



PENNINE LINK

No. 78

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FREE TO MEMBERS

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Non-Council Posts

Front Cover:

The Baltimore Diner which is becoming a popular calling place for a bite and a pint at Aspley Basin, Huddersfield was the major sponsor of the Kirklees Festival contributing £250 to pay for prizes and a band. Pictured handing over the cheque are Nicola Butler and James Bedford of Baltimore Diner and receiving it are Jill Pratt of HCS and Eric Woulds of Kirklees Council.

THE JOURNAL OF THE HUDDERSFIELD CANAL SOCIETY LTD.

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EDITORIAL

As yet another year draws to a close we all on HCS Council would like to take this opportunity of wishing members and friends of the Society a very happy Christmas 1987.

We would also like to thank you for the tremendous moral and financial support you have given over the year, please remember it is always appreciated and much needed, and now look forward to a busy restoration programme during 1988.



September was a particularly pleasing month for me on at least three counts. The Kirklees festival was an unqualified success, the Bates and Company appeal was dismissed and Bob Dewey and I enjoyed a three hour trip through Standedge Tunnel.

The Kirklees Canals Festival held at Aspley Basin was organised by Kirklees Metropolitan Council and used the Polytechnic facilities. The list of invitees included Kirklees Councillors - Councillor Preece officiated, local MP's and MEP's and members and officers from Tameside and Oldham Council. We also met the Yorkshire Area Sports Council represented by Cyril Villiers - an important and enthusiastic guest. His Council has pledged £40,000 towards the Standedge Tunnel Survey soon to be undertaken. I was particularly pleased to meet members of the local business community and we hope to address the Huddersfield 2000 group to discuss mutual objectives. It is encouraging to hear industrialists' support for environmental schemes such as ours.

The opening day event included a trip by an old Leyland double decker bus to view the works at Marsden and this took place during a mini cyclone which we later discovered blew down stands and a marquee at the site in Aspley. Nevertheless, Eric Woulds, the festival co-ordinator is to be congratulated. I believe a precedent has been set for an annual event. A big thankyou also to Garth and Jill Pratt and family whose presence is always noticed and without their organisational abilities, we should not have had such a successful festival weekend.

Environment wrote completely rejecting the appeal by Bates and Company for planning refusal by Kirklees Council for restricting building on and use of the ground floor of the existing extension to Fairfield Mills, Queen Street South, Huddersfield. Members will recall that had further development been permitted, the costs of restoration through the site would have been increased enormously and indeed may have even jeopardised the whole through restoration plan. Mike Thompson presented the case for the Society and supporting evidence was given by Mr. Garth Pratt - local resident and Master Craig Watson. You can read elsewhere in this issue the details but I must express the Society's appreciation for Garth's attendance at the Appeal -an all day affair and for a cogent, well argued presentation by Mike Thompson.

I quote a key paragraph in the Inspector's letter. It needs no further comment:

'There is no doubt in my mind about the level of commitment of both the local authority and many volunteers to carry through the proposed re-opening of the canal throughout its length, notwithstanding the scale of the tasks to be undertaken or the resources which will be required to carry them out. The work which has already been undertaken, at Aspley and in the length through Marsden as far as the Standedge Tunnel mouth, indicates clearly to me the value of the work not only to those with a particular interest in canals, but also to those who live or work near, or who visit the area, and therefore who benefit from significant improvements to the environment, and the trade which such a tourist attraction brings.'

PENNINE LINK

The third pleasurable 'event' in a very busy month for the Society, which has seen further progress on the canal below and above Mottram Road, Stalybridge; progress on the moves for a Business Support Group for the Society; the start of design work above Bayley Street, Stalybridge was an official trip through Standedge Tunnel. Bob and I went along at the invitation of Stewart Simm BWB's Area Engineer, and accompanied Mr. Brian Dice BWB Chief Executive and Mr. Malcolm Stakes BWB Mining Engineer. We also invited a sceptic - Mr. G. Bates of Bates and Co.

The trip which began at Diggle took nearly three hours. We were 'counted out' and 'counted in' by Donald from the Marsden Yard who also accompanied us and Fred Carter ably steered the party through in a twenty foot 'punt' with outboard engine. We

saw the magnificence of the construction - the jack arch sections, the spring arch sections, the totally lined sections and the extensive unlined parts of the Tunnel. We also 'enjoyed' the waterfalls below the airshafts particularly Red Brook. However, Malcolm Stakes was careful to point out the unstable sections and these are where bands of shale from the roof and walls of the unlined tunnel. Indeed towards the Marsden end we were prevented from navigating through without a chamber into side adits, a walk and ride through the adjacent unused rail tunnel and re-boarding another boat beyond a substantial roof fall. The need for a full engineering survey is evident and we look forward to the commencement of this in the not too distant future. I have no doubt that Standedge Tunnel can and will be a major national attraction once re-opened to navigation.

HIRE A TRADITIONAL STYLE NARROW BOAT FROM MIDDLEWICH

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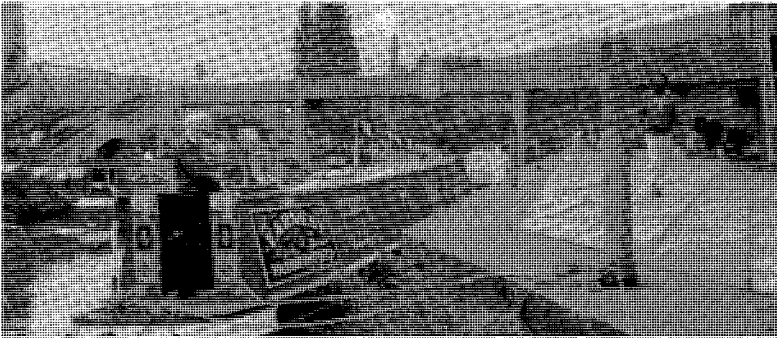


Photo shows Alec Ramsden in 'Earnest'

Photo: Laurence Sullivan

The 1987 Kirklees canal Festival was a great success in every way. Taking place over the weekend of 12th/13th September, at Huddersfield Polytechnic Site, Aspley Basin on the Broad canal and at the very beginning of the Huddersfield Narrow, the festival was visited by 15,000 people and it was clear that they were enjoying themselves.

