

SPRING HAS ARRIVED!

After a long, hard winter, spring has finally arrived and visitors have started arriving in Stourport. The two new Heritage Rooms were open to the public for the first time at Easter and should be open most weekends during the summer months. Costume guided walks will also be taking place and on June 15th we have a visit from Doitwich Civic Society. Please see later article for other events in the basin this year.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

Thursday 13 May 2010

Civic Award Presentation and AGM.

Thursday 24 June 2010

Midsummer Party.

In place of Festive Event we had to cancel. We will provide alcoholic refreshments and entertainment - you provide the food.

PARKS QUAY CRANE

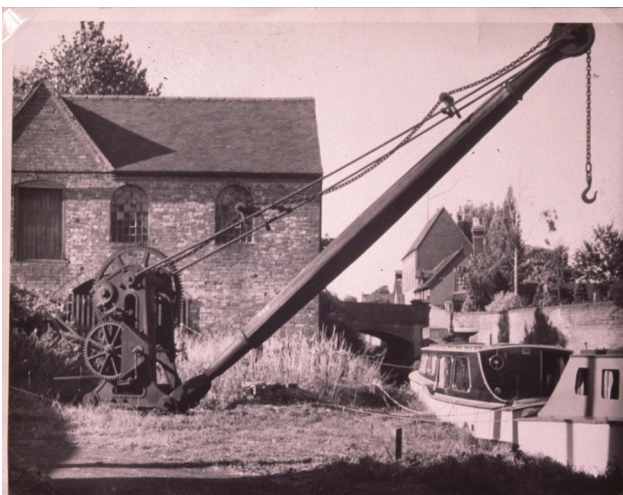
An historic crane has been rescued and reinstalled on Parkes Quay in Stourport-on-Severn.

A group of residents, led by John Eames and Jonathan Evans, raised £3400 to pay a contractor to make a new oak boom and reassemble the crane on site. It is thought to be one of the largest of its type on the system.

The crane, originally sited at Giggetty Wharf, Wombourne on the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal, was brought to Stourport around 1931 and erected on what was to become the famous site of the workshops of Holt Abbot – one of the earliest builders of pleasure craft for use on the canals.

On its prominent site, the crane will undoubtedly be noticed by the many visitors who come to Stourport in their narrowboats. Many will also notice the plaque above the moorings opposite, commemorating Holt Abbot, who was also one of the founders of the Inland Waterways Association in 1946.

Article by Arthur Page



From our Archives



March 2010

Forthcoming Events in Stourport Basins

Stourport Basins Heritage Weekend Saturday & Sunday 15/16 May 2010 12 noon to 4pm

Possible visit of The Lady Hatherton 1898 Inspection Boat (tbc)
British Waterways Heritage Working Boat and Heritage Rooms open

Pedal Power by the Mikron Theatre Company Wednesday 18 August 2010 7.30pm

An open air performance at Stourport Canal Basins. Bring your own chairs/ blankets. Wet weather alternative, see www.stourporttown.co.uk

Pirates weekend (tbc) Bank Holiday Sunday & Monday 29/ 30 August 2010 12 noon to 4pm

Canal Boat Trips and British Waterways Working Boat.

Heritage Open Days Weekend Saturday & Sunday 11 / 12 September 2010 12noon to 4pm

British Waterways Heritage Working Boat and Heritage Rooms open.

Halloween Weekend (tbc) Saturday & Sunday 30 / 31 October 2010 12 noon to 4pm

Canal Trips including Halloween evening trip and British Waterways Heritage Working Boat

STOURPORT CIVIC AWARD 2010

The entries received for the 2010 award were as follows:

Anglo House	The refurbishment and renovation of the old Anglo building
Baldwin House, 2 Lombard Street	Rebuilding and regeneration of 'The Outback' club
Riverside at Lickhill Caravan Park	Community environmental enhancement project to clear the riverside of overgrown vegetation
Moorhall Marsh	An environmental project to create a new wetland habitat
Parkes Quay Crane	A residents instigated and funded project to restore a historic canalside crane
Windlass Café & Heritage Rooms	Lottery funded scheme to reuse waterways buildings to promote and enhance the basins area of Stourport

The panel of judges comprised of our President, Will Scott; committee member and Architect, David Millis; and local architect with a special interest in historic buildings, Chris Hunt. A full day of site visits took place on Wednesday 24 March 2010. The judges were impressed with the variety and quality of entries and after much discussion the decision was made. The winners will be revealed at our AGM on 13 May 2010.

