Forth & Clyde Canal Society

CANAL NEWS

Summer 2022 £1.50 FREE to Members ISSUE 178



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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

All hands on deck required to get ready for the summer



Giving Gypsy some TCL

NORMALLY I always wish to start the Chairman's Chat on a high note, however not for this edition. In late March our containers at The Stables slipway were broken into and all the equipment we used to repair and clean the boats prior to painting was stolen. This included generators, pumps, hoses, cable reels, power washer, lawnmowers and even our BBQ etc.

On Sunday the 24th of April, yes, the day of our member's cruise, the containers were broken into again, just one or two items stolen this time as we are still to replace the earlier stolen equipment.

Then just when we thought things could not get any worse, we arrived today, the 26th of April, to discover in the 24 hours previously our newer grey container itself and its contents had been stolen.

The result of the above is that Gipsy Princess has been sitting high and dry on the slipway for a month with no work being carried out, however it is hoped that the hull can be cleaned and painted prior to slipping her back into the canal.

We have now commenced the cleaning of the outside of the boats and painting them, however help is always required to help with this, sometimes at short notice if we get a good spell of weather.

Just to continue with more poor news our member Frank Quinn passed away quite suddenly a few weeks ago. Frank had been a member for as long as I can remember, was

one of our crew members and would turn up for work parties, sometimes with his grandson in tow. He also volunteered at the Tall Ship at the transport museum.

Several Society members "manned" our stall at the recent Ship Ahoy event which was held at Summerlee Museum with interest shown in our activities and hopefully we will gain several new members from this event.

On a brighter note we have resumed the crew training programme and a number of charters have been booked, several of which have now taken place.

It is also hoped that we will hold our BBQ event on 12th of June however this will depend on if we can safely store equipment in our container without it be stolen.

Hopefully the next few months will proceed both Covid and break-in free allowing us to enjoy being back sailing the boats and not wondering what awaits us every time we arrive at The Stables.

Stewart Procter
Chairman

Front Cover: new bridge rising at Stockingfield Junction, towpath still closed, opening September

Editor's Note

Welcome to this issue. We bring plenty of news and events along the canal. Also lots of canal history this time around.

We tell you stories of the Bo'ness Canal, Cadder Pits, Roman Heads, Pictures from an Exhibition and Canal Memories. Our wildlife feature is on bats, and why they are the Editor's favourite 'caped crusaders'.

If you would like Canal News to carry less history and more current features, please email your words and pictures to the Editor, who would love to hear from you. Copy date is 30th August for the Autumn issue.

How about your canal holiday, pics and stories, canal cruises overseas, canal activities of any kind, canal memories, anything to engage our members and readers?

Paul Carter, Editor

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Resurfaced towpath on the Monkland Canal

Cruising Season Well Under Way (Weigh?)

Our Society fleet is busy with charter cruises for lots of organisations like Probus, choirs, church groups, Keep Scotland Beautiful, town twinning, country club and lots of birthday parties. Folk are coming from Dalry, Edinburgh, Kilsyth, Wemyss Bay, Allander and Govan to name some. Voyager, Gipsy Princess and Maryhill are all cruising, and all need members to help with maintenance and crewing. And the Editor wants to know, should Canal News use the land lubbers term 'Under Way' or the more nautical 'Under Weigh' as in weighing the anchor? Answers on a pretty postcard please.

Carron Sea Lock Repairs

Carron Sea Lock was closed to navigation at the end of April due to sluice failure. Divers successfully reattached the north gate sluice guide and then went on to repair the sea lock. Repairs may continue to the end of June. De-masting facilities have been closed for the duration and boaters are referred to Port Edgar.

Monkland Renewal

A major £429,000 upgrade is being carried out for the Monkland Canal towpath, part of the National Cycle Network route 75. Sustrans is providing the funding. This is part of the ongoing renaissance of the Monkland Canal started in 2008 by Scottish Canals, North Lanarkshire Council and the local community. Friends of Monkland Canal have been cleaning up the canal and towpath, and providing park benches for a welcome rest.

Floating Garden

A stunning 'Floating Garden' by 'Dandelion' will tour the Forth and Clyde Canal and Union Canal this summer. Consisting of two barges with floating ecosystems by Biomatrix, the

Floating Garden will engage with communities across Scotland, from local growers and schools to the public.
It will finally dock at the Helix. 'Dandelion' is the main event in the UNBOXED programme, which will create twelve 'Unexpected Gardens' across Scotland.

Canal World Premiere

'Union Celebration 2000' is the name of the music composed by 14 year old Edinburgh medallist Victor Seifert. The music was commissioned by renowned Luthier Steve Burnett who has made four stringed instruments from a willow tree blown down in Harrison Park by the Union Canal in Edinburgh.
The 'Union Canal String Quartet' were due to play Victor's music on Steve's instruments on a canal boat in Harrison Park as part of the Union 200 celebrations in late May.

