



Pennine

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Huddersfield Canal Society Ltd., 239 Mossley Road, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancs., OL6 6LN.

Tel: 0161 339 1332 Fax: 0161 343 2262 E-Mail: hcs@hcanals.demon.co.uk

General Secretary: Frank Smith

<i>Chairman</i>	David Sumner	4 Whiteoak Close, Marple, Stockport, Cheshire, SK6 6NT. Tel: 0161 449 9084
<i>Vice-Chairman and Working Party Co-ordinator</i>	Trevor Ellis	20 Batley Avenue, Marsh, Huddersfield, HD1 4NA. Tel: 01484 534666
<i>Company Secretary</i>	John Fryer	c/o Ramsdens Solicitors, Ramsden Street, Huddersfield, HD1 2TH.
<i>Treasurer</i>	John Sully	5 Primley Park Road, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS17 7HR. Tel: 01132 685600
<i>West Side Social Chairman</i>	Jack Carr	19 Sycamore Avenue, Euxton, Chorley, Lancashire, PR7 6JR. Tel: 01257 265786
<i>Chairman, HCS Restoration Ltd.</i>	Keith Gibson	Syke Cottage, Scholes Moor Road, Scholes, Holmfirth, HD7 1SN. Tel: 01484 681245
<i>Membership Secretary</i>	Josephine Young	Huddersfield Canal Society, 239 Mossley Road, Ashton-u-Lyne, Lancs., OL6 6LN. Tel: 0161 339 1332
<i>Festivals Officer</i>	Brian Minor	45 Gorton Street, Peel Green, Eccles, Manchester, M30 7LZ. Tel: 0161 288 5324
<i>Press Officer</i>	Alec Ramsden	16 Edgemoor Road, Honley, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, HD7 2HP. Tel: 01484 662246
<i>Sales Officer</i>	Pat Riley	8 Queensway, Greenfield, Oldham, Lancashire, OL3 7AH. Tel: c/o HCS on 0161 339 1332
<i>Editor</i>	Ken Wright	Bridge House, Dobcross, Oldham, Lancashire, OL3 5NL. Tel: 01457 873599
<i>Boats Officer</i>	Vince Willey	45 Egmont Street, Mossley, Ashton-u-Lyne, Lancashire, OL5 9NB.
<i>Special Events Co-ordinator</i>	Alwyn Ogborn	10 Rothesay Avenue, Dukinfield, Cheshire, SK16 5AD. Tel: 0161 339 0872
<i>General Members</i>	Allen Brett	31 Woodlands Road, Milnrow, Rochdale, Lancashire, OL16 4EY. Tel: 01706 41203
	Gay Quilter	12 Shaw Hall Close, Greenfield, Oldham, Lancashire, OL3 7PG. Tel: 01457 872526

SUBSIDIARY COMPANIES

HCS Restoration Limited

239 Mossley Road, Ashton-u-Lyne, Lancs., OL6 6LN. Tel: 0161 339 1332 Fax: 0161 343 2262

<i>Managing Director</i>	Stephen Whitby
<i>General Manager</i>	John McLoughlin
<i>General Foreman</i>	Malcolm Braddock
<i>OM Technical Section</i>	Bob Gough
<i>Administration</i>	Paula McLoughlin

Loxvend Limited (HCS Sales)

239 Mossley Road, Ashton-u-Lyne, Lancs., OL6 6LN. Tel: 0161 339 1332

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Front Cover: Millennium Commission Chairman and Secretary of State for Heritage, Virginia Bottomley, on a flying visit to Tunnel End, Marsden, pictured on board the Standedge Pioneer with the Society's two youngest Boat Masters, Julie Wilson and brother Andrew Wilson. Photo: Huddersfield Examiner



We're still waiting! Months of preparation followed by weeks of anxiety and we still don't know the result of the Millennium bid. The result is due between going to the printers and sending Pennine Link out, so we are taking the unusual, but obvious and simple, step of inserting a

loose-leaf update. If it contains what we hope it will contain, your next issue should have a full-colour cover! As it is, you may notice an extra bit of colour elsewhere in this issue.

Our cover picture this time tells a good story and I would refer you immediately to Alec Ramsden's account of the Secretary of State's visit, which replaces the Chairman's report this time.

Speaking of our chairman, he has contributed the first "Profile", the start of a series of articles which I hope will help you to put some meat on the bones of HCS "executives" and also be informative and, hopefully, interesting!

Advance notice of some changes for New Year:-

1. A photo competition, running all summer with judgement at the end of the year.
2. A series of excerpts from "Narrow Boat" by LTC (Tom) Rolt, the book that did more than anything to start the canal restoration movement. Mrs. Sonia Rolt, Tom's widow, has given her kind permission for what I hope will be a very popular addition.
3. A serialisation of the "story line", the narrative for the Standedge Experience report, prepared for

HCS by Archaemedia Ltd.

4. On the down side (who said Hooray?) The Wife's Tale will soon be taking a rest as we have run out of canal holidays! Did anybody read it?

Once again I am struggling to find something for the Distaff Side. Luckily Jo Young has provided a couple of short items this time which I am putting on this page. It may well disappear next time, unless some of you ladies take a bit more interest! Come on, get onto your PC and give us a thought or two. And for those without a PC I will willingly provide a ball-point on receipt of a stamped, addressed envelope!

While I am having a little moan can I also head one in the direction of **all** potential contributors? Even if you haven't finished writing your piece by the Copy Date (shown on the back cover), **PLEASE** let me know that you intend to send it. A brief description of content and length will do. I consider it my job to make sure all the pages are full and Bob and I have more or less done that by Copy Date + 1 week. Any article arriving, unannounced, after that is likely to be left out or severely edited, to everyone's dissatisfaction.

Another plea! **SOMEBODY**, and we think possibly a well-meaning member, is touring the East side locks with a windlass and handcuff key, lifting paddles and filling locks - **BUT NOT LOWERING THE PADDLES AFTERWARDS**. As a result, since the bottom gates mostly leak, the pounds are emptying, much to the chagrin and dismay of BW's Danny Stead at Marsden.

PLEASE, whoever you are, **LEAVE THE LOCKS ALONE!!** If you are keen to help, in a positive way, contact Trevor Ellis, working party co-ordinator, on 01484 534666. *cont'd...*

With impeccable timing the desperately awaited news from the Millennium Commission will arrive half way between Plink going to the printers and you getting it. Consequently, the news, good or bad will be inserted in your copy as a loose sheet. Obviously this will be the "Chairman's Report" for this very important issue and he has forsaken his usual spot in favour of this punchy report by ALEC RAMSDEN, our Press Officer.

It may not have been unstinted, unconditional support - that could not have been expected - but government minister Virginia Bottomley had encouraging words to say about the restoration campaign when she paid a quickfire inspection visit to the Narrow Canal in November.

"Very exciting" was her view after calling at Stalybridge and then zipping over the Pennines by car to Tunnel End where more details of the restoration blueprint were explained to her by representatives of the partners in the campaign.

Mrs. Bottomley was officially in the area as Heritage Secretary - she wears another top hat, of course, with the Millennium Commission - and she spoke about the way in which Lottery cash was helping a wide range of projects and a broad cross-section of the community - not just what she described as "luvvies."

Local community schemes were just as important. *"We try to go three ways with projects - environmental, scientific and community regeneration. This scheme is very sympathetic to our objectives. It is these types of projects which are giving new identities and life to communities".*

Commenting specifically about the Narrow Canal initiative the Minister said *"It is certainly an environmental project with a strong flavour of*

