

THE CANAL

The Pocklington Canal was completed in 1818 and forms part of the 2000 mile network of canals and rivers in England and Wales. The canal is 9½ miles long, extending from Canal Head, a mile south of Pocklington, to join the River Derwent at East Cottingwith.

The canal was never an important commercial waterway and its trade declined with the arrival of the railway. The last cargo, a load of roadstone, was carried by the keel *Ebenezer* in 1932.

Fortunately, the canal has escaped surrounding developments and remains essentially as it was built. Eight of the nine locks are now Grade II Listed structures and the four elegant road bridges are scheduled Ancient Monuments. The whole of the canal is, as you will find, a haven for wildlife, and visitors should take care to avoid damage or disturbance in this special environment.

RESTORATION

Restoration of the canal started around 1970. By then the lock gates had disintegrated, the swing-bridges replaced by fixed bridges and parts of the towpath were blocked with vegetation. There is now a good towpath, most of the swing-bridges have been reinstated and six of the nine locks have been restored. Half the canal, between East Cottingwith and Melbourne Arm, is now navigable and it should soon be possible for boats to reach Bielby, making use of the restored Thornton and Walbut locks.

For many years, PCAS volunteers were involved in restoring the canal, including major projects such as the rebuilding of Walbut Lock and Coates Lock in the 1990s. For health & safety reasons, our volunteers are no longer able to tackle major restoration projects, so future restoration of locks is likely to be done by the Waterway Recovery Group, whose trained volunteers are permitted to tackle major restoration projects on canals, and by contractors.

An interesting feature of the canal is the distinctive paddlegear used to empty the locks. This is operated by a large, six-spoked handwheel. Replicas of old paddlegear rescued from a derelict lock were installed at Walbut Lock. This paddlegear is now being reinstated when lock gates are replaced.

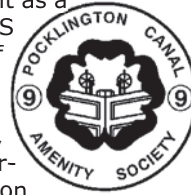
Restoration has been supported by countless donations from PCAS members and the general public and we have received many grants. The PCAS trip boat has become an important source of funding, through donations and sponsorship.



The old paddlegear

THE CANAL SOCIETY

The Pocklington Canal Amenity Society was formed in 1969, with the objectives of restoring the canal as a navigable waterway and safeguarding it as a public amenity. Since then, many PCAS volunteers have expended a great deal of effort in improving the canal. PCAS has over 260 memberships, including many life members, and is a Registered Charity, number 500637. Fund-raising is an important activity, and is essential for restoration work to continue. Although the Society's work has attracted generous grants, donations from members and the public make a very important contribution to funds, as does the Society Stall and our Information Centre at Canal Head. The PCAS Information Centre is run by volunteers and help is always welcome.



The Society organises social events, at which visitors are welcome, and publishes a magazine called *Double Nine*. We are also working with British Waterways, Natural England and other organisations to restore more of the canal and improve it as a habitat for wildlife.

JOIN THE SOCIETY

If you are interested in the Pocklington Canal, please join PCAS and you will receive our magazine and invitations to social events organised by the Society.

Annual membership: £8 (student/unwaged/retired £5)

Life membership: £80 each (over 60/unwaged £60)

Annual family membership: £10

To join PCAS, please contact the Membership Secretary: Carol Booth, The Poplars, Main Street, Melbourne, York YO42 4QQ ☎ 01759 318181, or visit the PCAS website.

PCAS TRIP BOAT – NEW HORIZONS

Short trips **from Melbourne** (see map) run on Sunday afternoons and Bank Holidays, from Easter to October. **No booking is needed for short trips** and there is no charge, but donations are welcome. Longer trips for groups of up to 12 can be arranged at other times and you are welcome to bring a picnic. To book a special trip please contact the Bookings Officer: ☎ 07092 119695, emailgfdPCAS@aol.com, as soon as possible.