Union Flotilla 200

This large and colourful flotilla over the weekend 20 - 22 May celebrates the Union Canal's 200th anniversary. The flotilla cruises from both ends of the canal, organised by Scottish Waterways for All in partnership with Scottish Canals. The boats from The Falkirk Wheel, and Lochrin Basin, courtesy of Edinburgh Canal Society will converge at Manse Road Basin, Linlithgow, home of LUCS, the Linlithgow Union Canal Society. This event happened as Canal News was in print and we hope to have pictures for our next issue.

Erskine Ferry Road Bridge

This canal bridge near the Bowling end of the canal has been closed to navigation for ongoing investments in advance of the



Swans enjoying Maryhill bottom Lock

NEWS IN BRIEF

summer boating season. The bridge was also closed to night time road traffic towards the end of April to allow the existing surfacing to be broken out and a new surface laid. Scottish Canals are looking at options but there may be some restrictions to boat traffic over the summer due to additional staffing requirements.

Falkirk Wheel Fixed

The wheel mechanism was found to be faulty in March and a new part had to be ordered and installed. The Wheel was then reopened after routine safety checks.

More Lock Works

Lock 8 developed a fault in March and could not retain water. The leak was temporarily stopped and then successfully fixed. All the locks are now twenty or more years old since the Millennium Link restoration (yes, it was that long ago) and in need of a programme of repair and replacement. Locks 17 to 19 at Castlecary have been fitted with remote sensing, completed by April, which will advise of sluices left open.

Stockingfield – Nearly There

The new three-way pedestrian bridge at Stockingfield over the junction between the main canal and the Glasgow Branch is nearly complete.

When 'Canal News' visited early May the barriers were still up and work is continuing to complete all construction and fully restore the channel. The £15 million project will help connect communities in North Glasgow and get rid of the need to leave the canal towpath and pass through a narrow dark road tunnel. The tall elegant 'skylon' is certainly impressive. Due for completion by the end of August, official opening is expected in September.



Stockingfield works almost complete



Queen Mary on the Clyde

Stockingfield Artworks

Four huge pieces of artwork are to be dotted along the towpath by the new canal bridge. A 132-yard-long giant snake will rise and sink into the earth. A car, sitting on a cobbled 'street' will reflect nature reclaiming the industrial past. There will also be a tall two-legged plinth featuring a rotating structural display and a 13-foot-high flower bust sculpture. The planning application is for "a series of community led art works that are proposed to enhance the landscape setting of the bridge".

New Board Members

Scottish Canals have announced a new non-executive chair and new non-executive board member. Maureen Campbell takes over from Andrew Thin as chair, for an initial three-year term. She was a key leader in the development of the Helix, home to The Kelpies, and vice-chair of Commonwealth Games Scotland. The part-time role will take up 42 days a year at £335 per day. Maureen likes swimming, cycling and walking... so, good for leading a canal triathlon then? Robin Strang takes on the new board member role, formerly Chief Executive of West Lothian Leisure.

Queen Mary to Sail Again

The Princess Royal recently announced that T.S. Queen Mary will sail the Clyde again, and not just be a permanently berthed attraction beside the Science Centre. The Friends of T.S. Queen Mary have raised and invested £3.8 million since they started restoration and hope to have her sailing by the summer of 2024. In its heyday the vessel, built in Dumbarton in 1933, carried 13,000 passengers each week.

In the meantime, big sister RMS Queen Mary is sitting a little forlornly at Long Beach, California, in need of repairs. Built by John Brown's in Clydebank in 1936 she carried over two thousand passengers and over one thousand crew on the busy transatlantic route. The ship has been a major tourist attraction at Long Beach since the 1960's. Closed since 2020, there are plans to reopen later this year.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Maid of the Loch

A recent crowd funder campaign has raised £43,000 for replacement paddles for Loch Lomond's steamer, launched in 1953 and under restoration by volunteers for twenty years. A collection of model ships by Lachie Stewart is to be exhibited in the ship's main aft lounge, as part of continued fundraising for restoration.

The exhibition will be open every weekend until the end of October, 11am to 4pm. The Maid is on the slipway at Balloch.

Slavery and the Canal

When Glasgow's Provost recently apologised for the City's links to slavery in the past, some canal references came up. Port Dundas on the canal is apparently named after Lawrence Dundas who was governor of the Forth and Clyde Navigation Company and owned two slave estates in Dominica and Grenada. Speirs Wharf takes its name from an Atlantic merchant connected with the tobacco trade and the slaves who grew the tobacco. Even the renowned canal engineer and steam engine inventor James Watt was involved.

