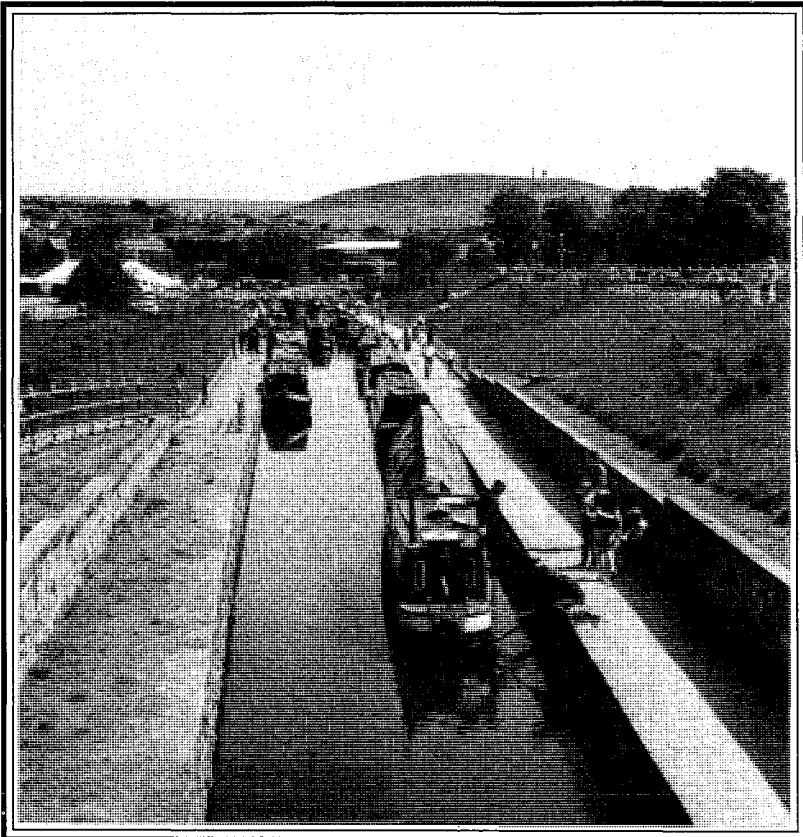




Pennine Link

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Members' Quarterly Journal

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Front Cover: Fifty years on - Boats at the Staley Wharf Golden Rally, Stalybridge. Photo: A. Ogborn



The article about bats in Standedge Tunnel (see What The Papers Say) brought a constriction to my throat and a shudder to my breast! Seemingly harmless, I read into it all sorts of problems. What happens if we can't get rid of the

bats? Do we sacrifice the tunnel to them and forget about through navigation? Do we turn the tunnel trip of Standedge Experience into a Batmobile ride? Will Swampy and his mates take over? (We have saved them the trouble of digging their own tunnel). Will the Millennium Commission give us the extra £2m needed to remove the protestors without disturbing a single hair of their shaven heads?

It's all this NATURE that's getting to me. At every turn somebody from a "green" movement is trying to remove or reduce the possibility of full through navigation on our waterways. The IWA quotes in "IWA News" are only a fraction of the total and I have edited out some half dozen specific references to sites where the Environment Agency and English Nature are imposing ridiculous conditions which, unless properly challenged (which means full and proper public consultation), will just become nature reserves. It's a very powerful lobby, with "government" credibility, and difficult to stop.

As I write, English Nature are watching our dredging proposals in Mossley very carefully and are quite likely to hold us up once again. Luckily we have so far managed to satisfy them. In fact, nature will win hands down if we don't start putting boats in the water. The recently dredged and cleared length from Stalybridge to Hartshead has already got wall-to-wall reeds!

As for the bats, I cheated a bit there. I already knew that the survey revealed no obvious signs of any of the eight species! Not a bat to be seen - just a few traces to show a minor presence. They are obviously on our side!

I am lucky to be representing you on the group putting together the details of the Standedge Experience and recently spent a fascinating morning at Manchester Business School, where a group of MBA students, of various nationalities, had prepared a report on our proposals as part of their course. It was gratifying to note that they endorsed our plans - hopefully we can press forward instead of starting again.

One thing about the Experience. It is becoming fairly clear that we shall have to rely quite heavily on voluntary assistance to run the scheme economically - something on the lines of the helpers at National Trust houses. This is one of the ways we see HCS developing in the future, with more hands-on support needed.

contd over ...



I write my comments on the eve of a week's canal holiday, starting at the old canal centre of Braunston on the Grand Union. After a busy year traversing the Pennines by motorway I am looking forward to a week at a more leisurely pace. Yes, I

know the Oxford is a busy canal, but I have always related to friends and colleagues that a canal holiday is the fastest way of slowing down.

If Braunston Junction can be classed as one of the busiest canal junctions now, how will Portland Basin/Dukinfield Junction be in four years time? Our Millennium Bid is progressing well and we now have a full time project director, Mr Alan Stopher, in post since 1st July 1997. The Huddersfield Canal Company Ltd is up and running and we have expectations that the 'deal' will be signed in the next two months.

Since the Society's application on behalf of the partners was accepted, the team, initially led by Mr Roger Anderson of Tameside MB,

has prepared legal documents, budgets, agency agreements and all the paperwork necessary to satisfy the Millennium Commission (MC) of the viability and 'deliverability' of our mighty project.

We are now only a few steps away from concluding the agreement with the MC and English Partnerships. It has not been easy. Three local authorities with their own priorities; BW pioneering the restoration of a remainder waterway with limited financial resources limited by statute and our Society, the applicant, who began the restoration and first criticised, then cajoled, then persuaded the others to restore. If it was an uneasy process, it has been rewarding to see multi-million pound authorities finally take up our cause with such enthusiasm, if a little late.

Who will benefit? We have produced statistics to prove the economic benefits. We have already demonstrated job creation benefits. But most of all we can be proud that we have all contributed to a permanent restoration of our heritage and repair to the environment so that in the next Millennium the Huddersfield Narrow will rank alongside the Oxford Canal as the country's busiest waterway.

David Sumner

contd I was hauled over the coals a bit after last issue for suggesting all was not well with progress on the Rochdale Canal. Since then there have been two newspaper articles, saying things are progressing well but that is not the whisper I keep getting. By the time you read this another Millennium Commission deadline will have been passed. So, who knows? It is an awful struggle for them and we do wish them well. As you will read later, in the report about Timothy West's visit in August, he acknowledges the great added value of both restorations being completed.

No matter how hard I try I cannot avoid mentioning cycling! Jo Young had a letter recently from a (ex-) member who is not renewing his membership because of the

Editor's hate campaign against cycling.

He goes on to say that he is one of an official group involving BW, Sustrans and Kirklees Council examining the possibility of introducing a cycle route on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal between Huddersfield and Marsden - the first the Society has heard of such a proposal - and still not officially. Does this not justify our concern? We had considered OUR canal as being fairly safe. I mean, what happens when you get to Marsden? Are they going to propose paving the tunnel? The latest official report is that the study is nearly complete. Presumably it will then go before some official committeebefore proper public consultation starts?

Ken Wright



As negotiations and discussions in respect of the Millennium Commission grant proceed, work on the actual canal has slowed almost to a standstill. That was inevitable and expected because no new schemes can commence until

satisfactory legal arrangements are made for the draw-down of grant from the Commission. Similarly, English Partnerships cannot reasonably be expected to make grant offers for parts of the scheme they are funding until they see the final approval of the Millennium Commission grant.

The only work currently taking place is by our own restoration company staff, in the area between Lock 12W and Scout Tunnel where a landslip had severely distorted the canal alignment. This has now been repaired using precast concrete abutments to form the new nearside wall. Work is taking place rebuilding the offside washwall and putting in the towpath. Allowing for minor repairs to Lock 12, fitting a lock ladder, and the lock gates (ordered from Dick Booth at Hebden Bridge) and paddle gear, and rebuilding the bywash, there is about five to six weeks work remaining. After that, we are contracted to dredge the canal between Grove Road and Lock 9, and to dredge and repair the canal and wash walls between Lock 11 and Scout Tunnel. Tameside engineers are discussing how these items will be tackled with British Waterways and English Nature before issuing instructions.

A small amount of restoration work remains at Lock 24E where the guillotine gate has proved difficult to operate. When our consultant engineer and Ken Wright looked at similar mechanisms on the River Nene they were warned that installation and set up was tricky - but they did not envisage the problems they

have faced in getting the gate to move steadily without it catching on its support frame. We understand that the problem has arisen because the gate itself is not absolutely true and flat - a consequence of being galvanised to protect it from rust. I am told a solution exists.

I have to report that I am increasingly concerned about the future of our restoration company and staff. Steve Whitby has done all he can to bring work forward and to obtain other work. In this respect it is apparent that we are too specialised and the oncosts involved in running the Society's office and staff are too high for us to compete for general building work, where smaller subcontractors generally work from home. We are, effectively, tied into the canal world and can only work on the Huddersfield Narrow, on other British Waterways contracts or on other restoration schemes. It is ironic that in this field our prices have been significantly lower than a contractor would normally charge, and some of the figures in the Millennium bid appear to be based on our costs, yet we are actually too expensive to compete in the general building field.

It was always my intention to keep the company going until the canal was restored, if possible, and then arrange transfer arrangements for our staff either with British Waterways (who will need extra maintenance staff), or to the Standedge Experience, where

A wish to provide continued employment will not guarantee payment of the mortgage.

people will be required to operate boats and for functions other than those of a museum curator type of role. That is still my intention - indeed I would still like to retain three or four staff even then, contracted to carry out maintenance on the canal if possible. BUT, the longer it takes for other contracts to come our way, the more unlikely this scenario looks. Not unnaturally staff are looking for other jobs - particularly with British Waterways (where else can they get good staff ready-trained and experienced?). A wish to provide continued employment will not guarantee payment of the

mortgage. Our partners, the local authorities and British Waterways, are keen to keep the restoration company going, but the Society has to cover the wage bill of around £3,500 a week. We are losing money now because contract prices were agreed when several contracts existed to cover the overheads - though to be fair that loss is buying the Society the very thing it was set up for (ie canal restoration). It is a loss we cannot carry for long, however, because of our financial commitments to delivery of the total Millennium project. The key question the Society faces is how long it can carry the loss and, at the time of writing, I do not know the answer. I still hope, in the meantime, that either British Waterways will find work for our team or it will prove possible to bring one of the Millennium projects forward. Discussions have taken place - but so far with no success.

To turn to better news, the Board of the Canal Company are meeting on a monthly basis. Alan Stopher, the Project Director, is in post in a temporary office provided by Tameside Council. Progress is being made towards the signing of the legal agreement with the Millennium Commission and, hopefully, all

the signing will be completed by the time you read this. That is proving to be time consuming as we expected with so many hurdles to jump and side issues to consider. For instance, it has come to light that with the delivery mechanism chosen the company might be liable to VAT on contracted work - which would add about £5m to the total project cost - Alan is taking advice on how to overcome this. David Parr, the company secretary (and Director of Legal Services at Tameside), continues to impress me by his grasp of the issues involved in the required agreement between the Company and the Millennium Commission, the agreements between the Company and its partners, the individual project agreements, his discussions regarding charitable status for the Company, and regarding the exceptions to legislation he has to negotiate with central government over the local authority shareholding in the Company. The more I hear, the more complex the whole thing becomes, and I am grateful that David appears to have a sense of urgency, setting short deadlines for the other partners (including HCS);

Keith Gibson

Profile: Keith Gibson

Tired of looking at a blank sheet of paper, and being pressed by his wife not to write a boring family history, the subject of this issue's Profile writes a few facts:

Name: Keith Edward Gibson

Age: 53

Married: to Kathryn (a Conservation Officer with Calderdale Council). We have two children - Rosie (age 9) and Jonathan (age 5). I also have two grown-up sons - Oliver & Mike.

Home: A small Pennine farmhouse 850 feet up in the hills above Holmfirth (bleak but a magnificent view).

Qualifications: Geography degree (Leeds University), Diploma in Town & Country Planning (Birmingham College of Art) & Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.

Occupation: Principal Planner, Conservation & Design, Kirkless M.C.

So what more do you want to know Mr Editor? How did I become interested in canals? - like everyone else, as a result of a hire boat holiday (in 1971 or 1972). How did I become involved in HCS? David Sumner asked me to take on the role of Project Officer (about 15 or 16 years ago). My current tasks? Chairman of HCS Restoration Ltd and one of the Society's two appointed Directors of the Huddersfield Canal Company.

Profile - Keith Gibson, Restoration Chairman

What was that, Mr Editor? What have I achieved with HCS? That's a tricky question - and one I'm not inclined to answer - although my articles over the years give a clue! The danger with this type of article is that a series of people reminisce about their experiences and each (no doubt accidentally in most cases) gives the impression that he or she restored the canal single handed. That is obviously not true. When the canal has been restored, it will have been the result of collaborative effort.



Keith, Kath & Jonathan at Caen Hill locks, Devizes.



Keith, Rosie & Jonathan at Devizes

Certainly I have produced ideas, researched grant schemes, written reports, interviewed consultants, persuaded other people to become involved, attended and chaired countless meetings, and even done the occasional bit of lobbying. In the early days I even played a part in work parties, at festivals and manning the sales stand. (I don't do any of these now because I know my limitations!). None of this would have been any use without other people, however. HCS is a very good example of collaboration between people of widely differing abilities coming together to argue a case. In fact it's an excellent example of something discussed at the March meeting of the Northern Canals Association.

Sorry, Mr Editor - what's that? Oh - the Northern Canals Association? That's a kind of moveable feast at which the policy & restoration people of English and Welsh waterway restoration societies and trusts north of Birmingham meet three times a year to discuss issues of mutual interest which I set up (after pressure from IWA sources) six years ago. I have just been appointed Chairman for a third three year spell (which I threaten will be my last!). The Society's Frank Smith acts as secretary to the Association.

The March meeting, held at our very own Transhipment Warehouse was unusual in that I spoke at length. I described the 10 key political, financial and physical steps which I believe apply to all restoration campaigns (not just to canals); it seemed a fitting distillation of my involvement with HCS over the years.

Keith Gibson

Keith's 10 steps to restoration heaven:

1. *Demonstrate public support*
2. *Stop further destruction*
3. *Show benefits by volunteers project(s)*
4. *Gain support of local authorities*
5. *Prove restoration possible*
6. *Prove economic & environmental benefits*
7. *Gain active support of local authorities*
8. *Gain active support of owner(s)*
9. *Seek funding to restore key parts*
10. *Seek funding to complete restoration*



Once again, the round of festivals kicked off with the 4th Saddleworth Canal Festival held on the 3rd-5th May in Uppermill.

After a shaky start, with worries about having use of the

field, the committee pitched in to ensure another fun packed weekend. The weather was kind to us on Friday for 'set up' day and with the erection of the marquees, the site soon began to take shape. This year we managed to borrow some excellent security fencing from Oldham Council and a small band of intrepid workers soon had the whole site fenced off, making for a much neater and secure venue.

