

PENNINE LINK

No. 69

May/June 1986



FREE to Members

25p

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Non-Council Posts

Cover photo: Cnty Clr Garth Pratt and Cnty Clr John Sully as they marked the magical moment when the Broad and Narrow were connected once more with the Wakefield Road bridge opening.

THE JOURNAL OF THE HUDDERSFIELD CANAL SOCIETY LTD.

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Chairman's Report to Council for 1985

It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of your Council, to present a review of the affairs of the Society for the year ended 31st December 1985.

Rather than begin with a review of 1985, it would be preferable, on this occasion, first to highlight the change in the climate in which the Society now operates. You will remember that in 1984 we held a meeting on Standedge attended by members and officers of

the five riparian councils and officers of British Waterways Board. This was the first time that all the local authorities had come together to discuss our proposals to restore the Canal. We proposed that a cost benefit study should be commissioned to prove the viability of a canal fully navigational from end to end. Further, we proposed that a steering committee be established, chaired by British Waterways Board, to progress restoration.

Joint Steering Committee

The Huddersfield Narrow Canal Joint Steering Committee first met in June 1985 and was chaired by Sir Leslie Young, Chairman of British Waterways Board. At the inaugural meeting, the Huddersfield Canal Society was invited to participate and members of your Council have attended the meetings held in 1985. Prior to the establishment of this Joint Committee, officers of the five councils and your Society met regularly in Leeds to guide the members and we owe a large measure of success to the joint approach on restoration to both these committees. In anticipation of the demise of the two Metropolitan County Councils — Greater Manchester Council and West Yorkshire Council — your Council was keen to bring about meetings so that the District Councils would have the opportunity of seeing the work of the Metropolitan Councils before the latter's demise on 1st April 1986.

End of the Metropolitan Counties

We will now have to rely on the three District Councils from 1st April 1986. Your Council is pleased to note the positive attitude towards restoration by Kirklees, Oldham and Tameside Councils who have all agreed to undertake maintenance agreements with British Waterways Board. The countrywide approach of GMC and WYCC was particularly valuable to the Huddersfield Narrow Canal restoration. Major projects could be undertaken by such large bodies as they were not concerned with the normal operations of a District Council and their large rating base produced large sums available for both their revenue and capital accounts.

I am particularly pleased to report that in November 1985 Greater Manchester Council voted £1.2M towards the restoration schemes on the West Side of the

'hill'. This sum was credited to the Society's account on 26th March 1986. A detailed programme is now being drawn up but it is likely that the monies will fund the continuing Manpower Services Programme operated by our subsidiary, Tameside Canals Limited, which was formed in July and the reconstruction of lowered and culverted bridges in Greater Manchester. West Yorkshire County Council agreed in 1985 to reopen the Wakefield Road Bridge. Your first chairman, John Maynard, accompanied County Councillors John Sully and Garth Pratt on the first narrowboat to navigate under the new bridge on 20th March 1986 — a historic day.

The legacy left by the two Metropolitan Counties has given the total restoration plans a good start which should ensure through navigation perhaps in the 1990s.

The Year and Progress on the Canal EAST SIDE

The West Yorkshire/Kirklees Manpower Services scheme Marsden-Slaithwaite is now in its second year and well on schedule. The top four locks at Marsden were opened on 27th March 1986. We would expect to see most of the nineteen locks completed by the end of 1986. A scheme to reconstruct the dam and spillway of the Tunnel End Reservoir was postponed after the Society and local council objected. We wish to see the reservoir maintained for recreational use and sympathetic treatment made of any constructional works.

We were in negotiation throughout the year with the legal and estates departments of West Yorkshire over the lease for the Society's occupation of half of the Tunnel End Cottages. To date this has not been completed. Improvements have been made to the facilities in the Centre and close co-operation with the

Countryside Rangers has enabled a re-design of the internal layout and ever-increasing visitor numbers. The Society has contributed towards the cost of a special tunnel exhibition which we hope will be completed in 1986.

WEST SIDE

We began work in 1985 on restoring the two top locks (31 and 32 West) at Diggle. Progress is excellent and visiting working parties have augmented our own efforts. We have discovered and reinstated the old bywashes and will start work on the locks proper in 1986. We would not have been able to undertake these works without a £10,000 grant from GMC.

Benjamin Outram carried over 15,000 passengers in 1985. It was our first full year of operation. Lack of experience and a poor summer contributed to a trading loss. We have made changes and hope that we can contribute to the Society's funds in 1986.

We suggested a scheme to GMC for the infilled section at Uppermill. GMC took it on board and invited tenders for the contract to reinstate the Canal. Work began in March 1986. When complete the Uppermill section will enable navigation from Wade Lock to the Wool Road Warehouse and increase the waters for angling.

TAMESIDE CANALS LIMITED

Our wholly-owned subsidiary, Tameside Canals Limited, Chairman, Tameside Councillor Frank Ruffley, began work in 1985 on the Huddersfield Narrow. They cut their teeth on the Peak Forest Canal and earned great praise from BWB Area Engineer, Northwich, for improvements to the towpath, walls and environs. The team of job creation employees, under the management and direction of Mr Stephen Whitby, have now begun

work on Locks 1-3W. We hope to see boats in Stalybridge in 1987. This project has been made possible by a £45,000 grant from GMC.

STALYBRIDGE

We published a report in the 1970s — 'A new Canal for Stalybridge' which kept alive our hopes of through navigation despite the short-sighted destruction of the Canal a decade earlier. In 1985 we commissioned W S Atkins (Wales) Limited to produce an engineering study of the options to find a route through and around Stalybridge. Their report detailed and costed seven options. It is now being studied by Tameside Council. The report was funded by GMC, IWA and your Society.

BENEFIT STUDY FOR THE WHOLE CANAL

In 1984 we proposed a cost benefit study for the Huddersfield Narrow Canal. In 1985 it was decided by the Joint Committee to commission a study to produce an advocacy document to lever out funds, public and private, to support the restoration. Funding for the study was promised by GMC, Tameside MBC, BWB, IWA and the Society. The task of commissioning a firm of consultants was delegated to the Society and a report will be produced by Summer 1986.

THE SOCIETY

John Maynard, our first chairman and one of the founder members, resigned his seat on the Council. He has also retired from work but has promised to remain active with the Society and members will probably see him digging in Diggle or boating on Benji for as long as is necessary.

Another active member, David Irving, resigned to take up his new post at Droitwich as Canal Manager of the restoration project.

We welcome Alec Ramsden, our new Press Officer, to the Council. Alec will bring journalistic professionalism to our publicity section and will assist David Wakefield in spreading the gospel. We also welcome John Morley and Jack Carr to the Council. John is our new Boat Officer and Jack our West Side Chairman.

THE FUTURE

It is particularly gratifying to note the District Councils' involvement in our Canal restoration. Tameside is giving engineering support, will contribute towards the benefit study and has provided W S Atkins with valuable help in the production of the Stalybridge report. Tameside Canals Ltd will continue to manage our Manpower Services Commission restoration work on the West Side. Representation on the Committee of Tameside Canals Ltd has been increased by the addition of two councillors from Tameside MDC — Councillor J Pettit and Councillor G Hatton.

Oldham MBC fully supports our Diggle restoration. Towpath renovations on the Canal undertaken by an Oldham MSC scheme will increase usage of the Canal and complement the restoration works in Oldham.

