Forth & Clyde Canal Society

CANAL NEWS

Spring 2020 £1.50 FREE to Members ISSUE 172



Santa Saga

Read how our crews dealt immediately and effectively with a Santa Cruise incident. PLUS the latest update on our innovative CanalCraft project

Visit our new interactive website at **www.forthandclyde.org.uk**

EDITORIAL



Society boat Maryhill dwarfed by the Tall Ship Glenlee at the Clydebuilt Festival

Society goes from strength to strength with new chair

WE START on a very sad note, with the illness and death of out vice-chair Jim McLachlan. Jim chaired our Society for many years and, when he stepped down to vice-chair, filled vital roles in crew training and representing us at external meetings, amongst many other activities. He will be sorely missed. See page 16 for Jim's obituary.

In "The Show Must Go On" page 6, Harry Silvers describes how Voyager's crew, taking a boatload of children & parents on a Santa Cruise, dealt with a very difficult situation when a thick steel wire wrapped itself around the propeller shaft. The incident illustrated the training experience and shear tenacity of our crews.

On page 8 Eleni Koumpouzi brings us up to date on our ground breaking CanalCraft project, which has helped bring many communities into meaningful contact with our canal. This successful project now has just a couple of months to run, having fulfilled all the objectives.

Your editor has been totally bamboozled in recent years by the many organisations operating on the Lowland Canals. So we sought help from Society founder secretary,

and veteran activist Richard Davies. Richard's essential guide starts on page 10.

When our CanalCraft volunteers built and launched one of their boats last year at the Seagull Trust boathouse in Kirkintilloch, Society member and local historian Don Martin said that this was the scene of the puffer Chindit's launch back in 1945.

So, of course, your editor pounced. You can read Don's article on page 12.

We also cover the story of the original Falkirk lock flight between the Union and Forth & Clyde Canals on page 14, including Society member Tommy Lawton's description of Canal College, which he mentors, excavating one of the old lock chambers.

At our AGM, See Society News, we elected Stewart Procter as our new, and very welcome, chair. Stewart quite rightly resisted all the committee's efforts to take on the extra duties.

After all he has enough on his plate as boats convenor and knew that chairing our committee, in the words of a previous chair, was like herding cats.

But perseverance pays, and Stewart's good nature eventually got the better of his good judgement, for which we are all supremely grateful. Thank you and welcome Stewart.

Finally, come along and enjoy the fun, see back page for events.


Voyager cruise

CANAL NEWS CONTENTS

Issue 172 Spring 2020



News p04


Features p6


In Focus p12


Society p19


Events p24

NEWS IN BRIEF



The old canal stables at Craigmarloch

Great Start

Our new chair Stewart Procter got off to a great start with busy Santa Cruises, members New Year cruise and Annual lunch, and charter bookings already coming in. See Society News for full AGM report and back page for forthcoming events.

Neptune's Steps doubles in size

This year the Red Bull Neptune's Steps event will see over 1,000 hardy souls plunge into the Forth and Clyde Canal at Maryhill. They will swim 420 metres and climb more than 10 metres of lock gates fitted with challenging obstacles. As well as events for endurance athletes there will be a more accessible pairs relay for the first time. See the fun at Maryhill Locks 21 – 22 March.

Kelpies New Year Fire and Light

Crowds flocked to the Kelpies at New Year for a fire and light spectacular including PyroCeltica, Theremin Hero, Mugenko Taiko Drummers. Music, choreographed lighting, fire sculptures and other performers entertained the public, along with more traditional kids treats such as toasting marshmallows.

Dumbreck Nature Reserve Upgrade

Kilsyth's popular Dumbreck nature reserve, connected by rural paths to the canal towpath, is to have a £3 million upgrade this year. Most of the cash will be spent on re-meandering the Garrel Burn, to reduce major downstream flooding events. The path network will be upgraded, local floods designed for, and wildlife habitats will be improved.

Craigmarloch Stables Consultation

The old canal stables at Craigmarloch, currently a roofless shell, could benefit from a

NEWS IN BRIEF

consultation event held by North Lanarkshire Council in Kilsyth in January. Possible future uses could include holiday accommodation. Our Society persuaded Strathclyde Region to rebuild the collapsed west gable of the stables and install concrete coping back in the 1980's. Without that action the Stables would by now be a total wreck.

Tourist Chief Exec visits F&C Canal

Last November Visit Scotland chief Malcolm Roughead visited Auchinstarry to celebrate new LEADER funding for projects along the canal and Antonine Wall. Ryan Barrie, owner of the Boathouse at Auchinstarry, said "the John Muir Way has been great for us. It keeps the hotel busy with travellers, particularly Americans, who are completing the route". The Boathouse is one of the official stamping stations for the new John Muir Way Passports.

Bill Oddie Stars

Bill Oddie came to Craigmarloch last October to film part of the new TV series 'Bargeing Britain: Then and Now' by Richochet TV. The producers wanted to link the canal and John Muir Way and found Craigmarloch to be the ideal backdrop. Watch out for screening this year.

Panacea Launched

Robert Irvine and Christine Hammell represented our Society at the launch of the Sorted Project's new canal boat Panacea at Ratho on the Union Canal in November. Funded by National Lottery Community Fund the boat will be used by individuals in recovery. Public Health Minister Joe Fitzpatrick did the honours, project manager is Karen Bradford.