Saturday dawned bright and sunny and we kicked in for day one of our festival. This year, Ratty the Clown was unable to be with us, but Dave Deval stepped ably into Ratty's shoes with his own brand of fun and magic, keeping both children and their parents amused. The sounds of the brass bands floated across the field as the public rolled up to sample all the fun of our festival. Then it was the turn of the Tae Kwon Do demonstration. A group of very fit young men and women performing this ancient form of martial art. It was then time for the grand opening ceremony with the VIPs arriving from the civic cruise, courtesy of the Pennine Moonraker, to a packed field. I dressed in my posh frock and big hat, gave a quick opening speech, then handed over to Cllr. Peter Dean, Deputy Mayor of Oldham, to do the official honours. There were also a few words from Cllr. John Hudson from Saddleworth Parish Council and the newly elected MP for Saddleworth, Cllr. Phil Woolas. The VIPs then went for a stroll around the site enjoying all the attractions. The afternoon session was rounded off by our own Entertainment Officer with songs from his duo 'More of James', and very enjoyable it was. The evening entertainment commenced with songs and stories from Stanley Accrington and then followed up with Biggles



The Opening Ceremony.

Wartime Band. An enjoyable evening was had by all.

Sunday dawned grey and wet and the public came in dribs and drabs. Eddie Earle the Cleveleys Cowboy arrived and a small band of us took instruction in line dancing. In between showers, the Saddleworth Clog and Garland Dancers and Saddleworth Morris Men strutted their stuff. The fire engine from Mossley arrived with its full complement of tea-drinking fire fighters. Dave Deval was still joking and keeping young and old amused despite getting mud on his nice white trousers! A real trouper.

Sunday night saw a folk night with Patchwork. A very enjoyable and well attended evening considering the weather. By the close of Sunday evening, the field was looking a bit like the Battle of the Somme as the rain continued to pour down.

Monday dawned even darker and wetter than Sunday. A very wet and bedraggled committee met to decide if we should carry on with the day's programme. Just as we were about to call it a day, a small band of intrepid punters in full wet gear turned up at the gate wanting to pay to come in. This was when the Dunkirk spirit kicked in. Everything that could be moved was taken into the marquee. Traders set up and the Uppermill Band played some sterling music as the stage began to float in the rising flood waters. Dave Deval gave another great show while John and Julie

Saddleworth Canal Festival



A bedraggled Committee.

Wilson doled out hot tea and bacon butties to all and sundry. Next came the time for the Novelty Dog Show and to our surprise people started to roll up with their bedraggled dogs. The judge had to be carried across the field as she came in high heeled shoes. Next should have been our Grand Duck Race but, as the torrential rain poured down, the river was checked and found to be in full flood, so the race had to be postponed. This brought our festival to a close with one very tired, wet and dejected committee; but even after all we had been through, we still managed to have a laugh. Tuesday found a small band of helpers doing the final clearing up under blue skies and warm sun; just our luck.

The Duck Race was finally run on Sunday 1st June in glorious sunshine. As the crowds gathered and the course was checked, there were some worries that there might not be enough water to run it! You just can't win. But at 3pm the ducks were set free and the long awaited race took place. A good ending to a somewhat disastrous festival.

Shirley Rowbottom
Chairman

Photos: B. Minor & Anon



Society stalwarts (Above, left to right) Gay Quilter, Shirley Rowbottom and Jo Young sell the last few ducks. Brian Minor (distance) and Trevor Wilkinson set the contestants free.



Although well over half of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal is restored, in water and capable of taking boat traffic, only the length from Whitelands in Ashton, the west of the canal, (not Portland Basin as has been published), is connected to the National network. Since restoration of the first three locks in 1989 the Canal Society Promotions Group has been looking at ways of getting boats to use this length. The main stumbling block was, of course, the fact that with no winding hole, only boats of about 28 feet maximum could turn around.

With the re-building of Bayley Street bridge and re-excitation of Staley Wharf, this problem was removed. However, certain other works such as dredging and wash wall re-building further delayed exploiting the full potential of the canal into Stalybridge.

At last, in 1996, it looked as though 1997 would be the year to 'go for it' and the Promotions Group sanctioned a committee being set up for a boat rally at the end of May bank holiday. This was ratified by HCS Council and October saw a small committee formed and the rally under way. The main intention was to demonstrate what the wharf area could look like when full restoration is complete, the area being a likely place for overnight (or longer) mooring.

As a number of the committee pointed out, it was 1947 when the last boat was at the wharf, ie. fifty years. So it was decided to name the rally 'The Staley Wharf Golden Rally of Boats 47-97'. With a reasonable area of land around the wharf and the promise that it would all be levelled and tidied up by May, craft stalls and other traders were invited along.

All looked well up to February '97. Sixteen boats had booked in, traders had either booked or stated intention of doing so. Everything seemed in place and then - disaster! British Waterways closed Rose Hill cutting, just west of Marple Aqueduct, due to the retaining wall being in imminent danger of collapse. Since twelve of the sixteen boats were coming down from the Macclesfield summit level, it looked

like our dream of a wharf packed with boats was going to be dashed.

Without going into detail, the ensuing months were filled with nail-biting anxiety and frenetic activity. The projected re-opening date for Rose Hill was 21st June, just in time for the Ashton Festival. BW were very sympathetic and offered to pay for the Rochdale locks fee to get boats around the long way. This would convert a long weekend into a two week cruise. A non-starter! Next they offered to lift boats out of the water and transport by road. Owners did not seem too keen on this and with rumours of an early completion decided to wait and see. After almost three months of uncertainty we still did not know what the outcome would be, would we have a boat rally or a damp squib for our efforts?

In the event, under intense pressure from BW, boat passage was available on Friday 23rd May, the Friday before the rally. HOORAY! All praise to the contractors, some of whom I understand were on the edge of divorce proceedings due to not being home for weeks, they did a grand job and I hope our gratitude can be passed on to them, perhaps via this article. I have already thanked BW verbally, now it is also in writing, this was a commitment to their customers second to none. Our rally would have been a little pathetic and the IWA Cheshire Ring cruise the following weekend would have suffered without this effort. Thanks to all concerned.

So! The rally was on again. Boats started to arrive at Staley Wharf on Friday evening but another fly was about to settle in the ointment. Despite having liaised with BW Marple office for adequate water supply to bring the expected number of boats up the three locks, and being assured water would be there, it was not. Black mark BW, but far outweighed by the praise above. The water supply turned out to be rather pathetic and Saturday saw boats grounded for hours, pushing and pulling to get over the mud and other obstacles. This was just like the pioneering days of the IWA when rallies were held at the end of almost

Staley Wharf Rally of Boats

impossible navigations to prove it could be done and keep the waterway open. At the risk of sickening you, dear reader, there is more praise coming, this time for the boat crews. By sheer dogged persistence and determination, a grand total of twenty five boats made it to the rally site, only six boats having ducked out.

Success! Saturday afternoon saw boats starting to arrive and by Sunday the whole wharf area was a blaze of colour and activity. Various stalls did a steady trade, fairground rides plus 'fishing' and 'dart throwing' stalls proved popular and the miniature railway set up along IMI car park was a huge success. The weary train drivers were fed pots of tea 'on the hoof' to keep them going.

Afternoon entertainment on the rear patio of the Wharf Tavern was very kindly supported by Tameside MB. The Jed Hone Jazz Band played to an appreciative audience on Saturday afternoon and Carrbrook Brass Band performed a similar function on Sunday afternoon. Unfortunately, the Tommy Tameside play bus promised for Monday failed to turn up.

Several competitions had been organised with the narrowboat Emma Jane winning the 'best dressed boat' accolade plus a bottle of ten year old malt whiskey and a trophy donated by the landlord of the Barge Inn. (Many thanks for that). The canal quiz was won by the crew of Colliery Lass, another bottle of whiskey, and although there was no prize, many people had a go at the round Stalybridge treasure hunt 'just for fun'. The local chamber of trade had organised a junior shop window treasure hunt and the prizes for that were presented at the rally on the Monday.

All in all, after all the waiting and gnashing of teeth, the rally achieved what we wanted. The visiting public were impressed, the pubs did a roaring trade, the weather was very kind, warm and dry, and the boaters enjoyed a good rally. Typical comments from visitors were: *Best thing that's ever happened to Stalybridge, it should be twice a year. I've lived in Stalybridge all my life, I didn't know the wharf existed. That's what this town needs, a*

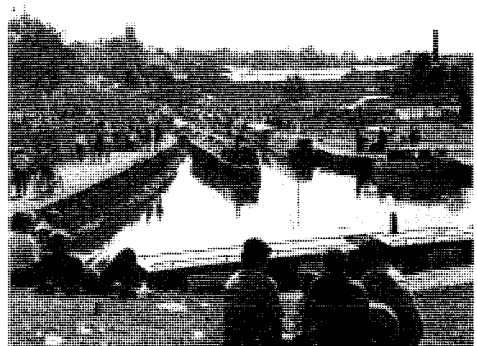
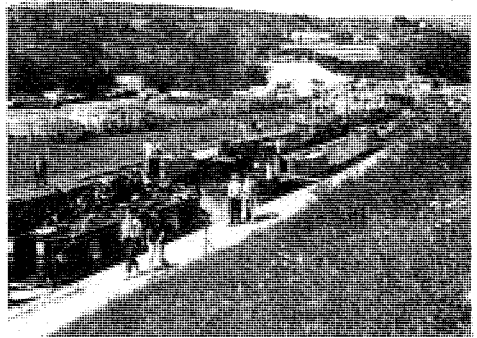
good shake-up. It's about time some life was brought back into this area. etc.

Although some pressure has been exerted to repeat the process, the committee were of the opinion that it should not be an annual event. Perhaps a follow-up event could be staged around the time through navigation is restored to the town. A number of sites along both east and west valleys would be ideal for one off boat rallies of this type and I, for one, am looking forward to being involved with such events.

Alwyn Ogborn

Chairman

Staley Wharf Golden Rally of Boats 47-97



Boats and Crowds - a successful Staley Wharf Golden Rally.
Photos: A. Ogborn



Joining in the preliminary fun and games with Yorkshire Electricity's Community Relations Manager, Angela Gault (centre) are (from the left): Maurice Winters, Ted Fussey, Steve Taylor and John Shaw. *Photo: Oldham Evening Chronicle*

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times! This was the general feeling at this year's end of June Summer Fair held at Tunnel End, Marsden.

Festival committees put a lot of time and effort into organising events along the canal, when the last thing they need is for the weather to conspire against them. Most other problems can usually be overcome, but no-one can control the weather. It appears that with global warming, the usual festival dates which used to enjoy good weather have now entered a different phase with rain now becoming the norm.

The Summer Fair was again organised by members of the Society, Marsden Community Association and Kirklees Countryside Service to help raise funds for local projects.

For the second year running the theme was

based on Country and Western, supported by local ceilidh bands, Appalachian dancing, and a wild west show.

The event could not have taken place without the financial support of Yorkshire Electricity and was officially opened by their Community Relations Manager, Angela Gault. Angie was a little upset when one local paper quoted her organisation as Yorkshire Water; an easy mistake to make considering the amount of water falling from the sky.

The rain showers over the weekend turned part of the site into a muddy track, failed to dampen the enthusiasm of the organisers, entertainers and the public at large. Music and dancing continued late into Saturday night as the venue moved to a packed-out Marsden Mechanics Institute.

British Waterways lent their support, as they

Tunnel End Summer Fair



High kicking
all the way for the
Tap and Sync Appalachian
Cloggers from Northampton.

Photo: Oldham Evening Chronicle

On-site catering at the chuck wagon provided refreshments conducive to the theme, with mountains of barbecued burgers, sausages, fried onions, and, of course, gallons of the proverbial baked beans, which added to the atmosphere. Liquid refreshments were provided by a local hostelry, with the more traditional tea and cakes being produced and served by local volunteers.

It must be admitted that not everyone is happy with the site chosen for the Summer Fair. Originally the Fair was held around the cottages at Tunnel End, but renovations to the former reservoir embankment

have done for many years, by extending the use of their facilities and manpower. Many a child went away happy with the practical knowledge of how to pop a balloon with the jib of a mini-excavator.

During the cowboy fight scene in a mock-up western street, and possibly because of local dialect differences, it was very hard to picture John Wayne coming out with those immortal words 'Ya smarmy waart, thar's git tow owerz ta git art o tarn, prontoal!' In any event, it was very exciting and realistic for the kids with lots of noise and action. To add to the realism, cordite fumes mingled with the culinary smells coming from the 'Chuck Wagon'.

resulting in the loss of most of the flat area used for tentage and entertainment, forced the move to the adjacent woodland picnic area. It must be said however, that raising the profile of these local amenities helps to provide additional facilities, as in the case of the woodland where two years ago the Countryside Service, with help from the Society, constructed a hard surfaced road into the picnic area to enable wheelchair access to the site.

With the exception of the bad weather, the '97 Tunnel End Summer Fair provided an entertaining family attraction for local residents and visitors from many parts of the region and elsewhere.

Frank Smith

Tameside Canals Festival 11-13 July 1997

Set against a background of rebirth and regeneration at the Portland Basin Heritage Centre, the sun once again shone on this year's festival.

With the Heritage Centre demolished but about to be rebuilt even bigger and better than before, last November's decision of the Millennium Commission to grant aid to the canal restoration project, plus Tameside Council's planning committee's decision not to allow the development of a new marina at Portland Basin on environmental grounds, we had several reasons to have a very positive outlook.

After the usual shenanigans involving the 1001 things that you forget need to be done every year, the Festival got off to a great start of Friday evening with live music from 'The Blues Busters' who entertained the crowds with their covers of 60's hits. With good weather and plenty of boats already moored alongside main site, things were definitely looking good.

Saturday morning appeared through a CAMRA beer tent induced haze but again the sun shone and all was well. Although the main site opens officially at 11.00.am., it seemed to me that by this time we were already quite busy. Final arrangements were being made for the Civic Cruise and both the Entertainments Tent and the Band Tent were being prepared for action.

The Mayor of Tameside, Councillor Eileen Shorrocks led the Civic Cruise, accompanied by the Mayor of Oldham and the Deputy Mayor of Kirklees. Ashton's M.P., Mr. Robert Sheldon attended as did Councillor Roy Oldham, Leader of Tameside Council. Representatives from one of the Festival sponsors, Stalybridge based Elf Atochem, were also on board and my thanks go out to all those boaters who allowed their boats to be used to transport our V.I.P.'s.

A buffet reception followed the official opening, and many of our guests were then interviewed by north west based radio station,



The technicians from GMR Talk almost outnumber the platform party! Canal festival opening ceremony.

'GMR Talk', who broadcast live from the site between 1.00 and 3.00pm. Newly appointed Restoration Project Manager, Mr. Alan Stopher, outlined the steps necessary to achieve full navigation by the end of the year 2000 and the campaign gained much valuable promotion.

Sadly, the annual Festival of Dance was much smaller than usual this year, and was relocated back onto the main site. A major attraction however, was the demonstration of line dancing that took place with several committee members being persuaded to give it a go!

Culture, colour and entertainment. Three elements demonstrated by the City of Salford Pipe Band who livened up the site with their powerful playing and attractive marching routines, whilst old favourites like Mystery Hyny and Snapshot entertained the young and the young at heart.

