

HBS NEWS AND CREWS & TOWLINES

Plenty of horseboating took place in August from the north to the south. The passenger boats were busy in the summer season during school holidays, and there were other noteworthy horseboating ventures taking place on several canals.

Briefly -

Aug 4: Robert Mackenzie with his horse Joshua pulled Ilkeston on the Grand Union.

Aug 5: Sue Day with her horse Bonny pulled Gifford on the Shropshire Union.

Aug 11-14: Sue Day with her horse Bilbo pulled Elland on the Leeds & Liverpool.

Aug 16-24: Sue Day with her horse Bilbo pulled Vixen on the Rochdale Canal.

Aug 23: Jenny Roberts with her horse Buddy pulled Ilkeston on the Regents Canal.

In more detail –

1. **On Aug 4, Joshua** worked with the Rickmansworth Waterways Trust on some trial horseboating, a learning exercise for both crew and the young horse Joshua. His owner Robert Mackenzie was joined by HBS President, Derek Armstrong, and dignitaries like the Mayor of Rickmansworth. The boat Ilkeston is owned by the Canal & River Trust and it has recently been restored at the Heritage Boatyard at the National Waterways Museum (NWM) at Ellesmere Port. The boat was towed by motorboat from the NWM to London with 2 days of horseboating on Aug 4 and 23. Joshua pulled for about two miles between Croxley Green and Rickmansworth.

See photos and video: www.chilternheavyhorses.co.uk & www.ilkeston.tumblr.com

Hear the Ilkeston Song written & performed by Linda Birmingham, inspired by Aug 4. Note some of the overgrown bushy vegetation on the towpath which Robert reports to HBS caused some problems with the towing line.

Note Robert's harness. Joshua is wearing an American collar, worn with a padding beneath it. Please do not even consider criticisms about this! Earlier this year, someone unknown to HBS wrote to complain about the photo of Taffy of the Tiverton Canal Company in the Countryfile Calendar, presuming that the padding under his collar meant he was being worked whilst he had collar sores! Although a British made collar is not usually worn with a separate padding, an American collar is used with the padding with the advantage that it can be removed to dry and changed for another. The cut down brass hames came from Derek Armstrong, President of HBS, who worked 2 boats horse-drawn, the Pamela as a hostelboat and the Hyades as a tripboat. The leatherwork of "the gears" was made by HBS Secretary Glynis Henville for Robert after he had joined Sue Day as a core crew member in 2000 going to London. Note the next working horse event at the Chiltern Open Air Museum is on September 22 and 23. Robert usually displays his boathorse harness on one of his heavy horses. See www.coam.org.uk for info on the Chiltern Open Air Museum where Robert keeps his 3 heavy horses - 2 young Shires (Joshua and Samuel) and a Clydesdale (Harvey).

2. **On Aug 5, Bonny** was happy to be pulling Gifford again, after much time off on maternity leave whilst bringing up her 3 foals. The annual event at the NWM at Ellesmere Port is titled Horses at Work. HBS provided the horsepower for Gifford, owned by BMS, the Boat Museum Society. One pleasing aspect of the crew this year was the inclusion of two young boaters. Alex had horseboated before with HBS from Bugsworth Basin to Marple in 2008. Bonny took Gifford to the winding hole and back, doing this twice in the day for photo opportunities. A few other working horses were present. Fred Sharpe was giving carriage rides with his two heavy cobs. In earlier years, Fred and his horse pulled a canal boat on two occasions. One time the boat was a motorboat, and Fred recalls with horror how the steerer engaged gear and nearly pulled the horse into the canal!

