



# Bradley Canal Restoration Society

Annual General Meeting – 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023

## Chair of Trustees Report

### General Update

Last year I reported that Rod was negotiating for a ground survey to be undertaken by BRIC (Brownfield Research & Innovation Centre) on the infilled locks. We need to establish what materials were used when the locks were infilled in the 1960s. This will enable us to determine if digging out by volunteers is practical or if grossly polluted infill, then it will be an expensive task by approved contractors. This unfortunately didn't happen, and BRIC has now been wound up as the funding, which was EU derived, has now ended. Wolverhampton University may be doing a comparable replacement programme, so all is not yet lost! Thank you, Rod.

Shortly after our last AGM a newly updated Nicholson Guide, covering our area was published. These are one of the most popular canal guides for boaters and has been completely updated. The rather unfavorable comments in the previous edition have been replaced, and whilst not glowing recommendations, at least they should encourage boaters to venture off the Main Line and explore the truncated loop. Our proposed restoration is shown by a broken red line that will inform guide users of our intentions. BCRS also gets a mention in the text. Thanks are due to Ivor for introducing us to the author.

As in previous years, thanks are due to the rest of the team. Emily for producing very prompt and accurate minutes of our meetings; in years to come these will form a valuable part of our archive. Darren is continuing to look after our Facebook Presence now ably assisted by Tom. Gavin as well as being our Treasurer looks after "The Arm" newsletter. Our membership is slowly growing & now stands at 215. Thank you, John, for continuing this work. All this voluntary work is carried out in addition to them having full time employment. Simon, having reduced his hours at WCC is continuing to support us. Ivor has resigned from the Executive Committee, due to the pressure of other voluntary work but will continue to support us when he can.

Our monthly work parties on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month continue on the truncated canal arm from Moorcroft Junction to Great Bridge Road, currently meeting under the Metro Bridge. A good regular team have been making a vast difference; you can now see where the canal is! On a recent Saturday we arrived to find that vandals had chipped 50+ coping stones off the edging that the ladies had exposed. These were collected and now safely stored for future reinstating. Nearly all of the overhanging tree boughs have been removed and a major cutting back of the area west of the Metro Bridge exposed a large area of land. This

we have grass seeded, seeds courtesy of Aaron at CRT. Our next task, as well as clearing more of the channel towards Moorcroft junction, is to attack the Himalayan Balsam to try and arrest it spreading. The support of the BCNS with tools and the pick-up truck makes all this possible. Too many individuals to name but thanks to all.

Maybe a one-off event, but on March the 18th we hosted the Northern Canal Association twice yearly meeting using the excellent facilities of Wilkinson School. The 50+ participants from restoration groups all over the UK, were split into two groups and in turn visited the workshops and went on a walk of the restoration. Lunch was taken in the Old Bush pub, being a very good Indian meal served buffet style. Well done and thanks to the Old Bush. Recently the NCA have sent us a useful donation, along with their thanks.

Last year we supported the BCNS open day at the Bradley Workshops and this year are planning to hold another event on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June in our name with the support of CRT. Whilst this will not be an "Official" BCNS event many members have said they will support us. On the day we will need lots of help please and the Friday before to set up. Darren with input from Brenda Ward (BCNS) is booking stalls. Hopefully this will stimulate more local support.

There are two Explorer Cruises booked to visit the workshops and have a walk on May 17<sup>th</sup> and June 28<sup>th</sup>. These provide opportunities for boaters to visit little used parts of the canal system and brings extra traffic to the arm.

For the future we need to have a plan. Covid slowed us down but in the new "Normal" we need a clear route plan. This will need a fully costed feasibility study. To do this we will need to boost our funds dramatically. One way to do this is to remember BCRS in your will. Any amount will be welcome, contact Gavin for details. It is simple and allows us to show to funding bodies that we will have a future funding stream. Not wishing the demise of any of you but it would seriously help us.

D. Pearson (Chair of Trustees) – 15th April 2023

## Membership

Membership currently stands at 215 paid subscriptions with a further 24 individuals are supporting the Society via a personal donation rather than a formal membership.