The Craft Tent had proved to be a huge thorn in my side, as just four weeks before the Festival, the agent who was organising it for us, ceased trading. Many of the traders already booked in had lost their payments or their deposits, and so some delicate negotiating was necessary. Unsure as to how many traders would still come, meant that we were taking something of a gamble, but it all turned out OK in the end as we were able to offer a good cross section of traditional arts and crafts.

Electricity for their tent proved to be something more of a challenge, as by Saturday

Tameside Canals Festival



Left: The City of Salford Pipe Band in full skirl.

Below Left: A young visitor to the Festival receives instruction from Bob the potter.

Photos: B. Minor



morning we realised that the generator which we had hired wasn't big enough to supply the trader's needs. An executive decision was made to hire a second generator and the problem was solved - until the original generator was stolen during the early hours of Sunday morning! Believe me, we are talking about a very heavy piece of equipment, being secreted away in the dead of night, despite on-site security! The mind boggles.

Chairman's duties include presenting the prizes at the Boaters Quiz (bags of apples in many cases!) and it would be remiss to fail to acknowledge the support of Malcolm and Alison Allcard who once again donated dinner for two as a main prize.

Saturday night 'live' entertainment followed the children's disco where early visitors along

with boater's children, agadooe, supermanned and generally joined in with all the other party dance favourites. Following this it was the return of the Smoky City Jazz Band, who have now attended the Festival several times. Their description in our Festival programme says: "their professional approach ensures their audiences go home happy and contented", (personally, I think the Beer Tent helps too).

Sunday was again a lovely warm day and the number of visitors swelled the site considerably. My memories of the day include an unrehearsed sing-a-long with the crew of the 'Hesperus', a working canal boat which had sailed up to the Festival for the weekend. The skipper of this motley crew asked me to pass on their thanks and the thanks of everyone who attended the Festival by boat, for the friendly way in which they were received, and as they cast off to make their way back to their home mooring late on Sunday afternoon, they shouted back to me: "See you next year".

Shortly after this, the heavens opened and the torrential rainfall that followed made sure that we didn't have to try too hard to clear the site. This surplus of H₂O meant that dismantling the electrics was quite a challenge.

Peter Hawley
Festival Chairman

FESTIVAL DOGSBODY FOR HIRE

Recently, the Express Sunday newspaper ran an article on canal holidays which stated: *"There's nothing to beat it. Chugging along a peaceful canal in a comfortable boat with the prospect of a secluded picnic or a ploughman's at a waterside pub."*

DON'T YOU BELIEVE IT!!

I should have known after my first narrow boat break that life aboard was not all it seemed; "Chief Cook & Bottlewasher" instantly springs to mind as I recall my first experiences. Admittedly I was keen to impress, the four day break was with my relatively new partner, his daughter, his mother and his father!

Having arrived late afternoon at the marina, unloaded the cars, been given a guided tour of the boat, it was everyone on deck for the big departure. Soon after setting sail I organised gin and tonics all round, then whilst everyone enjoyed the scenery I set about unpacking and sorting the foodstuff in the kitchen.

"That G & T was excellent, any chance of another?" said father

"A butty wouldn't go a miss" said partner

"Well don't spoil your evening meal," said mother "By the way, what are we having for tea?"

Don't those little kitchens in the galley get hot quickly?

The chilli with rice, salad and garlic bread went down really well and was appreciated by all, the washing up and tidying away and setting up of the beds didn't really take that long; in fact we had time for another G & T before I fed and walked the dog, then retired to bed absolutely shattered.

The four days continued in much the same way; when I wasn't cooking, cleaning, tidying up, making beds up, putting beds away, attending to every whim of all the passengers, I was leaping out of the boat in the rain to do the locks. Why is it that the Captain cannot do locks at all or function without a G & T in his hand?

Everyone said what a wonderful time we had all had!! I wasn't too sure.

Needless to say, partner got an ear bashing, but was sympathetic and said that next month we would take the caravan to a canal festival so that we would have the best of both worlds. The convenience of the van with awning, garden furniture, BBQ and the scenery of the canal boats without all the huffing and puffing of doing the locks etc.

We live in Oldham, the canal festival was in Tameside!! I thought we were going away. The Royal WE had apparently offered to help at the festival setting up the beer tent, doing the gates etc. etc. We couldn't back out now, besides which partner had told mother and partner (who live a short walk up the canal from the basin) that we would be there with the van and could have a family BBQ on the Saturday.

My Timetable for the Canal Festival Weekend

Friday

- 6pm Arrive at site after partner has finished work.
- 6-7pm Set van up, water, gas, awning etc.
- 7-8pm Help set beer tent up.
- 8-9pm Partner helps sample beer whilst I make spag. bol. for tea.
- 9-10pm Have tea, G & T, make list of shopping for BBQ.
- 10-11pm Wash up, make up bed, feed dog, walk dog, retire.

Saturday

- 7-8am Partner forgot to mention that he had to go to work until 2pm!
Make breakfast whilst partner gets papers and milk.
- 8-9am Wash up, puts beds away, tidy van, walk dog.
- 9-10am ASDA for shopping for BBQ.
- 10-11am Do partner's stint on gates.
- 11-12pm Do my stint on gates.
- 12-1pm Set BBQ up, set garden furniture out, walk dog.
- 1-2pm Make salad, chop onions, marinade chicken.
- 2-5pm Partner and guests arrive, play hostess.

The Distaff Side

- 5-7pm Walk dog and guests up and down canal admiring boats.
- 7-8pm Do partner's stint on gates whilst he entertains.
- 8-9pm Do my stint on gate.
- 9-10pm Clean up after BBQ, wash up, tidy up, set beds up.
- 10-11pm Catch last hour in beer tent with partner listening to the jazz band.
- 11pm Retire.
- Sunday**
- 8-9am Make breakfast whilst partner gets papers and milk.
- 9-10am Wash up, put beds away, tidy van, walk dog.
- 10-11am Partner does stint on gate whilst I pack van up.
- 11-12pm I do stint on gates whilst partner hitches van up.
- 12-2pm Have a look round craft fair, beer tent and entertainment.
- 2-3pm Last stint on gates then home to start Sunday roast.

The Tameside Canal Festivals followed much the same pattern for the next three years, for me they were a nightmare. The only factor that altered was the number of people attending our BBQ (it has by this time become something of a family ritual) and all that that entails i.e. more burgers, more bangers, more booze, more trips to ASDA, more washing up etc. etc. in other words a bigger nightmare.

Last year I sat outside my little two berth caravan on the side on the canal, after a morning's really hard work to get everything organised, I counted how many family and friends we had catered for and would you believe, including me and partner, 30 people sat round the BBQ. I decided there and then - NO MORE!!

I am very pleased to say that my days are now canal free, festival free ... and my new partner is wonderful and doesn't know his windlass from a windfall.

Note: Names have been omitted from this article to protect the GUILTY! Ed.

MERSEY BASIN CAMPAIGN WEEKEND

As in 1996, we are planning to stage an Information Weekend at the Transshipment Warehouse, Wool Road, Dobcross, Oldham on Saturday and Sunday October 11th and 12th 1997. Council Members and/or volunteers will be on hand to answer your questions about the progress to date and plans for the restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow and display boards will be there for you to view.

Why not drop in for a chat and a brew? We will be open between 11am and 4pm on both days and will look forward to meeting you.

1997 Christmas Card

Members will recall seeing Jack Mawson's seasonal water-colour painting of Tunnel End in the Spring 1997 issue of Pennine Link.

This painting has been used to produce exclusive Society Christmas Cards which will be available to purchase in the Autumn.

The cards are 8" x 6" in size and come complete with envelope and contain the wording:

*With Best Wishes for Christmas
and the New Year*

Available in packs of five, we hope that members will support the Society by purchasing as many as possible.

Please use the Order Form enclosed and make sure your order reaches the Society office before Friday November 21st at the latest to give sufficient time for mailing.

Why not send some to your friends as an early token of the Festive Season? The order form allows you to specify a delivery address and include a brief message.

Jo Young

In IWA terms I have been hob-nobbing with the great and the good recently. I was helping my friend and colleague Keith Noble to take his boat, 'La Maitresse' round to the Midlands for his annual hols (we did 155 miles, 122 locks and over 20 swing bridges in a week - in the worst July weather for years!) For quite a distance we locked and travelled with John Reeve, Chairman of IWA North East Region, until his fan belt broke. In convoy with him we left the bottom lock at Jackson's Hillock, Whittle-le-Woods, and all did a smart 'eyes-left' to Audrey Smith, IWA National Chairman, who was jumping up and down and waving in her canal-side living room! I'll have to be nice to them in this issue! Ed.

Bradford Exchange v. IWA

Bradford Exchange have advertised one of their 'limited edition' plates with a canal picture, in various places including June's Canal and Riverboat magazine. The product is apparently endorsed and approved by the IWA, complete with logo. There is no truth whatever in this and IWA have sent a 'strong letter of protest' and a claim for damages.

National Festival

Not unusually, by the time you read this it will be over! It was held at Henley-on-Thames over August Bank Holiday weekend and you have missed over 550 boats (including larger than usual ones), 330 caravans and tents, Dutch barges, coal fired Edwardian steam boat, trying out boats for a short trip, Punch & Judy, fire eaters, WRG pantomime 'Snow White and the Seven Wharfs', fairground, narrowboat 'Ragdoll' (Rosie & Jim) and Thai Baguettes! No doubt a good time was had by all.

Cheshire Ring Campaign

IWA Manchester Branch have completed a 15 boat cruise around the Cheshire Ring to draw attention to various achievements and problems on the ring, including one hire boat from Bunbury (near Chester) crewed by two visitors from the USA to highlight the overseas tourism element.

During the trip many civic parties joined in, including the Mayor and Mayoress of Tameside and three councillors and senior British Waterways managers.

Environment

There is considerable awareness of growing problems caused by extreme nature conservationists and the proposed new 'Special Areas of Conservation' (SACs). Whilst IWA is conscious that 'environment' includes both the built and natural environment, the following thoughts are considered to represent the views of many IWA council members:

"Certain sections of English Nature and the Environment Agency are attempting to control and restrict navigation in order to appropriate the waterways for nature conservation purposes. They are now regularly quoting in print ridiculously low recommended levels of boat movements which have no credible scientific basis of justification.

English Nature's 'Fresh Water Agenda' claims that the maximum number of boat movements a year compatible with high biological diversity is under 1,000. This, if accepted, would effectively close down the waterways system for navigation, totally undermine its economics, and lead to widespread abandonment which would destroy the very nature conservation interest they purport to be promoting.

Evidence to the Cannock Chase Local Plan public inquiry that more than 600 boat movements per year would destroy the SSSI (of which there are said to be 23 on British waterways) was challenged in detail, and the Inspector's report last year comprehensively dismissed their objections. Despite this, the Environment Agency, is continuing its opposition with recently drafted statements in the relevant Environmental Plan.

EA have also opposed the restoration of the northern Ashby Canal, claiming in the Catchment Management Plan that more than 600 boat movements per year would severely damage the SSSI. This is despite the fact that there were an estimated 2,500 boat movements at the time of the designation and that this has since grown to about 3,000 without any evidence of deterioration.

Their ongoing repetition of this nonsense displays ignorance and prejudice and undermines their own credibility. Yet not withstanding this, the Agency and English Nature exert considerable influence on local authorities, BW and others because of their status as government funded bodies. Unless their

cont'd over ...

Keen canal enthusiasts and Huddersfield Narrow Canal restoration supporters, actor Timothy West and his actress wife, Prunella Scales, paid a flying visit to the area in late August. Prunella has recently been appointed as the President of the Council for the Protection of Rural England.

The Wests have had their own narrowboat for many years and keep it on the Kennet and Avon Canal. When possible they live on their boat to be near their work, for example, if they are playing in London or Bristol.

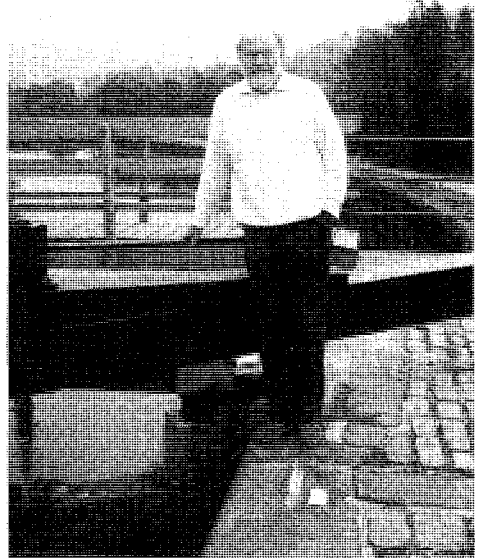
The visitors were shown all the recent improvements and the work currently in progress at Lock 12W, where they met the HCS Restoration work team. They completed the first day with a visit to the Ashton office where they met Chairman David Sumner and the office staff. Bob Gough identified some wild flowers for Prunella and presented her with a set of his restoration cartoons. Unfortunately, after watching the restoration video, she had to go directly to London by train, as she was recording a talking book the following morning.

Timothy, however, stayed overnight and the second day was taken to see Sowerby Bridge canal basin and the new magnificent Tuel Lane lock and tunnel before following the Rochdale Canal to Littleborough and then visiting Hollingworth Lake. He left in the early afternoon to be in time for 'curtain-up' at the Royal National Theatre, where he was appearing in King Lear.

Timothy and Prunella were both very impressed by the work being done and are looking forward to

sailing our Canal themselves. Timothy said *"the completion of this canal, with the Rochdale, will make the new ring a showpiece of the canal system and the Standedge Experience a national tourist attraction for boaters and non-boaters alike"*.

Ken Wright



Actor Timothy West examines a new lock (and, before anyone writes to tell me, the lock is on the Rochdale Canal - I forgot my camera the first day! Ed.) Photo: K.Wright

cont'd from page 18 ...

views on navigation are challenged and exposed for the utter rubbish they are, the danger is that they will be accepted by default.

There is a very real and rapidly growing threat here to our waterway, and particularly to canals, which the environmentalists cannot understand are inherently unstable artificial habitats created for and sustained by navigation. The IWA needs to take the lead in fighting this battle."

And finally

Yes, and finally beware of where you fly the Union Flag (Jack). Under current legislation, a fine can be imposed on any boater flying the Union Jack flag on a boat on the inland waterways (if that included the Jolly Roger there would be a fortune to be made on the Broads!) This obsolete bit of legislation is to be reviewed 'on the next occasion that primary legislation concerning merchant shipping is brought before the House'. In the meantime you should be flying the Red Ensign (Duster). Now you know.

Ken Wright

Before I begin, an apology. It was bound to happen, giving you old (all that was available) information, but I made a real mess of the last Council News. I said that the Oldham Otter would not be going to the Stalybridge Festival but, somehow or other, it took wing and got there. Also, the blockage of the Peak Forest Canal was removed a month early due to superhuman efforts by BW and boats were able to get to Stalybridge after all. Otherwise the news was quite accurate!

Meetings 25th June, & 27th August 1997

The long-term future of Tunnel End cottages is still under review but, in the meantime, it is still anticipated that the new Project Manager, Alan Stopher, will use part of the building as his office. Nicely halfway along the job - and well away from any of the other partners' offices!