Falkirk Wheel M.O.T.

The Falkirk Wheel is being drained of water for its annual winter MOT from 10 – 21 February. The engineering team will inspect the many systems and structures that make up the Wheel. The café and visitor centre will remain open Wednesday – Sunday 11:00am – 3:00pm.



Launch of the Panacea at Ratho

FEATURES

Going above and beyond to ensure the show must go on...



SATURDAY 14th December 2019 was a cold, wet and windy morning. This did not stop Voyager, of the Forth and Clyde Canal Society, setting out from Southbank Marina at 9am. with a crew of 4 onboard to Townhead Bridge, for another morning of Santa Trips run by Nonna's Kitchen.

With Santa and his elf and 30+ passengers, the children excitedly waiting for their turn to talk to Santa, each trip lasted about 30 minutes.

Two trips successfully completed we started

Voyager Crew:

Boatmaster Jim Pert
David Brown
Harry Silvers
Willy Boyle
John Hutchinson
(who happened to be onboard with his grandchildren helped with crew movement)
Robert (Riki) Irvine

on the third one when, after turning at Hillhead Basin, there was sudden extreme noise from the propeller with something wrapped round it, the usual tricks including going astern to dislodge whatever was attached failed.

We drifted into the side (unfortunately the side opposite the tow path), and three members of the crew tried to remove the offending item via the weed hatch several different ways, including the use of a hack saw. At one point two of the crew had to strip to the waist (not a pretty sight I can assure you) they were stretching that deep into the canal through the weed hatch working on the offending item which was now known as a thick steel wire wrapped several time round the prop shaft. This was extremely cold and unpleasant work.

The Boatmaster in between working down the weed hatch kept the passengers and children informed of our challenges, fortunately Santa was working hard with the children.

It was decided after about 30 minutes we would have to get the passengers safely from the Voyager while a plan to fix her could be carried out.

Jim had sudden inspiration that we could move the Voyager from one side of the canal to the other using the bow thruster.

This was successfully achieved and he managed to get onto the tow path, by jumping from the bow of the boat to the canal bank which happened to be just a bit more than the length of the gangplank, where he started pulling her along the canal towards Nicholson Bridge, with the occasional help from passing walkers/joggers.

With Voyager secured under Nicholson Bridge, the passengers safely left the Voyager and were led by Santa back to Nonna's Kitchen, who had been kept informed of our progress. Unfortunately trip four of the day had to be cancelled.

A plan of repair was developed and with the help of Robert (Riki) Irvine, who joined us at Voyager, plan A was developed. Two crew members would make their way back to the Stables and bring the Gipsy Princess down to Voyager and tow her back to the Stables to enable her to be pulled out the water on our slipway.

Meanwhile Riki would go to our slipway and set the winch up and lower the trolley down into the canal.

All was going well, though working in the Gipsy in the open was cold and wet for the crew. With the Voyager in tow, proceeding reasonably well we had passed through Townhead and Kirkintilloch bridges and on our way towards Joe's Wharf when Dave at the helm said b——y. h—l.

Coming towards us was the largest barge we had seen on the canal, certainly not something we expected, as we are were trained to handle all unexpected circumstances we meet on the canal (readers can imagine for themselves how it went) we arrived at the slipway.

Next challenge for our expert training was to manoeuvre the Voyager through a right angle turn and stern first onto the trolley with no Voyager engine. You can see a theme here, our training was used to achieve this with gentle nudges from the Gipsy Princess and couple of crew members on the canal side pulling her.

She was successfully edged onto the trolley and Riki pulled her sufficiently out the water to enable the offending item to be removed. This was achieved with bolt cutters and several cuts of the wire which was wrapped round the propeller shaft at least four times extremely tightly.

Voyager was put back into the canal, Gipsy returned to her mooring, winch safely returned to the container, and Voyager back to Southbank Marina and set up for tomorrow's Santa trips. I think this shows how much effort the volunteers put in to ensuring The Show Must go On, this is often unseen and not appreciated. Congratulations to all those involved in ensuring the children get their day with Santa.

Harry Silvers

FEATURES

Helena Koumbouzis reports on successful community project

CanalCraft shines at the Clydebuilt Festival in Glasgow



ON 21st-22nd of September, CanalCraft took part at the Clydebuilt Festival, at the Riverside in Glasgow. The festival is a celebration of all craft, big and small, that use the river Clyde and the event pays tribute to the traditional skills and existing boating capacity in and around the river Clyde that contribute to make people familiar with using the waterways.

CanalCraft brought all three small boats that were built during the project to the festival. CanalCraft also arranged for the Forth and Clyde Canal Society's wee puffer Maryhill to be there, so visitors to the event could become aware and reminded of the role of the small

craft and the Forth and Clyde canal to the development of Glasgow's maritime history.

During the two days of the festival, the small boats' boat builders and the CanalCraft team were at the project tent, welcoming visitors and presenting the project's outcomes. On the first day of the festival, the boats were exhibited at the grounds of the festival, for visitors to look at them and find out all about the project.

The boats were particularly popular with families and small kids who couldn't wait to be able to put them in the water!

The Maryhill puffer was moored at the pontoon behind the tent so visitors were encouraged to get close to the river and step in the puffer to experience being on a boat.

