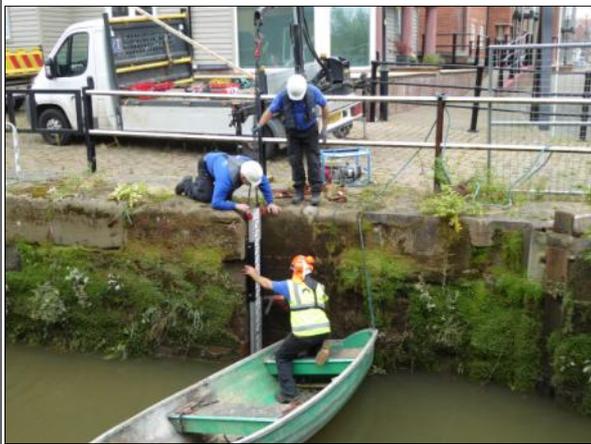


NEWSLETTER



TIDE LEVEL GAUGE INSTALLED AT LAST!



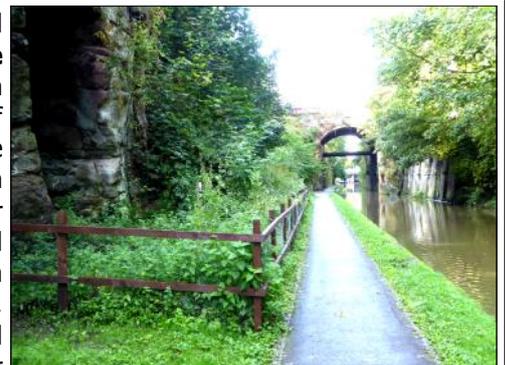
On Wednesday 20 September 2017, CRT finally installed the tide level gauge on the gate recess wall of the River Lock at the end of the Dee Branch. The gauge had been at Taylor's Boatyard for over two years awaiting installation. It is designed to show the tide level at the River Lock itself but also at Chester Weir and is a tangible demonstration of the joint strategy of IWA and CCHT to open up better access to the non-tidal Dee. The gauge was

financed from the proceeds of the 2014 IWA campaign festival in Chester. In the short term it will provide tidal guidance for any boats attempting to pass over or through the gate in the weir. Its ultimate value will be doing the same for boats using the intended lock in the mill race on the south side of the weir, the real answer to better navigation on the Dee.



NORTHGATE CUTTING LOOKING BETTER!

In the last edition, we reported that Chester Civic Trust had named and shamed the **'Unightly Barriers alongside the Canal in Northgate Cutting'** as part of its 'New Year Honours' list. The barriers have been in place for over two years because of potential problems arising from pieces of rock which were in danger of falling on to the towpath and harming anyone who is passing by at the time. This was an issue on which CCHT had been calling for the Canal and River Trust (CRT) and Cheshire West and Chester Council to cooperate in order to reach a sensible compromise on disputed issues and to carry out the necessary works as quickly as possible. Although a long term solution has not yet been identified, we are pleased to note that, over the summer, CRT staff have removed the large HERAS metal barriers and replaced them with wooden post and rail fencing and wire netting together with warning signs to prevent pedestrians and dogs from venturing into the 'danger' zone! Visually, this is a massive improvement on the previous arrangement and is to be welcomed pending the completion of any works to deal with the problem on a more permanent basis.



The new fences and warning signs

MIKE CARTER AND PAUL MILLS

We are sad to report the deaths of two stalwarts of the local canal community, who made great contributions to various aspects of the canals in and around Chester. **Mike Carter** was not only active in the Inland Waterways Association, helping to organise various Rallies, including those in Chester, but also led the local Towpath Taskforce for CRT. For many years, **Paul Mills** was a driving force in the Shropshire Union Canal Society and, more recently, led the Small Tasks Team Volunteers for CRT, in which role he was a tremendous help to CCHT since he organised the installation of our Information Boards and additional mooring rings. They will both be greatly missed and we offer our deepest sympathy to their families.

THE GOOD OLD DAYS ON THE CHESTER CANAL?

