

Manchester & Stockport Canal Society – Newsletter for 2016

(if you no longer wish to receive information from MSCS please advise me at RBravey@aol.com)

Dear Members and colleagues,

I am writing to you to bring you all up to date with the recent changes and developments that have, and are taking place, in MSCS.

At this year's AGM there was a major "changing of the guard". Founder members of the Society, Peter and Gwen Scott, Secretary and Treasurer respectively, retired after many years of active and faithful service.

As you may know Peter & Gwen moved to Berkhamsted some years ago and have been commuting to and fro ever since in support of the Society.

David Sumner, our Chairman, has been attracted to warmer climes and emigrated to Valencia.

All three will be greatly missed as they all have literally been the driving force behind the Society since its inception.

Your new officers are:

- Secretary – Patrick O' Herlihy
- Treasurer – Robert Twigg
- Chairman – myself, Roger Bravey

We are all "rookies" and embarking on a steep learning curve to fill the roles left by our predecessors.

Just a little about ourselves:-

- As Chairman, my calling is that of a Chartered Civil engineer. I have been involved with the society in producing some outline details proving the practicality of restoring the canal along the first stage from the Ashton canal to Lower Gorton reservoir.
- Patrick, our Secretary is a Chartered Surveyor.
- Robert, is our new Treasurer, his background is that of a retired local authority accountant, Robert lives in the Heatons and is involved with various community groups. He a school governor and though he admits to little practical experience in the rejuvenation of canals, he supports our aim to bring regeneration, wildlife & leisure benefits to disadvantaged parts of Stockport and east Manchester.

Over the past years the Society has been steadily moving towards a point where we can seriously consider taking the project from a concept to a reality. We have had several reports commissioned, primarily by the then British Waterways Board, Jacobs & Partners (Consulting Engineers) and latterly our Consultants, Moss Naylor Young Ltd.

Our profile has been kept in the public eye with information stalls at community events such as Reddish Vale country park in the summer and recent Houldsworth Square xmas lights, to try and increase local public support for the project.

Several plaques have also been erected along the line of the canal to inform people of what once existed where they now walk.

We have also utilised the enthusiasm of the final year engineering students from Manchester University, who have addressed some of the major technical aspects of restoring the canal as part of their final year course syllabus.

We are now in a position to look closely at commissioning the initial stage of the canal restoration from the Ashton Canal to Lower Gorton reservoir.

Because the present use of the original canal embankment at Gorton is that of an impounding dam to the reservoir we can no longer use the embankment to maintain the original line of the canal. A system of locking into and out of the reservoir has been devised instead.

Since our AGM in September there have been several developments on a practical front emanating from these years of hard preparatory work put in by our predecessors:

- a) We have held discussions with Manchester City Council. They are supportive of our efforts to redevelop the canal and have agreed to facilitate us in our aims.
- b) A meeting has been held with United Utilities to discuss the use of Lower Gorton reservoir as a “destination” for the first stage of the restoration, (a reason to restore the canal is all important to our business case).
 - Our proposals were met with a positive response and we have a letter of support from them to enable us to develop, subject to detailed design, part of the reservoir as a marina.
 - The first stage of our restoration now has the “purpose” we need to argue its redevelopment
- c) The second major obstacle on this stretch of the canal is the aqueduct across the main railway line west of Gorton station. This aqueduct is still intact but suffering from invasive growths of vegetation and sapling trees.
 - After some research, we have ascertained the relative responsibilities for the aqueduct and its supporting structure. We are now in the process of organising a “clear up” of the aqueduct to prevent any further deterioration of the trough and to inspect its present condition. *(if you would be happy to “get your hands dirty” please contact me – we will be looking for volunteers over one or two weekends in 2017).*

Our next steps will be to establish how we will reconstruct the canal, following the original route as closely as possible.

Meanwhile, we need to consolidate a partnership with the Council wards which will benefit from the canal, Canal & River Trust, (*who will ultimately operate the canal*), United Utilities and other local bodies who might have an interest in restoring the canal.

Last, but not least, we need to raise the funds to facilitate the work.

If you feel your interest in the restoration of the canal has been rejuvenated by this news update, please e-mail me on RBravey@aol.com or contact me on 0161 442 9087 to discuss how you might be able to help.

Things are on the move!

Roger Bravey – Chairman, Manchester Stockport Canal Society

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A working party is to be held on **Saturday 18th February** 2017 on the aqueduct over the Manchester to Leeds railway line.

The aqueduct is just west of Gorton Railway Station.

Activities start at 9.30am

We are removing tree saplings which are invading the aqueduct trough and threatening to damage the original wrought iron plated structure.

This is the first of many activities being planned along the line of the Manchester to Stockport Branch canal to preserve the remaining original features prior to a major restoration.

If you are interested in helping or just want to come along and see what we are up to – You will be most welcome

[For further information contact RBravey@aol.com](mailto:RBravey@aol.com)