The second day, the small boats went in the water and visitors were encouraged to have a row around in the boats and experience the river from inside a small craft, which was a first time experience for many of the visitors who tried it.

At the end of the festival, some visitors were encouraged to be on Maryhill when she moved from the pontoon to Kelvin Harbour. Feedback we got from visitors indicated that the experience of them being on a craft on the water was unique and made them understand the importance of the use of the waterways in everyday life. Clydebuilt festival was a great way to showcase both the work of the Forth and Clyde Canal Society and CanalCraft to communities.



The Ripple Retreat receive the boat

As originally planned, the CanalCraft's boats will find new homes in community organisations which will benefit from having access to the water.

In November, the charity It's Good 2 Give accepted one of the boats built by participants of the Maryhill Integration Network (MIN).

A team from the Forth and Clyde Canal Society, CanalCraft and some boat builders from MIN went to Ripple Retreat just outside Callander, to deliver the boat, which was named Love & Care by the people who built it. The Retreat offers holiday breaks for families dealing with child and teenage cancer.

We had a tour of the Ripple Retreat project by its volunteers and we admired the fantastic work and the magnificent location.

The arts organisation Carnival Arts, based near the Forth and Clyde Canal in Glasgow has accepted the second boat built by the MIN participants.

The organisation will use the boat every year during the Glasgow Canal Festival, engaging MIN and other local community organisations in floating activities on the canal.

In April, CanalCraft will come to an end. The Forth and Clyde Canal Society has been working hard to secure a good legacy for the project and reassure the investment that went in it will have a lasting impact to the community groups involved but also to the Society itself. The next update will be about the legacy of the project, so watch this space!

You can also learn about the CanalCraft activities by visiting the Forth and Clyde Canal Society's website: https://www.forthandclyde.org.uk/canalcraft.asp

FEATURES

Very colourful – but what are all these groups?

Richard Davies discovers a host of organisations involved with the Forth & Clyde Canal. How many do you know?

THE wide variety of organisations and groups that take an interest in our canals can seem bewildering to anyone who may not be closely involved in the wider campaign, so here is my personal summary. The descriptions are mine alone – no doubt there will be differing views of the role of each group. In date order:

The Inland Waterways Association (IWA)

founded 1946 www.waterways.org.uk

LTC Rolt's book "Narrow Boat" 1944 was the catalyst that brought about the creation of the IWA. The Association worked through Rallies, protests, publications, navvying and political lobbying to create today's inland waterway leisure industry. FCCS, like most canal societies in the UK, is a corporate member of IWA.

Royal Yachting Association/ RYA Scotland

1952/2001 rya.org.uk

RYA was founded in 1952 and RYAScotland became a separate entity in 2001. After SIWA disbanded, RYAScotland created an inland waterways panel in an attempt to continue some of SIWA's role. RYAS currently act as secretariat to the Scottish Parliament's Cross-Party Group on recreational boating, and canals have featured regularly in those discussions.

Linlithgow Union Canal Society

founded 1975 LUCS.org.uk

LUCS is well-known for its annual festival incorporating a cardboard boat race. LUCS operate 5 boats, one small and two large passenger boats, a self-drive day hire boat and a workboat (which was formerly the Alex Ingles, once operated as a small passenger boat by FCCS).

They have recently also acquired several inflatable dinghies with electric outboards for self-drive day hire.

Seagull Trust/ Seagull Trust Cruises

founded 1979 seagulltrust.org.uk

The trust provides canal cruising for disabled people. Starting with one boat at Ratho, it grew over the last 40 years with other branches at Falkirk, Kirkintilloch and Inverness.

STC now operates 9 day-trip boats, soon to be joined by a 10th at Kirkintilloch, between them carrying around 25,000 passengers a year making it the largest charity boat operator in the UK.

FCCS

founded April 1980 – and still going strong. 'Nuff said!

Edinburgh Union Canal Society

founded 1985

The society hired out rowing boats and ran a vintage motor launch from ornamental boathouse at Ashley Terrace. The group appears to be in hibernation, with no activity or OSCR reports since 2011.

Bridge 19-40 Canal Society

formerly Broxburn Canal Society, founded 1994 bridge19-40.co.uk

The Society operates a small passenger boat and a workboat, with a base at the former Union Canal maintenance yard at Drumshoreland and public trips from Broxburn.

The Millennium Link Trust
Registered as a charity May 1999
This charity was set up by BWB to administer funds to build the Millennium Link. Strangely it still exists, and recently made a grant to the World Youth Urban Games in Glasgow.

The Waterways Trust/ The Waterways Trust Scotland/ KBS *from 1999*
The Waterways Trust worked to support the value and enjoyment of the waterways. The Waterways Trust Scotland TWTS became a separate charity in 2012, but was wound up in May 2019, with the staff and volunteers of their "Canal College" project continuing to work through Keep Scotland Beautiful.

Re-Union Canal Boats
founded 2003 re-union.org.uk
Re-Union is a public funded social enterprise in Edinburgh. They operate a large passenger boat in Edinburgh, and a smaller self-drive day hire boat at Falkirk. They also organise volunteer lock-keepers on the Falkirk flight each summer under the terms of a contract with Scottish Canals. In 2019 with support from the Government's Scottish Investment Fund for social enterprise, Re-Union purchased Capercaillie Cruisers, the commercial hire fleet based at Falkirk. The group played a key role in the Keep Canals Alive! campaign in 2018.

