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THE JOURNAL OF THE HUDDERSFIELD CANAL SOCIETY

NUMBER 10

MAY 1976

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Number 10

May 1976

Editor .. .. . Chris Griffiths  
Printing & Distribution .. .. . Derek Walker  
Typing by .. .. . T S Freru

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ALL CHANGE!!

This issue of Pennine Link sees a bit of an upheaval, with myself taking over, and thus becoming our fourth editor. The magazine will now be printed on our own duplicator which we have purchased. We hope this will cut down delays, and enable us to keep to a regular publishing schedule.

Since we still intend to publish bi monthly, which is more frequent than many other newsletters, we are going to extend the scope of Pennine Link. In addition to articles concerning the society, and the Narrow Canal, we will also be including waterways news of both regional and national importance. Our campaign must be nationwide, and also be kept in the context of the waterways movement as a whole; keeping in touch with other waterways, and restoration, news will help us to do this.

The quality of the magazine will still depend, however, on the contributions received by the Editor. Your news, views, letters and articles or even just ideas for articles, if you feel that you just can't write

a complete piece. Criticisms and suggestions for the improvement of Pennine Link and/or the Society are especially welcome.

We had a number of entries for our 'spot the deliberate mistake' competition in the last issue. The correct answer was, of course: 'Haddersfield' on page 4 should have been 'Huddersfield'. The lucky winner was a Mr Dewey of High Flatts, who wins a year's free subscription to Pennine Link. The second prize of a two-year subscription was not awarded.

We apologise for the lack of a proper cover on this issue, which is due to problems at our printers. The cover will be back on the next Pennine Link which should appear in early July. Press date is June 25th, lets hear from you.

Chris Griffiths

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A DAY OUT ON THE BIG DITCH?

We are planning to organise a cruise on the Manchester Ship Canal on Sunday 12th September. The fare of £4.25 (£2.90 for children under 14) includes: boat trip from Manchester to Liverpool rail travel from Liverpool back to Manchester and an illustrated brochure.

If you are interested in this trip, which is well well worth making, please write to Alan West (address inside front cover) before June 17th. The trip will be cancelled if there is insufficient support.

Secretary's Report - Annual General Meeting

The second AGM was held on April 2nd at Ashton Town Hall and approximately 20 members attended.

The chairman welcomed members and reported on the activities of the previous year. We had attended 3 rallies (York, Dukinfield and Marsden Festival (plus Coventry - Ed), and held 2 social events - one in Huddersfield (David Ellis on "The Colne Valley Floor") and one in Ashton (Tony Lewery on "Narrow Boat Painting").

IWAAC had visited the canal and issued a press release.

Following the publication of the Feasibility Study, we had carried out two detailed surveys with a view to solving the problems in Huddersfield and Stalybridge. The reprint of the Study was due very soon.)

He reported on discussions with BWB about Standedge Tunnel (there are two small rock falls) and with Huddersfield Polytechnic about the Aspley warehouse.

Most significant, however, was the fact that Greater Manchester, Tameside, Oldham and Kirklees had adopted non-encroachment policies although not all were water-tight (groan - Ed) including such phrases as "subject to all other considerations". West Yorkshire are working on a similar policy.

He commented upon Pennine Link - drawing members' attention to the difficulties which had been experienced. Naturally we all wanted to produce a more professional job - but costs made it prohibitive.

....AGM Report

Election of officers and committee

The committee as listed inside the front cover was elected unopposed.

The secretary reported on the 'six projects' - see elsewhere in the magazine for further details.

David Chadderton of the Saddleworth Historical Society asked about the Royal George locks (18 & 19W) which are being infilled - there are original masons' marks on the chamber walls. Secretary reported that the masonry itself was not being disturbed - the chamber is simply being concreted in. He also mentioned the wooden warehouse by the A670 crossing at Woolroad. It was agreed to investigate repairing this.

Subscriptions

The question of subscriptions was discussed following a proposal that they should be raised. After some discussion, it was agreed that from 1/5/76 the rates should be

be:	Junior	75p
	Ordinary	£1.50
	Family	£2.50
	Associate	£5.00
	Corporate	£7.50 (minimum)

Life Membership

An enquiry had been received asking whether we would accept £15 for life membership. After a great deal of discussion, it was agreed that the request would not be granted.

I Tried to Run a Working Party

by Dr T J Noakes

Whilst the first HCS working party on the Narrow Canal is as likely to be remembered for daring technical innovation as it is for impeccable organisation, it did succeed in avoiding most, or all, of the pitfalls which can so easily turn a potentially successful event into the sort of shambles that one prefers not to talk about. (who said "conveyor belts"?)