...cont'd from page 3

And now, assuming Bob will surround
~~~~~ this bit ~~~~~  
with holly leaves, here's wishing you all the very best for a Merry Christmas and a Healthy, Happy and Prosperous New Year, from all at HCS.

Ken Wright

*community regeneration. Water is very symbolic. You need water to live and it transformed people's lives. It was of vital importance in the development of the commercial sector and now it is an agency for regeneration. Who would not like a house alongside a canal or river."*

And there was a pat on the back for those directly involved in the restoration campaign - particularly the voluntary sector. *"When you get voluntary societies which have been working to try and make it happen then it obviously appeals to us. It is quite clear that to some this has become an obsession,"* commented Mrs. Bottomley.

Restoration consortium members, including HCS chairman David Sumner, Tameside deputy chief executive Roger Anderson, who is "on the ground" officer for the Millennium bid, and officials from the three councils, would have liked more time with Mrs. Bottomley who was wearing a smart suit but no overcoat, although conditions were chilly and wet. In fact she commented about the "anorak brigade" being out in force.

However, the planned line of restoration through Stalybridge was pointed out to her and she was interested in a special, quickly set up exhibition of pictorial aspects of the planned "Standedge Experience" development at Tunnel End.

Mrs. Bottomley, who was accompanied by Michael Lorkins, the Millennium Commission's central team programme manager, posed for a Press photograph on the "Standedge Pioneer" with brother and sister boat captains Julie, 21, and Andrew, 18, Wilson - whose mum and dad, of course, are also qualified boatmasters - and then she was handed over to Kirklees Council Chief Executive, Rob Hughes, for a trip to Huddersfield and a bite and a drink at the space age McAlpine Stadium.

Rob promised to bend the minister's ear a little more about the importance of Millennium funding being made available and everybody was agreed that the lightning visit had been worth while. *"Quietly confident. It went pretty well"* was David Sumner's view.

# Millennium Bid Update



When you read this we should know whether the bid for lottery money from the Millennium Commission to complete the restoration of the canal has been successful. Maybe Editor Ken will contrive to delay

publication, or somehow include an insert with the news. (*Yes, he will! Ed.*)

To remind you - the bid submitted by the restoration partnership has been shortlisted by the Commission and English Partnerships have confirmed that they are to set aside £12.2m towards the project.

In the last issue I explained that our bid was being subjected to detailed analysis by the Millennium Commission staff and their consultants. I said that, apart from the proposed route through Stalybridge and the details of the Standedge Experience visitor centre at Tunnel End, Marsden, we could give detailed answers to almost any question that could be asked. I also explained how the funding package was then broken up into constituent parts and included expenditure back to February 1994 and I explained the delivery mechanism proposed (i.e. how the canal was to be restored and maintained).

Consultation with the Commission revealed that they were not too keen on including costs before the present, which has required restructuring the total package to ensure that the project can be delivered within the funding available - which has not been helped by extra costs being added (see below).

The Commission also required us to work through the proposals for Stalybridge and Tunnel End - a procedure to arrive at future answers was not sufficient. Timing of this work has been brought forward so that information can be given to our consultants *Pieda* with the intention of producing the all-important Business Plan in time for consideration of the bid by the Millennium

Commission in December.

The culmination of all this effort was a flying visit to the area by Virginia Bottomley MP, Secretary of State for the Environment and senior Millennium Commissioner, on Wednesday, 6th November.

## Proposals for Stalybridge Town Centre

On 27th September Tameside Council decided that the canal should be restored along its original route through the town centre, thus ending years of controversy as to the best way through the town.

About half a mile of canal is missing in Stalybridge between Staley Wharf and Mottram Road, having been filled in after the canal was closed. Tameside Council had for several years favoured connections to the River Tame which, with the insertion of locks, could provide a by-pass to the town centre, seeing this as a potentially unique asset to the town. Although not favoured by many, this did seem to be the only realistic option because the Delta Crompton factory occupied a major part of the original route. The recent closure of the factory opened up the possibility of the original town centre route being restored and the Council appointed engineering consultants Allott & Lomax to study the feasibility and costs of both routes.

Their report and the clearly expressed preference of English Partnerships made it clear, that now the original route was feasible, there was actually no choice. The original route is less expensive, much simpler in operation and has more potential to bring economic benefits to the town. More important, it is most acceptable to English Partnerships and the Millennium Commission. The Society has always taken the line that we would support Tameside Council, whichever route was selected, because it had the strongest claim to make the choice. However, that line was not without criticism amongst Society members, many of whom would have buried the river route long ago. I am very relieved that the Council have had the courage to select the best route.

## Proposals for the Standedge Experience

With the guidance of British Waterways, the Society appointed Brooke Millar Peden, Architects from Leicester, to prepare detailed proposals for the Standedge Experience.

The study pursued three distinct lines of enquiry:-

- a. What are the distinctive themes, storylines and history unique to the place and appropriate to interpretation?
- b. Is there a receptive body of visitors sufficient to justify and sustain the capital and revenue consequences of the development?
- c. What are the specifications and costs for the design, construction, content and media selection sufficient to form a viable visitor centre capable of attracting, satisfying and sustaining the prospective body of visitors?

At the time of writing I have only seen a draft of their report, but my initial conclusion is that we have spent the Society's money well. The work by Archaemedia in researching the history of the canal, setting it into the context of late eighteenth/early nineteenth century England and the development of a fascinating story of human endeavour is worth publication in its own right - indeed I hope Editor Ken will find a way to include the highlights in "Pennine Link". *(He certainly will! I intend to serialise the Archaemedia "story line" in future Plinks. Ed.)*

From this, Haley Sharpe, designers, have developed what will be a superb visitor centre telling the story of the canal in a way to interest all. This is all fitted into the listed warehouse which the architects propose to restore sensitively. A separate building is proposed within the warehouse yard to accommodate a cafe and general purpose meeting room.

Not surprisingly the total package at £2.5m will cost rather more than we had originally budgeted, mainly because of the advice that to succeed the centre must be light years on from the "displays on boards" image of many visitor centres and equal to the quality of

larger tourist attractions such as the Royal Armouries.

You will recall that the Society was already committed to raising £500,000 towards the Standedge Experience. That figure now increases to £550,000 although, as I said before, it may be possible to raise some of that from other sources and other grants, to a limited extent.

Appreciating the importance of the Standedge Experience to the Millennium Commission and that as a consequence of the increased cost the whole restoration package could collapse, Kirklees Council have bravely come to the rescue by the commitment of a further £500,000, although the Council, like the Society, will no doubt seek to find ways of spreading the load.

With regard to the crucial questions (will the centre attract sufficient visitors to justify the capital expenditure and will those visitors be sufficient to pay the revenue costs of the centre?) the study estimates that around 60,000 visitors will be attracted in the first year, rising to between 80-90,000 thereafter which number will be sufficient to justify the expenditure and at the pricing regime and staffing level suggested will cover operating costs, maintenance and renewal of exhibitions, etc. This is generally based on a thorough study of up to date information on visitor trends, population, etc. and is not just an update of earlier research by L & R Leisure Consultants and the Yorkshire & Humberside Tourist Board. The scale of the centre proposed is appropriate to this very special location and the numbers of visitors expected will not swamp Marsden or require the creation of a Disneyland type theme park. To put things in perspective 50,000 people per year are already recorded as visiting the existing Tunnel End Canal & Countryside Centre.

## Costs

I have before me what seems like the millionth draft of the total package of costs. This is increased by the inclusion of the

# Millennium Bid Update

rebuilding of the locks in Uppermill, previously seen as a separate item to be funded outside of this package (these were re-opened by volunteers, but not actually restored), and by the increased cost of the Standedge Experience and the addition of more accurate figures for compensation, etc. It includes all current work and commitments and totals just over £31m. The Millennium Commission will be asked to find about 47% of the total cost and English Partnerships about 43%. The remainder, to be met by the partners in the scheme, includes a contribution by H.C.S. voluntary effort worth nearly £1.2m in addition to the £550,000 actual financial input by the Society, £500,000 from Kirklees Metropolitan Council and £400,000 from British Waterways.

## Next Steps

Regularly consulting with the staff and consultants of the Millennium Commission, *Pieda* have now produced a Business Plan for the restoration programme. This forms a central element of the final submission to the Millennium Commission. Although the

timetable is very tight, subject to no further issues being raised or details questioned, we hope that a recommendation of approval will be made to the Commissioners in mid-December.

I am optimistic about this. I believe that we have proved that we have a project which meets the Commission's requirements and is worthwhile, which will be delivered in the required timescale at the costs estimated and which will be maintained thereafter.

If the bid is approved, the partners will very quickly have to set in motion the delivery mechanism I described in the last issue and the creation of a new and very exciting Huddersfield Canal Company.

The possibility of the scheme being rejected still exists, despite all our efforts, but seems increasingly unlikely to the bidding team of local authority, British Waterways and H.C.S. staff; the only fear is that the Commission may have a surfeit of equally worthwhile and equally deliverable projects, but we doubt that!

Keith Gibson

With all the excitement of the Millennium bid I have not reported on progress lately, so here is a quick update:

### 1. Dredging Lock 1W - Staley Wharf

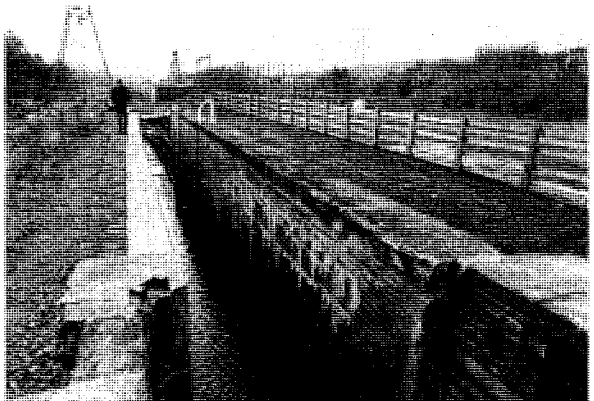
Dredging complete, but some wash wall repairs still outstanding. The H.C.S. Restoration dredging crew was augmented by two part-time dredger/tug drivers - namely Editor Ken and H.C.S. Restoration director Keith Noble.

### 2. Hartshead Infilled Section

Morrison Construction have completed this 305m. length of new canal, including a new hump-backed box culvert bridge at Grove Road. H.C.S. Restoration moved on to site to rebuild Lock 8W. The amount of rebuilding is such that this is almost a new lock with sides formed from

## RESTORATION ROUND UP

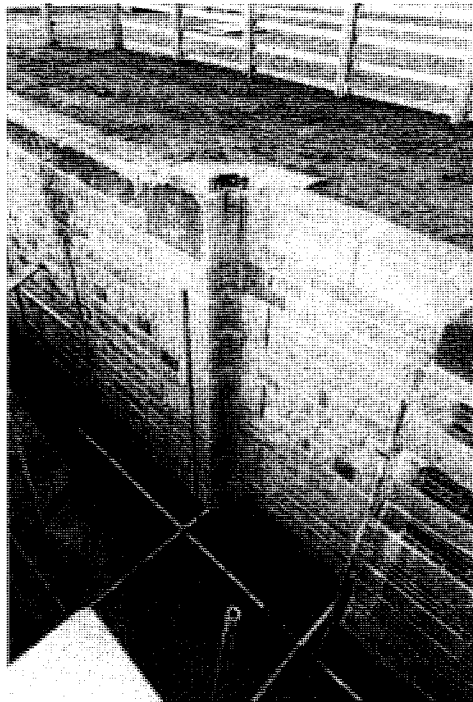
1m wide x 3m high L-shaped pre-cast concrete sections which have been faced in engineering brick to match the old lock. Concrete quoins have been cast in the Ashton yard. Quotes are expected for lock gates.



Lock 8W, Grove Road, Mossley. Photo: R. Gough



Pristine canal channel below Lock 8W



Lock 8W offside tailgate recess with cast concrete quoins.  
*Photos: R. Gough*

### 3. Lock 11W - Lock 12 W

The redundant railway embankment was removed and the land alongside the canal regraded last year. Now that it has been allowed time to settle H.C.S. Restoration have begun work on site, initially with the installation of a site compound and then by cutting a channel between Lock 12 and Scout Tunnel. The lock has been cleaned out of its hard fill and masonry work has begun. At English Nature's request plants have been transplanted from the work site below the lock to a safer location above the lock, in a shallow shoulder away from the navigable line.

### 4. Dredging Mottram Road - Hartshead Infilled Section and as required up to Scout Tunnel.

Before any work could begin the dredger, tug and mud hoppers were taken out of the water for what Steve Whitby described as "heavy

maintenance" - cleaning and reblacking the hulls, patching the hoppers, etc. Also, before work started, Tameside and British Waterways had to agree the methodology with English Nature because of the SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) status of the canal in Tameside. Most issues have been resolved, for instance the new concrete channel at Hartshead will have "soft edges" introduced to create a wildlife habitat. In some areas a centre channel only will be dredged to retain shoulders of marginal vegetation, in others a shoulder of marginal vegetation will be retained on the offside. English Nature have agreed methods of working and dredging is now well in hand, the regular work force being again augmented by part-timers, HCS Restoration directors Eric Crosland, Keith Noble and Editor Ken. The fresh water sponges which caused a lot of the hassle have



# Restoration Round-up

been relocated in safe water. One of these creatures is temporarily resident in an aquarium at Mossley Road.

## 5. Diggle Flight Locks 24W - 30W

Dredging, washwall repairs, towpath and footpath works etc. complete. Oldham planner John Rooney investigated the possibility of this contract being extended to cover the rebuilding of the walls to Locks 22W and 23W in Uppermill, but English Partnerships were of the opinion that the cost was too high to treat this as a genuine extension of that scheme. After a degree of to-ing and fro-ing it has been decided this work should be included in the Millennium programme.

## 6. Lock 24 East

Progress in getting the vertical guillotine gate to work has been very slow. The gearbox broke, was repaired then broke again. We always knew this would be the tricky bit following Ken Wright's visit to the Nene and The Ouse. Consultant Engineers Wilde &



Lock 12W to Scout Tunnel. The lock chamber has been emptied and the channel cleared to reveal the washwalls.

Photo: J. McLoughlin

Partners have now agreed a list of 16 modifications with Ron Tinker, the supplier of the gate, including a more robust gear box. Hopefully, by the time you read this, the gate will be in action.

## 7. Lock 23E

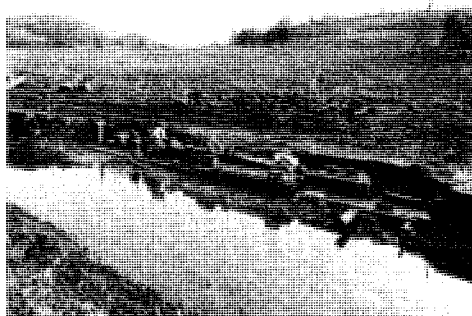
H.C.S. Restoration have rebuilt both walls of the lock chamber and carried out major demolition and rebuilding at the head of the lock to remove concrete from the ground paddle chambers. The lock is now complete with attractive hard landscaping and recently fitted gates.

