

Manchester & Stockport Canal Society – Newsletter for 2017

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

Dear Members and colleagues,

Just before we get down to a chat about the Society's activities this year, don't forget the AGM on 22nd October 2017 at 2.00pm at the Stockport Labour Club, Wellington Road North (at the junction with Belmont Way).

Nearly a year has passed since I last wrote to you, and for any that have visited the line of the Stockport Canal recently, you will have seen the results of the very successful day we spent in February clearing Gorton Aqueduct.



These are some photographs of “before” and “after”, quite a difference I think you will agree !!

We carried out the work because of the vigorous growth of the sycamore and ash trees which had self seeded in the trough. We were concerned that the riveted plates, which make up the aqueduct's structure, were in danger of being forced apart by the roots of these trees.

The work could not have been carried out without the excellent support of Waterway Recovery Group (WRG) and we thank them very much for their support and effort.

We set to work at about 10.00 am and by lunchtime all the trees were cut down to within 500mm of the roots – the remaining stools were left to make for easier removal at a later date.

Several MSCS members were also part of the team and the opportunity was taken to use the time to erect the remaining plaques along the canal line.

By mid afternoon the site was cleared, the brushwood chipped and the larger logs distributed to those with cosy fires to burn.

We took the opportunity to dig a trial trench through the soil and leaf litter in the trough and were rewarded when we discovered standing water in the trough – this gives us a good indication that the trough is likely to be for the most part watertight – an encouraging sign for the future.

The remnants of the tree stumps were treated with a brushwood killer to stop re-growth, which it has been noted has worked very well. Other than keeping the annual undergrowth at bay we shall leave the trough in this condition for the time being as the remaining soil is retarding corrosion of the wrought iron plates of the aqueduct.

Our work generated considerable local interest with many favourable comments about our plans to restore the canal.

With the state of the aqueduct now determined, we can now keep a watchful eye on it to prevent further deterioration – one major hurdle, hopefully overcome.

The Society's aims for the rest of the spring and summer were to try and build on the interest shown at Gorton through our attendance at the various "fun days" and festivals held in the vicinity of the canal.

We launched an initiative at the events to encourage more membership and also to set up a register of "Friends " of the canal with a view to getting the local community involved in events such as "litter picking" and gradually introducing residents, groups and communities to the idea of restoring the canal.

Letters were sent to the local Councillors with limited response.

We attended the annual events in Reddish and at Clayton Hall and most recently at the Openshaw Festival. This last event has proved to be the most successful of all – here we met with several other community groups who were embarking on the same quest of tidying up the area for their own various reasons.

Having now made these contacts, we hope that something can be co-ordinated between us all to achieve our ambitions – watch this space!

Again, our proposals to restore the canal were well received with many people recalling fond memories of the canal as it once was.

There seems a genuine wish that the existing footpath and cycleway be improved and the inclusion of the restored canal as a means of achieving this went down well.

We did come across one nugget of information none of us manning the stand were remotely aware of – the footpath is known locally as **"The Yellow Brick Road"** - Internet searches reveal nothing, other than it is also referred to by the local police authority in their reports on crime and misdemeanours.

Does anyone know the historical basis for this name? – no prizes – but it might just form part of the catch phrase we need to promote the Canal restoration and fire peoples' imagination !

LATE NEWS

Just before the Openshaw Festival we were approached by volunteers from Sustrans, the National Cycleway charity. They were organising a “litter pick” from the Fallowfield Loop cycleway - 50metres north of Debdale reservoir – to the Ashton Canal.

This follows the entire northern line of the Stockport Canal

We invited Sustrans to join us at our display at Openshaw and the event was well publicised among the other interested local groups.

THE “LITTER PICK” IS ON 21st, 22nd, & 23rd October 2017

If you click on <http://www.numeratics.com/cleanup/> you will find full details of this event.

The “Get Together” promises to be a large event involving Manchester University students and will be an ideal spring board for the Society’s ambitions to promote the canal – please register and come along and give your support if you can.