

## Civic Society honours Geoff Neal

At our Annual General Meeting on May 10<sup>th</sup> the Society made a special presentation to our Life Vice-President, Geoff Neal. He is a well-known chronicler of Stourport history and heritage, had reached his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday the previous day. It was felt that this should be marked in some way. Pauline Annis, our Chair pointed out that Geoff was born in the year Howard Carter discovered the tomb of Tutankhamen.

On behalf of the Society, the Mayor of Stourport, Councillor David Little, presented Geoff with a framed certificate and bottle of local wine. Geoff commented that he was still learning new things about Stourport and looked forward to returning on his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday to tell the Society more about them.



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## "Bramble Update"

by Jim Amos

"Bramble" is now back in the water since its spell in Dry-dock. The tiller has now been put back in place and the bottom up to the Gunwals has been painted. We are now working on the interior of the cabin but the work is slow as we have to cut the material to size at the Ticket Office and carry it down to the boat in the Lower Basin. A cry for help was placed in the Shuttle at the end of April for volunteers to help with the work in progress and to start other work as materials arrive.

We have had the offer from David Little to make and fit the prop shaft, so once this is done we can then get the engine controls fitted up and the boat will be movable.



## **Civic Society Audio Cassettes**

*By Mike O'Shaughnessy*

Work has started on copying the Audio cassette collection held in the Society archives to Compact disc. The collection was recorded in the 1990's by the late Anna Carter to make an audio history of Stourport. Among the contributors are Fred Bevan, Geoff Neal, Jean Horne, Pauline Annis, Margaret Roberts, Amy Baylis, Hettie Osbourne, Dora Micklewright, and many more. Some are recording of talks given at meetings of the Society. Pauline talks of the Baldwins, Geoff on the Stourport band., Allan Smith on the S & W canal, Chas Hadwell on Sam Thorpe Clockmaker of Abberley, Audrey Cooper on George Nicholson and his Cambrian Travellers Guide.

Many tapes are of meetings held at Anna's home when she chats with various people about old Stourport. Most concern the period of the first and second world wars and just after. Fred Bevan reminisces on his life working at the Foundry and the Anglo. There is talk of the life of boatman on the canal, the Carnival, the American camp, Gypsy Tent, the Ghost of Lion Hill and much more.

The quality of the recordings varies. The home recording is often punctuated by tea cups rattling and phones ringing. In some the participants are "off mic" so it is difficult to hear clearly what is being said. Some suffer from "print through" caused by the tapes being stored unplayed for a long period of time. However much of interest concerning the history of Stourport can be cleaned from them. Anna has left us a rich source of the history of Stourport. There are some 40 tapes of which 17 have been copied so far. It is hoped by copying them to compact disc they will become more accessible to members and it will help in the preservation of the history of Stourport.

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## **Forthcoming Events**

### **Saturday 1st September - Stourport Land and River Carnival**

The highlight of Stourports' year, and includes a parade with boats and marching bands,, plus an evening river carnival, and a host of activities and entertainment for the whole family .

### **Wednesday 5th September - Can you keep a secret?**

A performance by The Mikron Theatre Company in The Civic theatre at 7.30pm

*Welcome to England 1812     A unique blend of humour, history and harmonic arrangements*

### **Saturday 8th & Sunday 9th September - Heritage Open Days Weekend**

At Canal Basins and other locations around Stourport including Heritage Rooms (12 noon – 4pm).

### **Saturday 27th & Sunday 28th October – Halloween at Stourport Canal Basins**

Including Town Trail and Heritage Rooms (12 noon – 4pm).

### **Friday 23rd November - Three Kings Parade**

The traditional parade will take place in Stourport town centre, culminating in the Christmas Lights being switched on and a Carol service.

Visit [www.stourporttown.co.uk](http://www.stourporttown.co.uk) and [www.mikron.org.uk](http://www.mikron.org.uk) for further information

## 2012 Stourport Civic Award

The Civic Award, sponsored by Thomas Vale Construction, was first introduced in 1995 and is offered to encourage and recognise projects which contribute to the quality of the environment of Stourport. Both private and public buildings are eligible as are landscaping projects.

