



# SPOUT



NEWSLETTER OF THE  
**ASHBY CANAL ASSOCIATION**

December 2015 Where **£2** Sold Volume 44 N<sup>o</sup>4

## Where Is this?



Our mystery picture last time was taken at the Royal Military Canal in Kent.

More details about this unusual canal appear in a separate article in this issue.

Our puzzle picture this time, sent in by Gill redshaw, is a bit closer to home, but not on the Ashby Canal. It is near a very popular canal location – do you know where?



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## Spout Magazine

Volume 44 No.4 Decemember 2015

### Contents

Where is this? .....	2	From the Treasurer .....	17
From the Chairman .....	5	Work Party Pictures .....	19
MP Visits the Restoration Site .....	6	Brain Exercises .....	20
You May Have Missed .....	7	An Appeal For Help .....	20
Correspondence .....	9	Diary Dates .....	21
IWA Trophy Award .....	9	Snippets .....	22
A Good Read .....	10	Membership Application .....	24
Ashby Canal Bridges .....	11	Membership Matters .....	26
The Royal Military Canal .....	12	Nature Notes .....	27
Photography Competition .....	13		

Cover picture: Autumn colours near Snarestone Tunnel

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# Ashby Canal Association

Registered Charity No. 1063566

**A**shby Canal Association was formed in 1966, because of concern caused by the progressive closure of the northern 8 miles of the canal due to mining subsidence.

Since then, ACA has actively promoted the restoration of the northern reaches of the canal, and re-connection to the navigable length. Over recent years the Association's work parties have significantly contributed to the voluntary effort of the restoration project. The Association is also active in raising funds to help finance the restoration project. Significant progress on

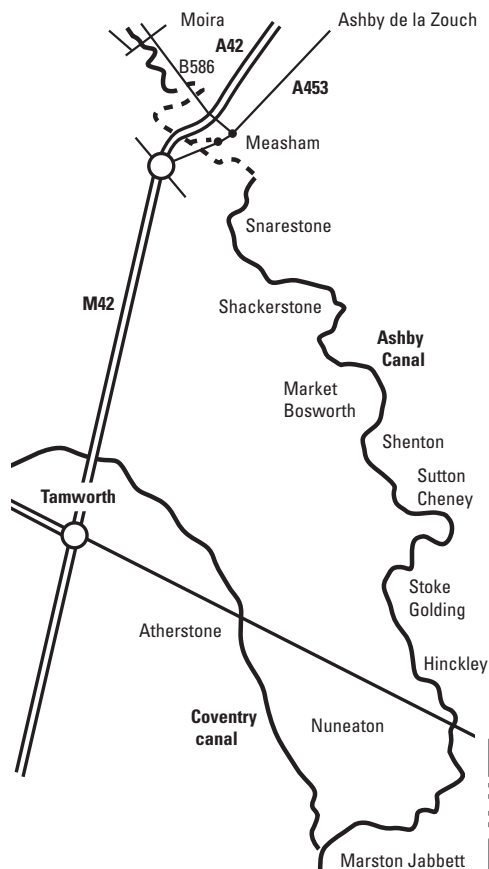
restoration has been made in recent years.

ACA seeks to promote the canal and its surroundings as an amenity for all - whether walkers, anglers, boaters, or canal-related businesses. It is also intent on preserving, where possible, the canal's rural character. It maintains regular dialogue with Local Authorities and the Canal & River Trust on matters affecting the canal.

Its newsletter, "Spout", is published quarterly and delivered to all members of the Association.

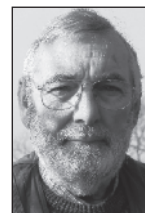
ACA organises several social events and meetings over the winter months at venues in the local area. These are publicised on our web-site and in "Spout" newsletter. Non-members are very welcome and entry is usually free. Members play a major role in organising and helping at the annual Shackerstone Family Festival and boat rally in September, and also support the Ashby Canal Trust's annual Moira Canal Festival held in mid-May. Slipways are available for trail boaters at Snarestone Wharf, Moira Furnace and Moira Bath Yard Basin. For those interested in the canal's history, a small photographic archive is available on the web-site, and written archive material is held at Ashby Museum. The Association is a registered charity, self funding. It is a corporate member of the Inland Waterways Association. Membership details can be found in this issue, or visit [www.ashbycanal.org.uk](http://www.ashbycanal.org.uk) You can follow

us on Facebook by joining our Ashby Canal Association Friends facebook group.



## From the Chairman

**M**ay I wish all our members and families and readers of this magazine the compliments of the season. I believe you will agree that 2015 has been a very good year for the Association on all fronts. The challenge we now face is to make 2016 even better.



ACA was founded in 1966 thus in 2016 it will be 50 years old. To mark this Golden Anniversary we are organising a rather special show over the weekend of 4th and 5th of June which will take place at Snarestone.

Please make a note of these dates since you will receive only one more Spout before the event. Planning is in its early stages, however I can say that there will be something to interest everyone with stalls, entertainment and boats. There will be working boats present and a trip boat and visiting boaters will be most welcome and will be required to pre-book. The sun will shine and as we progress more details will be posted on the ACA website.

The restoration of our canal has reached just beyond the new Bridge 62 where there is a winding hole for boats up to 52ft long. We anticipate that in 2016 work will commence on the building of the three-quarter mile length of new build in Measham.

Given this scenario, we simply have to connect up between B62 and Measham, not a formidable task compared with other restorations taking place around the country. Finance is of course a challenge. Unlike others, we do not have lock flights to build but we do have two aqueducts. The first being the Gilwiskaw where you will know that we are proactive in fund raising for this structure and I thank each and everyone who have donated to this campaign or bought a brick or two.

