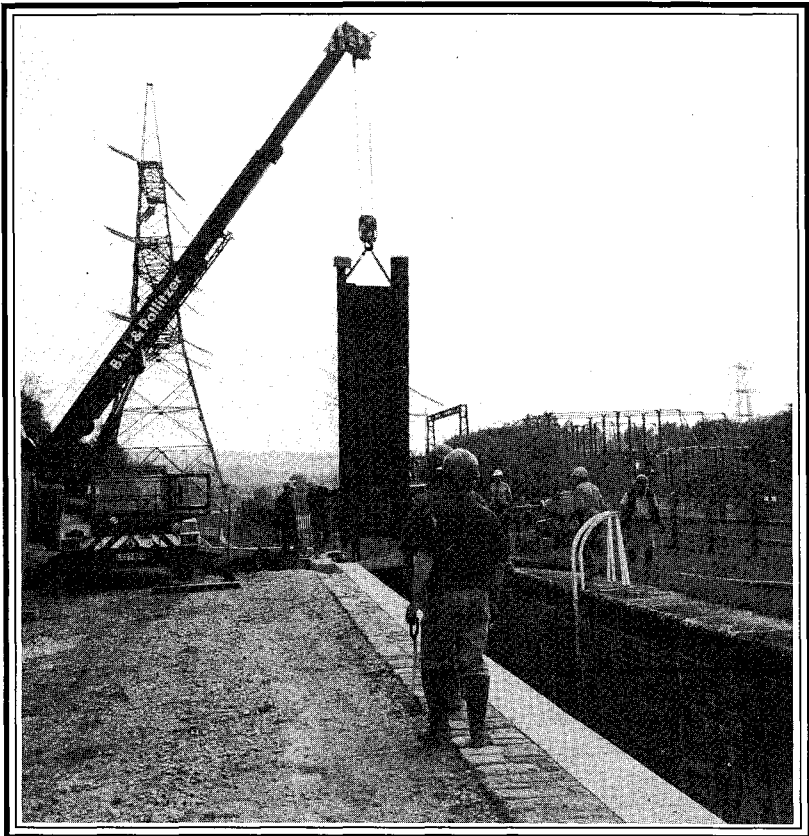




Pennine Link

Issue Number 121 - Summer 1997



Members Quarterly Journal

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Council Members.....	Inside Front
Editorial.....	3
Chairman's Report.....	4-5
Towards the Millennium - Progress.....	6-7
Profile - John Sully, Treasurer.....	8-9
IWA News.....	10
HCS Volunteers.....	11
'Narrowboat' by LTC Rolt.....	12-13
Bits & Pieces.....	14-16
'A Canal People' - Sonia Rolt.....	17-23
Standedge Experience 'Storyline'.....	24-25
Stalybridge Town Centre.....	Centre Pull-out

What Next for HCS?.....	28-29
The Wife's Tale - Part 33.....	30-33
What the Papers Say.....	34-37
HCS Council News.....	38
Letters to the Editor.....	39-41
Distaff Side.....	42
Canal Crossword - 17.....	43
Restoration Cartoons.....	44-45
The Building of Britain's Canals - Parliament.....	46
New Members and Back Issues.....	Inside Back
Coming Soon.....	Back Cover

Front Cover: Tailgate being swung into position at Lock 8W, Mossley. Photo: J. McLoughlin



Well, yes, I'm afraid that is a photograph of me! The Wife's Tale team has been off on strange waters again, this time cruising between Luxor and Aswan on the Nile. The boat I am steering here is not the cruise ship - the skipper there only used a 3" joy stick! - it is a "rust bucket" ferry taking our party to the west bank of the Nile, en route to the Valley of the Kings and Queen Hatchepsut's temple. 120 in the shade, absolutely fantastic week, and back to reality and two days of snow - in May! What has all this to do with editing your magazine? Well, not a lot; I just have to say that the watermanship skills of the Arab captains are incredible. "Breasting-up" is achieved with often 5, and sometimes 7, boats of between 750 and 1,000 tons displacement moored against the bank with motor ferries and feluccas (sailing ferries) at both ends. The middle cruise boat can slip its moorings, often during the night, and depart without disturbing other than a few of its own passengers or those on adjacent boats. It has to be seen to be believed. I got 20 bites on the first occasion I stayed outside to watch! Subsequently it was

daylight only or tons of repellent.

Well, New Labour have made it! Following a lifetime working in local government I have become almost apolitical: my confirmed belief is that, in local politics, it matters not which party is in power as long as it has a large majority, removing the need for time-wasting party political tub-thumping. Now we have a Labour government with a large majority, making our Canal corridor totally Labour-run, it can only help towards keeping the restoration on "go"!

Our canal is becoming a sanctuary for T.V. cameras. Those members who live too far away to have visited the canal may not realise, and no doubt this applies also to some who live a lot closer, that we are well in the frame at the moment. "Last of the Summer Wine" is being filmed more and more in Marsden, retaining the Holme Valley areas for the better known locations - Nora Batty's, the cafe, Cleggy's and Howard's etc. New series "Wokenwell" (if it ever takes off) is also set in Marsden and there is a lovely story of a local amateur dramatic society falling out with the TV crews for erecting a stage set in the amateurs' rehearsal room, thus keeping them out! And the first series of the highly successful "Where The Heart Is" used Slaithwaite for its fictional Skelthwaite, with a shot of OUR canal in the credits. And, on a one-off basis we have even had some filming for "Heathcliffe" with Sir Cliffe and BBC2 filming part of a documentary in the Colne valley. If the (sometimes doubtful) TV fame and fortune follow these towns as they have in Holmfirth (Summer Wine HQ) the opening of the canal will be an added bonus - and the Standedge Experience a guaranteed success.



On behalf on the Council of Management I present my report on the Company's activities and achievements for 1996 and future developments. Surely we are all of the same opinion that 1996 was our *annus mirabilis*.

We began the year with great hopes. In February our application was posted to the Millennium Commission and on 13 December 1996 we received the good news. Some twenty two years since the Society was formed to restore the Huddersfield Narrow Canal to through navigation we have all but achieved the Impossible Restoration.

The story of 1996 has revolved around our Millennium Bid and I want to put on record our grateful thanks to our full time employees, particularly Steve Whitby, who have, with our partners British Waterways, Kirklees M.C., Oldham M.B., and Tameside M.B., succeeded in getting approval. This partnership of local authorities, British Waterways and ourselves has since 1986 committed itself to full restoration and, following two unsuccessful bids, for Millennium Funding has now succeeded. It has been achieved because we have demonstrated that our project has distinctiveness, has public support and will regenerate the two valleys, particularly the urban areas of Tameside and Huddersfield.

For many years the Society has secured public and private sector funding to complement the volunteer input in the drive for restoration. Over the last two to three years derelict land grant has enabled road crossing, lock flights and infilled sections to be reopened. Now English Partnerships are committed to almost

cont'd from page 3

It was nice to hear recently from keen HCS supporter, actor Timothy West, that he hopes to find time in his busy schedule to come and see us during the summer, for a look round. He sends his congratulations to us all for the way things are progressing.

Ken Wright

matching the Millennium Funding to enable our great project to be completed and they can be assured that their investment in the Huddersfield Narrow will represent excellent value for money. Canal restoration may not be a financially glamorous *cause célèbre* compared to subsidised industrial estates and coalfield land reclamation but its impact will last forever. The Treasury may not value environmental improvements but ask anyone in the Colne and Tame Valleys if the albeit piecemeal restoration of the canal has improved the quality of life and I am sure that the answer is "yes". We began restoration in Uppermill in 1981. Now in 1997 a large housing development by our canal, by Wiggett Construction attributes its success - indeed its *raison d'être* - to the restored canal.

So the year began well. Robert Jones M.P., the then Junior Minister for the Environment (B.W.'s political boss) was present at the dedication of Lock 31W to the late Geoffrey Dickens M.P., he said "*restoration will transform the environment and image of the canal. It should stimulate investment in property and job creation whilst providing a superb setting for leisure and recreation.*" We agree and have been saying so since 1974!

In April 1996 we attended a meeting of the Parliamentary Waterways Group at the House of Commons and I presented our Canal Society's view on restoration, sitting between the Chief Executive of the Millennium Commission and a senior executive of English Partnerships. Eight days later we had passed the first stage of our application and we began the detailed stages of negotiation with E.P. and the M.C. This time our bid included the original route through Stalybridge which received unanimous support from the Stalybridge District Chamber of Trade. They stated "*to gain full advantage and revolutionise the town the Chamber considers following the original line of the canal, through the centre of the town, the most favoured option.*" Later in the year both the M.C. and E.P. said support for our bid would be forthcoming if the original line was chosen.

At the other end of the canal, Dr. Andy McDonald of Huddersfield University supported our bid and, one of many, wrote in support for restoration. He knew that a restored canal through his campus would be a

Chairman's Report

unique feature and enhance the attractiveness of the new University to students.

By the Autumn our final submission to the M.C. was being refined with help from consultants Pieda Limited and Market Access Limited. The partnership committed tens of thousands of pounds to produce the final submission. The business plan was checked by our consultants and the 'jewel in the crown' Standedge Experience was devised by the Society with detail design by architects and media consultants. The key to the sustainability of the project was B.W.'s asset management schedule and sinking fund concept which would guarantee a 125 year life for the restored canal. It was becoming clear that B.W.'s role in the restoration and the operation of the canal would be crucial. The Society hoped and believed that B.W. would commit themselves 100% to the scheme as well as their favoured "Lowlands Canal" scheme which was also subject to a Millennium Bid. In the end both schemes were approved and B.W.'s Chief Executive was pleased to endorse the Society's bid. It became clear that B.W. would take the leading role in the day to day operation of the restoration.

So here we are in June 1997 and with the new Huddersfield Canal Company Limited incorporated - two directors from each of the five partners and agreements with the M.C. due to be signed in June. In November 1996 Virginia Bottomley M.P., Chairman of the M.C. was given a whistle stop tour of the canal by myself and Roger Anderson, who led the bid on behalf of the partnership. She stated *"It is certainly an environmental project with a strong flavour of community regeneration 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."*

Obsession it may be, but the Society has always believed in itself and its one overriding aim. Volunteers have been the backbone of the drive for restoration and in 1996 the Society has once again been at the forefront of the project and, through our excellent publicity machine, has kept the public constantly aware of its aims.

Our magazine, Pennine Link, edited by Ken Wright, won the Tom Rolt award in 1996 for

the best Canal Society and Trust magazine. In typical fashion, Ken ignored this accolade and praised Alec Ramsden our Press Officer for keeping our campaign in the public eye. Alec's success in getting local, regional and national media attention will ensure that the new restoration vehicle, the 'Huddersfield Canal Company' is in the national spotlight.

The Society launched its new trip boat in 1996 - 'Standedge Pioneer' - a tug and butty. It was named by Bill 'Compo' Owen and it now ferries tourists between Lock 42E and the tunnel mouth. We are very grateful for an anonymous donation of £10,000 towards this new asset which is one of the first attractions and essential features of the Standedge Experience. This boat, along with others on our canal, is crewed entirely by volunteers and it was fitting that two of our youngest boat masters were introduced to (and photographed with) Virginia Bottomley upon her visit to Marsden in November 1996.

Every year the Society's sub committees organise festivals to raise funds and publicise our cause. In addition our sales team attend rallies throughout the region and beyond.

In 1996 Gay Quilter and her helpers attended seventeen venues, including the local festivals at Ashton, Huddersfield, Saddleworth and Tunnel End. These events are where we meet the public and whilst the support of celebrities such as Timothy West and Bill Owen is welcome and beneficial, it is the general public to whom we address our campaign and who will benefit most from a restored canal.

Our Society can be justly proud of its progress in 1996. Indeed the Millennium Bid of over £31m included a voluntary sector value of £1,185,898 in the package, based upon the input in time by our members in work to date, excluding the value of job creation.

1997 will see the beginning of the end of our restoration process. As a ginger group we persuaded our partners to join in the project. As full members of the new restoration company, represented by Keith Gibson and myself, we will ensure that the canal is restored as a fitting tribute to all those dedicated volunteers, businessmen and public sector representatives who have committed themselves to the Impossible Restoration.

David M Sumner
Chairman



Progress is being made following the Millennium Commission's offer of a grant of £14,851,241. With an expected £12m contribution from English Partnerships, inputs from the local authorities and British Waterways, and

£500,000 from the Society, this should see the canal restored and re-opened, and the Standedge Experience visitor centre in operation at Tunnel End, Marsden by the end of the year 2000.

Followers of my articles will recall that the restoration scheme is now to be the responsibility of a company limited by guarantee owned by the five partners in the enterprise. At the time of writing, David Sumner and I have represented the Society at a formal meeting of representatives of the partners to discuss the formation of the company, then at three Shadow Board meetings of the proposed company, and at the first Board meeting of the Huddersfield Canal Company on 22nd May. We have also met British Waterways officers on two semi-formal occasions at the H.C.S. office and at a presentation given to H.C.S. Council members at 'Dukes 92' at Castlefield, Manchester.

Inevitably the formation of the company has involved lengthy negotiations between the solicitors for the partners to ensure that the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the company meet the requirements of the five partners, the Millennium Commission and the Charity Commission. This has been complicated by the difficulty of reconciling the local authorities' requirement to control those works on the canal which they will be responsible for delivering with British Waterways' requirement to control those same works to ensure that they do not inherit unnecessary maintenance burdens. Eventually the Board of the company has agreed that British Waterways will take responsibility for works to the canal track, and the local

authorities for non-canal structures such as bridges. The Executive group of officers (attended by our own Steve Whitby and Ken Wright) have agreed on the classification of most projects, but some are hybrid with substantial elements of canal and highways or tourism related work. The Board have instructed the officers to consider these further.

The founding Board of Directors of the Huddersfield Canal Company is:

Councillor Riaz Ahmed - Oldham M.B.
Derek Cochrane - British Waterways
Jeremy Duffy - British Waterways
Keith Gibson - Huddersfield Canal Society
Councillor Jim Greenwood - Oldham M.B.
Councillor Roy Oldham - Tameside M.B.
Councillor Cyril Pearce - Kirklees M.C.
Councillor George Speight - Kirklees M.C.
David Sumner - Huddersfield Canal Society
Councillor Keith Welsh - Tameside M.B.

At the first Board meeting on 22nd May, Councillor Oldham proposed, and it was agreed, that Councillor George Speight should be the Chairman of the Company, with Councillor Jim Greenwood as Vice Chairman, and that the Chair should rotate to each of the partners in turn. At this meeting we confirmed the appointment of Alan Stopher as Project Director. He will be a member of the Board of Directors, but with no voting rights. The Board had previously interviewed 6 candidates shortlisted from a total of 150 applicants. Alan is a Civil Engineer and a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers, and of the Institution of Mining Engineers. He was previously employed by R.J.B. Mining (UK) Ltd, and was the Senior Manager for the £25m canal and river diversion at St. Aidens on the Aire and Calder. He will be employed by the canal company and be responsible to the Board, but under the financial arrangement whereby British Waterways act as banker to the company, he will go to them for 'pay & rations.' He takes up the position on 1st July.