So, apart from the incomplete Lock 24E, H.C.S. Restoration staff are now working on two sites only. From a maximum of 14 staff last year we are down to 9, and with the ending of the last Community Programme scheme, we have no job creation workforce.

This slowing down of the restoration programme was inevitable with the changes in grant regimes and the time involved in sorting out the Millennium bid.

Assuming that the bid succeeds, most of the remaining tasks are large scale construction jobs and it is not clear how much work will be allocated to our own workforce. However, I am determined to keep a team together over this difficult period. Work on routine maintenance and operating the Standedge Experience could be the eventual role for our team.

Keith Gibson



Reconstructing a significant length of nearside washwall below Lock 12W

Photo: R. Gough

I have always had connections with water in some way or another and it was probably after an Atlantic crossing towards the end of the war - my father was an ordinary seaman in the Royal Navy - that I was conceived, and born in Stockport before Christmas in 1945. Childhood holidays were always spent near water, beach holidays in Anglesey and Abersoch, and on the estuaries of the South West of England. My father could not swim, I barely can, and he went down with a ship off the Essex Coast and came up again to be rescued by the RAF. So I suppose I had to have a love and fear of water. But why canals?

Industrial archaeology came first and living around Manchester, with its rich history of the birth of the industrial world, my father taught me to look around, enquire and interest myself in even the most ordinary part of the built environment. After graduating in Economics at Leeds University I joined a clothing manufacturer in the East Midlands who made brassieres and other foundation garments. My company was quickly swallowed up by another textile company and then another and I eventually finished up working for Joe Hyman of Carrington Viyella - not personally of course - but as a computer manager for a Nottingham-based subsidiary of his.

This stuttering beginning to my working career was to influence my return to Greater Manchester. My then father-in-law offered me security of employment in road haulage and coal wholesaling and retailing. Then came the coal strikes! But I had moved to Dukinfield and when I had free time - from six and half days a week spent repairing lorries and even delivering coal - Margaret, my first wife, and I used to walk alongside a strange, deserted ribbon of water to the Tollemache Pub in Mossley.

Why was this canal derelict? Why could I hire a boat from Portland Basin and cruise to Llangollen, which we did, but not over to Yorkshire? A pal of mine persuaded me to attend a social in Milnsbridge in 1976 and I joined the two-year old H.C.S. The following

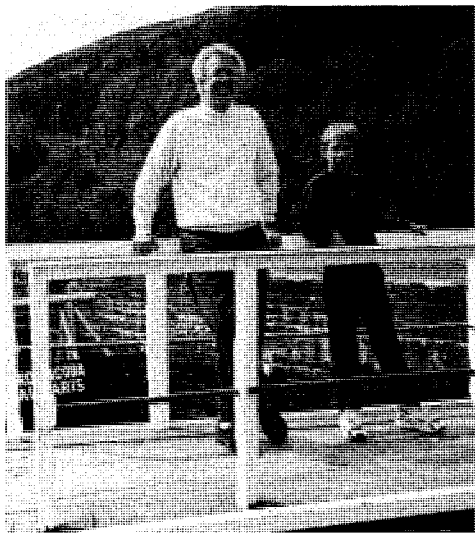
year I was treasurer of the first Tameside Canals Festival, Chairman in 1978 and I joined HCS Council in 1978. Meanwhile the company which I had joined folded and I became a lowly civil servant before joining Oldham MBC. Three or four years in the Civil Service followed by eighteen months as a trainee accountant was not a fulfilling experience. However, the Canal Society put interest into my life and brought me into contact with senior officers of BWB, as it was then known, and five local authorities - two of which had the vision to give our Society encouragement and eventually pump prime the restoration.

When people in authority stated that the Huddersfield Narrow Canal would never be restored I reacted and from 1979/80 when Dr. Farrar, our Chairman, gave me the task of supervising the restoration of the two locks in Uppermill, I became determined that those people at BWB would be proved wrong.

In 1979 another career change not only helped my hobby but introduced me to Diane, my wife, who was a graphic designer at Greater Manchester Council's Planning Department. My job at GMC was perhaps a direct result of my voluntary work with HCS as I became Festival Administrator for the 150th anniversary celebrations of the Liverpool-Manchester Railway at Liverpool Road Station, Manchester. Apart from the fun of playing trains - the Flying Scotsman, Sir Nigel Gresley, Princess Elizabeth (all engines!) visited the station - I organised a job creation scheme to cut a pedestrian link to the River Irwell to enable a rally of boats to take place and to hold passenger trips from our festival site.

At the end of the celebrations, with a new employer, I cruised from Apperley Bridge to York and back in what must have been one of the biggest booze cruises undertaken. Five men in a boat tripping over crates of beer at eleven thirty in the morning to climb out to a canal-side pub before tripping back at threeish to resume the journey. I believe that we moored somewhere in York!

## Profile - David Sumner, HCS Chairman



Father and son relax as Mum works hard to earn a crust! *Photos: D & D Sumner*

I was hooked and my new employer also ran two hire boat companies! My role was to develop a property portfolio for him. Years later I moved to my present employer based only a stone's throw from Kildwick Church on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal. We develop and build for companies like Securicor PLC, a job which takes me around England looking for sites, often by the waterside.

Diane is extremely supportive. All volunteers in busy organisations such as ours by necessity spend many hours away from home and need patient and understanding spouses. I hope Richard, my ten year old son, will inherit my love of the canal system. He has cruised from a very early age, largely in Chester, on Robin Witter's delightful electrically powered "Little Gypsy". However, he is developing his own interests, plays the classical guitar and violin and, of course, follows Manchester United and supports Stockport County F.C. We enjoy rambling together, particularly in Derbyshire, enjoy the occasional drink along the way and, wherever possible, visit the theatre and concerts.

My family know that my one ambition is to see the H.N.C. completed. It does not quite override everything else I do in my spare time but it has been a life's work and I shall not cease to work for its full through navigation. In the year 2000 I shall have been a member for twenty years. I hope that this will be my annus mirabilis and that all the people and friends I have met along the way and who have encouraged me will share in our success. This great team effort is a testament to the volunteer movement and I am proud to have been a part of it. Our success has been due to a resolute but non-confrontational approach, following our early demonstration to the local authorities and the public at large of the benefits of restoration.

We now have five other partners in our restoration movement, three local authorities, British Waterways and English Partnership. I hope that by December we will have a sixth - the Millennium Commission. If so I will have fulfilled my dream and the local communities and the country at large will have benefited from our combined efforts to undertake the "Impossible Restoration".

## TAMESIDE CANALS FESTIVAL

The second weekend in July saw the Portland Basin area of Ashton teeming, with thousands of people attending what has become one of the major canal festivals in the North of England.

We are reminded that many of the Society events are held, not only to promote the restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow, but also to show the benefits and pleasure gained from an active use of Britain's inland waterways.

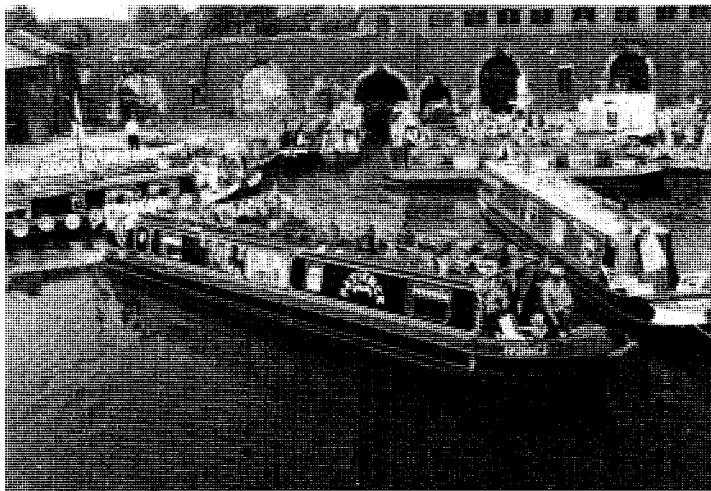
The Tameside Canals Festival certainly does this, with people of all ages enjoying a family day out. Many come year after year to give their support.

The committee are to be congratulated for staging such a magnificent event. It is not easy these days to put on events of this size as sponsorship is very competitive, costs seem to escalate every year and, along with this, there are more and more regulations being introduced to increase public safety.

Over 60 boats attended this year's festival. There would have been more, but a restriction on the use of the Marple flight prevented some of the regulars attending. The gaily decorated flotilla of canal boats stretched along all three of the Tameside canals as far as the eye could see, complemented by a growing number of caravans - 30 turned up this year, and this is becoming an established annual event for many of these land-based travellers.

Evening entertainment on Friday and Saturday, provided by Spike Island - Irish Folk Band and Smoky City Jazz Band, was well attended by the regular enthusiasts, supported as usual throughout the whole weekend, by CAMRA, providing a range of real ales whose names give no indication as to the contents of the amber nectar.

Daytime amusement was a patchwork of brass, pipe and accordion bands, children's entertainers,



Traffic chaos at Portland Basin! 1996 Tameside Canals Festival. Photo: A. Briggs

and, for the fourth year running, the Festival of Dance. A very popular event with a mixture of Morris teams, Appalachian, Asian and Irish dancing and, braving the weather, an exotic belly dancer.

The V.I.P. reception hosted by festival president, Sir James Anderton, was attended by civic dignitaries from Tameside, Oldham and Kirklees Councils and, another first, Monsieur Henri Le Roux, the 1st Deputy Mayor of Chaumont, Ashton's twin French town. The deputy mayor certainly enjoyed his day out and was pleasantly surprised, as we were, at the number of French people who stopped to talk to him. The festival committee were also grateful for the interpretive talents of Sir George Kenyon during the speeches.

Visitors who bought a souvenir programme were provided with pages of local history identifying much of the area's industrial past. One particular item mentioned that in 1799 there was a regular canal passenger service from Stalybridge via Ashton to Manchester. The journey took two and a half hours at a cost of 1s 3d in the front of the boat and 9d at the back. Modern day boaters would be hard pressed to match this time.

The 1997 Tameside Canals Festival will take place over the weekend of 11-13 July and is anticipated to be even better than the last one.

Frank Smith.

# 1996 Festival Reports

## TUNNEL END SUMMER FAIR

A big change this year. Instead of the usual location outside Tunnel End Cottages, the event was held on the picnic site in the wooded area which runs adjacent to the canal between Marsden and Tunnel End.

The change was necessitated by the lack of flat areas at Tunnel End after modifications to the reservoir embankment, and the safety measures surrounding the British Waterways Warehouse, following its closure due to structural problems.

Even with the best of preparations, one thing that is beyond anyone's control is the weather. Saturday's opening ceremony undertaken by Nick Barraclough (BBC Radio 2) and Councillor Allison Harrison, the Mayor of Kirklees was duly christened with a shower. However, with sufficient brollies at the ready,

no one got too wet.

This years event was to be billed as a big western event, the gunfight at the OK Canal. Sadly, the theme had to be played down, following the tragedies in Dunblane and in New Zealand.

Thankfully, the weather did not put too many people off, with the rain letting up for most of Sunday. Ironical that, for an area that is nationally identified with water shortages, the one weekend we hoped the drought would continue, it poured down.

In any event, the festival was a resounding success with special thanks given to Yorkshire Electric and Rural Action for their financial support.

Frank Smith

*Reproduced below is an extract from the broadsheet produced for the Fair in lieu of a souvenir programme.*

## The Marsden Pictorial News

Price 1d

June 29, 1996

### A SPECTACULAR WESTERN WEEKEND

**THE PROPRIETORS OF THE HUDDERSFIELD CANAL SOCIETY, THE MARSDEN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION AND KIRKLEES COUNTRYSIDE UNIT** have great pleasure in presenting a most entertaining diversion in the form of a 'Wild West Weekend'.

Situated on that area commonly used for clam bakes at the Tunnel End Canal & Countryside Centre, the weekend will feature a breathtaking assortment of music, entertainment and competition.

The Tunnel End Western Weekend will be compered by Messrs Ted Fussey, well known of the County, who has the honour of presenting the following acts for the public's general entertainment, &c., &c.

**The Fusspots** - A Ceilidh Band

**Hokum** - A Skiffle Group

**Soft Option** - Exponents of Blue Grass

**Chop up the Banjo** - Country Duo

**Colne Valley Music School** - Jazz Band

**Dave Buckley** - A Country Singer

**Rivendell** - Country Music

**Taft's Ragtime Serenaders** - N Orléan's Jazz

Terpsichorean attractions will feature the Appalachian Dance Troupe and for those of an extrovert disposition who, in the sense and consideration of propriety should be necessarily attired, wish to receive gratis instruction, Miss Bernadette shall be offering an instructional workshop in the finer art of Line Dancing.

For the younger members of Marsden County, the Proprietors have, at not inconsiderable expense, engaged the talents of not one, but two entertainers whose speciality and craft have been developed particularly for the young audience; to wit, Morris Roberts - Children's Entertainer, and Megan's Rainbow Funtime; the success of their previous engagements are testimony to their rapport and audience delight.

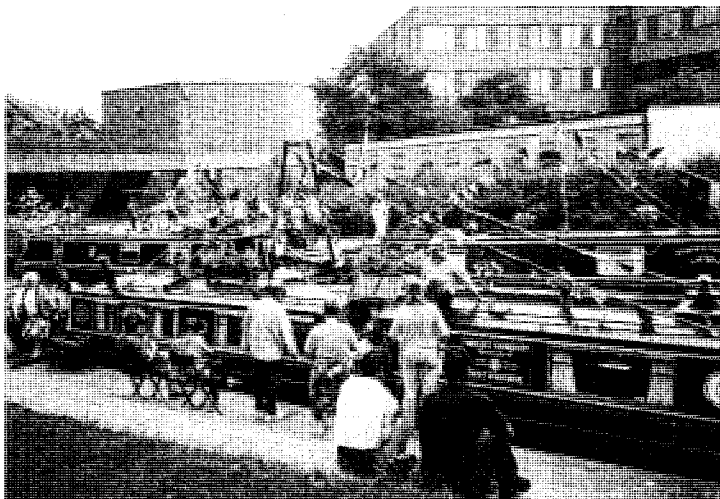
#### QUICK DRAW COMPETITION (Gunfight at the O.K. Canal)

The Alamo Gun Club have, through the efforts of the Proprietors, been secured for the duration of the event, in order to present their popular competition featuring

the speed of unholstering a sidearm. We are informed that the speed of the best practitioners cannot be ascertained by eye, the weapon appearing as if by some artful prestidigitation, yet drawn it is! This event, the finale of which will be held on the Sunday, must surely be seen to be believed and will become a talking point wherever Western fans and casual onlookers alike gather for rest and refreshment.

**NOTWITHSTANDING** the Western theme of the weekend, the Summer Fair will also feature those favoured attractions without which there may be a sense of disappointment - A Grand Barbeque, Craft Fair, Charity Stalls, Purveyors of Ice Cream and other assorted Refreshments, Boat Trips upon the Narrow Canal, &c. There shall be a Special Guest Appearance by Mr Nick Barraclough whose wireless programme on the Corporation's No. 2 Home Service has an enthusiastic and considerable following; he shall be called upon to perform the Opening Ceremony. The Proprietors offer their sincere thanks to Kirklees Gun Shop, Yorkshire Electric, Able Fuels and Rural Action for the Environment, for their sponsorship.

Photo: C. Jones



### HUDDERSFIELD CANALS FESTIVAL

Held at the end of August, around Huddersfield University's canal basin, the festival continues to give creditable exposure to the two Huddersfield canals.

Under the chairmanship of Geoff Brierley, the committee worked hard to organise this year's festival. As with other similar committees, obtaining financial support via sponsorship is extremely difficult, resulting in some events being run on a wing and a prayer i.e. it will be alright on the day. This year, Huddersfield was no exception.

Fortunately, some organisations offer their services free of charge. For many years the Huddersfield Sea Cadets, under the leadership of Lt. Judith Clarke RNR, have provided a valuable service to the committee and it is true to say, that it would be very difficult to run the festival without them.