A quick reminder, Subs (£7.50 per person) are now due. Mary Johnson will be pleased to receive them at the AGM

An online colour version of the Newsletter is now available.
Please go to our website: www.stourporttown.co.uk/civic_society.htm

PETER MCKINLEY (1948-1975)



Paul Bradford, based in the Isle of Man, has recently produced a book entitled Isle of Man TT & MGP Memorial 1907-2007. All profits raised by the book are to go to charities connected with motorcycle racing in the Isle of Man and to date over £11,000 has been donated.

Paul has kindly allowed us to print a copy of his article about local TT rider, Peter McKinley, who, sadly, died during the 1975 TT race. Peter was born at 12 Lower Lickhill Road in 1948. Although he was living in Batley at the time of his death, his mother was living at 85, Brindley Street, Stourport. Mary McKinley-Billingham was a retired post-woman who died last year.

Paul Bradford's article:

"Conditions were perfect for racing on the evening of Wednesday 28th May 1975, the weather was fine, the roads were dry and visibility was clear. Welcome news for the competitors gathered at the Grandstand in Douglas waiting to take advantage of an official practice session for the Tourist Trophy Races. Amongst them was Pete McKinley. Riding his Junior machine he completed his first lap of the evening with an average speed of 102.03 mph. He then changed to his 500cc Yamaha bearing the race number 9, which was entered in the International Open Classic Race to be held on Friday 6th June.

For the second time that evening he set off along Glencrutchery Road towards Bray Hill and quickly made his way round the course to Ballaugh Bridge where, on the approach, he overtook another competitor, Thomas Robinson, who was also out on his second lap of the evening and riding a 350cc Yamaha. Robinson followed him out of Ballaugh and kept him in sight through Quarry Bends and along the Sulby Straight but McKinley was pulling away from him all the time. Around three miles further along the course, Pete McKinley was seen negotiating the left hand bend at the junction with the track leading to Skye Hill but on the exit of the bend his machine began to drift to the right and was within a foot or two of the grass bank when it began to wobble. He recovered control of the machine but by this time he was on the wrong racing line going into the bends at Pinfold Cottage and collided heavily with the hedge and stone wall near to the house, "Glen Link", situated on the right hand side of the road. The unfortunate rider was thrown from the machine and came to rest on the left hand side of the road. His helmet had come off during the incident. The Yamaha came to rest almost opposite him on the right hand side of the road. Seconds later, Thomas Robinson came upon the scene but had reduced speed considerably as a result of being warned to slow down by someone at the roadside. He rode slowly through the debris in the road and alerted a group of marshals a short distance further along. The gravely injured rider was conveyed by helicopter to Noble's Hospital where he was admitted at 8.00pm but his condition slowly deteriorated and at 9.15pm that same evening he succumbed to his injuries.

The Chief Scrutineer later examined the Yamaha machine and found no evidence to suggest that a mechanical failure may have contributed to the accident.

Peter McKinley was 26 years of age. He was a foreman mechanic by occupation and a resident of Batley, Yorkshire. He was an experienced competitor, having started his racing career in 1969 at Brands Hatch. He won his first race the following season at Snetterton but really began to make progress in 1971 when he met Peter and Don Padgett. He was later to become their workshop foreman at their premises in Bradford Road, Batley. Originally from Worcestershire, the bespectacled rider finished 1974 as Cadwell Park champion and was looking forward to competing in the 1975 Classic Races. In his first Grand Prix, the French, he finished 6th in the 500 race and 9th in the 350, both on Team-Padgett Yamahas. In the Isle of Man he was familiar with the TT course, having finished 6th in the Lightweight 250cc race and 8th in the Senior during the 1974 TT meeting.

His funeral service was held at St. Giles Church, Heightington on 4th June 1975 and was followed by internment.

If you would like to order a copy of Paul Bradford's book, he can be contacted by email: paulbradford@manx.net

THE SEARCH FOR MONICA BALDWIN:

PART FOUR

The story so far: Monica Baldwin after 28 years in an enclosed convent near Bruges left the convent and sought to start a new life...

Monica next appears on the public scene in 1957 when her second book, *The Called and the Chosen: the Diary of Sister Ursula Auberon, Enclosed Nun at the Abbaye de la Sainte Croix, Framleghe*n, was published by Hamish Hamilton. This fictional account of the conditioning process of a nun who decides to leave the convent due to lack of a true vocation, was clearly based on Monica's own experiences. I think a modern reader would find it very heavy-going.