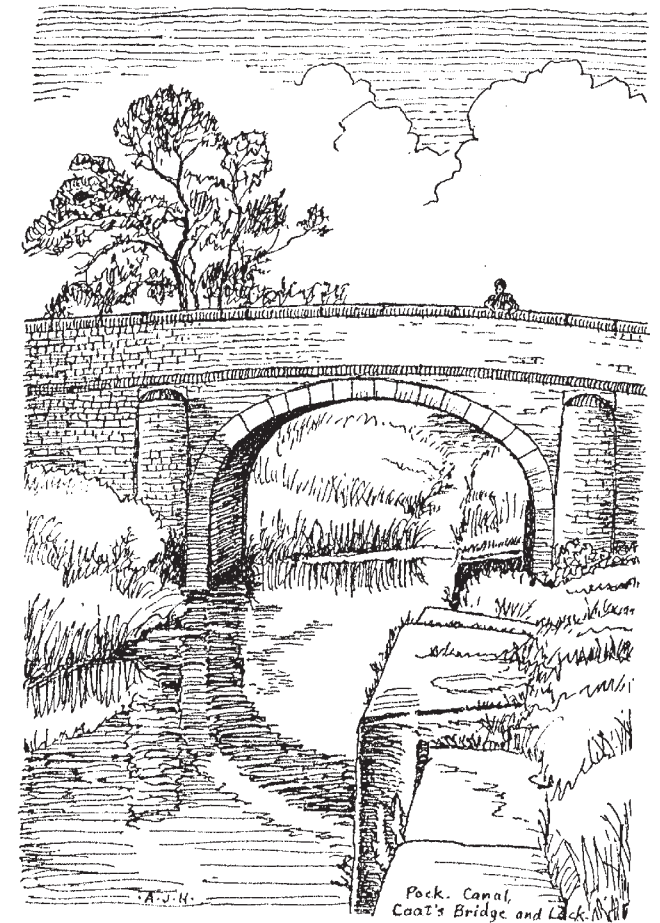
FURTHER INFORMATION

General information about the Pocklington Canal and the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society can be found on the PCAS website: **www.pocklingtoncanalsociety.org**

You can also contact the Secretary: Mrs S.M. Nix, MBE, 74 Westminster Road, York YO30 6LY. ☎ 01904 623338.

Compiled by AJ Anderson, PCAS Revised July 2009

The Pocklington Canal



a brief introduction from the

*Pocklington Canal
Amenity Society*

VISITING THE CANAL

The towpath between Canal Head and East Cottingwith is excellent for walking, but like many canal towpaths it is uneven in places and may be unsuitable for push chairs and wheelchairs.

The best access points are Canal Head, Coates Bridge, Bielby, Walbut Bridge, Church Bridge, Melbourne Arm, Hagg Bridge and East Cottingwith.

There are two car parks at Canal Head. Please spare a thought for residents and road users if you park in the villages or at the roadside. In particular, do not park close to the hump-back bridges because vision is restricted and farmers need to be able to move wide vehicles.

There is a popular picnic site at Canal Head which can be enjoyed by families and disabled visitors. The fishing platforms are suitable for wheelchair users. The nearest toilets are across the main road at the Wellington Oak, but these are for customers' use only.

INFORMATION CENTRE

The PCAS Information Centre at Canal Head is usually open on Sunday afternoons and on Bank Holidays from Easter to late October.

INFORMATION BOARDS

Look out for the information boards at Canal Head, Coates Lock, the Melbourne Arm and Hagg Bridge. These provide a map and an introduction to the wildlife and heritage of the canal.