A varied programme of entertainment was provided which included brass bands, Tae-kwon Do demonstrations, Morris dancers, and the Kirklees Canoeing Association, plus many attractions for the children. Amongst all the hustle and bustle was a Bird of Prey stand. Numerous hunting birds were on display, sitting patiently on their perches all day, barely moving, except for the odd hungry twitch when small dogs strayed to close.

Huddersfield University supported the festival again by permitting the use of its facilities where, for the second year, the craft fair was successfully held inside the refectory.

The Society is asked many times as to the 'green' nature of the restoration programme. Those boaters who have attended for the last two years will testify that it's very green - sadly, due to the lack of movement in the water, the canal basin is wall to wall with the dreaded green duckweed.

A temporary situation I am sure.

Those Society members who have never been involved in organising events, or have never had the opportunity to visit one of our festivals, would be surprised at the amount of abuse committee members attract whilst manning entry gates. For example; *If I knew I had to pay, I wouldn't have come. You have no right to charge entry. It's not worth the money. I always walk along this path/towpath. You never charged last year. I'm just collecting my car.* This is all in response to an average entry fee of £1.

Accompanied children are always let in free. (Fortunately, the vast majority of the general public are supportive and, if it wasn't for the patience and dedication of the volunteers, we could lose quite a few committee members each year) I appreciate that we all live in a free society, but it's not that free.

Suffice to say, this year's Huddersfield Canals Festival was successful in achieving its objectives. Some say it was one of the best so far. However, we must not be complacent - next year's has yet to be organised.

If members would like to assist at any of the festivals, either by joining a particular committee, or just helping out on the day, the Society would be pleased to hear from you.

Frank Smith

Keith Gibson has talked about the Standedge Experience in his Millennium Report. This article gives more background information and a hint as to what we might be getting.

For several years now the Society has been toying with a proposal to do "something special" at Marsden. From early days the title "Standedge Experience" has been banded about and ideas have formulated (if not fulminated!) in different peoples' minds. Only fairly recently, when our thoughts were forced to crystallise in the Millennium Bid preparation, was it realised that Standedge Experience meant a lot of things to a lot of people!

Most of the ideas had features in common:-

1. A canal trip from Marsden Station, the nearest large space for car parking.
2. An exhibition centre of some kind in the Tunnel End warehouses, currently owned by British Waterways.
3. Outdoor exhibits, and maybe a shop or two, with staff parking in the warehouse yard.
4. A boat trip into the tunnel - with *'son et lumiere'* presentation.
5. A ride back in the disused rail tunnel in a (possibly miniature) steam train.

However, none of these had ever got beyond the "that sounds like a good idea" stage although studies had been carried out in 1989 by L & R Leisure and the Yorkshire & Humberside Tourist Board to assess the potential of the proposed scheme. Mike Thompson, the Society's planning adviser, worked for ages to encourage financial interest from elsewhere, but to little avail. The job needed "money throwing at it" to get anywhere and there wasn't much of that about - and wouldn't be until the main restoration scheme could be seen to be really on.

'Chicken and egg', then. As Millennium deadlines approached, the need for more information became evident and some sketches were commissioned from Roger Beckett, the former British Waterways architect who was largely responsible for the

layout and design of the National Boat Museum at Gloucester.

These were a start but not what the Millennium Commission wanted. At early meetings we were advised that a full business plan would be necessary and our consultants, *Pieda*, were asked to add this to their brief. They were, to an extent, short on information to make a full and proper job of this in the time available - not helped by the Manchester bombing incident when *Pieda*'s Marion Chalmers, at a very crucial stage, was operating by mobile telephone while sitting on a wall outside Manchester Town Hall!

Insistence on yet more information from the Millennium Commission led to a delay in the whole bid being considered and gave valuable breathing space. The new requirement was for a complete all-singing, all-dancing report on viability and economics with full design and storyline background, obviously needing more and more expertise. Harriet Hudson, from British Waterways, had been involved with the restoration report for the Anderton Boat Lift and recommended that we should approach the consultants used there, because of their excellent report produced in a very short time.

This was done and, as in times previous, the Society was able to finance the study and report immediately, to avoid the need for the other partners to have to go through lengthy committee procedures.

In an incredibly short time, about a month, we had the result - a document nearly three-quarters of an inch thick, containing about one hundred pages of information and many charts, plans, diagrams and drawings.

The team involved, led by Brooke Millar Peden, Architects, was as follows:-

Michael Brooke - Partner

*Brooke Millar Peden, Architects*

Alisdair Hinshelwood - Partner

*Haley Sharpe Associates, Designers*

Fergus Sutherland - Director

*Archaemedia Ltd., Researchers*

Peter Rice - Partner

*Roger Richards Partnership, Cost Consultants*

David Tidman - Partner  
*Edwards & Blackie, Structural, Mechanical and  
Electrical Engineers.*

And what are we likely to get? Remember this is all very much at the "proposal" stage but all the people I know who have seen these proposals can't wait to see them on the ground.

## The Tunnel

The site will provide the option of entering the tunnel itself. The trip will be separately priced and will comprise a short trip of about ten minutes' duration into the tunnel and then a reverse journey of equal duration. The trip will be supplemented by a transmitted infra-red audio interpretation, bringing to life the stories and 'ghosts' of the tunnel.

## The Site

The site will hold the visitor centre in the warehouse, landscaped "discovery" areas, a large cafe, a meeting room, staff parking and, of course, the CANAL! The old wharf into the warehouse will be re-opened.

## The Water Taxi

The Standedge Pioneer will transport most of the visitors from Marsden Station car parking area, along the canal and straight into the warehouse under a new bridge and the old archway.

## The Warehouse

The description of the warehouse, 'the visitor centre', I will leave to Haley Sharpe, the designers of the 'experience'.

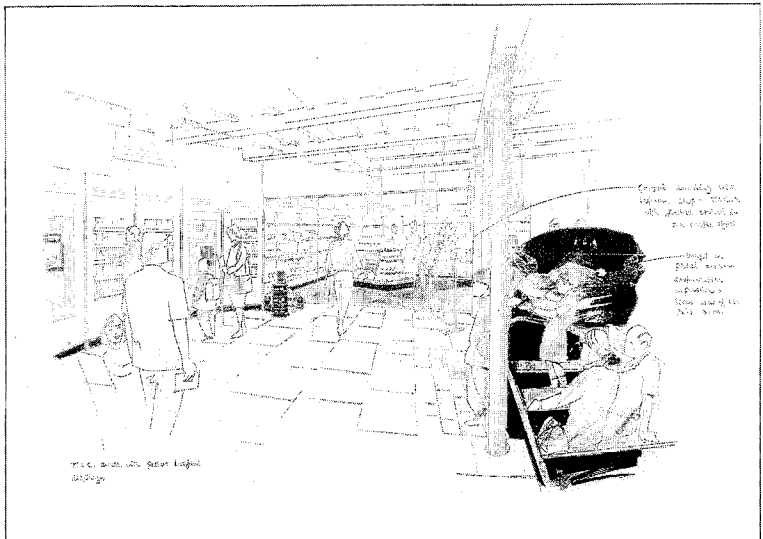
*"The Standedge Tunnel has many interesting facts and stories surrounding*

*it which can be drawn upon to create a fun, factual and individual visitor experience that will appeal to school children and enthusiasts alike. A broad range of technological and theatrical effects will be used to give the visitor the full 'experience' of the stories and events that made this site unique.*

*To begin the experience the visitor is taxied along the canal in a narrow boat towards a Victorian canal warehouse in a somewhat tranquil setting. Gently chugging under the original archway, they enjoy a transition from the outside world into a hive of activity.*

*The fabric of this wonderful building - the stonewalls, timber beams and stone flagging comfortably embrace the modern interior - providing a perfect backdrop for the glass partitioning, spotlights, clean cut finishes - with subtle references made to boats and the tunnel i.e. in the sleek angular reception counter or in a piece of sandblasted glass on a gondola.*

*Stepping up from the boat, onto the flagstone clad floor, the visitor can browse through the Tourist Information Centre or perhaps ponder over the tempting books, posters and models in the shop. The visitor can then meet up with*





# Standedge Experience

their party to begin the journey through history.

After climbing the timber stairs and getting a bird's eye view of the busy canal taxi area, the visitor enters the first floor - an introductory audio visual explains what they are about to encounter and why. The story of the canal and tunnel, encompassing related topics such as civil engineering, Marsden and Luddites to mention but a few ...

These subjects are explained creatively, through visual, audio and interactive methods of communication. The visitors can find out if they are strong enough to pull or take part in a narrow boat game show and then finally touching the canal workers in reconstructions which makes the experience even more life-like, especially with the sights, smells and noises of working life.

The expectation of a tunnel experience on the second floor is not far away now and promises to be a thrilling climax to the visit. As the visitor enters through the doors of the George Hotel lobby, there is a commotion going on at the bar, people discussing the new tunnel which is followed by an audio visual which goes on to explain the story of the beginnings

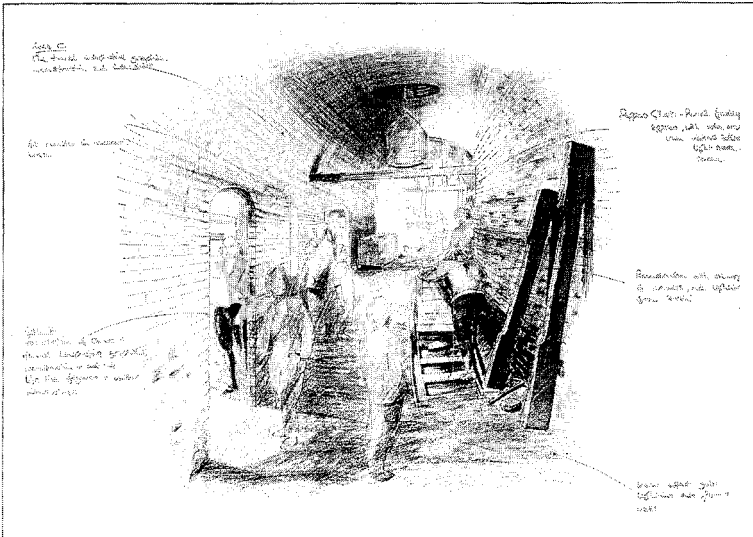
of the canal.

Suddenly, the visitors are transported into a dark, damp, smelly tunnel and they are drawn by the light to a room where physical interactives and audios explain how the canal was constructed and the tunnel's route selected.

Upon re-entering the tunnel, the construction noises are coming from materials being lowered from a hole in the roof of the tunnel, where a man is wheeling materials up a track, lit from a naked light held by a fellow worker. The end of the tunnel is gradually being hidden by a ghostly apparition of a poor family, explaining their side of the story using pepper ghost or S.I.S. systems. There are various areas where the visitor interacts with the materials and construction techniques employed by the tunnel's designers.

The visitor is then drawn into a room explaining the physical characteristics of the tunnel. This is followed by an awful stench of gunpowder, pre-empting a scene of carnage and chaos - a huge rip in the canal wall, debris, screaming, daylight lost in smoke, and an audio explaining the events and drama that took place in the tunnel.

The story concludes outside the tunnel in a grande finale - brass bands, cheering, bunting, children playing, speeches - *The Grand Opening - 4th April, 1811.*"



Far Left: View of narrowboat entry point / shop area. Ground floor.

Left: View of Tunnel Experience. Second Floor Plan.

**HALEY sharpe**  
designers



## Appley Bridge

Very pleasant venue and we were made most welcome. Our friends from Essex came up expecting a sight-seeing weekend whereas they were coerced into helping us instead. A most successful weekend.

## Mirfield

A superb day. Again we were made most welcome. Most enjoyable variety of activities - I joined in the tug-of-war courtesy of White Rose boat club and Pat and I entered the egg-throwing contest with some trepidation. Worth going.

## Saddleworth

I think we were too busy to notice, being fully involved as committee. However my stalwart helpers coped admirably when I was absent from the stall. Takings were slightly down on last year but still high for a festival with lots of competition.

## Anderton

Absolutely brilliant. From 10am to 3pm (the start of the cup final) we'd taken 35p - we'd given up, but to our amazement, on kick-off, we were inundated and ended up with good takings for a small festival. Sunday was steady. As with the previously mentioned boat festivals, the hospitality was splendid.

## Tunnel End - Boat Launch

A table full of spare goodies was prepared by Maurice & Jean, Janet & Kelly. Every little helps - thanks folks - I know you enjoyed yourselves.

## Haigh Hall

A first event for the one-lady organiser (!) and unfortunately it showed. The event was on two sites, the other being in front of the Hall where craft shops drew the crowds - no one seemed to come to our part. And boats were about a mile further on. Saturday afternoon there was no bar as

promised - the pub was a mile away. The barbecue that night was in the middle of the woods with folk music. Lighting was provided by car headlights (engines running). The beer was canned and ran out at 10pm. An enjoyable if somewhat different festival. We packed up very early on Sunday - the weather finally beat us (along with a severe lack of customers).

## Sale

Most successful, even being surrounded by a car boot sale - we turned up at 10.30 and promptly broke all records for setting up the stall. Shortly after, the booters decided to pack up. We were left at the far side of the field in the company of two other small charity stalls but were surprised how much money we took. For the first time ever we topped £100.00 on tombola takings - well done John, Julie and James. Generally brilliant takings for such a small event.

## Welshpool

A disaster - cold, wet field with wall to wall fresh cowpats. No matter how we had positioned the Sales trailer we would have had driving rain coming in. The few people who did turn up seemed to vanish on both days when the medieval battle was on. Steve seemed to have a curse on him on Sunday when first a local dog used him as a lamp post followed by, several hours later, someone wrenching open the portaloo door leaving him exposed to passers by - not a pretty sight. All-in-all - lack of entertainment, badly signposted, not well advertised and, like all IWA events, with entrance fee too high for what was offered, causing potential punters to turn away, which in turn means low takings for us. We didn't even cover our expenses.

## Stanley Ferry, Wakefield

We always enjoy this event - pleasant site, pleasant company and mostly pleasant weather, apart from the thunderstorm on Saturday night when we came back from the Ship Inn and Steve was trying to round up frightened dogs. Excellent Asian food on one stall, catering for vegetarians. Very similar takings to last year - quite acceptable.

## Chester

Dust, dust, organ music, dust! Cramped site and we had to plead for plaques - come on, IWA, we are boaters too! (Can't do both jobs at the same time, unless we invent the first aquatic Sales trailer). However I did find a narrow boat named after my home area in New Zealand (Wakanui). A feeling of being invited but not feeling part of the event. Only one loo - if you had a BW key. We were told there are plans to improve the site and provide more canal-related amenities.

## Tunnel End

Wet, soggy, muddy. New site under the trees - Jean couldn't even get out in her wheelchair to man the tombola. Poor signing. Takings were way down; the weather may have been a factor. A feeling that we were New Age travellers camped out in the woodland. Personally we prefer the old site with free entry.

## Tameside

I had to miss this one, mainly because I was in hospital - thanks to everyone who sent their good wishes and cards. Special thanks to the Festival Committee for the tray of fruit which went round the ward twice and then some. Weather was nice, entertainment was good and our usual position was the best possible, considering we can't get the Sales trailer on to the main site. Takings were slightly down on last year; seems to be par for the course this season.

## Emley Show

Always a pleasant event - helpers were queuing up for this one! I wasn't much use to man or beast but did make it. We dressed up this time - added p.r. which is important here. A good day was had by all. Any free time we had was enjoyable with such a diversity of things to look at - stalls, exhibitions, animals, show jumping, etc. Takings down on last year, but to be fair we didn't have room for the tombola.

## Huddersfield Historic Vehicles Rally

Thanks once again to Walter for the invitation. An enjoyable day - the weather kept fine till