Sadly, Leicestershire County Council are unwilling or unable to drive the project forward due to funding cuts and lack of staff etc.. However, we are actively participating in the formation of a Restoration Partnership which will bring together Canal and River Trust and Inland Waterways Association together with the various local groups who are supportive of the restoration. These include local and district councils, the National Forest and businesses in the area. It is early days but this initiative is very positive and exciting. As they say, watch this space.

In order to highlight the state of play Andrew Bridgen MP, whose constituency includes the Ashby canals restoration route from Snarestone onwards, was invited to view the works to date. On Friday 6th November, Orest Mulka our Vice-President, Cyril Blackford, John Roddis and myself met Andrew at Snarestone where we discussed in some detail the situation regarding the restoration. We then walked the new section to Bridge 62 and on to the site of the Gilwiskaw Aqueduct. We paused for a photo-shoot at B62 and some appear elsewhere in this Spout. Andrew is extremely supportive of what we are working to achieve and like ourselves he would very much like to see the canal connected to the section soon to be built at Measham. He similarly recognises that this will give Measham a significant injection of self pride and business opportunities.

We recognise that as we move forward we need to increase our membership. We do get a

## From the Chairman cont...

fair number of new members from various sources including people visiting Snarestone, however we also lose some each year who do not renew their membership. Whilst some may not wish to renew it is known that many forget. This is something we are addressing, however may I ask you all to help promote our Association by suggesting your friends join. The gift of membership may be the solution to one of your Christmas present dilemmas. A membership form is towards the back of this Spout.

On Saturday 21st December we held the

fourth, now annual ACA Quiz Night at Stoke Golding Club. On the first bitterly cold night of winter, 82 eager players came to have their knowledge tested. We began with a game of Stand-Up Bingo followed by ten quiz rounds and a Fish and Chip Supper. It was a lively light-hearted affair enjoyed by all I believe and thanks to everyone for their support. The proceeds all go to the restoration fund.

All the very best for 2016 to all readers.

*Peter Oakden - Chairman*

## MP Visits the Restoration Site

In November, Andrew Bridgen MP for North West Leicestershire paid a visit to the restored length of canal north of Snarestone Wharf, and examined the newly built bridge 62.

He also walked along the unrestored stretch as far as the site of the Gilwiskaw Aqueduct. The weather on the day of his visit was far from pleasant, but despite the wet and blustery conditions he was determined to see for himself what has been achieved, and what is still to be done.

He was accompanied by ACA chairman Peter Oakden, Secretary Cyril Blackford, Treasurer John Roddis, and Vice President Orest Mulka who had organised the visit.

Mr. Bridgen was well briefed about the Ashby Canal and very supportive of ACA's efforts to get the canal restored to Measham and beyond to Donisthorpe. He asked several searching questions, and told us he recently attended the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Inland Waterways. He was obviously keen to see the canal back in Measham, saying "I support the restoration of the canal. It will bring jobs to an area which has suffered decline in the past". He was very impressed by ACA's fund-raising efforts towards the project. As if to emphasise the tourism potential of the Ashby Canal, a hire boat arrived at Snarestone wharf just before the MP arrived,



carrying a crew of Australians who were on a grand tour of the waterways, and said they were enjoying every minute, even though the November weather was particularly unpleasant on that day.

On his return to London early the following week, Mr Bridgen had a discussion with Rory Stewart MP, the Minister with responsibility for the Waterways, who was very supportive of ACA's efforts to get the canal restored. Contacts like this will be very useful as ACA tries to maintain progress beyond the stretch which has already been restored.

## Not In The Guide Book

Ian Reid reveals a little known feature of Stoke Golding

There was the major threat of airborne attack during WW2. Although enemy parachutists didn't attempt to take Britain, bombing raids were all too frequent with planes being tracked by members of the Royal Observer Corps.

Their posts were scattered countrywide and connected via a telephone-network. At Stoke Golding a squat tower was erected and the ROC took up their positions to report on enemy aircraft movements. The obvious thing would have been to use the church tower, but that had been dismantled, it being too close to the aerodrome at Lindley. With the end of hostilities the post was eventually decommissioned and fell into disrepair. But things changed with the "Cold War" and Stoke again took its place in history. At the ROC site, a hole was excavated to accommodate a "secret"(?) underground nuclear bunker, one of a thousand countrywide. This was equipped with bunks, a desk, shelves, phones, electronic devices (a bit old-fashioned by modern standards), and other essential equipment. We presume a fire extinguisher was to deal with minor fires; not to put out a nuclear explosion. How safe the occupants would be in the event of nuclear attack is not clear, certainly a direct hit would finish them off and the ventilation system might well circulate radioactive particles if a device landed in the vicinity but it might have been safer that a wartime Anderson shelter. The bunker is still there, albeit in private ownership. When the present owner took over it really was secret, being covered in brambles and other overgrowth. This has been cleared and a certain amount of restoration carried out. The bunker consists of a chamber of about 18ft by 8 ft with about 6 or 7ft of earth above. Entry is via a "tower of about 3ft in height covered with a steel trap-door. A vertical shaft leads down with rungs being set into one wall. The subterranean room was equipped with a chemical toilet and bunks plus a desk at which the observers sat to twiddle their knobs and watch their dials. Not a lot to see, after all it was secret and is underground, but the keen historical types may wish to have a look. To view



what is visible above ground, walk out of Stoke, down Wykin Lane, past the new cemetery and take the footpath to the right along its boundary. After a couple of hundred yards, where the path turns left, you come to a small fenced-off area which contains the site. Its OS map reference is: SP39849667. The owner has been known to have open days, but with so little room to accommodate visitors they are not widely publicised. Look out for small posters round about June time. This is not the only restored bunker in the East Midlands: only recently an article in the Leicester Mercury described the one at Buckminster in the Vale of Belvoir. To find out more search for "ROC Bunkers" on the internet.