Ship Ahoy!

The annual Scottish Maritime Heritage Exhibition was held at Summerlee Industrial Museum, Coatbridge, in late April. Held over for two years due to Covid, Ship Ahoy attracted 18 exhibitors, including FCCS. There were six ship preservation societies, five model boat clubs and seven others.

Big boys Caledonian MacBrayne were there, along with all the minnows. The RNLI was along to ensure all was well with the kids enjoying the Kirkaldy Model Boat Club, who were sailing their boats on real water. There were steamer clubs and cruising associations and maritime museums.

We all enjoyed talking to the visitors and other stallholders. Next year's event is to be held in the Irvine Maritime Museum.



Fiona running our stall at Ship Ahoy

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.

PLEASE CHECK WEBSITE FOR CURRENT COVID-19 GUIDELINES

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Further information www.forthandclyde.org.uk

FEATURES

The Bo'Ness Canal

Continuing our occasional series on Scotland's lost canals and lades



Bo'Ness canal bridge, now carrying the A904

THE BO'NESS merchants were horrified. Ever since Charles II proposed a canal across central Scotland for his warships, the debate had rumbled on. The merchants of Bo'ness were making a good living as Glasgow's main east coast port, exporting tobacco and importing European goods. Could this all be threatened?

When the debate re-ignited a century after Charles' initial proposal, the Bo'ness merchants campaigned for a small canal direct from Broomielaw to Bo'ness. Now they were faced with possible disaster, a proposal for a much bigger ship canal entering the Forth via the River Carron, miles to the west.

To quote Falkirk's archaeologist Geoff Bailey: "Many of the Glasgow merchants already traded with Bo'ness and to them the port there seemed to be the obvious place to head for. It already had a large harbour capable of being entered at most states of tide. To the people of Bo'ness this not only made sense, but they were quick to realise that the alternative (Carron) would spell disaster for their existing cross-country trade".

The Edinburgh folk got involved with claims in the press that "The Fools of the West must wait for the Wise Men of the East". It all got even more serious when the second reading of a Bill to construct what is now the Forth and Clyde Canal passed its second

reading in Parliament in January 1768. The Bo'ness merchants forced an amendment to construct a branch to Bo'ness, but they would have to raise the funds themselves. The Act received royal assent on 8th March 1768 and construction of the Forth and Clyde Canal began at the Carron Sea Lock on 10th June 1768.

The Bo'ness branch now had to be funded. The branch was to be made by an independent company with a capital of £8,000. It was to be about 6 miles long and 7 feet deep, stretching from the Carron Sea Lock to Bo'ness harbour. The water supply was to be drawn from the River Avon below Jinkabout Mill near the present A905. James Watt made a survey and report in 1772 but subscriptions were not opened until 1782 and in March 1783 construction started. To put this date in context, the Forth and Clyde Canal was completed to Kirkintilloch in 1773 and Glasgow in 1775.

Cash ran out quickly. The original £8,000 was spent by the end of the first year and another Act had to be obtained to allow the company to raise a further £12,000. The River Avon aqueduct was mostly completed and the canal was constructed to within a mile of Bo'ness. But cash ran out again. Another survey, by Whitworth, estimated the canal would need nearly another £8,000 to complete. In 1796 it was unanimously agreed to abandon the canal.

The Bo'ness merchants' worst fears were now realised. A new customs-house was built in the new port of Grangemouth in 1810. In the next five years the receipts of the Bo'ness customs house dropped from £30,485 to £3,835, a disastrous loss of trade for the town.

Of course, any innocent soul might ask why they wanted to build a canal alongside the Firth of Forth when boats could simply sail >

Our Lost Canals & Lades Series

We started this occasional series in 2013 with an article on Sir Andrew Wood's Largo Canal in 1495. So far, we have uncovered twelve interesting stories. There are plenty more out there. For starters the South Lochs Lade Kirkintilloch, Stevenson Canal & Mines, Campsie Canal, and many more. So, your turn, the truth is out there, give it a go, words and pics please to the Editor.

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FEATURES

> along the Forth itself.

But what remains of the canal? The owners just walked away and sections remained for many years, gradually being infilled. The main feature, the Avon aqueduct, was left almost finished on the east bank of the river. In the 1830's the bridge was completed and repurposed as a road bridge, with the river Avon being straightened to pass underneath. It now carries the busy A904 over the River Avon. They built bridges to last in those days.

Further Reading

'The Bo'ness Canal', Geoff Bailey 2021. Published online by Falkirk History Society. This is a very comprehensive account, easily found on Google.