Whilst this has been going on, the other side of the equation has not been forgotten. Local authority officers are drawing up more

Towards The Millennium - Progress

detailed and more up to date information than that contained in the Coopers & Lybrand report of the benefits of restoration, showing, for instance, the number of jobs created already, or likely to be created, the number of dwellings, and the amount of industrial floorspace etc., relating this to the specific projects to be funded by English Partnerships, and specifying the dependence of these jobs etc. on the restoration of the canal. English Partnerships are also interested in the relationship with other public sector grant funded activity along or close to the track of the canal, and in the numbers of members of the various angling clubs, sea scouts etc. likely to benefit directly from restoration.

I have had some discussion with British Waterways Regional Manager regarding the future of H.C.S. Restoration Ltd. the Society's subsidiary restoration company and, particularly, the need to ensure continuity of employment for our staff when the current works are complete. We agreed that no decision can be made at the present time, but that all possible efforts should be made to bridge the gap between our existing work and the letting of contracts for Millennium Commission funded work. With a weekly wage bill of around £3,500 the possibility of this gap not being filled is a serious concern to me. Ken Wright, David Sumner and I have discussed the position in detail with Steve Whitby and asked him to prepare a paper for

the Board of H.C.S. Restoration and the Society's Council of Management. Those who can see beyond the simple facts of a balance sheet will appreciate that, whilst the restoration company has generally carried out work on the canal at cost so as to increase the work possible, this has been done at a minimal cost to the Society. Without the benefits offered by the restoration company the Society would have to be a totally different animal reliant on the services of volunteers. At the present time that would be very difficult. We need the office at Mossley Road. We need the staff to assist the Society - not only have the festivals and boats operations relied on them on occasions but all of us, particularly Ken & Jo, need the services provided by the office staff, and we could not have played our part in the Millennium bidding process without Steve successfully fronting our input at officer level. I hope that everything falls into place so that the canal company can sign the agreement with the Millennium Commission in time for new contracts to be given to H.C.S. Restoration before we run out of work. That may be a forlorn hope because the agreement will not be straightforward, and will itself be subject to complex legal agreements between the partners and the canal company. Failing that I am looking to British Waterways to offer other work to keep our staff employed in the short term.

Keith Gibson.

OUR GRATEFUL THANKS

Huddersfield Canal Society Ltd wish to publicly acknowledge the grant of £350 made by the Tame Valley Community Trust towards the replacement of waterproof screens on their public trip boat, 'Greater Manchester'.

Many Thanks

Allan C Knott
Boat Crew Officer

Lee Carter *Landscape Gardener*

Light ground clearances
Domestic garden maintenance

Tel: 0161 339 8848
Mobile 0598 359524

How a teetotal, Methodist local Preacher Labour Politician became involved in restoring canals.

I have been very fortunate to be involved with the restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal since 1981. There have been many exciting events but four that stand out are the first cruise through the restored locks at Uppermill, the opening of Tunnel End cottages in pouring rain, a trip through the entire length of Standedge Tunnel and taking the first boat through Wakefield Road Bridge in 1986 to what then was Huddersfield Polytechnic.

During the Second World War we lived at Nuneaton and it was a short walk to the Coventry Canal, which boats used regularly. Some boats were horse drawn and you would hear the hooves of the horse before the boat appeared; others would have an engine. When I left Nuneaton in 1946 we expected working boats to continue on the canals for ever.

Later, after we had moved to Leeds, I travelled to school from Kirkstall to Apperley Bridge. The Leeds and Liverpool Canal travels the same route and I remember hoping to see boats on the Forge 3 locks or on the stretch from Rodley to Apperley Bridge but between 1950 and 1956 there were very few.

Moving to West Bridgford in Nottingham in 1956 I was saddened by the sight of the derelict Grantham Canal near where I lived. Returning to Leeds in 1964 I was elected to Leeds City Council from 1971 to 1974, joining a City Council waterways group looking at improving the rivers and canals in Leeds.

In 1973 Leeds Civic Trust had a campaign to put "Leeds on Aire" and organised a number of events, including performances by Mikron Theatre Company at Kirkstall Abbey and in a warehouse beside River Lock on the Leeds and Liverpool. Their presentation told of the rise and decline of canals and the restoration of canals including the restoration of the Peak Forest and the Ashton Canal. It was then that I realised that canal restoration was possible.

In May 1976 I was elected as a Labour member of West Yorkshire County Council for Osmondthorpe in Leeds and I asked fellow councillors about the Rochdale Canal in Calderdale, to be told that it was steadily being filled in.

On 5th October 1976 I cycled along the then derelict Rochdale Canal from Sowerby Bridge to Todmorden. My mission was to impress on the County Council the "untold advantages" a restored canal would have on the life and prosperity of the Calder Valley. At my instigation a job creation scheme was started between Sowerby Bridge and Hebden Bridge, taking weed from the canal, rebuilding the walls and repairs to the towpath. Thus both members and officers became more and more involved in looking at the possibilities of restoring canals in West Yorkshire.

On 7th June 1980 the County Council organised a conference on canals in West Yorkshire under the chairmanship of the late Ralph Kirkham, who was then Chairman of the Calder Navigation Society. The conference document stated "*It is perhaps necessary to stress the tremendous task and level of investment that would be involved in restoring through navigation on either of both the Huddersfield Narrow or the Rochdale Canals in West Yorkshire and would be unrealistic in view of the current economic situation. However, the lobby at both local and national level which supports the idea of through navigation cannot be ignored.*"

In 1981 I became Chairman of the Recreation and Arts Committee. Later that year a Manpower Services Commission Scheme was proposed to restore the canal in Calderdale, from the outskirts of Hebden Bridge to Todmorden, a distance of 4 miles. The scheme started in 1982 and by 1983 the first lock, Library Lock at Todmorden had been restored. Other locks on that stretch were rapidly completed. Locks were being restored very rapidly, taking as little as two weeks, and we had the work to show to other people from all over the country. We had a meeting with Kirklees Councillors and officers and we

Profile - John Sully, Treasurer

invited them to look at the Rochdale Canal to encourage them to start a similar scheme on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal. This they did and later Ian Preston from the County Council was appointed to undertake a scheme from Marsden to Slaithwaite, with premises at Linthwaite. Members and officers from Greater Manchester Metropolitan County Council also visited the Rochdale Canal. (I did not join the Greater Manchester party as I was on a British Waterways Board inspection trip going through Standedge Tunnel).

In 1993 I cycled from Marsden to Huddersfield with Dave Finnis, who was then press officer for HCS. At Slaithwaite we met Yorkshire Post's Kirklees reporter, Alec Ramsden, now HCS Press Officer, and my fellow County Councillor, Garth Pratt. In 1985 I put in a bid for £350,000 to re-open Wakefield Road on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal for navigation. In March 1986 I took the first boat under Wakefield Road while Garth Pratt cut the tape to declare it open, so I was the first person to take a boat through to what is now Huddersfield University. Also in March we held a ceremony to reopen the top 4 locks at Marsden with Cllr. George Speight of Kirklees cutting the ribbon and we travelled on the HCS boat 'Stan'.

Mikron was based at Marsden. In 1980 they had featured HCS in their show. In 1985 the Arts Council decided not to continue their Grant. Like Mikron I read about this decision in the Guardian and so my Committee was able to replace the Arts Council funding. We also contributed a capital sum for their boat Tyseley. The last day of the County Council, 31st March 1986, was Easter

Monday and I led a guided walk from Lock 42E at Marsden Station to Diggle and back along "Boat Lane" with Dave Finnis.

After the abolition of the County Council in 1986 I was invited to join HCS and the Council of HCS along with Alan Brett and Garth Pratt. When Les Winnard stepped down as treasurer I became treasurer as I am a Chartered Accountant. (I qualified in Nottingham and moved to Leeds in 1964 working for a firm of accountants until 1967 when I became a lecturer at Leeds Polytechnic, retiring from that job in 1989). I have been involved with the crucial decisions since Greater Manchester County Council left HCS £1.2 million. Since our first holiday Cynthia and I have cruised, sometimes with our daughters, Anthea and Heather, on canals all over the country, between Leeds and Godalming, and we are hoping to be able to take a hire boat on the full length of the Huddersfield Narrow. At present I am a member of Leeds City Council representing North Ward. There are no canals in my ward but the complete restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow and Rochdale Canals will have considerable benefit for Leeds.

John Sully



John & Cynthia on board the tug 'Standedge' at Tunnel End, Marsden

Since the last time I compiled this item I have received 46 double-sided A4 sheets of information from IWA comprising 7 press releases, 3 monthly Head Office Bulletins, 2 IWA "Undercurrents" and 2 miscellaneous reports! Nobody can say that IWA doesn't make its presence felt. But when it comes to summarising the information where does one start? Well, with the Head Office Bulletin, that's what! This is a fairly new publication, in a crisp, business-like style without frills and ideal for busy editors. So I waited for the eleven pages of the May issue - and that came with four more pages of a new sheet called Water News for Boaters. Here goes!

Boat Licences

British Waterways and the Environment Agency are in the throes of agreeing joint or reciprocal licensing arrangements e.g. a B.W. licence holder can go on EA waters for a certain number of days per year and vice versa. These days are cumulative, apparently, except on the Thames, where they must be consecutive. And, of course, the Thames is where most of the "inter-water" movements take place. Back to the drawing-board?

Charity Commissioners

Voluntary organisations such as canal societies would be well advised to get hold of a new booklet "Charities and Trading" from the Charity Commission, available free, phone 01823 345427.

And while you're at it get the Inland Revenue's new exciting-sounding leaflet called "Trading by Charities - Guidelines on the tax treatment of trades carried on by charities (CS2)". Available from your local inland revenue office or from Liverpool 0151 472 6038.

Christmas Cards

Last year the Association sold 121,640 of their excellent waterways Christmas cards - a slight increase over 1995. 1997 designs are being sorted out but, for the first time, there will be packs of mixed design. The large card, however, has fallen by the wayside.

Cycling Permits

There are more details of cycling permits and the Kennet and Avon experiment taking place this year.

Fibre Optic Cables

Lots of information on the scheme to lay cables under a substantial mileage of towpath. All very complicated and well organised - it remains to be seen what sort of a mess will actually be made (tunnelling by mechanical mole under sett-paved areas - the best of luck!). Anyway, the income will no doubt be useful.

General Election

The Departments of Transport and Environment have been merged under Secretary of State John Prescott. 36 year old Angela Eagle (MP for Wallasey) is the Junior Minister responsible for British Waterways. She is one of the much-publicised twin lady MPs, her sister Maria being MP for Liverpool Garston. IWA are now busy educating new MPs into the rights and wrongs of waterways.

Vandalism

The need to report any and every act of vandalism is stressed. From March to October 1996 no recorded incidents took place on the Ashton Canal, no doubt largely due to the escort system and common sense about time of day etc.

IWA advise that every incident should be reported to the local police immediately or as soon as possible afterwards, in writing, with copies to local BW office and IWA Head Office.

This way the problem can be kept at the front of "Authority's" mind!

Water Supply

Including the information in Water News for Boaters quite a lot of information here. Suffice to say BW are taking great strides nationwide to rationalise supplies, sending surpluses to areas of shortage, renewing back-pumping systems etc. They really are trying hard.

contd ...

It is a while since I sent in a formal report on what HCS volunteers are doing, though some brief information was included in the "profile" in the last issue. However, now may be an appropriate time to go into more detail as we are in the process of formalising our relationship with British Waterways following the success of our Millenium bid. This, after all was a "volunteer-led" bid, and it is important that we maintain the volunteer content of the project in order to retain credibility, rather than backing off and expecting BW and the local authorities to make it happen.

Many people would question whether there is a role for volunteers at all now that funding has been approved and most of the major jobs will clearly be carried out by contractors. What is essential to bear in mind, though, is that the bid only covers those parts of the canal not already "restored". Some sections of the canal have now been standing for over ten years with limited maintenance and, due to the recent drought conditions, have seen no boating for two or three years. A massive job awaits BW and the Society in bringing the existing navigable sections up to standard, and both parties feel that volunteers should play a role in this work.

The work needing to be done to the locks includes ensuring that the hydraulic paddle gear works, by topping up oil levels and tightening connections, clearing debris and silt from the gates to ensure that these will open and close fully, and sealing gaps in the planking using wooden laths. "Weeding" of lock walls and gates and clearing overhanging trees etc. usually completes the work.

Our initial aim is to bring back into use the Marsden-Slaithwaite length, this being potentially the best boating area and one with a slipway. The first target we set ourselves towards this was to get the Marsden-Booth section navigable by the Spring Bank

Holiday, and I can report that we have failed, though not by much!

We had started working down the flight last year, trying paddle gear and gates, clearing obstructions and each week making more progress, when someone decided to rebuild the bridge into the railway goods yard, thus blocking the canal at Lock 42E.

Apart from this, I am sure that we would have made it as we would have been keeping the locks working on each visit as well as extending the length. As it was, we effectively had to abandon the top of the flight and gain access at Sparth for the duration.

At the time of writing, we have the locks working, apart from Lock 39E (Warehouse Hill) which we had fixed until the locals threw part of the adjacent roadworks into the chamber, and Lock 32E, where one paddle is stuck. We now hope to complete this first lap sometime in June, before carrying on towards Slaithwaite, which is about 8 locks further.

Our big problem at the moment is numbers, and my offer for others to join us is now becoming deperate. Lawrence Sullivan, one of our mainstays, has been unlucky(?) enough to be sent to California for six months and we could really do with a few people who are prepared to help us out, if only on the occasional Sunday. We tend to work alternate weekends, but please give me a ring on (01484) 534666 if you can assist at all. I will not publish a list of dates, as we will have to work around the people who can attend. The work is not too heavy, and anyone who can cope with canalling should be OK. There is quite some variety, with a bit of boating, some mechanical work, some very crude woodwork and jobs such as raking behind the lock gates.

Trevor Ellis.

But we can all help and BW have renewed their THRIFT Campaign. Remember?

T - stands for **Two** in a lock - or more.

H - stands for **Have** you shut gates and paddles

R - stands for **Report** any leaks.

I - stands for **Invite** oncoming boats through

F - stands for **Follow** advice given by BW staff.

T - stands for **Think** ahead - choose routes which minimise use of locks.

Copies of the THRIFT leaflet are free from BW Customer Services 01923 201120

BW are inviting voluntary help to encourage proper use of lock flights; "assistant lock

keepers" will wear a simple uniform and stand by to discourage inefficient use without interfering unnecessarily! Difficult diplomatic role. We do like to get hands-on!

Peak Forest Canal

By the time you read this, the Peak Forest will have been re-opened for at least a week and, hopefully at the time of writing, about five weeks. This will have allowed boats attending OUR rally at Stalybridge to come via Peak Forest, by special arrangement with BW. If it worked out we can only thank BW for their sterling efforts. If not, it was a good try.

Ken Wright

“Narrow Boat” is the book which, more than any other, was responsible for the start of the waterways restoration movement. In this second series of excerpts Ken Wright has selected passages about boats, boat-building and boat decoration as described by Tom Rolt over fifty years ago. We are grateful to Mrs. Sonia Rolt, the widow of the author, for permission to publish these articles.

