



**Canal &
River Trust**

Making life better by water

REFLECTIONS

10 September 2021

Hope you have all had a good summer and been able to see colleagues at one of our Let's Reconnect events. It's been a busy summer and with staycations and footfall across the sites has been good. Please see below, just some of the exciting things that's been happening.

Please will all staff/Task Managers in consultation with Lead Volunteers ensure all volunteer teams receive this latest edition. We appear to be getting closer to being able to formulate a distribution list from Sugar but still not quite there yet.

Museums Association Annual Conference 2021, Brave New World, 8-10 November 2021

The Trust is an Institutional member of the Museums Association. As such we have paid for every museum/volunteer to attend the Museums Association conference in November online. More details about the conference can be found at

<https://www.museumsassociation.org/events/conference-2021-brave-new-world/>

The Museums Association have provided the following joining instructions:

For staff/volunteers that would like to attend online they can book their place by [clicking here](#).

When making a booking, please be aware of the following:

Each staff/volunteer member that would like access to the Conference should make their own booking using the link above.

They must register themselves on our website, if they haven't already done so, and make sure Canal & River Trust is listed as their organisation in their online profile so that we know they are part of the organisation wide booking. It is important that staff make sure they have Canal & River Trust listed as their organisation in their profile otherwise the system will ask for additional payment.

They must not pass the link on to anyone who doesn't work at that organisation.

Joining instructions will be sent closer to the event.

Learning

August saw the successful conclusion of the first pilot session for the new Young Rangers programme at the Anderton Boat Lift. Over the course of a few months, a group of home educated children took part in a range of activities aimed at improving habitats including constructing a bug hotel and a toad abode. The impact was seen through the monitoring of plant and animal species using traditional quadrat and sweep net survey methods as well as

a motion sensitive wildlife camera. Highlights from the findings include foxes and badgers visiting the site and a rare pink caterpillar found amongst the wildflower meadow.

Following this successful pilot, a new group of Young Rangers has been recruited from a local college and under the supervision of Elliot will continue work to improve the site and create more habitats for a wider range of species starting in September.

At Ellesmere Port preparations are well underway for the delayed biannual STEM festival with a number of providers and schools booked to attend the event at the beginning of October. This event has proven popular with schools in the past and serves as an ideal showcase for many of the things that the team does. Not only does it bring large footfall onto the museum site but also showcases STEM careers through the STEM Ambassador programme and will this year allow the team to promote the new STEM learning offer being launched this term.

National Waterways Museum Ellesmere Port

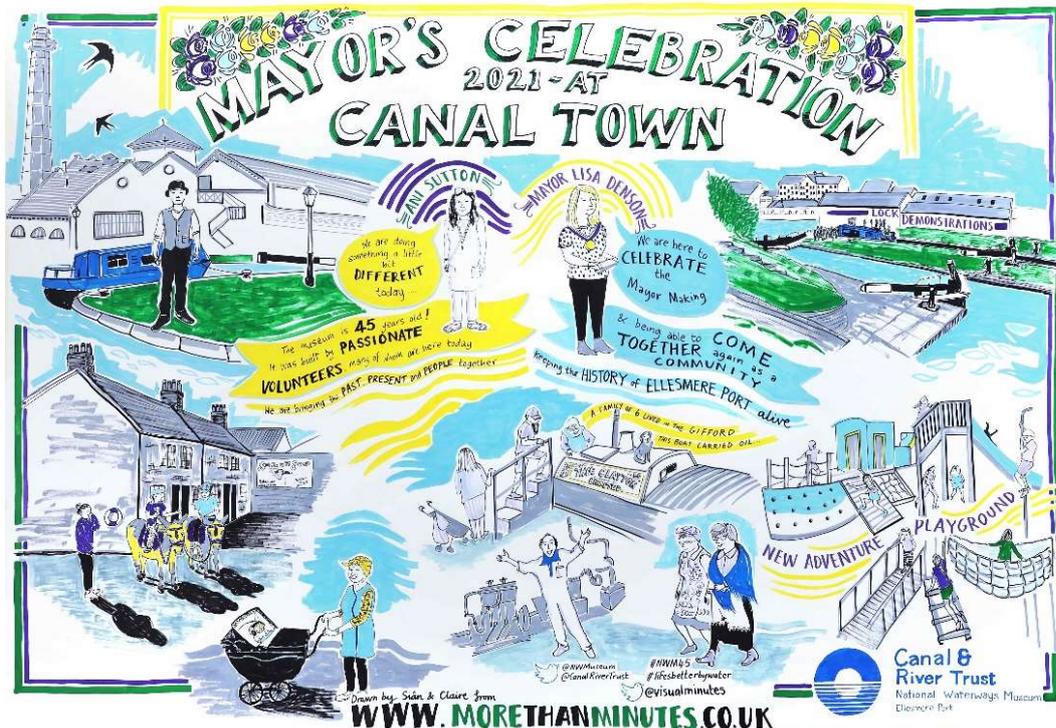
Horse Power at the Museum



Despite inclement weather on Sunday 15 August, a large number of visitors enjoyed following Bilbo in the morning and Bonny in the afternoon as they each towed Gifford along the canal. LocTup Together provided canal songs from the boat as well as performing in the Island Warehouse and entertaining customers as they sat in the outside area of the Café.