'The Canals of Scotland', Jean Lindsay 1968. Published by David and Charles. Still a great source.



Disaster Memorial at Lambhill Stables



Mineral Line bridge stumps



Pit 17 old structure

Back to the stone ages

DID the Bo'ness canal builders spot another substantial earthwork built by their predecessors six thousand years ago? The line of the canal runs close by extensive shell middens created by Mesolithic hunter gatherers around Inveravon. The middens are several metres thick, several metres wide, and at least tens of metres long, possibly even hundreds of metres. Built entirely of oyster shells and other harvested seashells, these middens must have been an imposing marker in the landscape at the time.

Just a few thousand people roamed Scotland back then, hunting game, gathering berries, and collecting the abundant shellfish. They must have returned again and again to this spot, over many generations, drawn by the abundant shellfish of the Forth estuary. Sea levels were higher back then and the middens were built at the top of a raised beach, now a farmer's field, and at the bottom of the sea cliff, now a steep wooded slope.

Literally millions of shells were deposited, a gigantic 'Fruits de Mer'. The shells look remarkably fresh even today (see picture).



The Cadder Pit

Paul Carter guides us on a walk through history

THE BEST place to start this walk through history is at Lambhill Stables on the Forth & Clyde Canal. A community run hub is situated in the restored canal stables. It has a welcoming café and excellent displays on local history, including the Cadder Pits and the big disaster of 1913.

Head north along the towpath, with a wee diversion around Possil Marsh nature reserve if wished. About halfway to Farm Bridge, Bishopbriggs, mysterious blackened timber stumps rise out of the water on both sides of the canal. These are all that remain of the mineral line that took wagons of coal and ironstone across the canal from Cadder Pits.

The pits were owned by the Carron Company, which ran the famous pioneering iron works near Falkirk. They made everything from ornamental gates to cannons from 1759 onwards, there is still a "Carron Phoenix" works. Once the canals opened, Carron were quick to start mining for coal and ironstone, firstly at Banton, then Nethercroy and finally at Cadder. They used the canal to get the raw materials to their works, and later used the railways.

A little further along the towpath, a roughly cobbled path leads off left up through the site of Mavis Valley pit village. Starting in 1855, the village had about 116 houses and 270 residents by 1910. Water was supplied from a well and there was a small village shop. Mine closure led to villagers moving away gradually, and the village was demolished in the 1960's. All that remains are scattered foundations hidden in the trees, plus old photos and memories.

Carry on up the path and turn left (west) at the top along the track bordering Wilderness Plantation. After about 500 metres, and before the cottage, head with great care into the woods. Beware lots of trip and fall hazards such as brambles, ditches, foundations, fallen branches etc. A real 'rumble in the jungle' will reveal the remains of several old mining structures including a short near-surface tunnel, all that remains of Pit 17. Pit 15 lay about 600 metres to the northwest, now under a modern industrial area. Pit 5 lay about 300 metres to the south, now under the closed landfill site.

The mines were over 170 fathoms (approx. 300 metres) deep, working seams of coal and ironstone in Carboniferous age Limestone Coal Formation strata. The seams dipped gently northwards and were interrupted by several faults and a whinstone dyke. Pits 15 and 17 were connected deep underground by the 'communications road'. Both pits wound men down into the workings, coal and ironstone up. The 'main dook road' ran northeast from the bottom of Pit 15. Working levels branched off this.

Air was pumped down Pit 15 and out of Pit 17. Cadder was a 'naked light pit' so men could smoke underground and worked by the light of oil lamps on their helmets.

