Forth & Clyde Canal Society

CANAL NEWS

Spring 2023 £1.50 FREE to Members ISSUE 180



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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT



Looking forward to another great year on the Canal

WELCOME to the Spring edition of the Canal News, and for those of you whom I have not yet met up with can I wish you a Happy New Year. For those were unable to attend last year's AGM we have two new members added to the committee. They are Scott Castel and Tony Waddell.

Despite the weather, work has been carried out on both Voyager and Gipsy Princess. A report is shown elsewhere in Canal News.

A big thanks must go to Jim Miller, Willie Boyle and Riki for almost daily visits to the boats to pump out the rainwater.

We had our normal New Year get together in the office and it was good to see those who attended.

Social events this year commence with a talk by Tommy about the canal, the theme being "Then an Now" in the office on Thursday 23rd of February at 7:30. Paul is leading a canal heritage walk on Saturday 25th March at 10:30. See Events for details.

Member's monthly cruises will commence on Wednesday the 3rd of May and the first Wednesday of the month until September, departing at 7:30pm from The Stables unless otherwise advised.

A Member's Sunday Cruise is also programmed for the 4th of June, departing from The Stables at 11:00 for a cruise to the Glasgow Branch to see the new bridges and other changes.

Again, this year we will try, weather permitting, to have another Society BBQ on Sunday June 11th at 1pm beside the boats moored opposite The Stables.

Canal Festival, plans have not yet been finalised, to date, with possible events being held between Monday 21st and Sunday 27th of August.

A poster to attempt to recruit new members has been created and will be distributed to various locations.

Boats: Maintenance and Crewing.

More assistance is required to maintain the boats whither it be on a regular basis or a call for "hands on deck" for cleaning and painting.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to plan jobs like painting any more than a day ahead due to the weather.

If you can help in any way that will help greatly and a group email or similar could be created to keep you informed of what's planned and when. The normal workdays are Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday.

Front Cover and opposite: Members hard at work repairing Voyager

Crews

Crew training commences this year on Wednesday the 29th of March in the office at Southbank Marina, 7pm for 7:30pm, the following ones will be on the boats moored at The Stables.

Please attend to ensure you are up to date with any changes on the boats and to refresh our procedures as per MCA requirements.

We require to have a larger available pool of crew members willing to sail hopefully more charters this year as last year it was mostly the same small group doing them all, remember it is charters which keep the Society financially afloat.

Stewart Procter
Chairman

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Editor's Note

Welcome to this issue. We bring full reports from our AGM, articles on canal history, wildlife, events, news and more. We welcome articles from members and would like to carry a new series on what the Society actually does. Well, we mostly run boats, but what does that entail? Articles please on boat maintenance, the slipway, crew training, boat certification, crew certification, charters and more. Plus publications, campaigning, talks, walks and governance. We are delighted to run the first article in this new series in this issue by Jim Miller on maintaining Voyager. His article on Gipsy will appear in our next issue. Also please keep articles coming in on anything you fancy, how about your water-borne holiday anywhere this year? As ever, 600 words plus some nice pics.

Paul Carter, Editor

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NEWS IN BRIEF



The Kelpies

Cruising into 2023

Our Canal Society has an action-packed year ahead planned for 2023.

Boat maintenance is a constant, from painting to major mechanical works. This is all done by our Society members so please respond to Stewart's pleas in Chairman's Chat, and volunteer.

Crew training will be getting underway again on Wednesday 29th March, 7:00pm for a 7:30pm start. The first meeting will be held in our office at Southbank Marina and therafter on the boats at their moorings opposite The Stables. We have a first rate crew training programme, covering all aspects of crewing. These include boat manoeuvring, rescue, boat handling and husbandry, sound signals and lights, rope handling and vessel knowledge.

Charter enquiries are already coming in and it promises to be another busy charter season, giving all boatmasters and crews a chance to use their skills.

Upcoming events include Tommy's Talk on 23rd February and Paul's Walk on 25th March. Looking further forward we have monthly members cruises staring in May and two members events planned for June, a cruise to enjoy the new Glasgow bridges on the 4th, and a barbeque on the 11th.

See Society News on page 18 for further detals and keep in touch via our 'Informatrix', see back page. In particular it is best to get on to Stewart's email list.

Society AGM

We had a successful AGM at Southbank Marina, Kirkintilloch on Saturday 19th November 2022, with good reviews of the year and new members elected to the committee. See pages 20 to 23 for full reports.

New Year Gathering

We had our first New Year Gathering since Covid struck, on Monday 2nd January this year. Lots of friendly discussions were held, even if fitting cutlass bearing and prop shaft for Voyager and other mechanical heroics featured rather prominently. No cruise, unfortunately precluded by ongoing maintenance work and some fresh ice on the canal.