3. From Aug 11 to Aug 14, Bilbo finished his long journey of 128 miles of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal and in addition made the first horse-drawn boat pull on the Liverpool Link in front of The Three Graces on the World Heritage Site. On the final day from Litherland into Liverpool with Elland, the World Heritage Officer of Liverpool came as a member of crew all day, dressed in Victorian period clothing. En route Bilbo was joined by sculptor Faith Bebbington who was filming to help her with her commission from the NWM to produce a boathorse sculpture to be installed at the NWM by Easter 2013. The HBS has recommended that the sculpture be not of any particular horse and somewhat larger than a cob, more of a vanner type, able to pull narrow and broadbeam boats. Bilbo worked his way down the Stanley Locks. Does anyone know if Nick Sanders and Crunchie did this in 1989? At the bottom of the locks, a motor tow took Elland to Pier Head to meet up with Bilbo again. The World Heritage Officer symbolically reattached the towing line to show his support and approval for this horseboating taking place on the World Heritage Site. Others attending to show support were Susan Hanley-Place MBE (the Chief Executive Officer of the Mersey Heritage Trust), Sharon Brown (the Curator for Land Transport at the Museum of Liverpool), and the sculptor Faith Bebbington, and CRT director Vince Moran, CRT NW acting manager Iain Weston, and CRT NW maintenance manager Steve Bergquist. Press and TV were also present. The final day was such a contrast to our starting day. In Leeds we made a quiet start in torrential rain which lasted all day and soaked all our crew and supporters. In Liverpool we made news and arrived in brilliant sunshine which warmed the crew and supporters, making a pleasant finish. At the triumphant end of his journey, Bilbo was awarded 24 carat/carrot gold to munch on! He ate his carrots by the sculpture of the Carters' Horse, a monument to the working horses which carted goods on wagons from and to the busy docks.

For photos and videos of the L & L journey, see www.horseboating.org.uk

4. Between Aug 16-24, Bilbo pulled the passenger horseboat Vixen for 6 days of horseboating during the Rochdale Canal Festival. This is the fourth consecutive year that HBS has been invited to play a major role in the 9 day canal festival. Vixen (built in 1990 for Foxton Boat Services) was horse-drawn from Hebden Bridge to Sowerby Bridge for the start of the festival. She then travelled over several days from Sowerby Bridge to the Rochdale Canal Summit level, carrying passengers on most days. Both Robert Mackenzie and Derek Armstrong (HBS President) came north to join in some of the festival horseboating on the Rochdale Canal. An enterprising idea, from Lucy Rogers, the Rochdale Canal Development Officer of CRT, was to invite this year's festival poet-in-residence Winston Plowes to hold poetry workshops on the horseboat over 2 days. The result was an exchange of words and vocabulary, culminating in a poem written about the horseboating from Todmorden to Walsden. On Friday August 24, Vixen was used to give public trips on the Rochdale Canal Summit amidst spectacular Pennine scenery which the passengers enjoyed in glorious sunshine. The resident lock-keeper Ray at Lock 37 is keen to see Vixen used again for horse-drawn passenger work on the Summit, even including some limited lock use. The Horseboating Society and the IWA and the Towpath Action Group, with others, campaigned successfully to prevent this towing path from going under tarmac as was planned about a year ago. The canal has been neglected in the last 3 years or so with no towpath washwall vegetation cutting going on. As a result, saplings and bushes were getting taller and thicker. HBS owes many thanks to HBS member Alistair Mitchell for removing this growth over the last two summers for a 7mile stretch from Sowerby Bridge to Todmorden. Thanks, Alistair. However another 25 miles remains uncleared, and we struggled with tall bushes from Todmorden to the Summit.

For photos of passenger work with Vixen on the Summit - www.horseboating.org.uk

5. **On Aug 23, Buddy** took over the pull of the CRT owned boat Ilkeston which had been towed into London by motorboat. Jenny and Lynne Roberts and Buddy started beyond Lisson Grove to go to the London Canal Museum. The Chairman of the CRT Trustees Tony Hales joined the boat on its final leg as it arrived in London in sunshine celebrating its centenary year, having been built by FMC in 1912. The Lord Mayor of Westminster, Angela Harvey, made appreciative comments about canals and boats and volunteers and Buddy. At the London Canal Museum, Kate Adie remarked that she hoped there would be more boating “with more horses”. There is a wealth of information on the London Canal Museum website about the entire project. See www.canalmuseum.org.uk/news.htm and you can find a press pack, journey log, leaflet, Facebook page, and Twitter feed about the boat. Also see the video of the horseboating in London on www.ilkeston.tumblr.com Note Buddy having to negotiate one of the unsuitable motorbike barriers in a chicane form. His very calm temperament makes it relatively safe to take Buddy in some places where not all horses should tread. Many HBS members will know Buddy as he was previously owned and trained to canal boatwork by HBS member Stephen Rees-Jones who operated horseboat Sian on the Welshpool section of the Montgomery Canal. When Bilbo injured his legs after being shot at by youths with ball bearing guns, Stephen kindly lent Buddy to Sue Day for HBS journeys whilst Bilbo recovered in 2008. Buddy pulled the horseboat Success to the IWA National at Autherley Junction, Wolverhampton as the last project of the HBS Heritage Lottery Fund project entitled “Why Do Canals Have Towpaths?” The Friends of the Regents Canal were in touch earlier in the year with HBS as they are campaigning to try to prevent planned widening of the towpath which they see as a historic structure (as HBS does), and they fear widening the towpath will lead to even faster cycling rather than making more comfort for all users. Why Do Canals Have Towpaths? They were built for canal horses and the people walking and working with them. A steady pace of often 2mph with a laden boat, maybe 4 mph with a fast horse with an empty boat. Oh, for that peaceful pace again on our towpaths! Will Buddy’s trip do some good to keep our towpaths for walkers or prevent the towpath being widened? Unfortunately the last decade has seen ever more obstacles appear to horseboating, especially in town locations where boats moor to the towpath and cyclists are abundant and motorbike barriers are common.

