



NEWRY NEWS

FROM GERALDINE FOLEY

NEW BRANCH PAGE LOGO

In keeping with the Newry - Portadown canal's unique position in the history of our waterways, we have decided on a historical logo to identify our branch page in IWN. The drawing is a detail from a survey drawn in 1800 by John Benn. I like to imagine him sitting on a hill overlooking the canal, a bit fed up with his lot and envious of the lighter-man below ambling along the canal with his horse. We came across the drawing during research for our 'Handheld History' project which is creating a GIS map of the canal, its history and social heritage. We will be using the drawing as the project logo.

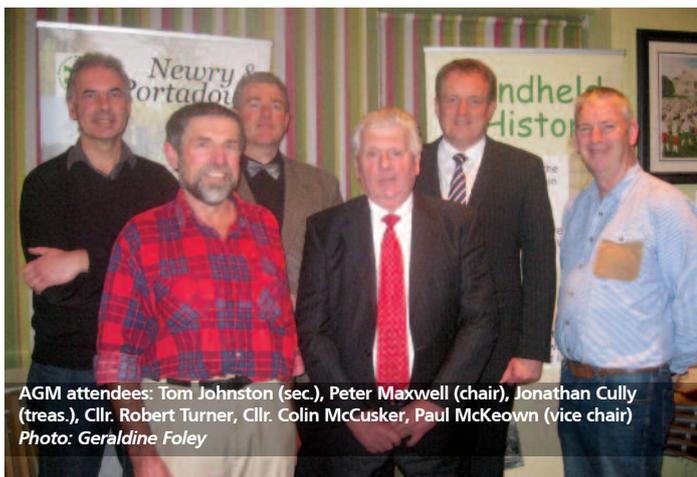
2013 AGM

The 2013 AGM was very well attended, with many non-member guests who had participated in our events during 2013. Representatives of the various statutory bodies involved with the canal attended as well as the Lord Mayor of Armagh, Councillor Robert Turner and Deputy Mayor of Craigavon, Councillor Colin McCusker. With an ever increasing programme of events and projects we decided to split the role of secretary and PRO. Tom Johnston takes over as branch secretary while Geraldine Foley continues with PRO duties. In 2014 branch meetings will rotate between 3 venues - Newry, Scarva and Portadown - to reflect the fact that we have members from all the

communities along the canal. The meeting venue in Portadown is provided free of charge by the Asda supermarket.

PROJECT DIVERSIFICATION

Our continuing association with Asda has been very rewarding. We had an in-store awareness day which yielded new members and increased interest in branch projects and in December we had a bag-pack that raised more than £800 for canal restoration projects. We are very grateful for the support of Asda and in particular for the enthusiasm of their community champion Elaine Livingstone. Projects funding was further boosted in December when we successfully gained a grant from the NGO Challenge Fund to pay for 3 camera bird-boxes, TVs and associated literature and events. The branch feels it is important to promote all the diverse attractions of the canal environment as a means of developing support for restoration of the waterway itself and if we can get grant aid to pay for it so much the better. Another example of diversity is our foray into guerrilla gardening. A patch of rough ground at Moneypenny's lock is slowly being turned into a bee friendly habitat. Extra workparties have been convened and are attracting branch members keen on gardening as well as the usual stalwarts who have a go at all activities.



AGM attendees: Tom Johnston (sec.), Peter Maxwell (chair), Jonathan Cully (treas.), Cllr. Robert Turner, Cllr. Colin McCusker, Paul McKeown (vice chair)
Photo: Geraldine Foley



Uncovering the bypass pipe: Tony Donnelly, Aine Donnelly, James Burke, Pat Watson
Photo: Peter Maxwell

LOCKS 2 & 3 PROGRESS

Regardless of the diversity of activities undertaken we never lose sight of our primary objective which is of course restoration of the waterway for boat traffic. To this end the reinstatement of locks 2 and 3 at the Newry end of the canal continues, but not without its setbacks. Enormous quantities of new sand have been washing into lock 3 from the Bessbrook River. It was depressing to have to almost start afresh at each workparty, but we have now found a semi derelict bypass pipe upstream and after this is reinstated we should be able to divert the flow away from the lock chamber itself. More satisfying work was done at lock 2 where 9 tonnes of stones and rubble have recently been removed, often using techniques more familiar to the ancient Egyptians than the 21st century. The results can be seen, in video,

on our Facebook page - Newry.Portadown.Canal.

PUBLIC REALM DEVELOPMENT

The department of Social Development and the local council are spending more than £2 million on the development of a promenade along the canal in Newry city centre. A new shared cycle and pedestrian path will replace the narrow footpath and ugly concrete wall along the full length of the quays. Initially the plans omitted any upgrade of canal facilities but after a robust campaign against the creation of an 'ornamental lake' the branch has achieved some 'future proofing' with the installation of moorings and service points in preparation for some courageous person to crane a boat onto the waterway in the middle of the city and start using the canal.

Horse barge logo photo: Geraldine Foley



IWAI Bee team: Liz Johnston, Judith White, Tom Johnston, Tanya Duffy, Stephen Boyle, Heather Crawford, Bruce Crawford, Brian Cunningham
Photo: Peter White