The bunker was eventually decommissioned and the site sold off, but not before its secret location was exposed by members of the CND. Some time in the seventies they gathered around it and held some sort of demonstration. The local folk would probably have been largely unaware of this except that the demonstrators painted arrows on the road nearby. These were speedily removed and, it is said, the tarmac was relaid to preserve security. Adjacent to the bunker, the original ROC post has been re-created. This is not underground of course and is high enough to command a good view of the surrounding countryside and skyline. These towers were not built to a standard pattern but the new build is a good approximation of what it may have looked like.

# You May Have Missed

Ian Reid reviews this autumn's social meetings

The October members' meeting saw a great start to the winter season with an illustrated talk on China's Grand Canal. The Great Wall of China is well known to us, the Grand Canal perhaps a little less so, but in such a vast country as China the words 'Great' and 'Grand' take on a significance that rather leaves our Grand Union in the shade. The speaker, Liam d'Arcy Brown, claimed not to be a canal addict but exhibited a deep knowledge of China, its history and customs. Indeed, following university studies, he had lived in the country for many years. In this time he had made many visits to cover the length of the waterway and stored up an incredible knowledge of it. This is the longest artificial waterway in the world and it's pretty old as well. Parts date back to the 5th century BC although various sections were not joined up until the Sui dynasty which was from 581 to 618 AD, still well ahead of us in the west.

Stretching over 11,000 miles south north from Beijing to Hangzhou the canal has connections to various rivers which flow west/east to the sea. Despite its length a fairly low summit level of 138 feet was achieved and ramps were used to carry boats between pounds. Pound locks were introduced by an engineer, Qiao Weiyue, in the 10th century. With the Yellow River devastating the country with disastrous flooding and finally altering its course, it was inevitable that some changes in the canal route were made over the years. Apart from natural flooding, it was not unknown for the river's banks to be deliberately breached to impede advancing troops in time of war.

The canal is still in use over much of its length, not by tiny narrow boats, but by much larger craft including trains of lighters carrying several thousands of tons of bulk cargo. Coastal traffic can enter the canal and such are the dimensions of channel that it can still play an important part in the industry of China. The speaker illustrated his words

with a fine collection of views, ranging from early depictions to his own spectacular shots. Despite our perceptions of the Chinese regime, he was able to travel over the length of the canal and mix with the boat's crews and their families at will. They were friendly and pleased to talk of life on their cut.

This was certainly something different and widened the horizons of our audience.

We were closer to home in November, just up the road in fact, with the Lichfield and Hatherton Canal Restoration Project. This was a welcome return visit from Bob Williams who is the director of the Trust dealing with finance. Seven years ago he had given us a detailed description of the progress at that point in time and the plans for the future. Now he brought us up to date with current changes in the state of play. Having successfully installed a rather lonely viaduct over the M6 Toll, the latest obstacle to be thrown at the restoration team is HS2. (How bureaucrats and politicians love these abbreviations!) We are led to believe that the final route for this railway line is not yet cast in stone (or should that be ferro-concrete?). This means that interested parties can contribute their suggestions to the planners; it is hoped that they will then study them and perhaps take heed of them. Already supporters of the canal have submitted proposals for an alternative to the rail route which they say would benefit both canal and Railway. We wait the outcome with interest.

The speaker gave a thorough visual tour of the proposed route, which includes only relatively minor deviations from the original routes of the Hatherton Canal and the Lichfield Canal. They were actually separate canals but the combining of waterways and the sharing of routes is not without precedent. It was interesting to compare views of the canal in water and still in use with the present circumstances. Actually much is still unimpeded but there are critical obstacles to be overcome.

The size of the task somewhat dwarfs our ambitions for the Ashby Canal, and the costs involved are that much greater. Lichfield and Hatherton will provide a valuable link through from the Coventry to the Birmingham Canal Navigations.

The audience and speakers at both these meetings must be congratulated for having successfully negotiated the tortuous route to the MIRA car park via road works within the grounds. They were then subjected to Horiba MIRA's rigid security checks. Be assured the ACA committee are aware that the situation is not ideal, and are discussing future possibilities. In the meantime, please bear with us. We hope to see as many members as possible at our AGM in January.

Ian Reid

# Correspondence

Dear Editor,

In the last "Spout" Ian Reid wrote an article about the width of boats that might have used the Ashby Canal in the past. According to a document in my possession dating from the days when the LMS railway owned the canal, the width of the stop lock at Marston Jabbet is shown as 8ft 3in. Therefore boats up to 8ft wide could have got through, but the lock is not 9ft as Ian thought. I am not sure, but I would guess that Marston stop lock is still about 8ft 3inches wide, as it is unlikely to have been rebuilt.

Yours sincerely  
G Glover

# IWA Trophy Award

Phil Sharpe, IWA Lichfield Branch's Planning officer, and an ACA member, was awarded IWA's prestigious Cyril Styring Trophy in 2015 for the IWA member who has made an outstanding contribution to campaigning. ACA would like to pass our congratulations on to Phil for this great achievement. Phil regularly represents IWA on the board of the Ashby Canal Trust, and continues to make a positive contribution to ACA's restoration efforts. He was recently active in campaigning to protect the line of the Trent and Mersey canal at Woodend near Fradley from the HS2 proposals, his many hours of work being rewarded by a successful outcome. In his voluntary work as Lichfield Branch planning officer he often deals with planning applications affecting the Ashby which he always deals with diligently. The latest of these concerned the proposed solar farm near Basin Bridge near Stoke Golding - where some extra screening from the canal would be desirable. Congratulations on the award, Phil!

