



Pocklington Canal Project Newsletter #5: December 2017

Major habitat improvements taking place on the Pocklington Canal

Dredging has taken place between Top Lock (Canal Head) and Silburn Lock, and is currently taking place between Walbut Lock and Church Bridge (near Melbourne). The Pocklington Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is designated for the diversity of scarce aquatic plants. However, where the canal has become overgrown with reed sweet-grass, the diversity of its plant life has reduced. Dredging a channel along the canal in certain sections will create open water habitats, giving some rarer plant species the chance to recolonise. The dredging is being carried out using a special amphibious excavator, designed specifically for works in SSSI habitats, and one of only three in the UK.

In addition to this, work is planned to remove some of the trees along the edge of the canal to increase the amount of light reaching the canal. Over the last few decades the number and density of trees along the canal has increased, and the shade that this creates on the canal is part of the factor for the decline in the quality of the SSSI.

The works have been agreed by both the Canal & River Trust's Ecologist and Natural England's Senior Land Advisor, and are taking place outside of the breeding season.



Left: dredging underway upstream of Silburn Lock in November 2017;

Above: the same view in August 2017

New look for the canal's signage

A group representing all project partners has developed a new 'interpretation' scheme for the canal, which is being designed by PLB Ltd in Malton. This new scheme will consist of: new display boards (lectern panels) with differing content at Canal Head, Melbourne, Hagg Bridge and East Cottingwith; taller, more sculptural units alongside the bridges; smaller panels at some of the other structures along the towpath. A leaflet will also accompany the scheme. The map is a very useful aspect of the existing boards, so this new scheme will retain this with a new illustrated map, as well as including historic photos.



The new illustrated map for the leaflet

For all the updates, take a look at our **Facebook page** /PocklingtonCanal, follow us on **Twitter** @PockCanal, or visit the Canal & River Trust website and look for the **Pocklington Canal blog pages**.



Canal &
River Trust

Funding raised by
The National Lottery
and awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund



2018 is nearly here.... with plenty of events to mark the bicentenary of the Pocklington Canal!

Work began on building the canal in 1815, and it was completed and opened on the 30th July 1818. A series of Open Days and events are in planning to mark this milestone, all made possible thanks to funding through the Heritage Lottery Fund. As well as our drop in Open Days (see box to right), there are guided nature walks and identification workshops, family nature safaris and canoeing taster sessions. We will be reopening the Denison Warehouse archaeological dig at Canal Head in July 2018 for those who missed out first time around. View events on the Canal & River Trust website, or at pocklingtoncanal.eventbrite.com. There will be a printed events guide available from venues around Pocklington in 2018.

In addition to celebrating the achievements of the Heritage Lottery Fund project, Pocklington Canal Amenity Society (PCAS) and Canal & River Trust will also be celebrating the opening of a further two miles of the canal to boats. The Bicentenary Appeal Project will be completed by July 2018, which will see boats being able to travel from Melbourne Arm up to Bielby Arm. The PCAS *New Horizons* public trip boat will be running trips along this newly restored section later in the year. To celebrate this achievement, PCAS are organising a boat rally, which will take place at the same time as the public festival.

Key dates for the diary

Heritage Open Day, Sunday 20th May at Melbourne Arm.

Help celebrate the transformation of the Melbourne Swing Bridge (no 7) to a period design with heritage activities, theatrical walks and more for the family.

Wildlife Open Day, Sunday 24th June at Melbourne Arm.

Explore the canal's wildlife, get on the water in a kayak and build your own bird box to take away.

Bicentenary Festival & Boat Rally, Saturday 28th July & Sunday 29th July at Canal Head and Melbourne Arm.

Help celebrate 200 years of the Pocklington Canal by taking part in our festival, with archaeology and kayaking at Canal Head, and boat trips, wildlife activities and a boat rally at Melbourne Arm.

Memories of the Pocklington Canal

As part of the bicentenary year, Canal & River Trust and the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society would like to gather and record local stories and memories of the canal. This could include memories of early working parties restoring the canal, boaters using the canal, local people living near the canal – the scope is broad! We are looking for volunteers and participants to take part in this oral history project.

Volunteers will be responsible for interviewing people and recording their stories. There will be a workshop in March 2018 with Canal & River Trust Archivist John Benson to cover the what, how and why of recording histories. If you are interested please email Lizzie for more information, or sign up for the role through the Canal & River Trust website (search for Pocklington under Volunteering Opportunities). People wishing to be participants and to be interviewed (all very friendly– and there will be cake!) are also asked to email Lizzie.

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working in partnership