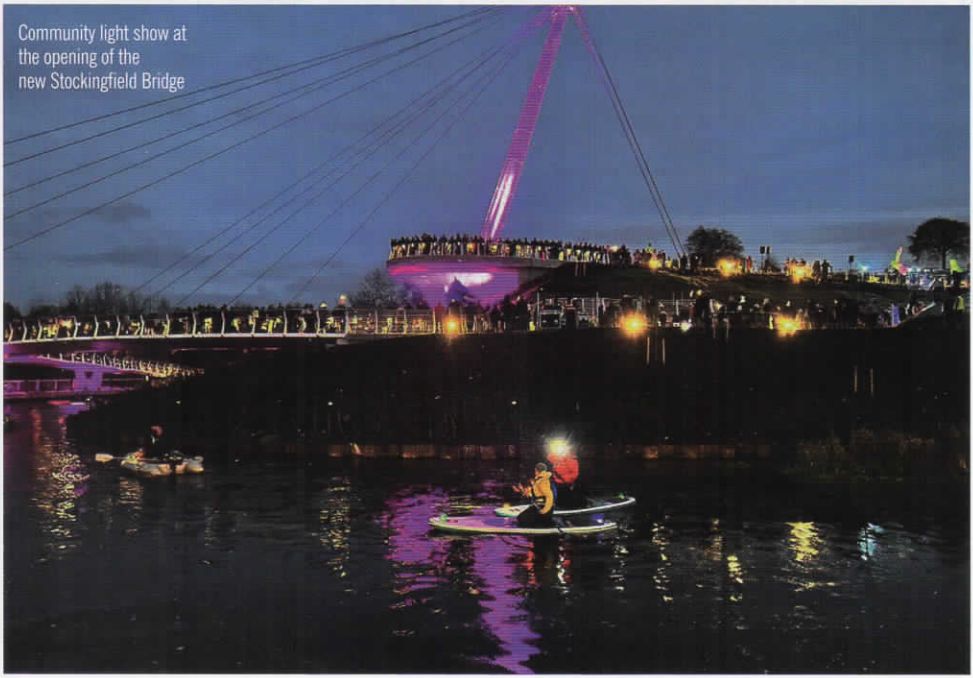
Iconic Stockingfield Bridge Opened

A community light show welcomed the opening of the new three-way canal bridge on 3rd December. Residents of Ruchill, Maryhill and Gilshochill, all now united by the new bridge, brought along a dramatic display of home made lanterns led by Carnival Arts, the lights were inspired by the local canal and wildlife. Welcoming statements came from Richard Millar, Scottish Canals Chief Operating Officer, Karen McGregor, Sustrans Scotland Director and Susan Aitken, Leader of Glasgow City Council.

The new active travel plan bridge has won the 2022 Institute of Civil Engineering, Peoples Choice Award. The award is decided by a public vote and recognises civil engineering projects that have made a positive impact on their local communities.

The £14 million cable stayed bridge opened after a nearly two year construction programme.

The new bridge allows pedestrians and cyclists to cross the canal without leaving the towpath, avoiding a potentially dangerous road tunnel, and forms a missing link in the National Cycle Network.



Community light show at the opening of the new Stockingfield Bridge

NEWS IN BRIEF



Bowline Award

The innovative Bowline, which is transforming the old railway viaduct across the canal at Bowling into a fully accessible linear park and pathway, has won just one of four Civic Trust Awards in Scotland. Thanks to John Yellowlees for picture.

Lock 9 Cottage Restored

The derelict old lock keepers cottage by Lock 9 in Falkirk has been restored and repurposed as a community centre to help local people with housing and employment issues. The cottage is beside the railway 'swing' bridge which no longer swings. Instead, the lock chamber was moved just upstream during the Millennium Link, giving sufficient headroom for boat traffic. Unfortunately the towpath is not so lucky, and users have to cross the railway via the road bridge.

Meanwhile, restoration of the nearby canal-side RoseBank Distillery is nearing completion, and the distillery will soon be distilling it's distinctive Lowland malt whisky again.

Kelpies Free Tours

Free tours inside The Kelpies at the Grangemouth end of the canal were offered to the public throughout January. The tours gave a great opportunity to view the amazing engineering that went into creating these striking sculptures.

New Chief Executive

Scottish Canals is seeking a new Chief Executive. Catherine Topley is moving on after a four year stint. During that time she secured record investment in our canals. Her time at the top saw the creation of the canal-side Claypits Nature Reserve, Glasgow's only inner city nature reserve, and construction of the striking new bridge at Stockingfield. She was well regarded by many in the voluntary sector.

Richard Millar has taken over meantime as Acting Chief Executive. Well know to the canal societies, he brings over 20 years experience of Scotland's canals to the role. We wish him well.

Floating Stage

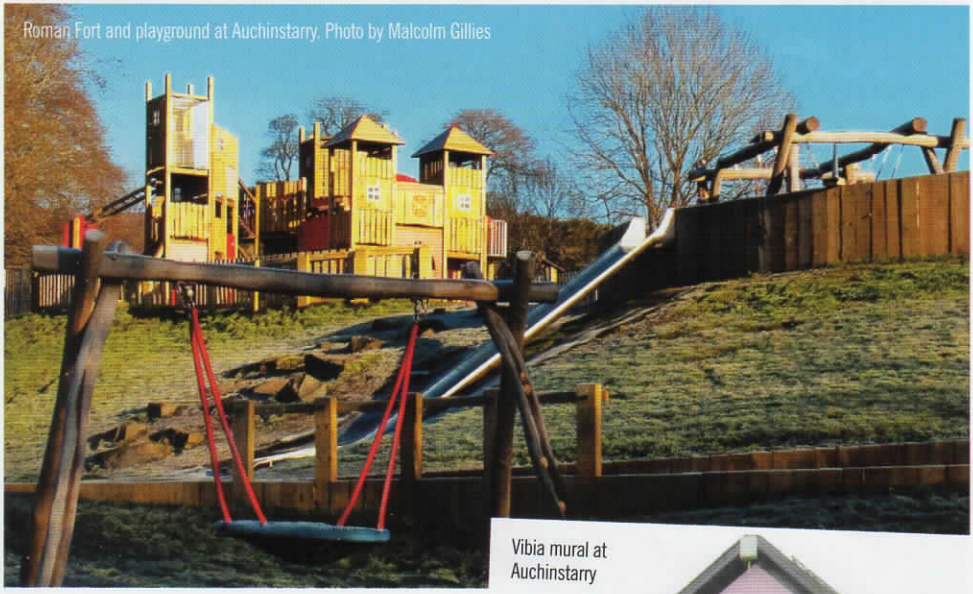
An innovative floating stage is proposed for the Lowland Canals, bringing a new and unique performance venue to our waterways. Local choirs, bands and dramatic societies are expected to use this novel opportunity. It will be moored at different places along the Union and Forth and Clyde Canals, serving many canal-side villages and towns.