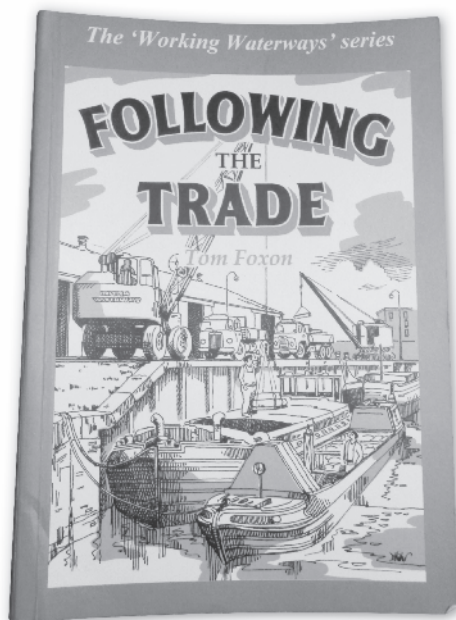
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## A Good Read

Following the invitation in the last "Spout" for readers to suggest a book that would appeal to waterway enthusiasts, I would like to suggest "Following the Trade" by Tom Foxon, published by the Belmont Press.



I came across this book on a second hand stall at a canalside event, and it cost me 50p. If you are not so lucky as me, I think you can still order it through bookshops or on the internet, and I think it is also on sale at CRT's Canal Museum shop in Stoke Bruerne, priced £8.99.

The factually based book follows the fortunes of Tom Foxon as a working boatman in the mid 1950s. Tom became a "Number One" (owner-boatman) after finishing his National Service in 1954 and acquiring a working boat. The book describes, in a fairly light-hearted way, numerous trips, many of which are in the Midlands. Tamworth, Atherstone, Bedworth, Longford all figure prominently in his early escapades, before Tom's activities move to the BCN, and then further afield.

Some of the distances covered in a day on these

trips make you marvel. Trips on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal delivering coal to the pocelain works in Worcester involved leaving a colliery loading point at Brownhills, on the far corner of the BCN network, on one day, and arriving Diglis in Worcester by eight in the evening on the next day. If you have ever had a go at doing the Tardebigge flight of locks followed by the Astwood flight yourself, you will know how much work and distance this entails, and to do most of that lock work in one day seems phenomenal. At least Tom had help unloading the boat when he arrived in Worcester

There is also a fascinating account of working on barges carrying Regent petrol out of Avonmouth and up the River Severn. Who remembers "Regent" petrol these days? As well, there is an insight into the work of the lockkeepers on that river, as Tom acted as relief lockkeeper at some of the Severn Locks.

The book finishes with a thoughtful "epilogue" reflecting on how life was much simpler and less stressful in the fifties, and how the waterways scene has changed since then.

The book is well-written, in a pleasant easy going style which I am sure you will enjoy, whether you are a working boat enthusiast, or just a general reader like me who likes a bit of nostalgia.

PCN

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## More About Ashby Canal Bridges

In the last edition of "Spout" we looked at the names and position of bridges on the Ashby Canal covering Bridge 62 to the original terminus just beyond Bridge 74.

The LMS map used for that article shows the bridge names for the rest of the canal too. Some of these names are well known and still used, others are not.

Starting at Snarestone Wharf and heading south let us have a look at some of them. Bridge 61 is known by a rather obvious name - Turnover Bridge - describing exactly what the bridge does, allowing the towpath to turn over from one side of the canal to the other. There is only one other turnover bridge on the Ashby Canal - at Shackerstone, Bridge 52, which is known as Turn Bridge. This is similar in design to, but not quite the same in appearance as, Bridge 61, because Bridge 52 carries a road.

Inbetween Snarestone and Shackerstone, going south, we have the following:

Bridge 60 - Varnham's Bridge, an attractive stone built accommodation bridge a little way north of the tunnel.

Snarestone Tunnel, 250 yards long, did not appear to have a number. There was however, some variation in the spelling of Snarestone on the tunnel signage over the years. Sometimes it appears with an "e" at the end, and sometimes without.

Railway Bridge - a metal skew bridge, south of the tunnel, now dismantled except for the brick parapets which can still be seen in the surrounding vegetation. It is not clear whether this ever had a proper bridge number - if so it should have been 59A. The railway line went from the junction at Shackerstone, north through Snarestone to Measham, Donisthorpe and joined the Burton line near Moira.

Bridge 59 - Pares Bridge. This name is well known and still used. It is a prettily situated brick built bridge which gives access to a small row of cottages, and is on a rather tight bend which, judging by the damaged brickwork, is often hit by boats

whose steerers have misjudged the bend.

Bridge 58 - Gopsall Wharf Bridge. Its name describes exactly its situation at the wharf. The wharf originally allowed for goods transported by water to be carried by cart, etc., to Gopsall Hall. ACA had a clean up programme at the wharf a year or so ago and put in mooring rings and seats. The lane up to the bridge and wharf is isolated and has attracted unwelcome behaviour in the past, fly tipping and graffiti. Despite discussions with the authorities, it has proved difficult for ACA to get the graffiti removed, as there are rules about what materials may be used on the brickwork to avoid damaging the bricks and the canal water. Perhaps the weather will eventually wear the marks away. Gopsall Wharf Bridge unfortunately lies on the boundary line between Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and North West Leics District Council, allowing for disputes about who is responsible for removing fly-tipped rubbish, etc. To be fair, HBBC have been very co-operative in helping ACA clean up the area and improve the surface of the wharf car park which does lie within their boundary.

Bridge 57 - just a few hundred yards south of the wharf, marks the entry to the Gopsall Woods area. The bridge name is Green Lane Bridge, which is slightly confusing to present day visitors as the 'green lane' would nowadays seem to be the one which goes over Gopsall Wharf Bridge 58. The wooded area adjacent to Bridge 57 is Crown Estate private woodland, and which is fenced off to deter intruders. Following repairs to its brickwork, the bridge recently sported a green plaque - installed by HBBC - declaring it to be part of the Ashby Canal Conservation Area. The plaque now seems to be missing.