Canal boats had been registered with the local sanitary authority since the Canal Boats Act of 1877 and the local sanitary inspector was responsible for inspecting the living conditions in craft registered in his area. At the turn of the twentieth century the sanitary inspector did no such inspections on the Chester Canal however. The Shropshire Union Canal Co. employed a 'general inspector of boats' but the condition of boat cabins and their occupants was not his responsibility either. Indeed, it was far from clear just what the SUCCo inspector's duties were, particularly as he kept no record of what he had actually inspected.

All this was exposed to public gaze in a case that came before Chester magistrates in August 1900. On the night of 16 July Inspector Nicol of the NSPCC was patrolling the boats tied up in Ellesmere Port docks when he came upon the SUCCo boat **Eleanor**. Its charming name belied the appalling conditions he found inside the rear cabin. Edward Moore and his wife Annie lived there with their five sons. The children ranged from Richard aged twelve to five month old baby Sam. The fore cabin was disused. Their bedding consisted merely of dirty sacks filched from the boat's cargoes. The children's 'bodies were in a state of filth that almost baffled description. They were undernourished and their clothing was ragged and infested with vermin.' The Moores were charged with wilfully neglecting their children and pleaded guilty. Two similar cases had been to court the previous week.



George Talbott, the SUCCo boat inspector based at Tower Wharf, gave rather evasive and contradictory responses to questions about the Company's inspection regime but basically argued that it was not his job to be concerned about the living conditions of boaters. A letter from Thomas Hales, the SUCCo general manager, did little to clarify things. He said the recent cases were exceptional and had escaped the notice of the officials because of the sheer number of the company's boats. The magistrates retorted that the Company should employ someone whose clear responsibility was to ensure cabins were fit for human occupation.

Edward and Annie Moore had been on the boats since their common law marriage in the 1880s. They started off in the Black Country and in 1891 Edward was working as a day boatman on the BCN. Annie and their two boys lived ashore in Bilston. During the 1890s they moved on to the growing SUCCo fleet of boats, presumably seduced by the better money and cheaper living costs of long-distance boating on the canal to Ellesmere Port. They were clearly unable to adapt domestically to life aboard and their wretched living conditions – and the Company's

indifference to them - show the underside of narrow boat life over a hundred years ago. The evidence might suggest the Moores were 'rodney boaters' who would ultimately leave the canals and whose undernourished and verminous children would suffer early deaths. In fact the family stayed with the SUCCo and the children all survived their harsh early years. Indeed, they flourished and by 1911 they were running three boats. In the census that year we find Edward and his son Samuel were on the 'Mouse' at Tower Wharf, Chester, whilst Annie, three sons and a baby daughter were on the 'Stella' amongst the 53 canal craft tied up at Ellesmere Port. Three of their other sons led by 20 year-old William were now on a third boat, the 'Hugo', elsewhere in the docks. And George Talbott was still working from Tower Wharf, now titled 'traffic inspector'. On census night he was on hand to fill in the illiterate Edward Moore's form for him. Let's hope his job specification and conscientiousness were clearer than they had been in 1900.

Register of Canal Boats.	
<p>1. Name of the boat as entered in the Register ... Gannett</p> <p>2. Name of the master ... George Talbott</p> <p>3. Name of the crew ... George Talbott</p> <p>4. Name of the crew ... George Talbott</p> <p>5. Name of the crew ... George Talbott</p> <p>6. Name of the crew ... George Talbott</p> <p>7. Name of the crew ... George Talbott</p> <p>8. Name of the crew ... George Talbott</p> <p>9. Name of the crew ... George Talbott</p> <p>10. Name of the crew ... George Talbott</p> <p>11. Name of the crew ... George Talbott</p> <p>12. Name of the crew ... George Talbott</p> <p>13. Name of the crew ... George Talbott</p> <p>14. Name of the crew ... George Talbott</p> <p>15. Name of the crew ... George Talbott</p> <p>16. Name of the crew ... George Talbott</p> <p>17. Name of the crew ... George Talbott</p> <p>18. Name of the crew ... George Talbott</p> <p>19. Name of the crew ... George Talbott</p> <p>20. Name of the crew ... George Talbott</p>	
<p>10. Date of application for Registration ... 24th December 1878</p> <p>11. Date of re-examination by Officer of Sanitary Authority ... 21st June 1879</p> <p>12. Date of Re-Registration ... 24th July 1879</p> <p>13. Place to which the boat is registered ... Ellesmere Port</p> <p>14. Multiple number of persons for which the boat is registered ... 3</p> <p>15. Observations ... As a fly boat</p>	<p>16. Multiple number of persons for which the boat is registered ... 3</p> <p>17. Observations ... As a fly boat</p> <p>18. Observations ... As a fly boat</p> <p>19. Observations ... As a fly boat</p> <p>20. Observations ... As a fly boat</p>