Guthrie's New Book

Our Society's President, Guthrie Hutton, has produced a new book on 'The Scottish Iron and Steel Industry'. Published by Stenlake, it is packed with pictures and text. It includes classic old pictures of iron and steeel works along our canals including Kirkintilloch, Bonnybridge, Falkirk and along the Clyde including Glasgow and Motherwell. A good read for just £11.95.

Romans Invade Again

Nearly two thousand years after our pictish


Roman Fort and playground at Auchinstarry. Photo by Malcolm Gillies

ancestors chased them out, the Romans appear to have invaded again. A magnificent new Roman Fort has risen on top of a knowe within Auchinstarry Quarry Park, just across from Auchinstarry Marina. It is surrounded, not by protesting picts (not even Robbie) but by slides, climbing frames, swings and other play equipment. Opened in December after a nearly two year construction period, the guard of honour was provided by pupils from Croy and Kilsyth Primary Schools.

The new play park is part of the £2.1 million Antonine Wall Project. This is a collaboration between local councils along the Wall and Historic Environment Scotland which has seen new facilities created, mainly for kids, between Bowling and Falkirk. Introduction boards, interpretation panels and Roman statues help get across our Roman heritage.

Vibrant Vibia

Continuing the Roman reinvasion, a colourful new mural has appeared beside the canal at Auchinstarry Marina on the gable wall of the facilities block. It depicts, in 'cartoon style', a Roman general's wife Vibia along with symbols representing her helmet, purse and wreath of leaves found in her grave. The mural has attracted the admiration of many towpath walkers, except for one. She told 'Canal News' that the brightly coloured new mural "looks like the picture on a Kellogs cornflakes packet", proving that the ancient Scottish art of the pungent put-doon is alive and well!


Vibia mural at Auchinstarry

FEATURES

Society at Work

First of a new series of articles on what our Society actually does

Jim Miller gets us off to a fine start with his blow by blow (literally) account of replacing Voyager's cutlass bearing



Shaft being replaced

At the annual inspection of Voyager for the Certificate to allow the carrying of Passengers (basically the boats MoT) the MCA inspector stated that the cutlass bearing was worn and would require to be replaced. The MCA certificate was issued with the proviso that this task would be completed prior to the start of 2023 cruising season.

At the beginning of December Voyager was taken out of the water to commence bearing removal in order that a new bearing could be purchased.

The bearing removal required that a major strip down of the aft end was required i.e.

- Removal of rudder,
- Removal of propellor,
- Disconnection of propellor shaft from flexible coupling at gearbox,
- Removal of propellor shaft.

We started the job by disconnecting the rudder angle indication device from the rudder stock in the steering gear compartment, disconnecting the rudder stock from the hydraulic drive mechanism, rigging a lifting device (the rudder is HEAVY) and finally removing the rudder. Removing the rudder allowed the propeller shaft to be pulled straight out of the cutlass bearing without impediment.

After removal of propellor shaft it was noted that there was wear on shaft at the inboard end caused by, it is assumed, ingress of grit through the cutlass bearing. This grit incursion is normal as the cutlass bearing is canal water cooled.

The shaft was duly taken to an engineering company in Glasgow who repaired the damage by building up the shaft material then grinding down to the original shaft dimension thus making good the shaft – much cheaper than replacing shaft.

The next stage of work required the removal of the old cutlass bearing which proved to be rather more onerous that at first anticipated!


Comparison between old and new bearings


Propellor refitted


Rudder on trolley


Rudder being positioned


Rudder bolted in

As can be seen in picture rather brutal (hacksaw, large hammer and cold chisel) methods, complete with a few expletives, had to be employed to coax the old bearing out.

The new bearing, I'm pleased to say, went in without any bother (much to the relief of the maintenance team).

With the successful installation of the cutlass bearing we could now re-fit the propellor shaft which slid into place with ease. The next task was to re-place the lantern gland and fit the sealing rings (5 off) followed by the re-connection of the flexible coupling to both shaft and gearbox drive flange.

The next stage of the work was re-fitting of the rudder which required the use of an engine lifting rig because of the weight involved.

Once the rudder was in place and bolted tight the propellor was re-fitted.

To finish the job we had to reconnect the Rudder Angle Indicator device within the Steering Gear Flat and re-connect the hydraulic mechanism to the inboard end of the rudder.