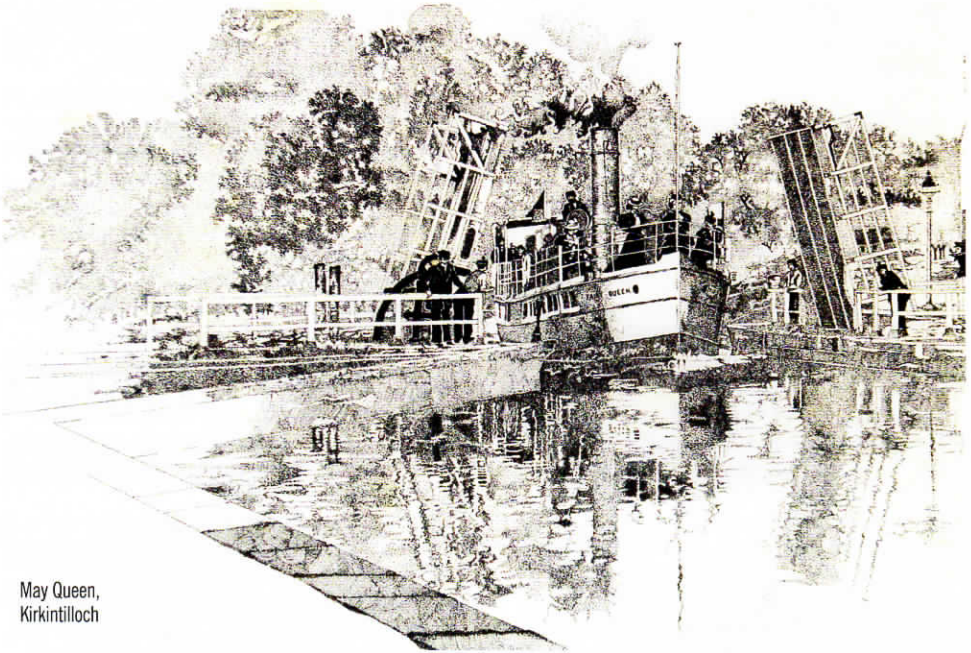
On the 13th of August a fire broke out in Pit 15 when a backshift of 26 maintenance men was underground. A few men made their way to safety along the communications road. Heroic efforts were made from Pit 17 to rescue the rest of the men but 22 died. The Mines Inspector's report was scathing about the failure of Lanarkshire Coal Masters Association to provide a Rescue Fire Brigade. The Fire Brigade had to be called all the way from Dunfermline. Too late. Over fifty thousand people turned out for the funerals, see Canal News 154, Spring 2014.

From Pit 17 either make your way back to Lambhill Stables, total distance about 8km (5 miles), or head up to and over Farm Bridge (see the Cadder Pit exhibition board) and back by canal offside path, total distance 9km. For a shorter walk, head from Bishopbriggs Leisure Centre, over Farm Bridge and along canal to Mavis Valley.

FEATURES

Canal History: Pictures from an Exhibition (Part 5)

By Guthrie Hutton



May Queen, Kirkintilloch

When our esteemed Canal News editor took possession of ten pictures that had evidently been used in an exhibition, two were of subjects that every display of canal pictures must use: the Queens.

Both are images that have become widely familiar, although the drawing of Fairy Queen 2 heading through Hillhead Bridge is based on a photograph. The boats, owned by James Aitken, began their reign in 1893 when the first Fairy Queen went into service. Such was her success that Aitken replaced her in 1897 with a larger Fairy Queen.

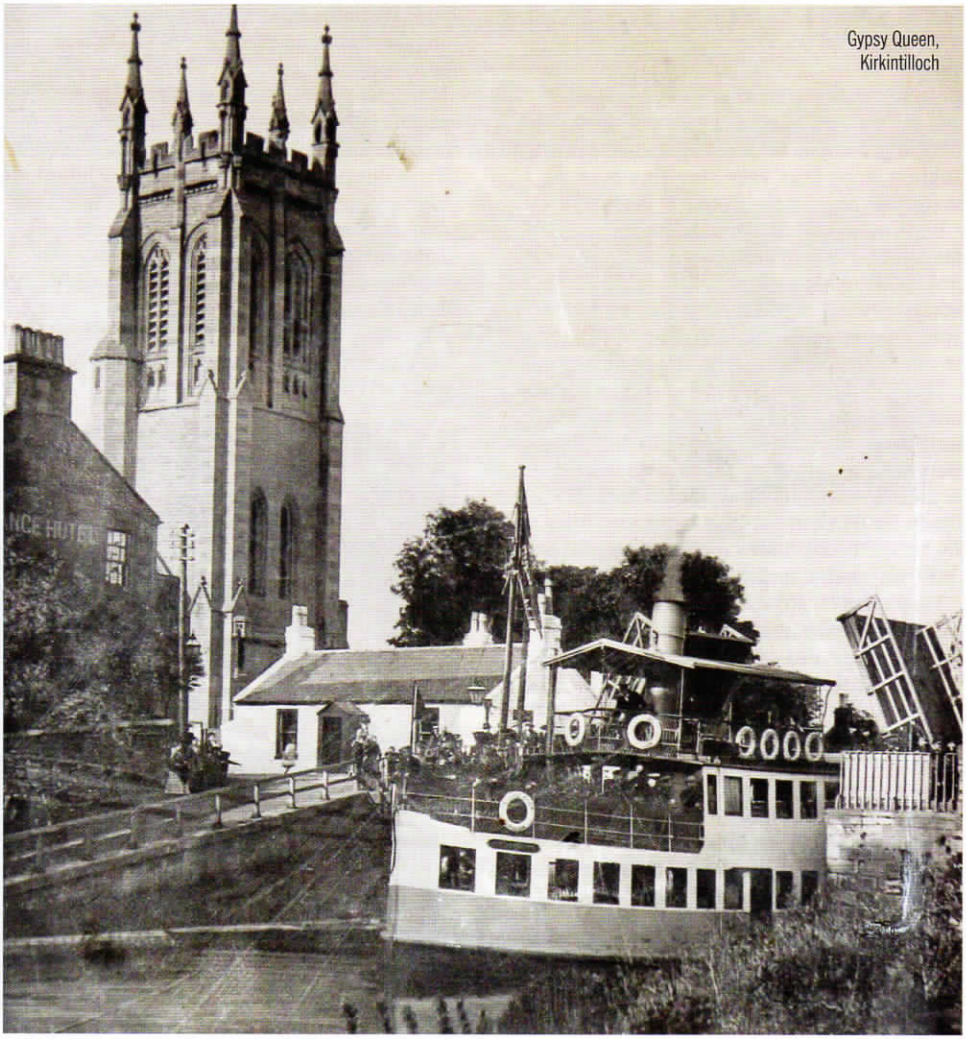
The little steamer quickly became a firm favourite and so, in 1903 a new steamer, May Queen was launched from the boatyard of Peter McGregor & Son at the canal basin, Kirkintilloch, and then in 1905 another boat, Gipsy Queen, joined the fleet. Seen here passing through Townhead Bridge, Kirkintilloch, she was built at Paisley and was the largest boat to sail on the canal. Kirkintilloch was their home base, but the boats' cruising destination was Craigmarloch, where James Aitken established a little resort with bungalow tearoom, swings, walks and putting green.