One of the advantages of her increased income was the ability to travel and see the world. Between 1963 and 1964 Monica embarked on a world tour. Edward Baldwin, the current Earl Baldwin, remembers Monica inviting him when a young man to join her in order to get the views of both the old and the young. He declined, probably wisely, as Monica soon fell out with the woman who accompanied her on her tour.

The end-product of Monica's world tour was, *Goose in the Jungle: A Flight Round the World with Digressions*, published in 1965.

"A goose flying home over the jungle carrying in its bill a pearl." Monica used these lines from a Chinese poem to describe her return from a flight around the world. After spending twenty-eight years as a strictly enclosed nun, she felt for a long time like a goose in the jungle of a world in which she found herself. Unable at first to settle in any one place, her sojourns in different parts of the country were interspersed with travels to many parts of the world.

This account of a tour which took her to California and Mexico, Tahiti, Fiji, Tonga, Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong is frequently interrupted with digressions which 'show that the best travels lead you not only along the road and across the ocean, but into your interior as well.' Monica spent five months away accompanied by a friend, Rebecca.

Monica made a particularly perceptive comment on her life when she said:

"My life was like a cinema film out of which the middle part had been snipped and then the beginning joined clumsily on to the end."

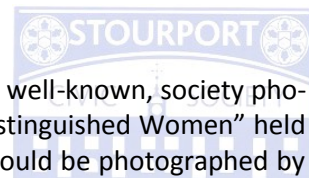
Monica Baldwin was present at All Saints Wilden, 1967, for Stanley Baldwin's Centenary service but by September 1967 she was living at Orchard Mead, Ringwood, Hants. In a letter to John Cory, arranging a short stay with him, she referred to her father's death and Cory senior's sermon at the burial service. She was clearly curious to know who was living at the Mount and expressed a desire to visit it. In a letter to John and Betty Cory in November of the same year she says of Stanley Baldwin:

"But he neglected his children's religious formation and his wife never gave them any at all because she had none...The Baldwin men invariably choose the wrong wives. They ought to be chosen FOR them."

She was clearly anxious to get back to Worcestershire, asking the Corys if they knew of any flats in Bewdley. She complained about the traffic noise in Ringwood.

On January 5th 1968 The Times published her interview with Neville Bradbrooke, headed, *Life Beyond the Wall*. In the interview Monica talked about the growing realisation that she did not have a true religious vocation. She referred to living on the borders of the New Forest "where she is writing her autobiography which she describes

as her swan-song. She holds strong views on factory-farming: famine relief; and the “wishy-washy” politics of the Labour Party as practised by George Brown and Harold Wilson.”



The year 1968 was a significant year as Monica sat for a portrait by Madame Yevonde, a well-known, society photographer. It is likely that the portrait was one of those included in an exhibition on “Distinguished Women” held that year. It seems somewhat ironic that a lady who had led such an austere lifestyle would be photographed by somebody who specialised in producing portraits of society beauties and royals.

It was in 1968 that Monica left the hated Ringwood and moved to Alderney in the Channel Islands. I have not been able to discover any explanation for this move but it seems likely that, once again, Monica had been in contact with old acquaintances. The Alderney address, “Raz Joyeaux”, gives nothing away and no longer exists. Remembering that by this time Monica was seventy-five years old it is possible that this was a residential care home.

Monica had lost none of her “feistiness” and in a letter to The Times on December 18 headed “Selfless Men” she criticised those who complained that celibacy was creating “loneliness” for priests and discouraging new recruits to the priesthood.

“No priest worth his salt should today have time for loneliness. If he is living up to the obligations of his priesthood, the tragic shortage of vocations-due to the pleasure-seeking age in which we live....should surely spur him on to greater self-sacrifice and an effort at least to take on some of the work of those who find the royal road of the Cross too hard for them.”

Monica set pen to paper again in January and February 1970 expressing her strong opposition to the abandonment of the Tridentine Mass:

“I am convinced that neither Cardinal Heenan nor even the Pope himself are fully aware of the acute anguish now being endured by those who care most deeply.”

I have not been able to find out when Monica left Alderney but in September 1975 she moved to Montgomery House, Long Melford, Suffolk..It was here that the final scenes in her troubled life would be played out.

Monica had moved to Montgomery House, a private old people’s home, following an invitation from Mrs Pamela Forbes, the proprietor, who was a cousin of two members of the order. For the first six weeks of Monica’s stay, all went well but soon relations between Monica and the people she was in contact with, started to deteriorate. Mrs Forbes was particularly concerned by the fact that Monica had been discussing her private life and impending divorce with the other residents. Three days before her death Mrs Forbes had given her one month’s notice to leave the home. As Monica went out of the office she had said, “You haven’t heard the last of me !”