Lowland Canals Volunteer Group
founded by Scottish Canals 2010
LCVG was created to enable BW/Scottish Canals to co-ordinate physical voluntary work. It became seen as a principal means of communication with the voluntary sector and has now been incorporated into the new SWfA (see below).

Scottish Canals Boaters' Group
founded April 2015
SCBG was a Yahoo discussion group, with occasional physical gatherings at Ratho, plus one at Bowling. In early 2017 its members decided to create the –

Lowland Canals Association
founded 2017 lowlandcanalsassociation.org
LCA largely represents private boatowners on the Lowland Canals – a group of people who generally have not joined the traditional canal societies. The issue that brought it to life was the Scottish Canals review of user charges in 2014-15, when consultants were employed to set charges for moorings, particularly residential moorings. LCA lodged a petition with the Scottish Parliament to have an independent Ombudsman to oversee disputes. The Parliamentary hearings went on for many months, with some limited success in related issues, but no Ombudsman.

Glasgow Canal Cooperative
founded 2018 glasgowcanalproject.com
The Glasgow Canal Co-op was created by Scottish Canals encourage organisations located around the "Glasgow Canal" to work together. Strangely, they never refer to its proper name: Forth & Clyde Canal, Glasgow Branch! The Co-op organises the annual Glasgow Canal Festival.

Keep Canals Alive!
started February 2018
When the Forth & Clyde Canal closed due to broken bridges in 2018, the groups and individuals who had previously campaigned to get the canals restored, met to plan a campaign, called "Keep Canals Alive!" The group was simply a gathering of people, a slogan, an email address, an impressive letterhead with the logos of 11 supporting organisations (including FCCS) and a facebook page. It has no constitution, bank account or membership – just a common cause. After the canal re-opened they decided not to disband, encouraged by official advice that KCA! was a useful forum. It remains there, in hibernation, but ready to step up if another crisis occurs.

Scottish Waterways for All
incorporating LCVG waterways.org.uk/swfa
SWfA was created by Scottish Canals in 2019 as a means of consulting with interested parties on all 4 working canals. It has a formal membership of 12 people representing the main voluntary groups plus individuals chosen for specific skills/knowledge and 3 senior members of Scottish Canals staff. It has a web page within the IWA website, on which minutes of meetings are published.

And, not forgetting some of the other groups that no longer exist. The story of these is maybe something for a future article: SIWA, 1971-2009, Strathkelvin Canal Park Group, 1973-199? Falkirk and District Canals Society (c. 1979 – 1990??).

IN FOCUS



Kirkintilloch Basin Goods Station, Southbank Road, 28 April 1960, with puffer Chindit on slip at Hays' repair yard, in background.

Encounters with the Chindit

Don Martin tells the story of Hays Boatbuilding Yard in Kirkintilloch

I DON'T know how many people still remember the launch of the puffer Chindit at Hays' boatbuilding yard, Kirkintilloch, on 20 September 1945.

Probably there are still a few who do, although it is a long time since I last spoke to anyone with a clear memory of it. I was certainly there, aged 4, and throughout my childhood and early adulthood retained memories of the scene, with crowds gathered on Townhead Bridge and round about.

However, my later work with the extensive collection of Kirkintilloch launch photos at the William Patrick Library contaminated my memory of the occasion, so that photo-images and recollection now merge together in my mind, rendering it impossible to isolate the memory that I once possessed. And I don't think that I ever had any recollection of the mishap that occurred during the launch, delaying its completion until the following day, when the ancient puffer Caesar was needed to haul the Chindit's stern off the bank at the side of the launching slip.

The launch of the Chindit was the last of its kind at Kirkintilloch, although Hays' repair slip in Southbank Road, beside the former entrance to the Canal Basin (now reinvented as Kirkintilloch Marina) remained in use for many years, and puffers wound up on the slip for repair remained a familiar sight (one, indeed, that I could see from my

childhood bedroom window). In January 1960 I purchased a new 35mm camera and began a serious programme of local photography, although I didn't at first include the Southbank slip in my schedule.

However, a report in the Kirkintilloch Herald of 1 November 1961, stating that the slip was about to close, prompted appropriate action and I duly photographed the puffer Slav at the slip, as the last vessel to be repaired there.

The repair facility closed on 1 December, with the result that puffers finally disappeared from the Kirkintilloch scene, after a presence that had lasted for over a century.

When I began my programme of local photography in January 1960 my priority was to make a photographic record of the pioneer, canal-feeding Monkland & Kirkintilloch Railway, which I knew to be under threat of closure at the time. In April 1960 I took comprehensive photographs of Kirkintilloch Basin Goods Station, one of which clearly shows a puffer on the slip at the other side of the Southbank Road, for repair. Digitisation of the negative now confirms that it was none other than the Chindit, the last puffer built in Kirkintilloch.

Sadly, with my obsessive focus on the railway I didn't think to go out of the goods yard and take some close-up photos of the puffer, which would have been readily possible. This seems especially unfortunate when it is remembered that these were the last days of the Chindit.

Shortly after her 1960 overhaul she broke away from her moorings at Dunoon and according to Guthrie Hutton in his Puffers book 'bumped along the shore to Kirn' until she was 'bent and battered' and unfit for repair.