There were some 40 stalls with goods for sale ranging from wooden toys for children, lovely knitwear and even bread.

After a disappointing start with a very nasty squall Saturday lunchtime, stall holders were delighted with the response from the visitors.

There were displays from the IWA, Kirklees, Barnsley Canal Group, some tourist organisations and of course the Huddersfield Canal Society stall with Fiona Minor in charge. A quoted 'not to be missed' exhibition of the work being done on the Huddersfield narrow by Kirklees was set up in the cafeteria/bar in the Polytechnic.

Entertainment as well as education being part of the scheme and with thanks to Stuart Holland of Kirklees Leisure Services there was a continuous

programme of music and dance. These included the Bradshaw Mummers, the Hartshead Morris Men, the Black Bear Dancers, the Sporting House Stompers (with particular thanks to this jazz band who kept spirits up during the bad weather), Shepley Brass Band, Lockwood Brass Band, (sponsored by Tony Stocks of Safety Equipment Centre Huddersfield) and the Northern Star Steel Orchestra.

A bouncing platform known as the fun monkey for young children with excess energy was run partly as a creche with the willing help of the sea cadets who were a credit to their officers.

Rides along the Broad Canal were run by the Calder Navigation Society in 'Doreen' and free trips for the handicapped on the E. Austen-Johnston.

The Huddersfield Canal Society Council and Kirklees council had invited a party of local industrialists, councillors and members of leisure organizations, parliamentarians, as guests at the opening.

Councillor Les Preece introduced the party and in particular Brian Handley, regional director of the Yorkshire and Humberside Tourist Board who officially opened the festival.

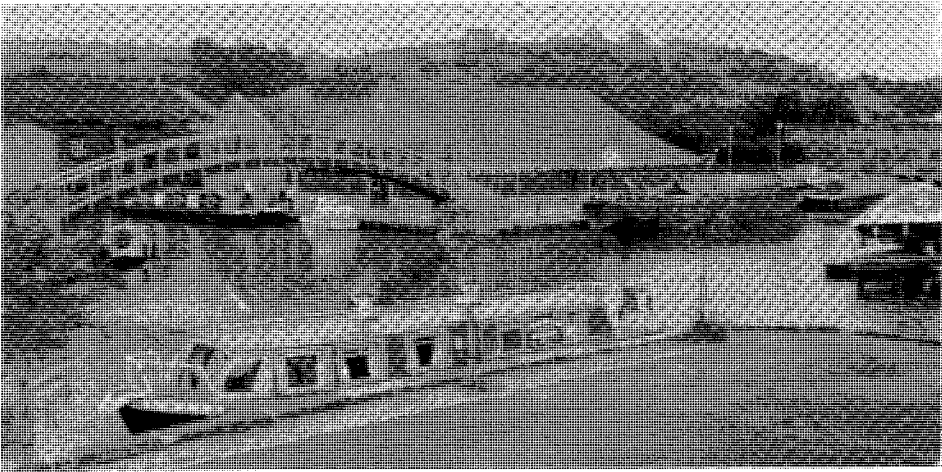


Photo showing bridge to 'Baltimore Diner'. In forefront boat 'E. Austen-Johnson' the boat giving free rides to the handicapped. Photo: Laurence Sullivan

Following the naming of lock one- the Stanley Dawson Lock, after a former mayor of Kirklees- the VIP party was taken along the canal in vintage buses, although the weather was appalling the trip was both important and successful.

A canal festival must have boats and the South Pennine Boat Club organized the rally and HCS is grateful to Tony Lockwood for his hard work. The Baltimore Diner, a new restaurant at Aspley Basin had sponsored prizes for the rally. The manager James Bedford presented wonderful decorated water-cans to Eric and Dorothy Riley with the best dressed boat 'Eva', to Bernie Guest, Harry Noyes and Rika Petersen as the best dressed crew on 'Brighthouse Nan'

Apart from the meeting of many old friends and boaters enjoying an evening in the Polytechnic Bar with the Chris Blount Jazz Band.

Truly big event is always hard to organize, particularly for first timers and all HCS members must be grateful to Eric Woulds, Jane Scott and Debbie Robertson of Kirklees Technical