packing up time, of course, and then it made up for lost time.

## The National - Windmill End

It not only rains in Manchester! Not quite as bad as THAT Wakefield National. Didn't do very well - it's a pity they still insist on charging £5 entry. Fragmented organisation. Unfortunately due to rapidly declining takings at Nationals, the Sales Team are considering whether it is feasible to attend any more IWA National Festivals - 1997 at Henley is already out. When we arrived it was dusk and just as we began to erect the tents, the skies opened - a prelude of things to come. Takings were slightly higher than last year but still half those of THAT National at Wakefield.

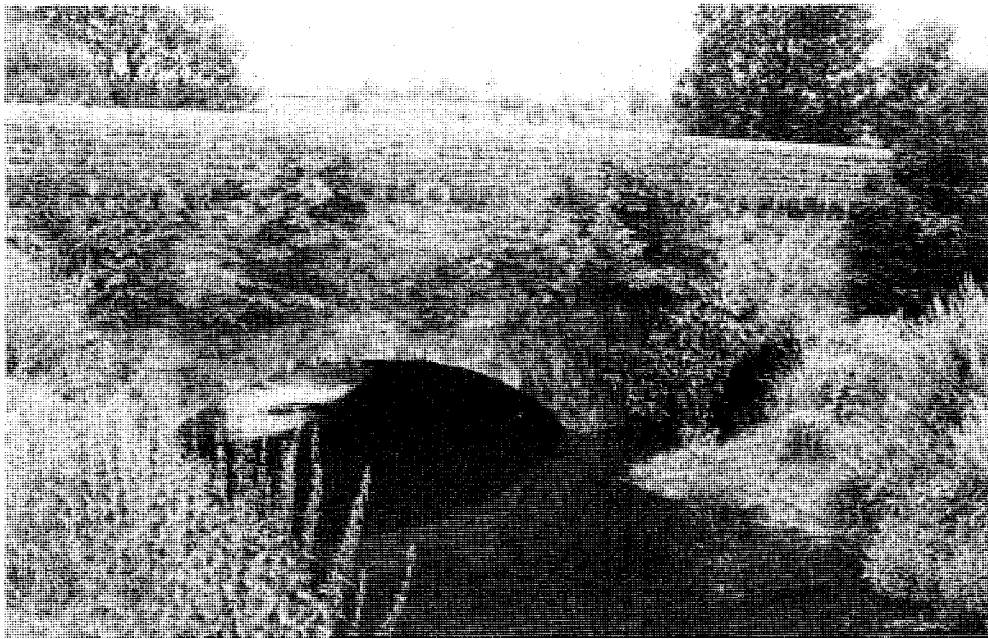
## Huddersfield

Once again we successfully negotiated THAT corner and the Sales trailer still remains land-based. Well done to Committee members who had to step in at the last minute - you worked wonders. Entertainment was excellent. The weather also helped. Saturday's successful trading was rather a surprise, probably due to TV coverage - we usually do better on a Sunday. One of the few events where takings were up on last year.

## Black Country Boating Festival - Titford Pools

Camping again, except that I had a berth on Pride of Sandwell for two nights then a comfy bed for the third (thanks again, Peter & Angela). We enjoy our venues in the Black Country. At last I could make it. Excellent variety of stalls and food. Plenty of boats. It's a shame that BW are trying to shut this small section of the Birmingham Canal network as it's such a pleasant area. One of the reasons we like attending events in the Black Country is that there's always a good proportion of working boats represented. Takings the same as last year.

**To summarise** - we did more smaller Cruising Club events this year and find them more friendly and successful (both financially and for p.r.) than non canal-related events (apart from Emley Show and the Vintage Vehicle Rally).



... cont'd from page 19

Thanks to my many helpers this year, particularly Pat Riley and Steve Quilter who has also made major contributions to this article but also Brenda & Alan Radley, Ian Moss, Eve Prugar, Janet & Jack Patterson, Jean & Maurice Winters, Janet & John Wilson, Kelly, Kelly's mum, Ann Craven, Ann Watson, Jo & John Young, Julie & James Brimicome, Ann & Brian Minor, Sue Allen, Joan & John Leslie, Alan Siddall, Rod Moors, Shirley Rowbottom, Celia & John Meade, Dave Leigh, Angela & Peter Hale, Pete from Southampton, Phyllis & Dick Jorden.

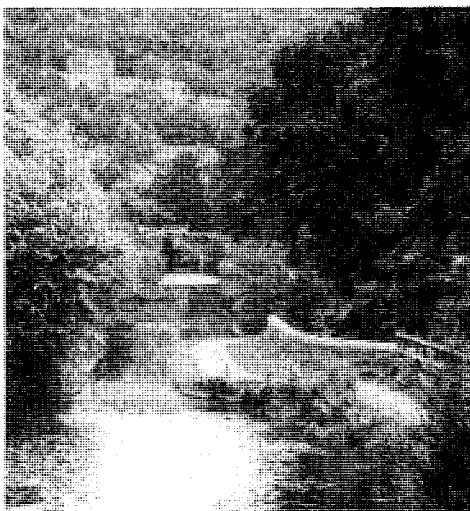
And not forgetting Bob, Frank, Paula, John Mac and Steve from the Office.

I wish to thank all the people who have helped and supported me over the past five years and reluctantly hand over the post of Sales Officer to Patricia Riley who is eminently capable of stepping into my shoes. I still plan to be involved and expect to see you supporting Pat as you've supported me. Thanks.

Gay Quilter.

*Above:* Royal George Aqueduct (Also known as Division Bridge Aqueduct). Not exactly a blockage but, like Owd Sag, needing a close look and probable re-lining to make it water-tight. The view is from the River Tame. Twin-arched, probably for flood relief purposes, considered wise policy even in 1790-odd.

*Below:* Royal George aqueduct, Lock 18W and the dramatic Saddleworth scenery in the background.



# Photo-Feature - Blockages

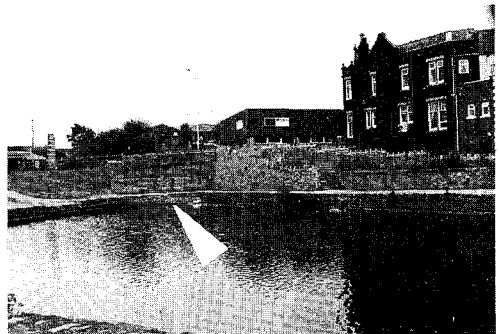
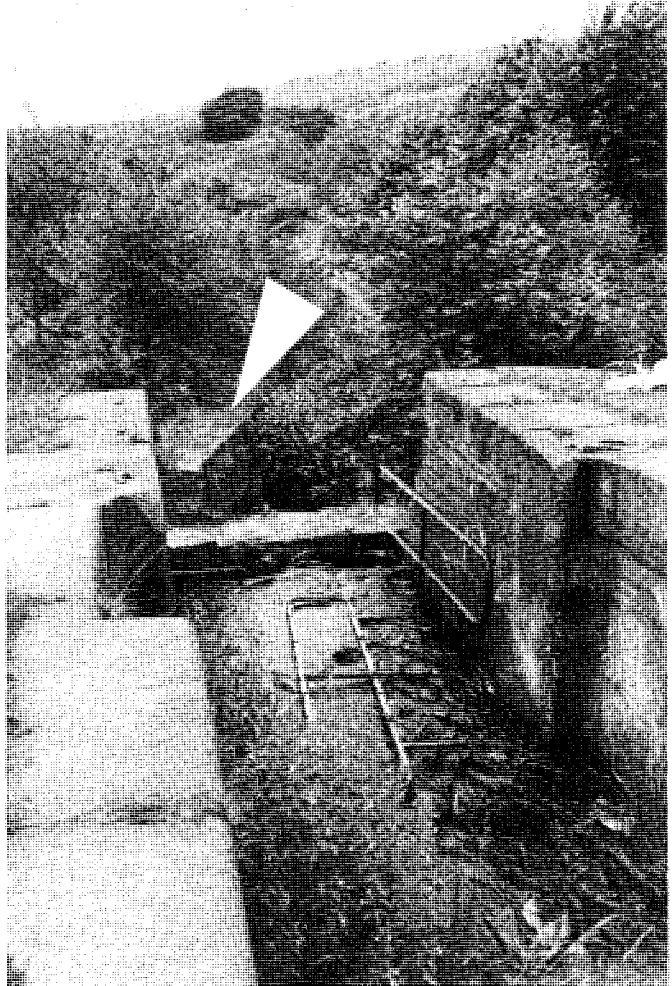
Here is the final selection of pictures showing the remaining blockages on the West side of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal. We take up the trail leaving Oldham (Saddleworth) for Tameside (Mossley) to arrive at the final blockage in Stalybridge and, as I hoped in the last issue, in the knowledge that the proposed route now follows the canal's original line through the centre of the town.

*Right:* Lock 12W. Photo taken on the day reconstruction work started (that's why the handrails are in the bottom - or rather on top of the cascading concrete fill). The wash-wall (arrowed) should be several metres to the left indicating the extensive movement of the ground in this area. The canal is reduced to a narrow stream through all the undergrowth (see page 9 for a more recent photo of this area).

*Below Left:* The head of Lock 7W and the start of the culverted section through Stalybridge. Note the well-worn coping stones on the old wharf and the remains of the canal-side crane. The expanse of water on the right is a "winding-hole" for turning boats round. (For the land-based readers the wind in "winding" is pronounced as in windy-blow!)

*Below Right:* Staley Wharf. Shown, arrowed, is the other end of the town centre culvert at the point where the Huddersfield Narrow Canal now joins the national system. The original canal bridge can be made out beyond the newer stonework.

*Photos: K. Wright*





**THIS IS IT!** An aerial view of Stalybridge showing the original line of the canal (dotted), now established as the favoured route for the

restoration. Forced upon us, to some extent, as you will read elsewhere, but much to the delight of many people.

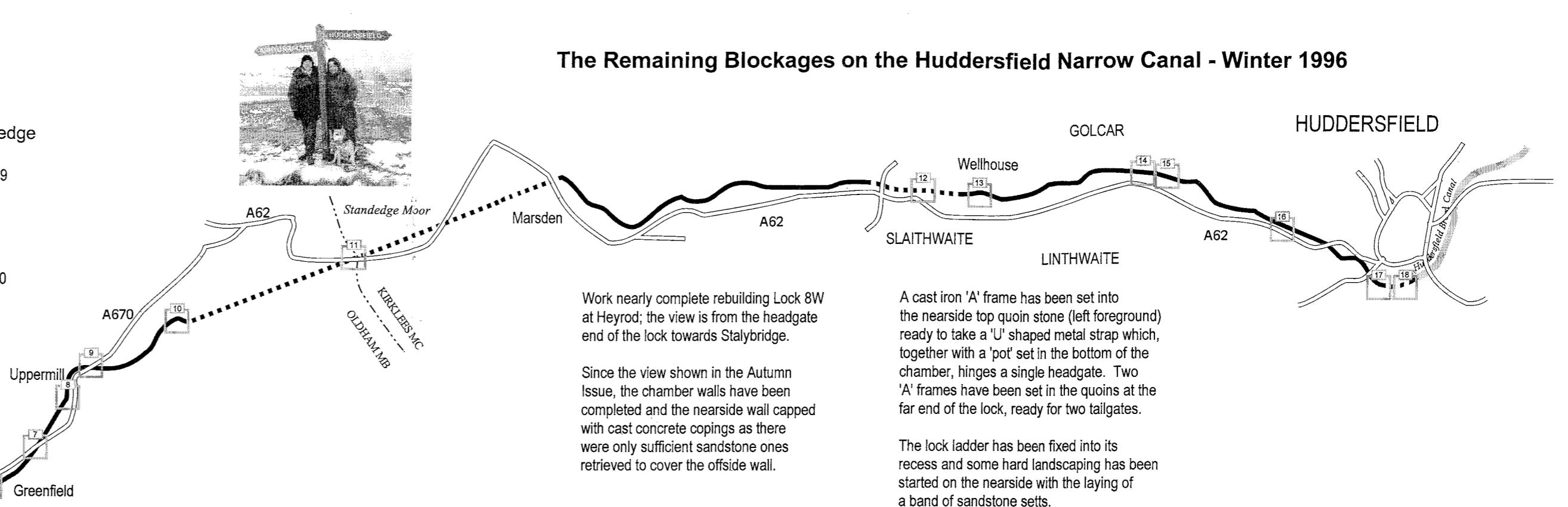
This photo is one of a series of aerial views, covering the full length of the canal, taken from a helicopter by my intrepid assistant

Bob Gough. The set is available for inspection at the Society office and enlargements can be supplied for the requisite fee.



# The Remaining Blockages on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal - Winter 1996

- 1** Stalybridge Town Centre  
Start Date - First Quarter 1999  
Finish Date - Third Quarter 2000  
Estimated Cost - £8.5 m
- 2** Hartshead Infill & Lock 8W  
Works Nearly Completed  
Estimated Cost - £1.44 m
- 3** Scout Tunnel  
Start Date - Fourth Quarter 1996  
Finish Date - First Quarter 1997  
Estimated Cost - £80 k
- 4** Division Bridge Aqueduct  
Start Date - Second Quarter 1997  
Finish Date - Third Quarter 1997  
Estimated Cost - £300 k
- 5** Mann's Wharf to Frenches  
Start Date - Third Quarter 1997  
Finish Date - First Quarter 1998  
Estimated Cost - £100 k
- 6** Frenches to High Street  
Start Date - First Quarter 1998  
Finish Date - Third Quarter 1998  
Estimated Cost - £80 k
- 7** High Street Bridge & Wade Lock  
Start Date - First Quarter 1997  
Finish Date - First Quarter 1998  
Estimated Cost - £450 k & £130 k
- 8** Old Sag Aqueduct  
Start Date - Second Quarter 1999  
Finish Date - Third Quarter 1999  
Estimated Cost - £205 k
- 9** Wool Road Bridge  
Start Date - Third Quarter 1998  
Finish Date - First Quarter 1999  
Estimated Cost - £450 k
- 10** Ward Lane to Standedge  
Start Date - First Quarter 1999  
Finish Date - Second Quarter 1999  
Estimated Cost - £40 k
- 11** Standedge Tunnel  
Start Date - Fourth Quarter 1998  
Finish Date - Second Quarter 2000  
Estimated Cost - £5.32 m



Work nearly complete rebuilding Lock 8W at Heyrod; the view is from the headgate end of the lock towards Stalybridge.

Since the view shown in the Autumn Issue, the chamber walls have been completed and the nearside wall capped with cast concrete copings as there were only sufficient sandstone ones retrieved to cover the offside wall.

A cast iron 'A' frame has been set into the nearside top quoin stone (left foreground) ready to take a 'U' shaped metal strap which, together with a 'pot' set in the bottom of the chamber, hinges a single headgate. Two 'A' frames have been set in the quoins at the far end of the lock, ready for two tailgates.

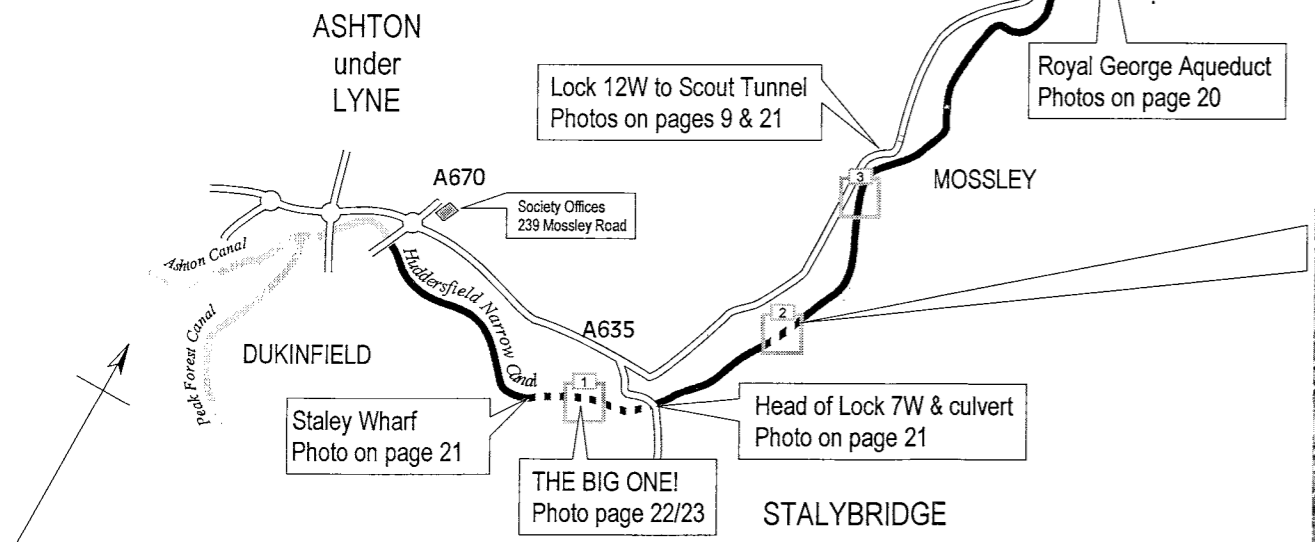
The lock ladder has been fixed into its recess and some hard landscaping has been started on the nearside with the laying of a band of sandstone setts.

Once the excess water has been pumped from the lock chamber, it will be measured for gates and Spring 97's view should be of yet another completed project!

*\* The timescale and completion of the projects are dependent upon obtaining funding from the Millennium Commission, to whom an application was made in February 1996 and when you read this, you will know the outcome of the application!*

Photo: R. Gough

- 12** Slithwaite Town Centre  
Start Date - Second Quarter 1999  
Finish Date - Second Quarter 2000  
Estimated Cost - £3.02 m
- 13** Lees Mill Bridge  
Start Date - Fourth Quarter 1996  
Finish Date - First Quarter 1997  
Estimated Cost - £187 k
- 14** Holme Mill Bridge  
Start Date - Fourth Quarter 1996  
Finish Date - First Quarter 1997  
Estimated Cost - £187 k
- 15** Golcar Aqueduct  
Start Date - First Quarter 1998  
Finish Date - Second Quarter 1998  
Estimated Cost - £205 k
- 16** Mark Bottoms Bridge  
Start Date - Third Quarter 1996  
Finish Date - Fourth Quarter 1996  
Estimated Cost - £362 k
- 17** Sellers & Co  
Start Date - Second Quarter 1998  
Finish Date - Second Quarter 1999  
Estimated Cost - £2.91 m
- 18** Bates & Co  
Start Date - First Quarter 1998  
Finish Date - First Quarter 1999  
Estimated Cost - £2.24 m



Scale approx. 1" to 1 mile

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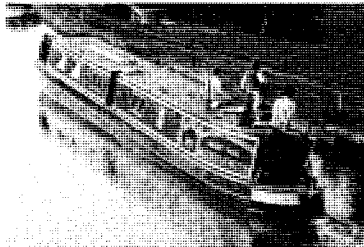
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The year is 1995 - getting closer! - and Anne & Ken had been invited to move fellow HCS member Keith Noble's boat for him, prior to his long summer holiday. The boat is normally kept at Sowerby Bridge but Keith had already moved it to Keadby, near the mouth of the River Trent. Anne and Ken, with various volunteer helpers, had two weeks to get the boat to "somewhere near Stratford" - on with the tale.

## La Maitresse

The boat is basically a cruiser-stern narrowboat but quite unique in my experience because the stern has a flat counter (rear end), making a rectangular rear deck. This deck, apart from the gaps for getting on and off, is surrounded by a heavy - and highly varnished - mahogany seat/rail. Underneath the rail to the deck is "filled in" with sheet steel, giving an appearance something like the counter of a yacht where the gap is filled in with canvas. On a narrowboat it provides a welcome degree of privacy, for the crew (not to mention keeping the wind off your legs!) and an opportunity to display the boat name in an unusual way. Altogether very striking and a joy to sail on.

AND - the galley is at the back! Regular readers will know I'm a bit paranoid about that.

The remainder of the boat is fairly conventional with an open dining/lounge area leading, through the bathroom, to a forward

cabin with a double berth. Since Ken and I were almost certain to be first up in the mornings we gave up the cabin to our crew and slept on the dining table! Fortunately the weather turned out to be so good that, when we didn't eat in pubs, we picnicked on deck, meaning we could leave the bed made up.

## Saturday 24th June

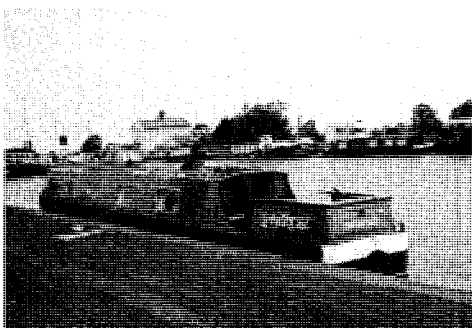
Weather - overcast  
- after weeks of beautiful weather.  
Destination - Somewhere on the River Trent!

## PREPARING FOR A MARATHON

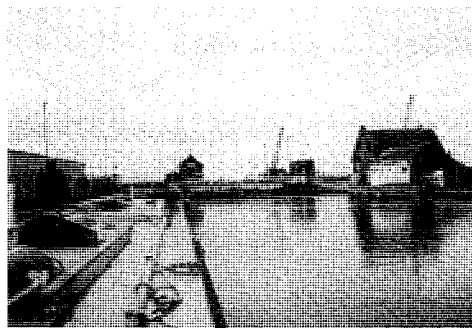
The logistics of "moving" boats are familiar to most boat owners but we had only limited experience from our days of overnighting with disabled children on Austen Johnson. It is mainly to do with leaving cars all over the place so that the "moving" boat can be left at a remote mooring and the "movers" can get back to base.

In this case our logistics started with taking Bill (the dachshund) to Stafford, on Friday, to have two weeks' holiday with his breeder and to see all his favourite relatives again.

Then, on the Saturday morning, we left home at 9.20 and drove to Huddersfield to pick up a suitcase at Roy's and Elaine's as they were travelling light when they came to join us. Next on to Keith's and Jill's near Halifax at 10.05. Quick coffee, loaded Keith's car and left ours in their drive (having previously



"La Maitresse"



Keadby

## The Wife's Tale - Part 31

added Jill to our insurance for a day). Off at 10.30, dropped Keith off in Hipperholme to follow us, with Colin, in Colin's car and convoyed to Keadby where "La Maitresse" was waiting for us at the end of the Stainforth and Keadby Navigation, by Keadby Lock. All clear so far?

Having made incredible time we now had a long wait for the tidal Trent to be prepared to receive us. We loaded the boat in leisurely fashion and had a look round Keadby Wharf - not very inspiring apart from the lock itself, the long drop into the Trent and the swing road bridge. Further along the cut is the unbelievable railway sliding bridge but we missed that.

Fish and chips from a local shop for lunch were very welcome and eventually we were marshalled into place by the lock-keeper - about six boats of various size and shape - and dropped into the depths.

When the lock gates opened it was like looking out to sea! The Trent is very wide at this point and instructions are to belt out well towards the middle before daring to turn upstream. It all seemed very gentle to me but that was probably due to Keith's impeccable watermanship (have to keep on his right side!). Jill, meanwhile, was driving back home in their car, leaving Colin's car at Keadby (as the saying goes - "there's more"!).

The Trent is very wide, very brown and very fast (did you know that the Trent delivers

more water into the Humber than the Thames does with its estuary - so there!).

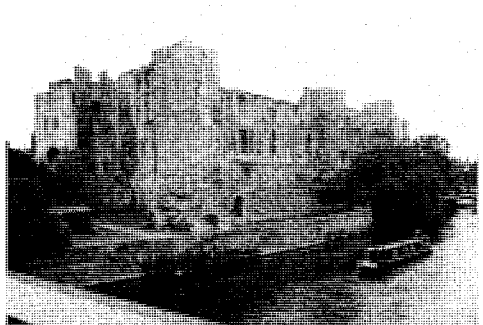
Unfortunately, because of the high flood banks it is also very boring - at least this bit is. Over the banks the land is very flat - "surrounded by root crops and often by fog" - relieved only, from the water, by power station cooling towers. I have never seen so many power stations - they came up one after the other for miles.

We passed Gainsborough (we could tell from tall flour mills sticking up above the banks) and arrived at Torksey, 27½ miles upriver, at 7.05pm. One thing about the rivers, you can put your foot down! Torksey is where the Fossdyke Navigation leaves the river to go all the way to the sea at The Wash, via Lincoln and Boston. It is nearly at the end of the tidal Trent and offers a safe mooring pontoon, that rises and falls with the tide, between the river and Torksey Lock, which are a couple of hundred yards apart. Here we stopped for the night. Went to the White Swan and while I had a sandwich the three men ate as though it was their last meal: steak pie, chicken marsala, chicken curry, sticky toffee pudding, apple pie, etc. Also a drink or two and lots and lots of chat - all about boats. Keith and Colin are even pottier about canals than HE is, so it was all very interesting!

Until Keith and Colin leave us we are in the front cabin and we had the familiar hilarious session trying to make the bed. Eventually managed it and went out like a light.



Torksey Lock & Fossdyke



Newark Castle

Apparently I missed a very tuneful night (snoring was only part of it!).

A good first day but what has happened to the weather? Very dull and thank goodness we brought some warm clothes. It was decidedly parky out on the big river.

## Sunday 25th June

Weather - overcast, warmer, brighter later.  
Destination - Gunthorpe  
Distance - 35 miles  
Locks - 5

### ALL CHANGE!

Had a good night's sleep and woke at 6.30! Another overcast day but warmer already. Could only wonder if the sun was out at home as it had been for what seemed like weeks. We have decided to move out into the main cabin at night and leave the more confined cabin space for our "visitors". Once we were under way (at 7.30) I had a bit of a sort out and improved matters greatly.

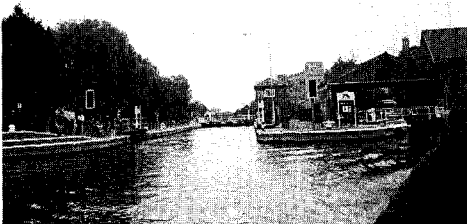
Fairly slow progress against the current and with Keith keeping a firm hold of the River Guide. This is a publication which details the correct course for boats in the Trent, showing all the many shoals and mud-banks. From the boat it appears to be wall-to-wall water but there are obvious shallows indicated by ripples - and others not so obvious!

Sunday is a great fishing day on the Trent.

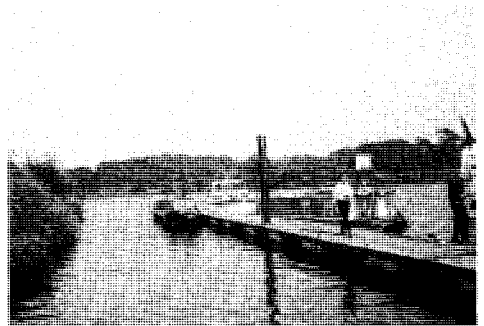