Bridge 56 - Timm's Bridge is a brick built

## More About Ashby Canal Bridges cont.

accommodation bridge near the woods. In recent years some permissive paths have been created from here to allow walkers to explore some of the adjacent countryside and creating a 'round' walk. A map board has been installed to indicate the paths. Just north of the bridge, the piled banking offers very pleasant moorings for narrowboats though those with a deepish draught have to know exactly the right spot where to tie up. South of the bridge it is not so good for mooring and even though the piling looks tempting, the sides are quite shallow.

Bridge 55 was deep in the woods, but has long since gone, though the narrows in the canal indicate where it was situated. It is remembered that there were cottages here which are also long gone.

Bridge 54 is called Hill's Bridge from where a footpath heads northwards to Newton Burgoland.

Bridge 53 - Town Bridge, heralds the approach

to Shackerstone. The use of the name "Town" is a bit overblown given the size of Shackerstone Village, though given the absence of large settlements along the Ashby Canal perhaps Shackerstone was considered a place of some importance when the bridge was named. It does of course serve to distinguish it from the other Shackerstone Bridge, 52, the Turn Bridge mentioned earlier, which is adjacent to Wharf Farm.- see below

Bridge 52, Turn Bridge, has its place in history because King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra passed over it in 1907 on their way from, and back to Shackerstone station when the Royal Train brought their royal personages to visit Gospall Hall.

We'll follow the canal southwards in the next issue.

## The Royal Military Canal

**T**he puzzle picture in the last Spout's "Where is This?" feature was the Royal Military Canal. We expect this kept a lot of you guessing as it's a long way from our area, so here is a bit of background information.

The canal is in Kent, and interesting because it was originally constructed as a defence work, being promoted for military purposes rather than by Act of Parliament. It was a sort of very large "moat" round the land bordering the south east coast, being about nineteen miles long originally, and running in a broad sweep behind Romney Marsh.

After the threat of invasion by Napoleon had passed, an Act of Parliament was passed in 1807 to convert it into a navigation. This is about three years after the Ashby Canal was opened, at a time when canal transport was considered to be "the future". The grandly titled Lords Bailiff and Jurats of the Level of Romney Marsh leased the canal from the Secretary of State for War for a shilling a year. It was

not particularly successful as a navigation for trade. It had an entrance lock, at a place called Iden, where it joined the River Rother, about four miles upstream from the little port of Rye. Sections have been derelict for some years, though some lengths are still there, possibly restorable. A length at Hythe, which came under the control of the local council, is in water and used as an amenity feature with pleasure trips and rowing boats available. Our picture showed rowing boats at Hythe, and picnickers on the bank, proving how popular this section is, in an area not very well provided with canals. Well worth a visit if you are ever in this remote corner of Kent.

## Photography Competition

**I**n the last edition of 'Spout' readers were asked to submit pictures of the Ashby Canal in all its Autumn glory! A number of you responded with some excellent shots, some of which feature on the next few pages. We are offering a small prize for the winner and runner-up whose entries are picked out with with a rosette!



Pam McLellan



*This is our Autumnal winner. Well done Pam, a little something will be winging its way to you in time for Christmas!*



Pam McLellan



Alyson Luff

*This is our Autumnal runner-up. Well done Alyson, a little something will be winging its way to you too in time for Christmas!*



Alan Cuff



Alyson Luff



Alan Cuff





*Claire Jackson*



*Claire Jackson*

Thank you all for taking part. All the shots we have chosen to print in this edition of 'Spout' have great composition and colour! We'll do the competition again in the new year so keep on snapping!

**Editor**

## From the Treasurer

Since the last edition of "Spout" reached your doormat, the new length of canal from Snarestone wharf to the winding hole beyond Bridge 62 has been opened to boats and towpath walkers.

Visitors will have noticed that there is still a small amount of work to be finished off on the bridge, namely the addition of brick copings on the parapets. This work will be funded by ACA as part of its commitment towards the restoration scheme, and we are hoping the work will be done shortly, weather permitting. We have also contributed to the costs of the WRG camp which did much of the brickwork on Bridge 62, and also, as indicated in the last issue, made a donation to the WRG's appeal for a new van. ACA is also funding the winter work parties along the restored stretch and beyond, and we are also anticipating some expenditure connected with the installation of notice boards.

The canal line beyond Bridge 62 has been levelled, giving a tantalising impression of what the next stretch will look like, once the aqueduct over Gilwiskaw Brook is built. Donations to the 'Buy a Brick' scheme and the aqueduct restoration appeal continue to come in from far and wide, demonstrating how much support there is for the canal. Since the last "Spout", we have received donations from the following:

M Seagrave	Twyford, Hants
J Cooke	Brighton
C Porter	Nottingham
C Harvey	Sherborne, Wilts
H Eastman	Deal, Kent
A Rogers	Farley, Wilts
T Berens	Farley, Wilts
R S E Sykes	Shackerstone
R Leacroft	Brigstock, Northants
K Callaghan	Coalville
B Tetlow	Hinckley
E Davies	Sinope, Leics
R Fuller	Stone, Staffs

To all these supporters, we send our grateful thanks. Donations received after press date, mid-November, will be acknowledged in the next issue.

We also wish to record our special thanks to Mr D. Thompson of Loughborough, who once again made a contribution to our restoration funds recently. We have had several donations in the past from Mr Thompson who is a keen towpath walker. Peter Oakden and I met him in Ashby at his request recently, when he handed us cheques totalling £12,700. This magnificent gesture is very much appreciated.