Puffer Slav at Kirkintilloch Repair Slip, November 1961

IN FOCUS

Scotland's Lost Lades and Canals

Falkirk Lock Flight

Continuing our occasional series with Paul Carter



Top (stub) end of the Lock Flight

WHEN the Union Canal was completed in 1822 it was connected to the Forth and Clyde Canal at Camelon, Falkirk, by a flight of eleven locks. The locks started at the (then) end of the Union Canal, about 700 metres west of the Seagull Trust Boathouse, and finished down by Lock 16 in a big basin (now car park) called Port Downie.

The locks were 69 feet long, 12½ feet wide and had a fall of 10 feet. The locks had individual side ponds for additional water supply.

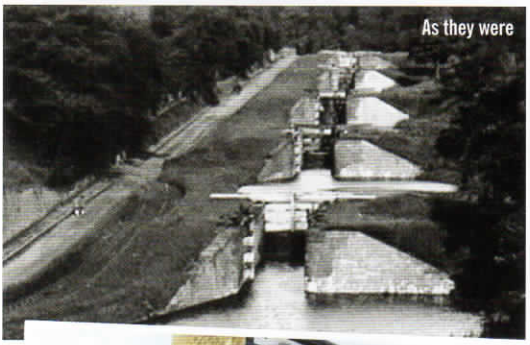
To start with the locks were much used to get heavy goods such as coal and masonry up from the Forth and Clyde Canal and into Edinburgh. Passenger traffic was also welcomed. A guidebook published in 1823 tells passengers in glowing terms about the view from the top of the locks after coming through the Falkirk Tunnel.

"On returning to the light of day, they are greeted with a view of the most beautiful and extensive landscape... A famous traveller, who had visited the source of the Nile, declared that, in all his travels, he had never met with a view which exceeded that from the hill of Falkirk... with respect to the view of the Grampian Hills, and the shores of the Upper Forth".

But most passengers just wanted to get from A to B as quickly as possible. The night sleeper "Swift" boats were very popular. However, it took too long to get passenger boats through the lock flight so passengers had to get up in the middle of the night and, with their luggage, walk past the locks to change both



< The partly excavated lock



As they were



canals and boats. The Union Inn was built at Port Downie beside the Forth and Clyde Canal. It proved very popular with canal users, and still is today.

Not surprisingly the new railways proved very popular and through passenger services ceased in 1848. The Lock Flight was closed in 1933 and the whole canal was closed in 1965. Then came the Millennium Link. The Union Canal was extended to Tamfourhill, driven beneath the Antonine Wall in another tunnel, and reconnected to the Forth and Clyde Canal via two locks, the now famous Falkirk Wheel and the Jubilee lock.

To see the route today, start at the Union Inn and head up Greenbank Road. Pass under the railway bridge and turn immediate left up a track. This track runs parallel to the line of the lock flight and connects to the Union Canal towpath. The lock flight lay in woodland just to the right of the track. Some remains can be seen, in particular the upper masonry of one of the locks, excavated in recent years by Canal College volunteers. Continue to the top, where you will find the entrance to the old lock flight from the Union Canal.

Tommy Lawton, FCCS founder member and Canal college mentor tells us:

"The eleven locks that linked the Union Canal to the Forth and Clyde were unusual to other canals in Scotland since they had storage ponds between the locks to conserve water, that the Union was short of.

After closure in 1933 flats and factories were built over the lower section. After hunting in the trees Lock 2 was discovered. With the assistance of Archaeology Scotland, Canal College students cleared the undergrowth and exposed the lock, but we were only allowed to go down just over one metre. Part of Lock 1 was also exposed but not excavated. We also created a pleasant woodland pathway down part of the lock flight route".

Further reading:

"A Companion for Canal Passengers betwixt Edinburgh and Glasgow". Printed for John Aitken, Port Hopeton 1823. Reprinted by Linlithgow Union Canal Society. 1981.

"The Union Canal, A Capital Asset". Guthrie Hutton. Stenlake. 1993.

"The Canals of Scotland" Jean Lindsay. David and Charles. 1968.

IN MEMORIAM

Jim McLachlan

JIM was always the quiet but purposeful man of the Forth and Clyde Canal Society. In an organisation full of flamboyant and often argumentative characters he was always the steady hand on the helm. This is no doubt why he served eleven years as our Chair, and many more as our Vice-Chair.

Joining the Society in 1985, Jim served his first period of chair in 1990 -1 - 2 & 3. The Society was to the forefront on campaigning for reopening the canal, and this period saw important moves forward including the Glasgow Canal Project.

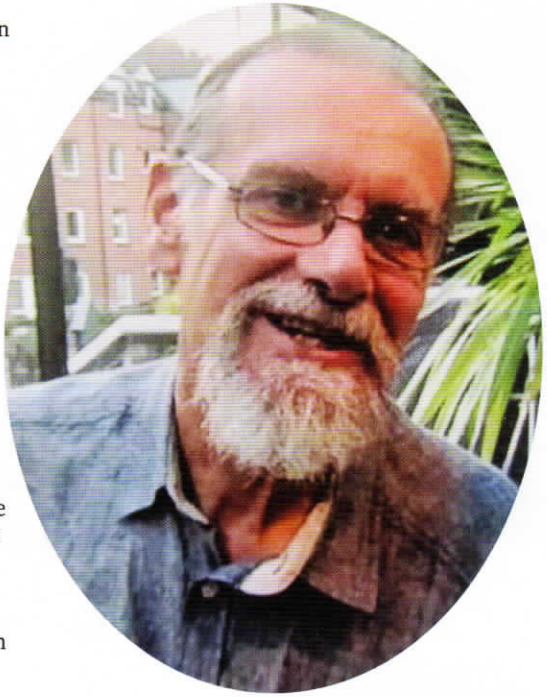
The Society launched Gipsy Princess, campaigned successfully against the proposed M80 canal route, and helped organise many big rallies. These included the National Trail Boat Rally on waste ground at Tamfourhill, now site of The Falkirk Wheel.