Kirklees MDC will continue to support the MSC Marsden to Slaithwaite scheme and it has drafted a plan for the eventual through navigation to Marsden from Wakefield Road.

We again look forward to 1986 with confidence with the knowledge that twenty-five per cent of the Canal is now restored or under restoration. Vast amounts of money are being expended on the Canal and its environs. Your Society has achieved much in the past year. Our role is changing to one of management and participation in the overall restoration through the various public and private bodies. We need and value your continued support.

ASHTON CANALS FESTIVAL

Portland Basin
Ashton-under-Lyne
11th-13th July

- Camra Beer Tent
- Saddleworth Morris Men
- Punch and Judy
- Uppermill Band
- Boat Trips — Craft Fair
- Barbecues — Boat Rally
- Folk Night — Magic
- Dancers & much more.



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and Festival President
Mrs Barbara Castle MEP



Admission Friday, Sat. Night £1
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£1.2M Grant from Greater Manchester Council

On 26th March 1986 Greater Manchester Council handed John Fryer, our Company Secretary, a cheque to the value of £1,200,000. This was the culmination of three months' detailed discussion between The Society, BWB and GMC over an agreement as to how the monies should be spent and administered. The sum granted to HCS was based on our estimates of a five-year job creation programme (£50,000 per year capital input) and the reinstatement of three road crossings in Oldham, viz: Wool Road, Wade Lock and the B6179 road crossing in Greenfield.

The monies have now been paid into the Society's account and have since been re-invested. The agreement between BWB and HCS was dated 25th March and provides for the restoration strategy to be agreed between the Board and HCS. This magnificent grant will, subject to the continuance of the Manpower Services Commission schemes, virtually ensure restoration of the Canal from Ashton to Diggle except for Stalybridge. Restoration estimates are based upon our estimates of the monies required to underwrite a 100-man JCP each year for five years and GMC's

estimates of bridge reinstatement. Allowing for underestimates of the extra monies required to underwrite the JCP and overestimates for the road crossings — Wakefield Road Bridge, a six-lane trunk road cost around £160,000 — the sum donated by GMC plus investment interest should pay for our West Side restoration plans.

This grant gives the District Councils of Tameside and Oldham confidence to support the Society and our schemes. The Benefit Study will spell out how best to restore the Canal commensurate with the benefits to be derived from restoration. However, the Society needs monies for its normal operational requirements. Membership fees pay for Pennine Link; other donations underwrite other administrative costs. It is essential that we maintain our sales efforts and membership roll. The Festivals contribute directly to operational costs but the costs of a successful pressure group like ourselves have to be met from general funds. The faster we generate income, the sooner we can all cruise from Ashton to Huddersfield. We still need you!

Diggle Restoration Report

Trevor Ellis

My optimism in the last report based on the high turn out on the mid-January weekend soon changed with snow and bad weather for several weeks in February and March. We have now almost completed the bywash works and another weekend should see both working.

The next priority is work to rebuild the tail of Lock 31W adjacent to Ward Lane. As numbers and equipment permit we will also start on the lock chamber on Lock 32W.

Future dates are:

10/11th May; 31st May/1st June;
14/15th June; 28/29th June; 5/6th
July; 12/13th July; 19/20th July;
26/27th July.

The changes are due to festivals in May and Summer work camps in July. For further information please ring me on Hudds 534666.

**PRESS DATE FOR
JULY/AUGUST
PENNINE LINK
IS JUNE 1ST**

It was a marvellous moment when the 44ft narrowboat 'Aylsbury Merganza' nosed into a new concrete tunnel under Wakefield Road Bridge, Huddersfield, to officially link the Huddersfield Broad and Narrow Canals.

It meant that the link was open again after twenty-three years and Cnty Clr Garth Pratt, who was at the controls with Cnty Clr John Sully, of the boat, owned by the County Council's footpaths officer Wilf Moss, had just the right words to mark the event.

It was, he said, a short journey underneath a six lane highway in terms of distance, but it was a major leap forward in the campaign to restore the narrow. Cnty Clr Pratt, chairman of the Colne Valley Joint Steering Group said that the dream of full, navigable restoration of the narrow would now become a reality.

There was a pat on the back for HCS which, he said, had convinced the county council that the restoration would bring new life to the Colne Valley, and, just as important attract new jobs.

The project would transform an unsightly eyesore which was a liability into an important recreational attraction, although the full benefits would not be realised until the restoration scheme had been completed.

Naturally there was quite a turnout of VIPs for an event which had been anticipated for years and which, once it had been started was soon finished — about three weeks ahead of schedule in fact.

The £160,000 plus contract went to Streeters Northern and not only did the company beat the target time but managed to carry out the work in such an efficient way that the predicted horrific snarl-ups of traffic on Huddersfield's second busiest feeder road never happened.

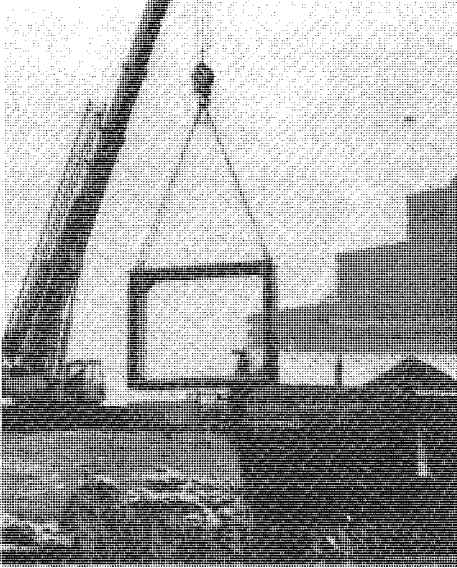


Seeing light now at the end of the tunnel, Bob Dewey (left) and Keith Gibson. *Photo: Yorkshire Post.*

Following the 'vandalism' of the filling in of the old tunnel, a water flow was maintained through three, 4ft diameter culverts. The contractor's brief was to instal in their place a 4.2m wide by 3.3m high box culvert in an open trench.

The work was split into three distinct stages, each one commencing on completion of the preceding stage and involving the excavation of about a third of the width of the six-lane highway.

A major fact, of course was controlling the water flow. Streeters managed this by damming at both upstream and downstream locations, using temporary reinforced tarpaulin structures laid over a network. The coffer-dam technique worked, giving a relatively dry area in the middle where work could take place. There were a few drawbacks, including the flooding of the coffer dam five times, but, as Streeters said, the delays were 'relatively minor'.



The last section being lowered into place.
Photo: Bob Dewey

Thirty-four precast box sections were laid in the staged, open cut trenches — each section weighed ten tonnes — to form the 30m long tunnel.

Sheet-piled retaining walls reducing the canal width to eight feet were installed and other major work included the re-laying of major service conduits. To gain extra height two, nine-way British Telecom cable ducts had to be raised by a metre without disrupting telephone connections and two cast iron, high pressure water mains had to be relaid.

Geoff Caplan, Streeters director, said that the contract had been an unusual one for his company, which was more experienced in the construction of sewerage systems and foundations. "But I think our performance on this contract underlines the fact that we are able to adapt our specialist skills most effectively to this type of work" he said.

True, and the result, as Clr Pratt pointed out, was probably the most significant step forward in the restoration of the narrow.