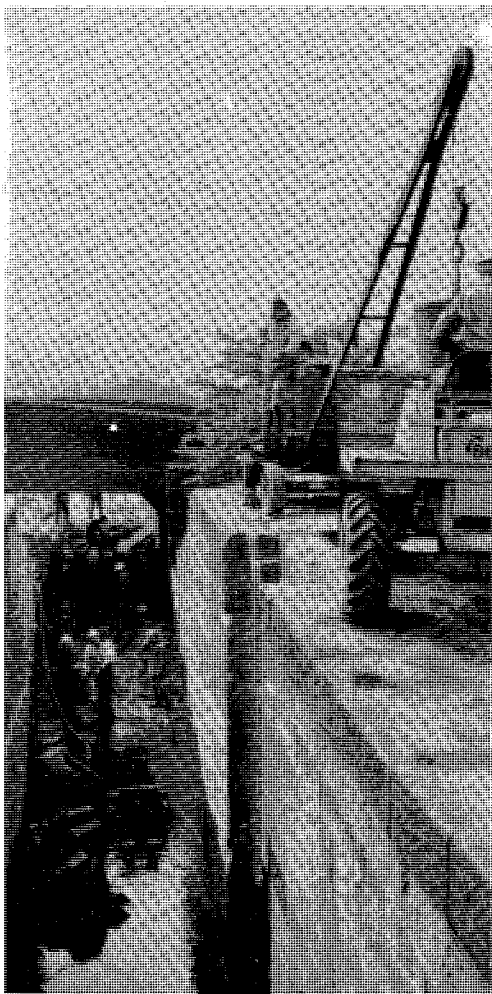
Services who found themselves with the job of the organization. They set a clear pattern that proved successful and it must be hoped they can repeat it on the 10th-11th September 1988.

The canal society's partnership with Kirklees is, indeed a happy one.

The natural site for the festival at the Polytechnic contributed to the overall success and thanks must go to the Polytechnic governors for their support and to Ruth Horsfall, conference officer and Howard Renshaw catering officer for their friendly and efficient co-operation.

It is appropriate also to thank HCS stalwarts who turned out, not just for the pleasant jobs during the festival, but also to put up stalls for 4hours in the dark and in a steady drizzle.

An abiding memory must be of the Sunday afternoon as the sun streamed down with thousands of people promenading when the first boat left gently and elegantly moving away it was watched by all as the Lockwood Band played Anchors Away.



Since the spectacular progress of our summer working week, things have returned to normal at Diggle. The first job was to repair the dumper (yes, I really mean things are back to normal!), which consumed plenty of man-hours. This being completed, we have started to attack the remaining gunge in lock 32W, which is taking on a consistency between thin porridge and thick soup!!

As I write, we are in between visits from the Waterway Recovery Group (WRG). A fortnight is a fairly short time to put the plant back into order, but on the second, larger, weekend we hope to do some work on both the locks and on the pound between. In the longer term, fitting a top gate to 31W is a target; this will allow better control of water, as well as giving a more finished look to one of the locks.

Future dates are:-

November 14/15th
November 28/29th

December 12/13th
January 2/3rd

I hope that these fit in with the pre- and post Christmas commitments. Please ring Trevor Ellis on Huddersfield 534666 for further information.

Photo shows work on Lock 31W.
Photo: Bob Dewey

Trevor Ellis.

PRESS DATE
1st December

Although the £1.2m grant we received on the demise of the Greater Manchester Council provided a wonderful boost to the restoration programme it will not on its own ensure the restoration of all of the canal. We have, therefore, been investigating other sources of funding. Mike Thomson, the Planning Consultant who we brought in to help, reports that the welcome he has received from all sources in the past nine months has exceeded his most optimistic expectations.

Whilst this is gratifying in itself, a lot remains to be "brought in" on the financial front. The National Heritage Memorial Fund, for example, have said that the Trustees do not normally support survey work of the kind we propose for Standedge Tunnel - but may in due course be able to make a contribution towards the cost of restoring the tunnel. They have asked to be informed of progress and we live in hope.

English Heritage, who have been sent excellent B.W.B. photographs of the superb tunnel brickwork (and the less satisfactory parts !), have been kept in touch, but as yet has made no decision as to whether they will support the Standedge Tunnel engineering and leisure studies which are jointly expected to cost about £300,000.

All the more credit, therefore, to the Yorkshire Regional Council for Sport and Recreation, who have reserved £40,000 for the study, and have placed emphasis on the canal cruising network and the wider role of canals in their Water Recreation Strategy. We were pleased to see Cyril Villiers, the Sports Council Regional Director and his wife, Joan, at both the Ashton and Huddersfield Festivals.

In Manchester the Department of the Environment have been immensely helpful with our European Regional Development Fund applications for the tunnel survey, and for aid to the first three years of the five year programme of M.S.C. and contract work we have put forward in Oldham and Tameside. Our thanks go to Peter Barnes and Phil Eccles for their help and guidance. John Tavare, the Chairman of the Mersey Basin Campaign was a welcome guest at the Ashton Festival. (E.R.D.F. funds are only available in certain areas, one of which is the Mersey Basin, including the Tame Valley).

English Tourist Board-Jonathan Tucker in the North West, John Chapman in Yorkshire and Humberside, and at Blacks Tower, London-have added their support and enthusiasm. The new Yorkshire and Humberside Director, Brian Handley, opened the Huddersfield festival with a short and to the point speech.

The scene is set fair for paper progress, given of course the vital support needed through the Mersey Basin Campaign E.R.D.F.. Hopefully this dull paperwork will lead us to an agreed but flexible programme of restoration on the west side of the canal complimenting Kirklees existing east side plans. Mention of flexibility leads me to note that you can't plan for everything. despite all the negotiations and investigations with our 5 year programme, hardly a week goes by without some problem fading away only to be replaced by another. Just how we cope with that in an E.R.D.F. programme we have yet to work out!

KEITH GIBSON:

Tameside Canals Ltd are the firm responsible for the reconstruction of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal in Tameside. As a partially M.S.C. funded scheme we act as a major employer in an area which has suffered from the loss of the traditional manufacturing industry.

Our major brief is to return the canal to navigation. This involves an extensive programme of dredging and major reconstruction work of the locks. In future a massive civil engineering project will have to be undertaken to redirect the route of the canal through Stalybridge town centre.