Jim's next stint as chair was seven years long, from the end of 2007 all the way through to the end of 2014, when he took on the Vice-Chair role.

Jim's caution then of "no time for complacency" is just as true now as it was then. The new Kirkintilloch Marina, Auchinstarry Boathouse and Falkirk Kelpies were all created during this period. The Society was very busy with charters, school trips and rallies. Jim always paid attention to detail, including crew training and attending many vital external meetings.

His steady hand, quiet humour, hard work and attention to detail will all be greatly missed.

In his working life Jim was a personnel officer with Central Regional Council and he brought his people management skills to our Society. He held a private pilot's licence and told us all about flying round the boundaries of an entire county – Clackmannanshire!



Jim had a very moving and well attended funeral at Clydebank Crematorium and wake in Milngavie with many Canal Society members present on Saturday 25th January.

He leaves behind his wife Margaret, son Fraser, daughter-in-law Jo and beloved granddaughter Kayleigh. Our thoughts are with them all.

James (Jim) McLachlan. 1st November 1941 to 9th January 2020.

Peter D Stewart

Also, sad to record the death of long time Canal Society member Peter D Stewart. Peter attended Society events right into his nineties.

Charter a Society Boat

The Canal Society has a fleet of three boats available for charter. Each boat comes fully crewed. Our boats are an ideal way to enjoy a family celebration or enjoy a cruise for your organisation. Each boat has a galley to organise your own catering.







VOYAGER

Up to 45 passengers or maybe 40 if you are catering. Hourly rate of £135 first hour.

GIPSY PRINCESS

up to 25 passengers or maybe 20 if you are catering. Hourly rate of £110 for first hour.

MARYHILL

up to 6 passengers. Each charter is considered on its merits and the lowest figure would be £80.

Charges are reduced for second and subsequent hours at progressively reducing rates and a full day charter may enjoy a discount. Charities, youth groups and other eligible organisations may be considered for a reduction on the final figure calculated.

The boats are generally based at the Stables Restaurant, Kirkintilloch G66 1RH. Cruises can also start at Southbank Marina in Kirkintilloch, Spiers Wharf in Glasgow and Auchinstarry Basin, Kilsyth, by special arrangement. One way trips are also sometimes available to Glasgow, Auchinstarry and the Falkirk Wheel, and are advertised on our website.

Telephone bookings to Robert Irvine 01236 735533
Further information www.forthandclyde.org.uk

SPLASHBACK

SplashBack From The Canal News Archives

Thirty Years Ago

'Gipsy Comes Home' was our front-page story, covering the launch of the Society's new trip boat Gipsy Princess at Craigmarloch near Kilsyth. This marked the culmination of a three-year campaign by a local committee of the Society to run public trips on Dicks Barge and Alex Ingles and fundraise for the new boat. And yes, 30 years on Gipsy is still cruising for our Society.

Twenty Years Ago

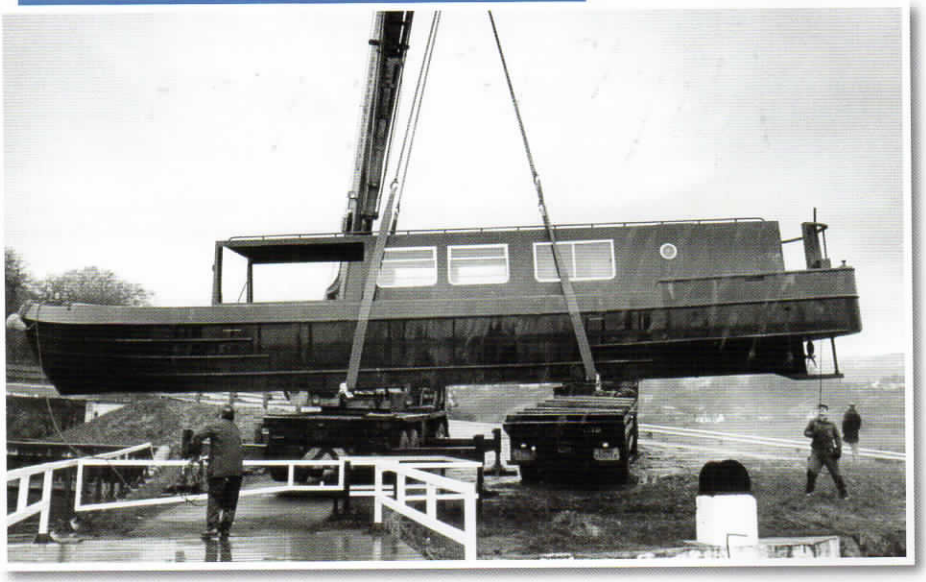
'From Eyesore to Icon' was our lead story, covering British Waterways unveiling its stunning new design for The Falkirk Wheel, to be built on the derelict site of the old Scottish Tar Distillery which went on fire in 1970.