Plans are still being discussed about the wider implications of the Standedge Experience and the possibility of including the Kirklees Countryside Service and the National Trust into the overall scheme - marketing "Tunnel End" as the multi-purpose attraction. Just imagine, the smell of an N.T. shop in Marsden! Manchester Business School are helping to assess the marketing potential of the Experience (see Editorial).

The Chairman has reported to Council on the progress in setting up the new Huddersfield Canal Company. A major advance, this; in the "politics" of restoration.

In addition, Council nominations were approved for the Shadow Board and officers working party of the 'Standedge Experience Ltd.'

Discussions are still taking place as to the future role of Society volunteers within the 'Experience'. Volunteer input is seen as a crucial element in the proposed business plan. Council believes that this is one area where the Society can make a significant contribution, not only in the capital it is investing in the project, but in the future management of major visitor attraction.

The Treasurer reported that all festivals lost money in 1996. The Society's auditors, Revell Ward, have merged with another organisation and are now known as Neville Russell.

Once again, the serious situation regarding continuity of work for the HCS (Restoration) Ltd work force was the main subject for discussion. The hope is that the existing work will spin out until we can start work on the two locks in Uppermill. Not as easy as it sounds because of complexities in funding and management.

A new Fund-raising and Sponsorship Committee has been formed. One aim will be to restore the £0.5M HCS is putting into Standedge Experience. This would allow the Society to live fairly comfortably on income from investments and could ensure our future as a major canal organisation with full-time staff.

The sales team have permission to purchase a bigger tent for on-site accommodation.

The Promotions group sadly had to announce the cancellation of the Huddersfield Canals Festival (see page 31). *Following the recent tragic events concerning Diana, Princess of Wales, it is quite likely that out of respect and common sense, the Society would have cancelled the festival anyway.*

Council agreed to register with ENTRUST - The Environmental Trust Scheme Regulatory Body Ltd. - to be eligible to apply for monies that may be available from Landfill site operators, who in turn should be able to offset up to 90% of their tax liability to H.M. Customs & Excise on donations made to approved bodies.

Ken Wright

Twenty years ago ... in Pennine Link

'Wells Fund Raising Company Ltd had offered professional fundraising services. It was agreed to proceed to a discussion with their managing director.' '...we have decided to engage the services of management consultants and this is going to cost us £500 initially and a possible further £1,000.'

Holidays are over, back at work and school, time to go through those canal and river holiday snaps and see if any of them are WINNERS!

Here are the rules for the PHOTO COMPETITION for photographs taken between 1st January and 30th September THIS YEAR!

- * Prints only - black and white or colour - but winning entires will be reproduced 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 H.C.S. and their immediate families.
- * Entires will be judged by Mr. Geoffrey Hope, past-President of Oldham Photographic Society and well-know 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-U-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 H.C.S. member you are related to.

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

5. CLOSING DATE: MONDAY 10TH NOVEMBER 1997

There will be a winner and a runner-up in each of the four categories (senior and junior) and each will receive:-

- 1) Publication in December's Pennine Link.
- 2) A signed certificate.
- 3) *Winners:* A print of 'Dungebooth Lock' and set of 'Restoring a Narrow Canal' cartoon prints in colour.
Runners-up: A print of 'Dungebooth Lock'.

Any queries to the Editor, Ken Wright, Tel: 01457 873599

Readers of *The Wife's Tale* over the years will have spotted many references to errors in 'Nicholson' - but no longer, hopefully. John Harwood reviews the new-style publications which are an enormous improvement on the earlier ones.

The new Nicholson guides published recently cover the entire navigable system of England and Wales in a new and much more useful format.

Every map has north at the top of the page now making orientation much easier compared to previous issues when north could be at the top, bottom or anywhere else on the page. The maps now include a strip of full colour Ordnance Survey map of from half a mile to two miles of the surrounding country at a scale of 2 inches to the mile which will make finding villages, Post Offices and other facilities a lot easier, as well as making walks much easier to follow. And, as for being up to date, the Huddersfield Narrow Canal is shown, open to Stalybridge!

Notwithstanding that somehow Ladywood locks on the Droitwich Barge canal have become two up and two down with a summit pound of 100 yards, or that the Aylesbury Arm has eight locks according to the text but sixteen according to the map, these are matters of supreme triviality in comparison to the overall presentation of these guides which are a must for any reader, walker or boater. Plink crossword addicts will also soon be needing them when more canal locations taken from the guides start to appear in our crossword!

As a bonus the entire set can currently be purchased from I.W.A. (Sales) at a 10% discount and P & P free.

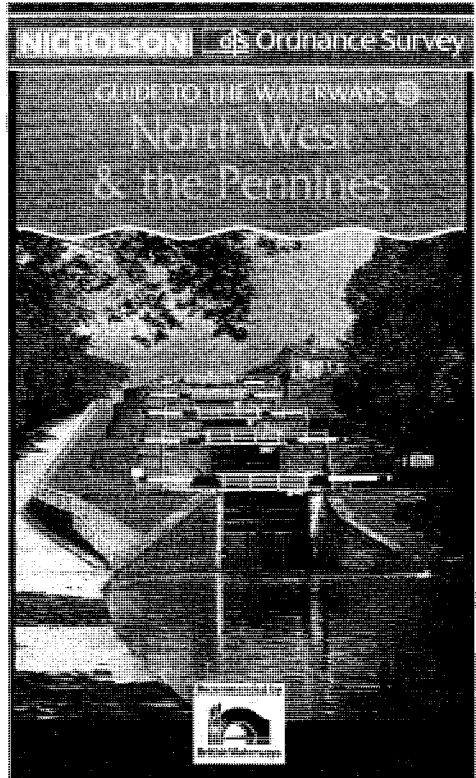
John Harwood

I make that £9.00 per copy and there are seven titles -

1. London, Grand Union, Oxford & Lee
2. Severn, Avon & Birmingham
3. Birmingham and Heart of England
4. Four Counties and the Welsh Canals
5. North West and the Pennines
6. Nottingham, York and North East
7. Thames, Wey, Kennet & Avon

I.W.A. Sales - 0171 586 2556

As a P.S. - There is also a new set of Pearson's Canal Companions - an altogether different story which I will tell you about in the next Pennine Link! Ed.



'Barry of Bingley'

Canal Walks - The first in a series of canals worth looking at.

WHEN B.W. MET B.W.

A day out at Bingley

Motorists on the A650(T) should take Park Road at Bingley station, turn left in half a mile (Beck Lane) and, after ¼ mile, start looking for somewhere to park which will not inconvenience the locals. Walking on a short distance will bring you to a footbridge at the top of the Five at grid reference SE107399.

If it's your lucky day and the permanent lock keeper, Barry Whitlock is on duty and not overrun with boat movements, you may have the privilege of a few moments chat with one of B.W.'s top ambassadors, a man in his element and at peace with the world - keeping boats moving through his locks and, when there are no boats, keeping the environs in pristine condition.

Those new to boating cruising westwards from Leeds on the Leeds and Liverpool get a little advance warning at Bingley three rise as to what will come next. However, few are totally prepared for their first sight of 'Bingley Five Rise'.

In its eagerness to get to grips with the Pennines, the L & L has already climbed 150' from Leeds before getting to Bingley. The three and five rise together will add another 90' to this in the course of less than half a mile - spectacular in any canal context, the more so in locks built in 1774!

The spectacular appearance of the locks is due to their construction as a staircase. This is a method of lifting a canal by the steepest possible gradient in the shortest possible distance by eliminating the pounds between locks - thus the top gate of one lock becomes the bottom gate of the next lock up. The method of operation can be a little difficult to comprehend initially but in simple terms is as follows:

Going down:-

You will need to fill the top lock and put the boat in it, from there you travel from lock to lock with the

same water always ensuring that the next lock is empty before you fill it - otherwise a degree of flooding will demonstrate your lack of prowess.

Going up:-

Obviously you will need the bottom lock empty in order to enter it. From there you fill the top lock and bring that water down a lock at a time until it lifts you into the next lock. Refill the top and repeat and repeat until you arrive at the top.

Watching Barry leaping around with apparent nonchalance, opening and closing paddles (or cloughs in the north) here there and everywhere will probably add to your confusion as to how these locks function but also to your admiration of a man who can make it look so easy, especially when he passes boats going up and down at the same time!

Having perused the operation of the locks and taken your photos (most impressive from the bottom) the walkers amongst you may care to take a stroll in a downhill direction. Should you be making this outing in winter you will be well advised to call at the mill you will shortly pass wherein is made that well known brand of underwear for winter use usually modelled for us by Compo - in his alter ego member No. 2000 of our Society! Next come the 'Three Rise' locks, perhaps unfortunately ignored due to the presence of the 'Five Rise'. A stroll of a further mile will enable you to study the L & L's way of bridge protection - on bridge 205 you will notice the rollers provided to stop the tow ropes grooving the bridge. Just beyond you will arrive at Dowley Gap two rise locks and thereafter Dowley Gap bridge and aqueduct showing how the towpath can change sides without disconnecting the horse and where the River Aire moves to the other side of the canal.

John Harwood.

I can endorse John's description of Barry. On my recent trip along the L & L we were met at the 3-rise by Barry who immediately announced "I'm up to my lug-oles in boats, this morning!" and then proceeded to give us a vivid description of how his own narrowboat is getting on. An amazing character. Ed.

Pennine

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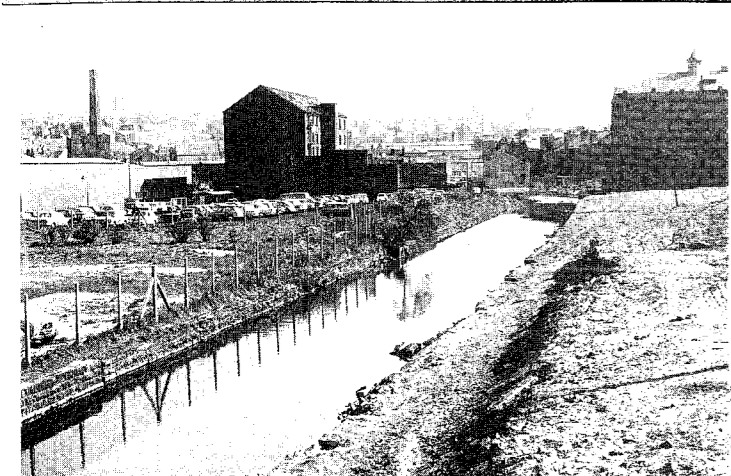
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'PENNINE MOONRAKER'

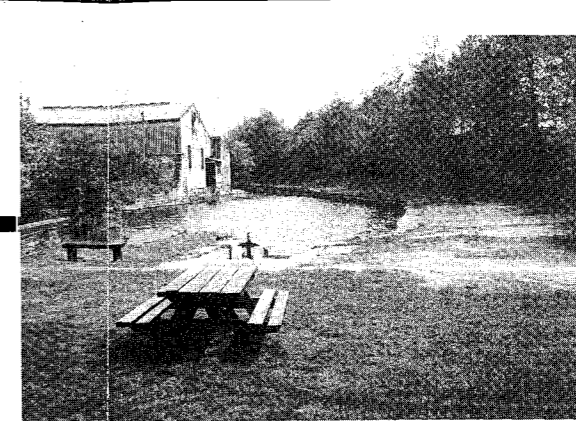
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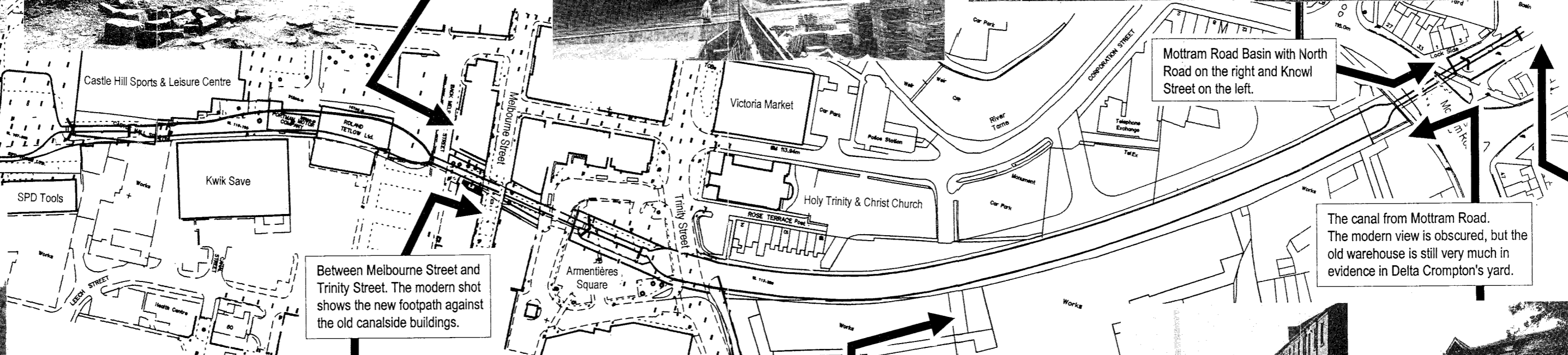
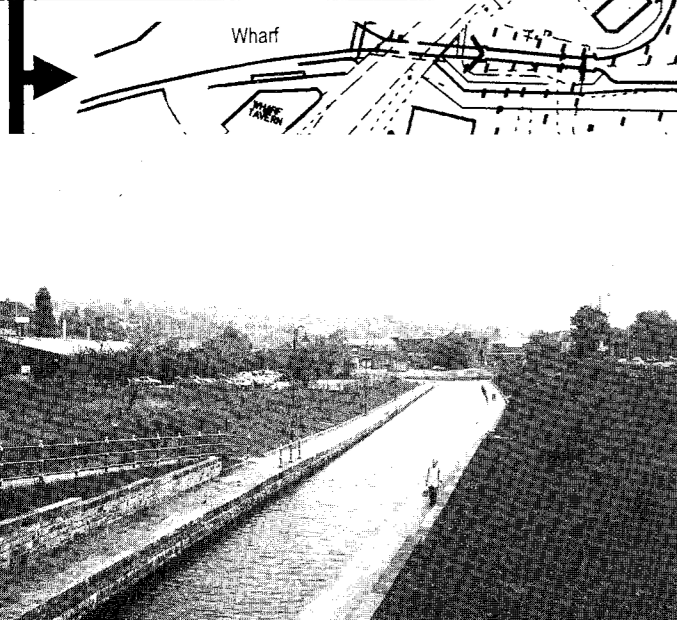


The view off Melbourne Street, now near Castle Street car park, towards Armentières Square.



Crane at Guide Post (Mottram Road) looking from North Road towards Knowl Street. In the modern photo the 'stump' of the crane can be seen on the right.