With three boats, James Aitken was able to

offer a variety of services, but Fairy Queen was disposed of just before World War 1 and May Queen just after. Gipsy Queen remained in service until 1939, with a little motor cruiser, Fairy Queen 3 joining her in 1923.

For pure nostalgia, it's hard to beat the attraction these little canal Queens must have had for the people who sailed on them, or just watched them sailing by, accompanied by music and conviviality.

Thanks Guthrie for your final part in this intriguing series, and congratulations on your 80th. We probably still have these big and slightly battered, exhibition pictures somewhere. If you would like these, please contact the editor.



Gypsy Queen, Kirkintilloch

IN FOCUS

Going a little batty on the canal

WARM still summer evenings are ideal for going bat hunting down by the canal. It helps to have good night vision and the ears of a ten-year-old, or a bat detector. Failing any of these it is best to join an outing by a local bat group. I joined a local bat group who were checking out the canal between Craigmarloch Bridge and Wyndford Lock. As dusk thickened after sunset, we headed down the path to the canal from Kelvinhead. Flitting and zig zagging around the trees above our heads were tiny bats, Pipistrelles. When we got to the canal, slightly larger bats were speeding over the water surface, Daubentons.

Pipistrelles are amazing aviators. They are fast and furious, turning on a sixpence and jinking around as they hunt insects. They usually fly at 2 to 10 metres above ground or water. I enjoy them jinking around just above my head as they hunt over my back garden.

They hoover up midges. Pipistrelles are the real caped crusaders, despatching mankind's mortal enemies by the thousand, putting Batman and Batgirl in the shade. Each pipistrelle can mop up 3,000 midges in a night, much better than a midge deterrent. They will fly up to 10 kilometres a night along canals and hedgerows hunting insects.

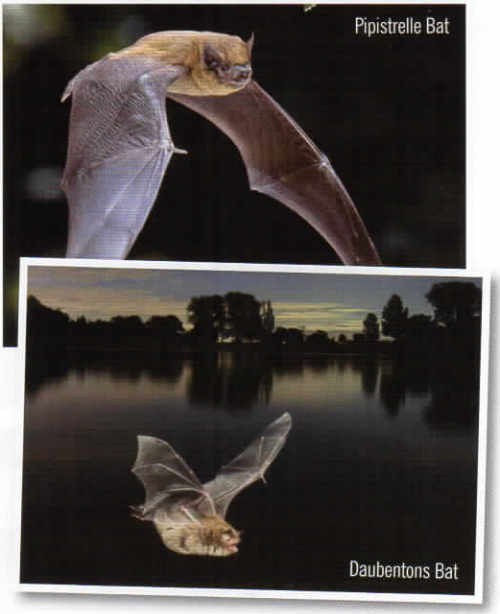
They echo locate their prey, pinging high pitched squeaks at around 45kHz off the insects. They also call to each other. My kids could hear them as they walked up our lane in the dusk, but no longer. You have to be really young to hear bats without a bat detector.

Pips are tiny, smaller than sparrows. They roost in crevices in trees and in our houses, under roof tiles and behind fascias. They live in colonies of 100 or so and breed at one year old. Pips have one pup a year and can live up to 16 years. About two and a half million fly around Britain's skies.