Our aim is to provide, in the canal, a major focal point for the re-juvenation of the whole Tame Valley. Thus we are engaged in a series of projects that benefit special interest groups and ultimately the whole of the community. Involvement with anglers, rambles, nature lovers, as well as boaters have been encouraged.

In European Year of Environment our ecologist has established links with many ecologically concerned groups and has initiated a programme of school, college and volunteer visits and projects.

Currently we are at work on a major project to benefit the disabled people of Tameside. Thus we have constructed an Angler's Wharf which will provide an easy and safe access to the rich fishing potential of the canal for the disabled angler.

At 32 m long and 3 m wide detailed planning has had to be considered. Great care has been taken to ensure sympathetic materials have been used. A great deal of time and skilled work by Craftsmen has ensured that hand layed setts and flags have been used in a safe and aesthetically pleasing manner.

Marko Dutka

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A government inspector has turned down the plan by Bates and Co. to lift planning restrictions on the line of the Narrow Canal as it runs through the company's Fairfield Mill premises in Queen Street South, Huddersfield.

At the same time there was a pat on the back for both H.C.S. and Kirklees Council from the inspector, Mr Jack Chambers, who not only looked at the Bates' site, but also other stretches of the Narrow.

Turning down the Bates' plan Mr Chambers commented "There is no doubt in my mind about the level of commitment of both the local authority, and many volunteers, to carry through the proposed reopening of the canal throughout its length, notwithstanding the scale of the tasks to be undertaken, or the resources which will be required to carry them out".

"The work which has already been undertaken, at Aspley, and in the length through Marsden as far as the Standedge Tunnel Mouth, indicates clearly to me the value of the work, not only to those with a particular interest in canals, but also to those who live or work near, or who visit the area, and therefore who benefit from significant improvements to the environment, and the trade which such a tourist attraction brings".

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Rejecting an application by Bates for costs the Inspector said that he did not consider that Kirklees Council had acted unreasonably.

HCS Chairman David Sumner was delighted with the decision. "A mass of solid evidence was presented at the appeal by the society and the council and obviously this has been accepted by the Inspector" he said.

"The decision is a very important one, for this site was regarded as a major stumbling block in the restoration campaign. The inspectors ruling effectively clears the way, and we are now hoping that through co-operation with the management of the firm a workable agreement can be reached on how the canal should be restored through the site."

Chairman of Kirklees Development Committee, Clr Les Preece, who spoke at the inquiry also welcomed the decision, commenting "It vindicates the council's policies towards restoration of the canal. It is another major step forward."

The Bates scheme on the canal project appeared to him to have the effect of increasing the costs and difficulty of re-opening the length of the canal through the appeal site. A 'cut and cover' technique which was less costly and would be practicable at present, would no longer be possible if the development went ahead, and a tunnelling technique would need to be employed instead.

PRESS DATE
1st December

The Huddersfield Canal Society Fleet now numbers some six vessels all told. The Society purchased a dredger and two hoppers from BWB to be used by Tameside Canals Limited in the onward and upward rush from Portland Basin. We already had Stan and No 2 at Marsden and Benjie operating from Uppermill. Of these, the only ones with no problems are the two hoppers! Newly painted they are tied up at Ashton patiently awaiting the chance to carry their first load. The dredger, TCL have discovered, was made in sections, front and back to be unhitched then fastened alongside to make a 20 ft wide platform, completely stable and able to take the strain of the grab swinging about with a load of mud and supermarket trolleys from the bed of the canal. However - much of our canal is only 14 ft wide and in places such as Whitelands Tunnel, is only 8 ft wide. The dredger without its side pieces becomes unstable and has a distressing tendency to roll over, much to the dismay and despondency of the operators! A possible solution is fitting hydraulic retractable legs which will go into the bed of the canal and hold the crane platform rigid. Steve Whitby is examining all the possibilities.

Stan is rapidly coming to the end of its economic life. (I'm sorry, Mr. Maynard, but old age catches up with us all!) The received expert opinion is that this season will be the last for Stan as a passenger carrier although there could still be a role as a floating advertisement for the Society. Number 2 needs a fair amount of work to make it into a viable alternative.

Harold Nield who operates Benjie at Uppermill is going it alone from next season and buying his own boat to run. The Council wish him every success and would like to express grateful thanks to Harold for all his efforts on behalf of the Society and for spreading the gospel each year. We will be moving Benjie up to Marsden and operating it from there with volunteer crews at the beginning of next season. All you would-be Captains and ticket collectors - watch this space - when the dates are finalised, I will be asking for - nay begging! - your co-operation and assistance.

Brian Minor
Convenor - Boats Committee

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Here is a brief update on the situation since I last wrote on this subject in May/June issue of "Pennine Link".

The society's subsidiary M.S.C. scheme Tameside Canals, has started work on the 1987/88 programme. This was delayed for 3 months because of negotiations over manning levels which have now been resolved. In the meantime, the M.S.C. agreed to an extension to keep the scheme running. An additional environmental project, the creation of an anglers wharf for the disabled at Portland Basin, provided useful extra work. Lockgates built at the Waterways Board's Stanley Ferry workshop are now in place at Lock 2 and gates built at the Kirklees M.S.C. scheme's Colne Valley Workshops should be fitted at Lock 3 when you read this. Completion of Lock 1 is delayed until the sewer work for the North West Water Authority is completed below the lock. Work has now started in earnest above Stalybridge, initially on sorting out the by-washes to Locks 9, 10 and 11. The new office/depot for the scheme at 239 Mossley Road, Ashton (needed to provide a secure permanent base, instead of the inadequate portakabin) should be occupied soon.