Rear of Bridge Street (Staley Wharf). The church tower and railway ventilation shaft can be identified on both photographs

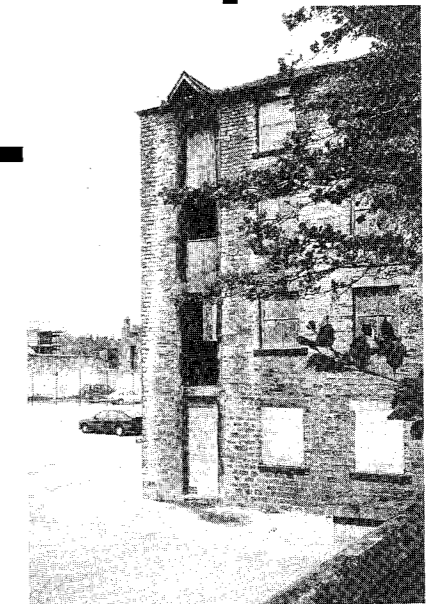
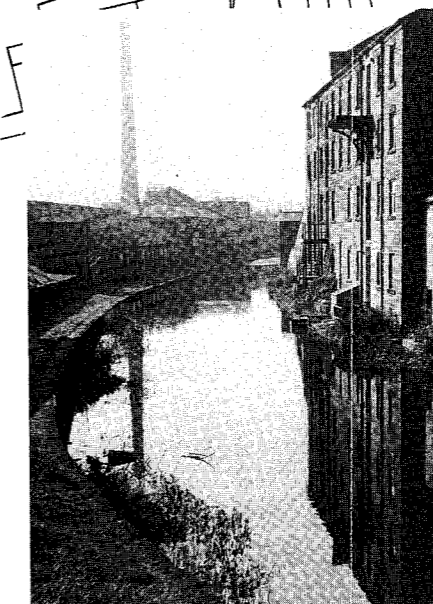
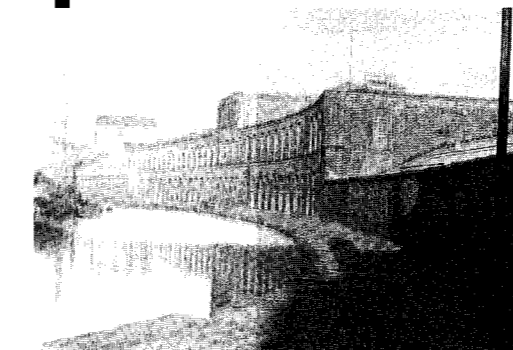
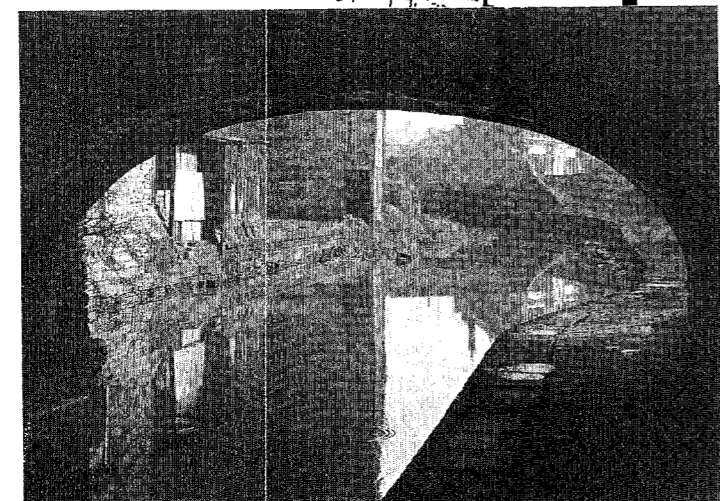


Mottram Road Basin with North Road on the right and Knowl Street on the left.

Between Melbourne Street and Trinity Street. The modern shot shows the new footpath against the old canalside buildings.

The canal from Mottram Road. The modern view is obscured, but the old warehouse is still very much in evidence in Delta Crompton's yard.

Aeriolite works (previously Taylor Langs) from Trinity Street; modern view obscured within Delta Crompton's yard.



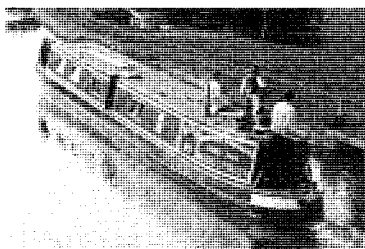
Only a very few photographs are left of Stalybridge town centre with canal complete; and a few from around 1970 when infilling was in progress. Here we compare those views with Stalybridge today.

Our thanks to the Local Studies Library and Stalybridge Historical Society for permission to use the photographs.

IF ANYONE KNOWS OF ANY BETTER OLD SCENES, WE SHOULD BE DELIGHTED TO HEAR FROM THEM!

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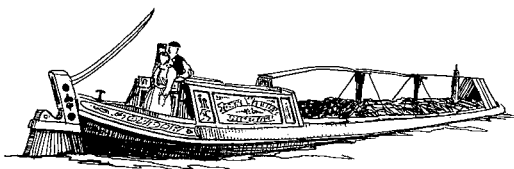
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The third part of a serialisation of 'Storyline', the background material prepared for the Society by Archaeamedia Ltd., as part of our millennium bid report on the Standedge Experience.

The Huddersfield Narrow Canal

Why the canal was built

The need to link the economies of Lancashire and Yorkshire was obvious to both sets of populations on each side of the Pennines and the advantages to be gained potentially enormous, especially with the new canal system that was growing up separately in two distinct systems from the 1770's onwards.

The sheer scale of the task put most people off attempting to construct a direct route, and the only attempt to link the two counties was being pursued by the Leeds and Liverpool Canal Company after an Act passed in 1770. This was eventually planned to follow a tortuous route north-east from the Lancaster Canal, up to Gargrave, and then turning ninety degrees to travel south-east to join the Aire and Calder at Leeds. It had a total length of 204 kilometres with 91 locks designed mostly to take boats 62' x 14', and had two tunnels, the longer of which at Foulridge was 1,640 yards long and took six years to build. The route was finally completed in 1816, only nine years before the first running of the Bolton and Leigh railway. Although there was trade over the summit, the bulk of the business of the canal took place on either side of the Pennines. From the 1840's onwards the canal was faced with three recurring problems: railways, shortage of water, and the poor condition of Foulridge Tunnel. This had collapsed as early as 1824 with other major stoppages in 1843 and 1902. Water shortages closed the summit in 1824 and 1826 and the reservoir system had to be enlarged on a number of occasions after that. The last commercial traffic stopped in 1972, but virtually all of the canal is still in use to this day.

The second attempt to cross the Pennines with a canal was taken by the Rochdale Canal Company which planned to link Manchester with the Calder and Hebble Navigation at Sowerby Bridge. It eventually received its Act of Parliament in 1794

and was the first of the trans-Pennine canals to be opened in 1804. It was 53 kilometres long and had a total of 92 broad locks which could take boats of 74' x 14' 2". There were two tunnels on this route, the longer being 336 yards long which ran under Deansgate in Manchester. The canal was a commercial success from the beginning but was losing trade from the 1870s onwards. The last commercial traffic ceased in 1958 and all but a one and a half mile section in Manchester was closed to navigation, until recently.

While the plans for the Rochdale Canal were struggling to pass through Parliament, a third plan to cross the Pennines was being hatched. Much of the impetus for this development came from the promoters of the Ashton Canal and their desire to have a cross-Pennine route of their own. They had been authorised in 1792 to build a canal to connect Ashton-under-Lyne with nearby Manchester. This had placed their canal right at the eastern extremity of the Lancashire waterways network and its potential to become the connection with a direct route over the adjacent mountain chain became overwhelmingly attractive to them. Their plan was to use the valleys of the Rivers Tame and Colne to make a route that was even more direct than that proposed by the Rochdale Canal Company. In a climate where the Ashton Company's shares were at a high premium and the canal mania was in full swing the idea seemed like another sure-fire investment, and, for the moment, no one seemed to take into consideration the fact that technically the canal would have to be very advanced, never minding the fact that the moorland plateau at Standedge would either have to be traversed, or more likely, tunnelled.

Starting the Canal Company

The first public sign that the idea was becoming fact was seen in an advertisement in the Leeds Mercury on the 25th of May 1793. This recorded that a meeting had taken place on the 17th of May at the house of one Humphrey Dyson

"...pursuant to public Advertisement, for the purpose of taking into Consideration the Propriety of making Surveys of a Line of a Canal

Standedge Experience 'Storyline'

Communication from the MANCHESTER ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE and OLDHAM CANAL, to the Town of HUDDERSFIELD, in the County of York",

with one John Plowes in the chair. At their first meeting it was resolved that

"...a Canal Communication as above stated, would be of great public Utility, and of essential Advantage to the manufacturing and landed Interests of the Counties of York and Lancaster",

and that,

"... a PUBLIC MEETING shall be held at the George Inn, in Huddersfield, on Thursday the Thirtieth Day of this Instant May, at Eleven o'Clock in the Forenoon, for the Purpose of entering into a subscription to defray the Expenses of making Plans and Estimates of the said intended Canal, and for carrying the above Resolution into Effect".

At this second meeting optimism ran high and those assembled promised £150,000 of the £200,000 sum that had been estimated would be required to complete the project. On a more practical level an engineer's report on the scheme and a survey of the route were also commissioned. The next meeting was called on the 22nd of October at which the survey and report were presented. Nicholas Brown, the surveyor, outlined a route nineteen and three-quarter miles in length with a three mile tunnel at Standege. The engineer, Benjamin Outram, outlined some of the physical consequences of choosing such a bold and direct route through such hilly terrain. To lift the canal 436 feet from its eastern end to a summit level 645 feet above sea level at Marsden would require the construction of forty-two locks, whilst a further thirty-two would be needed to effect the descent of 334 feet from the Diggle end of the summit level to Ashton. The summit level itself would, at four miles in length, be too short to collect enough water to fully supply the canal, which would thus have to rely on a number of reservoirs. Furthermore the great tunnel between Diggle and Marsden was to be the longest yet envisaged in Britain.

Their report contained the minimum documentation necessary for parliamentary processes, and the costings included were at best rudimentary. The

price of the building works was put at £178,748, and this, like the estimate on how long construction would take, was grossly inaccurate. Nevertheless, local enthusiasm for the canal ran high, and, as Brown and Outram also said,

"...It will pass through a country full of manufacturers, which at present are carried on under great disadvantages, from the great difficulty and expense of land carriage; and by the vicinity of the proposed Canal to the rivers, the mills upon them would obtain their articles free from land carriage".

The only alteration to the scheme was an increase in the amount of reservoir capacity allowed for to appease local mill-owners and the passage of the Act through Parliament was so smooth that it was on the statute books by the 4th of April of the following year.

The detailed final costs submitted by Outram estimated the price of construction at a total of £182,748, very close to the sum of £181,900 that had been attributed by the 427 subscribers. A canal such as the Huddersfield, built to serve special local interests, relied on a high degree to local support: the share book shows quite clearly that many of the subscribers were local men, manufacturers and merchants from Lancashire and Yorkshire - clothiers, cardmakers, woolstaplers, clothdressers, and these are the descriptions that recur. Often the subscriptions were small, and it was quite common to find small traders having only one or perhaps two shares. These local traders were supporters of trade, not financial speculators.

Building the canal

Outram was officially appointed as engineer in June 1794, and Brown as 'Surveyor, Book-Keeper and Superintendent' in the following month, and work on all sections of the canal was begun. Outram believed that *"the soil, on other parts of the line, is favourable to the project"*, and construction should therefore have proved relatively simple outside of the tunnel, and work went ahead at a good pace. The first comprehensive picture of how far this work had progressed came in

Outram's report to the June 1796 general assembly of proprietors, in which he gave the impression of a project that was firing on all cylinders and experiencing no special difficulties. Between Huddersfield and the east end of the tunnel at Marsden, 22 of the 42 locks were "nearly finished", while two of the three aqueducts, Paddock and Golcar, were already complete. The five miles from Slaithwaite into Huddersfield were expected to be soon "open for business", and his optimism extended from the engineering works in hand to the financial outlay expected; "On the whole there appears no reason to expect that the works of the canal will cost more than the estimate, and there is great probability of their being done for considerably less." This statement would come back to haunt Outram later, but his confidence in the building works appeared to have been justified when the Ashton-Stalybridge section was commissioned in November 1796, the Huddersfield-Slaithwaite section soon after this, and the Stalybridge-Uppermill section in August 1797. With these parts open the canal would at least be able to do some trade, and therefore attract some revenue to offset the massive construction costs.

Everything was not going entirely to plan, however, and it appears that Nicholas Brown was struggling to cope with the huge responsibilities of his position. This might be one of the reasons that in June 1797 the committee asked Robert Whitworth, engineer on the Leeds-Liverpool Canal, to inspect the works and to make a report to them. His official report was generally favourable to the condition of the canal construction so far, but his private comments were damning: "The masonry and the earthworks of this canal were the worst executed of any I ever saw", and "...the work will be nearly all to do over again, particularly the locks." Outram's design for the locks appears to have been seriously at fault, as he did not provide wide enough foundations for the abutments, and did not make waste-water channels around the locks watertight. As a result seepage and frost damage played havoc with foundations and walls alike. At the same time Brown made several elementary setting-out errors, such as incorrectly locating weirs. The two men were also hindered by

the company's unwieldy management structure, which forced the inexperienced young surveyor to undertake the supervision of the full length of the canal on his own, a responsibility for which he was neither prepared or qualified. Outram himself was engaged on other projects simultaneously and could only be present on site for four or five days in a month, and the result was an understaffed and inefficient organisation.

The Engineer

Outram's situation was by no means unique as there were too few first-class engineers available to work on all the canal schemes that were under construction all over the country. Every Canal Company wanted a man with a big reputation and it was easier to increase the number of canal projects than it was to increase the numbers of suitably qualified engineers. Each Canal Committee, naturally enough, wanted its full share of its engineer's time, and letters were sent continuously to keep him informed of progress, to ask advice and, with increasing frequency, to ask when he was coming to the works.

Each engineer could be working on any number of projects at any one time, all of which could be spread widely across the countryside. Bearing in mind that he would be travelling on atrocious roads, in the worst of weather, and often visiting remote workings that could only be reached on horseback (Standedge is a prime case in point), it all adds up to, at times, a quite gruelling existence.

But if canal engineers were hard worked, they were also handsomely rewarded, gaining in terms of hard cash and social status. The engineer was highly respected and able to move quite freely among, and associate on equal terms with, some of the best intellects of his age. He might not be equally at home in the fashionable and aristocratic world of London and Bath, but among the growing and increasingly influential groups of scientists, technologists and industrialists that were forming at this time he more than held his own. When portraits were painted of the most influential men of the generation, the canal engineers were fully represented.

Standedge Experience 'Storyline'

The financial rewards for a successful engineer could be enormous. Benjamin Outram's profits came as much from the Butterley Ironworks, in which he had a partnership with the famous engineer William Jessop, as they did from his canal and tramway construction work. Outram eventually became quite a specialist in the construction of tramways. It developed into a common practice to build tramways, simple railways, between an industrial concern, such as a coal mine or iron works, and the nearest canal. When a tramway was being considered it was Outram to whom people turned first. The usual tramway was made of rails laid on stone sleepers, on which carts could be pulled by a team of horses. Outram's expertise in this field was often called for when a Canal Company faced financial difficulties. Many canals were built starting at each end, and, when funds ran out, the company was often left with an embarrassing gap in the middle. A popular solution was to call in Outram to survey the canal and to consider the feasibility of joining the sections with a tramway. It is ironical that this solution, which seemed to offer salvation to hard-pressed canal proprietors, should prove to be the forerunner of their ruin - for it was on a Welsh tramway that Richard Trevithick made his first successful experiments with a steam locomotive running on rails.