Photo: Bob Dewey

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SHIRE COTTAGE

BED & BREAKFAST

Prop: Monica Sidebottom

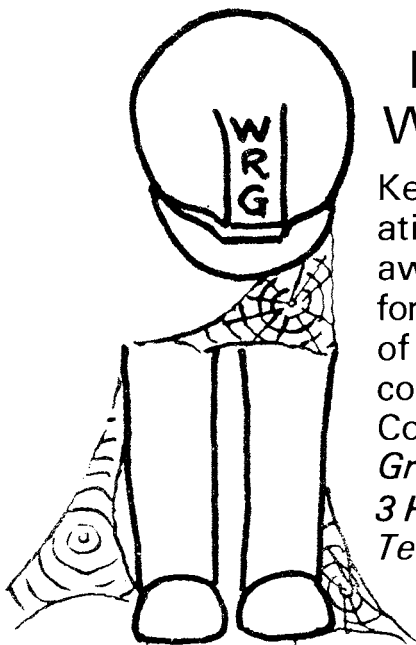
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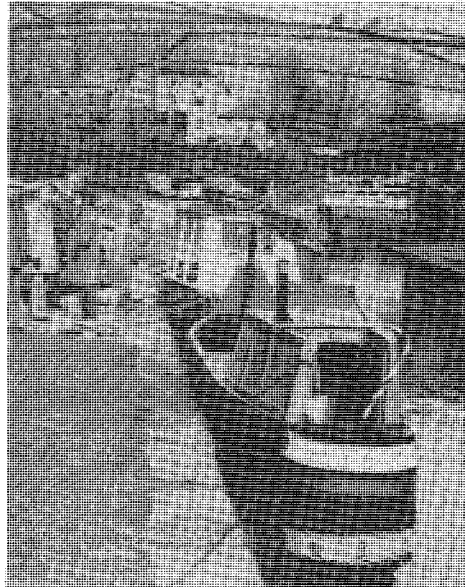
In the last issue of Pennine Link I said there was not much activity boatwise. The situation has certainly changed now summer is on the way. After much effort by John Maynard and myself No.2 managed to get at Aspley for the opening of Wakefield Road bridge. We can't claim to have been the first boat under the bridge — that was reserved for West Yorkshire who of course made the reopening possible — but we can claim to have taken the first boat through without hitting the side (I'd better not say who was steering the West Yorkshire boat)!

The next week, No.2 was back at Marsden, together with Stan for the opening of Marsden locks. Despite nearly sinking Stan in the first lock (what **did** happen Bob?) and nearly getting booked for speeding with No.2 on the return trip we all had a very good day.

Hopefully by the time you read this No.2 will be at Stalybridge. Stan, after some restoration work and a coat of paint is to remain at Tunnel End. Stan is now looking quite smart and I would like to see it run more often — it might even be possible to take it down a few locks — if anyone's interested in running public trips or just "hiring" it for a group of friends give me a ring.

Finally, Benji started operation at Easter. Unfortunately we can't go all the way up to Brownhill at the moment due to the work on the infill section between there and Wool Road but it shouldn't be too long before that section is open, considerably extending the length of cruising waterway.

This year Harold is to continue to operate Benji full-time as a business. I know this is a disappointment to some members who, like myself, used to enjoy running the boat at weekends but there are problems in operating a boat like Benji with so many different crews and



Stan outside Tunnel End Cottages at Lock opening ceremony. *Photo: Bob Dewey*

it does mean that she can be run more often with a corresponding increase in publicity, whilst additionally guaranteeing a profit for our society.

That's all for now so pleasant boating and I hope to see you all along the canal in the next few months.

JOHN MORLEY, Boat Officer

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As reported in the last issue of Pennine Link the Huddersfield Narrow Canal Joint Committee wishes to identify the economic, social and environmental benefits of restoring the canal to navigation, and has asked the Huddersfield Canal Society to commission a study on its behalf.

Although considerable progress is being made towards restoration, it is evident that the probable cost of full restoration is likely to be beyond the resources of the local authorities, the British Waterways Board and this Society. Funding will, therefore, have to be sought from other sources to finance the removal of the major obstructions. In preparation for these bids the Joint Committee believe it is important that the benefits which will result from restoration should be clearly identified at an early stage. A brief for the study prepared by several members of your Council of Management defined the scope of the study:

The study is required to identify and assess the activities arising directly and indirectly from canal restoration. It is required to assess the new local tourist and other expenditures which will accrue from the exploitation of the restored canal. An assessment of the wider effects of restoration will also be required; e.g. from increased growth in tourism on adjacent canals and nearby settlements, and potential from canal-side and other consequent or related developments.

Employment consequences of the restoration will be specifically identified and, all other things being equal, there will be a pre-disposition to the kind of skills of the local workforce. Full and part-time jobs will be specified separately and the likely seasonability of work considered.

The economic benefits will be identified in terms of both income and employment

opportunities. The study is required to assess the local regional benefits in terms of retained "household" income, and employment by the application of established economic multipliers. This should be such that it is later possible to compare these retained regional income benefits with the required investment and operating costs to illustrate the net economic benefit of the restoration in accordance with recognised Treasury guidelines".

"Close attention will be paid to identifying ways in which private sector capital can be involved, and grants which are likely to be available from other sources. This will include proposing commercially viable facilities and identifying best suited locations.

Field survey work will be expected, and consultation with other interested organisations, particularly the Huddersfield Narrow Canal Joint Committee and its constituent members".

Seven consultants were asked to tender. Six tenders were received (two of the firms having decided on a joint approach). Two consultants were interviewed on 20th March at the Civic Centre, Huddersfield by representatives of the Waterways Board (David Pyrah — principal Engineer, North, Peter White — Architect/Planner, & Sue Smith — Landscape Architect), by three local authority Planners (Eric Woulds — Kirklees, Steve Hughes — Tameside & Peter Davey — G.M.C.) and by your Chairman and myself. It was decided to appoint the combination of Leisure & Recreation Consultants Ltd. and PIEDA Ltd. to carry out the study at the tender price of £35,000.

Leisure & Recreation Consultants are a management consultancy specialising exclusively in leisure and tourism, and part of the L & R Leisure Group that also operates theme parks such as the 1986 Stoke Garden Festival and owns The Royal Scotsman — a very expensive

holiday by rail (part with steam power!) in Scotland and 8 hotel barges operated under the name "Exclusive Tours" on the French canals and rivers.

PIEDA are economic and funding specialists with a record of achieving major public sector grant aid for joint venture projects and advising the EEC on major tourism grants.

The association of these two firms of consultants have recently been successful in committing the investment of £30M at the Waterfront in Dundee where Scott's historic ship "Discovery" will be brought from London to form the centrepiece of a major development. Together they are also currently working on studies of: Rhondda Valley Tourism & Heritage for the Welsh Development Agency & Mid-Glamorgan C.C., Hull Waterfront for Hull City Council, Humberside Tourism Strategy for Humberside C.C., & Leeds-Liverpool Canal Corridor Study for Lancashire Enterprises Ltd., & Lancashire C.C.

Leisure & Recreation Consultants have other recent experience of waterways and transport heritage having carried out work in connection with the Anderton Lift, the Forth & Clyde Canal, the Settle and Carlisle Railway, the East Lancashire Railway and the Birmingham Railway Museum & for UK Waterway Holidays Ltd.

It is hoped that they can produce an imaginatively written and presented advocacy document which brings together the findings of both the economic assessment and leisure & tourism projects.