ABOUT BOATS

As one would expect, such an exclusive community possesses a traditional language of its own. For instance, there is no ‘port’ or ‘starboard’ on the canal, the boat captain calling to the ‘steerer’, ‘Hold in!’ (i.e., towards the towing path) or ‘Hold out!’ The Canal itself is invariably referred to as the ‘cut’, owing to its artificial character as distinct from the natural channel of a river, while ‘Cressy’, the craft which gave me my first experience of canal travel, was not, in correct parlance, a barge at all, but a ‘narrow boat’, built to pass the locks of ‘narrow cuts’. To become still more technical, she was a ‘Shroppie fly-boat’, which, being interpreted, means that she was built by the Shropshire Union Canal Company, and worked for them ‘fly’ - that is, she travelled night and day, using relays of horses, like the old fliers of the roads. For this reason she was of slightly finer build than the slower craft, being intended for lighter and more perishable cargoes.

-----0000O0000-----

Their inborn gipsy love of colour and polished metal finds expression in the gaily painted cabins of their boats and in the wealth of glittering brass ornaments which adorn them. These gay, vividly contrasting colours have become as naturally a part of the canal scene as the bright plumage of the kingfisher, because they are the product of an artistic instinct which is entirely unselfconscious.

-----0000O0000-----

It was their work of repairing and refurbishing the wooden boats that most delighted me, for it was no less than the last miraculous survival of a craft centuries old. In the thirteenth-century Sainte-Chapelle, of Pierre de Montereau, in Paris there is a carving upon a door which represents the building of the Ark. Three mediaeval boat-builders are at work; one is swinging his mallet as he caulks the seams between the timbers, which a second is tarring from a pot with the aid of a long-handled brush; a third, standing inside the hull, is using the adze. I saw these tools used in precisely the same manner at Tooley’s Yard. The adze has become almost extinct among the tools of the country carpenter, who once used it extensively for squaring beams and roof-timbers, but among canal boat-builders this rural bygone still survives. The seams of the narrow boats are caulked with strands of oakum, and the noise of the mallets which I heard so often was that same sound which must have echoed through the woods by Beaulieu River when they were building the ‘Agamemnon’ and the ‘Euryalus’ on the slips at Buckler’s Hard. The tall rudder-post of the canal boat suggests an association even older, for the boatmen call it a ‘ram’s head’, and so recall the carved fighting ships of the Norsemen. On the inside of the hull the timbers are plastered with hot ‘chalice’, a time-honoured mixture of tar, cow-hair and horse-dung. Then a layer of felt or brown paper is applied, and finally the thin vertical oak planks, or ‘shearing’, are nailed into position. Sometimes the main timbers, or ‘strakes’, at the bow or stern have to be renewed. These have a double curvature to conform to the graceful inward and upward sweep of the hull. A single curve can be obtained by the conventional method of steaming, but it was explained to me that if both curves were obtained by this method in a piece of straight-grained oak, it would sooner or later crack and split. The craftsman’s solution is to obtain a timber having one correct curve already in the grain, so that it need be bent only in one direction. Mr. Tooley

'Narrow Boat' by L.T.C. Rolt



Ropework: 'ram's head' is the plaited crown; 'swan's neck' the length of fine work behind the 'elum' or helm. Whiteness by hard scrubbing with cut water.

must have carried this natural curve in his mind's eye, for he related how, years ago, he had spotted a suitable oak tree growing on the outskirts of the town, and when at last he heard that it was to be felled to make way for housing development, he bought it. Now it lay in the yard sawn into timbers ready for use, and I can think of no better fate that could befall an English oak.

-----ooooOoooo-----

Each member of the family played his especial part.



Tooley's yard at Banbury. George, left, is caulking seams with oakum and grease. Herbert, right, is fitting a new elm bottom plank.

George began in his spare time from the factory; he was the lettering expert, and painted the owner's name and port of origin in elaborate cream lettering, shaded with blue, on the large vermilion centre panel of the cabin side. Then it was the old man's turn to embellish his son's work with little garlands of bright flowers in the four corners and between the lettering. Finally it was left to Herbert, the younger son, to paint his castles on the four small side panels. Apart from striking a line with a chalked string to keep the lettering level, they did no preliminary sketching or spacing out whatever, but worked straight out of their heads with wonderful rapidity and skill. I watched fascinated while Herbert painted the four castles in the space of one afternoon.

-----ooooOoooo-----

Each boat carries two water-cans, one an open 'dipper' which, as its name implies, is dipped into the canal and used for a hundred and one domestic uses, from peeling potatoes to washing the captain's wool vest; the other is a tall can with handle, spout and lid, like a mammoth hot-water jug, in which drinking-water is stored. Both are elaborately decorated

with flowers, and often carry the owner's name in white letters on a red circumferential band.

-----ooooOoooo-----

'Narrow Boat' is available from IWA (Sales) Ltd. price £9.85 including post and packing.

Telesales No. 0101 586 2556

Tom Rolt Books available From IWA:-

Autobiography

Landscape with Machines £9.85

Landscape with Canals £9.85

Landscape with Figures £9.85

Transport

From Sea to Sea (Canal du Midi) £16.00

Other Tom Rolt Books

Sleep No More - *Railway, Canal and other stories of the supernatural* (Sutton Publishing Ltd) £4.99

Railway Adventures - *Tallyllyn Railway* (Sutton) £14.99

The Making of a Railway - *The Building of the Great Central Railway* (Sutton) £12.99

Extracts and Photos courtesy of Sonia Rolt and Sutton Publishing Ltd ©

CANALS ALIVE! VIDEOS FOR SALE

The following videos were released by British Waterways as part of the Canals Alive! celebrations of the cuts, culture and traditions of the Inland Waterways.

Further information is available from:
British Waterways Tel: 01923 201120.

These videos are compiled from old film stock and generally have the look and sound of the wartime propaganda films or old newsreels. This only adds to the feeling that one is eavesdropping on situations long gone and makes the videos a valuable addition to any canal archive or book shelf.

C200 - INLAND WATERWAYS

Reflecting the end of an era when commercial carrying on Britain's waterways ruled supreme. The video contains three British Transport Films - *There Go The Boats (1951)*, an evocative look at commercial carrying on the narrow canals as well as the story of the construction of our canals. *Bridge of Song (1955)* shows a new lock at Newark on the Trent Navigation being constructed and commissioned. *Inland Waterways (1950)* centres around a not wholly uneventful journey from Brentford to Birmingham for a narrowboat and butty.

Black and white, 65 mins.

C201 - TAKE TO THE BOATS

Combines two disparate films covering leisure and commercial activities on British canals. *Take to the Boats (1962)* is a previously unpublished film extolling the virtues of taking a holiday on the canals. Primitive by modern standards, the film details the types of craft available and includes a brief how to for those who had never been afloat before. *Grand Union Canal (1929)* is a silent film to promote the carriage of goods and materials on the GU from Regents Canal Basin in London through to Birmingham.

Colour and Black and white, 50 mins.

C202 - GENTLE HIGHWAY

The waterways of England played a quiet, but not totally un-noticed, part in the national war effort between 1939 and 1945. A cinema short *Barging On (1944)* was commissioned by the North West Regional Canal Committee to demonstrate the waterway's contribution, and the efforts of men and women who worked on them. The fascinating portrayal of canal history is in contrast to *Gentle Highway (1970)*, made at the end of the commercial canal carrying era. Evocative scenes of pleasure boating capture the magic of the waterways, while a sequence of commercial craft using the famous Anderton Boat lift shows waterways engineering at its most dramatic. *Civilised Adventure (1983)* surveys our waterways through the lens of two American film makers.

Colour and black & white, 57 mins.

C203 - "WATERWAYS OUR HERITAGE"

The two films on this video show something of the early decades of tourism on the inland waterways. In *Waterways - our heritage (1979)*, we follow a family cruising from Hillmorton near Rugby on the Oxford canal, via the Trent & Mersey and Shropshire Union canals to Wolverhampton. The history of the canal system is told as we travel. *World of the Waterways (1969)* follows an undergraduate's journey of discovery on canals. The broad waterways serving industry are contrasted with the canals and reservoirs used for cruising, sailing and fishing. Colour, 58 mins.

The videos are priced £9.95 (+ £1.25 p.p.) each from:-

**Film Archive Management and
Entertainment,
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Sussex
BN27 3UN**

Credit card orders to 01323 - 849186 or by Fax on 01323 - 840757 giving card number, expiry date and name and address of the card holder with your order.

ELLESMERE PORT BOAT MUSEUM

Those of you who have not yet visited the Boat Museum, at Ellesmere Port, have missed a treat. Combined with a trip to Chester and the Cheshire Oaks retail park you can have a hectic day or a leisurely weekend.

As well as permanent exhibitions and working demonstrations there are also many special events such as:-

June 28th/29th

Rose and Castles Painting Course
Weekend Painting Course £60

June 28th/29th

Rosie and Jim will be visiting for the weekend on their boat "Ragdoll"

July 6th

Pumphouse in Steam/Special - Boat movements and activities

July 27th

Keels and Wheels - Classic Car Show.

August 3rd

Pumphouse in Steam/Special (See July 6th)

August 1st - 20th

Maritime Meanderings - Paintings exhibition by Joe Beetham

August 24th/25th

Model Boat Convention
Pumphouse in Steam

September 7th

Pumphouse in Steam/Special (See July 6th)

September 13th/14th

Roses and Castles Painting Course £60

*For further details ring the
Boat Museum on 0151 355 5017*

SHARDLOW HERITAGE TRUST

On the "Letters" pages you will find a letter from Sheila Cooke, HCS member and publicity officer for the Shardlow Heritage Trust in which she describes the new Heritage Centre.

Shardlow has a unique place in the history of this country. The 18th century canal port, with its associated wharves and warehouses, is

clearly to be seen. Originally a river port, Shardlow developed greatly with the opening of the Trent and Mersey Canal in 1770. Goods were transferred from wide boats to narrowboats and stored during this operation or while awaiting redistribution by road, in a growing range of warehouses. Along with this development came all sorts of other businesses and buildings to support the carriers, boat builders, ropewalks, workshops, stores, stables, offices, workers' cottages and owners' houses.

The decline of the canal business brought different uses for the warehouses, but the area remains remarkably unchanged.

Shardlow really is worth a day out - and no need to be on a boat! The village is on the A6 only a few miles from Junction 24 on the M1. Recommended!

Opening Times at the Centre

Easter - May:

Saturdays and Sundays 11am - 5pm

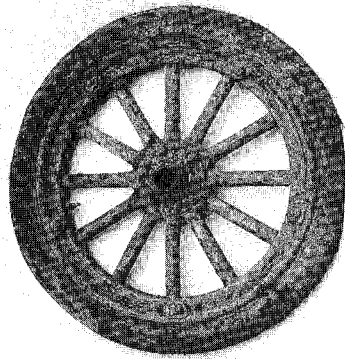
June - September:

Wed, Thurs, Sat & Sun 11am - 5pm

October - November:

Saturday and Sunday 11am - 4.30pm

December - March: Closed



Found at Guide Post, Stalybridge while dredging - known as an 'artillery wheel', dating from before 1920 - 30"x3.5" Goodyear tyre made in Canada - wooden spokes, excellent condition under muck - rest of vehicle not located - only one owner! - OFFERS?

CYCLISTS

However hard they try the image of cyclists is taking a lot of knocks these days, not helping with their insistence that they should all have virtually unlimited access to canal tow-paths.

Problems are being caused on the Kennet and Avon Canal from dust being thrown up by cyclists onto moored boats. The cyclists themselves are having to wear smog-masks to avoid nose, throat and lung irritation.

A canal society magazine says "I speak of cyclists, not the gently pottering cyclist who is out for a spot of exercise along a pleasant traffic free route, but the hard core of head down and cycle fast brigade who don't believe in bells or other warning devices. They cycle rapidly up behind walkers and strollers and expect to be given instant passage. Some of them even threaten violence if challenged as to their conduct. We hear of them riding over the expensive carbon fibre rods of anglers. Let's keep the towpaths for strollers, potterers, anglers, gentle cyclists, naturalists and all those who enjoy the peace and beauty of a unique waterside environment."

Even the Daily Mail had a go.

"An elderly woman takes her dog for a walk in Richmond Park. A passing cyclist causes her to stumble. She shouts after the receding blur of lurid Lycra: 'Don't you even say sorry?' He stops. Dismounts. Walks back to her and hits her in the face.

"This is a true story which a friend of mine witnessed last week and I'm afraid it doesn't surprise me one bit. In their aggressive bid for cyclists' 'rights' many cyclists have become dangerous, violent menaces. They mount pavements, cut up cars at traffic lights and routinely ride the wrong way down one-way streets. They claim a sort of moral superiority - but their behaviour is fast making them more loathed than drivers of Transit vans, Mini Metros and pizza delivery motorbikes." (*Daily Mail* 14.3.97)

Meanwhile BW are going gently ahead with plans to reintroduce cycle permits. A trial run

starts on the Kennet and Avon (only) from July 1st. Permits are £15 p.a. or £12.50 if bought in advance. Monthly passes are £5 (£4) children are free and BW boat licence holders get one free permit for lock-wheeling cycles. "Towpath Rangers" will enforce.

Although there were 10,000 free permits issued last year the estimated future cycle traffic is 1¼ MILLION per year! And that's before Sustrans start making cycleways everywhere. It's easy to see how the cycle can get supremacy over boats and fishing rods - by sheer numbers. (The above statistics were printed in June's *Waterways World*).

"A history of the breweries of Stalybridge, Dukinfield and Hyde" by Barry Sullivan.

Price £3.00 post free from:

B. Sullivan at 122, Cambridge St., Stalybridge, Cheshire SK15 1AU. Tel: 0161 303 0629.

I remember quoting from an earlier book of Barry's in *Plink* No.117 "A history of R.A. Barrett & Co. Ltd., Mineral Waters, Ashton-under-Lyne" and saying it wasn't the punchiest of titles. His latest offering is equally erudite of title but quite fascinating in content. It follows an earlier version on Ashton breweries which sold as far afield as America, Australia and South Africa.

There are 25 A4 pages and many photographs, beer bottle labels and advertisements. Heginbotham's of Stalybridge, Shaw's of Dukinfield and Creese's of Hyde. The histories cover the period from the mid-nineteenth century until the last brewery closed or changed hands in the earlier part of this century.

The stories are of hard-earned fortune and enterprise and are a fascinating insight into the business attitudes of the day. As always, Barry comes up with some quaint anecdotes - I particularly liked the account of the inquest into the deaths of Mr. John Cooper Chapman De-Burgh and Mr. John Heginbotham! I also discovered who invented "Barlova", the malted milk drink popular when I was a lad and also who marketed the first home-brew kit - Nobbie's Extract!

A good, interesting read. You may have to wait for a reprint if you don't hurry!

Ken Wright

"A CANAL PEOPLE" *The photographs of Robert Longden by Sonia Rolt.*

Reviewed by Ken Wright

As mentioned in Distaff Side in Pennine Link 120, the above book was published in March and I got myself a very early copy.

During a few brief years in the late 1940s and early 1950s Robert Longden, who at the time was a recently retired machine tools worker and keen amateur photographer, took a remarkable set of photographs of the narrow boat community at Hawkesbury Junction, also known as Sutton Stop, or Sutton's, the main meeting point for those who worked the Midlands canals.