Mayor's Celebration

The Mayor's Celebration brought in nearly 600 visitors to the museum on Sunday 5 September which coincided with another of our Canal Town Sundays. It was great to see the museum so busy. The artists at "More than Minutes" created an illustrative memoir of the day. If you take a close look at the artwork, you may be able to spot a few familiar faces.



Wirral Narrow Boat Community Trust

A huge thank you to the Wirral Narrow Boat Community Trust (WNBCT) who provided trip boats for the museum through the summer holidays. Most boat trips were full and the guiding volunteers were able to undertake the commentaries, with the back-up of a taped version if voices or energy faded.

Live Music and Let's Walk – Sunday 19 September

On Sunday 19 September, to celebrate the end of Canal Town for this year, there is a special event where LocTup Together will perform their maritime and canal themed songs. For those visitors who are a little more energetic, there is the option of going on a one mile walk outside the museum to hear more about the historic docks.

Bake Off at the Museum

The final Let's Reconnect event was held at the museum where staff and volunteers were encouraged to bake a cake and the judging was undertaken jointly by Julie Sharman (Chief Operations Manager) and Jim McKeown (Museum Duty Manager). The successful winner was Abbi Cooper who baked a vegan Victoria Sponge cake and the joint runners up were Liz Fairweather (Lemon Drizzle) and Clare Matthews (Top Hat cake). They all received a special apron. Thank you to everyone who took part.



News from Collections and Archives

Earlier this year, the BBC recorded a piece on Measham Ware for their BARGAIN HUNT



DAYTIME series. Images from the Trust's Waterways Archive at Ellesmere Port were used and Charlie Ross, the presenter, asked the Stoke Bruerne Museum team to talk about Measham Ware. Originally, the filming was to take place in the museum but due to Covid it was closed. The intention then was to take some pieces from the museum out onto the towpath but unfortunately, it was blowing a gale that day and it wasn't safe for the artefacts. At the last

minute, the Boat Inn opposite came to the rescue. They were also closed but made an area available on condition that no more than 6 people were available on BBC I-player after that. there! The programme should be broadcast on Friday 10th September on BBC 1 after that.

National Waterways Museum Gloucester

The Canal & River Trust Activities on the Water event in the Gloucester Docks in August was great fun and there was some great feedback from people who took part in the paddleboarding, kayaking and canoeing sessions with Discover Paddling. The plan is to hold these events more regularly in 2022.



'Our SUP lesson was fantastic 🙌 my daughter and I loved it! The lads instructing were fab too. She can't wait to come back, highly recommended!'

Photo: Activities on the water in the Gloucester Docks

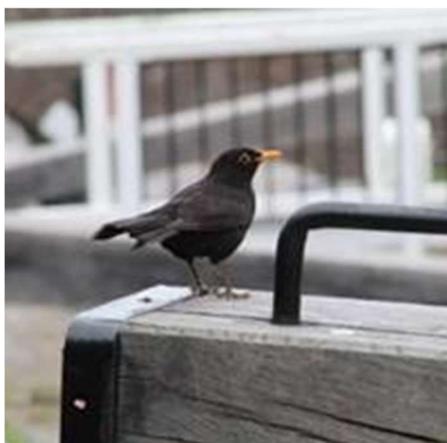
The Museum is thrilled to have the boat trips on Queen Boadicea II back up and running. The trips are running at a reduced capacity and have proved to be very popular. Some groups have enjoyed trips with takeaway afternoon teas prepared by Sam who (with help from Yvonne) valiantly made 50 individual cream tea boxes in one morning!

As part of the Gloucester History Festival and to celebrate the boat trips starting again there will be a series of social media posts, delving into the history of Queen Boadicea II and her role as a Dunkirk Little Ship. You will be able to find those on the National Waterways Museum Gloucester Facebook and Instagram pages throughout September.



Photo - historical postcard of Westminster Pier where Queen Boadicea was based in the 1930s.

Foxton Locks



Changes are afoot at Foxton Locks and autumn is well and truly making an appearance. The fruit trees in the orchard are full of apples ripening and the burnt orange colours of this beautiful season are emerging. Elderberries, blackberries and sloes are in every hedgerow on this 34-acre site; and visitors can relax, sit back and watch nature in action. Already the swifts are diving for insects and preparing for the migration to a warmer climate. The new resident blackbird is getting bolder and can always be seen resting on the locks in between feeding; and daring any boater to disturb his day!



