

Canal Appeal Reaches £100,000

The Pocklington Canal Amenity Society has announced that their Bicentenary Appeal Fund now stands at £100,000. Their chairman, Paul Waddington, said that this is a significant milestone towards the target of £250,000 which the Society is planning to raise by the bicentenary of the opening of the canal in 1818.

The fund will be used for works at Thornton and Walbut Locks, which will enable the navigable length of the canal to be extended by two miles to near the village of Bielby. Both these locks will be provided with new lock gates and there will be repairs to the brickwork of the lock chambers. Preliminary exploratory works have already started at Thornton Lock, although major works are not planned to start there until the Spring of 2016. A similar programme of works is planned for Walbut Lock during 2017.

The Pocklington Canal Amenity Society is directing its appeal to businesses, charitable trusts and individuals. It is also planning a number of fund raising events in 2016, starting with a race evening at Melbourne in February.

Contributions to the Bicentenary Appeal can be made via the PCAS website:
www.pocklingtoncanalsociety.org

Caption to photograph: The leaking lock gates at Thornton Lock.

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

The Pocklington Canal, in the East Riding of Yorkshire, is 9.5 miles long and has nine locks. It stretches from the River Derwent at East Cottingwith to Canal Head, which is a mile short of Pocklington. It was opened in 1818, having taken three years to build. After cessation of commercial use in 1932 the canal became derelict but has been partially restored and is currently navigable from the Derwent to Melbourne.

The Pocklington Canal is entirely rural and, of all the canals in Britain, is probably the one that has undergone the fewest changes. Its nine locks are Grade II listed buildings, as are the four road bridges that cross the canal.

The Pocklington Canal is of considerable importance for wildlife. It is included in three Sites of Special Scientific Interest and is noted for uncommon aquatic plants, damselflies and dragonflies. The canal is part of the internationally important Lower Derwent Valley, which includes lands that flood in winter and is important for wintering wildfowl and many other birds.

The Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded the first stage of funding for a partnership project coordinated by the Canal & River Trust, focusing on wildlife conservation, heritage work and improvements for the benefit of visitors to the canal.

Pocklington Canal Amenity Society

The Pocklington Canal Amenity Society is a Registered Charity and was formed in 1969. It has over 300 members.

PCAS works to protect the canal and to restore it as a navigable waterway. It started restoration of the then derelict canal in 1970. The canal had been under threat in the 1950s, a time when the amenity value of waterways was less appreciated. Its members, with the help of other volunteers, have carried out extensive restoration work, including rebuilding locks. The work has been funded by donations from members and the public, together with grants. It has support from the Canal & River Trust, the Inland Waterways Association and the local authority.

The PCAS Bicentenary Appeal was launched in February 2015. The funds raised will be used to extend the current head of navigation by two miles to Bielby. PCAS intends to celebrate the Bicentenary of the opening of the canal with a number of events in 2018. These include a trailboat rally, which is expected to attract boats from all over the country.

The Society liaises with the Canal & River Trust, Natural England, the East Riding of Yorkshire Council, the Environment Agency, English Heritage and the East and North Yorkshire Waterway Partnership.

Regular PCAS working parties tackle maintenance and other tasks on the canal. The Society holds fund raising activities. It has an information centre at the popular Canal Head picnic site and operates a trip boat on the navigable length of canal.