The images are of a close community and represent its members in a very intimate way, at work, at play, in their domestic affairs and as they lived on the paired and single colourful narrow boats.

Sonia Rolt was a wartime volunteer worker on the canals (an alternative to the Women's Land Army). Unlike the majority of the volunteers, who left as soon as the war ended, Sonia stayed on and married into the boating community and Hawkesbury Junction became a regular port of call over the next five or so years.

This was where she met and befriended Robert Longden and, in the book's introduction, she tells of Longden's detailed studies of canal people, how she attempted many years later to find some of his photographs and how, eventually, she found well over a hundred glass slides in mouldy boxes in a garden shed. This part of the book is fascinating in itself.

The high quality photographs in the book, taken from the original glass transparencies and never previously reproduced, show a now vanished way of life. 150 pages are packed with information in the form of introductions to various sections and detailed captions to the 138 photographs, many of them full-page.

It is difficult to attempt to describe the power and simplicity of the photographs. They are quite superb, split into sections depicting the

place, the people, the work, the life, etc. But the title is 'A Canal People' and it is them, especially the women and children, who will make this book unforgettable and a fitting addition to any canalcoholic's library.

I am including several photographs, more or less at random, as a taster. They are all in Mrs. Rolt's copyright and are reprinted with her kind permission.

The book is published by Sutton Publishing Co. in co-operation with British Waterways and the Inland Waterways Association and is available from IWA Sales, by mail order only, on 0171 586 2556. ISBN 0 7509 1048 8 (Hardback)

SPECIAL OFFER!

Until the end of August the book is available from IWA at £19.99 (the actual cost price), but including post and packing.

RING NOW!

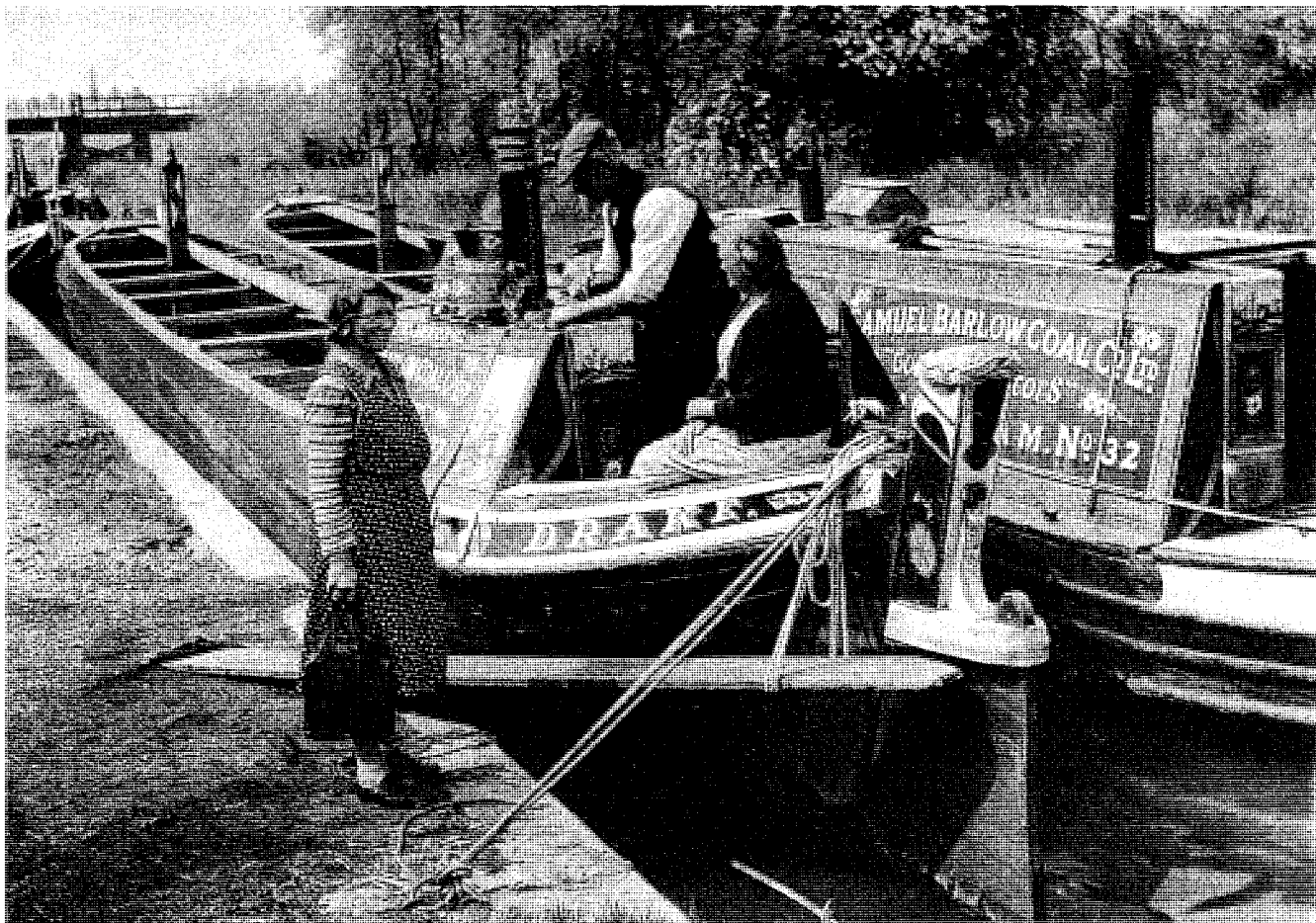


Sonia Rolt with her book - 'A Canal People'

Photo: Harry Arnold: Waterways Images



Here Doris Beechey (Mrs Bill Grantham) and sisters, and assorted children, make a group which would have appealed to Augustus John. In such family boats wash-day was every day, but a meeting and sitting together in the sun is a rare enjoyment, not to be missed.



Mr & Mrs Jack Skinner snr worked for Samuel Barlow Coal Company. They were the parents of the Jack Skinner who married Rose Hone seen earlier. Note the ingenious gangplank, fixed up to aid getting on and off an empty butty high out of the water. Here they are in conversation with Rose, Mrs Charlie Carter.



The vital ingredient of daily life, washing and keeping clean, rarely found so good an opportunity as this. Space for a good line, a handy support for a plank table and a fire for boiling water for clothes (which must be off the picture) were the main ingredients. Josie Grantham (nee Beechy) with her sister Netta, who married Henry Wilson, share the domestic labour.



Mrs Nellie Stokes (nee Littlemore) and the burnished throne of her butty Rae. Everything is in place and everything is perfect. The motor with a long line over the paired single locks at Hillmorton will pull her gently in.



A husband and wife team, probably without a mate or help, work a pair of loaded boats up the three locks at Hillmorton near Rugby. The two single locks for each lift side by side and the silted up canal below, made working them a mixture of effort and ingenuity. Here, for the wife, effort seems too weak a word.

'A Canal People' - Sonia Rolt



I have not found anyone who can identify the stoical boatwoman in this fine portrait. Perhaps she was a 'northerner' or from one of the Fellows, Morton & Clayton pairs taken over by British Waterways, who only then began to frequent Hawkesbury. She wears a traditional boatwoman's bonnet, graceful and less flamboyant than many. These were already rare and Robert Longden always tried to record both bonnet and wearer.

The second part of a serialisation of 'Storyline', the background material prepared for the Society by Archaeamedia Ltd., as part of our Millennium bid report on the Standedge Experience.

The Pioneering Canals

With the exception of the Bridgewater Canal, Pioneering canals were cheap to build, usually narrow, and compared with the later canals, easy to construct. They were earth-hugging, contour-trailing canals whose engineering had a going-along-with-nature aspect to it. The winding canals of this era like the old Birmingham Canal, the Oxford and the Wyrley and Essington (known as the 'Curly Wyrley') had the feel of Georgian craftsmanship in them. In their sinuous routes and the curving shapes of their lock beams, bridge-holes and parapets there were rustic echoes of eighteenth century landscape gardening, Chippendale chairs and Wedgwood pottery. In an unselfconscious manner of design they were by and large unmistakably English and appreciably of the aesthetic of their time.

The engineers who built these early canals were led by James Brindley, who, first on the Bridgewater and Trent and Mersey canals and then as a highly paid consultant, pioneered a form of engineering that put safety first and took few risks. Although the young Duke of Bridgewater seemed to take inspiration from Riquet's work on the Canal du Midi, these early British canal engineers seemed to have learned little or nothing from previous continental experience, but to have taught themselves again what men like Riquet had done a hundred years before. There is a myth that Brindley (described as "as plain a looking man as one of the boors of the Peak") was barely literate, but in reality he was an ambitious businessman and an inventive engineer who made models of aqueducts out of cheese and reputedly dug a trial lock in his own back garden.

Canals of the 1760s and 1770s, like the Birmingham, Chesterfield, Coventry, Droitwich, Oxford, Trent and Mersey and Staffordshire and Worcestershire, exhibit many Pioneering features. River valley routes were favoured and embankments and cuttings were avoided if at all possible. They utilised large numbers of locks strung out along the canal and these were part of a

general reluctance to find more daring and expensive engineering solutions. If aqueducts had to be built they were low, squat and oversized, and any tunnels were narrow and wonky and only built if there was no alternative. Most British canals were cut before the maps of the Ordnance Survey had appeared, and although local maps existed, engineers and surveyors had to work out their own maps by surveying and levelling the proposed route, and adjusting as they went along until they had found a satisfactory line.

At this time few people had the savings or monetary wherewithal to make long-term investments and consequently this limited initial capital meant that construction costs had to be kept to a minimum with expensive engineering works to be avoided. Building narrow canals not only kept the costs of construction down but also saved water, the engineer's other most pressing concern. With an average sized lock using between 30,000 and 40,000 gallons of water every time a boat passed through it, the engineer had to provide enough capacity in the summit level reservoirs to cover all eventualities. Water was a very valuable commodity in Britain at the time these canals were being constructed, due to its extensive use for industrial power. Because of this, allied to the scarcity of capital, waterways were designed and constructed to be as small as the estimated traffic would warrant. Hence the legacy of undersized canals, too limited to compete with the railways and roads and with their own built-in obsolescence.

The Heroic Canals

There were Heroic antecedents to be seen in some Pioneering works dating from the 1770s and 1780s, such as John Longbotham's great Leeds and Liverpool locks, the straight lines of John Smeaton's Birmingham and Fazeley Canal, the coast-to-coast Forth and Clyde and the stone architecture of the Thames and Severn. But the truly Heroic 'style' only emerged strongly between *circa* 1790 and 1820 - the dangerous and atmospheric years of the Napoleonic War and the Canal Mania. It is a style stamped with the imaginative, large-scale planning and inspired leadership of engineers like William Jessop, George Leather, John Rennie and, most famously

Pennine

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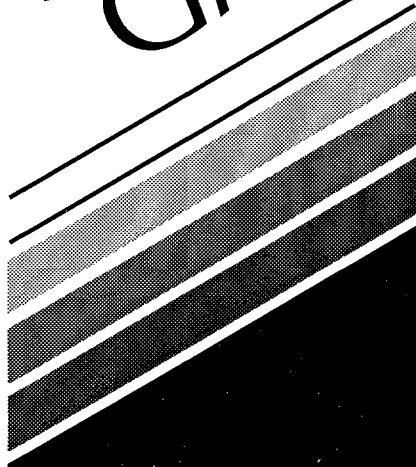
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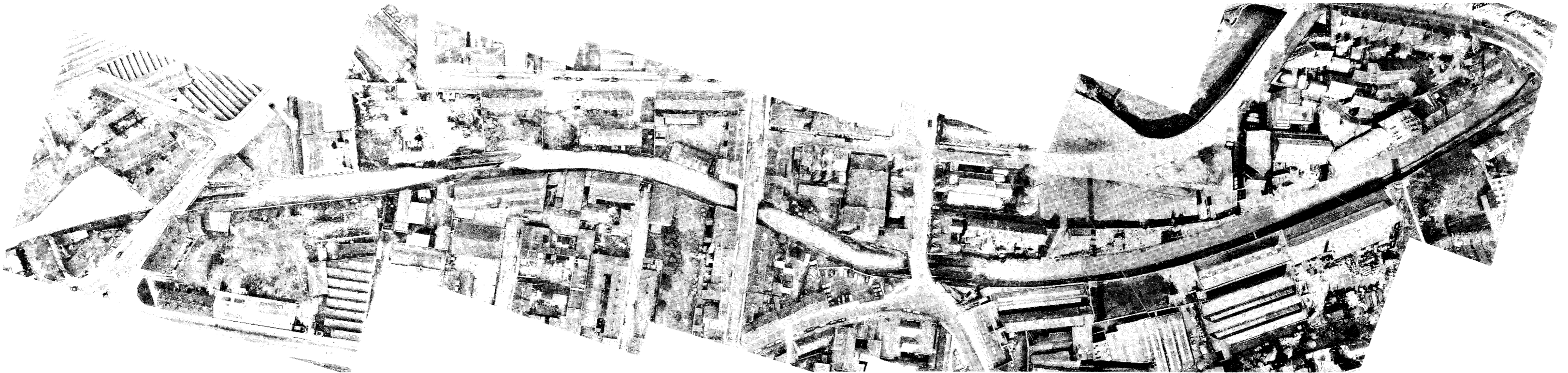
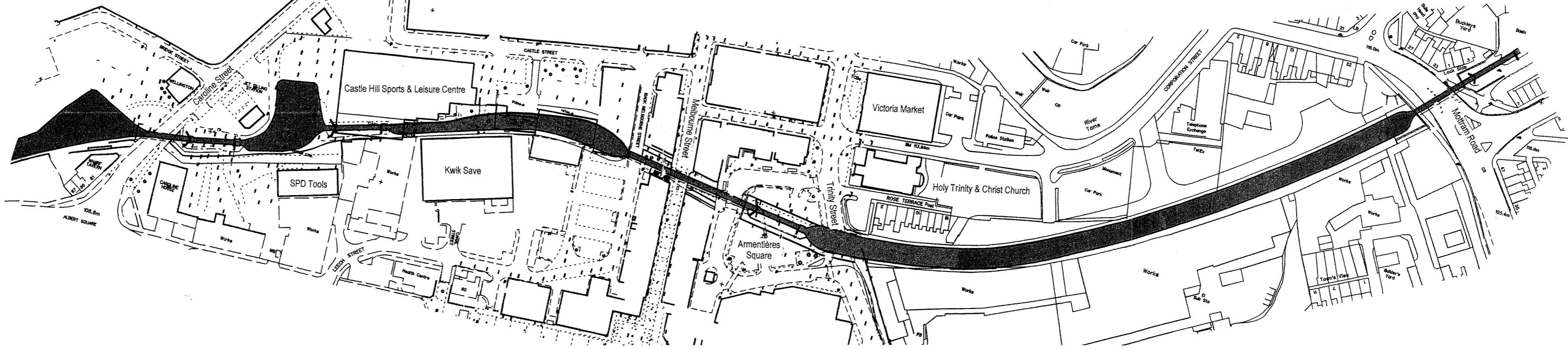
Above: A plan showing the proposed re-instatement of the Narrow Canal through the town centre.

