

## **PRESS RELEASE 1 June 2009 – Pocklington Canal Amenity Society**

### **Canal Society celebrates 40th Anniversary**

The Pocklington Canal Amenity Society recently celebrated its fortieth anniversary with a dinner held at Allertorpe Park Golf Club, which is a short distance from the Pocklington Canal. The principal guest and speaker was Robin Evans, Chief Executive of British Waterways. Mr Evans congratulated the society on its persistence in promoting the restoration of the Pocklington Canal over such a long period, and spoke of the importance of the voluntary sector in maintaining the canal system.

Later, Sheila Nix MBE, who has been the society's secretary throughout the forty years, was presented with a bouquet and made an honorary vice-president. Sheila was one of five founder members who attended the dinner.

Earlier in the day, Robin Evans visited Sandhill Lock, where a bulge in the chamber wall is considered a potential danger, and British Waterways staff have proposed filling in the lock to make it safe. The canal society, backed by English Heritage, think that this would be a backward step and propose that an early start to restoration of the lock would be a better way of dealing with the hazard.

Robin Evans also visited Cottingwith Lock, which is the entrance lock to the canal from the River Derwent. This lock has been closed for two years due to the failure of one of the lock gates. The visit took place on 29th May, just before British Waterways started work on the installation of a new set of gates.

#### **For further information please contact:**

Paul Waddington      Chairman, 01405 763985      waddington@gooleboathouse.co.uk  
Sheila Nix, MBE      Secretary, 01904 623338

Pocklington Canal Amenity Society, Registered Charity 500637  
74 Westminster Road, York YO30 6LY

PCAS website: [www.pocklingtoncanalsociety.org](http://www.pocklingtoncanalsociety.org)  
Enquiries and requests for photos: [enquiries@pocklingtoncanalsociety.org](mailto:enquiries@pocklingtoncanalsociety.org)

#### ***Notes for Editors***

#### **Pocklington Canal Amenity Society**

PCAS was formed in 1969 to protect and restore the canal as a navigable waterway. Its members have carried out extensive restoration work on the canal and its structures. The work has funded by donations from members and the public, grants, and support from British Waterways and the local authority.

PCAS has over 250 members with diverse interests and raises funds for the restoration of the canal. The Society liaises with British Waterways, Natural England, the East Riding of Yorkshire Council and English Heritage.

The PCAS trip boat *New Horizons* is based at Melbourne and has become an important part of the local community. It and the PCAS Information Centre at Canal Head are run by members of the Society and make valuable contributions to funding for restoration.

The Society is celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary with renewed enthusiasm to complete restoration of the canal.

## **The Pocklington Canal**

The canal is 9.5 miles long, flowing from Canal Head, a mile south of Pocklington, to join the River Derwent at East Cottingwith. It forms part of a network of over 2000 miles of navigable inland waterways.

The four road bridges are Scheduled Ancient Monuments and eight of the nine locks are Grade II Listed. English Heritage and British Waterways, in consultation with PCAS, have produced a draft Heritage Management Agreement to extend protection of structures on the canal and to facilitate their maintenance.

Approximately half the canal is navigable, between East Cottingwith and Melbourne Arm and six of the nine locks have been restored. The three remaining locks will require major work, and Sandhill Lock is currently under investigation by engineers from British Waterways and English Heritage because of concern about the advanced deterioration of its structure.

The canal has been isolated from the waterway network for over two years because of failure of one of the gates at Cottingwith Lock. British Waterways are currently installing new gates and carrying out repairs to the structure of the lock. The refurbishment will include installation of replicas of the distinctive wheel-operated paddlegear present when the canal was in commercial use.

The canal is of considerable importance for wildlife and is included in three Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Unlike most canals, the banks are entirely natural. It supports a diversity of aquatic plants, and thirteen species of dragonfly and damselfly can be found. The lower end of the canal, adjacent to the River Derwent, floods in winter and is of international importance for wintering wildfowl. This part of the navigable canal is included in a Special Protection Area, a Special Area of Conservation and a Ramsar site. British Waterways regard the canal as one of the top ten sites to see wildlife on their waterways: [www.waterscape.com/features-and-articles/features/top-ten-places-to-see-wildlife](http://www.waterscape.com/features-and-articles/features/top-ten-places-to-see-wildlife)

Natural England and British Waterways are now managing the canal to control tree shading and the overgrowth of vegetation in parts of the non-navigable length, to arrest decline in the diversity of aquatic plants.