Daubentons are slightly larger, about sparrow sized. Unlike pips they fly straight and low, usually just above the water surface. Watch out for them about one hour after sunset. Caddisflies, mayflies, mosquitoes, aphids, and crane flies are all on the menu. Insects are caught just above the water or scooped up from the surface. Daubentons use their large feet as gaffs or use their tail membranes as scoops. Look out for fast whirring wing beats, long sweeping turns and ripples where the bat has caught it's prey.

Summer roosts are often in tree holes or rock crevices, or under bridges. Winter roosts are in tight clusters of bats, in mild moist places like mines or tunnels. Like pips they hibernate from September to April. Daubentons have a single pup every year and can live up to 40 years. About 150,000 live in the UK.

So let us celebrate our caped crusaders. They liven up our skies when the birds have gone to bed, and keep populations of Scotland's fearsome biting midges and mosquitoes in check.



IN FOCUS



When two giant heads are better than one

OUR CANAL now has two giant roman soldiers' heads stationed nearby. Centurion Silvanus, near Craigmarloch, has been joined by his brother soldier Aurelius at Lambhill.

Aurelius enjoys a commanding view from his mini hilltop location at Lambhill Stables. When Canal News visited, folk were out enjoying the sun, and a party of visiting Iraqi's were particularly intrigued. A replica sandstone Antonine Wall distance slab, fashioned by Glasgow stonemason apprentices, is situated beside the giant head, along with an information board. The original distance slab, found nearby, is preserved in the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow.

Centurion Silvanus, along with the adjacent replica Arniebog distance slab, has now been voted a top visitor attraction by an expert panel. The panel were impressed by the sculpture's ability to engage the public.

But did they know that Silvanus is known locally as "the metal heid" and Aurelius as the "big heid"? The Antonine Wall and Forth and Clyde Canal run close together for much of their lengths, crossing each other at Cadder. The metal sculptures are part of the £2.1 million Antonine Wall Project, run by Local Authorities and Heritage and Environment Scotland.



SPLASHBACK From The Canal News Archives



Forty Years Ago

'Queen Sails again at Kirky!' was our June front page story covering the Ferry Queen's successful road trip to Hungryside Bridge. Lavinia Derwent launched her into the canal with the help of a bottle of champagne and a 250-tonne crane. The Kirkintilloch Herald called it 'the Day that the Boat came in'. Our September issue continued with a treasured DTI certificate for up to 60 passengers. Our first page picture shows 'No 8' cruising with a full boat load past Cadder Bridge.

Thirty Years Ago

'Canal 200, British Waterways celebrates two centuries of canals' was our September front page lead, announcing a big commemorative year ahead. 'Auchinstarry Festival' told us that at least two thousand local folks flocked to our festival with over 500 passengers carried on 'Gipsy Princess' and the 'Nolly Boat'.

Twenty Years Ago

'Chairman's Chat', by Guthrie Hutton, took up the front page and next three pages, celebrating the opening of The Falkirk Wheel and a large number of FCCS activities. Tommy Lawton wrote the lead article in our September issue telling us of over 50 Gipsy Princess sailings and Janet Telford's 26, taking over 3,000 passengers despite a wet season. Tommy also put out a familiar and heartfelt plea for more volunteers to help with boats.

Ten Years Ago

'Maryhill goes Forth' was our August front page headline. Dave Connell told the story of Maryhill's cruise from Grangemouth Sea Lock up the Forth to Stirling, with the Provosts of Stirling and Falkirk on Board. Maryhill was taking part in the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Flotilla. The front page carries a picture of 'Maryhill' at The Falkirk Wheel carrying the Olympic Torch on its round Scotland tour.

From the Photo Archives:
The Maryhill on the Firth of Forth



In Memoriam - Frank Quinn

CANAL Society members were sad and shocked to hear of the death of Frank Quinn at the end of March. "He will be sadly missed" was the reaction in all the messages coming in when the news was passed on from fellow volunteers and from the TALL SHIP where Frank also gave of his time and effort.

Trained in electrical engineering, he had a strong interest in Glasgow's engineering heritage. He worked on the WAVERLEY as well as the GLENLEE where he put in many hours working on FERRY NO 8 once aka to the Canal Society as FERRY QUEEN.

He emerged into activity with the Canal Society in response to a mailing sent out to a selection of members who had previously been active in the hope of re-activating them (His was the only response!) From then on he became a constant faithful crew member, helping out unobtrusively wherever needed, accompanied sometimes by his grandson, Clayton. For a number of years they joined May and Bob Kohn in keeping the regular GIPSY PRINCESS Saturday sailings going from the Stables.