Discussions have continued with Oldham Council about bridges to be rebuilt in Saddleworth, and preliminary investigations of the work required should start soon. As seems to be normal with these things, the start of Oldham's M.S.C. project - scheduled to begin work at Royal George, Greenfield - has been delayed, not through any lack of enthusiasm on the part of council officers, or of your Society, but because of involved negotiations over financial matters. I hope that I will be able to report a conclusion satisfactory to all parties and the commencement of work soon.

Looking further ahead our five year programme includes the reconstruction of the infilled canal at Hartshead, and the beginning of work on the new route through Stalybridge town centre. Major progress on the ground with these projects will of course depend on our success in obtaining grant-aid to supplement the funds already available. In the meantime, however, detailed negotiations are being carried out by David Pyrah, Principal Planning Engineer, North and other staff of the Waterways Board concerning Hartshead and the Society has agreed to fund a borehole survey of soil conditions as part of the design work involved. We have also begun discussions with Tameside Planning Officers about Stalybridge, and have agreed to set on engineering consultants to design the first section between Bayley Street and Caroline Street.

There are so many things going on that it is difficult to ensure that everything is reported in "Pennine Link" that I can report on! Perhaps one of the most important recent events (affecting all of the canal - not just the west side) was the decision of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal Joint Committee (the joint B.W.B., Kirklees, Oldham, Tameside and H.C.S. committee co-ordinating restoration) to go ahead with a Paving Bill, which will be the first stage of a new Act of Parliament to rescind the closure of the canal. The Paving Bill will permit navigation on the canal. Its cost of about £50,000 is intended to be shared, with the Local Authorities and the Society contributing £5,000 each and the remainder being met by the Water Board.

KEITH GIBSON:

ASHTON TO HUDDERSFIELD The hard way

by Laurence Sullivan.

Not so much the story of a boat trip, more of the events that lead up to it. During my many boating experiences, the following rule crops up frequently: 'take things as they come, and don't plan too far ahead'. This article is a good example.

Since becoming a 'boat owner' a few years ago it had been my ambition to take my boat from Manchester to Huddersfield via the Leeds and Liverpool canal. During many years of hire-boating I had been on the Huddersfield Broad Canal and the Aire and Calder, but never on the Leeds and Liverpool. With Ashton Canals Festival in its 10th year and the promise of a good festival at Huddersfield it seemed appropriate to do the trip this year.

Before I go any further I suppose I'd better introduce my boat. She (or he) is a 30 ft steel narrow boat called 'John Gilbert'; built in 1971 to the design of a Birmingham tug, and powered by a minute 8hp single cylinder diesel. I bought 'John Gilbert' in 1985, but some long-standing HCS members will no doubt remember the boat's previous owner, Arthur Hornsby, who regularly brought it to the Ashton Canal Festival. Arthur still takes an active interest in the boat, and is always there to advise me from his wealth of experience.

Back to the trip. The initial stage would be getting from my moorings at Marple to Wigan. There were two possible routes depending on which way round

the Cheshire Ring you went. The shortest route by far was straight through Manchester, but this was lacking in scenic qualities, and involved a hefty licence fee for the Rochdale. So I naturally preferred the long, scenic route, providing I had the time to do it all.

Before progressing any further there was a major job to do: 'John Gilbert' was due to come out of the water for inspection and re-painting. This was a completely new experience for me and I had no idea what problems there might be lurking under the water, or how long it would all take.

This big event finally occurred in July, just after the Ashton Canals Festival. The boat came out at Ashton Canal Carriers, using their unusual, but very effective, steam powered boat lift. A quick inspection showed that the hull was o.k and would only require cleaning and painting. However, the stern gear was in a sorry state and would require complete removal and overhaul. With time running out, I was beginning to have second thoughts about the trip.

About this time, I went on one of the free 'Benji' trips and was much heartened, following a chat with Alec Ramsden. Alec was looking for volunteers for the Kirklees Festival and hearing about my plans he made the encouraging remark: "Don't worry Laurence; you WILL get to Huddersfield we'll make sure of that." Alec knew the Leeds and Liverpool very well, and both he and John Morley were happy to crew for me. John also offered to help out with the stern gear problem.

Having dismantled the stern gear I took the remains of it down to Crowthers in Oldham and within a week I'd had the

lot refurbished and re-installed in the boat. 'John Gilbert' was back in the water much sooner than expected so the trip was definitely on. The revised plan was to go directly through Manchester on the outward journey and return to Marple via the rest of the Cheshire Ring.

I would set off on Sunday 30th August and John would be with me for the whole trip, Alec would join us on the Tuesday. I had also rounded up some extra help for the first two days.

A couple of interesting facts had now been brought to my attention. Firstly, there was a stoppage on the Bridge-Water Canal at the end of September, which meant that I would have to get back pretty sharpish. Secondly, there was a leak on the Lower Peak Forrest Canal at Romiley. This was causing problems due to lower water levels, but had not yet lead to a total closure. No problem really, as I wasn't going back that way, or so I thought.

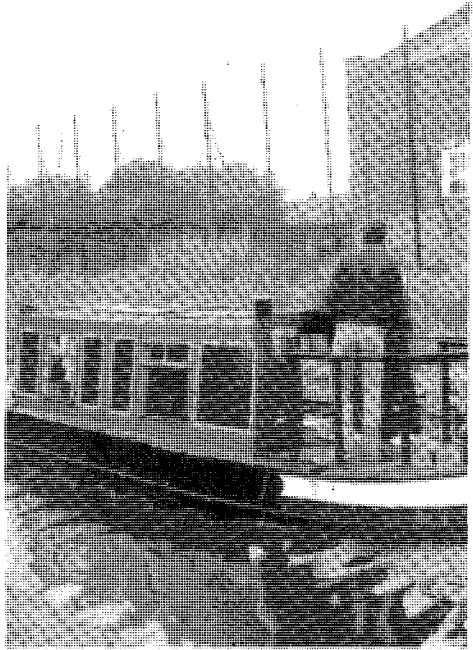


Photo shows 'John Gilbert' on the Ashton Canal.