There was an angler every four yards - for miles - and they were in teams with matching jackets! Being very wide the river accommodates boats and anglers without conflict. And herons - there was one every 50 yards or so for the full length today, keeping a steady eye on anything the fishermen might drop!

The only happening of note was at Cromwell Lock - the official end of the tidal section - when Colin fell in! He slipped on the foredeck of the adjoining boat taking a rope across to breast up and went in up to his chest before he grabbed a rope and hung there. He was in the lock in deepish water and, with the curved shape of the boat prow, took a bit of heaving out. We were all concerned as Colin had been quite ill recently but he is made of stern stuff and soon recovered. He is very experienced, it really is so easy. Keith had us all in life-jackets (buoyancy aids?) for the river length and we now know how sensible he was from that occasion. What made matters worse was that the hydraulics on the small lock were damaged and we had to use the huge barge lock.

The Trent locks have a very useful aid that we hadn't seen before. There are several long, vertical slots (about 4" x 4") in the lock walls and inside the slot is a taut rope or chain. A rising or falling boatman can pass a rope, or a boat-hook, round the fixed rope and easily go up or down. The locks are deep and there is no way to secure a boat by throwing a rope



Leaving Town Lock, Newark



Gunthorpe Staithe

# The Wife's Tale - Part 31

up to the top - the normal way on small canal locks. Also, because the locks are mechanically operated from a control tower, there is no need for the boater to leave the boat.

Lovely little village at North Muskham - now we can see over the banks - and the Muskham Ferry is a super looking pub with its own "end-on" (à la Broads) moorings.

Made Newark town quay by 1.00pm; a bit late but relieved to see Jill waiting for us with Roy and Elaine. What a stupid design the quay is! On a curve, with an overhanging concrete ledge. The back end of La Maitresse immediately swung under the ledge and took a large chip out of the immaculate varnish - not a good start for our captaincy! Having moored we said our goodbyes and Keith and Jill went home by way of Keadby, so that Colin could pick up his car (I told you "there's more" - logistics, that is!)

Walked into Newark, which is a fascinating old market town meriting closer scrutiny, and went to the Ye Olde Market for hot beef sandwiches and a pint or two. The pub is very unusual, probably very old; it looks as though somebody has thrown a roof over a bit of old street!

Back on board at 2.00pm: Roy and Elaine can't wait to get going. It is their first experience of canal (type) boating and they have been itching to have a go for a while. Quickly through Town Lock, heading for Gunthorpe. Weather brightening and

definitely warmer - tides do funny things to weather and tidal rivers are no exception. Feel as though the holiday has really started now with Ken at the helm, as it were.

Pretty scenery above Newark and banks reasonably low now to see over. Plenty of water skiers. Lovely pub, "The Lazy Otter" with its own moorings, at Farndon. Saw a rabbit sitting in the entrance to its burrow, below Hazleford Lock - plenty of grebe, Canada geese, terns, herons. Through Gunthorpe Lock, took on water and then moved on to the secure pontoon (surrounded by a high wire fence with a BW key operated locked gate). Next to us was a huge Broome cruiser - we have seen those being built near Norwich.

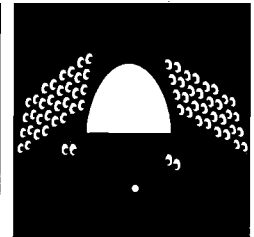
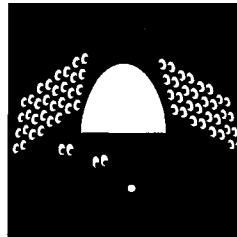
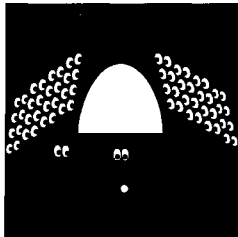
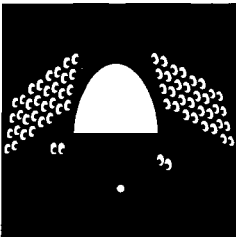
Drinks on deck in glorious sun - is this it? Had a good dinner of garlic and herb tagliatelli with carbonara sauce followed by coconut cake with strawberries and cream. I was hoping to lose a bit of weight over the next two weeks! On to The Anchor, the last of three pubs in a line - Tom Brown's Bar (for bikers), The Unicorn (for young things) and The Anchor (for mainly normal people). Got involved in a music quiz so left quickly. Boat by 9.45 - made up beds. All very weary and ready for bed by 10.15. It must be age!

NEXT TIME:

Hawkesbury Junction (Sutton Stop) - and another change of crew!

*Photos: A & K Wright*

In Standedge Tunnel ...



Well, who would have thought it ..

After 17 frames ...

It's turned into ...

A black ball final!

## Wedding by Water

*The following article appeared in October's Waterways World and is repeated here with their kind permission. Bob Dewey was, as many of you will know, the Society's first secretary and one of those responsible for organising the very first meeting of interested people in 1974. He was a tireless worker for the Society until his job took him away from the area seven or eight years ago. We all wish him well. Ed.*

For a couple who love the canals and want to get married, the ideal is to marry on a boat. However the Marriage Act 1995 precludes marrying on a cruising boat in England and Wales, despite representations being made by APCO to allow it. That didn't stop Bob & Elizabeth Dewey organising their June reception and honeymoon afloat, choosing the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct as their starting point.

The reception, limited to 24 adults, was aboard the Ribbon Plate boat based at Trevor on the Llangollen Canal and Bob, well-known member of the Huddersfield Canal Society and Waterway Recovery Group, admitted he "would rather have been steering our boat as we set off, but it's just not done for the groom to be away from the reception".

The reception cruise included crossing the aqueduct to the delight of their guests, most of whom had never been on a canal before. Following the reception they returned to base where they transferred to an Anglo Welsh 40ft narrowboat with a four poster bed for a week's honeymoon cruise.

Having changed into more suitable boating clothes they continued with the boat decorated with traditional white wedding ribbons and the bride's bouquet at the front.

Photo: R. Dewey



## HCS Council News

Designs and costs for new landing stages for the Standedge Pioneer water taxi at Marsden are being prepared (*Not before time! Ed.*)

A survey has been carried out to locate bollards and mooring rings on the stretch of canal now in use between Ashton and Stalybridge.

The Society is proposing itself for the IWA National Awards. The Ken Goodwin Trophy is for societies or trusts engaged in waterway restoration who have made the most significant progress in achieving their objective during the previous year. (*Well, if we don't, who will?*)

Sales figures are down on last year. Pat Riley has been elected to replace Gay Quilter as Sales Officer. The Council has formally thanked Gay for all her hard work and dedication during her time as Sales Officer.

The Council is funding Consultant's fees to produce a big glossy report, for the Millennium Commission, on the Standedge Experience. This was prepared in a remarkably short time (*See full report elsewhere.*)

The Council decided not to send delegates to the first ever IWA national seminar for canal societies (*I wonder why? Only £33 plus travel, for two people!*)



## I.W.A. NEWS

### The National

The 1996 National Festival, held at Dudley on August Bank Holiday, turned into a bit of a damp squib, partly due to the disappointing weather. The number of boats attending was down, as were the numbers "through the gates."

The events were very well received by those who did make the effort but IWA is fully aware that some re-jigging is overdue and have now made an arrangement with BMIF (British Marine Industries Federation) who already organise the London, Southampton and Nottingham boat shows.

Under this 3 year deal BMIF will sponsor the Festival and organise the trade exhibition whilst IWA will do what it is best at and look after all the other events with the express intent of improving the overall attraction to visitors and IWA members.

Next year's Festival will have a prime venue for the new format - Henley on Thames - for four days, including August Bank Holiday.

### Money, Money, Money

One of IWA's constant efforts is in appealing to all and sundry to accept that the central supply of funding for inland waterways is totally inadequate. British Waterways don't need to be told that! IWA is giving BW all the support it can in trying to raise Government interest (and funding).

The Annual Report recently published by BW is a very depressing document. Are our political masters totally blind to the advantages of an "up and running" waterway system? It would seem so - and this is another area where, IWA member or not, YOU can help by collaring your local MP and giving him/her some earache! They will be door-stepping soon so have your questions ready.

IWA is also criticising BW for raising boat licence fees - by 25% above inflation over the next three years. The IWA believes that these increases are a direct result of a Government directive that boat owners must be squeezed for more cost in an attempt to replace cuts in Government funding.

### Some Good News

On a happier note IWA welcomes the granting of £25 million of Heritage Lottery money to the Kennet and Avon Canal which will fund a programme of heritage and environmental

conservation and visitor improvement works (*whatever all that means! Ed*). There will be a six year programme of embankment stabilisation, water supply improvements and lock refurbishments. The balancing funding of £4 million (sounds like a lop-sided balance) is being provided by the Canal Trust, local authorities, BW and others.

Also good news is that the Sheffield and Tinsley Canal has been upgraded from 'remainder' to cruising waterway. This is what we hope will eventually happen to the Huddersfield Narrow as it means more lolly for maintenance.

### Photographs

The IWA is starting a national photo library of waterways and is asking people to donate slides or prints to them. When you think, there must be thousands of pictures lying about in drawers that are not a lot of use lying there. We have hundreds in the office. Seems like a good idea, especially with modern retrieval systems. A godsend for poor old editors!

### Course In Lancs/Yorks Lingo

The last of our lessons on how to talk proper if you want to do business in Huddersfield Canal country. You may not want to speak it but you need to understand it or you'll not be allowed to do business with us. On the other hand, don't worry if you didn't get it all right because we'll make an exception and do business anyway. (*Answers: Back Cover*)

Your total scores suggest the following:-

- 0-10 You are obviously from South of London
- 11-25 You are obviously from South of Watford
- 26-40 You're from the Midlands (or Scotland)
- 41+ You must be as barmy as we are!

1. Howurreewes-worree weeizen?
2. Ateldim burreeuwnt lissen.
3. Lerrim purrizatton.
4. Astle clowte thee if that dunt goier.
5. Tintintin.
6. Gerrarry targithi and weeit.
7. Eeez gorross at ooam.
8. Thawanster wesh thi eeroils aht.
9. Middadz gorrajag.
10. Thakkan if the wannts.
11. Eez nobutta babbi.
12. Tantad nowt dunnatit as I nose on.
13. Cantha kumtower owse tuneet?
14. Weerz gaffer?

*The fourth, and last, of a series of articles on the Engineers involved with the building of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal.*

We now come to one of the less well-remembered engineers who worked on the HNC and one of the least successful. John Varley was a student of James Brindley, the 'father' of British canals, famous for his pioneering work for the Duke of Bridgewater. He made an early survey (not taken up) for the Marquess of Rockingham for a proposed Greasborough canal of some three miles in length to connect with the River Don at Rotherham.

Varley comes to the fore on Brindley's death when he was appointed a contractor to the Chesterfield canal under Hugh Henshall. Henshall reported that his work on Norwood tunnel was not to the standard required and controversy arose when it was suggested that he was letting contracts to his brother at rates considered to be excessive.

Further controversy followed him to the Erewash canal where, as Engineer, it was alleged that he had not kept proper accounts for land and damage compensation payments and, perhaps worse, he made mistakes in levels for the top lock. This led to his dismissal in May 1780 and by August that

lock had had to be demolished and rebuilt, Varley being billed for some of that cost. By 1791 he was surveying the Nutbrook canal (a branch of the Erewash) but this was finally built to a survey of Jessop's.

By 1791 Varley was the Engineer of the Leicester and Northamptonshire Union Canal (now known as the Leicester line of the Grand Union - the canal never got further than Market Harborough) where again he ran into trouble in the building of Saddington tunnel. A follow-up survey by Fletcher revealed deviations in the tunnel and Varley had to put up a surety of £2,000. It took the opinion of two more surveyors to reach the conclusions that some straightening would be required if the wide barges for which it was planned were to be able to pass through the tunnel and as a result some walls were rebuilt.

Whilst Varley was working on some aspects of flood control on the Huddersfield Narrow in 1800 he tendered for some of the work in Standedge. In view of his former reputation and the fact that his sureties backed out he was not taken on. Thus, one of the smaller contributors to our canal went into relative obscurity! (*Perhaps as well! Ed*).

John Harwood

## NEW COMPETITION!

An early warning that next year we will be organising a PHOTO COMPETITION! Prizes will be awarded, but the ultimate in accolades will be publication in PENNINE LINK!

### BASIC FACTS

1. All pictures must be taken after 1st January and submitted before the end of September, 1997.
2. Prints only - black and white or colour - but remember they will be reproduced only in black and white.
3. Minimum size of print 6" x 4", maximum 8" x 6".
4. Any canal-related subject is acceptable in two categories:-
  - a) Huddersfield Narrow Canal
  - b) Other British waterways - for those

of you who don't pass this way very often.

5. A junior section for photographers aged 16 or under will be judged in the same categories as 4. above.
6. The competition is open only to bona fide members of Huddersfield Canal Society and their immediate families.
7. Entries will be judged by an independent expert.
8. Entry will be FREE but if you want your prints back we will need the return postage.

So, get your cameras oiled and your film stock bought and start thinking of some good subjects. More information on how to submit your entries in a future issue.

The years roll by and life goes on but one organisation ploughs steadily forward, loved and admired by gongoozlers almost the length of the land. I refer to Mikron Theatre Co. who have their HQ on our Canal at Marsden but who spend most of the better months touring the canals and the bitter months touring Pennine halls and pubs.

This year Mikron celebrate 25 years of canalside theatre and we want to associate ourselves with all the good wishes from their audiences everywhere.

The brains behind the organisation are Mike and Sarah Lucas who were already interested in canals when they decided to set up their own company to take theatre to people who might otherwise not get the opportunity to see live shows.

Mike was a law graduate who, like many before and since, took up play-acting at university and preferred it to the course work. He eventually finished up at The Webber Douglas School and became a qualified professional actor.

Sarah was also a law student until Mike weaned her away and they lived the lives of peripatetic actors until 1970 when Mike's interest in community theatre led to the Mikron idea.

The company is based on a converted working narrowboat, Tyseley, and thus is restricted in size to six, four young performers who can usually act,