Earlier horseboating on the Regents Canal, London

Unfortunately some of the publicity about the horseboating in London was very inaccurate. It was stated that Ilkeston was the first horse-drawn boat on the Regents Canal in 60 years. This denied credit to those who travelled hundreds of miles horse-drawn to reach London! As far as HBS knows, the previous boat on the Regents Canal was Maria, pulled by Bonny from Manchester to London to Waltham Abbey in 2000, a horse-drawn journey of about 250 miles, from which the HBS was founded in January 2001. On that occasion, Bonny and Maria spent one day on exhibition at the London Canal Museum. About 5 years before Bonny, it was Molly the horse of radio broadcaster Dylan Winter who pulled Regulus to the London Canal Museum as the final destination after about 200 miles having started at the Boat Museum at Ellesmere Port (now the NWM). In 1989, Crunchie pulled his boat for Nick Sanders along the Regents Canal to the IWA National at Waltham Abbey (like Bonny did in 2000). Crunchie and Nick did a remarkable journey of about 350 miles from Marple to Manchester to Liverpool to London. It was billed as “the last long distance horse-drawn canal journey” but fortunately Dylan Winter and Sue Day made sure this was not the case. The HBS was founded as a legacy of the millennium journey to London which involved a changing crew of 40 volunteers with a hardcore of 5 who mostly are life members of HBS. It is even likely that horse-drawn cargo boats used the Regents Canal in the last 60 years as many canals still had some diminishing amount of horse-drawn traffic in the 1950s.

A horseboating prospect on the Cromford Canal:

The Friends of the Cromford Canal (FCC) had in recent years been paying horse owners to supply a working horse to pull their boat over one weekend at the autumn Discovery Days at the World Heritage Site around Cromford in Derbyshire. Graham and Lorraine Turner, having been trained by HBS Midlands rep Jayne Bradley, used two of their horses. They used their horses Rosie and Billy Jim. In 2008, Shire horse Billy Jim pulled Duchess. In 2009, Shire horse William pulled Duchess as well as his rides dray for a different owner. See the Gallery on www.horseboating.org.uk for photos of Billy Jim and William at work. See photos of Cromford Canal 2008 and Cromford Canal 2009. The canal is owned by the Derbyshire County Council. There will be no horseboating in 2012 while the canal is restored to a more favourable condition for any form of boating. However the FCC hope to purchase a boat soon, which would be electric powered but sometimes horse-drawn. An email from the FCC Vice Chair follows.

Dear Sue,

I thought you would like to know of the progress we are making to the bring horse boating back to the Cromford canal. As you know the canal became so silted that we could not even use the demonstration boat, which we used for several years. Well now the Derbyshire County Council are to spend £300,000 this winter to dredge the section from Cromford Wharf to High Peak Junction. (About one mile) They have already spent over one million pounds on the canal to restore the iron aqueduct over the railway and in dredging the canal at Whatstandwell.

Our President Brian Blessed, has agreed to head our fund raising campaign for us to try and obtain £50K to buy a boat we have in mind and convert the engine to electric power; for trips when there is no horse. All being well we should get the trip boat up and running by next spring; as long as we can get the funds. If you know of any sponsors we will be happy to hear from them.