Photo shows 'John Gilbert' passing through Manchester on the Rochdale Canal.

The big day arrived, and the first problem. The fridge had packed up; soggy beefburgers for breakfast, YUK! There was more to follow; a heated discussion was taking place on the moorings; I went over to investigate. Apparently, there had been a serious breach on the Macclesfield Canal at Kidsgrove. Oh no! the long scenic route back was now out of the question. I would have to return through Manchester; another Rochdale licence fee to pay. If they closed the canal at Romiley, I wouldn't get back to Marple at all; oh dear! Plenty of time to worry about the return trip, we were going and that was that. Plenty of help for the first day and excellent weather. A brief discussion with the lock keeper on the Rochdale, indicated that I might get a discount for the return passage. The

following day we were on the Leeds and Liverpool and facing the notorious 'Wigan 21'. This flight of wide locks is aptly described as 'not for the faint-hearted'. With our numbers now reduced to three, I was expecting a long haul. We were in luck; another boat was doing the flight, so we shared the locks and the workload. We celebrated with an early evening drink (or two) at the top of the flight, before bashing on to Adlington. The hard bit now over; Alec and his son, Graham, joined us as planned and we made excellent progress, reaching Leeds by Friday. Much has already been written about the Leeds and Liverpool, and there is little I can add. It is a truly magnificent canal and was well worth all the effort. Alec and Graham departed at Leeds leaving John and myself to



Photo shows Laurence with 'John Gilbert' at Rodley, Nr Leeds.



Photo shows Laurence sticking up his latest plaque.

Photo: Huddersfield Examiner.

complete the journey. By Sunday afternoon we were approaching the Huddersfield Broad, having picked up two more helpers on the way. The good weather finally deserted us and the last leg was completed in torrential rain. A miserable end to the journey but at least I'd made it.

The trip had taken eight days, the train journey home took just over 20 minutes!

Footnote:

I haven't mentioned the return journey, so, in case you were wondering, I did get back to Marple, and I got a cheap passage through the Rochdale. Oh!, and by the way, anybody know how to mend a fridge?.



Joining H.C.S. Sales Officer, Fiona Minor, on the H.C.S. stall, is Mr Brian Handley, Regional Director of the Yorkshire and Humberside Tourist Board, who officially opened the festival

You might have seen the Sales Stand in operation if you have been out and about this month. We occupied a prominent position at the National Rally at Hawkesbury and were in the car park at Huddersfield.

The sales at Hawkesbury certainly justified the cost of the transport to and from on a purely commercial basis but the main advantage is that the stand provides a focal point for all our members and supporters to make themselves known and talk to one another and to any members of the ruling military junta who were around at the time.

It is also very interesting to compare experiences with the other canal societies who had stalls. We have a tendency to think that only HCS is battling against the world to restore a canal; it's nice to know there are others equally dedicated.

Thanks to chairman David for spending all day Saturday, Hon Sec Bob for Sunday afternoon, Festivals Officer Brian for Sunday and Monday (mind you, he had no option, he got me into this job!), manning the stall and particularly to those members of the Ashton Canals Festival Committee, Dennis and Wendy Latham, Vince and Sue Willey, Alwyn and Mavis Ogborn with Sarah and Andrew, for helping out during the weekend and thanks to Mavis for feeding seemingly hundreds of people on your boat.

Kirklees (Huddersfield) Festival was a different ball game. Sales were once again good but the people coming to the stall were not the canal buffs but mainly the ordinary man and woman in the street desperately wanting to know what was happening on the canal. Thanks to Vice-Chairman Trevor, Chairman David (once again), Ann and Eric Crossland and to Laurence Sullivan

(writer of the Pub Section of the Tow-Path Guide - a very erudite gentleman) for their help in this direction.

A lot of lessons have been learned very quickly this year, one of which is that the Sales Stand is a vital part of our PR effort and not just purely for commercial ends. The council are now looking at it from this point and there could well be many changes in the future. Hopefully the stand will appear at all water-related gatherings next year. What I would like to see is the ordinary member of the Society more involved. I have had tremendous support from the council this year but I know there must be dozens of you out there looking for a greater involvement in the society's work. Well, here's your chance, give me a ring and offer your services - for an hour, a day or a complete weekend. It's good fun and you meet some super people. The stand sells canal knick-knacks, HCS sweaters and ties, post-cards, etc. So there's nothing heavy, nothing messy or dirty and everything is priced by me so you don't have to worry about costs. So DIAL NOW 04575 6581 and be the first volunteer for 1988!

One more point before I finish and that is that the society are desperately in need of a caravan for the stand. Anyone with one or who knows where there is one, please contact me. We are looking for something in the region of 10 to 14 ft preferably with an awning, reasonably priced, of course!