Ten Years Ago

History was the main theme of our February issue with articles on a cruise through history on the Markate from Dunadd to Holyrood by Andy Carnduff, the Paisley Canal Disaster by Charles Inglis, Then & Now on the White Cart by Iain Morrison and a walk through history around Kilsyth by Paul Carter.
'Chairman's Chat' was written by our late vice-chair Jim McLachlan for both the 30 years ago and 10 years ago issues, in his usual enthusiastic and thought-provoking style.

From the Archives

Launch of Gipsy Princess at Craigmarloch on March 3rd, 1990.



THE
STABLES
Country Pub and Dining

Traditionally a place for boatmen and passengers to rest and eat, we look forward to welcoming you soon.

Serving great food. fine wines and premium lagers all day

Glasgow Bridge,
Glasgow Road,
Kirkintilloch.
G66 1RH
0141 777 6088



Commercial & Colour Printers & Office Suppliers

Cowan print

Cowan Print, Unit 18, Burnside Industrial Estate, Garrell Road, Kilsyth Glasgow G65 9JX
Tel: 01236 821177 Fax: 01236 821177 email: craig@cowanprint.co.uk

www.cowanprint.net

SOCIETY NEWS



Society AGM

A packed annual general meeting (AGM) heard reports of our healthy finances and busy boating year. Stewart Procter was elected our new chair and three new committee members elected, Cathie Sweeney, Fiona Shepherd and Willie Boyle. See following reports on finances and boating.

The AGM was held in the Society's office at Southbank Marina, Kirkintilloch, on Saturday 23rd November and was followed by refreshments and cruise on Voyager.

Healthy Finances

Treasurer Robert Irvine reported healthy finances with an income of £27,620, and expenditure of £22,008 giving a surplus for the year of £5,612.

The Society had a closing balance of £49,830 which includes £15k ring fenced for future major spending on the boats and the £15k recommended by the auditor to cover a year's expenditure with reduced income. The CanalCraft project shows an income (mainly HLF) of £41,576 and expenditure of £29,950 leaving a balance remaining of £11,626.

Copies of the Independent Examiners Report prepared by Wylie & Bisset LLP Chartered Accountants were handed to members.

Copies have also been submitted to the charities regulator (OSCR) and Companies House. This includes the Report of the Trustees and Accounts. Wylie & Bisset LLP were reappointed for a further year.

Robert also reported a current membership overall of 178, a small decrease on last year.

Busy Boating Year

Boats convenor Stewart Procter reported another busy year with 59 charters, identical to last year, plus events like Canal Carnival, Glasgow and East Dunbartonshire Doors Open Days, Kirkintilloch Canal Festival, Clydebuilt,

members cruises, crew training and essential boat movements.

Stewart also described the huge effort that goes into maintaining our three boats, Voyager, Gipsy Princess and Maryhill. Jobs range from renewing engine mounts and sorting cooling systems, through to painting, grounds maintenance and boat cleaning. Much of this is carried out by a small dedicated band, and Stewart appealed for more members to get involved.

Getting crews can also be a challenge. Stewart is concerned that numbers are dropping and that individuals are getting overstretched. Again, please help.

Crew Training

Our Society runs a first-class training programme. This includes boat manoeuvring, rescue, boat handling and husbandry, sound signals and lights, rope handling and vessel knowledge.

Sessions will be held on most Wednesday evenings from April to August, check website for dates. Training, which is an annual MCA requirement, is mainly on the boats with some indoor sessions. New crew members are always welcome, please get in touch.

Members Events

Members enjoyed a rather wet and windy traditional New Year cruise on January 2nd followed by a members' lunch at the Glazertbank Hotel, on January 18th.

Evening meetings to come include February 27th when Neil Fraser of HES will speak on 'Kirkintilloch Life Then and Now' and March 26th when Barry Puncher of the Fire Service will lead an active session on Fire and Water Safety. 7:00 – 9:30pm for crews in particular.

Paul Carter will be leading a Heritage Walk starting at 10:30am on Saturday 14th March, Townhead Canal Bridge, Kirkintilloch. Tommy Lawton is giving a canal talk to the Kirkintilloch Antiquaries at 2:30pm on Wednesday 18th March in the Barony Chambers. Both events are part of East Dunbartonshire History Month.

Santa Cruises

Voyager was again host to Nonna's Kitchen Santa Cruises doing 28 trips on 7 days throughout December. Customers enjoyed breakfast in the restaurant, a visit to Santa on Voyager and a short cruise.

See 'The Show Must Go On' on page 6 for some real-life drama.

Boats Vandalised

Sad to report that Gipsy Princess and Maryhill were both vandalised on our Glasgow Road Bridge moorings, as was Christine McKay's Craft Daft. Members rallied round to clean up the boats, take them to safety and start repairs.

Membership Renewal

Following a change made to the 'Articles of Association' in relation to when membership is renewed, at our AGM in November, all membership is due for renewal on 1st March annually. Enclosed with Canal News are a renewal letter and a copy or copies of your member record(s).