Thanks to the Buy a Brick scheme, the donations mentioned above, and the balance of Miss DeWoronin's bequest detailed in the last "Spout", the Gilwiskaw Aqueduct Appeal now stands at approx £60,250. In addition we hold designated restoration funds of approx. £33,000, giving us not far short of £100,000 earmarked for restoration purposes. This fund-raising effort, which is still continuing, is a remarkable indication of the level of support for the canal restoration. We are aware, however, that canal building is proving to be a very expensive business, so we are anxious to raise more, and also to get the best possible value for our money when we come to spend it. Behind the scenes, our Chairman and Vice President have been putting much effort into looking at ways to move things forward, and find other funding opportunities to help the cause.

Once again Mr & Mrs A. Berry have sponsored the cost of posting out "Spout", a gesture which we much appreciate. I had the pleasure of meeting Mr & Mrs Berry a few weeks ago on the towpath at Snarestone and was able to thank them in person.

## From the Treasurer cont.

The annual accounts for the year ended 30th September 2015 have now been completed, and are being audited as I write this. The accounts will be formally presented at the Annual General Meeting in January. They show the Association to be in a very strong financial position due of course to the amounts of money we have collected towards the restoration, which is earmarked specifically for that purpose, and which we are waiting to spend. As far as our day-to-day running costs, we continue to run as tight a ship as we can. Now we have electricity installed at Snarestone, we have this ongoing power cost to factor into our overheads for the coming year. However, we have decided to keep membership subscriptions at the current amount this year. A membership renewal form is enclosed, and we should be pleased if you will give it your prompt attention so that we don't have to send out reminders.

The Ashby Canal Co Ltd., our trading company, had a successful year to 30th

September. £6218 was raised as profit on sales, bric-a-bac, mooring fees, advertising, etc., on top of which we had £5700 proceeds from the 2014 Shackerstone Festival, making a grand total of £11918 which was handed over to ACA at the end of September. As usual we send our thanks to everyone concerned, all those who helped with the shop, at events, collecting bric a brac, etc. The magnificent result is a reward for your efforts. The Shackerstone Festival 2015 was, I am pleased to say, also financially successful. ACA's share of the proceeds was £6400 plus boat entries of £600, so a very worthwhile result. The Festival Committee needs new members - an appeal is included elsewhere in this issue. If you can help, please contact Roger Grimsley (see address section).

Finally, a thank you to Peter Oakden for organising our enjoyable annual Quiz Night in November, which was a valuable fund-raiser as well as a great social event.

**John Roddis**

## Quiz Night



*The Annual Quiz night held at Stoke Golding Club on 21st November was a great success with 83 people attending.*



ACA member Brian Tetlow kindly sent in these pictures of the October work party. If you fancy a bit of fresh air and want to get involved contact Rod Smith on 01530 833307.

# Brain Exercises

## A few puzzles to help keep your brain active during the festive season:

1. I was walking down the towpath earlier this year and passed a canalside garden, where a chap was planting out vegetables. "What are you planting" I asked. The chap said "Have a guess - the name of this vegetable contains all the vowels, once each". This caused a bit of head scratching.

"Are you including the letter Y as a vowel?" I asked after a while. "No" he replied. "In fact, I'll let you puzzle out something else as well. My work is canal-related, and my job also contains all the vowels, one of each"

Eventually I managed to figure out what the man was planting, and what his job was. Can you?

2. Here are some anagrams, they are all places on or connected with the Ashby Canal. Can you work them out, and then place them in order from north to south, i.e. heading down the canal.

TOM THROW BRAKES NAME FAR CURIO DWARF AND SHAWL DENTAL BISHOP  
 BID BAD ASHTRAY MANY RICH ELK TAN HUED CONQUEST GOD LIKE TONGS  
 RAN COLT FLASH LOG WRAP MAC TURN NO JOINTS TAN NEUTRON LENSES

3. If you like an arithmetic challenge, try this one (It will also test whether you have been reading "Spout" carefully recently).

Start with the number of the very last bridge on the Ashby Canal at what was Canal End, near Spring Cottage (a bridge now long gone) .....

Multiply by the number of turnover bridges now on the Ashby Canal x ..... = .....

Add the number of miles from Marston Junction to Snarestone Pumping Station (nearest whole No) + ..... = .....

Deduct the number of locks at Hillmorton ..... = .....

Multiply by the number of locks in the Atherstone Flight x ..... = .....

The answer is important to the Ashby Canal in what way?

## To all members - An appeal for help

ACA is one of the co-sponsors of the Shackerstone Family Festival. Like all events of this scale, they are the result of a combined effort on the part of many people. Would you like to become actively involved in its organisation and planning? If you feel you could help with any of the roles outlined below please contact me and I will be happy to discuss them with you. All roles are home based and the committee meets once a month at the Shackerstone Village Hall. You don't have to physically attend all meetings - a written feedback on progress would be acceptable. So if you live further away this need not stop you from coming forward. Currently assistance is needed for : Fairground, etc, liaison; Sponsorship team (contacting old, present and potential sponsors); Marketing (publicity and press releases); Programme - to help with producing content; Festival forms and Welcome letter; Trade and craft booking; Child protection officer; Minute taking at meetings (production and distribution of printed minutes). If you could reply showing your interest in time for our January 12th 2016 committee meeting it will greatly assist our planning for next year's Festival. I am available to discuss any queries you may have after Dec 12th. I can be contacted at [roger.grimsley@ntlworld.com](mailto:roger.grimsley@ntlworld.com) or by phone on 02476 734522. **Roger Grimsley**

# Diary Dates

**W**e hope that members and friends will join us at all or any of these events. If you haven't been along to one of our meetings before, you will be assured of a warm welcome. In the event of snow or bad weather during the winter months, please check our web site in case of last minute cancellations, or ring Audrey Boston on 01455 290462

**Monday Dec 14th** At Donisthorpe Woodlands Centre, Church Street, Donisthorpe DE12 7PY 7.30pm. The Ashby Canal, Past, Present, and Future. An entertaining programme at this popular venue. Starting with Legless Productions' new film "The Ashby Canal" which will receive its premier showing by Brian Langtry. Followed by an illustrated review of the Ashby Canal Restoration by Geoff Pursglove. (This programme replaces the presentation on the Grantham Canal which was originally scheduled. We hope to have this talk at a later date)

## 2016

**Monday January 11th** At Horiba MIRA Sports and Social Club, A5 Watling Street, Nr Nuneaton, CV10 0TU 7.30pm. Annual General Meeting followed by a talk by Nigel Smith of Ashby Canal Centre.