A gentle, unassuming and modest character with a ready smile and friendly greeting, Frank had stories about the 'Wee Ferries', the Cluthas and the Caley Railway to entertain crews and passengers on canal trips. He will, indeed, be sadly missed. *Alison Payne*



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SOCIETY NEWS



Ship Ahoy

Our stall at the maritime heritage exhibition (see News in Brief) attracted a fair bit of attention. Visitors to our stall came from Dunoon, Edinburgh, and everywhere else in between.

We spoke to dozens of people, gave out copies of Canal News and the CanalCraft booklet, and generated a fair bit of interest. Out of 18 stalls, we were the only canal society present.

MCA Licences

Gipsy Princess's licence lapsed because of lockdown. Repairs to the hull and painting of the hull have been done and she is now back in the water but we need volunteers to get the remainder of the preparation and painting carried out so we can invite the MCA surveyors to inspect her and issue her with a new Passenger Licence. Once that is done, we can put her back on charter and recoup some of the money she has cost.

Voyager has plenty of charters booked but her licence lapses in early June and we need to schedule the MCA surveyors to inspect her so that we don't need to cancel any charters already booked.

Boat Safety Scheme Certification

Maryhill is the only vessel in our fleet which comes under this scheme. Her certification needs to be renewed in August 2023.

All hands on deck for urgent maintenance

A very small band of dedicated volunteers have been dealing with the maintenance on all our boats but, as you will have read in the Chairman's Chat, this was delayed firstly by a break-in to our containers and theft of a lot of our equipment, then the theft of the container that was only purchased in August 2019.

Despite these setbacks work has continued, and Voyager is nearly painted externally, and Gipsy Princess is back in the water with her hull now painted. All we now need now is a dedicated band of volunteers to prepare and repaint her. Other maintenance issues include, at this time of year, the regular cutting of the grass adjacent to our moorings opposite The Stables.

Slipway

As we go to press, in addition to using the slipway for our own fleet of boats, we currently have five private boats booked to use the slipway almost continuously between the end of May and the end of August.

Crew Training

Crew training commenced on Wednesday 30th March, although the number of volunteers we had before lockdown is much reduced. The result of this may impact on whether we can accept charter bookings. We are all volunteers and give our time freely, but not every day of the week!


Crew training

Gypsy in need of TCL, please volunteer

SOCIETY NEWS



Members Cruises

We have a break in crew training on the first Wednesday of the month when we hold a member's cruise. All members are welcome, although if everyone turned up, we would have a problem. Anyone who wishes to attend please turn up at our moorings at or just after 7pm. We normally sail from 7:30pm until 9:00 or 9:30pm. The April and May members cruises have happened with the ones in June, July, August and September still to come, all sailing from The Stables when going to print but check website for any changes to this.

Charters

Charter bookings are good considering everyone is still being careful, and some of our regular customers are limiting their numbers. We get a variety of customers, church groups, probus groups, hen parties, birthday parties, and people from all walks of life.

Membership

The majority of the membership subscriptions for the current year have been received although, as usual, there are some who leave it until the last minute.

We would remind members that their subscription payment is due within six months of the renewal date on 1st March annually. Our constitution allows us to cancel any membership, without notice, where payment has not been received by 1st September, but in every case, we contact the member(s) to remind them their membership is outstanding.

New Members

A combination of the Ship Ahoy event and posts on Facebook by Fiona Shepherd, one of our committee members, has resulted in a few new and enthusiastic members.

Hopefully more to follow. Unfortunately, on the downside, we have lost a few members

during the Covid period, some by not renewing their membership, or for other reasons.

Finance

At present we are holding our own financially. The insurer has accepted our claim for the first incident where items were stolen, less the small excess we must pay, but we will not be reimbursed until we have replaced everything or chosen to accept a cash settlement for items.

We understand that any cash payment will be less than the replacement cost. We are still processing the theft of the container and its contents and will need to wait and see what our insurer has to say about it.

The committee agreed some years ago to keep a sum of money "ring fenced" for an unforeseen event such as an engine failure and so far we haven't had to reduce this figure to free up monies for day-to-day expenditure.

We may have to make a temporary adjustment while we purchase replacement items and until the insurer pays out.

Two we missed

Sorry we missed the passing of two of our very long-standing members during the lockdown years. Maria Fyfe was a Maryhill MP and played a key role in the early years of canal campaigning. She helped fight the good fight to stop the Maryhill section of canal being filled in for safety reasons and gave great support for canal restoration.

David Holgate was another of our early canal campaigners who, like Maria, kept up his membership right to the end.

We remember all their hard work with gratitude.



ABOUT US

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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**

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

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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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