This year there is no requirement to return your member record(s) unless there are changes to your details, such as address, phone numbers, email addresses, etc., or if you wish to sign up to Gift Aid, or to cancel Gift Aid due to a change on circumstances. If your Data Protection statements need to be amended or updated your member record(s) must be signed and returned.

At present there are still a few members who have not yet returned their Data Protection statements. If returning your membership record(s) please return the entire form, not just part of it.

ABOUT US

Canal News

Canal News has been published since 1980 by the Forth and Clyde Canal Society. It contains news, articles and events, and is circulated three times a year to society members, libraries and public representatives. We welcome news items and short articles, with pictures if possible. Please get in touch by phone, post or e-mail. We look forward to hearing from you.

Many thanks to all who contributed articles, news, typing, computing and pictures for this issue. We do not normally attribute pictures, but if you would like an attribution, or we have used one without permission, please contact us and we will fully acknowledge in the next issue. Also please get in touch if you feel we have got facts wrong or you wish to challenge any opinions.

Contact Points

Editor	**Paul Carter, Woodlinn, High Banton, Kilsyth G65 0RA**
	Tel: **01236 822437** e-mail: **paulcarter1943@live.com**
Printer:	e-mail: **cowanprint@btconnect.com**
Distribution:	**Rachel Forbes**
Final Copy Date:	Next issue: **April 30th, 2020**
Head Office:	**Forth & Clyde Canal Society, Boat Users Block, Unit 4, Strathkelvin Place, Southbank Marina, Kirkintilloch, G66 1XT**

JOIN US AND HELP SAVE THE CANAL

- Campaigning
- Boats
- Socials
- Walks
- Volunteering

Come and enjoy our many activities from boat crewing and maintenance to talks and walks.

Forth & Clyde Canal Society

Annual subs

Family £25
Ordinary Member £20
Student or Pensioner £12

Contact

The Membership Secretary
83 Glenacre Road
Cumbernauld G67 2NT

Telephone 01236 735533
Email:
robert.irvine@talktalk.net

Forth & Clyde Canal Society Executive

Chairman
Stewart Procter

Secretary / Company Secretary
Christine Hammell 0141 561 1953

Treasurer / Membership / Bookings
Robert Irvine 01236 735533

President
Guthrie Hutton

Enjoy our Canal Informatrix

Keep in touch with us in a variety of ways:-

WEB SITE Visit our website www.forthandclyde.org.uk for latest news, events, and background information. Contact our webmaster if you wish to help, at our email address.

E-MAIL ALERTS keep up with the latest events etc. Join our email circulation list by contacting our webmaster on secretary@forthandclyde.org.uk

make friends with us on **Facebook**

Join us on **Twitter**

CANAL SOCIETY BRANDED CLOTHING

We now have a new supplier of branded clothing – see below for items and prices

Premium T-Shirt	White only	**£9.00**
Classic Polo Shirt	Navy or White	**£12.00**
Classic Sweatshirt	Navy	**£14.50**
Classic Fleece	Navy	**£19.50**
Selkirk Softshell Jacket	Navy	**£30.00**
Regatta Microfleece, ¼ zip	Navy or Royal Blue	**£18.00**
Baseball Cap	Navy	**£6.50**
Beanie Hat	Navy	**£6.50**

All shirts, sweatshirts and jackets come with two logos, left chest and right arm. Cap and hat with one logo.
All logos are embroidered with the exception of the T-shirt and Baseball Cap which are heat sealed logos.
Contact Membership Secretary, details previous page.

Spring Events 2020

FEBRUARY

Thursday 27th – **Society Members Winter Talk** Society Office, Southbank Marina, Kirkintilloch. 7:30pm. 'Kirkintilloch Life, Then and Now' Neil Fraser of HES.

MARCH

Saturday 14th – **Canal Heritage Walk** Townhead Canal Bridge, Cowgate, Kirkintilloch. 10:30am. About 1½ miles, ending about 12 noon, surfaced paths. Paul Carter.

Wednesday 18th – **Kirkintilloch Antiquaries Canal Talk** Barony Chambers, Kirkintilloch 2:30pm. Tommy Lawton.

Weekend 21st – 22nd – **Red Bull Neptune's Steps** Swimming Challenge. Maryhill Locks.

Thursday 26th – **Society Members Winter Meeting** Society Office, Southbank Marina, Kirkintilloch. 7:00pm. 'Fire & Water Safety'. Barry Puncher of Fire Service. Crews strongly advised to attend.

APRIL

Saturday 18th – **Society Stall at 'Ship Ahoy' event** Summerlee Museum, Coatbridge.

Crew Training **will start on a Wednesday evening** at some time during April. Check website for details. 7:00pm for a prompt 7:30pm start.

MAY

Wednesday 6th – **Society Members & Friends Cruise** – First of the season. Society moorings opposite The Stables. 7:00pm for 7:30pm.

Weekend 22nd – 24th. **Year of Coasts and Waters Events** (Scottish Boat Rally)
Auchinstarry – The Falkirk Wheel – Kelpies
Keep an eye out for details nearer the time.

JUNE

Wednesday 3rd - **Society Members & Friends Cruise**
Society moorings opposite The Stables. 7:00pm for 7:30pm.



KEEP UP TO DATE: for updates and information go to www.forthandclyde.org.uk, make friends with us on Facebook and join us on Twitter

Design & Print by Cowan Print, Kilsyth 01236 821177