This year two Awards were made. The Awards were presented by Bill Munn on behalf of Thomas Vale plc, who talked about Thomas Vale's strong roots in the local community.

**The first Award** went to the new Stourport Primary School and Mrs Jacqui Elwis, head teacher, accepted the Award on behalf of Worcestershire County Council. Award certificates were given to the architects, Quattro, and the builder, Thomas Vale. Will Scott, representing the judging panel described the school as a "confident new building with effective use of natural light and adhering to high standards of "green" technology". Mrs Elwis emphasised how the children themselves had been involved in planning the building.

**The second Award** was made to Anglo House, represented by owner Julian Tanser. Will Scott remarked on the landmark feature of this building standing at one of the "gateways" to the town. It had been restored to a very high standard and was performing a useful function in providing office space for a wide variety of small businesses. Award certificates were given to the architects, Godwin Austin-Johnson and the builder, Mike Crane.

**A Commendation** was awarded to Mark Tranter the owner of Severn House, New Street for what the judging panel described as "a labour of love" in restoring one of the older residential properties of Stourport to its original condition from its' recent use as District Council offices.



After the Awards were made visitors and their guests were invited to join Society members for light refreshments and given the opportunity to view the exhibition of prize-winning entries. It was then on display in the library for 2 weeks.



## How I came to Stourport B y J e a n P e r c i v a l

In the 1990s I worked in inner city Birmingham as the manager of a Family Centre for Save the Children. During August we ran a holiday play scheme and each Friday was trip day. One of my popular places to visit was Stourport on Severn, not too far away, plenty to do and only 60p to park the double-decker on the Riverside Park. The invasion of 70 children, staff and some parents was organised!! Split into groups they would visit the Town, fair ( 2 rides only!) play sports on the field, tour of the locks/ basin (conducted by me ) and a picnic. Great days!!

During this time I had a River-Avon-side caravan near Pershore and had become a weekend volunteer lock-keeper at Strensham lock, where my love of all things boating was born. In the Easter floods of 1998 my caravan drowned, well, all but a foot of it. I never loved it the same after that. I had been made redundant in July 1997 when Save the Children closed all their Family Centres. Following the flood I decided to spend my redundancy money and bought a 40 foot narrow boat, and soon after, left the flat I lived in, sold the car and became a continuous cruising live-a-board!!

Obviously I visited Stourport frequently, arriving either by river or canal, and always spent a number of days here, it was a familiar place to me. During a visit in August 2002 coming from the river ,I moored above York Street Lock and walked to the foot bridge to go to Tesco. Crossing the bridge I saw “ that lovely house with conservatory” that I had passed so many times was for sale. Half way round Tesco I realised the reality and I called into Phipps for the details on my way back to the boat. After 4years on the boat I was thinking about what came next.

I said a sad farewell to Stargazer and moved in on 30th November, a Saturday. On the Monday, I went to The Day Centre as I had seen a poster offering tea and a chat. The Group who met were on their Christmas outing that day! However, I met a woman , we sat and chatted, I had information about activities at the Centre, St. Michael’s Church, York Street Doctor, the Civic Society, an invitation to the Christmas party and I was to be a fairy at the New Year party. On the way home I volunteered to work in 2 Charity shops and am still in one of them!!

I have got more involved .....and the rest, as they say, is history.

*Jean has since left Stourport but was an active member of the society for many years.*

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## Stourport Town Clock

2013 marks the 200th anniversary of the Stourport Town clock on the Yacht Club. We are fortunate to have Charles Hadwell coming to talk to us in February about this famous landmark.

To mark the bicentennial, we are reproducing an article that first appeared in our second ever newsletter in 1992 for your enjoyment. Please note that this 2 page article is reproduced in its’ original layout.

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A full colour version of this Newsletter is available online:  
[www.stourporttown.co.uk/civic\\_society.htm](http://www.stourporttown.co.uk/civic_society.htm)



*Please now read about Stourport Town Clock in Newsletter 52a*



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Newsletter 52a