Below: A mosaic of aerial photographs covering the plan area, taken in 1960, showing the original line of the Canal.

Studying the photo from left to right: the open area of Staley Wharf forms a prominent feature before the Canal passes under Caroline Street and enters Lock 4W. After a short pound, comes Lock 5W and the Canal passes under Melbourne Street and Trinity Street before entering Lock 6W. The Canal follows a long, graceful sweep as it approaches the bridge under Mottram Road.

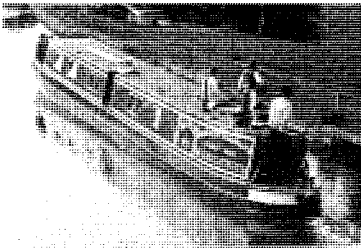
Looking at the proposed re-instatement of the Canal: of particular note is the relocation of Lock 6W to the centre of Armentières Square and the repositioning of Lock 5W requiring modifications to the Castle Hill Centre. The enlarged water area between Locks 4 & 5W will act as a vital reservoir for the use of Lock 4W.

Though the re-instated canal follows the original line, certain modifications to the channel will be inevitable due to recent town centre developments.



Re-instatement plan courtesy of Tameside M B
Aerial mosaic courtesy of Stalybridge Library

Pennine



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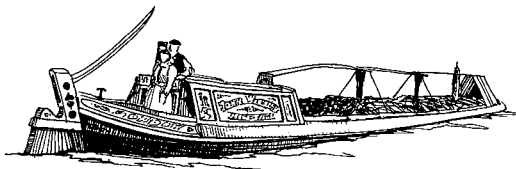
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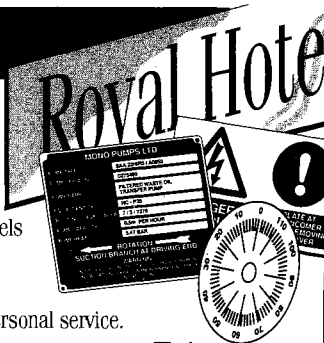
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Standedge Experience 'Storyline'

of all, Thomas Telford. Its characteristics include direct routes, deep cuttings, huge embankments, wide channels, long summits, locks in groups and flights, and the use of new technology.

Where Pioneering canals went along with nature, Heroic began to go up against it: up and down and straight through, instead of round and round. Canals now climbed dramatically through the landscape, cut through the rock, tunnelled beneath the hills and spanned the river valleys. They linked great towns and cities, sending water where it had no natural right to be.

The very idea of building a canal across the Pennines was quintessentially heroic, yet by 1816 three had been built; the Rochdale, the Huddersfield Narrow and the Leeds and Liverpool. In the Midlands, Jessop's Grand Junction ploughed its way towards London. In the south, Rennie joined the Kennet and Avon navigations by means of a broad, barge-carrying canal, distinguished by its massive, classically-detailed aqueducts. England's first ship canal, the Gloucester and Sharpness, revived the port of Gloucester.

The Lancaster Canal opened up north-west Lancashire. The Worcester and Birmingham, Grand Western, Cromford, Peak Forest, Llangollen, Macclesfield and Shropshire Union can all be considered to be Heroic Canals, and in Scotland the Caledonian Canal linked the North Sea with the Atlantic Ocean.

The best engineers of the period had the ability to design one thing after another. Rennie and Telford attended to everything from aqueducts to gudgeon pins, and there was a desire to not only make things work as well as possible but to make them look right too. The unerring instinct for quality is the hallmark of this period, and this is seen at its best on the Shropshire Union Canal of 1826-35, where the Canal Age reached its zenith. This was the last full-scale canal built in England by traditional methods, and its clean, sweeping lines and huge embankments and cuttings are perfect examples of Heroic engineering. Unfortunately this perfect example of canal engineering came too late to be anything other than a model for the next transport revolution, the railways.

PHOTO COMPETITION

**Improving weather - holidays
afloat or near waterways
imminent - get out that camera!**

In the last two PLinks we told you about the PHOTO COMPETITION which will be for photos taken between 1st January and 31st September this year.

Here are the rest of the rules again:-

* Prints only - black and white or colour - but winning entries will be reproduced only in black and white.

* Minimum size 6" x 4", Maximum 8" x 6".

* Any canal-related subject is acceptable, categories:

a) Huddersfield Narrow Canal

b) Other British waterways

* Junior section for photographers aged 16 or under in the same categories as above.

* Open only to bona fide members of HCS and their immediate families.

* Entries will be judged by Mr. Geoffrey Hope, past-President of Oldham Photographic Society and well-known in photographic judging circles.

* Entry is FREE but, if you want your prints back, we will need the return postage.

HOW TO ENTER

1. Send your photographs (maximum 5 per person) suitably reinforced with thin card to

PHOTO COMPETITION,
HUDDERSFIELD CANAL SOCIETY,
239 MOSSLEY ROAD,
ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE, OL6 6LN

2. Include details of the photographs (where and when), captions if you so wish and the name and age of the photographer, if 16 or under.

3. Include your name and address and the name of HCS member you are related to.

4. Include return postage if you want your prints back.

5. CLOSING DATE: MONDAY 10TH NOVEMBER, 1997

6. DETAILS OF THE PRIZES WILL BE GIVEN IN THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE OF PENNINE LINK

7. Full results and the winning photographs will be printed in the December issue Pennine Link.

Any queries to the Editor, Ken Wright,
Telephone 01457 873599

**PHOTO
COMPETITION**



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Ken Wright has some rambling thoughts on a couple of worthwhile activities.

REGENERATION

I have recently been writing a series of articles about the restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow for a local very glossy freebie called "Around Saddleworth". In the last issue I wrote about the Millennium grant offer and concluded "*may I suggest, to Saddleworth entrepreneurs, that the time has come to start thinking seriously about investment in canal-related businesses? Marinas, hire-boats, chandlery, etc. All will be needed soon!*"

As a result of this article I have already had an enquiry from a boat-owner asking when he can put his name down for a mooring in Uppermill!

For those of you who don't live near the canal Saddleworth is a tourist area just West of Standedge Tunnel and Uppermill is its central village, where the trip boat "Pennine Moonraker" operates. Just outside Uppermill is our transshipment warehouse and two large winding holes (or turning spaces) only yards apart.

More or less the same day as the boating enquiry, the Oldham Evening Chronicle carried an account of a plastics business operating in the old canal wharf buildings adjacent to one of the winding holes.

This firm is bursting at the seams but cannot

expand because it is trapped between the canal, the river and the Green Belt.

Consequently the area is crowded with the paraphernalia of the business and it is not a pretty sight (or site). To raise the capital to move, the company needs to sell the site for a good price.

The Council will not allow housing on the site but "*would accept leisure use.*" This is translated as meaning a public house.

What about a marina? And/or a hire-boat yard? The site is ideal. Two large pounds, a dry dock, existing "heritage" buildings waiting to be "done up", good road access, two locks for boat-hirer training and easy security and an excellent mooring before tackling Standedge Tunnel, a mile away. Plus easy access to shops, pubs, restaurants and tourist attractions

One of the main reasons for getting our Millennium grant is to find new jobs and "regenerate" canal-side land. The plastics company would increase their workforce from eight to 40 or 50 by moving and the canal boat base could employ as many as ten on a full or part-time basis.

I have just created about 50 jobs, removed unsightly industry from the picturesque canal-side and started a much needed boat centre.

If somebody else thought of it first why isn't it happening? Is it purely shortage of money? Why is the plastics firm spending £60,000 to improve a site they don't want? Why aren't



'Saddleworth Marina' on a murky May morning.
Heritage buildings, dry dock and lock.



Excellent road access!

What Next for HCS?

the Council taking a more positive interest?

Their "industrial" designation of the site is presumably because of its current use; it is wholly inappropriate in the area as it is now, residential with one pub and one farm.

As a ginger group shouldn't the Canal Society be looking at areas like this and trying to get things moving before opportunities are lost, as they might well now be in the above case?

The company confirm that they must move, eventually. Why not sooner than later to avoid too much abortive work and costs?

CANAL GUIDE

Trying to walk the dogs up the Diggle flight, against a steady stream of cyclists (well behaved!), walkers, other dog-owners, and trying to keep the dogs away from all those tempting food bowls full of maggots, it

occurred to me that I was surrounded by historic scenery and industrial archaeology and nowhere could I read about it in an easy way.

So, my second suggestion for the Society is the production of a towpath guide! Just as useful for walkers, many of whom are long-distance, and similar cyclists, who need shops and pub information as well as overnight stays. Plus maps and local and historical information.

There are plenty of professional ones for guidance and such a publication could keep a group of members happily occupied for a year or two - and bring in funds - and be ready for the first through boaters!

Ken Wright

Photos: K. Wright



Victoria Works in its canalside setting. Houses left and foreground.

I've got to start this time with a terrible admission. In Part 32 I said "... saw a splendid old working boat - Duteous ..." Just to prove that some people do read The Wife's Tale turn to the Letters pages and see what John Harwood has to say!

It's still Summer 1995 and we are well into our delivery of Keith and Jill Noble's boat "La Maitresse" from Keadby to Stratford upon Avon. Friends Bryn and Gwyneth replaced the original crew at Tamworth and we are now on the Coventry Canal at Atherstone.

Thursday 29th June

Destination - Hawkesbury Junction
(Sutton's or Sutton Stop)

Weather - Clear blue sky, brilliant sunshine, hot!

Distance - 29 miles, including Ashby Canal

Locks - 0

An absolutely gorgeous morning. Usually cruising around Easter-time this summer weather still comes as a surprise. Engine on at 7.35 and just beat a school boat to the off! Water very low - remarked how dirty it was. Wooded lush countryside - hard to believe we are getting near the 'industrial' heart of England. But then, isn't it always the same? There is far, far more "green and pleasant" than "dark, satanic"! Lots of huge allotments going into Nuneaton - resident photographer Bryn took a lovely picture - well he would have if he had remembered to put a film in the camera! Saw a water vole - first one on this trip, I think - they really are getting scarce.



The famous Greyhound Inn and iron bridge at Sutton Stop, or Hawkesbury Junction.

Filthy water all the way to the Ashby - sewage, debris of all kinds. Never seen so many privately owned narrow boats in such good condition. Best laid plans again. We had intended to go straight on to Coventry and overnight there to have a good look round but the Coventry Canal was **closed**, (Mon, Tues, Wed, I think) for some bridge works at Bridge 7. Signs at Hawkesbury Junction informed us of this. We moored up, had a quick look round and lunch outside in the sun at the famous old Greyhound pub. Excellent and only £2.95 each. Took on water and bought supplies at the equally famous shop.

Hawkesbury, known to the old boatmen and women as Sutton's or Sutton Stop is a wonderful collection of buildings, bridges and canals and has a very special place in canal history, immortalised in wonderful photographs by Robert Longden (see "A Canal People" elsewhere in this issue). Ken took a few good ones himself! We decided to retrace our steps (with great difficulty on a canal!) and have a look up the Ashby, less than an hour away. Unfortunately we were pointing towards Coventry so Ken did a truly magnificent 3-point turn in the famous bridge-hole, clearly inspired by the thousands who had done it before him.

The Ashby offers its visitors an information leaflet in a box on the first bridge - empty, of course! It is a very rural canal - and quiet, being a cul-de-sac. Huge farms, not v.



Hawkesbury Junction from the iron bridge. Coventry canal on the left, Oxford canal on the right, connected under the bridge.

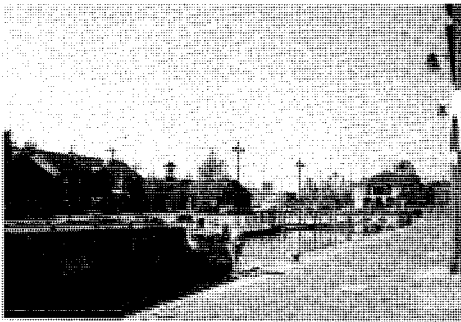
The Wife's Tale - Part 33

inspiring so took the opportunity to do some part learning. Bryn had a nap and G & K talked - some might say "as usual". Turned round at Hinckley, about 6 miles along the canal. Another superb 'wind' by HIM - I must stop praising him, it has a nasty effect! - back to Hawkesbury for the night. Excellent sandwich tea/supper. Over to the Greyhound about 9pm and had a couple of drinks in the garden. Back to the boat for more drinks and a lot of laughter. Set off to go to bed early but it was midnight before we managed to get ours organised! I can't imagine why.

Friday, 30th June

Destination - Rugby
Weather - Beautiful, dull later
Distance - 23½ miles
Locks - 1 (stop lock, Hawkesbury)

Another beautiful morning - left bed made up - decided to eat *al fresco*! Set off towards Coventry, having been advised by several "well-wishers" that we were heading for trouble. All sorts of stories of vandals and unfriendly anglers. Not on our trip! We certainly didn't see any vandals and the anglers were more friendly than we had met in a long time! And what a treat we would have missed. Whether it was because the canal had been closed for a few days or, as we were told, because of some totally friendly discharge into the cut, the water was absolutely crystal clear with lush underwater vegetation - and teeming with fish! No wonder



The new canal basin, Coventry.

the anglers were friendly, we had not experienced anything like it since glass-bottomed boat trips in the Red Sea! Wonderful.

Unfortunately a lot of the growth got caught on the prop and Ken cleaned it off. Looking into the weed hatch was like looking into an illuminated fish tank! An incredible sight. Worth the trip just for that but more was in store. We hadn't heard about the very recent improvements to Coventry Canal Basin.

Somebody has spent a fortune, like a mini-Castlefield. On into the city; we had decided to see the cathedral and then get on our way. What a magnificent building! I had a lump in my throat the whole time I was there. It is a truly holy place with such a fantastic history. I can't go on about it here but, if you have never seen it, make the effort - and double the



Coventry Cathedral.

enjoyment by going by boat. Just think, if we had taken any notice of the advice at Sutton's, we would have missed so much.

Ken bought some new specs. at Boots to replace some presumably lost overboard (a bit expensive at £19.99 - he usually pays £2.99, at the most £5.99!) Even I can read with them. Had to stop twice to clear weed and bottomed a couple of times in bridge-holes.

Ken cleaned the boat and Bryn fish watched - saw several really huge ones - oh for a rod and line! Moored at Sutton's for another lunch at the Greyhound - this place is like a magnet for steel narrowboats! - still excellent value although Bryn thought £1 for an extra fried egg was a bit much. Onto the Oxford through the tight cast iron bridge and a double turn. Lock-keeper warned us about low water from Napton to Warwick on the flights. Through

undulating country to Stretton Wharf, the home of Rose Narrow Boats - the one with the distinctive "ROSE" logo! Crowded moorings at the shop. First-timers being instructed and one - Swan Lake - all over the place!

The wooded scenery is so lovely and one can see why people say the Oxford is one of the premier canals - but it's all the same - beautiful but boring! On to Rugby. Stopped at Tesco and had a shop. All had showers and Gwyneth made sandwiches. To the Toby pub at Bridge 58, only one drink and back to the boat (usually means there was loud music but not recorded!). Weather has changed - a lot cooler - oh, dear! Strikes me this crew has had a very easy time of it - two days, one stop lock!

Saturday, 1st July

Destination - As far as we could get!