Once all checks had been made to ensure everything was in place and tightened correctly we put Voyager back into the water and sailed round to our normal berth opposite the Stables.

Jim's article on replacing Gipsy's water pump will appear in our next issue.

FEATURES

Remembering crazy days on the Forth & Clyde

Morna Gourlay continues our series on campaigning in the 70s

THE BIG Drought of 2022 has prompted many comparisons with the similar scorcher of 1976, but it's not the exceptional heat of that summer that sticks in my memory – it's standing on the steps of Glasgow City Chambers clad in a boiler suit and with a hard hat emblazoned with We Dig Canals on my head, presenting a bottle of very dodgy-looking liquid to Prime Minister Jim Callaghan and his wife Audrey.

When you think of today's security hoo-ha surrounding the great and the good, it's astonishing that I was able to hand over unhindered what could well have been a Molotov cocktail, but which was in fact a small glass bottle of genuine Forth & Clyde Canal water, complete with blobs of duckweed, and with a very witty label attached, extolling the efficacious properties of the contents – a bit like Lily the Pink's medicinal compound! The chat was that England was so parched that road tankers were heading south over the Border filled with the contents of Scotland's finest lochs.

"Mr Callaghan," I chirped brightly, "I hear that you're in dire need of water down there in England, and wondered if a wee drop of this would be helpful?" Unfazed by the suspicious-looking bottle, Sunny Jim accepted his gift with grace and good humour, while Audrey looked on, somewhat bemused.

So who had put me up to this wizard wheeze? Richard Davies of course. Our paths had crossed in 1975, when I had returned to Glasgow after some years away and was helping out in The New Glasgow Society's office in Argyle Street. The office boasted one of those new-fangled thingummies called a photocopier, which back then was a total luxury, and Richard frequently popped in to run stuff off. He was embarking on his Master Plan to reopen the Forth & Clyde, and I was intrigued. My childhood memories of the canal involved either sitting in a traffic queue at Temple, waiting for the swing bridge to open, or crossing the bascule bridge at the bottom of Cleveden Road in my father's Morris Isis – he never quite managed to complete this manoeuvre without the exhaust catching on the wooden slats with a great clatter, while my brother and I squealed with laughter in the back seat.

Anyway, back to Richard and his Plan. Being a very persuasive chap, he soon had me roped into various clean-up operations, splendid fun despite the grime and slime and old car tyres. After a fruitful day's toil, we would all repair to the late lamented Shish Mahal in Gibson Street for a splendid curry feast washed down with flagons of lager.

We also spread the waterways word by manning a SIWA stall at the SNO Proms in Kelvin Hall – the perk here was that we could sneak into the promenading area without a ticket just before the concert started, although in that heatwave summer of '76 we had to endure a lot of Brahms and Beethoven while standing with the sweat dripping down our faces – the Kelvin Hall air conditioning made such a racket that it had to be switched off during performances.

Out on the Canal, Richard's barge was causing something of a sensation with folk who had long ago decided that the F&C should be consigned to the great dustbin of history. What had once been an ammunition lighter during WW2 was now powered by outboard motor and chugged along with our happy band on board. Never mind that it looked like a big, motorised bathtub – it really

turned heads. You could almost see walkers on the towpath thinking Wow – this canal has potential after all! especially on one occasion when we were sailing towards Craigmarloch and a wee boy who was with us stood up in the bows and played his bagpipes! The annual Ice Breaking Cruise was not for the faint-hearted in those far-off days. With no superstructure to provide shelter, we stood in our big bathtub in sub zero temperatures while the ice crunched beneath the bows and the alcohol kept us warm.

Pub nights were held in a hostelry near Charing Cross, and as we plotted a canal reopening strategy and the next big publicity campaign, we could never in a million years have believed that one day it would all come true. In the meantime, the clean-ups continued, and the Drambuie Marathon was the highlight of our year.

In those days I was driving my beloved bright green Citroen Dyane, renowned for its legendary suspension, and therefore just perfect as a back-up vehicle for our intrepid Drambuie team. Laden with victuals and spare parts, I could bounce along the pot-holed towpath ahead of the competitors and stand on the canal bank, ready for a smooth handover of whatever was required. To add to the general gaiety of the day, I had a cassette of Bob Smith's Ideal Band, who famously recorded The Canal Cruise in 1930, an imaginary voyage aboard the Fairy Queen complete with daft patter and a medley of merry tunes. If I opened the tailgate and cranked my car stereo up to full volume, these delightful ditties floated out across the canal, including the one I still remember so well…..

It's a lovely day
As we sail away
On the Forth and Clyde Canal...

And more than 90 years later, aren't we lucky to be singing the same song!

Morna (then Chambers) was the first ever Editor of our Canal News, now celebrating our 180th Edition.Thanks Morna



Morna presents canal water to Prime Minister Jim Callaghan

FEATURES

Local birdlife enjoying more fish suppers

Pictures by Kilsyth photographer Malcolm Gillies



Dipper fishing on a local burn

THE LOCAL fish really do not stand much of a chance. In our last issue we carried Malcolm's pictures of ospreys scooping trout out of canal reservoir Banton Loch and a kingfisher working the canal feeder lade. In this issue we bring you Malcolm's goosanders, cormorants, herons and dippers, all spending the winter feeding on our canal, loch, burns and lades.