**Monday Feb 8th** at MIRA Sports and Social Club (see address above) 7.30pm. An Evening with Roger and Teresa Fuller – a follow on from last year's very popular presentation, with more memories of journeys with a pair of working boats and lots of rare photos.

**Monday March 14th** at Donisthorpe Woodlands Centre, Church St, Donisthorpe

DE12 7PY, 7.30pm. Entertainment by Phil Clayton who will present 'BCN Joeys, Joshers and James' with songs of the day. This promises to be another very entertaining evening at our popular venue at the northern end of the canal. Please put it in your diary now.

## ADVANCE NOTICE

### May 21st- 22nd

**Moira Canal Festival** - The usual mix of fun and entertainment for all the family, with boats, stalls, refreshments, and activities on and off the water.

### June 4 – 5

**ACA Fiftieth Anniversary Gathering** At Snarestone Wharf. More details in the next edition of Spout. Visiting boats welcome, working boats, refreshments. All members and friends are invited to help us celebrate our fiftieth birthday. Please contact Clive Walker (see addresses section) if you can help with setting up, or over the weekend.

## Work Parties

We are planning to hold work parties on the third Sunday of each month Jan, Feb, March, weather permitting. Please wear appropriate clothing and stout footwear, and bring gloves and any personal protection gear you have. Hot drinks are usually provided. Further details of each work party from Rod Smith on 01530 833307, who will advise on what work is being tackled. Meet 10am, Snarestone Wharf, Quarry Lane, Snarestone. Please remember to sign in before starting and sign out when leaving.

## Association of Waterways Cruising Clubs

**A**WCC (Association of Waterways Cruising Clubs) has recently been considering splitting their Midlands Region into two, as it contains, in their view, a disproportionate number of affiliated clubs compared with the other regions. Under the initial proposals, ACA would find itself in a different region from Hinckley Boat Club and Coventry Cruising Club, even though we are all in a similar geographic area. We would however be in the same region as Soar Boat Club. The split does not seem entirely logical and Ian Palmer, our AWCC rep., has made representations on our behalf about this. There has also been recent debate amongst some clubs about the offering of free moorings to visiting boats from affiliated clubs. It is left to individual organisations to decide what they wish to offer. The position of ACA remains that visiting AWCC members may moor at Snarestone wharf beyond the swingbridge for up to 7 days only - the same

as any ACA member. Other boaters are strictly limited to 48 hours, and this applies on any part of the canal between the swingbridge and Bridge 62. A notice has recently been erected alongside the swingbridge.

## On The Box

**T**he excellent recent BBC TV series "Canals - The Making of a Nation" featured the Ashby Canal at Moira in an episode primarily concerned with George Smith of Coalville, the campaigner for better conditions for boat families. Local historians Wendy Freer and Denis Baker (both of whom have given talks to ACA) featured in the programme, both giving long interviews, and enjoying a journey on the canal in the "Joseph Wilkes" trip boat. The programme may still be available on catch-up TV if you missed it.

## URGENTLY REQUIRED

Please donate your old unwanted brassware, China, Clocks, Vases, Lamps, Collectables and Bric-a-Brac

All Proceeds go towards the restoration of the Ashby Canal from Snarestone to Measham

*Rod would like to thank everyone who has kindly donated items to his stall. Help us raise money for the restoration.*

Contact Rod Smith 01530 833307 (after 7pm) or 07946 199914



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# Application for Membership

Ashby Canal Association

Please return the form to:

**Cindy Aston, 11 Saxon Court, Leomansley View, Lichfield, Staffs. WS13 8AS** Enquiries: **01543 418748**

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS.

Title..... 1st Name..... Surname.....

Title..... 2nd Name..... Surname.....

Address.....

..... Postcode.....

Tel (H)..... Tel (M) .....

Email:.....

(if applicable) Name of Boat.....

Mooring.....

I/We wish to apply for the following membership:

(Please tick appropriate boxes)

Single Membership £13.00 per annum

Family £17.00 per annum

(two adults plus children)

Clubs & Societies £30.00 per annum

Clubs & Societies (10 Year) £180.00

Single Life Membership £140.00

Family Life Membership £180.00

I/We agree to abide by the rules and constitution of the Ashby Canal Association

Enclosed with this form:

Cash Fee £.....

Cheque Donation £.....

**TOTAL £.....**

Cheques should be made payable to **Ashby Canal Association**

I/We are interested in joining the following groups:

Work parties  Helping at events  Sales/Publicity  Environmental

Fund raising  Spout magazine  Other (Please specify) .....

*giftaid it*

**Gift Aid Declaration**  
I wish this and all my future donations to Ashby Canal Association to be treated as Gift Aid donations. I confirm that I pay at least as much UK Income tax/Capital Gains tax for the year of donation as ACA and any other charities or community amateur sports clubs that I donate to may reclaim on my donation in the tax year. Council Tax and VAT do not qualify

Signed .....

Date .....