The initial idea (we had this two years ago) was, of course, that it was time HCS organised a working party. After a couple of false starts we finally decided on a 'gardening' type activity since:

- a) it does not tend to involve expensive equipment as does a full clearance.
- b) it is less likely to go seriously wrong.
- c) it can cope with wide variations in numbers turning up.
- d) it presents, hopefully, a much bigger visual improvement at the end of the weekend than, say, a chamber clearance (which have often resulted in a very clean lock chamber but with everything else and everybody getting a bit).

We decided that the section of canal above Slaithwaite would be most suitable for this kind of work, and we identified 3 different sets of jobs that could be attempted:

- 1) Towpath. Though heavily used, and in basically sound condition, it was badly rutted and had many deep puddles. Infilling of these and surfacing with rolled ash would provide a big visual improvement, as well as improving the facility for the numerous towpath walkers (TPW's).

- 2) Stone walling. The towpath wall was in surprisingly good condition, except for a length near the upper limits of the site. It was felt that the repair of this gap might be possible over the weekend, in view of the probable availability of stoned walling experts (as seen on TV)
- 3) Tree chopping. Whilst not wishing to be labelled as senseless oafs who converted a charming leafy glade into a howling desert, it was apparent that the take-over of vegetation on this length should be restrained (In the long term some more will certainly need to be removed; on normal canals it is not customary to find a young forest growing between the towpath and the canal.)

When the items of equipment essential for this to be done were listed, the result was a little off-putting: 1 lorry, 2 dumpers, 1 trailer, 1 vibroller, and many wheelbarrows(sic) saws, racks (sic) ropes, shovles (sic) large quantities of ash (30-40 tons) and a considerable amount of diesel oil (sic). Our financial situation was (and is) quite healthy. To keep it that way, this lot would have to be begged, borrowed, or borrowed unofficially, without causing any great financial drain. This was achieved through, principally, the good offices of Kirklees Council, who receive our gratitude for providing a lorry and driver, vibroller and a considerable number of hand tools, and several loads of high quality ash.

Dumpers were loaned by PFCS (needless to say it broke down) and the Inland Waterways Protection Society.

Volunteers came from several local groups and some from considerable distances (London, Oxford, Liverpool)



PFCS Mobile were there in force, along with many other very familiar faces, not to mention the infant HCS working party under whose auspices it all took place. A very valuable service was made available by Huddersfield Voluntary Aid who provided tea, hot soup, beefburgers and other sustenance over the weekend (as well as covering the SAFETY aspect).

Over the two days numbers at work fluctuated between 30 and 50. Luckily the weather stayed fine, bringing out the TPW's (there were a lot of them about), and the result, in my opinion, was a success. All the objectives we set ourselves for the weekend were accomplished. There is now a smooth, relatively level towpath over the length we dealt with (about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile). A degree of offending vegetation has been removed, without going to excess, and finally, most of the stone walling earmarked for attention was rebuilt.

Looking forward, we envisage another working party later in the year. Next time, though, we hope it will not be agricultural (other than in the sense of freely providing fertiliser) but will be a clearance organised (\*!?!?- Ed) along traditional lines as this is the direction our working party will have to move in the future.

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Some readers may not know that PFCS Mobile have monthly working parties on other canals. Transport departs from Manchester on a Friday night returning on Sunday, and new faces are always welcome. For details of forthcoming digs, see Diary on page 16.

... NEWSLINK...NEWSLINK...NEWSLINK...NEWSLINK...NEWSLINK..

... It seems that there's a good chance that commercial traffic will return to the Midlands canals. The Regional Water Authority intends to build a new sewage treatment plant, and the local council wants them to transport the sludge by tanker boat ... We may yet see rubbish barges on the Huddersfield Broad!

... The reprint of the Feasibility Study is on its way but has been held up by pressure of work at the printers. If you've ordered a copy recently - please be patient...

... We hear that Ralph Kirkham is to take over the editorship of IWA Norwester, following the retirement of John Greenway. We wish Ralph 'all the best', and await the next issue with interest...

... On the subject of magazines... The 'Pennine Link' Trophy for late newsletter publishing (always awarded to ourselves in the past), goes to Graham Palmer for 'Navvies 60'. We understand that it is going to be published this year...

...We're still looking for someone to help organise a programme of meetings for this coming winter. A very simple job, no experience necessary, please inundate Bob Dewey with offers...