It is hoped that physical attendance at events in the coming months will enable us to continue to increase our membership. A proposed rule change at the AGM is intended to bring all membership renewals in line with a consistent date (1<sup>st</sup> April) to hopefully make the renewals process simpler and to aid cashflow forecasting. New members subscribing before that date each year, will receive the first year at a pro-rata rate.

## Social Media

The Facebook page has been active since April 2019, and we have seen a fantastic rise in followers in that period with the number currently standing at 2500 (a rise of some 200 since last year). Our Instagram following is also building with 250 followers.

Our social media following is critical to awareness raising, “friend-making” and keeping all interested parties informed of the progress that we are making. As we undertake a variety of projects, including work parties, public meetings, attendance at festivals, etc. we shall use our social platforms to keep everyone informed and invariably ask for additional support. Please encourage other contacts to follow our Facebook and/or Instagram accounts to continue to grow the following.

Regular viewers of the pages will have seen that support is growing from important sectors of the community and beyond. Local MPs, Local Authorities, CRT, Inland Waterways and the Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust are all getting behind this scheme to bring back this bit of canal that holds such historic importance for our area and indeed, this country.

## Bradley Canal Festival

A significant event during this year was the BCNS Open Day at Bradley Workshops, held in May. We have gained permission to hold a similar event on Saturday 17th June, which will hopefully become the annual Bradley Canal Festival. We were fortunately blessed with glorious weather which certainly helped to bring in an estimated 1500 visitors over the course of the day.

The opportunity to turn this into an annual event is a significant undertaking from us and will need significant planning and organising on the day. However, the benefits should be significant, both from an awareness raising perspective, but also as a potential revenue stream. Whilst we wouldn't be looking to make large profit, we would need to cover costs and hopefully generate income from stall holders, raffles, donations, new members, etc.

Other canal festivals across the region benefit enormously from this level of profile and it would be valuable to our profile to organise an event each year in Bradley.

In order to make this a successful day, we will need support from members and supporters. If you feel you can help, with the planning or on the actual day please contact us on [info@bradleycanal.co.uk](mailto:info@bradleycanal.co.uk)



# Bradley Canal Restoration Society

## Financial Report 2022-23

This report reflects the financial position of the association from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

Gift Aid continues to be reflected in the accounts, and we would encourage members, who are UK taxpayers, to indicate as such when they renew as this allows us to benefit from Gift Aid. Unfortunately, Amazon has ended its Amazon Smile charitable contributions scheme, so we have now joined easyFundraising and we would encourage members and supporters to register with easyFundraising and nominate BCRS as the chosen charity.

The accounts have been externally audited by our Accountants (Tax Advisors and Accounting Services Limited, of Bilston) and will be submitted to the Charity Commission in accordance with statutory requirements.

### Statement of Accounts: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

	2022-23	2021-22
<b>Income</b>		
Opening Balance	£ 5,486.52	£ 4,685.69
Subscriptions	£ 1,792.14	£ 1,537.00
Donations	£ 2,238.00	£ 2,937.00
Gift Aid	£ 155.07	£ 119.00
Amazon Smile	£ 84.43	£ 57.15
Bradley Canal Festival (2023)	£ 165.00	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 9,921.16</b>	<b>£ 9,378.34</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Equipment	£ 256.03	£ 520.60
Insurance	£ 600.37	£ 105.00
Administration	£ 2,029.48	£ 1,563.22
Subscriptions	£ 249.00	£ 239.00
Event Costs	£ 99.15	£ 144.00
Professional Services	£ 360.00	£ 1,320.00
Accountancy Fees	£ 400.00	N/A
Printing	£278.33	£ 0
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 4,272.36</b>	<b>£ 3,891.82</b>
<b>Balance</b>	<b><u>£ 5,648.80</u></b>	<b><u>£ 5,486.52</u></b>

G Hawkins (Treasurer) – 5<sup>th</sup> April 2023