Fiona Minor
Sales Officer

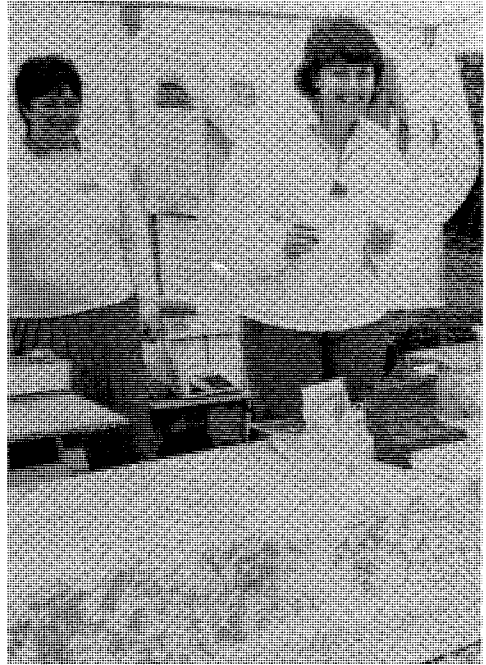


Photo shows Fiona Minor (with Jill Pratt in the background) setting up the HCS stall at the Kirklees Festival.

PHOTOS FOR POSTCARDS?

I am after any photos of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal to make a set of 5 postcards. If any one has a photo or photos they think may be suitable please can you let me have them as soon as possible.

Please remember to put your name on the reverse of the photos and to let me have your address so when I have finished with them I will return.

Please send to Fiona Minor, Sales Officer, 263 Manchester Road, Mossley, Ashton-under-Lyne, OL5 9AN.

A gold star for those readers who remember which horse Tanner is. Those who don't remember, turn back to Sept/Oct. 1986 issue No.71. Tanner, grey, now 13 or 14 years old. I bought him in 1983. I had declined the HCS's offer of stardom for Tanner in 1984 when asked if he would tow the boat Benji in Uppermill for the civic cruise at the Uppermill Festival. Tanner was there with my horse caravan from which I was selling wholefood snacks. He is a good wagon horse who has travelled the roads to Appleby Horse Fair several times and toured for me in 1983 between Manchester and Leeds with the Horse-Drawn Clown and Puppet Circus.

However, he had no experience of pulling boats and I did not think the civic cruise was the best time to experiment! Instead I brought Sonny to do the job, the experienced boathorse of the Ashton Packet Boat Co.

Several months later, Tanner met Benji for the first time. I have grazing by the canal and was walking Tanner to the field along its access by towpath. He showed much fear on his first encounter of a canal boat - a monster which loomed large out of the water (the Loch Ness monster?). Although I was often tempted to give Tanner a try with 'Maria' at Guide Bridge, I rather wondered if he was strong enough to pull the laden boat through the shallow waters of the Peak Forest Canal. Combined with remembering this fear of his, I did not ever seriously consider using him.

During the summer of 1986 I visited the newly opened 'National Museum of the Working Horse' in Halifax to introduce myself. I was very interested to hear that they had been asked to provide

horsepower for one day to pull 'Sarah Siddons' from Hebden Bridge along the Rochdale Canal. The horse they had used was Duke, a magnificent black shire, a varner to be precise, a smaller type of heavy horse. No mishaps occurred but the horse was too fast, wanting to trot and exerting himself unnecessarily (as had my varner Blossom) (article in No.71). The boat operators Calder Valley Cruising asked the museum to provide horsepower to open the 1987 season over Easter. Due to other commitments they could not do it themselves and in early January asked me if I would go. But what horse to use? Duke was too busy on their yard and was not really suitable it seemed. Sonny would be busy with his own boat 'Maria' at Easter probably. I was offered various shires by their owners, but none had ever even seen a canal, my horse 'Blossom' was unable to help being due to have a foal. They posed problems of transport (too heavy for my car to tow!) and insurance. I dreaded an accident with someone else's horse, with less than 4 weeks to go, I still had no horse tried and tested. On consideration, it seemed worthwhile letting Tanner have a go - 'Sarah Siddons' was a lighter boat than Maria, in deeper waters, and it was only for 3 days after all. If Tanner managed OK, I would have the bonus of it being my own horse I had trained, and he could perhaps stand in for Sonny if he should ever be unavailable (due to the odd day's lameness etc. which has occurred over the years).

I brought Tanner at the end of March (by car and trailer) to the boatyard having mustered up a crew for 'Maria' to run empty. We got the boat moving by pulling it ourselves before attaching Tanner to the line, so as not to dis-

hearten him immediately. A wagon horse expects the wheels to roll straight away behind him. I worked Tanner in blinkers - he had no knowledge of what he was pulling on this occasion! A crew member was stationed at the towing mast to disconnect in any difficulties. To my delight Tanner worked beautifully, negotiating the bridgeholes safely. It seemed a good start but I knew adventures lay ahead - locks, narrower bridgeholes, aqueducts, tunnels, overflows, anglers with huge rods, and huge umbrellas etc. After this successful first attempt, I felt I might as well continue with Tanner as try a strange horse. At least Tanner and I were used to working together and trusted each other.

The phone rang unexpectedly. Would I go early to Hebden Bridge for a publicity launch on April 7th of tourist attractions in the area? The TV cameras would be there, as well as press, and local VIP's. So my 'green' boathorse was to be launched in the thick of watching eyes. I insisted on a practice run the day before. My own harness was not ready so I borrowed Sonny's and off we set.

APRIL 6th

Tanner was very nervous. Trod on my toe - ouch! It was very difficult to get him to stand still whilst I hooked/unhooked the towline from him. Whether it was the strange surroundings, I don't know, but his composure had gone. We managed OK, going through one lock too.

APRIL 7th

The Bygone Days launch. Tanner was better today as he presumably recognised the route and job from the day before. We were in traditional costume - it rained and rained - but vanity in front of the TV cameras stopped me putting on waterproofs.