Goosanders are striking looking fish-eating ducks. Their bills are serrated like a saw to help them hold on to slippery wriggling prey. They mostly breed along rivers in our uplands, Highlands and Borders. The canal is a magnet for them in the winter, with plenty of coarse fish like roach, perch and tench to prey on. Canal reservoirs, like Banton Loch, offer flavoursome brown trout, for those with a finer palette. Look out for them swimming and diving. They are bigger than mallards, the male is white & black with pink & green overtones, the female has a greyish body & russet head with 'punk' style hairdo.

Cormorants also find the canal irresistable in winter and spring, and love hanging out (literally, drying their heraldic wings) on Spiers Island in Banton Loch. Your editor watched one come up with an enormous fish from the canal at Kelvinhead. Couldn't get it down? You bet it did! The struggling fish was expertly manoeuvred round so it went head first down the bird's long black gullet. The large bulge working its way down the

cormorant's neck showed the slow and steady progress of the unfortunate fish. One of the Auchinstarry boaters recently told 'Canal News' about a poor cormorant being mugged by goosanders on the canal. The cormorant had just surfaced with a fish when watching goosanders swooshed over, grabbed the struggling fish from the cormornat's bill and whizzed off with their booty.

Herons are also very attracted to the canal and Banton Loch, standing motionless for ages, but super alert, ready to stab down into the shallows with their long neck and bill, for fish or frogs. At other times they are just standing around. A group of five were recently seen huddled motionless in Spiers Island keeping out of the wind and digesting their fish suppers. Come Spring they will be gathering in their heronies to rear the next generation, but will soon be back.

Even tiny dippers get into the act. Living and breeding along the lades and burns they are 'dab' hands at grabbing small fish as they stalk under water, along with caddis worms and other juicy morsels. This small bird, bigger than a robin but smaller than a starling, with its distinctive white bib, can be seen whizzing along burns, even in the middle of Kilsyth.

Please do send Canal News your wildlife stories and pictures.



Grey Heron putting on a pose



Goosander on Garret Weir



Cormorant

Spiers Island has featured a couple of times in this article. It is named after Archibald Spiers, the chairman of the canal construction committee in the 1780's. A local resident told Canal News he had been calling it Spider's Island for years. Why? Because when he checked it on his laptop, Google had alledgedly inserted and extra 'd'. We rather like Spider's Island.

SPLASHBACK From The Canal News Archives

Forty Years Ago

Our February 1983 issue front page story was … 'Caledonian sails on the Canal'. We gave a warm welcome to the new restaurant boat, a converted 60 foot long Clyde Ferry, based at The Stables. Taking up to 32 passengers for meals, with room left over for dancing, the boat was a popular venue for many years. She now has a new life as arts centre 'CraftDaft' based at Southbank Marina, Kirkintilloch. 'Springing onto Action' was our April 1983 lead, detailing a full programme including Fairy Queen sailings, canalside pub night, sea-to-sea cycle ride and canal spring clean.

Thirty Years Ago

'SIWA Reposnse to the M80' covered the Scottish Inland Waterways Association's complete lambasting of the Government's proposal to route the new M80 over and alongside the canal in the Kilsyth area, ruining one of the most scenic stretches. Thankfully all the strenuous campaigning eventually paid off and the motorway kept to the original A80 route. Otherwise boats cruising out of Auchinstarry Marina would have sailed stright into a long dark concrete tunnel.

Twenty Years Ago

Our March 2003 issue covered fund raising, crew training, M80 threat to canal (yes, still), summer cruises, path networks, litter campaign, and boat operations. Our new campaign was called 'More Than Boats' which, curiously enough, always seemed to be about boats including a shopping list for portholes, ropes, fenders, propeller, gearbox, lifebuoys.

Ten Years Ago

Our February 2013 issue was our first in glorious technicolour and covered Santa cruises, canal walks, cruises, Lambhill Stables lunch, Penny's Path, talks, and the Panama Canal.

From the Photo Archives:

Ferry Queen and Caledonian near the Stables back in the 80s.



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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

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IN MEMORIAM

Willie Philips

FCCS members have deployed many skills in support of the society, but few talents have been as conspicuous as those of the late Willie Phillips.

Not that Willie was an extrovert, indeed he was an unassuming man who let his work speak for him, and what work it was! He was a very good sign writer and when the society discovered his skills he needed little persuading to take on the task of painting the names on all of the boats.

He also painted the society name in big letters along the side of the hulls – the best advertising we ever had, nobody could miss our boats. Willie also painted signs for society events, giving us a splendidly professional image.

He was a gem and real asset for the society, and he liked being part of it, arranging for a grandchild to be christened on one of our boats, (although sadly I don't recall which one). A proud man of Maryhill, he was an ardent Partick Thistle supporter, perhaps the archetypal Thistle supporter; it would be hard to imagine someone like Willie being comfortable amongst the raucous denizens of Glasgow's other football clubs.

Willie was also known to patronise the Viking bar in Maryhill Road where he and my old mate Donald Mackinnon sometimes met. They shared a common past having both served in the Gordon Highlanders regiment, a connection that almost resulted in our clean-up barge being named the Gay Gordon, but perhaps wisely they opted for Kirky Conveyor, a name inspired by the bulk carrier Atlantic Conveyor, lost during the Falkland's War, and again the old tub was duly adorned by Willie.