In particular they offer to study: Market potential for Canal based and other Tourism & Leisure Activity, Development potential of Canal related property assets, Marketing initiatives that will increase the trading potential of the Canal Cor-

ridor, The costs and benefits of various sections and overall of the canal restoration, Funding sources for restoration, & an attainable phased plan of development. When the study is completed this summer it should provide the Joint Committee with a prospectus to attract both public grant aid and private investment capital to the canal.

KEITH GIBSON

Stalybridge

The costed engineering study of the various possible routes for rebuilding the canal through Stalybridge has been presented to your Council by WS Atkins & Partners.

A presentation has been made to Tameside Council who are considering the report. The Council are keen to see a suitable route agreed and have been very supportive.

Details of the various routes cannot be revealed at this stage. To do so could have unwarranted effects on property values — based on the hope that a restored canal adjacent could increase values, or the fear that a particular route will require the taking of land for construction purposes.

KEITH GIBSON

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Work on Lock 35E

Photo: Yorkshire Post

Ian Preston, project engineer for the Slaithwaite to Marsden restoration scheme, made the job sound easy in a racy, informative and fascinating talk to over thirty HCS members and friends at an East Side meeting.

Capped locks, cascaded locks and tons and tons of silt, collapsed walls, lack of skilled labour — these and a dozen other problems were confronted and overcome by the former West Yorkshire County Council engineer who had a special responsibility for bridges.

Statistics were staggering. Up to date 700 square yards of masonry has been put into lock walls and 42,000 tons of silt has been dredged or labouriously dug by hand from pounds and dumped on official tips — where it will eventually become very productive topsoil.

The work is on schedule and in addition to restoring a canal and providing a much more pleasant environment the Slaithwaite to Marsden project is also giving a sense of purpose and pride to those MSC workers involved with it, said Mr Preston. In fact many who have learned new skills have been able to move on the permanent jobs outside.

Almost half of the workers — ninety-eight out of 200 involved with the scheme since it started in 1984 — have been able to get full-time employment.

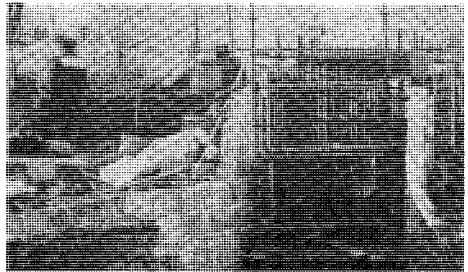
And, said Mr Preston, the stage had been reached where firms locally were beginning to ring him to see when workers were finishing their MSC stint. "We have reached this stage and I hope to foster this attitude and to get personnel officers of firms along to see me and talk over how we can help each other" he said.

Many of those involved in the project had never had a job before and a major problem was to get them into a work ethic — reporting for duty regularly and on time.

This had been achieved in many cases and new skills, such as scaffolding, bricklaying, dumper truck driving and carpentry, were being learned which were useful in other jobs.

The time scale of the project is that it should be completed by the end of the year and by spring next year it will certainly be available for boats to use — the more the merrier.

Ian Preston and his men will be moving to another stretch. An MSC scheme is



Work on Lock 35E

Photo: Yorkshire Post

due to start on a five-lock length of canal between Slaithwaite and Linthwaite. That no doubt, will present him with even more problems, but as he made clear to the meeting a problem always has an answer — and he has managed to find satisfactory answers so far on a scheme which is being run on a shoestring, but giving a first-class final product.

In February, the canal at Slaithwaite was again the focus of the Moonraker event for about 200 villagers. It was only the second time the event had been held yet the local press reported that it was an "annual tradition"! The local legend is brought alive, which I had better briefly explain for those living elsewhere, I'm not so sure of the story — can any reader correct me if I'm wrong?

So far as I know, the story goes that excise/police men found local men with rakes wading in the waters in Slaithwaite. When asked what they were doing, there was a pause, then they pointed to the moon's reflection on the water and explained they were trying to rake it out. Shaking their heads, the police moved on, calling the mad folk of Slaithwaite, thereafter Moonrakers. As soon as they were out of sight, the men hauled up their crates of illegal liquor (or whatever booty it was).

Now we Moonrakers are so crazy that we make a huge lantern Moon each year to float on the canal. A Mummer's play is enacted whilst the Moon is towed along the canal (or a pallet) then raked out. The brightly lit Moon is lifted onto my dray; the horse-drawn Moon is then processed round the village, accompanied by villagers proudly holding their own lantern aloft. Returning to the canal, the Moon is set alight and her spirit soars back to the sky by means of a big firework rocket.



Slaithwaite Moonraker Event Photo: Artivan

Next day when the Moon once more "falls" into the canal, come and join us. I deliberately proposed the event in order to use the canal as a site for community theatre. Perhaps in 1987 it could be a bigger celebration if the Marsden to Slaithwaite section has been completed by spring.

We had difficulty on our next trip heading towards Manchester. Gates have been put up to prevent motorcycles on the towpath. The padlock on one gate had seized up over the winter. When we finally got it open to let Sonny through, we were left with a very mangled Leeds & Liverpool key

I made a mistake in the last issue of Pennine Link (No.68) about the dates for boat-trips to Marple where individuals can book (i.e. not chartered). They should read May 4th; June 1st; June 29th; July 20th; September 7th. For booking enquiries please phone 061-320 8338. I hope we will see some of you aboard over the summer. Just a hint — Sonny loves carrots and apples!

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A happy Clr George Speight seen with Cty Clr John Sully officially opens the Slaithwaite-Marsden, nineteen lock restoration project.
Photo: Yorkshire Post

The Slaithwaite to Marsden scheme — the biggest single project on the Narrow Canal (roll on the day when the biggest, Standedge Tunnel gets under way) — was officially opened by Clr George Speight, chairman of Kirklees Council's Development Committee.

It was a great day also for HCS officials who were there in force, with Bob Dewey and John Morley steering Stan and No. 2, behind the official BWB "V.I.P." boat as the ceremonial ribbon was cut by Clr Speight, before the three boats progressed through three locks towards Slaithwaite.

Clr Speight said that the occasion marked the slotting into place of another piece in the twenty-mile long jigsaw which, when it was completed, would take the shape of a fully restored and re-opened narrow.

He described the event as marking a series of huge steps forward which would mean that a section of three

miles of the canal would be navigable — and he invited boaters who had trail-able craft to come along and test the water.

But Clr Speight did not forget those who had done the work under a major MSC scheme. He mentioned Kirklees planner John Miller and also project engineer Ian Preston who, he said, had worked wonders and enjoyed every minute of his job, even getting more than his feet wet.

As Clr Speight pointed out the scheme had given a sense of purpose and pride to those who had been involved — the latest count of workers topped the eighty mark. Many, said Clr Speight, had left for regular jobs after learning a valuable skill from their work on the Slaithwaite-Marsden scheme. Despite the dreadful winter it was a tribute to the hard work and ingenuity of all those who had been involved with it that the scheme was on schedule.

Said Cllr Speight "By this time next year this Marsden to Slaithwaite section of our historic canal should be cruisable". Kirklees Council, like the Tameside and Oldham Councils is now fully committed to the restoration project.

"It isn't just about restoring a canal, but also about creating jobs, and surveys have shown that up to 300 full-time jobs could be the spin-off when the Huddersfield Narrow is a continuous waterways link between Yorkshire and Lancashire".

He said he hoped to be invited back to cruise the full length of the Slaithwaite-Marsden stretch when it is open, and he hoped that somebody might even let him steer the boat.