Register entry for SUCCo flyboat, **Gannett**, first registered at the start of registration in 1878 and still running in 1907. It shows the name of the master, the its normal route from Ellesmere Port to the Potteries, and the dimensions and cubic capacity of the cabin. It was registered for four men as a fly boat worked in shifts and otherwise for three men or three women or a man, wife and two children (if male, under 14, if female under 12).

CHESTER CANAL CONSERVATION AREA

– THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL?

Members of CCHT who have been working to make the Chester Canal a Conservation Area are now hopeful that the end is in sight!

Many years have passed since Howard Dickinson, the leading Conservation Officer with Chester City Council at the time, suggested that this was a project the Trust could take forward. Gwynneth Buss then formed a small group to work on the necessary documents and several other Trust members as well as Canal and River Trust have been involved in subsequent years. Now Cheshire West and Chester Council are engaged in the final steps towards declaring the canal a Conservation Area.

How would being a Conservation Area help the Chester Canal? It would help protect its environment, special features and buildings, and even important views from and along the canal, from unsuitable development. It would draw attention to the Canal's heritage value and make it better known. The Council is committed to making the documents part of its local plan.

We expect the designation of the Conservation Area to be made before the end of 2017. This would be very appropriate as this year is the 50th Anniversary of the



One of the latest developments next to the canal

legislation to enable Councils to set up Conservation Areas. The Chester Canal will be the first that Cheshire West and Chester Council has designated.

CCHT has dedicated the formation of the Chester Canal Conservation Area to the late Howard Dickinson, who not only gave us the idea, but was also a member of the Trust and a much loved friend to many of us.

Ann Farrell

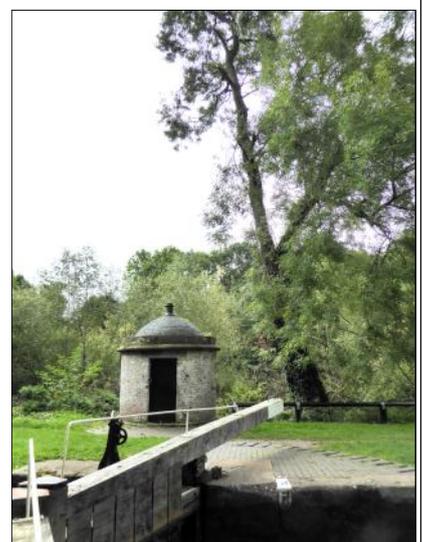
A LUCKY ESCAPE FOR TILSTONE LOCK LENGTHSMAN'S HUT!



June

The three surviving Lengthsman's Huts on the Chester Canal are a unique and fascinating feature of the canal's past. Working with CRT, CCHT undertook a restoration of the one at Tilstone Lock in 2013 and subsequently opened it to the public for Heritage Open Days. While passing in June of this year, we were alarmed to see that the overhanging branches of a nearby ash tree looked like they were about to fall and demolish the hut! This was reported to CRT but it would appear that nature took its course and the branches did fall! As we passed by again in September, we were relieved to find that they had missed the hut (but not by much!) and the building appeared to be unharmed.