Crises

As with many contemporary canal projects, the biggest problem faced by the Huddersfield Canal Company was with finance. By 1796 arrears on deposits and calls amounted to £22,652 out of £92,000 called for. In April 1797 the Treasurers sent out a reminder that they were owed 'upwards of three thousand and four hundred pounds' - the Company was overdrawn. Their first reaction was to order the sacking of the workforce, but Outram pointed out without workmen the work would stop, expensive machinery would lie idle, and no one would regain their investment. The Company reversed their decision and looked for more sensible ways to get funds. They were able to raise a mortgage which kept them going along in spite of repeated scares of financial doom. In

1798, the Committee had to report that "*by the Bankruptcy of several of the Proprietors*", the death of others and some emigration, they were unable to raise the money to pay their debts. The Huddersfield Canal Company was typical of many of the canal enterprises that were formed in the 1790's, although it had a larger proportion of local investors than some of its contemporaries. A general meeting in mid 1798 resolved to press the shareholders for payment of their arrears as defined under the terms of the Act, but this was easier said than done. They certainly tried, but in spite of cajoling, threatening and pleading, they found that too many of the subscribers preferred the forfeiture of their original investment to putting up any more cash.

It was in this climate of financial uncertainty that a disaster happened. In the summer of 1799 huge floods destroyed much of the works. The Tunnel End Reservoir at Marsden partially collapsed and Slaithwaite Reservoir almost shared its fate. The Marsden Aqueduct was washed away, not to be replaced until 1806, whilst that at Stakes between Ashton and Stalybridge was similarly destroyed. The original four-arched stone structure at this location was supplanted by an aqueduct of cast iron which still survives.

The Committee initially panicked, sensing that a crippling blow had been dealt to their already fragile finances, but a special assembly was quickly called to consider ways of raising the necessary money for repairs and the practical task of organising reconstruction. Repairs and additional defensive works were costed at £6,500, but the Company was by now in serious financial trouble. Even without the flood repairs, much remained to be done, but by 1799 the original share capital had been exhausted, so that the Company could not even afford to pay its own workers. In consequence, a new application to Parliament was found necessary to enable more money to be raised, with the resulting Act of 1800 authorising the making of extra calls upon shares up to £20.

Next time - Thomas Telford to the rescue!

Summer 1995 and we are well into the Midlands now, taking the Noble's boat "La Maitresse" from the River Trent to Stratford-upon-Avon. Friends Bryn and Gwyneth are assisting us. This is the start of our ninth day.

Sunday, 2nd July

Destination - Warwick
Weather - Cloudless and sunny
Distance - 8½ miles
Locks - 10 (+2 for a trial run)

Woke to an absolutely beautiful morning. Quick breakfast and off early to get to Bascote Locks, about 2½ miles away, by 8am. The locks were "locked" until then as part of the water saving exercise and we expected there to be a queue later. Did some cleaning on the way. Arrived at 7.55, excellent timing. Just one boat already waiting - a hire boat with two families on board. Primed locks in readiness and went down all four in 35 minutes - not bad considering the other boat's crew were self-confessed novices. Nothing to be ashamed of - the more "first-timers" there are the better it is for the system - "use it or lose it" is still a dreaded cry in some parts. And anyway, we enjoy showing them the ropes! We have been there, albeit a long time ago.

Locked all the way through with them to Radford Bottom, another six locks and three miles. Went through Royal Leamington Spa, not much to write home about from the canal, and moored up at Bridge 43 where there is a brand new development - including a

Sainsbury's. Ken and I went there to do some buying-in for the next week ("hollow legs" was about to join us). We moved over to the other side where there was a brand new pub - "The Tiller Pin" - and had an excellent 3-course Sunday roast beef lunch. Went back to Sainsbury's for some wine!

Off at 1.40 through very new "des res" development abutting the canal and the remains of much canal-related industrial archaeology. Reached Kate Boats at Warwick, Bridge 49, at 2.10; this is where our pre-arranged crew swap was to take place - again, with the prior agreement of Kate Boats, Simon was to leave his car in their car park.

Ken crossed to the towpath side to moor and went on the prowl, looking for Simon. He arrived at 3.45, Bryn and Gwyneth were all packed and ready, and he took them off to Tamworth to pick up their car, arriving back in Warwick at 5.30! Four days by canal!

Decided to do one of the Cape Locks before settling down to give the new crew a taster and then returned and moored up for the night. Drinks on deck, dinner and more drinks until bed at 10.30.

Monday, 3rd July

Destination - Warwick!
Weather - Mainly sunny, occasional light shower
Distance - ½ mile
Locks - 2

Stayed in bed until 8.00! Almost unheard of -



Warwick Castle.



Warwick Old Bridge.

The Wife's Tale - Part 34

as was the rest of this day. When out in hire boats we always tend to look for “value for money” and keep motoring! With a private boat and some time on our hands we decided to have a day in Warwick. I had never been and Ken was going on about the castle.

Mixture of sun and cloud with a gentle breeze. Sat on deck to have breakfast. Walked into Warwick through beautiful Georgian (and earlier) houses. Went out onto river bridge to photograph the castle. Down Mill Street to Mill House - a garden open to the public and so beautiful it defies description (by me, anyway!) Excellent view of castle and old bridge and weir (one of the problems in making this part of the Avon navigable).

To the castle - Simon waited outside and read his paper - we found it a bit dear but with one concession (bless him!) and a Daily Mail £2 voucher for me we did quite well. Now run by Tussaud's and a lot different from HIS memory, when the guides were largely blind British Legion members. A real experience, through, with gruesome dungeons, medieval “experience” (including stable smells!), state apartments - all very well done with subtle lighting and life-like figures in period clothing and situations. Plus a few live ones, acting as ushers and security but helping the image also. So glad we made the effort to visit.

Walked through the town again and to “The Tilted Wig” for lunch in a lovely Georgian square. Bit pricey. Missed a sharp shower,

luckily. Bit of a shop at Sainsbury's, a long stop in a second-hand book shop, bought some out-of-this-world carrot cake nearby. Back to the boat and off at 4.00pm. Mainly to take on water and because Simon couldn't wait to get his hands on the tiller. Got stuck in second lock with a large plastic bag round the prop. Ken freed it and we were joined by a cruiser and locked with it. Gave a fisherman a float we had found - v. grateful - warned about robberies! Went to “Cape of Good Hope” after tea, excellent pub with superb menu - pity we had eaten! Very reasonable prices. Back to boat for a tot or two - then bed.

Tuesday, 4th July

Destination - Kingswood Junction (via Birmingham, nearly!)

Weather - Gorgeous, blue sky and sun.

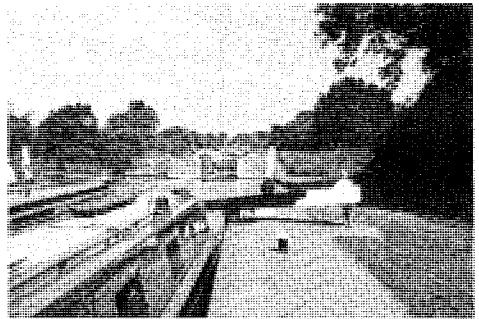
Distance - 21 miles

Locks - 31, a heavy day!

Wakened at 6.00 am by a steel rolling mill! Horrendous noise. Wonderful morning. Set off at 7.20 before any other boats were awake (must be deaf). Passed Saltisford arm - no mention in Nicholson - got to start of Hatton Flight and waited to see if we could share the locks with someone. In ten minutes “Club Connoisseur” arrived (Club Cruisers) and we locked all the way with them. 21 locks with a total rise of 146½ feet! And for the full 2½ hours the (novice) crew on the next boat fried full English breakfast for what seemed like ten of them - oh!, the smell - and we did most of



Old Warwick.



Hatton lock flight.

the locking without even a bacon butty offered! I was shattered at the top. Clouded over. Went through Shrewley Tunnel (400 yards) and got wet through. Another boat came through in the opposite direction - much too fast - we lost our steering and had to use the pole to get off the side - very rare occurrence!

Moored at Bridge 65 (Navigation pub) for lunch. Excellent old pub with v. good food selection. The barman was sporting a "Manchester Hacienda" night club T-shirt! To village shop for a few things and away by 1.50. Decided to carry on up the Grand Union towards Birmingham as we were already at our day's destination and also - as HE puts it - "to see how far it is". Or, to see a length of canal we hadn't travelled before. Went up Knowle Locks (5) with "Excalibur" from Black Prince. 4 German couples doing everything by the book - ropes everywhere - slows things down a lot! Past Stephen Goldsborough's yard - tried to wind (turn round) but too shallow - on to the next point! Managed to wind - v. impressively - just before Bridge 77 - not quite in Birmingham! - just past the new viaduct carrying the M42. Saw two kingfishers and two herons. Back down Knowle Locks - did the first on my own, being the only "crew" awake, but the bumping brought assistance from the rest! Back to the Navigation for the night - v. pleasant area, hard to believe we are so near to Birmingham. Glad to moor up - it's been a

hard day!

Wednesday, 5th July

Destination - Hockley Heath (Upper Stratford Canal)

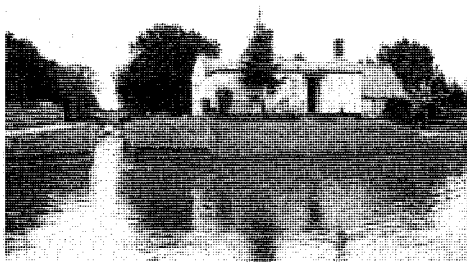
Weather - Warm, a bit cloudy.

Distance - 6¾ miles.

Locks - 18 + 2 lift bridges.

Late start - again, it's that Simon, and got off at 9am. Saw 11 ducklings in one family! New cut at Kingswood so narrow that one of the rubber fender rails had been removed to allow narrowboats to get through! What a crazy design - who does these things? The cut itself, though, is useful, saving a lock-full of water every time a boat does the manoeuvre we did. Up Lapworth Locks (14, in all, from Kingswood). Memories of William, years ago, "missing the boat".

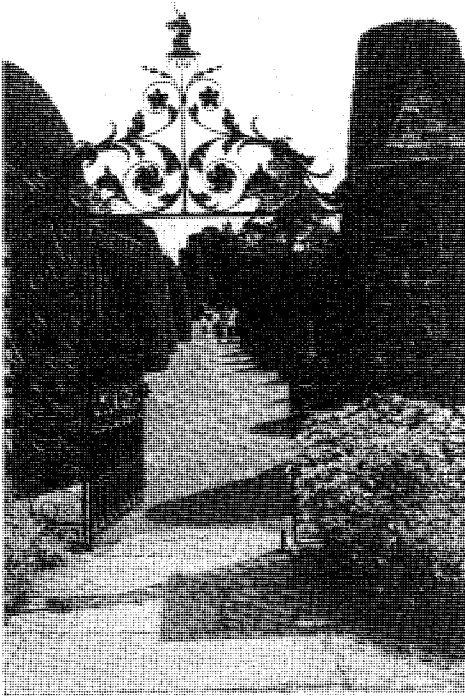
Moored up, past Bridge 31, to go to Packwood House (N.T.). Ken made bacon butties - had them on deck with beer and spritzers! 2 mile walk to Packwood through beautiful country lanes. Walked the avenue of trees waiting for house to open. Tudor/Jacobean with 1920s/30s addition in Tudor style. Magnificent gardens with giant yew topiary - said to represent the Sermon on the Mount. Back to boat for 3-ish. Long, cold drinks - v. hot. Set off to go to winding hole at Bridge 22 through v. pleasant scenery, new towpaths, new houses. Have noticed that a lot of new brickwork on the locks - refurbished since BW took the canal over from the National Trust - has been



The new cut, Kingswood Junction - it really is too narrow! Typical barrel-roofed Stratford Canal lock-house



Packwood House.



Packwood House topiary garden.

knocked off again.

Went past the pub we are aiming for tonight - much changed since we last saw it in 1988! Turned as planned and back to the "Wharf Tavern" at Hockley Heath - drinks, showers and then to the pub for dinner - turned into a "carvery" style but excellent. After many beverages returned to the boat - seem to remember skimming stones! - Bed!

NEXT TIME - On to Stratford and returning "La Maitresse" to her rightful owners.

Photos: A & K Wright

**In life's see-saw
we all need someone
to give us a sense
of balance**

GET YOUR NAME DOWN!

As a fund-raising exercise we are hoping to organise a number of "inaugural trips" over the next year or two as more land-locked sections of the Huddersfield Narrow become navigable.

The idea is to fill a boat with canalcoholics willing to pay, say, £20 - £25 for the privilege of being on "the first boat to in 50 years". Each participant would get a day out and a signed certificate.

If you want to be on the list of people to be called upon when a trip comes up contact the office NOW and GET YOUR NAME DOWN!

1997 HUDDERSFIELD CANALS FESTIVAL

It was with regret that the Society had to cancel this year's canal festival at the 11th hour.

Several key factors contributed to the final decision. Principally it was because replacements could not be found to fill the gaps left by committee members who could not continue, either because of ill health or personal commitments. A second, and sadly a sign of the times, was a severe lack of sponsorship monies.

It was hoped that the financial deficit could be made up over the weekend, but relied heavily on a large committee to staff entry gates and other fundraising initiatives.

The festival committee worked very hard to organise the event. Most of the major items were in place; craft stalls, entertainers and boats were booked in, but unfortunately the remaining handful of volunteers could not ensure that public safety would be adequately maintained. This fact alone would have decided the issue.

Although despondent at the moment, the festival committee have vowed to try again over the next few months and form a new committee to plan for the 1998 Huddersfield Canals Festival.

Anyone local to the Huddersfield area wishing to help on the committee should contact the HCS office for further details.

Frank Smith

Not a lot, again, but interesting in their variety. One superb letter I got accused me of running a "hate campaign" against cyclists and, unfortunately, also forbade me from printing the letter - was it hate mail?

This letter arose from The Wife's Tale team disgracing itself by screaming with recognition when N.B. PROGRESS sailed past us on the River Bure, on the Norfolk Broads! This is Chris Coburn's boat which regularly puts to sea and I reviewed a video of it (in Plink No.117) called "Carry on up the Lune".

The following morning, on our way to Great Yarmouth, we passed "PROGRESS" moored up outside the Stracey Arms. As it was only 7.00a.m. we didn't shout again but I did send Chris a postcard to explain what all the noise was about! Ed.

Dear Anne & Ken,

Thank you for your postcard.

Fancy you seeing us on the Broads! I am glad you did not wake me on the Sunday morning. We had only just arrived in through Great Yarmouth, from Peterborough, a day before. It had been a 27 hour passage then a wait for the tide and a run up to the Stracey Arms! We have now completed our run round the Broads and are hoping to make our way back South towards the Thames, as weather permits,

Thanks for your interest,

Best wishes,

Chris (Chris Coburn)

Lee Sanitation Ltd.,
Fenny Compton,
Warwickshire

Our next contact with "PROGRESS" was an unfortunate one. We opened our morning paper to find a large colour photograph of the boat stranded across a weir on the River Orwell in Suffolk, heading for Ipswich and the Stowmarket Canal. No doubt a high tide has sorted them out by now! Ed.