There must be a fair number of HCS members who would be delighted to act as instructor for another important chapter in a restoration scheme which, this year has certainly been gathering momentum.



Photo: Bob Dewey



The UIP Boat

Photo: Yorkshire Post

Progress Report

When I last reported in the Nov/Dec issue of Pennine Link on the progress of our subsidiary Company, Tameside Canals Ltd's MSC Community Programme project, we were waiting for a £45,000 Grant from GMC. This had been delayed because of difficulties created by the abolition of the County Council and by the need for us to prove that we would adopt an ecologically sensitive approach to restoration. The cheque was gratefully received shortly afterwards, but progress has still been slow on the restoration phase of the project between Ashton & Stalybridge, because of the need to devise engineering solutions to the various problems.

Lock 1W

We need to build a new bywash through the horse tunnel — which is complicated by the presence of a sewer crossing the canal below the lock not far below water level. Tameside Council Engineers have agreed to survey the lock when it has been emptied of infill material. The Waterways Board have asked the North West Water Authority to remove the sewer.

Lock 2W

Solution depends on what happens about the bridge to Senior Service which has been widened & would obstruct the bottom gates. British Waterways are discussing this with Senior Service.

Lock 3W

British Waterways have agreed on a schedule of work requiring the partial rebuilding of the lock walls. This is proceeding. Lock gates are to be ordered from the Kirklees MSC workshop in Linthwaite.

The need for engineering advice has become increasingly apparent. Although Tameside & the Waterways Board have both given invaluable help, a more permanent solution to provide such advice as and when required is being sought.

The Board of Directors of Tameside Canals have inspected a former builders yard at Mossley Road, Ashton, and, having obtained a Surveyor's Report, have asked Project Manager Steve Whitby, to enter into negotiation for its purchase as a permanent office/workshop base for the project.

An application to continue the project for a third year has been submitted to the Manpower Services Commission. The deadline for submitting the project was before the completion of negotiations for the £1.2M GMC grant, so, apart from continuing work between Ashton & Stalybridge no further major restoration work is yet proposed. It is proposed to employ 143 people on the following works:

1. Continuation of work on Locks 1-3W
2. Washwall, towpath & boundary wall repairs and the erection of fences & planting of a hedge between Mottram Road and Hartshead Power Station.
3. Creation of a dredgings deposit area (which will eventually be landscaped) at Cavendish Street, Ashton.
4. Various environmental projects on or near the Huddersfield Narrow: creation of access paths at Robinson Street & Tame Street, the erection of a fence & stile to the west of Clarence Street alongside the towpath, landscaping of riverside slopes to the north of Furness Street, the construction of a riverside walkway to the north of Furnace Street & regrading of a grassed area & tree planting at Ashton Wharf.
5. Continuation of the various environmental projects on the Peak Forest Canal with which the scheme started.

Now that the Society has received the £1.2M grant from GMC the continuity of the scheme seems assured. A detailed work programme will be prepared to keep TCL busy for several years in restoring the canal from Mottram Road through Mossley to Uppermill. To avoid

confusion we might have to rename the company when work progresses into the Oldham District! How far up the canal the MSC scheme will restore depends very much on how far down the canal the HCS volunteer project progresses from Diggle — and on the continuation of the Community Programme. With no apparent decline in unemployment it seems reasonable to expect C.P. to continue for some time yet.

The actual programme will initially have to be based on a draft 5 Year Programme we prepared last year for GMC, but modifications may be required to take account of the most advantageous rates of spending, and may be required if the Benefits Study shows major benefits by restoring particular sections of canal out of sequence. Also we may eventually have to take account of parts of a future Stalybridge rebuilding project which could be carried out by MSC workers.

KEITH GIBSON

Ashton Canals Festival

The most important dates for your diary this summer are 11th, 12th and 13th July. Yes, it's that time again — The Ashton Canals Festival, when the sun will shine (I've booked it in advance!), the beer tent will dispense 14 varieties (at least) of inner refreshment and entertainers' music will fill the air.

On the Friday night we have a Folk Concert and top of the bill is Fiona Simpson and four other artistes. On Saturday night we will be beating away the time with a lively group called The Hot Spa Stompers. During the daytime we have a variety of entertainment for all tastes — there is a magician for the children (and his lovely assistant for the older males) and a Punch & Judy man. There are two dance teams — the

Saddleworth Morris Men who keep us on our toes and the Sokhill Ukranian Dancers who set our feet atapping. There will be a Brass Band to listen to and other delights too numerous to mention and, of course, plenty of stalls to wander round.

If you fancy a trip along the canal, there will be at least four boats running trips throughout the weekend. There will be working steam engines to delight the nose as well as the eye and, of course, boats of every size, shape and colour.

If you intend to come by boat and have not yet sent in for your boat entry form, do so now to: Vince Willey, 31 Middle Green, Ashton-under-Lyne. 061-330 9810.

If you have a stall or product to sell and would like to be on our site for the weekend, contact: Trevor Harvey, 24 Woodside Street, Carrbrook, Stalybridge: Mossley 5963, and he will send you all the details.

If you have a few hours to spare during the weekend and would like to assist in any way, shape or form, please contact our Manning Officer, Joan Harvey at the address above and she will be only too pleased to rope you in.

For any further enquiries, please contact: Brian Minor, 45 Gorton Street, Peel Green, Eccles, Manchester. (Tel: 061-789 4867 daytime only).

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Dear Editor,

It will certainly be the older members of HCS who remember Wilf, who died on March 12th at the age of 81. An apprentice trained mason, Wilf joined British Waterways at Marsden after the war, following service with the Royal Navy. He was soon promoted to foreman and one aspect of his job always fascinated the public, although only a small part of his responsibilities. This was inspecting Standedge Tunnel! Indeed, not only the inspection trips, but chartered cruises were undertaken. Most historic of all was the last passage by a private boat — "Ailsa Craig" in August 1948, with a crew which included Tom Rolt and Robert Aickman.

Rolt describes the journey in "Landscape with Canals", a dramatic account of how their rotting craft got stuck in the tunnel, but Aickman gives a different version ("Waterways World", 1974). He tells us how, after struggling to reach Ashton, "Wilf Donkersley entered our lives, transforming the situation.... with natural authority". And so the tunnel was reached, and although Aickman went adrift a bit in details such as "natural limestone caverns" and the "Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway", here is another fascinating account. It differs from Rolt's, in that they were led by the BW boat (the former "Gleaner" whose remains lie at Tunnel End) and it was this that stuck! But, once free, "Wilf regaled us with a sequence of songs" — unspecified, but I am sure, very tasteful and suitable for "Ailsa Craig's" mixed crew. After the passage of the Huddersfield Canal, they "clubbed together to buy Wilf a watch... he transformed our voyage from a highly anxious obligation to a great adventure". It was eleven years later I first met Wilf on a tunnel trip and enjoyed his company at intervals until these ceased in 1967. I don't remember him bursting into song — more like quiet confidence — at least we always got through! In 1962 he was

made up to Section Inspector and he was proud to have been seconded to Northwich Area during 1963-4 to act as Clerk of Works for the restoration of Marple Aqueduct. Back at Marsden, a "Huddersfield Examiner" article of 1969 described Wilf as "The Plumber of Standedge — Dropping Rocks in the Buried Stream" as well as recounting the extent of his job, from Huddersfield to Manchester and to Bolton and Stockport, and involving reservoirs and water-courses. A photo shows him in his office, cheerful and confident.