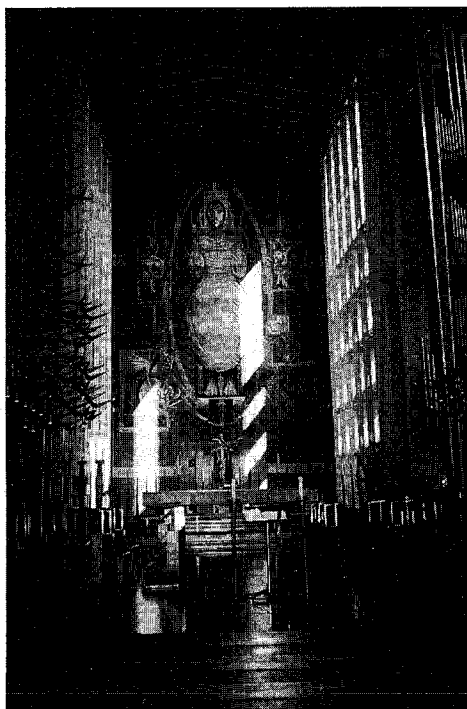
(Long Itchington)

Weather - Overcast and slight drizzle

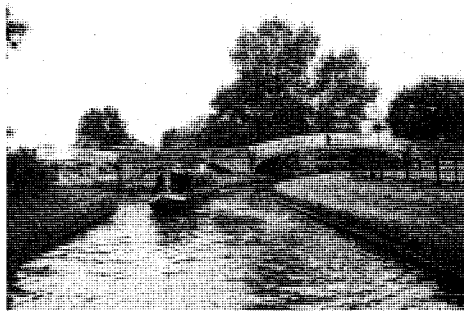
Distance - 19½ miles

Locks - 13

Drizzly and a bit windy. What a change from yesterday. Came upon a plastic cruiser with a young family aboard just as we approached Hillmorton Locks. Not a clue about locks so helped them out. Down Hillmorton (duplicated) locks. Another famous canal name but not much to see. Passed a field full of lapwings with chicks - obviously something in there suited their diet! On to Braunston, the Piccadilly Circus of midland canals - as usual



Coventry Cathedral.



Braunston Junction.

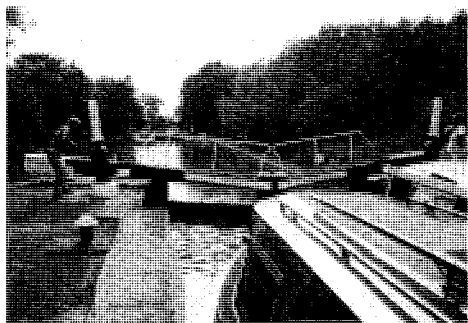
The Wife's Tale - Part 33

humming with activity. Mainly boat-owners doing their weekly visit to make sure their boats are still there and chinwag with the neighbours. Stopped before the turn and filled with water, then walked to the marina and met Tim Coghlan, the Braunston entrepreneur. He couldn't sell us the little brass door catch to replace one HE had broken - because he didn't have one - but he did show us where Ken's nephew's boat was - "Proper Job" - had a good look round it - from the outside.

To the "Boatman" pub for lunch and watched the frenzied activity on the water. Glad we are turning away and not tackling this stretch on a Saturday afternoon!

Left at 1.45 and a smart right turn into the Grand Union Canal where it combines with the Oxford. This section was improved during the depression in the 1930's and is lined both sides with concrete cappings - all with the date cast into the surface every few yards! Also unusual are the distinctive paddle winding gears, operating on a worm and taking for ever to wind up - but very easily. And they take just as long to wind down - it was only much later that I discovered that the paddles go down on their own - unassisted, and gently - probably the only ones on the system to do so! Still, it was good exercise.

Approaching Napton Junction we were lined up for a bridge-hole when a boat coming from the opposite direction realised, too late, that we had "right of water" being much nearer the



Stockton locks. Typical 1930's Grand Union paddle gear and concrete-capped wash walls.

bridge. The steerer misjudged the job completely, rammed the concrete wall and bounced sideways onto us, just as our bow was clearing the hole. Took some red paint off but no other damage. Profuse apologies etc! I don't think he had been boating long!

Through Napton Junction and on to Calcutt Locks and Calcutt Boats - doing the initiation lock-wheeling trip with the Saturday change-over hirers. Some delay but quite entertaining, really. And nice to see a canal really busy. Got talking to the owner of the boat in front of us - she was ranting on about 'Swan Lake' again, wasting water by going down locks on its own. We both managed to leave 'Swan Lake' behind in the confusion!

Down Stockton Locks, 8 in a row plus 2, with "Albert" from Coventry - v. efficient - all 10 locks in 1 hour 1 minute! All very ready for a drink - and showers - moored at Itchington Bottom - a name for Terry Wogan to conjure with!

After dinner Ken then decided to mend the shower, as the pump had decided not to. It involved taking half the side of the bathroom away - not a bit easy. The language was foul and he got so fed up that he abandoned the job in mid-flow and we got to the pub at 9.45!

There are seven pubs within easy walking distance but we plumped for the "Two Boats". It was packed, being Country and Western night, the entertainer was - well - noisy, and amplified! We opted to sit outside but it was quite chilly so, after one drink we returned to the boat for more. Just before we went to bed HE had another go at the shower and it was all done in minutes! The benefits of lubrication, I suppose!

Couldn't get to sleep for the loud pop music from a pub on the opposite side of the cut!

NEXT TIME - on to Warwick and another crew change.

Photos: A & K Wright

'WHAT THE PAPERS SAY' *Not a lot, actually! The local press has been relatively quiet since I last collated the cuttings. Maybe the calm before the storm; Press Officer Alec Ramsden recharging his batteries before the start of the Millennium works, perhaps?*

Anyway, here are a few snippets. The first relates to the speed limit on A670, Wool Road, Dobcross, as it passes the Transshipment shed (sorry, warehouse). I have said it before, and I will say it again, now, that the proper way to reduce vehicle speeds on A670 is to alter the appearance of the road in conjunction with the canal bridge works required for restoration. It is worth investigating whether the "traffic-calming" roadworks could be financed from the savings in reduced bridge-works. Or is that too simple a proposition?

Customers object to 40mph limit

The speed limit on a part of Wool Road, Dobcross, is to be increased, despite opposition from residents and parish councillors.

Members of Oldham Environmental Services Committee agreed to raise the speed limit to 40mph from a point near Spurn Lane to just past Sugar Lane.

Letters of objection to the change from 30mph were received from two councillors, local residents, and customers of the Navigation Inn.

But the report by Paul Fletcher, Director of Technical Services, suggested that the increase would not result in any more problems.

It was also supported by police, who said most traffic travelled at between 40 and 50 mph in the 30mph zone.

The stretch also qualified for the increased limit under Department of Transport criteria.

Councillor Jon Comyn-Platt asked the meeting to ensure another check in 12 months' time to see if any problems had arisen because of the increase.

Councillor Howard Sykes added: "*It needs looking at. I will be amazed if after the opening of Standedge Tunnel, the traffic increases, and we do not have to look at this again.*"

Oldham Evening Chronicle 5.3.97

Directors for Canal Company

Two Oldham councillors will be appointed to the new limited company which will oversee the completion of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal restoration.

The canal recently won a £14.85 million Millennium Commission bid towards the restoration, and a project co-ordinator will be appointed.

The limited company will be a charity, and board members will come from five partners - Oldham, Tameside and Kirklees councils, British Waterways and the Huddersfield Canal Society.

Oldham's directors will be Councillor Riaz Ahmad, chairman of the Environmental Services Committee, and Councillor Jim Greenwood, chairman of the Education and Leisure Services Committee.

Oldham Evening Chronicle 5.3.97

Canal trips unlocked

There was good news this week for local people who like to take their weekends afloat. Narrow-boat canal trips should be back in action in Uppermill at Easter.

British Waterways is now in the final stages of completing repairs to two locks in the village. It says that the maintenance work was a vital part of keeping the Huddersfield Narrow Canal open.

Oldham Evening Chronicle 27.3.97

Pubs approached by canal owners

British Waterways is looking at buying up pubs and restaurants along the route of the soon-to-be revamped Huddersfield Narrow Canal.

Their finance expert, Kevin Tierney, has approached 16 or 17 pubs, including about 10 in the Huddersfield area.

Guy Lawson, spokesman for British Waterways (BW) - the owners of the canal - said: *"We are interested in any that are likely to be on the market in future. We want to work in partnership with other organisations to ensure that we provide the full range of facilities necessary once the canal is restored."*

Huddersfield Canal Society press officer and chairman of the narrow canal joint committee marketing group Mr. Alec Ramsden said: *"Commercial development would be a major part of the restoration picture - and not just pubs and eating houses. There are proposals for profitable use of many of the historic but disused buildings along the line of the canal and we are hoping that the private sector will be actively involved."*

At The Tunnel End pub, Marsden - yards from Standedge Tunnel - landlady Corinne Shaw said they had been approached but were not interested in selling. She was sceptical of how much benefit the canal opening would bring but said they hoped to reap any benefits themselves.

Mr. Lawson said: *"This will be a super canal but we need facilities for boaters and other visitors to be in place to bring more benefits to the communities between Ashton and Huddersfield. We are working with Kirklees Council and Huddersfield Canal Society to make sure the restoration is a success."*

The Standedge Experience visitor centre at Tunnel End was one scheme which would bring money into the area and there would be spin-off benefits in boosted sales for pubs and cafes, said Mr. Ramsden.

Huddersfield Examiner

Waterway dream 'will happen'

A 10-POINT action plan for successful waterways restoration was unveiled to canal campaigners in the north at a meeting at Dobcross.

The blueprint was presented to the Northern Canals Association by Keith Gibson, chairman of the Huddersfield Canal Society's restoration wing, at a meeting at the Wool Road transhipment warehouse.

Millennium money and matching funds from other sources, including Oldham Council, has provided £31 million for what was once regarded as the impossible dream of restoring the Huddersfield Canal.

Members of canal societies and other waterways organisations were told that their restoration motto should be *"one day it will happen"*.

Support from public and local authorities was vital and restoration had to be possible, as it would bring important economic and environmental benefits, he said.

Conference delegates were shown practical restoration examples and walked the Diggle flight of locks.

Society chairman David Sumner said key issues were vision, co-operation and dedication. *"We have certainly had our ups and downs in the 22 years since the apparently crackpot campaign to restore the canal was started,"* he said.

"But we always saw a light at the end of the tunnel and thanks to a sound working partnership, we shall see our dream come true - with all the benefits that will bring - by the turn of the century."

Oldham Evening Chronicle 28.3.97

The next item was published the night before the event and gave us no time whatever for the Society to be represented at the open meeting, nor were we advised in advance. Seems odd, when OUR canal actually laps against the

walls of the Saddleworth Museum! Or did somebody think that our presence might stifle the speaker? Anyway, I for one would like to hear what he has to say and, following a conversation with Paul, there is a chance of a future talk to HCS, or an article in *Link*. I look forward to that.

Restore or modernise?

Local historian Paul Sillitoe makes an interesting observation in a special talk to Saddleworth Historical Society tomorrow night: is re-opening a canal to navigation more important than preserving its historical character?

Paul, whose job at the Oldham Local Studies Library partially disguises his expertise as an industrial archaeologist, will discuss the pressures that have contributed to restoration at various schemes.

"The debate is, if you like, about the differences between re-opening a canal by lining it with concrete and overflying it with concrete bridges, or reopening it by restoring the original stonework and cast iron." he explained.

He suggests that the National Lottery - which has already handed almost £40 million to the Kennet and Avon and our own Huddersfield Narrow restorations - has meant that it is possible not to have to cut corners quite so much in the race to restore navigation.

"There are many points to make in the debate - and that is all I hope to do," he said. *"I have had no involvement in the Huddersfield Canal project and haven't seen the detailed proposals, so can't really comment on it. But I hope the restorers have conservation as much in mind as navigation."*

Paul's talk is at Saddleworth Museum from 7.30 pm. The meeting is open to non-members.

Oldham Evening Chronicle 7.5.97

The following is the latest reported news on the Rochdale Canal (April). Let's hope the situation has improved by now.

Canal hope sinking?

Ambitious plans to reopen the Rochdale Canal, to make a free-flowing waterway between Sowerby Bridge and Manchester have run into serious problems.

Oldham Council cannot afford the advance funding the project needs and has been unable to find a development partner. Even if the funding was in place the project would still have another stumbling block to overcome - United Norwest Co-op's understandable reluctance to move from its store to make way for the canal.

At this stage it does not look too promising. Any delay in the £24 million project would mean it would not meet the Millennium Commission's grant conditions and would, therefore, lose the lion's share of its funding. Without that, the project would be doomed.

It would be a pity if the restoration bid failed now because there is unlikely ever to be a better chance and the hope must be that Oldham Council can find a partner with the vision to see the long-term benefits of opening the canal.

It is a different and happier story at the other side of the borough where plans to reopen the Huddersfield Canal are moving at some pace. A Millennium grant and matching funds from other sources, including Oldham Council and the private sector, means that £31 million is already in place to turn what once seemed an impossible dream into reality. A 22-year roller-coaster ride of disappointment, elation and despair have brought the supporters of the Huddersfield project close to the end of the journey and they deserve enormous credit for sticking with it.

Editorial, Oldham Evening Chronicle,
1. 4. 97

Canal visit probes the secrets of Standedge

British Waterways chairman Bernard Henderson went underground to probe the secrets of Huddersfield Narrow Canal.

He was joined by Huddersfield Canal Society chairman David Sumner and Cllr. George Speight, chairman of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal Joint Committee, on a visit to the waterway, the country's No.1 canal restoration project.

Part of the trip included a boat ride into Standedge Tunnel - the longest and highest canal tunnel in Britain - which runs more than three miles from Marsden to Diggle.

Millennium Fund cash and money from English Partnerships and colleagues in the restoration drive - British Waterways, the canal society and Tameside, Oldham and Kirklees councils - will make £31m available.

The cash will be used to re-open the waterway in a bid to bring jobs and improved environmental and leisure facilities to communities along the canal. The tunnel is scheduled to become part of the Standedge Experience leisure and tourism attraction at Tunnel End, Marsden.

Mr. Henderson said British Waterways was looking forward to working in partnership. He added: *"Restoration of this unique structure will bring new life and new opportunities which will bring new life and new opportunities which will more than justify the public and private investment involved. When complete the scheme will reflect the remarkable enthusiasm of all those who live locally and have been involved."*

Mr. Sumner said: *"Mr. Henderson was very impressed with what he saw and plans for developments and we welcome the pledge of solid British Waterways support for the scheme. By the millennium the canal, once neglected and forgotten, will be a facility of which we can be proud."*

Huddersfield Examiner 29.3.97

Windfall turns canal dream into reality

A timetable to restore the full stretch of historic Huddersfield Narrow Canal has been unveiled.

A £15m payout from the National Lottery's Millennium Commission, handed over to canal enthusiasts in December, will turn a 20-year dream into reality.

The lottery cash is being put towards a £31m scheme to restore and re-open the full 20-mile-long waterway linking Huddersfield and Ashton-Under-Lyne.