It is clear from newspaper accounts of the coroner’s inquest that Monica Baldwin had been behaving strangely in the days before her death. She refused to have her bedsheets laundered, insisting on washing them in the sink in her room. Apparently she found fault with everyone and everything and upset the other residents. Pamela Forbes claimed that “She was obsessed by death and was always talking about death.”

The day before her death, 16th November, Monica drew up a new will, witnessed by the local vicar and his wife (Rev and Mrs Herbert). The whole of her estate, which amounted to just over £20,000 was left to Irene Arbuthnot, a friend. Monica was last seen alive on 17th November. She was found dead in bed on the morning of 18th November, “slumped on the bed, a bottle in her right hand and tablets in her left”. The coroner’s verdict was that death was due to: “poisoning by a combination of alcohol and barbiturates.” He further recorded that Monica Baldwin took her own life while the balance of her mind was disturbed.

The notice of Monica’s death which appeared in *The Times* was brief and businesslike. I am still trying to find out where she was buried or cremated but it is proving very difficult.

The Search for Monica Baldwin will be produced as a booklet in the autumn.

© Pauline Annis

1ST STOURPORT ST MICHAELS SCOUT GROUP CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

St Michaels Scout Group in Stourport will be celebrating its' Centenary with an Open Weekend on 8 & 9 May 2010 from 9am to 4pm at its HQ in Mitton Gardens. All ex Scouts, Cubs, leaders, committee members or anyone else once involved with the group, are most invited to attend. The groups extensive photographic and document archive will be available to view, and it will be an opportunity to meet old friends, reminisce and maybe bring along memorabilia or old photos. Further celebrations will include a group camp in the summer for current Beavers, Cubs and Scouts.

Scouting came into being after Baden Powell wrote 'Scouting for Boys'. This was issued in several instalments outlining various activities and soon boys set themselves up as small groups or Patrols. St Michaels Scout Troop was set up in 1910 with the help of Lord Hampton, The Chief Scouts Commissioner, who already ran a Troop in Hartlebury. Bill Davies was the original Scout Leader and led the group until 1948. The photograph also taken in 1948 shows Bill receiving a Medal of Merit badge from Lord Hampton in The Bell in Lion Hill.

In 1951 John Morris assisted by his brother Jim became Scout leaders for many, many years and were assisted by Ray Hancox and Gill Foster. In 1972, Clive Huntbatch became Scout Leader and has been involved with the group ever since. He finished his role in the group as Group Scout Leader in 1999. One of his scouts, Gareth Morris, is now the Scout leader himself. Another, Mark Gould, is the current Akela for the Cub Pack. The pack dates from the 1930's and Ivy Dudley was the first and long serving Cub leader. She is also pictured in the photograph.

The group originally met in a shed at the back of the old Parish Rooms, what is now the Christadelphian meeting room, opposite the Police Station. About 1935 they moved to their present site in Mitton Gardens. They were charged a Peppercorn Rent for the site by the owners, Thomas Vale. The site had been a chicken farm and the scouts were involved in its clearance! About 1948 the group raised the sum of £83.00 to buy the land outright. After an Arson attack, the HQ was burnt down in October 1992. Only 18 months later, after extensive fund raising, the rebuilt brick HQ reopened in May 1994. In the foyer of the hut is a list acknowledging the grateful thanks to all in the community who helped with its rebuilding.

Clive took St Mikes Scouts camping 29 years in a row from 1972. Carpets of Worth always supplied a lorry, which they had been doing since the mid 1930's. For some time, 3 tons of equipment and all the scouts would travel to camp in the back of this vehicle. When this was deemed unsafe, they also supplied a coach for the Scouts to travel in. In 1952 and 1954 annual camp was in Jersey! St Mikes continues to camp under traditional canvas marquees and Patrol tents unlike many groups that now use smaller and lighter weight modern tents.

After the war, 'Bob a Job' was brought in to raise money for Scout groups and the Scout Association. Scouts would go out in Job Week knocking on peoples doors asking for tasks they could do for one shilling (5p). Job Week finished in the 1980's, because of safety concerns and was replaced with the payment of subscriptions.

Finally, Assistant Scout leader, Stephen More, will be coming to our midsummer party on 24th June to talk about his scouting life. He was amongst the first group of Scouts when Gareth Morris took over as leader in 2000.



Pictured in 1948: second left Ivy Dudley, then Bill Davies, Lord Hampton (arms folded) and far right Reg Worth of Carpets of Worth

Article by David More, Treasurer and Scout Helper
1st Stourport St Michaels Scout Troop