With his passing, it's nice to think that his immaculate handiwork will always be there in photographs of the boats. They will stand in lasting tribute to one of the society's great stalwarts.

Guthrie Hutton



Willie and his family at our Society Barbecue in June last year.

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 £150 first hour.

GIPSY PRINCESS

up to 25 passengers or maybe 20 if you are catering. Hourly rate of £120 for first hour.

MARYHILL

up to 6 passengers. Each charter is considered on its merits and the lowest figure would be £90.

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.

PLEASE CHECK WEBSITE FOR CURRENT COVID-19 GUIDELINES

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

SOCIETY NEWS



Society AGM in November

Society AGM

We welcomed enthusiastic members (17) to our AGM at Southbank Marina on Saturday 19th November. Chair, Stewart Procter, welcomed new committee members Scott Castel and Anthony (Tony) Waddell. The outgoing office bearers and committee members were all re-elected. AGM reports are given on the following pages.

Events

Thursday 23rd February Tommy's Talk.
Tommy Lawton on 'The Canal, Then and Now'. Society Office, Southbank Marina, Kirkintilloch, 7:30pm

Saturday 25th March Paul's Walk.
Paul Carter leads canal heritage walk in Kirkintilloch, part of the East Dunbartonshire History Month. Starts at Townhead Bridge at 10:30am.

Wednesday 3rd May Members cruise
Departs 7:30pm from The Stables unless otherwise advised. There will be further members cruises on the first Wednesday of the month until September 2023.

Sunday 4th June Members cruise
To look at the new canal bridges in Glasgow. Departing from our moorings opposite The Stables at 11:00am. This cruise will be approximately 5 hours.

Sunday 11th June Members' BBQ
At our moorings opposite The Stables. Members to bring their own food although

teas & coffees will be provided. The barbeque will be ready to cook on by 1:00pm.

Crew Training

Wednesday 29th March – This will be the first night of crew training and will be held at our office in Southbank Marina, Kirkintilloch, 7:00pm for a 7:30pm start.

Wednesday 5th April – Crew training will continue, but at our boats on their moorings opposite The Stables.

Training will continue on every Wednesday evening until the beginning of September, with the exception of the first Wednesday in the month from May onwards when we hold a members cruise.

Timing for both training and members cruises is 7:00pm for a 7:30pm start (training) or departure (cruise).

Charters

We have already received a number of enquiries about charters with several already booked. Currently the first of these is not until the 6th May although it is expected that more enquiries will be forthcoming.

Membership

The report from the AGM, covering the period from 1st October 2021 to 30th September 2022 is elsewhere in this issue. Included with this copy of Canal News is a renewal reminder letter and a copy of your member record. Membership is due on 1st March annually and we ask that you check the date your payment is made if paying by Standing Order.

If you need to make changes to your membership record please amend and return the complete form to the Membership Secretary whose address is on the form.



BOAT ACTIVITY AGM REPORT

Gipsy Princess Gipsy Princess has not sailed this year due to the fact that she did not have a current MCA passenger certificate. A MCA inspection was carried out on the 1st of November and following a few updates to MCA paper work a current certificate has been issued. She has also had the exterior painted with a different shade of blue and the top of the cabin is now grey. The painting will be completed as the weather permits.

A replacement engine cooling water pump awaits to be fitted as the old unit had developed a leak.

The timbers around the front doors and windows require to be replaced when weather and time permit.

Voyager Voyager has been kept busy this year with crew training, member cruises and charters with destinations as far as Lock 21 and Auchinstarry.

Voyager is currently up the slipway for replacement of the propeller shaft cutlas bearing. Todate the propeller and shaft, and the rudder have been removed and work is ongoing to remove the bearing. only after removal of the bearing and check the sizes, will we be able to order the replacement. Upon completion of the painting on Gipsy Princess, Voyager's outer paintwork requires to be done.

Maryhill Maryhill has been out and about with number of charters ranging from birthday treats to engagements and a trip to the Kelpies with a travel writer.

A deflector plate requires to be fitted in front of the new cooling pipes to stop them collecting weeds etc. She also requires to be inspected later in the year.

Slipway Well, what a bad year we have had to start with, 1st the containers were broken into and all our tools and equipment used to clean and maintain the boats were stolen, then a few weeks later the newer container itself was stolen, with it went all the small bits and pieces used to maintain the the boats. The slipway itself has been busy between our boats and 6, I think private ones, with a number of slots booked already for next year.

Paperwork and the MCA

This continues regardless of all the other activities and can take up quite a lot of unseen time.

Crew training This restarted again this year after being halted by Covid-19, what was noticed was the small numbers attending some of the evenings compared to previous years, hopefully the numbers will be up again next year.

Events We had our summer BBQ, the weather was fine and it was well attended with everyone bringing their own food and doing their cooking, all being well a further one will be held next year.

Charters The bookings have been quite good in the last year, however as you have already heard not enough to cover our costs. The numbers approximately were Voyager 26 and Maryhill 6.

What does the future hold for the Society and it's boats? Well that depends upon the members who are willing and able help to not only to maintain the boats but also crew them as over the past year it has normally been the same small group who have been doing both, and they are to be thanked for that.

We require more constant help with the crewing and maintenance otherwise we will not be able to cover our cost with charters or maintain the boats to the required standards.

What's planned.