In 1970 Wilf retired and at first found plenty to occupy him. He had always thrived on hard work and would put hours of labour in after his working day, on his smallholding or doing building jobs. Home to him was the mid-Colne Valley, many years being spent at Low Westwood. Later Wilf moved up to Wellhouse. Ill luck saw him involved in two motor accidents on the same day on the steep hillside roads — his wife died in 1984 and his last days were spent at Thorpe Grange, Almondbury.

Wilf would have been glad to see our canal come to life again, including we hope the tunnel where he sang so cheerfully back in 1948. His retirement went unrecorded by BWB, falling in the period when there was no staff magazine, and so I feel this little tribute is called for, to a man who for many years seemed to be a part of the Huddersfield Canal — I am sure he is singing once again!

*GEOFF BROWN
Birkby, Huddersfield*

Dear Editor,

Being a construction worker at this time of year, being laid off because of bad weather snow, ice, etc., leaves you with plenty of time to yourself. Some afternoons I like to sit down with a mug of coffee with a tot of rum in it, and read through my old Pennine Links, Water-

ways Worlds, and other books/mags about canals and boating.

My very first P.L. was No.40 1981, restoration had just begun. Here we are with P.L. No.68 1986 due anytime. What a lot has happened since April 1981. Wakefield Road Bridge to re-open in May 1986, Uppermill section fully restored and the infilled section to be removed very soon, a detailed survey of the Standedge Tunnel, the Marsden-Slaithwaite project and HCSs very own Diggle project. Sadly in each P.L. Trevor Ellis pleads in vain for more volunteers as did Laurence Sullivan and Graham Maskell, before him.

The attendance of our working party weekends are diabolical some weekends, having read some of the old P.Ls I think I know why members are not turning up. Will members please not be frightened off the weekend working partys, you **don't** have to work up to your knees in freezing cold mud/water, well it's never come over the top of my wellingtons yet, there are pumps working and dams built, to keep the water levels in the lock chambers at a reasonable working level.

Those dams are built by those, unsung heroes who do work waist-deep in mud/water to build the dams so we can have the easy life. If anyone comes along to a working party and feels tired you can have a rest and, if you have brought a flask have a brew. There is no one stood over you with a whip, there are no task masters on working parties, the more the merrier, volunteers are needed. The sooner Lock 32W is cleaned out work can begin rebuilding the chamber walls, if enough members turn up, the digging out of both locks could be done, then later on this year we might be able to start digging out Lock 24W and move up or down as each lock is cleaned out.

DAVID JACK ROBINSON
of the 'It can be done' brigade

A letter received from George Brown of Ontario, Canada, in response to last years' Ashton Canals Festival's raffle organiser Vince Willey sending George a plaque for the 'furthest travelled' raffle ticket counterfoils.

Dear Mr Willey,

Thank you so much for your letter and the plaque, I guess you've given up hope of a reply. I do regret the delay but I work away from home most of the time, and with the slow down in construction you have to travel here if you want a job, and the heavy snowfall and icy conditions don't help we are having a real cold winter in Dec, and Jan we had 48 inches, and 52 inches of snow respectively.

I am from the Colne Valley and I think I am the only overseas member. When I got out of the RAF in early 46 I saw the state of the canal, and I wrote to the Colne Valley Guardian, urging that it be preserved, by this time I had emigrated to the USA in Jan 1947 these old canals are really beautiful and it will be really something when they are fully restored.

I wouldn't worry about having to pay for a transatlantic flight, it just wouldn't be worth it, we are still very much under the weather here, but this morning I saw a great big flock of geese flying north so they can't be wrong, spring is on its way and it will be a really beautiful one, I can feel it.

I wish you every success with the Ashton Canals Festival.

Best wishes to you and the Committee
Sincerely, *GEORGE BROWN*

Editor's Note: Good to hear from you again George and that you're predicting good weather after 8ft 4ins of snow! We have by the way, 7 other foreign members but you're the **only** member of HCS in Canada!

The Diary of a Reluctant Mariner

Note: Perhaps I should change the sub-title. I haven't been reluctant for two or three years!

Anne & Ken with Simon (18) and Sarah (12) and friends Simon and Martha and, of course, William the famous dachshund are partway through their fourth canal holiday in April 1983, on the 'Henry Palmerston' from Acton Bridge.

"Llangollen Closed"

Day 4 Tuesday (you will remember I have forgotten to include the days' vital statistics in this log). Off at 7.30 — just Ken (slavedriver) and me up — a lovely morning with the sun shining but cold. Through some gorgeous scenery — moored at Ellesmere Boats for groceries etc. — stopped later on and took on water (a daily task these enlightened days!) Canal very short on pubs and shops. Had lunch on the go as we wanted to make Trevor as quickly as possible (should I re-write that sentence, I ask myself?) Got to Chirk and over the aqueduct and through the tunnel — quite impressive but water v. shallow and grounded often without getting **very** stuck! Could do with a good dredging — or more water, HE says. On to Trevor and over the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct. What an experience! I went below out of the way of the 120ft drop. HE sat on the edge of the boat, on the rail, with his derriere hanging over the edge — **and** taking photographs! From the bit I saw between my fingers it was most impressive and once again could only marvel at the skills of those civil engineers 180 years ago. As the book says (Pearson's) "quite the most astonishing piece of canal engineering in the world".

Into Trevor and made to go on to Llangollen but what we had heard turned out true — Llangollen was closed because of a lock breakdown and bridge



View from Pontcysyllte Aqueduct

repairs. Short-changed at **both** ends of the holiday! Mucked about the marina for a while, Ken did a 97 point turn (no, really, he's quite good at turning round now) and back the way we came. I walked back over the aqueduct (**not** Bible-like — on the **walkway!**) I decided it was dangerous with my eyes closed but I looked **very** straight ahead. After all, three steps up a ladder is my **absolute** limit, especially at decorating time ! I digress. Rain and a bit of hail for company. Stopped at Chirk Bank and walked into Chirk — pleasant little market town — walked to the castle (over the tunnel) beautiful gates which, naturally, were shut — as was the castle! And only open p.m. tomorrow so missing it, pity. Back to boat, dinner of macaroni. Went to "The Bridge" and, by pre-arrangement, met M & D. M is a famous Welsh actor with 45 films behind him (including "Cruel Sea" and we were making arrangements for him to narrate in an amateur production of "Under Milkwood" at our local Festival of the Arts. What a smashing evening it was. They are a super couple and will stay with us for the week of the show. M was

PENNINE LINK

“telling the tale” with theatrical gestures and getting quite excited when one of a gang of leather-clad, metal-studded young people asked him “Hey, aren’t you an actor?” The loud, rolling, Welsh “NO” in reply was all the answer the youth needed! M & D came back to the boat for coffee and much admire it. Can’t wait for the Festival! Bed late!

Day 5 Wednesday Didn’t get up till 8.30 — nice change — dressed and walked the half mile uphill to Chirk to do some shopping — back by 9.30 and off at 9.45. Picked a load of washing up on the prop — dress, jumper, tea-towel and miscellaneous rags! From piles of soggy cloth at intervals on the towpath it was clear that the whole of some poor woman’s washing had been ruined — I wonder if she ever discovered where it went — or is the police file still open! Got stuck a couple of times but nothing too drastic.

Weather really nice and sunny. Stopped at the “Narrow Boat” pub and Ken treated us to lunch — v. nice it was, too. Tried to ring Mum, got through but only the 5p slot was working so couldn’t say much (on re-reading that sounds utter rubbish but I did write it!)