# Ashby Canal Association

Registered Charity No. 1063566

## President

Tom Henshaw 5 Chapel Street, Newhall, Swadlincote, Derbys. DE11 0JU 01283 216275

## Vice Presidents

Brian Osborne 23 Alderminster Road, Solihull, West Midlands B91 3YT 0121 705 2639

Orest Mulka 2 Bosworth Grange, Snarestone, DE12 7DQ 01530 272761

## Committee

### Chairman

Peter Oakden Oak Cottage, Wood Lane, Norton-juxta-Twycross CV9 3QB 01827 880677

### Deputy-Chairman and Speaker Liaison

Audrey Boston Linton House, 1, Westhaven Court, Mkt Bosworth, Nuneaton CV13 0PR 01455 290462

### Secretary

Cyril Blackford 48 The Ridgeway, Burbage, Hinckley, Leics. LE10 2NR 01455 614816

### Treasurer

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Rod Smith 4 Ashby Road, Sinope, Coalville, Leics. LE67 3AY 01530 833307

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Fax: 01530 273986

### Canal & River Trust

Fazeley Office, Peel's Wharf Lichfield St, Fazeley Staffs B78 3QZ 0303 0404040

### Ashby Canal Trust

Email: ashbycanal@tiscali.co.uk www.ashbycanaltrust.co.uk 01530 273956

### Ashby Canal Association

Website: www.ashbycanal.org.uk - Email: info@ashbycanal.org.uk

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## Membership Matters

Enclosed with this edition of Spout is your membership renewal invitation for 2016. Please renew promptly or you may forget. By renewing now, it will save ACA the added expense of sending reminder letters out with the March edition of Spout.

All members, Annual or Life, receive a reminder each year so that you can check your contact details on the back of the renewal form and make changes as necessary, adding in any missing details. You may find it easier to email changes to [membership@ashbycanal.org.uk](mailto:membership@ashbycanal.org.uk) especially if no fees are due for you in 2016.

Members can pay their subscriptions using internet banking. Payment should be made to sort code 40-24-19; Account name: Ashby Canal Association; Account No 11223461. Please quote your membership number and surname in the reference section when making your payment, otherwise we shall not be able to identify you.

Our current membership at the end of 2015 stands at 470 an increase of 43 over 2014. A modest increase that does reflect members coming (93) and going (58) during the year. The ACA wishes to thank all of you who strive to recruit new members into the Association.

We would like to welcome the following 25 new members, and look forward to meeting them with their families and friends, at our various functions throughout the year.

Mr S. J. Wain	Brewood
Mr P. Barber &	
Mrs V. Scragg	Long Eaton
Mr P. & Mrs A. Carter	Coventry
Mr S. & Mrs B. Alexander	Wigton
Mr M. & Mrs I. Watts	Bramcote

Mr A. Eagle &	Northampton
Mrs J. Gosling	Rugby
Mr T. & Mrs G. Redshaw	Nuneaton
Mr R. & Mrs L. Hancock	Coalville
Mr R. Main	Loughborough
Mr D. G. Thompson	Hinckley
Mr B. Tetlow	
Mr S. & Mrs T. West	

	Broughton
	Astley
Mr P. & Mrs R. Swift	Ashby
Mr A. D. Gibbs	Coventry
Mr R. Hart &	
Mrs A. Deeming	Atherstone

On behalf of your management committee may we wish all of our members a Happy Christmas and New Year. We look forward to meeting you at one of our events in 2016.

*Cindy & Roger*



**Answer to Brain exercises:**  
 1. The man was a boatbuilder and he was planting cauliflowers  
 2. Wadlands wharf; Bath Yard Basin; Moira Furnace; Sharestone Tunnel; Gopsall Wharf; Carlton; Market Bosworth; Shenton Aqueduct; Stoke Golding; Hinckley Arm; Hospital Bend; Marston Junction.  
 $3. 74 \times 2 + 22 - 6 \times 11 = 1804$  (the year the Ashby Canal opened)

## Nature Notes

ACA's vice-president Orest Mulka is a keen nature photographer, who is always on the lookout for an interesting pictures.



### Kingfisher at Bridge 62

Within a week of the builders finishing the bridge, this male kingfisher was using it as a perch. Kingfishers are very territorial and each control up to 2 miles of river or canal. Boaters at Sharestone Wharf have seen a Kingfisher flying towards Bridge 62 and it's almost certain that the pictured male's territory is the end stretch of the canal. There is another Kingfisher who operates between Bridges 54 and 57 and there is yet another who looks after the Gilwiskaw stream which is half a mile across country from Bridge 62.

Kingfishers only share territory when they pair up for breeding purposes. They then excavate a tunnel up to 2 feet long in an earth bank of a watercourse. Here they feed their young and their holes are noted for their stink since decaying remains of fish remain in the nest cavity. Once fledged the young are driven out of the parents' territory and the survival rate is poor.

The Kingfisher's life is difficult since they stay around through our winter and a frozen canal can mean starvation. The new stretch of canal has added new habitat, though initially it isn't ideal since Kingfishers like overhanging branches from which they can spot their prey. They take mainly small fish, too small to be a competitor for anglers fortunately. However the

message is clear, the more canal the more Kingfishers. So let's restore more miles of canal!

### Alien Species

Alien species have featured in the last two editions of Spout. Here is another example.

Whilst running along the Ashby Canal between Bridges 56 and 54 I noticed what looked like a giant goldfish sunning itself on the surface near the bank.



On closer inspection it was a koi carp. It had barbels near its mouth which goldfish don't possess. In any case this would have been the world's biggest goldfish since it was 2 feet long. This koi carp would have to have been more than 20 years old to get to this size. It's another alien invader and like the yellow-bellied slider turtle, seen in a previous edition of The Spout, must have been deposited in the canal as a small fish many years ago.

Koi are carp which have been selectively bred (initially in China and Japan) to produce attractive colours. Therefore they can interbreed with the common carp in the canal, so perhaps we don't need to feel sorry about its potentially celibate existence. Having been a pond fish during its early life it will be likely to be unfit for human consumption since medications for pond fish infections persist in the flesh and are toxic to humans.

I think I just heard a "peww" coming from the canal!

*Orest Mulka*

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