Monday 2nd of January in the office at 12noon will be the New Year Get Together.

Thursday 23rd of February in the office a talk by Tommy about the Forth and Clyde Canal, Then and Now, 7pm for 7:30pm

June, a 2nd Society BBQ. The date will be confirmed later.

Stewart Procter,
Chairman

TRUSTEES REPORT (ABSTRACT)

A 19 page 'Report & Financial Statement for the Year Ended 30 September 2022' was prepared by Wylie & Bisset LLP, our accountants, and which included the Trustees Report prepared by ***Christine Hammell****, our Secretary. An abstract from the Trustees Report is shown below. Copies of the full report were available at the AGM. Should anyone wish a digital copy of this report please contact the Treasurer.*

WITH the lifting of the restrictions, put in place during the 2020 and 2021 Covid 19 pandemic, we were able to put into action the plans for 2022 which included maintenance of our boats, promoting charters, increasing our membership and beginning crew training in the Spring.

There was also a recognition that the Covid pandemic had taken its toll on the volunteer sector so we realised that through our website, social media and our Canal News magazine we would have to campaign more vigorously for new , active members to join the "Society". Our campaign for new members generated a small group of volunteers who are a welcome addition this year. As a Society we are committed to being involved in diverse areas of the community through education and recreational activities ensuring, where possible, all age groups have the opportunity to learn about the wonderful asset that the canal brings.

Achievements & Performance.

This year our slipway has generated regular income as many boaters on the Forth and Clyde Canal needed to do necessary repairs on their vessels. Our volunteers managed a regular flow of boats up and down the slipway throughout the year which generated welcome revenue.

With the lifting of restrictions our boats are being booked throughout the year again. This includes various Clubs, schools, Church groups, families and individuals who just want to cruise the canal as a different way of enjoying the countryside and celebrating life events.

In a more unusual case we transported author and journalist, Christopher Somerville, on our boat Maryhill from Kirkintilloch to the Kelpies as part of research for his latest publications and travel book.

There would appear to be a continued interest in the chartering of our vessels, ensuring regular income to maintain them.

Unfortunately during the early part of March , while we were striving to reopen our activities, both of our storage containers were broken into and a large quantity of our equipment was stolen, and then one of the containers itself was stolen. It would appear to have been a well organised gang who did this.

Thankfully we were insured against this type of loss, but it made our ground and maintenance work extremely difficult and caused delays. Obviously, we are making efforts to greatly increase our security.

We continue to communicate with the public via our Website and Facebook page which is updated on a regular basis and has a large following. There are also members of the Forth and Clyde Canal Society who deliver talks to groups within the community who have an interest in the history and heritage of the Lowland Canals. They are reporting that these events are now restarting and invitations to speak are being received.

The Forth and Clyde Canal Society also continues to produce and distribute the Canal News magazine three times per year to the Membership and various groups and Local Authorities. We also publish Canal News on our website. All of this would not be possible without the many unpaid hours spent by a small group who produce this interesting publication.

Boat Maintenance & Crew Training.

We must maintain our boats to Marine and Coastguard Agency and Boat Safety standards to allow us to carry passengers in the numbers we do. This is made possible by a group of enthusiastic volunteers who devote many unpaid hours working on our boats ensuring they meet the required standards of passenger carrying vessels. The time spent volunteering this year has been approximately 1950 hours.

All three of our boats needed considerable levels of work to have their passenger boat safety certificates renewed. As previously mentioned, we achieved this with Voyager and Maryhill, but Gipsy Princess still requires work which is being hampered by weather conditions and the availability of volunteers. The intention is that this work will be completed before winter.

Crew Training recommenced in full in March 2022 and although our numbers had dropped, we did have some new members who are enthusiastic and have attended regularly on Wednesday evenings and other work parties. It is hoped that at least two of the new crew will be able to achieve Boatmaster level in the next year or two.

Financial Review.

Principal funding source comes from our Membership Fees, Donations and income from Charters and Slipway bookings. The Society continues to monitor its running costs on a monthly basis and we still have a balance which allows us to maintain and run our boats, produce and distribute our Canal News magazine and also the ongoing costs of our website. There is however a shortfall between income and outgoings which will be demonstrated by our accounts. This is mainly due to maintenance costs, increased fuel prices and income from charters being less this year.

For this reason, we have increased the charges for charters and slipway use by 10%.

TREASURER'S REPORT

You should all have a copy of the summary of the accounts for the year ended 30 September 2022 showing an income of £17,639.05 and an expenditure of £22,406.54, a deficit of £4,767.49 for the year. While we had more sailings than in the year ended 30 September 2021, we have had significant expenditure on our two passenger boats and, in addition, we have had to deal with the issues raised following the two break-ins in March and April. As in previous years one of our sources of income is our membership subscriptions. More than half of the membership subscriptions goes towards the printing and distribution of our very successful magazine 'Canal News', with the balance covering a good proportion of the costs listed under 'Sundries'.

At the year ended on 30 September we had approximately £39.5k in the bank, £15k of which is "ring fenced" for unforeseen events such as an engine failure on one of our boats. Previously the "ring fenced" figure had been £20k and it was agreed at the June committee meeting that the this be reduced to £15k on 1 July 2022. This change was agreed to free up more working funds.