Left at 2.00, sat up front with Ken, sunbathing. Again the scenery was

beautiful (it **always, still**, looks totally different going in the opposite direction); took some photographs. Called in at Whixall Marina but it was deserted and nothing much out of the ordinary. Bit of a catastrophe! 1) lost William’s lead — must have left it in the pub at lunchtime 2) the hamburgers (brought ready-prepared from home) were off (turn up the fridge, Anne) so we had soup, fried eggs, baked beans and mash! Plus Xmas cake and (my Yorkshire breeding) cheese.

Moored up at Platt near “The Waggoners”. So far so good. ‘Genuine’ local; darts, doms, mainly farm-workers nice Jack Russell pup. Simon & Simon on pin-ball machine. Could hardly see where we were going it was so dark going back to the boat. “That’s her excuse, HE says”. Cheek.

Bed fairly early and a good night’s sleep needed. Hope the weather keeps up — been v. good so far, must get a pump-out tomorrow — AND re-educate the male end of the crew about “inspecting the moorings” last thing at night!

The photograph, taken from the steering perch, shows the 4 inch wide edge of Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and a set of goal posts 120 feet below in the Dee valley.

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The Huddersfield Narrow Canal — built 1793-1811

Engineer: B. Outram

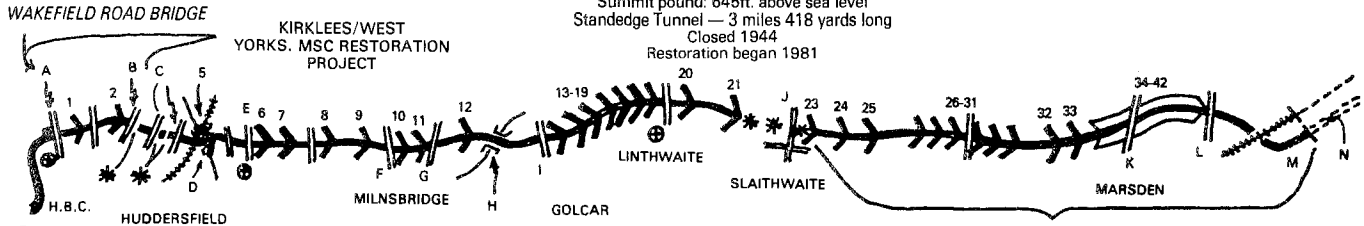
Length: 19 7/8 miles

Summit pound: 645ft. above sea level

Standedge Tunnel — 3 miles 418 yards long

Closed 1944

Restoration began 1981



EAST SIDE
LOCKS NUMBERED 1-42E

The Huddersfield Narrow Canal — built 1793—1811. Engineer: B. Outram. Closed: 1944. Last recorded passage across Summit: 1948. Restoration began 1981. Length: 19 7/8 miles. Summit pound: 645 ft. above sea level through Standedge Tunnel — 3 miles 418 yards long.

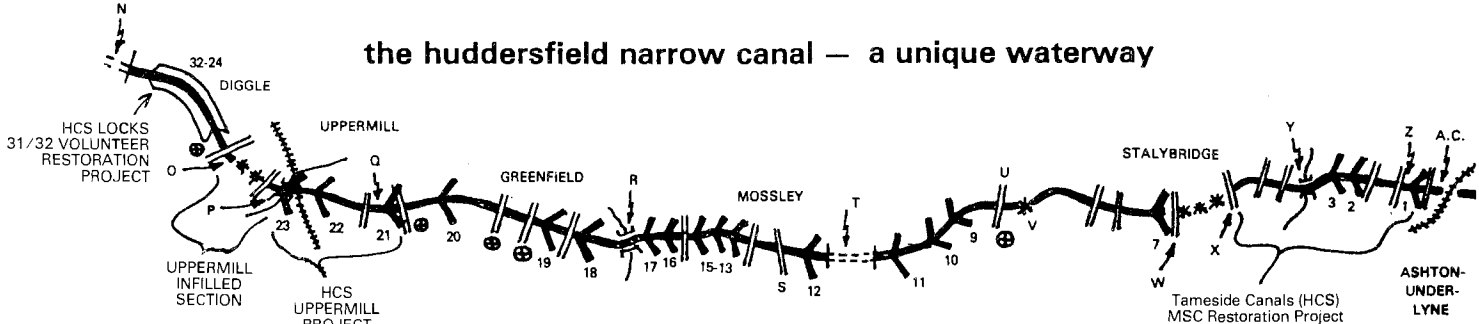
- H.B.C..... Huddersfield Broad Canal
- A.C..... Ashton Canal
- A..... Wakefield Road
- B..... Queen Street South
- C..... Manchester Road
- D..... Paddock Foot Aqueduct
- E..... Stoney Battery
- F..... Market Street

- G..... Morley Lane
- H..... Golcar Aqueduct
- I..... Golcar Swing Bridge
- J..... Britannia Road
- K..... Warehouse Hill
- L..... Station Road
- M..... Tunnel End Cottages
- N..... Standedge Tunnel
- O..... Wool Road Warehouse and Brownhill Visitor Centre
- P..... Saddleworth Aqueduct (old Sag)
- Q..... Uppermill Museum

- R..... Royal George Aqueduct
- S..... Egmont Street
- T..... Scout Tunnel
- U..... Grove Road
- V..... Hartshead Power Station
- W..... Mottram Road
- X..... Bayley Street
- Y..... Stalybridge Aqueduct
- Z..... Whitelands "Tunnel"
- *..... Infilled sections
- +..... Culverted or lowered bridges

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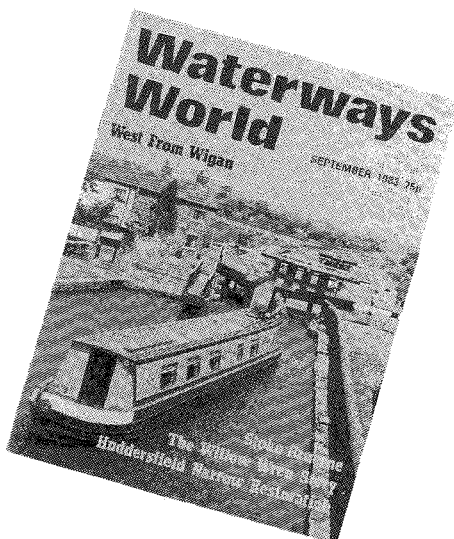
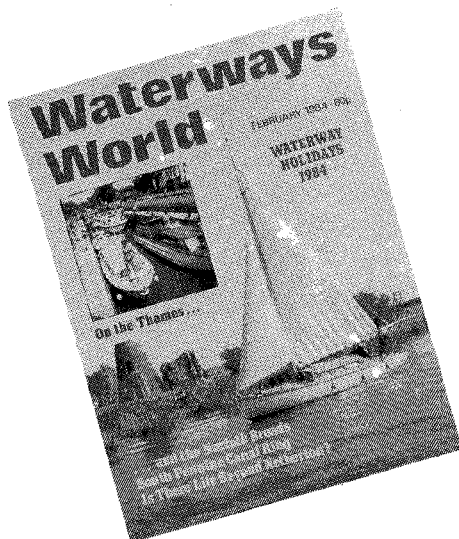
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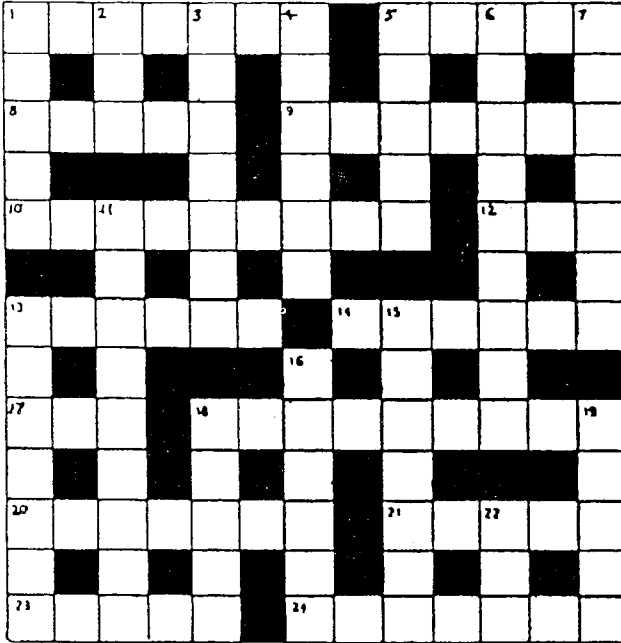