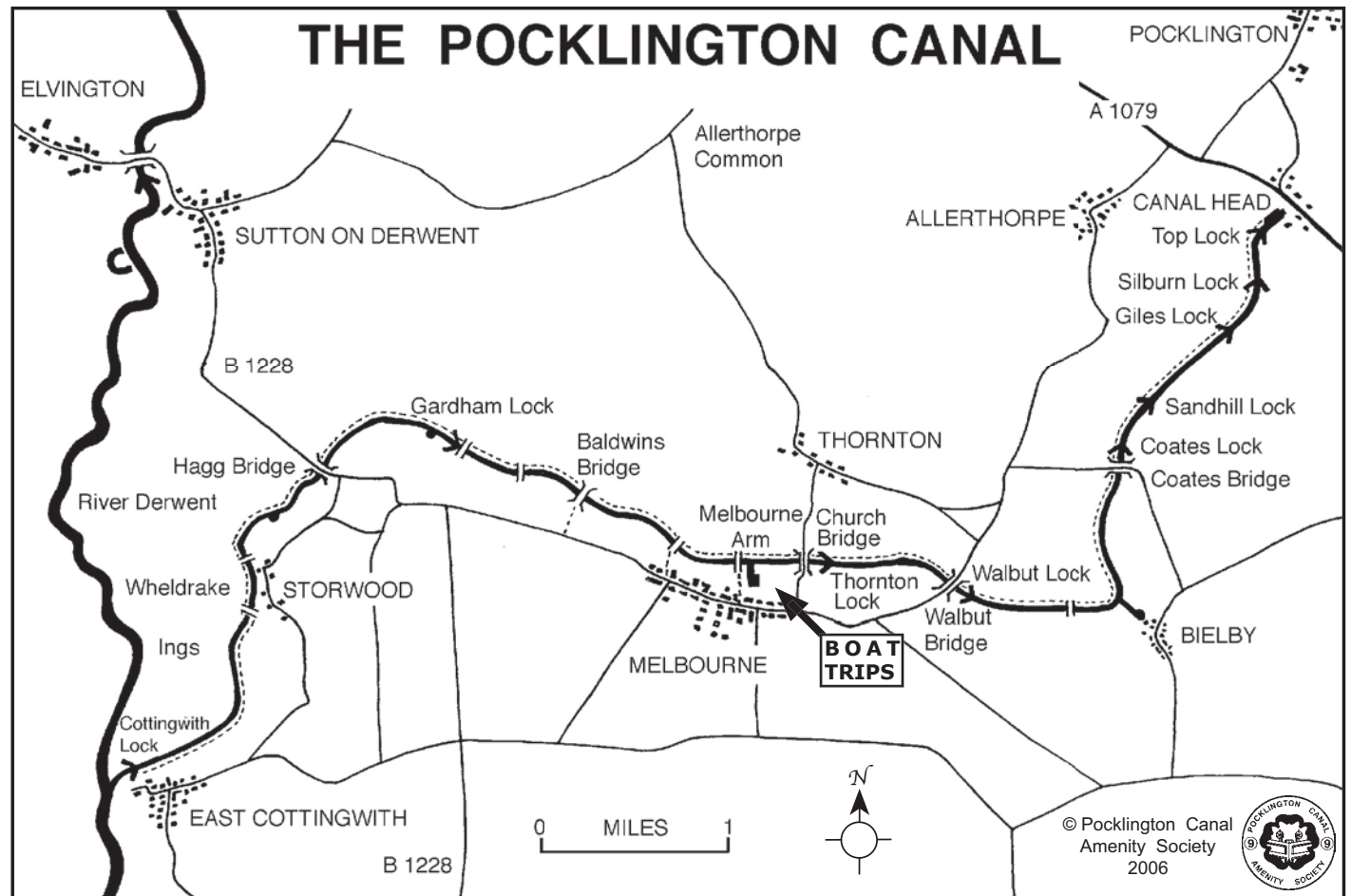
REFRESHMENTS

The three pubs close to the canal are the *Wellington Oak* at Canal Head, the *College Arms* at Bielby and the *Melbourne Arms* at Melbourne.

On summer Sundays and Bank Holidays, sweets and canned drinks can usually be obtained from the Information Centre at Canal Head. At similar times, ice cream is available at Ings House, which is between the end of the canal and the main road.

The canal is managed by British Waterways. Their Yorkshire office is at Leeds: ☎ 0113 2816800. BW have carried out repairs to Cottingwith Lock and installed new lock gates. The canal was re-connected to the waterways network in July 2009.

In event of pollution, flooding, fish in distress or other emergencies please contact the free Environment Agency Emergency Hotline: ☎ 0800 80 70 60



WILDLIFE

The Pocklington Canal is home to a wide variety of plants, birds, mammals and insects. It is one of the most important waterways for wildlife in Britain. The wildlife of the canal and surrounding land has been afforded national and, in some parts, international protection. Please do not let children pick wild flowers!

The information boards along the canal will give you an idea of what you can see and hear. Swans nest on the canal each year and are particularly popular with visitors. The canal supports unusual aquatic plants but even common ones, such as yellow water lily, contribute to the character of the canal.

The canal above Melbourne has more tree cover than the lower part, and you will see different birds. As dusk approaches you may see barn owls and bats.

ANGLING

Roach, perch, tench, bream, carp and pike can be found. A rod licence is required and day tickets are available from the Post Office at Melbourne, the *Wellington Oak* at Canal Head and tackle shops. For further information contact the York and District Amalgamation of Anglers: ☎ 01904 651346.

BOATING

The canal forms part of the 2000 mile network of navigable waterways in Britain. Access is via the River Ouse at Barmby. The current head of navigation is Melbourne Arm, where there are moorings and a sanitary station. It may soon be possible for boats to reach Bielby. The PCAS trip boat *New Horizons* is based at the Melbourne Arm.