The only hiccup was Tanner being afraid of TV cameras. I sent a message along warning the cameramen to make more room for us, but of course they did not. As we took up the slack of our line to take off from Clog Factory, Tanner approached the cameras, and in a moment of shyness, he turned his back to them! The harness fell off etc. - I'm glad they didn't show that on TV! Anyhow they made more room for us and we got under way successfully this time. I was drenched and wondered how good an idea this horseboating lark was after all! But after the cruise on the boat, a mighty helping of dockpudding (local speciality of bacon and spinach, oops, I mean docks) and a sup of beer revived me whilst Tanner munched in the shelter on his trailer. Exhausted and relieved it was over, we returned home, promising to be back for Easter.

APRIL 16th

Phone rings unexpectedly. The little tugboat has broken down, could I come a day early and do Good Friday boating by horse too? Yes.

APRIL 17th-20th

4 full days of boating. Tanner was dreadful on the first day - nervous and impatient again. I had brought my own assistant for each day of Easter luckily. We managed Tanner OK, and he steadied down as time went on.

It was a new experience for all the crew. I was the only one accustomed to horseboating. The procedure at locks took some learning - learning how to coil the towline neatly and pass it under the lock bridges takes practice.

By the end of the Easter weekend, I was told Calder Valley Cruising was hooked and wanted to go horsedrawn for the

PENNINE LINK

season! The museum had sent another man and horse up for a day to do some cruising but he was considered not to be 'boat-friendly', causing the boat to be knocked about a lot and getting the towline wrapped round a cyclist's headlight. So a contract was drawn up and Tanner found himself to be a fully-fledged boathorse!

We have operated successfully all season, Tanner settling in well to this job. I'll tell you a few of the adventures in my next article. Do come and see us. Phone me on 061-301 2368 (24 hours) or Calder Valley Cruising (0422 844833/845272).

Sue Day.

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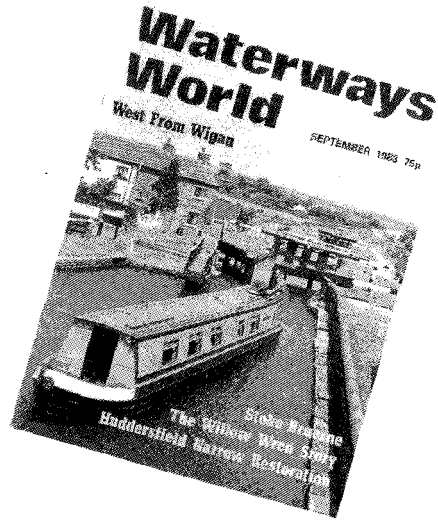
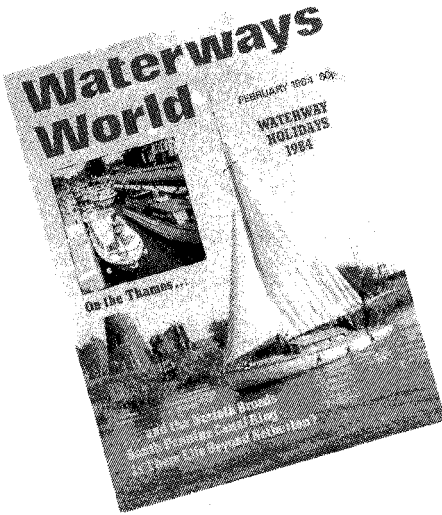
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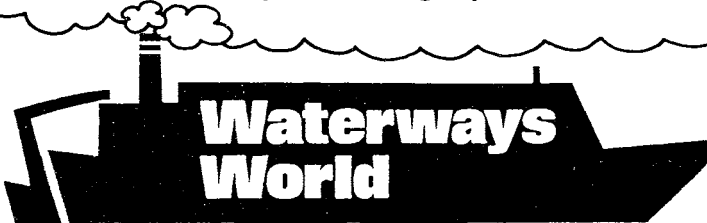
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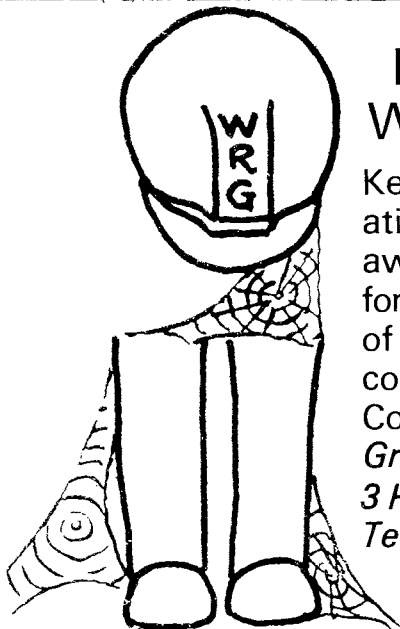


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- 1573 Mr A.V. Tucker,
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- 1583 Mr & Mrs John Staveley,
- 1584 Mr Allan Matthews,

VAL DEWEY
Membership Secretary

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- 5th November 8.00pm East Side Meeting at the Albion, Longroyd Bridge,
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11th November 8.00pm West Side Meeting at the Farrars Arms, Grasscroft,
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9th December 8.00pm East/West Christmas Meeting at the Diggle Hotel,
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Ribble Link Cruise Video - August 1987 a 10 mile cruise on tidal waterway.

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West Riding Branch. Meetings at Victoria Hotel, Gt. George Street, Leeds.

8th January Natter and Noggin. Members slide show.

29th January

26th February 'The maintenance problems of facing B.W.B.' by Stuart Simms,
area engineer, Wigan and Peter Barnes, Castleford Area Engineer.

Manchester Branch.

January 8th Worsley Cruising Club, Cawdor Street, Patricroft, Manchester
'Developements on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal at Stalybridge' by Tameside
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28th/29th...November

12th/13th...December

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For further details Tel Hudds: 534666

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