Gwynneth & Ray Buss



September

- Full Boatyard and Dry Dock Services
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October 2017
Number 29



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Chester,
CH1 1QN

www.chestercanalheritagetrust.co.uk

Chester Canal Heritage Trust (CCHT) initially formed in November 1997, and now registered with Companies House (company number 04360134) and with the Charities Commission (charity number 1094394)

THE OBJECTS OF CCHT ARE:

To advance the public education by engendering and fostering an awareness of the Chester Canal, its activities, heritage and environs (including adjoining waterways), in local people and visitors through the following powers:

- the provision of training and education in the skills of the watery environment;
- the encouragement of exploration of the role of the waterways in the development of the surrounding area;
- the support and preservation of the canal's heritage, including the historic narrowboats and other craft that made use of it;
- the development of recreational activities within the canal environment;
- the dissemination of information about the canal;
- the monitoring of developments and proposed developments affecting the canal;
- and participation in schemes and initiatives designed to safeguard, promote and enhance the canal.

JOIN TODAY!

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Individual: £12 per year
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Junior (under 16): £7 per year
Corporate: £35 per year

Application forms can be downloaded from the website

WINTER TALKS 2017-18

Wednesday 1st November 2017

George Jebb M.I.C.E. (1836-1927) Chief Engineer to the Shropshire Union and Birmingham Canal Navigation Companies.

By **Timothy Peters**, who divides his time between research into early modern medical history and the industrial archaeology of various aspects of the history of inland waterways.

Wednesday 6th December 2017

Taylor's Boatyard - The story continues.

By **Geoff Taylor**, who is the grandson of Joseph Harry Taylor, founder of JH Taylor & Sons, Chester, and who has researched the history of the firm and its craft over many years.

Wednesday 7th February 2018

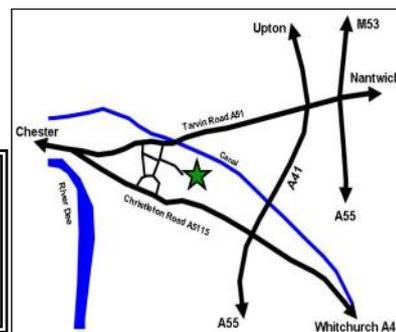
Shipbuilding on the River Dee

By **Tony Barrett**, who is an expert on aspects of the history of Liverpool, the Mersey and related areas.

Wednesday 7th March 2018

Saving the Canals - Some Thoughts on Waterways Heritage

By **John Yates**, who is an historic environment specialist who worked for Historic England. He is a past chair of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation and has also had a long involvement with historic narrow boats. A member of Canal & River Trust's Council, John is a member of the North Wales & Borders Waterway Partnership and the Heritage Advisory Group.



Talks start at 8.00 pm in the Clubhouse at

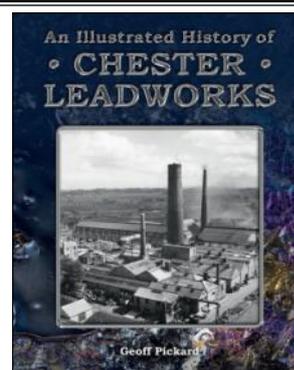
Chester Boughton Hall Cricket Club

Boughton Hall Avenue, Boughton, Chester, CH3 5EL

Free to members of CCHT, IWA & SUCS, non-members £2.50

A HISTORY OF CHESTER LEADWORKS

Those who were fortunate to be present at our talk in March 2013 will recall that it was 'standing room only' to hear Geoff Pickard tell us about the history of Chester Leadworks in a fascinating presentation with lots of great pictures. He has now produced an excellent 216 page hardback book **An Illustrated History of Chester Leadworks**, which gives a comprehensive account, not only of Chester's role in the lead industry, but also of the science and technology on which that industry is based. Although the Shot Tower is all that remains of the works today, the book covers in detail all the company's other products such as white and red lead, lead sheet and pipe as well as precision castings.



The book retails at £25.00 but Geoff Pickard has agreed to make it available to CCHT members at a discount price of £20.00. A display copy will be available at our talks, where orders can be placed.

Educational Services for Local Groups and Schools

Chester Canal Heritage Trust can offer a variety of walks and talks about the canal and its history to schools, local groups and societies.

For further information about this and other services, contact us:

E-mail: education@chestercanalheritagetrust.co.uk