Kind regards,

Mike Kelley

Vice Chair, FCC

See www.cromfordcanal.info/ to see the appeal letter and how to sponsor the boat. Contact the Friends of the Cromford Canal direct or the HBS Treasurer if you wish to sponsor the purchase of their boat.

Note the meeting on Nov 4 for those interested in operating the boat.

Maureen Shaw Appeal for an Interpretation panel at Wardle Lock

Att Sue Day - Chairperson of the Horse boating Society

Hi Sue,

You may be aware that I have been asked to lead through the IWA Chester and District Branch to provide an interpretation panel at Wardle lock depicting Maureen's life story for the benefit of future generations of boaters and walkers alike. Now that I have received the necessary permission from Wendy Capelle (BW/CRT), the official launch appeal was made at the Middlewich Folk and Boat Festival and sent in to the Middlewich Guardian at the request of Dave Thompson (Middlewich Town Council). As you know, Maureen's younger days were spent driving the horse with the Jinks family and in my design build up I feel it important to add an image of a girl driving the horse with boat - an oil boat would be icing on the cake. I am considering a zink

interpretation panel and I need a line drawing similar to the one shown on the HBS home web page, right hand side or a picture that I can make into a line drawing. Can you give me some help with this?

I am writing to a number of waterway and heritage organisations for contributions and I know that the you will have a number of members who have fond memories of Maureen over a number of years who may wish to contribute. Could I ask if your society would contribute to this project and/or launch an appeal for funding from your members. This is already in hand with two local IWA magazines and money is starting to come in. The proposed panel will be A2 size similar to the Salt Trail ones already installed along the Canal towpath in Middlewich. I understand they cost £1550.00 + VAT each but I hope to take out some of that cost by having the SS frame made up locally.

Perhaps you would be good enough to come back to me regarding this request after your committee has had a chance to discuss.

I would like the Horse Boating Society to be part of this project and hope to install later on this year if possible.

Kind Regards

Peter

[Peter Bolt, Project Officer Chester and District Branch Inland Waterways Association](#)

Maureen Shaw Appeal

A number of organisations and individuals have expressed a wish to provide a permanent tribute to Maureen by way of an interpretation panel which would tell the story of this remarkable lady and her life as a working boatwoman. The official launch of the funding appeal was made by the Inland Waterways Association (IWA) at the recent Middlewich Festival to a gathered audience including the Mayor of Middlewich Councillor Simon McGrory, the Deputy Mayor Councillor Bernice Walmsley and Fiona Bruce, MP for Congleton.

From being born into a working boat family, given away as a baby, driving boat horses as a child and then working on the canals with her husband Jack, this fascinating historical account will be read with interest by future generations of boaters and walkers alike. Permission has recently been given by British Waterways for the panel to be located at Wardle Lock, known by many as, 'Maureen's Lock', adjacent to the lock cottage, where she spent the latter part of her life keeping a watchful eye and assisting boaters. Many people have asked if they can donate to this project and IWA Chester and District Branch have been asked to lead and secure funding to allow the panel to be made and erected.

The Mayor of Middlewich, Councillor Simon McGrory said,

“It is important that the Town Council and people of Middlewich support this worthwhile project to provide a permanent tribute to Maureen as not only will it mark the life of a remarkable lady, it will also help to record vital heritage information about the development of the town”.

If you would like to contribute to this project please send a donation, by cheque, made payable to IWA Chester and District Branch with the reverse side marked,

“Maureen Shaw appeal” to:

Peter Bolt, 4 Poplar Farm Close, Saughall Massie, Wirral, CH46 5NZ

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Please contact the HBS committee on enquiries@horseboating.org.uk if you wish to make comments on how the HBS could contribute to the Maureen Shaw appeal.

CREW & EVENT DATES

Saturday and Sunday, September 22 and 23, no canal

Heavy Horse Autumn Working Event at the Chiltern Open Air Museum, Gorelands Lane, Chalfont St. Giles, Buckinghamshire, HP8 4AB

Activities: cultivation, timber extraction, carting etc.

www.coam.org.uk and www.chilternheavyhorses.co.uk

Monday September 24, Leeds & Liverpool Canal

Legging Foulridge Tunnel on the centenary day of when Buttercup, a brown cow, fell in the canal and swam through Foulridge Tunnel (nearly one mile) to be revived with brandy at the Foulridge end of the tunnel.