Dear Ken,

Last weekend I went to the Nantwich Rally, a rare chance for me to visit the HCS sales stand when it was within reasonable distance of my home. I enjoyed my Sunday morning enormously, and write to express my sincere praise and admiration for the whole "set up", and for Pat and Steve Riley. They gave me a lovely friendly welcome (and a drink of coffee to warm me up!) and were doing a magnificent job there, despite the cold, wind, rain and mud. I felt proud to belong to the HCS, and I congratulate you all on your efforts and achievements.

Very sincerely,

Margaret Sinfield
(Founder Member)

Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent

You may recall (Plink 118, page 14) that I went on a bit about finding a decent pub on the Norfolk Broads. We went again this year and it was excellent. On our return home I sent the landlord a copy of Pennine Link No.118. He writes:-

Dear Mr. Wright,

Many thanks for your kindness in sending me the copy of "Pennine Link" and of course for your glowing testimonial contained therein. I am pleased that following this year's pilgrimage you found us still to be "up to scratch" and hope that we may have the pleasure of seeing you again next year, if not sooner,

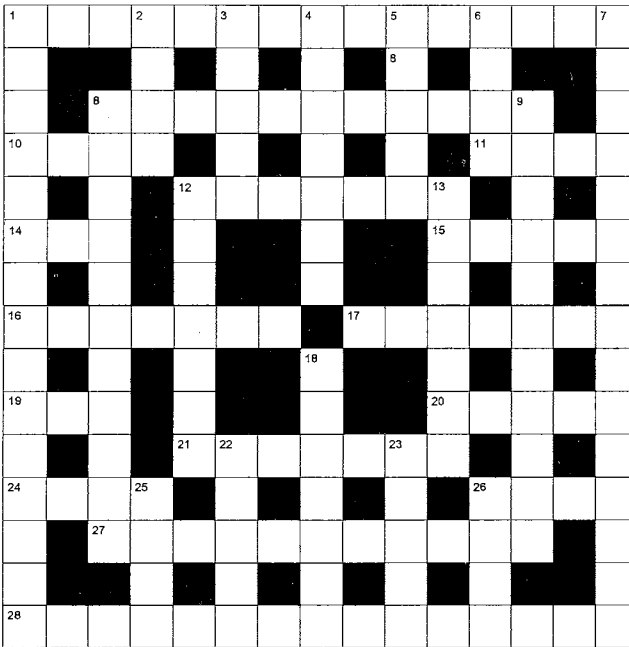
Kind regards,

Andrew (Andrew Burrell-Saward)

P.S. We will be happy to offer canal society members a 10% food discount if they care to bring a copy of "Plink" with them on their visit to us. Good luck with the remaining blockages!

Red Lion Inn, Church Street, Coltishall,
NORWICH NR12 7DW Tel: 01603 737402

That really is a splendid offer if you are in that part of the world. You will be made very welcome - and you can enjoy a pint or two of the pub's special brew - "Couteshall Weaselpis"! Ed.



21. Facial twitch with a gemstone has light applications (7)
24. Lock gates soak up water when made from these timbers (4)
26. A battery in prison? (4)
27. One most rely on when boating on the River Waveney (11)
28. See-low stock rank on the T & M south of Derby (11,4)

DOWN

1. Wharfage area on the Severn by pass! (10,5)
2. Found near the nose and near the noes we hear (4)
3. So ran things in a town near Vesuvius (5)
4. Find a feather stole on a shortened road - soon be on the boat (7)
5. Heavy interview with part of the cooker (5)

ACROSS

1. Environmentally friendly blacksmith's shop where the Staffs & Worcs rises (11,4)
8. Beg Derry fir where the Aire & Calder has a lock and a power station (11)
10. Things seen in the sky after a night on the ale? (4)
11. Boring naturalists talk endlessly of an insect bite, hardly surprising really (4)
12. Merry old king joins a motoring club to go green boating (7)
14. Buy a pink newspaper in the East to read about an amphibian (3)
15. Eyeless with spirit whilst taking rides on canal boats (5)
16. Tiny Les found swimming on the Sheffield canal (7)
17. Why less of Terry Wogan with silly questions as to how one keeps warm in bed (7)
19. Alternatively I could go backwards up a Spanish river (3)
20. The Beano illustrates this essential for an engine (3)

6. Glug! Answer found on a branch of a questioning river (4)
7. Large village with SE county connections found where the Regent's canal rises (11,4)
8. Staircase heavy with vulpine connections on the Leicester line (6,5)
9. Nile links NE of the Ulster canal (11)
12. Mixture of tar, cow hair and horse dung applied to the bottom of wooden boats (7)
13. At top o'th lane find a purveyor of intoxicant (7)
18. Cook dinner on board with a measure of aptitude et al (7)
22. A section of one's mind gives freely in disagreement (5)
23. Granary and other breads produce a person of Indo-European extraction (5)
25. Fly above a river in Leicestershire (4)
26. Black gold (4)

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

The first of a series of articles by vice-chairman Trevor Ellis.

The Huddersfield Canals on Postcards

Part 1 - A Short History of Postcards

The serious development of the picture postcard in the U.K. probably dates from November 1st 1899, when the Post Office conceded that cards of size 5½" x 3½" could be sent through the post in this country. Although it only represented an increase of 1" in the length of the card, the change, boosted by the introduction of a divided back in 1902, which permitted a message of reasonable length as well as a picture, was followed by a phenomenal growth in the number of cards posted.

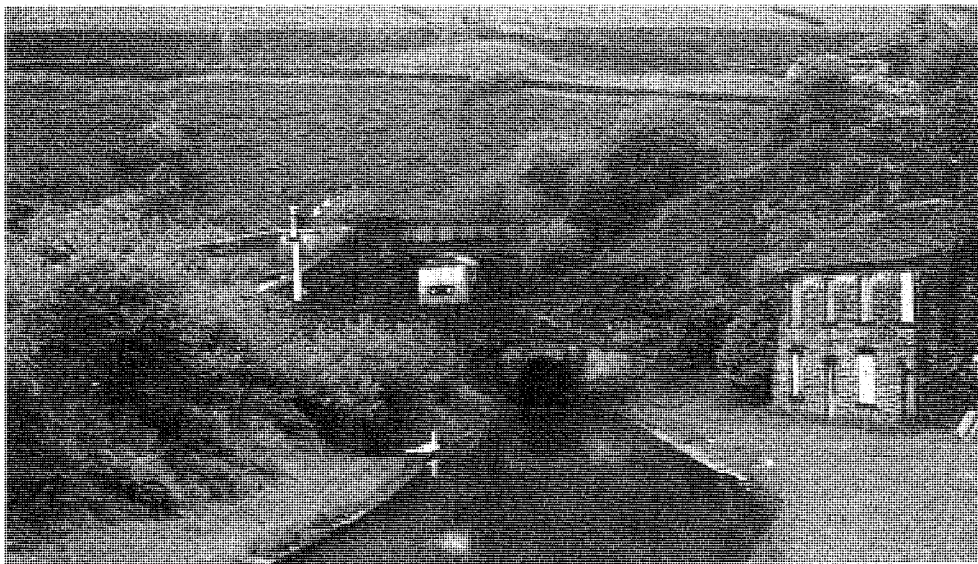
From about 1902, most large towns were covered by picture postcards and, very quickly thereafter even the tiniest of villages. The numbers of postcards posted peaked in about 1907 and then declined very slowly towards the first World War. Ever since, fewer and

fewer have been posted, until today postcards are linked primarily to holidays and most people only send them at that time of year,

This was not always so and, before 1914, cards were used in much the same way as the telephone today. Speed of delivery of cards then can be surprising in these days, with messages such as "*meet me this afternoon at 4.00pm*" not unusual.

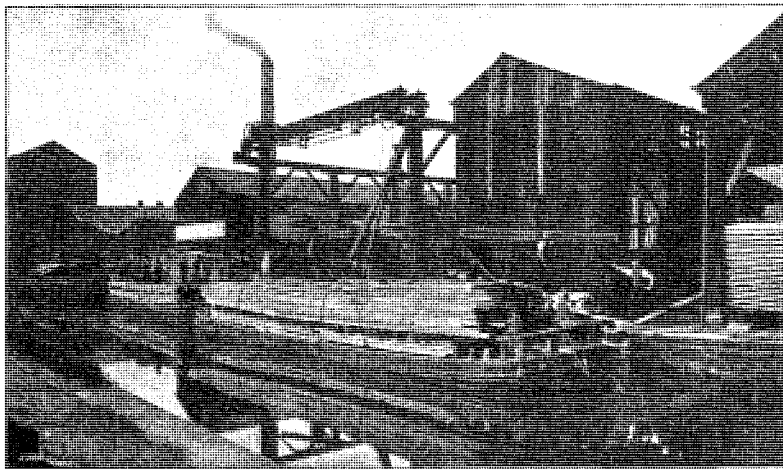
Those with an interest in other forms of transport will be aware, however, that in a town such as Huddersfield, it was possible to post a card on a passing tram, the box being emptied when it passed through the town centre, and deliveries were more frequent.

There must have been a number of other social, political and economic factors at work in the rapid growth of postcard usage and collecting, just as there were in the subsequent decline. This is not intended to be a history of the postcard, however, but a look at the very specific area of canal postcards of the Huddersfield Canals.



Standedge Canal tunnel is the longest and the highest in Britain.
5698 yards long and 436 feet above sea level.

The Huddersfield Canals on Postcards



JARRATT, PYRAH & ARMITAGE'S WHARF. HUDDERSFIELD.

Today there are probably four or five cards of the Narrow Canal in print and, perhaps surprisingly, at least two of the Broad Canal. Even this is a remarkable increase from the David Finnis photograph of Tunnel End published for the Society (below left), which was the only card available in the late 1970's and early 1980's, and probably the first produced since the early 1950's. Compared to this, I know of around 50 up to the end of 1918, and perhaps 20 between the Wars.

Strangely, there is one 1940's card and one in the early 50's.

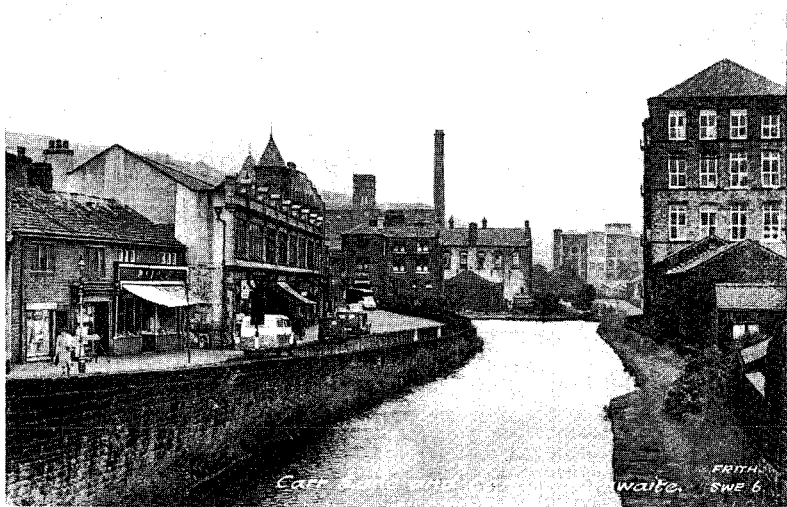
The card from the 1940's (above) shows three barges unloading timber at the Jarratt, Pyrah & Armitage wharf on the Broad Canal, exactly where the

Sainsbury supermarket now stands. This was produced for the company by the local printers, Jubb, and I suspect that the picture was somewhat older than the "194..." date provided on the back.

The 1950's card (below) shows Slaithwaite before the canal

was filled in, and was produced by Frith, one of the largest national postcard publishers. It would be difficult to date, apart from two facts; the lock gate is missing, and someone has parked an Austin A30 at the far end of the street. The latter was not produced in any quantity till 1952, and is likely that this picture must date from shortly afterwards.

Trevor Ellis



In this third selection of excerpts from *Narrow Boat*, the book by Tom Rolt which was responsible for the start of the waterways restoration movement, Ken Wright has picked out items about canal people of over fifty years ago.

As always, we are indebted to Sonia Rolt, the author's widow, for permission to use these excerpts.

Illustrations

Scraper-board illustrations by Denys Watkins-Pitchford were used in all editions of *Narrow Boat* up to the current one, the golden anniversary edition, published in 1994. In this edition Sonia Rolt has selected some contemporary photographs, used in addition to the original illustrations. Examples of both are included in this article.

CANAL PEOPLE

To step down from some busy thoroughfare on to the quiet tow-path of a canal, even in the heart of a town, is to step backward a hundred years or more and to see things in a different, and perhaps more balanced perspective. The rush of traffic on the road above seems to become the purposeless scurrying of an overturned anthill beside the unruffled calm of the water, which even the slow passage of the boats does not disturb.

Few boatmen can either read or write, and, like many country folk, they often appear surly and taciturn to strangers from the towns. But beneath this natural reserve there shines a bright intelligence whose great charm lies in the fact that it has not been acquired from Council schools and newspapers, but is in part traditional and in part evolved during many slow journeying with only heron and plover for company.

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

On the opposite side of the drawbridge from the boatyard there was a lock, and on the lockside stood a toll office. There all the boats southward bound for Oxford with their cargoes of coal were checked and gauged. At eight o'clock every week-day evening the toll clerk locked the bridge in the closed position

and swung a heavy door across the towing path, so that any late-comers had to tie up until the following morning. There can be no mistaking this hour of closing, for they still ring the curfew in Banbury.

I had selected the most promising of an elderly and rather dubious assortment of Li-Lo mattresses and was making my bed when the creak of tackle and the slow clip-clop of hooves on the towing-path opposite heralded the arrival of a belated horse-boat. I looked out. The boatman was walking beside his horse, and when they drew abreast of my window they halted, dim shapes in the darkness. The tow-line fell slack as the boat, low laden in the water, slid into view, and the scarcely perceptible ripples round her bluff bows died as she was checked and drawn into the side.

Golden lamplight streaming from the open aft doors of the cabin illuminated the weather-beaten face of the women at the tiller, and glinted on her gold earrings. These were my unknown neighbours on my first night afloat. Though they must have cast away soon after sunrise, they did not disturb me, for I slept soundly, despite the fact that the mattress I had so laboriously blown up deflated overnight, so that I awoke to find myself on the hard boards.

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

The Tooley family had adapted themselves to meet changing conditions by acquiring a considerable mechanical skill which was entirely self-taught. When the crude-oil engine began to supersede the horse on the Oxford Canal they fitted several motors in horse-boats with great success. They installed their own generating plant to light the workshop and charge the boatmen's wireless batteries. Most remarkable of all, when this engine broke a piston, they did not, as you would suppose, send an urgent order to the manufacturer for a spare, but set to work to make another. This meant making a wooden pattern, core and mould-box, constructing the mould in sand, melting the iron in a crucible over their small open hearth, pouring the mould and turning the casting to size. All this was done as though the task was of every-day occurrence, and the engine has run perfectly ever since.