Our accountants, Wylie & Bisset, recommend that we have a minimum of £15k in our account to allow us to operate for one year with little or no income and, excluding the "ring fenced" figure, we have at present funds to operate for approximately 18 months with little or no income.

As reported at the 2021 AGM we had spent the entire £3k of the 2021/2022 EDC Grant by the beginning of November 2021 but it was agreed that we would continue to allocate certain costs under the heading of 'Grants' until the grant period expired on 31 March 2022. This was to show what we could have spent had we been awarded a larger grant. The £2.7k expenditure shown was paid for from Society funds. As usual I am happy to answer anyone's questions on the accounts at this time, or I can go over specific details on a one-to-one basis at another time.

Transactions between 01/10/2021 and 30/09/2022

Summary

CATEGORY	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	PROFIT/LOSS
Accountant	£	£1,083.00	-£1,083.00
Membership	£2,412.00	£12.00	£2,400.00
Donations	£716.35	£13.00	£703.35
Grants	£-	£2,696.07	-£2,696.07
Insurance	£3,922.31	£2,016.37	£1,905.94
Scottish Canals	£175.81	£2,137.02	-£1,961.21
Voyager	£5,645.00	£4,603.80	£1,041.20
Gipsy Princess	£394.90	£4,382.08	-£3,987.18
Maryhill	£1,265.00	£1,028.16	£236.84
Winch	£2,700.00	£296.09	£2,403.91
Events	£-	£12.60	-£12.60
Sundries	£-	£1,441.02	-£1,441.02
Boatmasters Licences	£-	£115.00	-£115.00
Lifejacket Servicing	£348.64	£656.04	-£307.40
Sales	£59.04	£59.04	£-
Postage	£-	£505.25	-£505.25
Printing	£-	£1,350.00	-£1,350.00
Totals	**£17,639.05**	**£22,406.54**	**-£4,767.49**

Independent Examiners Report and Appointment of Auditors

You should also have a copy of the Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 30 September 2022 prepared for us by Wylie & Bisset LLP. You will note that this document also includes the Report of Trustees for the year ended 30 September 2022 (extract on p21). Again, our Secretary Christine Hammell, must take the credit for preparing the Trustees Report. Both Stewart Procter and I had sight of it before it was sent to Wylie & Bisset but had no input into the content.

Our funds are comparable with last year and reflect the £4.7k difference in income over expenditure. This would suggest that some of our income covered the reduction of the value of our fixed assets, namely our boats.

If anyone has any questions on the Independent Examiners Report I will be happy to try and answer them, but if not, I would like to propose that the report be accepted.

I would also like to propose that Wylie & Bisset LLP be retained for the financial year 2022/2023.

One final item. Jenny Simpson, the partner at Wylie & Bisset who we have dealt with since before I was appointed treasurer, is retiring at the end of this year and I would like the Canal Society to send her a letter of thanks for all the help and assistance she has given us over the years.

Robert Irvine
Treasurer

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

At our AGM last year, we had 180 members in our records on 30 September 2021. This year we have 166 members in our records on 30 September 2022. This consists of 33 Ordinary members, 41 Family members, 3 Life members, 1 Corporate member, 84 Pensioner members, 3 Student members, and 1 Unwaged member. Over the course of the year, we lost 27 members, from cancellation of membership to being advised someone had passed away. However, we also gained 12 new members. There have also been enquiries for membership, some I note going back to 2021, where an application form has been sent out but never returned.

Following the reminder of membership renewal sent out with the Spring issue of Canal News reminders were sent out with the Summer and Autumn/Winter issues and there are still 20 members, included in the member numbers, who have not paid their subscription for 2022.

With the approval of the new committee these persons will be removed from the membership records further reducing our numbers to 146.

Gift Aid membership has dropped from the 133 reported last year to 125 this year. This is because of cancellation of membership or members passing away.

I reported last year that I had still to submit the details for the 2020/2021 year to HMRC for our Gift Aid submission. Unfortunately, it got missed and I have only now submitted for 2020/2021 and 2021/2022. Assuming there are no penalties for a late submission the amount received will be reported to committee and appear in next year's accounts.

I would also like to mention another financial element in this membership report, namely Amazon Smile as it is, in essence, a member donation. Anyone who logs on to Amazon using the Amazon Smile login and registers the Forth and Clyde Canal Society as their nominated charity will generate income for the Canal Society. Currently we are receiving between £7 and £8 a quarter. Not a lot, but it all adds up. If anyone present, or persons you know, uses Amazon, and they have not already nominated another charity, can I ask that you consider nominating the Canal Society as your charity as every little bit helps. We have been using Amazon Smile to order items lost in the thefts from the containers.

In relation to the General Data Protection Regulations, it is important that you advise the Canal Society of any changes to your details, as outlined on your membership record. A copy of this record is sent to you with the Spring issue of Canal News, although you can request a copy from the Membership Secretary at any time. Any changes should be recorded on your membership records and the complete form returned to the membership secretary at his home address, which is on the form.

Finally, can I thank all those members who included a donation along with their subscription, or at some other point throughout the year, and thank you all for your continued support.

Robert Irvine, Membership Secretary

ABOUT US

Forth & Clyde Canal Society Officers

Chairman Stewart Procter

Secretary / Company Secretary
Christine Hammell 0141 561 1953

Treasurer / Membership / Bookings
Robert Irvine 01236 735533

President Guthrie Hutton

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

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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.

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

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

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