Buttercup will be on board the boat, once rescued from having to swim!

Possible horseboating to the Anchor Inn, Salterforth.

Crew needed. Info from enquiries@horseboating.org.uk

Saturday and Sunday September 29 and 30, Dudley No.1 Canal

Dudley's Parkhead Festival, back after a 4year break, usually bi-annual.

Dudley No 1 Canal, Holly Hall Rd, Parkhead, DY2 0TT

Large event, free admission, 10am-5pm

See www.dudleytunnel.co.uk info from 01384-236275

Horse-drawn boat demos at the top lock, demonstrating the use of the ground-level pulley wheel to send the boat out of the lock while the boathorse walks in the opposite direction along the lock-side.

Previously demonstrated by Jayne Bradley, HBS Midlands rep, with her Clydesdale horse Prince.

This year to be done by Jane Muntz-Torres by arrangement with Jayne Bradley. Jane acted as crew on the HBS journey in 2008 to the IWA National at Autherley Junction, Wolverhampton. Jane keeps Shires and cobs in the Midlands.

Saturday October 6, Leeds & Liverpool Canal

Bingley Five Rise Project Launch, 11am-3pm

The project has created trails between Bingley and Saltaire, interpretation panels, and a horseboating film between Saltaire and Bingley.

Horseboating demo(s) on the Bingley Five Rise Locks. To be confirmed.

Crew needed. Info from enquiries@horseboating.org.uk

Tues, Wed, Fri October 9, 10, 12, Leeds & Liverpool Canal

Bingley Schools Week, a variety of activities

Horseboating demo(s) on the Bingley Five Rise Locks. To be confirmed.

Crew needed. Info from enquiries@horseboating.org.uk

Saturday and Sunday Oct 13 and 14, Ashton Canal (and others)

40th anniversary year of Ashtac, the clean-up attack on the Ashton Canal, with clean-ups on the 3 sections of canal radiating from the Dukinfield Jn at Portland Basin, Ashton under Lyne. Clean-up volunteers are needed.

Ashtac connection to HBS? Once their canals were cleared, some of the volunteers set about restoring the horseboat Maria, which they operated as a passenger trip boat from 1978-1999. In 2000, Maria made her Millennium Maria journey from Manchester to London pulled by boathorse Bonny. From that journey, the HBS was founded. The Horseboating Society has operated Maria horse-drawn from 2001 until now. Horseboat Ironsides will be used for collecting rubbish and towpath saplings, along with another 2 boats. The horseboat will be bowhailed, not used horse-drawn. The horseboat is an open iron BCN Bantock boat, about 100 years old, similar to the hostelboat Pamela which was horse-drawn in the 1970s.

Steve O'Sullivan, Volunteer Co-ordinator for the Canal & River Trust said "This is a great opportunity for people who care about their local canal to come down and get involved with helping the Trust take care of this fantastic historic network, have a lot of fun and do something really worthwhile!"

Over the weekend of 13th and 14th October volunteers will work in all 3 directions from Dukinfield Junction – on the Ashton Canal, the Lower Peak Forest Canal and the Huddersfield Narrow Canal. Rubbish and debris will be pulled out of the canal and put into workboats. Workboats to put the rubbish in will be provided, along with all tools and equipment required for the event. Those preferring a lighter task can have a go at litter picking. For both events volunteers are advised to wear stout footwear and bring waterproofs in case of rain.

More information: Alison Smedley, IWA Branch Campaign Officer, by email alison.smedley@waterways.org.uk or phone 01538-385388 or 07779-090915

See www.canaljunction.com/news

Sunday October 21, Ashton Canal

Celebration horseboating trip with horseboat Maria from Guidebridge to Portland Basin and nearby to enjoy the local towpaths cleared of sapling growth at the 40th anniversary Ashtac clean-up of Oct 13 & 14.

To be confirmed.

Crew needed. Info from enquiries@horseboating.org.uk

Mid/End of October, Grand Western Canal

The Grand Western Canal Visitors Centre in the Tiverton basin will be opening its doors for the first time towards the end of September and it will be officially opened 30 days or so after that.

The Tiverton Canal Company will be keeping the little stone stable as their shop and booking office.