The whole place feels like a frenzy of activity when it comes to wildlife, but sometimes you need to look very close to see what's out of sight. This is something young visitors have been doing on bug hunting events just before their return to school. With the guidance of the Trust's bug expert, Catherine West, an abundant array of butterflies and insects have been discovered at Foxton. It is heart-warming to realise that this amazing destination is host to some of the rarer UK species. There are plans to focus on moths this autumn; and bird watching is on the cards. Foxton is always surprising visitors because there's so much to see and do.



The Inclined Plane has been cleared of brambles revealing more of the original tracks. This excellent work was started by Duke of Edinburgh Award students in August and then continued by a small volunteer team of Foxton Welcome Hosts. This ancient monument is a highlight of the free guided walks on offer and the volunteer hosts (who guide the walking trails) were inspired to help preserve it. You can now see the details of the tracks clearly from the viewing platform. Previously they had been obscured by overgrowth and now Welcome Hosts are reporting visitors have a better understanding of how the old boat lift would have worked. Work has now stopped until April because this part of the site is home to hibernating newts. They make their way up from the ponds below and stay safely sheltered in the tracks and rocky areas throughout winter.

Foxton Locks has just been selected as a Travellers' Choice Award Winner 2021 by TripAdvisor for consistently offering visitors an excellent experience. This is awarded because the site has received a high level of excellent reviews during 2021. Duty Manager, Julie Nottingham says, "We are delighted that our visitors are reporting high levels of satisfaction when visiting Foxton Locks. These reviews are really useful for letting us know what we are doing well. It helps us to build upon things people enjoy doing and seeing".

The Welcome Station had been repurposed as a welfare area because it has been easier to provide a socially distanced space for volunteers. However, this autumn Foxton will be welcoming visitors back. There is a fantastic model of the locks and Inclined Plane to view; and visitors can enjoy the displays of old canal ware and learn about how the locks work. So watch this space because there will soon be even more on offer at Foxton.



Anderton Boat Lift

A historic 19th century commercial boat anchor, rescued from the bottom of the River Weaver Navigation, has been given a new home on display at the foot of Anderton Boat Lift.

The Trust was asked to provide a permanent resting place for this fascinating boating relic

by the family of former British Waterways sections inspector Neville Robinson.

The anchor, thought to date back to 1840, belonged to the old Weaver-built schooner *British Queen*, and was discovered by Neville and his colleagues buried deep in silt at Pickerings Wharf in the 1980s, when they were dredging the Weaver to maintain river depth – a task now carried out by the Trust.

The anchor then spent many happy years as a curio in the Robinson family garden – even moved house with them. But when Neville and his wife died recently, their son and daughter felt it was time to find the treasured memento a permanent and more fitting home on dry land next to the Weaver, where visitors can enjoy seeing it too.

With the help of John Tackley, president of the River Weaver Navigation Society, and Ani Sutton, the destinations and attractions manager, the anchor is now in place on public view. And in August, the Robinson family, guests and boating colleagues met at Anderton to enjoy a celebratory ribbon cutting.

Staffing

Elaine Clay-Thompson

The Museum at Gloucester sadly said goodbye to Elaine at the end of August. She will be greatly missed as the museum's duty manager but she is wished all the best in the next stage of her career as she trains to be a teacher.



Photo - Elaine in a diving helmet

Message from Jonathan Lott

"For those who don't know me, I'm Jon Lott; one of the duty managers at the museum in Ellesmere Port. After four and a half years working at the museum, I have requested and been approved for a career break, to allow me to return to university. I will be undertaking a one-year Master of Science degree in Maritime Archaeology at Southampton University. This is a field I have been interested in from childhood, and I am glad to have the opportunity to further my knowledge in this subject. If all goes well, I should return to my role at the museum in mid-August 2022. I would like to thank my colleagues for the support I have received, and I look forward to seeing you all again in a year."

Jim McKeown's Retirement

Friday 27 August saw Julie Sharman, chief operating officer present Jim with his long service award for 40 years as an employee at the museum. This followed a six-year period of him volunteering.

Jim is known for his love of all things relating to trains and so the collection from staff and volunteers bought him an "experience" of a One Night Break and Steam Train Trip with Churnet Valley Railway for two along with a further £80 towards his rail fare and spends. Staff also arranged for him to receive his favourite black puddings and Chris Bacon colourised and annotated the classic black and white photograph of "Lunch break for restoration volunteers at The Boat Museum" which was presented to him.

Jim will be returning as a Collections Volunteer to assist in identifying some of the artefacts housed at the museum.



Please remember to share your stories with us.

Please look after yourselves, families and friends and stay safe.

Please send any contributions to Michelle Kozomara Michelle.Kozomara@canalrivertrust.org.uk and Barbara Kay Barbara.Kay@canalrivertrust.org.uk by 5pm on Tuesday 5 October 2021. Thank you.

If you no longer wish to receive Reflections please contact Michelle Kozomara michelle.kozomara@canalrivertrust.org.uk

If you have colleagues who don't currently receive Reflections but would like to, please ask them to contact Michelle with their email address. Thank you.

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