Huddersfield Canal Society first detailed this ambition when it was formed in 1974. And the lottery boost means the remaining "blocked" sections of the canal will be re-opened by the dawn of the 21st century.

Among the stretches needing work are parts by Sellers and Co and Bates and Co off Chapel Hill, in Huddersfield. Work on both these is set to start next year and will be completed by summer, 1999.

Another major chunk involved is in the centre of Slaithwaite and the work on that part of the canal will cost an estimated £3.02m.

Campaigners on both sides of the Pennines, having celebrated the massive windfall, say it's now time to get down to serious hard work.

Mr. Keith Gibson is chairman of the group formed to co-ordinate the work, Huddersfield Canal Society Restoration Ltd. He said: *"Set down on paper it may sound very simple. But it is far from simple. No other canal society is so intimately involved in a process such as this. We are treading new ground."*

Mr. Gibson added: *"It is not going to be easy to meet the requirements of the Millennium Commission in the short time allowed."*

"We have to flesh out the details of how the project will be managed to guarantee completion by the millennium and to guarantee that the canal will be maintained for at least 125 years afterwards."

Members of the canal society are busy taking photographs of the sites involved in the restoration so they can compile a series of before and after pictures.

Huddersfield Examiner 29.3.97

Due to a lack of items, and the Chairman's inability to attend, the Council meeting in April was cancelled, so the news is old news from the February meeting! Still relevant, though.

HCS are getting involved with Kirklees Council and British Waterways in working up the Standedge Experience proposals.

Proposals to move the Oldham Otter from its safe house in the end of Standedge Tunnel at Diggle to provide boat trips at Stalybridge Boat Rally (24 - 26 May) were frustrated by access problems for the crane and low-loader and associated costs. Also Council decided that the boat could not be moved unless it went to another secure mooring.

The above event is also seriously affected by an embankment collapse on the Peak Forest canal. BW are carrying out remedial work but the canal will not be re-opened until 21st June. Any boats coming to Stalybridge will, therefore, have to come up the Ashton Canal flight from Manchester.

Availability of "accessible" cash is causing some problems for our treasurer. HCS acts as a bank for HCS Restoration, funding it

between payments from the local authorities. Also, we have put a substantial sum into the purchase of Standedge Pioneer, various consulting fees and the canal heritage audit.

Preliminary details of the formation of the Huddersfield Canal Company were discussed. This body will run the Millennium restoration works and comprises members from the three local authorities, BW and HCS. David Sumner and Keith Gibson are our reps. on the Board.

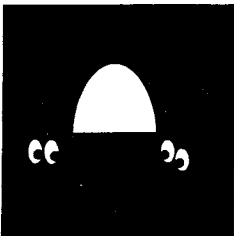
The Society has agreed to support BW in their new positive attitude towards running the restoration project.

Discussion took place on the ever-present problem of finding future work for our HCS(Restoration) workforce. It is hoped that some of the Millennium work can be brought forward to give work continuity and/or that BW will be able to take advantage of our skills and experience. - they will obviously have to expand their maintenance workforce as the rate of restoration increases.

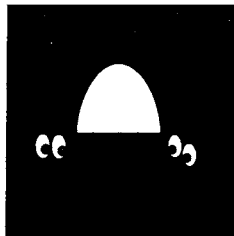
Derek Cochrane (BW Regional Manager) and Dr. David Fletcher (BW Chief Executive) have both accepted invitations to our AGM (6th June).

Ken Wright

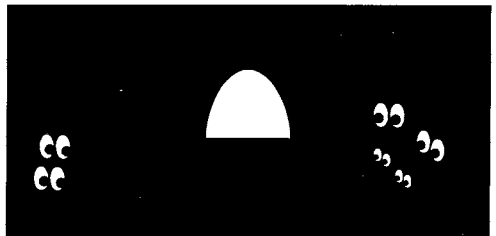
In Standedge Tunnel ...



Look, you said we'd go and visit ...



I know, but they have such airs and graces ...



(Since they moved to Judy Wide)

Dear Ken,

Thank you. I now have my membership card.

Thoughts and observations from a number of recent walks along the canal.

A fisherman was telling me how much he appreciates the recent dredging. He thinks it will improve fishing once all the work has been done.

An elderly couple were out walking near Scout Tunnel. They said they would like a water boat service!

Today before I went walking I looked at old photographs of the canal in Stalybridge library. Have they all been used in publications? If the society can get permission some would be interesting for PLINK.

Someone suggested the dredgings might be suitable for selling for top soil! Would it be suitable?

I noticed there are a number of old bottles in the rubble at the bridge where the sponges were found. I hope the bottles will be rescued.

More than one person has expressed concern that dredging will start between Grove Road and Lock 9W when birds are laying their eggs. They have suggested a quick tidy up before dredging starts properly would help things e.g. remove weeds.

Someone commented today that the new walls near Lock 12W were not straight.

What about a progress board near Mottram Road, Stalybridge so locals can see where progress is being made and what is planned? Shop keepers in Stalybridge hope the restoration can be completed before they are forced out of business. They think it will bring trade to the town.

No doubt I will have more comments as I meet many interesting people on my regular walks along the canal.

Yours sincerely,

Joseph Yeomans, Stockport.

I shall certainly be looking at the old photographs, possibly with a future "Photo Feature" in mind.

Dredgings, generally, are a disgusting mixture of silt, stone, metal and glass and separating out the silt would be a very expensive process. Where the silt is more or less "clean" it is very, very fine and dries into a hard crust.

It could be of use for lightening a clay soil but not for much else.

We have pulled hundreds of bottles from the canal but the large majority are worth very little. They have all been examined by Barry Sullivan, a local bottle collector and expert, and those of any interest have been put on display in the transshipment warehouse. The rest are being saved for an eventual car boot sale!

It is not really practicable to programme dredging work to avoid birds' breeding times but, on the evidence so far, our operations do not deter wild life. In fact the opposite seems to be the case; during dredging this Spring a pair of mallards swam to meet the tug every time it passed their "home"!

I wouldn't dare comment on the walls at Lock 12W beyond saying that, on my visits, the workmanship looked excellent.

I'm afraid "progress boards", if used at all, would be wanted at many sites along the canal from now on. They are expensive, difficult to maintain, and vandal-prone. That is why we prefer to use the local press - and Pennine Link - to keep people informed. Ed.

The following letter is from regular contributor, and crossword compiler, John Harwood. He leaves me, or rather, The Wife, with a certain amount of egg on face!

Dear Ken,

Sorry to be troubling you again but my eye was caught by a piece in 'The Wife's Tale' in number 120 now I've had chance to read it through. What follows is in no way a criticism of the writer - perhaps more a compliment to the builder mentioned below.

Page 27 - "saw a splendid old working boat - Duteous."

Duteous was in fact built in about 1988 in Burton by Dave Harris and fitted out by Tony Francis - full credit to them for producing a 'splendid old working boat'!

Jan & Dusty Miller lived aboard Duteous from building until last year (witness the shopping trolley and TV aerial on the photo). Unfortunately due to

Jan developing spinal problems, making living in the limited space aboard increasingly impractical, they were forced to let Duteous go in favour of a boat with a more modern layout.

Many is the cup of coffee I have shared with them aboard Duteous whilst taking work breaks from driving in the Burton area. I first met them when we moored together on one of my hire boat trips.

I apologise for the fact that I am filling too much of the photo but Jan can be seen in command here at Willington with the Toyota factory in the background.

Regards,

John Harwood, Eyam, Hope Valley.

John restores my self-confidence by writing elsewhere:-

"I used to think Plink was a good magazine - how wrong I was - seeing this month's (No.120) it moves forward into the category of superbly excellent; sincere compliments to you."



Photo: D & J Miller

Dear Ken,

Reading the latest Plink (120) while watching the Easter boating rush from our garden, I spotted in the Wife's Tale that she misses the canal museum at Hoskins Wharf, Shardlow. This is now a Mansfield Brewery family pub called the Clock Warehouse (photo p27).

Across the car park we have opened a Shardlow Heritage Centre in a 1770's Salt Warehouse. We are obviously smaller than the former museum but we are specific to the village and the canal in relation to the village. We have a full size model canal narrowboat cabin plus audio visual presentation, cases on local history from the iron age onwards and wall displays including River Traffic, Coming of Canal, Canal Companies, Local Warehouses, Life on the Cut, Pubs and Breweries.

We can take parties - which include a guided walk round the village - at £1.50 per head.

We publish a village trail for 25p and a set of colour reproduction postcards c1910 - eight for £2.20 inc. p & p from me. For a s.a.e. I can send the current brochure and programme.

We are volunteer run on sweat, tears and mini-grants so we need to encourage people to stop and visit - only 50p - children free.

Yours sincerely,

Sheila M. Cooke,
Publicity and P.R., Shardlow Heritage Trust,
14 Millfield, Shardlow,
Derby, DE7 2HD

Dear Ken,

A little funny, serious snippet for the next Pennine Link;

*QUE SERA SERA.
Whatever will be, will be!*

In other words, if it can go wrong, it will go wrong, and if it can go wrong for a newly licensed Skipper, it will go wrong on the maiden voyage.

Ask Julie Wilson!

She is having sweatshirts printed for her first crew;

*"We crewed with Julie ...
and we lived to tell the tale."*

Never mind Julie, we all love you, and you coped well!

Letters to the Editor

I hope that will intrigue you Ken, enough to print it, just to show that every boat trip does not go like clockwork, and it can go wrong with a vengeance. We do get days when nothing does go right and Julie's first trip was one of those days; it was very frustrating for her, but please ask her yourself.

Regards,

Peter Wright,
Huddersfield.

I was intrigued, and I did ask Julie, and her story of her first day as skipper of a trip boat is right here! Ed.

Date: 17 April 1997

(Very new) Skipper - Julie Wilson

Crew Members:

Janet Wilson - also a skipper

Peter Wright

Jason Maskell - my partner and trainee

Destination:

Jet Amber, Peak Forest Canal, Ashton

Passengers:

Children from the local primary school

Started off at 12 o'clock, myself on the tiller, towards Jet Amber, the playing fields and winding hole on the way to Hyde. All went well until our return, when Jason opened the lift bridge and I went through. The occupant of the farm was waiting to cross in her car and as it lowered to about a foot from closing, she drove across and nearly took his arm off. Needless to say he was not impressed.

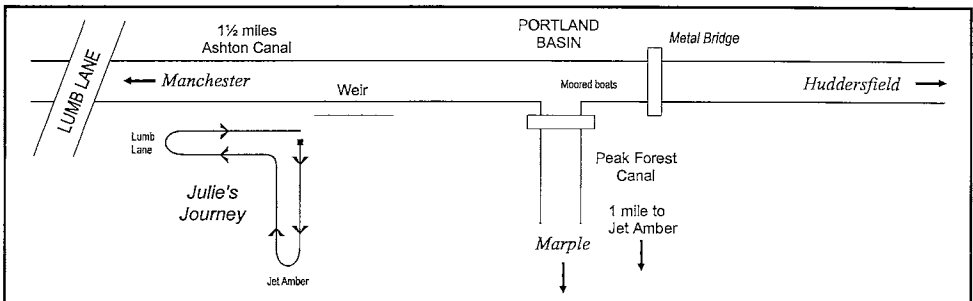
The teacher then asked if we could take them to Lumb Lane as it is closer to the school and would save them the trouble of catching the bus. I agreed and off we went. On the second bridge from Portland Basin something was caught round the prop ... a pair of jeans. Then, after dropping the group off, we had just set off when something else caught ... an umbrella. I was fuming; 45 minutes later, having been up to the armpits in freezing water, I let Janet take us back to the basin, through the tunnel ... and she lost steering.

Needless to say Jason, Peter and I ended up pulling the Greater Manchester all the way back, only to get stuck on the weir and then have trouble mooring up as we had to cross the metal footbridge *and* swing the boat round. At Portland Basin there were two other boats moored up and we had to moor up next to them. Janet went down the weed hatch at this stage only to find an industrial bag wrapped firmly round the prop. There was no way of removing it as the Stanley knife was blunt, so we left it until the following day.

It was then I realised I hadn't got my mobile phone with me, so I checked the boat over and could not find it anywhere. Then it dawned on me; on the way to Jet Amber, Jason had joined me on the tiller and as I moved to allow him to steer, something dropped in the water ... yes, you've guessed ... the fish can now contact relatives all over the country!

So there you have my first day as Skipper ...one that I shall not forget in a hurry!

Julie Wilson.



Having fallen into canals since she was six, Sarah Wright takes a backward look to a teenage diary entry ...

Dear Diary ...

This parental obsession with canals is a bit odd. As a teenager trying to learn the basics of canalling, I'm not finding it easy. Firstly, why can't I put toilet paper down the toilet? There's a flush toilet at home which seems to accept all kinds of waste. But not on this boat. "DO NOT PUT ANYTHING INTO THIS TOILET WHICH MAY CAUSE IT TO BLOCK". O.K., so where do I put my wad of loo roll? If I open the window, I can throw it in the cut - but then the waterways of England will have the same paper problem as the Himalayas. This is very hard indeed!

Secondly, the shower makes a horrible noise and once clean I have to walk on disgusting lino (standard cream with brown patterns your outside loo wouldn't be seen dead in!) to sweep the floor clean with my feet. And this is meant to be fun!

Why was I press-ganged on this holiday? To drive the boat in the rain? To open locks? To walk the dog? Child slave labour - a small step away from a return to Dickensian values!

And there are some really odd people around. Fashion sense is binned in favour of stay-pressed Bermuda shorts and knee socks with open-toed sandals - urgh! And slingbacks are alive and well it seems on the Llangollen! Why is it that Bermuda shorts are seen driving "pleasure cruisers" on the canal (badly I might add)? They have no idea what side of the canal they're meant to be on. Maybe that has something to do with the fact that they're drinking alcohol! Sunday drivers my dad calls them. Maybe Bermuda shorts drivers are like those flat-cap Sunday drivers you see on the roads. You know - the ones that have "Baby on Board" and "My Other Car's a Porsche" stickers in the rear window. "My Other Boat's a Cruise Liner"? Maybe not! These are the same people who insist on towing their

Jurassic caravans behind even older Rovers in the middle lane of the M1.

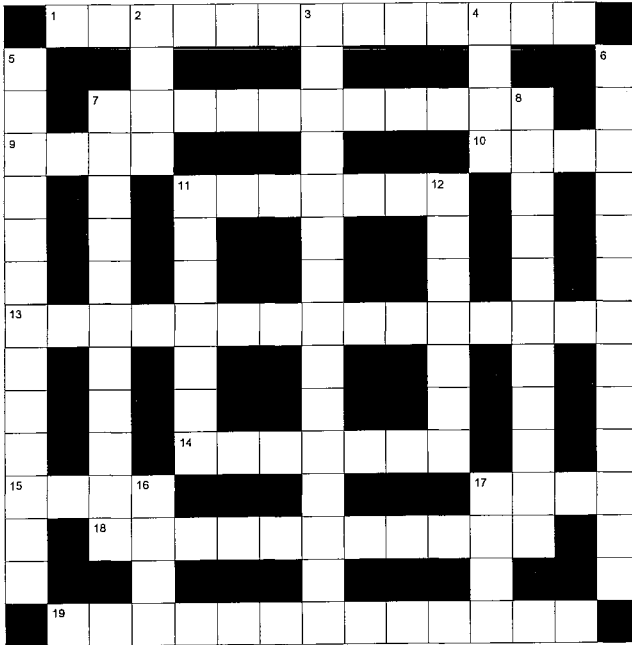
Talking of alcohol. Alcohol seems to play a central part in the waterways' world. Mum and dad always navigate by pubs - is this so we don't get lost? Maybe, a crate of beer is standard issue. I've seen a bevy of American men, probably from the airbase at Lower Heyford, loading up their boat with beer. Do endless miles of canals drive one to drink? Alcoholics Anonymous should be informed in that case. Do crates of drink add ballast to the boat? Whatever - can you get nicked for driving a narrow boat at 4mph under the influence? Do the Waterways police have special speedboats to catch you out? Canals with speed trap cameras? Lock keepers with breathalysers? It's all a bit too much. You see what happens when there are no locks to break up the monotony - mindless ramblings ensue!