sing and play an instrument, and Mike and Sarah as "management". The duties on the boat are shared, including steering, locking, cooking and setting up the shows.

The plays themselves are built around canal history, the Industrial Revolution, Pennine folk and the like and are set in front of a canvas screen, appropriately painted, that fits on to a scaffold frame and is equally at home in a field, a pub car park, a tap room or, just occasionally in a theatre.

Having seen Mikron in action I actually came to grips with them when they visited a little theatre where I was heavily involved, in Delph. They brought their Autumn Pennine Tour to us for, I think, three years, and I had the pleasure of looking after them and helping with their gear. Sarah wasn't with them on these local outings but I got to know Mike and the various members of the company quite well. What always impressed me was their amazing "*joie de vivre*" - they radiate energy! After a quick pint in our bar it was always "off to the Station", their home pub in Marsden, for another couple before closing time.

Congratulations on your own Silver Anniversary, Mikron. Long may you flourish.

Ken Wright.



Mikron Theatre Company 1996 - Left to right: Mike Lucas, Edmund Harcourt, Joanne McGowan, Richard Povall and Vashfi MacLachlan

Dear Ken,

As someone very much concerned with our network of roads and tracks, I read with increasing amazement and annoyance some of the letters concerning Towpaths and Cyclists in Issue 118, notably the negative attitude taken by K.N. of the Calder Navigation Society.

The legal position is, as you say, unclear. On the 1:25,000 map the Huddersfield Canal towpath appears to be shown as a public right-of-way (specifically a footpath) only from Scout Tunnel to Diggle; the rest is not shown as a right-of-way at all, and its use is presumably determined by BW by-laws.

With perverse logic one could argue that as towpaths were built for horses, and that as bicycles are regarded to be in the same group as horses in rights-of-way legislation, it is horses and cyclists who should have priority on the towpath!

But there are at least four other towpath user groups, namely walkers, dog walkers, joggers, and anglers. There can be conflicts between any of these groups, and picking out cyclists as the only or principal problem group seems rather odd. For example, walkers four abreast make it difficult for faster users to pass, dog walkers allow their pets to foul the towpath, making the track unpleasant for everyone else, and anglers obstruct the towpath with their poles at anything from ankle to neck height.

It should not be impossible to accommodate most of the requirements of all these user groups. This approach is surely rather better than the negative attitude of the Calder Navigation Society, with its pious reference to the use of canals by cyclists as 'fashionable but ill-considered', and 'well-meaning but undesirable'. Put bluntly, walkers do not have some God-given right to walk on most canal towpaths, and we need to develop a strategy to accommodate all reasonable users.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Paul Hindle, Salford University.

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Dear Sir,

Re: Pennine Link - Autumn 1996

In your Autumn issue, you have given considerable space to correspondents wishing to put the case against increased shared use of the towpaths - a "very one sided argument", as you concede on page 12.

I think Mike Woodhead (W & B Canal Society Chairman), whom you quote, speaks for the vast majority of canal users when he says that, "*the Canal Society does not object to reasonable numbers of well behaved people being allowed to cycle on the towpath*".

In 1994 British Waterways, in its Leisure and Tourism Strategy document, acknowledged that cyclists are already welcomed in many regions provided that the condition of the towpath is suitable and that users complied with the Waterways Code for cyclists.

Extensive lengths of towing path are not suitable, perhaps will never be suitable. Other lengths require improvement work before they become suitable.

In each case a detailed study must be undertaken to assess the suitability and demand for a variety of uses including - walking, cycling, fishing and mooring boats; to consider other potential route options for cyclists where practical and safe, or parallel paths where towpath widths are limited; to make recommendations as regards surfaces, barriers, signing, seating, and maintenance; to assess the costs and benefits.

British Waterways has commissioned a number of studies from Sustrans, each one will be available for public comment and consultation.

Yours sincerely,

David Hall FRICS,  
Manager, SUSTRANS, Yorkshire Region.

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Dear Sir,

I read with interest the commentary on cycle routes along canal towpaths, appearing in PLINK 118. The crux of the problem is that serious sportspeople, travelling often at speed, are being superimposed on a canal network full of other legitimate users, usually enjoying a different pace of life.

Surely the answer is for the cycling to be "on sufferance only", with it being made clear that the permission to cycle is granted on the condition that the greatest respect is paid to those already on the towpath - fishermen, boat owners, walkers, even horses towing trip boats.

Cyclists should be prepared to dismount; possibly a development of the existing cycling permit, with the applicant declaring and signing his or her obligations before being allowed on the towpath, would be appropriate.

# Letters to the Editor

I might add that recently I had some difficulty in using a boathook from the towpath to clear a fouled propeller, on account of the danger of lancing one of the many speeding cyclists, and even cars, behind me.

Yours sincerely,

Geoff Wheat, Leeds.

*I can't help but be pleased at the mixed response to my article in PLINK 118. Comment from all sides is needed to get a true picture. And please don't think I am anti-cyclist. In my youth I was dedicated - NCU, CTC, founder member of BLRC - cycling was my passion.*

*I have asked Keith Noble (the mysterious KN of the Calder Navigation Society) a professional engineer who, until recently, specialised in traffic matters including cycling facilities, to write a response to these letters which is printed elsewhere in this issue. Ed.*

Dear Mr. Wright,

May I suggest a way in which perhaps money could be raised for the H.C.S. During dredging work old milk bottles and other bottles are recovered. There would be people who would be prepared to pay for some of the bottles. I collect "old" milk bottles.

When restoration is complete from Mottram Road to the restored Lock 12W it would be good to see some canal trips.

While out for a walk I met a gentleman who says he remembers grain traffic to Mossley. He was telling me about the lock keeper's cottage near Lock 11W and told me how he walked up one side of the canal and down the other. He would like to be able to walk both sides of the canal between Grove Road and Scout Green Tunnel.

Yours sincerely,

J. Yeomans, Stockport.

*We have lots of old bottles and hope to market them soon after taking advice on their value.*

*We are constantly considering possible sites for trip boats but there are problems of cost and staffing, not to mention vandalism, that make such operations increasingly difficult.*

*The side of the canal opposite the towpath is, more often than not, private land and there are no rights of way. There is an exception at Diggle where we have recently, with Oldham Council, created a path suitable for disabled persons on the "off-side". Ed.*

*A letter addressed to Jo Young, our membership secretary, reported here with Mr. Allen's permission.*

Dear Mrs. Young,

My Society membership is due for renewal on November 1st and I therefore enclose a cheque for £11. You will see that I have converted the membership to Family Membership so that my family can support the work which is in progress.

Our interest in canals goes back many years. For 23 out of the last 26 years we have spent part of our summer holiday on the canals and 14 of these years were spent on the same boat with the same family. My second son narrowly missed being born on the canal!

Two years ago our elder son decided to select Huddersfield University as one of his possible choices and we paid our first visit to the town on March 1995. It was not difficult to discover the canal from the university and in due course his A level grades confirmed his choice of Huddersfield.

On my first visit during term time we travelled by train to Marsden and walked back to Huddersfield, a very interesting walk. Since then we have taken afternoon tea at Slaithwaite! This year David has moved house and now overlooks the Wickes Car Park and The Sellers blockage.

I must congratulate those who produce Pennine Link. The articles are fascinating and the photographs excellent.

I was particularly interested to see the photos of the east side blockages since I can now understand the proposed line and I have discovered Lock 3E which I had passed on many occasions without realising its presence.

When I visit David later this month we intend to travel to Diggle by public transport, walk down to Ashton and then return to Huddersfield by train. Although David will have finished at Huddersfield University before the year 2000 we shall follow progress with interest not least since I am due to retire in the summer of 2000!

Please keep up the good work and I look forward to reading of further progress.

Yours sincerely,

J.H. Allen, Sutton Coldfield

Keith Noble, *Honorary Secretary of the Calder Navigation Society, comments on the letters received on this subject following the article in Pennine Link 118.*

Dear Ken,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment upon the letters from David Hall and Paul Hindle.

I cannot take issue with Mr. Hall's letter on its face value. If construction of a cycleway can be shown not to be detrimental to other users' enjoyment of canals and towpaths, then so be it. However, our fear is that that will usually be tantamount to squaring the circle, but the influence of the green transport lobby is such that cycleways will be accepted as 'a good thing' by public bodies without bothering too much about critical appraisal.

If British Waterways has already commissioned a number of studies from Sustrans, that is a bit like the League of Nations asking Hitler for an answer to the Jewish Question. Sustrans is a campaigning charity as are CNS and HCS: it would be foolish to expect them to produce an unbiased response. If BW want an impartial view they should appoint independent consultants without telling them the answer they want beforehand.

Unfortunately Dr. Hindle was so amazed and annoyed by our letter that he put pen to paper without reading it carefully. Perhaps it would help if I were to repeat a sentence from it:-  
*"It is one of our aims to see canals enjoyed by as many people as possible, whether they be boating, walking, cycling, fishing or just gongoozling".* Dr. Hindle quite rightly adds dog owners and joggers to the list and in doing so strengthens our argument. The second paragraph included the words:- *"Despite what others may suggest, we are not anti-cyclist. We do not wish to see cycling prohibited from towpaths ...".* The issues are not whether towpaths should or should not be used by cyclists (they are now and should continue to be) but whether:-

(i) cyclists should be accorded stronger rights on towpaths than other users

(ii) our canal heritage is of so little consequence that it can be sacrificed to meet the aspirations of just one group of users.

The initiative on this issue has come from the cycling lobby. If Dr. Hindle thinks we are picking on cyclists, he has missed the point:

I repeat yet again, like most other canal societies, we want a wide range of people, including cyclists, to enjoy our canals but we will resist any action which either upsets the delicate balance which already exists between conflicting uses or which detracts from, or destroys those very characteristics of canals which give so much pleasure to so wide a range of people.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Noble, *Honorary Secretary.*

*Even as I write our two long-haired dachshunds have just returned from a walk on 'Saddleworth Promenade' the towpath in Uppermill. They were absolutely filthy and went straight into the bath. Most of the mud - and this is a 'restored' towpath - was caused by bicycle tyres loosening the already wet surface. No further comment! Ed.*

Dear Ken,

Great to see you keeping up the excellent tradition of winning awards.

Life in Wales keeps us busy - we had a local government re-organisation in April so lots of changes. We expect boundary changes again next April.

Interested to note possible change to route through Stalybridge.

As I recall the principal reason for choosing the river was Delta Enfield. If they're gone, the best route must be the old one - both for Stalybridge itself and for canal users.

I can't see anyone being allowed to moor on the river. I can't recall if anyone ever estimated how many days a year the river might be unnavigable.

If you want votes - put me down for the land route!

Best wishes to all, Bob Dewey.

*'What the Papers Say' on page 37 seems rather apposite. Ed.*

We are saddened to have to record the untimely death, suddenly after a short illness, of Maureen Gough, wife of our assistant editor, Bob Gough.

Maureen was born in Stretford, in 1946, and spent all her life in the North Manchester area. She met Bob whilst visiting her cousin, who was a lab technician at Bob's school in Kingston-upon-Thames, and eventually inveigled him into leaving his county - but not his accent - behind.

Regular visitors to the Ashton office knew Maureen well; she worked part-time there for about five years, keeping the place clean and trying to create some sort of order from the chaos. She always worked where she could be surrounded by people - she loved them all - for many years she worked nights in the maternity unit at Tameside Hospital.

She followed that with several years as a cloakroom attendant at Manchester Polytechnic and became a mother figure and counsellor to many young students. From that she went to possibly her favourite job - in a



sandwich shop - where she could talk to people all day.

Pennine Link readers who didn't know Maureen should get out a magnifying glass and study the picture of her, Bob and Sam the dog, under a curious direction sign on Standedge Moor, on recent centre pullout maps!

Maureen was a prolific reader and also made notes, along her life, in a special book. After her death Bob looked into the book and found a full description of her wishes for her funeral - hymns, readings, format, the lot.

And what a beautiful occasion it was. The hymns were more than appropriate and the readings, by her cousin June, were inspiring - and humorous. Everybody present knew, by the end, that Maureen really was looking over us and making sure we all did it right.

Maureen was a long-standing fan of David Essex and took the star as her emblem in tribute to his "Stardust". She collected anything star-shaped or star-inspired. Now she is a star in her own right. 'Bye, Maureen.

Ken Wright

## **STALYBRIDGE 1997 RALLY OF BOATS**

In spite of drought orders, dry gardens and neglected lawns this summer, movement on Britain's Inland Waterways does not seem to have been adversely affected. This is partly due to the control of water on the system and also to the fact that the floating mobile homes have shallow draughts (and flat bottoms) and could almost negotiate a saucer of water (that'll be the day!).

Many canals, long neglected, are being restored. Readers will know of the longstanding enthusiasm by which the Huddersfield Narrow Canal is being rebuilt and rediscovered. Who would think that Stalybridge has a promenade and a wharf not far