... Bob Dewey and Chris Griffiths apologise to everyone for anything they may not have got round to doing in the past few months - theses and final examinations have been prevailing.

Letter to the Editor

May 7th 1976

Dear Editor,

I have recently been re-reading a previous issue of 'Pennine Link' in which you published a letter from Mr Roger Squires of Beckenham, which among other mentioned the possibility of keeping a boat to make trips through Standedge Tunnel, exactly on the lines of the organisation at Dudley during the period of official closure.

I understand that the BWB objection to this is based on the grounds of safety, and a claim that the tunnel is liable to roof falls.

Has any member first-hand knowledge from a recent trip through the tunnel, to either substantiate or dispute the adoption of this attitude? Certainly there are stretches of Dudley Tunnel which appear adventurous to say the least; and there are other shorter tunnels where an unlined roof looks insecure (eg Tardebigge) but navigation is nevertheless permitted. One could insure against any minor accidents, of course.

Be that as it may, Standedge is outstandingly the canals greatest publicity asset, which should be pushed for all the Society is worth; it is in so many ways unique - by far the longest and highest canal tunnel, its remarkable early use as a pilot heading and spoil removal road to the rail tunnels, and perhaps its claim to be the only tunnel to have grown in length during its functioning life-time, make it a connoisseur's tunnel!

Yours sincerely, Maxwell H S Holgate MICE  
Worsley, Manchester.

Bates (Huddersfield) Ltd

By the time you read this, the society may have lost by far the most important battle it has yet had to fight. I hope it hasn't - if the editor allows a Stop Press, I'll try and give the very latest position.

The story starts in March when I observed a new planning application for development at Bates' factory in Queen Street South, Huddersfield. Officially, the application was received on a list published in early April, and the chairman and I circulated about 40 societies and other groups asking them to oppose it. Many did, but discussions with Mr Bates apparently proved that the company was not prepared to allow the proposal to be moved even ten feet to protect a line for the canal.

Despite Kirklees 'non-encroachment policy' it seems likely that the application will be approved - the employment-v-leisure conflict tends to have a bias (naturally) towards the former. The policy would not be breached - the wording includes a 'let-out' clause "subject to each application being considered on its merits.." Frankly, in Kirklees where jobs are at a premium it is feared that leisure may have few merits when jobs are (allegedly) at stake.

I'm doing my best - but its difficult arguing with your bosses and telling them that they're fools!

RAD

PS: If the Stop Press tells you that no decision has been made, please send your objections to Directorate of Planning, Kirklees MC, 24, Market Street, Huddersfield. Very urgent\*\*

A Short Account of the HUDDERSFIELD CANALWilliam Pontey

As it is very probable many persons may wish to enquire why the Author should meddle in a matter of this sort he has to answer once for all, that he does it under an idea that a duty is imposed upon every one to warn not only his friends, but mankind in general, and even his enemies, of approaching danger. He has for 16 years been in the constant habit of observing the vexation, the difficulty, the distress, and even ruin, this ill-fated Canal has brought upon hundreds. The habits of his life have necessarily brought him in some degree acquainted with the business of the construction of canals generally, as well as the means necessary to supply them with water; and hence he does not scruple to assert that this knowledge leads but to one conclusion in regard to the London and Cambridge Canal, which is, that from the prospectus held out the subscribers have nothing to hope, while from the very nature of the thing itself, they have everything to fear. To receive 5 per cent for money advanced at the end of years possibly 16 or upwards, as in the case of the Huddersfield Canal, could by no means be a matter of hope for a person who has the option of vesting his property where there is a moral certainty of receiving both principal and interest from the present period; while on the other hand the difficulties and incalculable expence of constructing a Canal, such as that proposed, with a double danger of a scanty supply of water and an inadequate trade, are indeed objects sufficient to alarm any one not equally rich and careless in regard to his property.

But to facts - Some time previous to the year 1793, an act was obtained for making a Navigable Canal from Ashton under Lyne to Manchester, and by some means

continued on page 13.

The 'Six Projects' - a progress report

These six projects were described in Pennine Link 9 and form the basis for the Society's activities in the immediate future.

1) Aspley Warehouse

Minimum-cost estimates (ie how much cash is needed to keep it standing up) still being prepared, but should be ready soon. Secretary to discuss matter further with polytechnic.

2) Rally

Agreed at committee (30/4/76) to investigate the possibility of rally at Aspley, with Polytechnic section being used for trail-boats. Alternatively at Marsden on summit pound.

3) Stalybridge Diversion Report

Work progressing - publication aimed for August/September.