One more thing, Diary. If alcohol is an incentive for adults to have "fun", then cake, sweets and other banned household substances are sure as hell a child's incentive. Should be dished out liberally to keep us quiet.

I don't know - this canal holiday lark has its seedy side - bribery, child slave labour, drinking and driving, fashions that should carry a health warning. I'm beginning to think I would be safer at home - when I've stopped rocking!

P.S. Where's the video?

**There can never be
true
generosity
without
sacrifice**



13. Pot clown works OK at one extremity of the Cuckoo! (7,4,4).
14. In Alloa din goes on whilst filling the boats (7).
15. River Tean flows through a volcano (4).
17. Eager (indeed perhaps Eagre) to get to the source of a river (4).
18. Sue NE Scotch for failing to examine the keyhole carefully (11).
19. Enjoy shortened herb with boiled meat whilst picnicking on a wharf on the River Ant (6,7).

DOWN

2. Beneath the M6 find L & L locks with clerical connections (4).
3. Male from Deva has to move to find work unloading ships here (10,5).

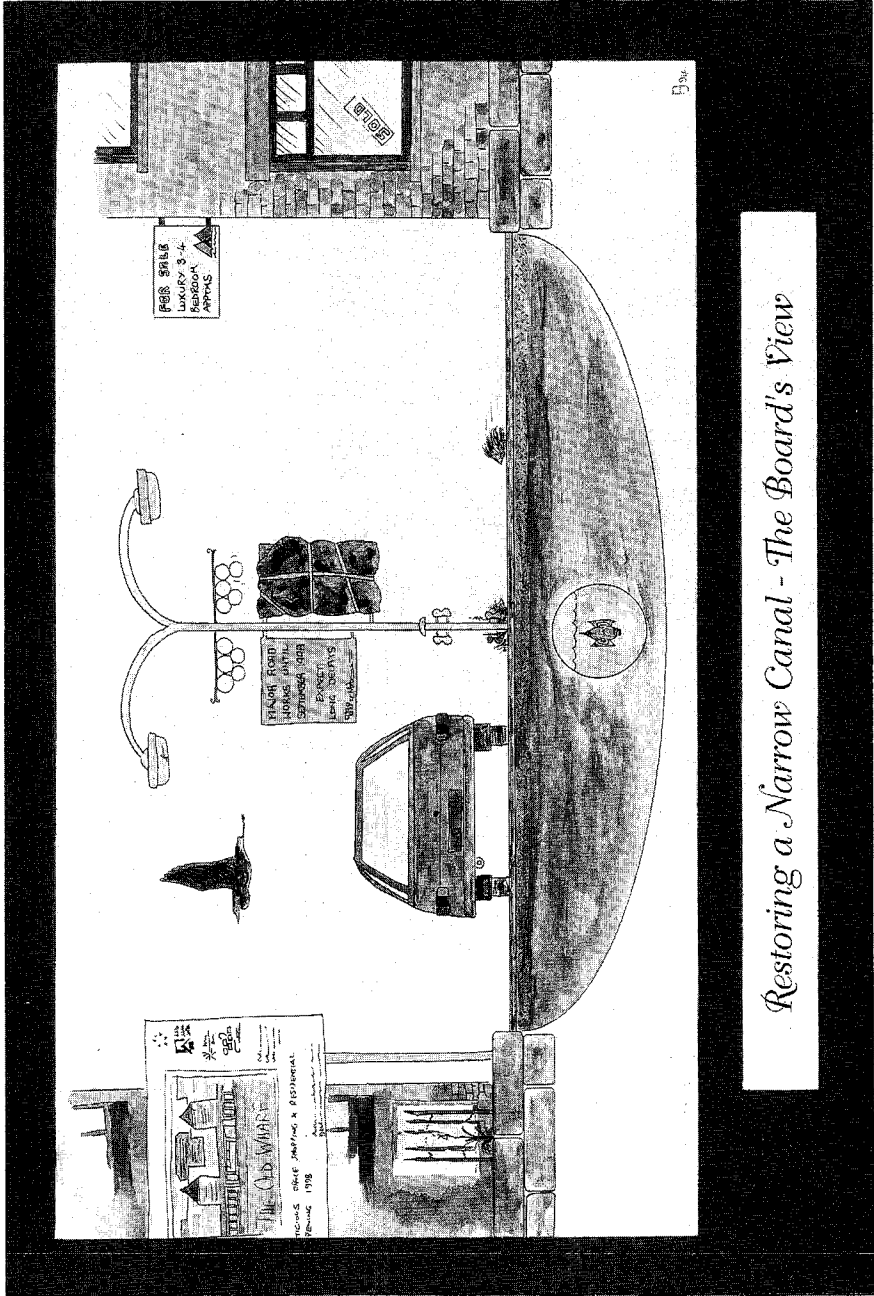
Our congratulations to K & M Sykes of Huddersfield who won last issue's competition. This, and foreseeable issues, will be non-prize canal crosswords with the solution given in the same issue - we trust you won't peek too much; it had been felt that waiting up to 3 months for the answers was a little excessive!

ACROSS

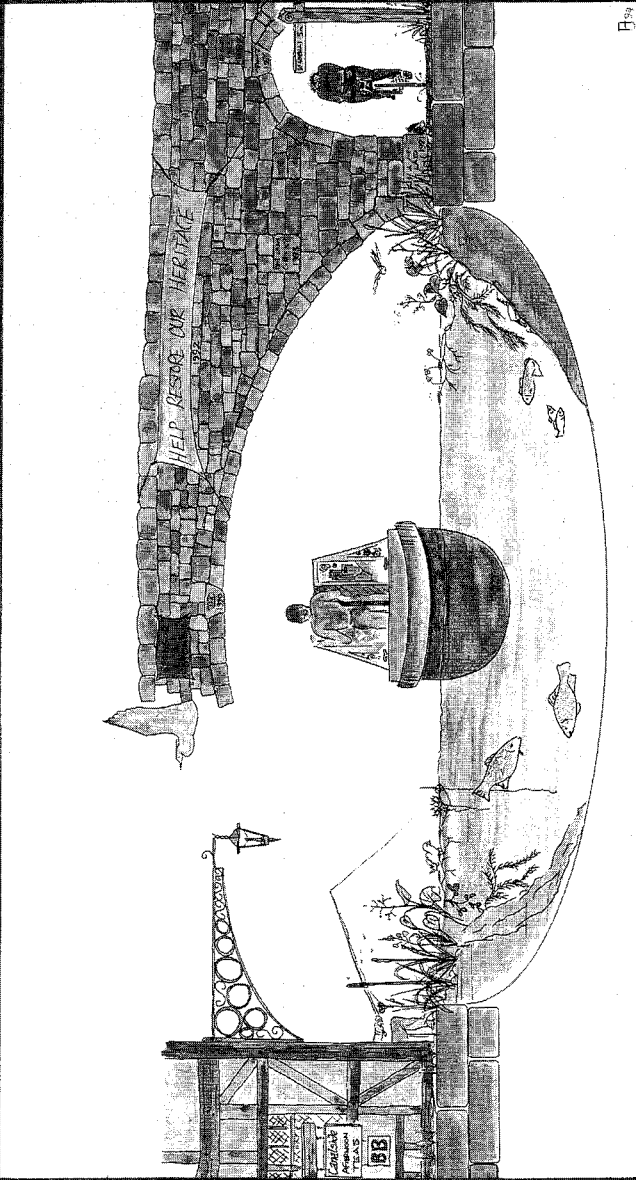
1. Rid tender skim at the southern end of the S & W (13)
7. From Etruria to Froghall the watery way (6,5).
9. Where Upton is in relation to the Severn (4).
10. Wound you less whilst not going up a flight of locks (4).
11. Self igniting Thames cargo boat (7).

4. He who went boating with Ratty and Mole (4).
5. Pipe smoking clerical assistants (13).
6. Former arm of the BCN New Main Line - filled with many little ships? (7,6).
7. One type of long fish sold by weight on the Ashby? (11).
8. You must be mad to have reasons for pulling a train (11).
11. Is a Gull found on a sailing ship (7).
12. Grain in the hold must be kept dry during bad weather (7).
16. Sail close to the former owner of Polly Peck (4).
17. Rank, not experience, will determine the speed of the ship (4).

The solution to this crossword is given at the foot of the inside back page.



Restoring a Narrow Canal - The Board's View



Restoring a Narrow Canal - The Society's View

The second in a series of articles by member John Harwood on the background to our canal system.

PART 2 - PARLIAMENT

The general route of a proposed canal having been decided, and estimates prepared, the committee could set out to obtain the Act of Parliament which authorised the building of their canal, set its route, authorised compulsory purchase of land and laid out grievance procedures and tolls. Any canal to be built entirely on private land would not need all this procedure but, as the only exceptions were links to collieries and factories, the Act of Parliament was the norm.

As James Brindley (the "father" of the canal system) was the chief engineer to the first canal of the 'canal era' he, and the Duke of Bridgewater, were much involved in the initiation of canal Acts. Brindley, whilst reputedly only semi-literate, was a master of persuasion and appeared before parliamentary committees with practical demonstrations of his proposals rather than with sheets of paperwork. It is recorded that he even took clay into committee rooms to demonstrate the technique of clay puddling to make canals waterproof and carved models of bridges out of blocks of cheese besides drawing many sketches in chalk on the floor.

The main need of canal proponents, however, was friends in high places. Whilst the Duke of Bridgewater moved in high circles and had 'friends' the promoters of your average canal had first to convince their own Member and then to proceed with vigorous lobbying. By 1792 so many Bills were being presented that Parliament was being distracted from other matters. Consequently a system of procedure was set up to ensure that all the necessary groundwork was carried out, such as publication of intent in the London Gazette and local papers, and also that proper maps and costings and full lists of consenting and dissenting landowners were submitted. At the height of the canal mania in 1793 thirty six

bills were before Parliament with nineteen being approved in that year. So much paper was about that one petition in favour of the Worcester and Birmingham canal was fourteen yards long whilst the citizens of Stafford sent in a petition in favour of a canal then changed their minds and sent in a further petition against it!

As always the chief antagonists of a proposed canal were the mill owners who were concerned about the effects on their water supplies. The Rochdale Canal was delayed over a period of three years while mill owners argued about water, only relenting when the company agreed to build reservoirs specifically for the mills. Farmers would also be active (as it was possible that some of their fields would be divided) so accommodation bridges had to be provided for the purposes of moving stock. The landed gentry would keep a close eye on any proposal that threatened their property and would put great effort into having the line of the canal moved away or having the 'visual impact lessened. This might include negotiations to have decorative bridges built on their approach roads and areas of canal widened to give the appearance of a lake (e.g. Tixall wide on the Staffs & Worcs) rather than of a common canal.

By the time an Act was obtained for a canal so much time, effort and money would have been expended on maintaining staff at Parliament, engineers and lawyers fees etc. that the passing of the Act would be cause for nearly as much celebration as the actual opening of the canal.* The Act for the HNC was passed on the 4th April 1794 authorising the company to have a capital of £184,000 with the ability to make calls for a further £90,000 if necessary. The mill owners' arguments ensured that the Act contained provisos that reservoirs capable of holding 20,000 locks of water should be built and no water could be taken from rivers unless in flood. Now the groundwork could begin.

* *Rather like preparing a Millennium bid! Ed.*

THE SOCIETY WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS:

2419	Mr Smithett, Hatnes, [REDACTED]
2420	Mr & Mrs Bates, [REDACTED]
2421	Mr Warring, [REDACTED]
2422	Mr Littlewood, [REDACTED]
2423	Mrs Gdaniec, [REDACTED]
2424	Mr Hill, [REDACTED]
2425	Mr & Mrs Hankinson, [REDACTED]
2426	Mr Lambert, [REDACTED]
2427	Mr & Mrs Taylor, [REDACTED]
2428	Mr & Mrs Miller, [REDACTED]
2429	Mr Barratt, [REDACTED]
2430	Mr & Mrs Rigby, [REDACTED]
2431	Mrs Bayley, [REDACTED]
2432	Dr & Mrs Kneale, [REDACTED]
2433	Mr Pring, [REDACTED]
2434	Mr Schofield, [REDACTED]

THE FOLLOWING BACK NUMBERS ARE AVAILABLE FREE FROM:

John Maynard, 29 Thick Hollins Drive, Meltham, Yorkshire
Please send an A5 size stamped, addressed envelope (38p)

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, 119, 120

*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.*

SOLUTION TO PRIZE CROSSWORD No 16 - ISSUE 120

*ACROSS 1. Hillmorton locks 6. Stourport 9. Evade 10. Sloop 11. Brede 13. Etruria 14. Chianti
16. Surer 17. Eagre 19. Miaou 20. Trent lock 21. Thames and severn.*

*DOWN 1. Holme pierrepoint 2. Mitre 3. Torksey 4. Lords 5. Shopshire union 7. Barbridge
8. Botany bay 11. Brigs 12. Ether 15. Crofton 18. Eerie 19. Macle.*

SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD No 17

*ACROSS 1. Kidderminster 7. Caldon canal 9. Upon 10. Down 11. Lighter 13. Worksop town lock
14. Loading 15. Etna 17. Keen 18. Escutcheons 19. Dilham staithe*

*DOWN 2. Dean 3. Manchester docks 4. Toad 5. Church wardens 6. Dunkirk branch
7. Congerstone 8. Locomotives 11. Lugsail 12. Raining 16. Asil 17. Knot*

WEST SIDE MEETINGS

Wednesday 9th July

General Meeting at the Tollemache Arms, Mossley, 8.00pm.

Wednesday 13th August

Walk along Boat Lane - Meet at the Diggle Hotel, 7.45pm.

Wednesday 10th September

A short walk on the Huddersfield Narrow - Meet at the Transhipment Warehouse, Wool Road at 7.30pm.

In the next Issue of Pennine Link ...

Festival Reports from Saddleworth, Stalybridge,
Tunnel End & Tameside

The BBC afloat - Legging in Standedge Tunnel

Profile - Keith Gibson, Restoration Chairman

Photo Feature - Old Stalybridge

Canal Walks

Huddersfield Narrow in old Postcards

.... *plus all the regular features*

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Full Page	£37.50	£150.00

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Life	£90.00
Associate	£15.00
Corporate	£150.00

Huddersfield Canal Society is a member of:



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