from the town centre? Next year, at the Spring Bank Holiday, narrowboats will come from the Ashton direction and meet up for a rally.

It isn't just the boaters, however, who will have fun, there will be things to see, things to buy and things to do for the not-so-old to those who are slightly older. Hopefully drought orders will allow thirsts to be satisfied and allow boats to edge into the Wharf.

***MAKE A DIARY DATE!***  
***24th - 26th May 1997***

*For boat bookings, contact:*  
*Bill Heyes on 0161 643 0892*

Jack Paterson  
Publicity Officer

*After the enormous Press we had before the last issue the last three months have been amazingly quiet. The Saddleworth Festival (Bless it!) has produced yet another flurry of interest. The police boat at Ashton merited a picture in the Oldham Chronicle and the big news about Stalybridge also made my local rag. As I have said before - I can only show you the cuttings that I get - there must be more! Ed.*

## **Constables launch canal crime-wave crackdown**

Police officers have taken to the water to patrol a stretch of canal suffering from a crime wave.

The waterways watch is taking place in Ashton where special constables are now covering their beat in a cabin cruiser. Greater Manchester Police is the first force in the country to provide its special constabulary with a boat to tackle crime.

Insp. Trevor Booth, of Tameside police, said: *"In recent times there has been an escalation of incidents of violence and general nuisance on and around the Ashton Canal. It is an area which has been isolated from normal police patrols."*

Canal boat-owners have reported cases of youngsters leaping on to their boats and stealing handbags, radios and other small items before jumping back on to the towpath.

The £7,000 police cabin cruiser was bought with funds from the Home Office. It will initially operate at weekends, staffed by specially trained police personnel.

*Article & Photo: Oldham Evening Chronicle*

## **Axing fair saves canal festival**

The fun of the fair is being axed from Saddleworth's Canal Festival. Dropping the kiddies' favourite was part of the price demanded by Oldham Council for allowing the event to go ahead next May in Uppermill.

There were fears that the festival, held on the King George playing fields, would have to be cancelled after residents complained about noise and disturbance.

The festival has been held for the last three years but this summer angry neighbours organised a petition calling for it to be moved.

The entire future of the event would have been threatened by moving it away from the



WATERY BEAT ... Canal-boat patrol at Ashton



canal-side, organisers said at the time.

But the petition was withdrawn after a compromise was thrashed out during talks between ward councillors, the Huddersfield Canal Society and organisers of the festival.

Oldham's leisure committee chairman Cllr Jim Greenwood said festival organisers had given 'firm evidence and constructive proposals' for keeping the festival on its present site.

Cllr Greenwood said: *"I feel satisfied that the level of opposition voiced earlier this year by neighbouring householders to the siting of the festival has been greatly reduced and that people's concerns about nuisance have been properly addressed by the organisers"*.

He said the organisers have promised that next year there will be no external amplification of music, no fairground, and the public address system will be used sparingly only between 11am and 5pm. Concerts will finish at 11pm.

Festival committee chairman Shirley Rowbottom said: *"We provided information about previous festivals, our objections to any change of venue and stressed the massive amount of unsolicited messages and petitions of support we have received"*.

*The Advertiser 19.9.96*

## Canal set to go through town

### Decision marks U-turn on route plan

**Council leaders have been forced to do a U-turn in the bid to restore the Huddersfield Narrow Canal.**

Tameside chiefs are suggesting that the Trans-Pennine waterway should go through the centre of Stalybridge - despite initially opposing the route.

The path of the canal had proved a stumbling block in the £29 million Millennium Commission and English Partnerships funding bid.

Spearheaded by the Huddersfield Canal Society, the application has led to a unique partnership of waterway enthusiasts, Tameside Council, Oldham Council, Kirklees Council and British Waterways who own the canal. Tameside council wanted to canalise the River Tame and create a channel to run alongside, but opponents claimed this would cause major engineering problems.

Two new flights of locks would have to be built for the river route and those opposed to the scheme said the Tame would always be threatened by floods which would leave the canal unnavigable for several months of the year.

Opponents preferred the original route of the canal through the town centre, which was covered over in the 1950s. This had proved problematic because of the Delta Crompton cable site, in Trinity Street, which was built over the canal. But the factory finally closed its doors in October after a series of redundancies.

Both town centre and river route options were presented to the Millennium Commission and engineers carried out a series of feasibility studies. The canalisation of the Tame is thought to cost in the region of £12 million and the route through Stalybridge just £8.5 million. The council decision is believed to have been made amidst concerns that funding body English Partnerships - expected to contribute over £15 million to the overall scheme - would pull out of the deal if bosses insisted on a river route.

Shopkeepers and members of the local Chamber of Trade have all expressed their preference for the original canal route which they believe will reap financial rewards for the town. Littleborough and Saddleworth MP and canal enthusiast Chris Davies said: *"There are some imaginative and exciting schemes in store. It is good news for the canal user, good news for the restoration scheme bid and most of all good news for Stalybridge."*

A Tameside council spokesman said: *"The council supported the river route because we*

*felt it offered the most opportunities for economic regeneration. There were also the problems that the original route would cause in terms of disruption to businesses.*

*"That situation altered with the closure of Delta Crompton Cable Works and Bostock and Bramley.*

*"The funders both favour the original canal route and the council accepts this as the only practical way forward to reopen the canal through Stalybridge and bring economic benefits."*

Huddersfield Canal Society representatives were not available for comment.

*Stalybridge and Dukinfield Reporter 31.10.96*



Armentières Square car park, through which the canal will now run. Photo: R. Gough

## News from the Transhipment Warehouse

### The Mersey Basin Trust

The Mersey Basin Trust is a charitable network of some 215 voluntary bodies in the north west of England which in turn has a membership in excess of 200,000 people. They cover a range of interests including recreation, wildlife, community, heritage, environmental improvement and education.

The Trust and its members are active participants in the Mersey Basin Campaign which aims to regenerate the land alongside our rivers, streams and canals, and to achieve a minimum Grade 2 water quality throughout the area by the year 2010 and, where practical, improvement to Grade 1. The Campaign covers the whole of the Mersey catchment and the Leeds and Liverpool Canal corridor, therefore covering the west side of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal.

Members may recall that the Campaign's 10th anniversary was reported in Issue 115 when, to mark the event, we staged a special exhibition at the Transhipment Warehouse. As this proved worthwhile, we repeated the exercise over the weekend of October 12th & 13th when visitors were able to view a display of canal restoration progress and future plans. Saturday attendances were low, due to inclement weather, but with the sun shining on the Sunday, the tourists were out in

force. The very few helpers who gave up their time to answer the public's questions were hard pressed to keep things going, but we persevered and left satisfied that we had spread the news of the Society's progress.

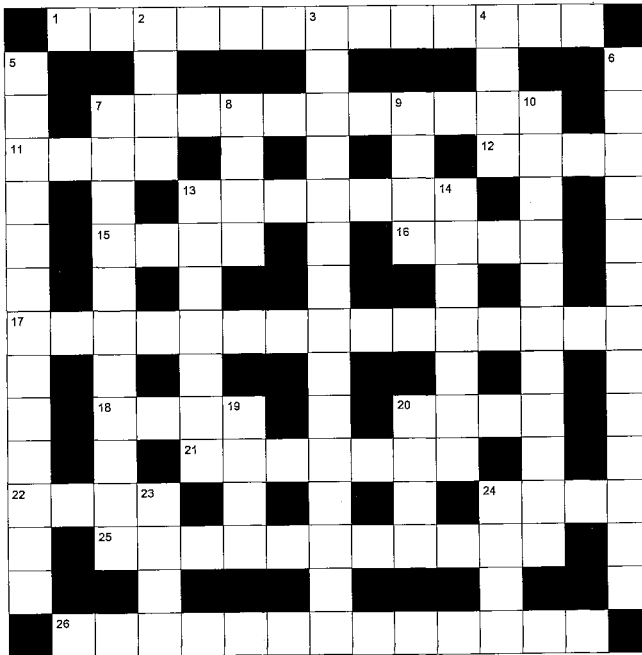
### Canalside Theatre

Those who attended the Mikron Theatre Company's presentation of 'A Woman's Place' at the Transhipment Warehouse on October 28th enjoyed this new production immensely. It told the story of the fight for female suffrage which began in the North of England.

The cast performed for nearly two hours, creating a multitude of vivid characters seemingly far in excess of their company of four. The production featured some very cleverly composed songs and through a series of humorous episodes provided an entertaining account of the origins of the suffragette movement.

The Mikron's informal style is very appealing and even if you are not a regular theatre goer, 'A Woman's Place' is well worth seeing if you get the chance.

Jo Young



Autumn's prize copy of Pennine Passage has yet to be won, so it will be awarded to the first correct solution drawn at random from all those entries received by the next Copy Date, 24th February, 1997.

Please send your entry (including your name and address!) to :

Prize Crossword, 239 Mossley Road,  
Ashton-under-Lyne, OL6 6LN.

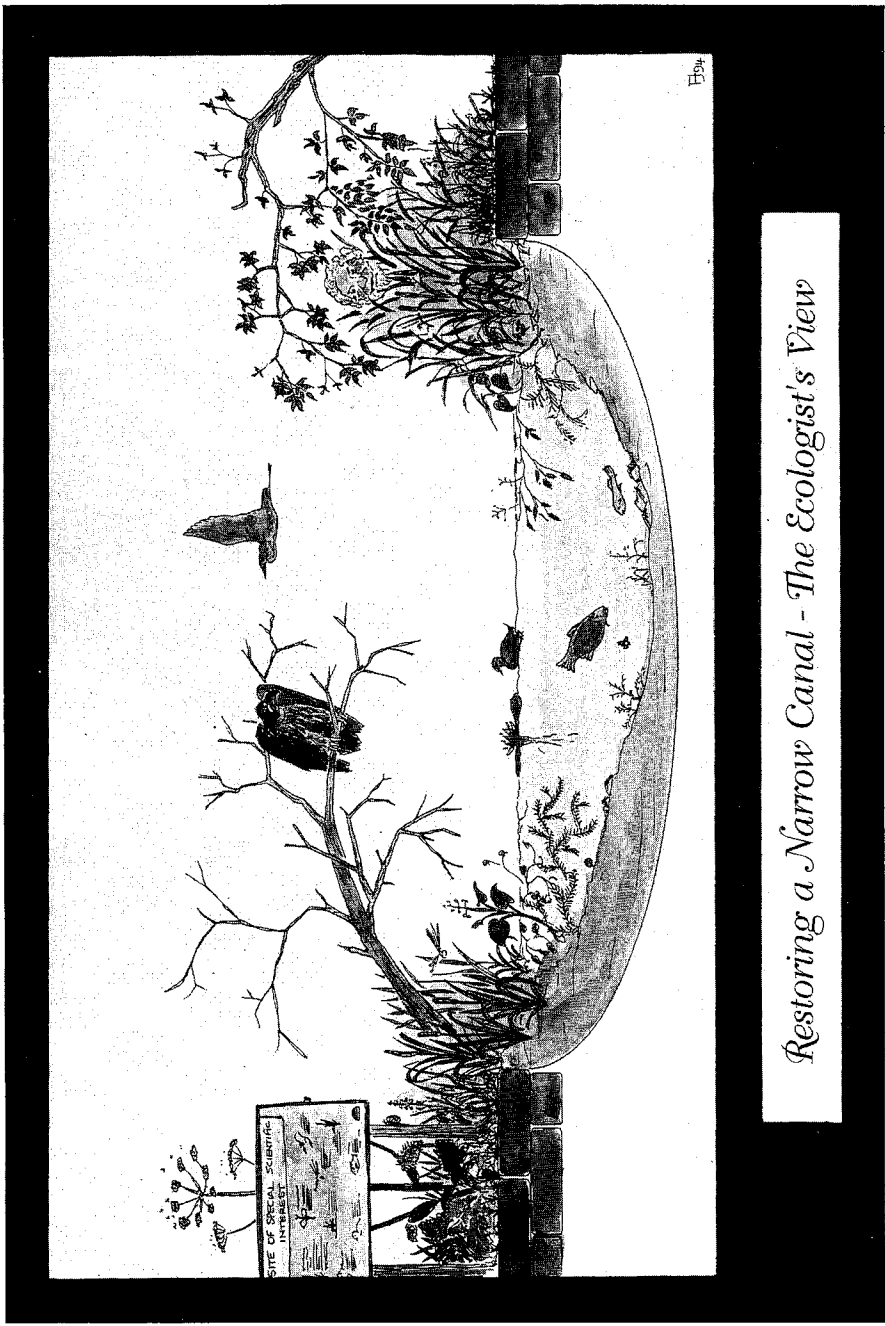
### ACROSS

1. Where a buzzing worker helps the Leicester Line fall near Kilby (6,3,4).
7. Where morning moistures might be interred on a branch of the Calder & Hebble (8,3).
11. Loch etc - on a broads river? (4).
12. After joining Mensa I'll be able to name yachting equipment (4).
13. Cut talc at GU locks (7)
15. A European politician with mining ancestry we hear (4).

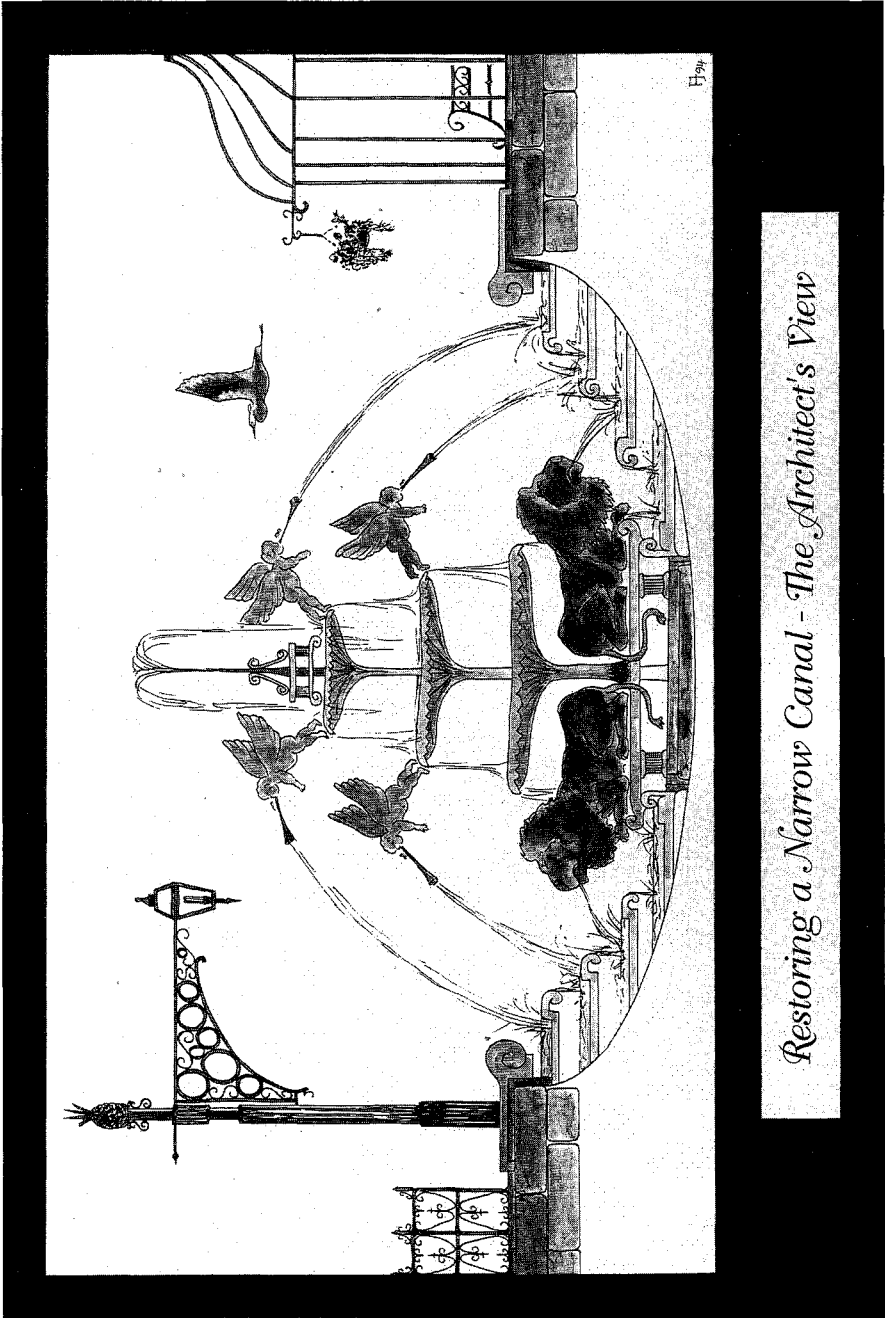
16. I am bemused by the technicalities of verse (4).
17. It's beneath us to prepare oysters in a Scottish town, Get Una! (5,10).
18. Drab ungulate finds a stopper for the hole in the bottom of the boat (4).
20. Drive an Ital across the bottom end of a lock (4).
21. T Shogun files a report? (7).
22. Just north of Autherley on the Staffs & Worcs cook dinner without a sea in sight we hear (4).
24. Cuts off a rabbit's tail? (4).
25. Find a unique way of lifting a train at 42E (7,4).
26. Drink hot milk curdled with ale whilst crossing the Peak Forest canal midway up Marple locks (7,6).

### DOWN

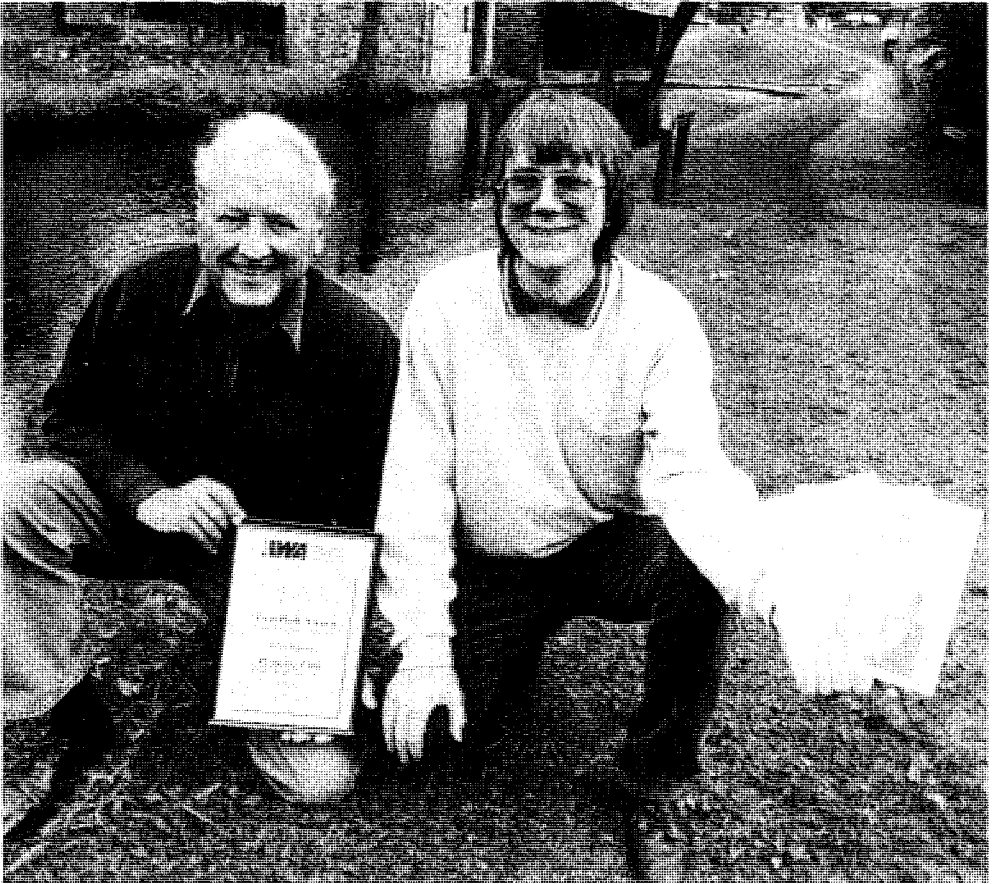
2. On the River Teme encounter another boater whilst- (go to 4D). (4).
3. Shut cub flaghorn nearer Diggle than Marsden! (4,6,5).
4. On the River Soar find an environmentally friendly method of propulsion (4).
5. Look, mole chock on the Erewash in Sandiacre (4,5,4).
6. Where on the BCN, lupine types might play football alongside 21 locks (13).
7. Task of the lowest social order on board? (11).
8. Ales seen off the Norfolk coast? (4).
9. Stay ye till an abominable visitor has left (4).
10. Spoil the interring of a security device a few miles up the Llangollen (7,4).
13. Get cross if you overdo the barbecue at this station (7).
14. Tab rota works fine on one of Thomas Clayton's boats at Oldbury (7).
19. Bill lugs a seabird backwards (4).
20. Extol loyal collectors for keeping the canal company in business (4).
23. Mensa and others, full of Liffey water, seen crossing an aqueduct backwards here (4).
24. Type of missile seen in fast blowing clouds (4).



*Restoring a Narrow Canal - The Ecologist's View*



*Restoring a Narrow Canal - The Architect's View*



### On Wright track at magazine

Huddersfield Canal Society's magazine *Pennine Link*, has won an award for the fourth time.

The magazine, which has developed from a simple, duplicated news sheet, has been edited for a year by former council civil engineer Ken Wright.

Mr Wright, of Dobcross, was assistant highways director with Kirklees before his retirement. Here he displays the Tom Rolt award for best waterways periodical, while assistant editor Bob Gough (right) holds

copies of the prize-winning publication.

News of the award came at the Inland Waterways Association's annual festival.

The competition is organised by a national waterways magazine and judge Chris Catterall said the canal society's production was "very professional".

The magazine first carried off the award in 1984 when housewife Sue Gibson was editor. Successive editors have built on the winning formula, packing it with facts, features and competitions.

*Photo & Article courtesy of Huddersfield Daily Examiner.*

## THE SOCIETY WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS:

|      |                    |            |
|------|--------------------|------------|
| 2397 | Mr & Mrs Marriott, | [REDACTED] |
| 2398 | Dr Ineson,         | [REDACTED] |
| 2399 | Mr Thompson,       | [REDACTED] |
| 2400 | Mr Lawton,         | [REDACTED] |
| 2401 | Mrs Rowbottom,     | [REDACTED] |
| 2402 | Mr Mowat,          | [REDACTED] |
| 2403 | Mr & Mrs Hanmer,   | [REDACTED] |
| 2404 | Mrs Smith,         | [REDACTED] |
| 2405 | Miss Best,         | [REDACTED] |
| 2406 | Mr Diamond,        | [REDACTED] |
| 2407 | Mr & Mrs Howarth,  | [REDACTED] |
| 2408 | Mrs Schofield,     | [REDACTED] |
| 2409 | Mr & Mrs Seymour,  | [REDACTED] |

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## THE FOLLOWING BACK NUMBERS ARE AVAILABLE FREE FROM:

John Maynard, 29 Thick Hollins Drive, Meltham, Yorkshire  
Please send an A5 size stamped, addressed envelope (29p)

10, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39  
40, 41, 42, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59  
61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79  
80, 81/82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99  
101, 102, 103, 104, 109, 111, 112, 114, 115, 117, 118

*Please Note that certain issues are now reduced to single copies only - so, first come, first served!  
Also, the issues listed are the **only** ones held, please do not request issues which are not on the list.*

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## DIALECT ANSWERS

1. Who was he with, was he by himself.
2. I told him but he wouldn't listen.
3. Let him put his hat on.
4. I shall hit you if you don't stop.
5. It isn't in the tin.
6. Get Harry to give you a hand with it.
7. He has got a horse at home.
8. You want to wash your ears.
9. My dad has got a Jag.
10. You can if you want to.
11. He is nothing but a baby.
12. It hasn't had anything done to it as far as I know.
13. Can you come to our house tonight?
14. Where is the boss?

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## SOLUTION TO PRIZE CROSSWORD No 14 - ISSUE 118

ACROSS 6. Royal George Lock 9. Itchen 10. Plowes 11. Enam 12. Tolls 14. Soho 15. Churnet  
16. Gondola 18. Smew 20. Stern 21. Dabs 22. Haling 23. Golcar 24. Hatherton Branch.

DOWN 1. Nottingham Canal 2. Latham 3. Tom Rolt 4. Floods 5. Ocker Hill Branch 7. Gin 8. Gap  
12. Trees 13. Spoon 17. Leawood 19. Weight 21. Dilham.

---

By the way, Lock 42E has been known as Railway Lock, in case you didn't already know. Also, you might like to remove the canal map from the centre of the magazine, not only to display at home, but also to reveal the full panorama of Stalybridge!

### WEST SIDE MEETINGS

|                            |                                                          |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Wednesday 8th January 1997 | General Meeting at the Tollemache Arms, Mossley, 8.00pm. |
| Wednesday 12th February    | General Meeting at the Tollemache Arms, Mossley, 8.00pm. |
| Wednesday 12th March       | General Meeting at the Tollemache Arms, Mossley, 8.00pm. |

## In the next Issue of Pennine Link ...

Millennium Verdict - What Happens Next?

Profile - Trevor Ellis, Vice-Chairman

The Building of Britain's Canals - Part 1: Promotion

Standedge Experience - Storyline

Mud, glorious, mud - You just can't throw it away!

Excerpts from 'Narrowboat' by LTC (Tom) Rolt

.... plus all the regular features.

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