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CLUES DOWN

1. Five eighths of 5 across (5)
2. Electric unit (3)
3. Winners (7)
4. Method (6)
5. This is one of these (5)
6. Happening at night (9)
7. Leaseholders (7)
11. Neglected canals become this (9)
13. Canal men they were (7)
15. Unwanted Trash (7)
16. Made by meeting lines (6)
18. Much used by 13 down men (5)
19. Locations (5)
22. Zodiac sign (3)

CLUES ACROSS

1. Boat loading places (7)
5. Waterway (5)
8. Subject of a talk (5)
9. Water gates (7)
10. Canal 'menders' (9)
12. Employ (3)
13. Sounds metallic (6)
14. Greatly used mechanically (6)
17. Scamper (3)
18. Leaflets (9)
20. Enchant (7)
21. Creek (5)
23. Rough grass (5)
24. Places to learn at (7)

Crossword No.30 kindly sent by Mr J. Crosland

Solution to Crossword No.29

ACROSS: 1 Locks; 4 Aspley; 9 Vandals; 10 Ultra; 11 Silt; 12 General; 13 Due; 14 Lime; 16 Kiln; 18 Cos; 20 Officer; 21 Weir; 24 Talon; 25 Flotsam; 26 Resist; 27 Ruled.

DOWN: 1 Lavish; 2 Canal; 3 Snag; 5 Sputniks; 6 Lateral; 7 Yearly; 8 Usage; 13 Descends; 15 Infills; 17 Softer; 18 Craft; 19 Primed; 22 Easel; 23 Moor.

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Ashton Canal Book	£1.00	15p p&p
Huddersfield Narrow Towpath Guides	reduced to £1.00	40p p&p
West Yorkshire Waterway Guide (spiral bound towpaths guide)	£1.95	40p p&p

SALES ORDER FORM

Please send me

Item	Qty	Cost & Postage
Orders to Jean Buckley, 37 Edward St, Oldham	TOTAL	

Please make cheques payable to LOXVEND LTD.

Classified Ads

The Witters of Chester support restoration of the Huddersfield Canal — and would like all Diggles to know that at their canalside factories they make very good canoes, paddles, helmets and trailer towing brackets.

Deeds of Covenant

Those who wish to help the Society further by paying your subscription under a Deed of Covenant then please write to or phone me for details.

SUE BRADBURY, Treasurer

***Tunnel End
Canal &
Countryside
Centre***



Summer Openings

Monday Closed except Bank Holidays

Tuesday 2-5pm

Weds, Thurs, Friday 11-1pm, 2-5pm

Saturday, Sunday 11-5.30pm

For details of Activities etc.

Tel: Huddersfield 846062

Programme of Events

May Exhibition: Colne Valley in Camera.

June Exhibition: BWB's Standedge Tunnel exhibition

26th June: Illustrated talk by Robin Witter on the Tunnel.

July Exhibition: Ceramics by Nan Musgrove.

FOR PROGRAMME OF WALKS AND EVENTS SAE TO CENTRE

***DON'T MISS THE STANDEGE TUNNEL
AUDIO VISUAL EXPERIENCE
OPENING END OF MAY***

Birdwoman of Ashton

On 8th June, Fiona Minor, the Publicity Officer of the Ashton Canals Festival, is to make a sponsored parachute jump to raise funds for the Huddersfield Canal Society. She intends to step out of an aeroplane at 2,000ft. over Shropshire and raise money for the Society with every foot of the way down. To make her feel better on the way up — I think relief will be the main feeling on the way down — it will be nice to know that she not only has all your best wishes but your financial support as well! In other words, sponsors are required.

Please send your promise — anything from 50p for the effort to £10 per foot parachuted — to:—

Finoa Minor, 548 Liverpool Road, Peel Green, Eccles, Manchester.

We are pleased to welcome the following new members:

- 1428 Paul Dyson, [REDACTED]
1429 Mr & Mrs Michael Wright, [REDACTED]
1430 David Crofts, [REDACTED]
1431 Alan G. Hodson, [REDACTED]
1432 Mr J. C. Kilner, [REDACTED]
1433 Geoffrey Cheetham, [REDACTED]
1434 Chris Jones, [REDACTED]
1435 Mr & Mrs Philip Jackson, [REDACTED]
1346 Brian M. Lippard, [REDACTED]

Val Dewey
Membership Secretary

HIRE A TRADITIONAL STYLE NARROW BOAT FROM MIDDLEWICH

One day the Huddersfield Narrow will be restored and boating enthusiasts will flock to it. Until then, sample the delights of the rest of the area's canals by starting from Middlewich, the hub of the North-West system — all the canals are within one weeks' cruise.

Hire one of our traditional style boats. 4-12 berth, some with fully fitted boatman's cabins (cross bed, drop table, etc.) They have enclosed engine rooms, handpainted decorations and plenty of brass to polish.

Brochure from:



MIDDLEWICH NARROWBOATS

(WILLOW WREN KEARNS LTD)
CANAL TERRACE
MIDDLEWICH, CHESHIRE CW10 9BD
Telephone: Middlewich (060 684) 2460

"The Boater's Hire Base"

- 14th May 8.00pm Social Meeting at the Farrars Arms, Grasscroft, Oldham.
- 17/18th May Huddersfield Festival & Boat Gathering at Aspley Basin, Wakefield Road to celebrate the bridge re-opening.
- 5th June 8.00pm Illustrated talk by Mr W. Wood entitled 'The Progress of the M62 through Hunsworth' at the Pack Horse Hotel, Slaithwaite.
- 11th June 8.00pm Social Meeting at the Cross Keys, Uppermill.
- 3rd July 8.00pm Social Meeting at the Sair, Linthwaite.
- 9th July 8.00pm Social Meeting at the Farrars Arms, Grasscroft, Oldham.
- 5-26th July WRG's Summer workcamp at Diggle.
- 11/13th July Ashton Canals Festival.

Working Parties at Diggle

31st May/1st June;

14th/15th June

28th/29th June

5th/6th July

12th/13th July

19th/20th July

26th/27th July

Tel: Trevor Ellis on Huddersfield 534666 for details.

EDITOR. The editor holds the right to edit or withhold articles and letters or to retain them for publication at a later date.

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