4) Working Party

Provisionally agreed to arrange a chamber clearance in Huddersfield in October. (subject to permission)

5) Social Programme

We desperately need an organiser - or preferably one for each side of the Pennines. It's your society - do you want meetings, or not?

..... A Short Account (cont from page 11)

or other while the work was in progress, the shares of £100, each got up so as to bear a very large premium, in consequence a sort of Canal Fever or rather Mania attacked hundreds, under the influence of which the Huddersfield Canal was projected. Such a link being wanted to form a Chain of Canals from Manchester by Ashton to Huddersfield and Hull.

The first Proprietors, however numerous and flushed with the prospect of realizing Fortunes by the business very generously considered to let the good folks on the other side of the mountain (for they had a mountain to cross, and it has also proved a Mountain of Difficulties) share in the expected spoil, and hence a meeting was advertized at Huddersfield to consider the business, at which a report was produced, read, and very generally and readily approved of. ...the person that made it, a very young man (Benjamin Outram)...told them he knew what would be found in the tunnel though about 200 yards beneath the highest part of the Mountain; ultimately however he found a difficulty there he had not counted upon, it was a quantity of water which baffled alike the power of engines, and his skill; and hence it is that five years, the estimated time necessary to complete the business, is now swelled to  $16\frac{1}{2}$ , and still no loaded vessel has passed the tunnel; the report certainly affords abundant matter for consideration,...however, for the present I dismiss it with only one observation, which is, that, on almost every head of expence it serves as well as a thousand witnesses to convince us that Engineers are not infallible.

extracts from a pamphlet written by William Pontey, a resident of Huddersfield, in 1811. Its purpose was to dissuade prospective investors in the London & Cambridge Canal.

The previous extracts were taken from one of the few documents relating to the Huddersfield Narrow Canal that remain. Do any readers know of any more source material? We are particularly seeking documents from the period of railway ownership, anything describing boats and/or traffic, and any photographs or illustrations from prior to 1960.

Anyone who can suggest any new sources of information please contact the editor.

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....The 'Six Projects' (cont from page 12)

6) Slipway

No progress - we cannot find the owners of the land by Golcar Swing Bridge.

If anyone would like to help with any of these projects please contact the secretary.

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QUOTE OF THE MONTH

'Navigation' (IWA West Mid Region) tells us of a marathon cruise by the Mikron Theatre Company who will:

"...be travelling once again on the narrow boat Tyseley and covering some 15 000 miles of waterway."



In the next issue of Pennine Link we hope to have -

Water, water everywhere, but not a drop...

Pennine Link visits 'Water 76' to find out why, in this year of water shortages, the water industry has decided to hold a massive exhibition to show how good they are.

The Boat Museum

The North West Museum of Inland Navigation opens its doors to the public on June 12th - we take a look round the Ellesmere Port site.

Pennine Drink ... the first of a series on the pubs of the Huddersfield Narrow.

Bates Ltd ... the final verdict.

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...LATE NEWS ...LATE NEWS ...LATE NEWS ...LATE NEWS... LA

Bates: Application went to sub-committee on 24th May recommended for approval. Decision deferred... still time for objections...do it now..NOW We've got them on the run...

It is rumoured that BWB are to sell off another length of canal in Huddersfield, despite giving assurances that this would not be done. We have not, however, been consulted over any proposed sale and are trying to discover if the rumours are, in fact, true. More news in the next Pennine Link.

DIARY

- June 4th East Pennine Transport Group meeting  
at the Minstrel Inn, Huddersfield  
7.30pm Mr Willie Hodgson, an old boat  
man on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal wi  
will be talking about some of his  
experiences.  
HCS members and friends welcome.
- June 12/13 IWA West Riding/Rochdale Canal Soc  
Rally at Sowerby Bridge
- June 12/13 IWA Merseyside/NWMIN Rally at Ellesmere  
Port. Traditional working craft only in  
the basin: opening of Boat Museum
- July 3/4 PFCS Mobile working party on the Droit-  
wich or Thames & Severn canals.  
Ring Pete Stockdale, 061-485-2247  
for further details
- July 31/  
Aug 1 PFCS Mobile
- Aug 7/8 IWA National Rally at Peterborough  
'nuff said
- Sept 11 Marsden Village Festival - help  
needed for stand.
- Sept 12 Trip on Manchester Ship Canal -  
see elsewhere for details.
- JUNE 25th PRESS DATE FOR PENNINE LINK No 11

The opinions expressed in Pennine Link are those of the contributors, and not necessarily those of the Editor or the Society.