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

-----ooooOoooo-----

The boatmen brought their cans to Mr. Tooley when they needed a repaint, for the old man excelled at this work. To behold him, as I did, when he sat before the bench in his narrow workshop, the battered bowler firmly planted on the back of his head and a tray of many-coloured paints at his elbow, was to see the past miraculously living in the present. Not a past preserved in a museum or spuriously recreated in and Art and Craft shop, but a vital tradition. Handling his fine camel-hair brushes with wonderful sureness and delicacy, he first of all painted little shaded discs of sepia, ochre and pink on the green ground of the can and surrounded them with a garland of pale green leaves. These were the centres of the roses. When they were dry, the petals, red on sepia, yellow on ochre and white on pink, were superimposed so simply and swiftly that only in the way a mere blob of paint seemed suddenly to blossom forth was the skill revealed. The bright work was completed when the veining of the leaves had been painted in with a very fine brush and a coat of varnish applied to preserve it.

Mr. Tooley was once asked by a London store to teach their employees how to paint these flowers. I am glad that he refused, for his must surely be the only surviving natural art in this country which has not been commercially exploited and debased. I obtained a promise from him that, when my own work on 'Cressy' had reached the decorating stage, he would paint for me a bunch of roses on each of the four panels in the sleeping-cabin. Later I feared that he would never be able to keep this promise, for the old man was taken seriously ill with pneumonia and spent some time in the local hospital. When he was at length discharged he was still far from well, but he had not forgotten, and insisted upon painting them. The work tired him exceedingly, he rested frequently on the stool I provided for him, but his hand was still sure. He has painted no flowers since. *(It is with sorrow that I have to record the death of Mr. George Tooley soon after this book was written.)*

-----ooooOoooo-----

A 'Number One' is the canal term for a boat owned by her captain, as distinct from those

owned by the canal carrying companies, which are worked by paid crews. In the past the bulk of the canal traffic was handled by these independents, the carrying company being a comparatively recent development, but modern conditions are all against the old race of owner-boatmen. Possessing no capital reserve to see them through a slack spell, and unable to draw dole allowance, they cannot survive the cut-throat competition of the modern haulage business. Many have given up the unequal struggle by selling their boats and their labours to one or other of the companies, and so - more is the pity - there are few 'Number Ones' left on the canals now, and certainly none finer than those surviving on the Oxford Canal. Old John Harwood, captain of the 'Searchlight'; Joseph Skinner of the 'Friendship'; Townsend of Abingdon and Beauchamp of Oxford; the Hones of Banbury, father and son-these were fine men of the old school who still kept their own boats. Three generations of Hones worked three boats between them, Alfred Hone senior and his wife the 'Cylgate', his son and daughter-in-law the 'White City', and his granddaughters the 'Rose and Betty', which was named after them. These boats were kept in spotless condition, as was only to be expected, for an owner naturally has more pride in his boat than a paid crew. All the paintwork was mopped down and the brasswork polished at every available opportunity, and on one boat there were canvas sheets which could be let down to protect the varnish on the cabin sides from the sun. In addition to the customary binding of pipe-clayed turk's heads, there floated from the 'rams head' of the 'White City' a long



Painting the can

horse's tail. I have tried in vain to discover the origin of this custom, which I have since seen on a few other boats, but, whatever the tradition, it has been lost in the past. The brass bands and safety chains of the stove chimneys always glittered like gold, and through the cabin doors I would catch glimpses of the beloved rows of brass knobs glimmering and winking in the light, of the prized openwork plates hanging on the walls, of immaculate lace curtains and gleaming pans. Beside the resplendent water-cans on the cabin roof stood green-painted flower-boxes planted out with pink and white bachelor's-buttons. Often there would be jam-jars also, filled with great bunches of wild flowers gathered on the wayside - primroses, cowslips, hyacinths or dog-daisies in their season.

-----ooooOoooo-----

A mere landsman, sitting in one of these narrow-boat cabins, only 8 ft. long by 7 ft. wide, cannot help but marvel that this in the

boatman's home; that within this tiny compass all the manifold needs of a large family are administered, and that it has been a witness of all the comedy, drama and tragedy of many lifetimes. When the cabin doors are closed the only daylight comes from a small 'bull's-eye' in the roof and a lookout forward, only a foot square, which is often obscured when the boat is loaded. Light at night is provided by a large three-cornered paraffin lantern hung in an angle of the wall. Immediately to the left of the doorway is the coal-fired cooking and heating stove, the space around it occupied by saucepans. On the stove-top tea is forever brewing, for the boat people are inveterate tea-drinkers. Their teapots, like their water-cans, are usually of an original and traditional design - a brown salt glaze stoneware ornamented with a band of coloured flowers in relief and a white plaque bearing in blue letters some simple motto such as 'Love at Home'. Their manufacture is now extinct, as I



'A long horse's tail floated from the "Ram's Head" of the "White City"



A narrow boat cabin interior. The ticket drawer, which contained the documents for the trip, is screened by a layer of thick hand crochet. Measham pottery jugs hang above the stove (Collection of Tim Wilkinson)

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

found when I tried to obtain one. They were last made especially for an old lady who kept a shop on the Ashby Canal, or the 'Moirá Cut', as the boatmen call it. The supply failed with her death and the closing of her shop.

The boat wife keeps her provisions in two cupboards, one in the tapering stern aft of the deck, and the other beneath the deck floor. Next to the stove is another tall cupboard, set at an angle of forty-five degrees to the wall, the door of which, elaborately decorated with castle and flowers, is hinged at the base, and when opened forms a table for meals. When it is folded back after use any crumbs fall into a small drawer beneath, which is specially provided for this purpose. A wide bench along the opposite wall is the only sitting accommodation, and does duty at night as a side-bed for the children. A second and wider cross-bed, with cupboards above it and a folding centre portion, lies athwart the fore end of the cabin. It is usually screened by a pair of lace curtains. This is the boatman's marriage bed; here, in this little space, he was born and will one day die. No simpler existence can be imagined.

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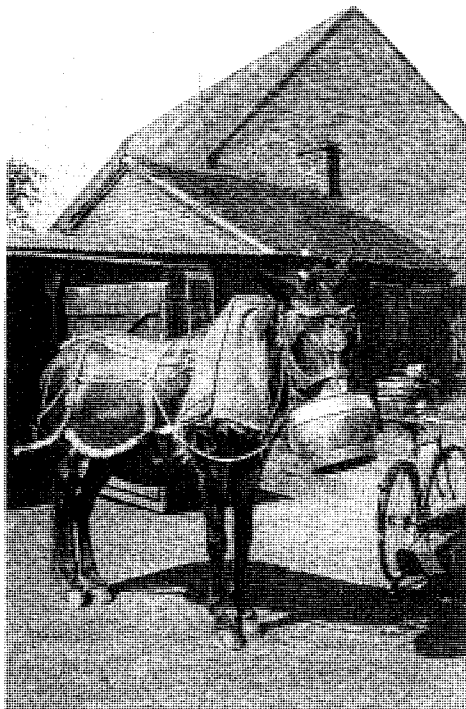
Many boatmen are self-taught musicians, and I found that nearly every boat on the Oxford Canal carried a melodeon, a concertina or an accordion. Often of a night time I would hear the familiar strains of 'Daisy Bell' or 'Two Lovely Black Eyes' floating over the water from the cabin of a moored boat. Needless to say, Herbert Tooley had become proficient in repairing these instruments, and I looked on one evening while he dextrously fitted a new key spring to a melodeon belonging to John Harwood of the 'Searchlight'. While he worked, the old boatman talked, his unhurried, rhythmical speech as soothing as a Gregorian chant.

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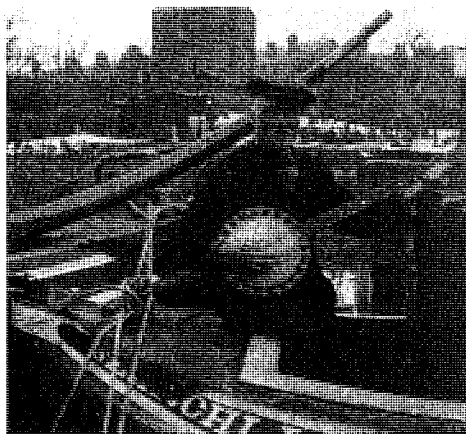
'Narrow Boat' is available from IWA (Sales) Ltd. price £9.85 including post and packing.

Telesales No: 0171 586 2556

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



Banbury Wharf: the boatman's mule prepared for the day's work on the towpath
(Collection of Hugh McKnight)



Mr Harwood on *Searchlight*, moored at Banbury on the Oxford Canal
(Collection of Hugh McKnight)

SOME EAST SIDE NEWS

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The East side is to form a boat and social committee, with a view to consolidating existing membership, and hopefully to encourage new members to join.

BBC2

On 30th May, a crew arrived with Adam Hart Davis, to do a documentary on transport; much filming was done aboard Pioneer, including "Legging" out of the Tunnel at Tunnel End, this is due to be screened on 24th November at 1300 hours.

MAIDEN TRIP

Also on the 30th May, the maiden trip of the Pioneer took place through the locks at Marsden. Five locks were negotiated altogether, but the sixth, with a jammed paddle, put a stop to any further progress.

This trip was achieved with the help of two Waterways engineers and two HCS staff, without whose help we would have been stuck several times en route, especially on the return trip with lack of water. Suffice to say that at one point the Pioneer was left on a silt bank at about 60 degrees - somebody should have had a camera.

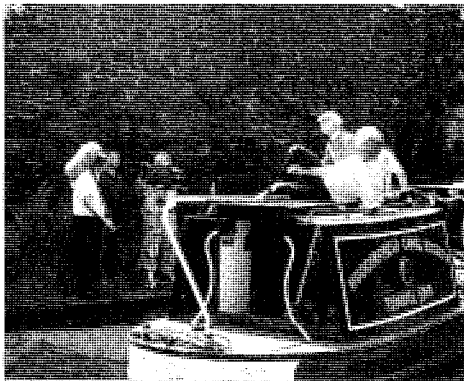
The five locks trip, including all the hazards, took approx. three hours, which was considerably faster than anticipated.

Special instructions were needed for the use of the paddles on the stretch, otherwise they will not close! Hopefully, this will be sorted out before the canal is opened!

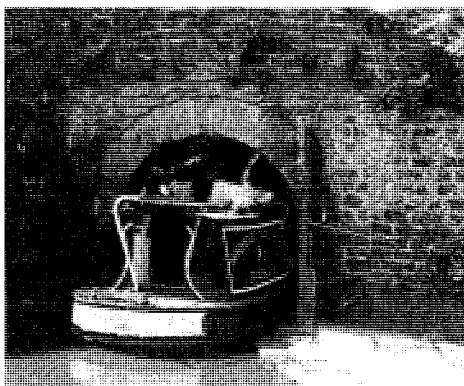
We are advised that this section needs USING, and each trip will get easier and, once a channel has been established, no further problems are envisaged,

The crew on this trip comprised Maurice Winters, Jason Diamond and myself, all of whom were badly sunburnt after a day in the 80's! Oh yes, and at one point a frog hitched a ride.

Peter Wright



"Right, let's get it over with"



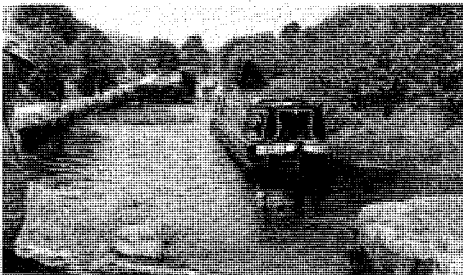
"Can we all squeeze in here"



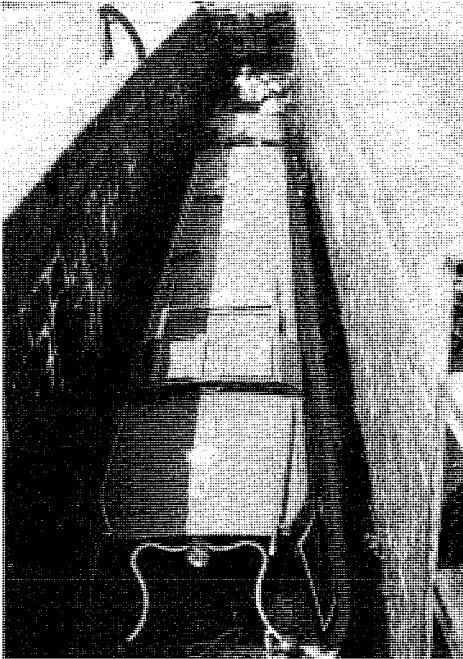
"Thank God that's over" Adam Hart Davis



Leaving the Top Lock (42E) at Marsden Station.
Note rebuilt access bridge to car park.



Entering Lock 40E.



Deep in Lock 40E. Photos: P. Wright



ELLESMERE PORT BOAT MUSEUM

Here are a few further events taking place at the Boat Museum. As we have said before, this is an excellent day out at any time, even more so if combined with a trip to Chester and/or the retail park, Cheshire Oaks, which is close by.

GENERAL

October 5th

Tugs and Pushers

Event themed to power around the Dock Pumphouse in Steam/Special Boat Movements & activities *

November 2nd

Pumphouse in Steam/Special Boat Movements *

November 8th - 9th

Knobstick, Graining and Scrolls Painting Weekend Painting Course - £60

November 22nd - 23rd

Grand Christmas Craft Fair

Santa in his Grotto

Special admission price to Fair and Museum

* *Subject to weather conditions*

SPOOKY EVENING GHOST TOURS

Hair-raising tours of the 200 year old Museum Complex

Friday 3rd & Friday 17th October
(Pre-booking Essential)

HALLOWEEN HOWLER

Spooky tour of the Museum followed by candlelight themed meal (inc. free Witch's Brew)

October 31st (Pre-booking Essential)

All places on ghost tours must be booked in advance

For further details ring the Boat Museum on 0151 355 5017

VOLUNTEERS WORKING SAFELY

Safety Guide for Voluntary Groups working on British Waterways Property

This pamphlet, produced jointly by British Waterways and the Waterway Recovery Group of the Inland Waterways Association, is an attractive A5 glossy document, full of good pictures of enthusiastic workers with hard hats and dirty faces.

Obviously intended for groups such as our own, I picked the pamphlet up full of hope for an interesting and useful read. What a disappointment! There are ten pages of management-speak without a single useful safety hint!

Clearly the document is intended to be handed out to voluntary workers - page 8 exhorts us to "make sure you have enough copies of this guide available for anyone under your control" - (YOU being voluntary groups) - "More copies are available from the appropriate British Waterways representative and the IWA/WRG head office."

And what advice does our voluntary group get?

- * Assess risks arising in the course of the work and produce method statements and safe systems of work. These will cover any hazards that BW have specifically notified you about, and any work to be undertaken by sub-contractors,

- * Discuss with the BW project Manager any points where you are unclear about the hazards.

- * Provide BW with copies of risk assessments, method statements and safe systems of work as requested, including appropriate COSHH and noise assessments.

And so it goes on!

In other areas the writing borders on 'gobbledegook'. For instance:-

"Notify as soon as possible before construction work starts of any known hazards that those carrying out the work need to know

of (i.e. any in addition to those covered in this booklet)"

or

"Appraise proposed methods of work so that BW can be sure that adequate safe systems of work will be in place before work begins. BW will judge these against their own standards".

Not a word about hard hats or steel toe-caps. Perhaps all that will follow in a work-place document entitled "Volunteers Working Safely" - hang about, what's this one called?

And, as a P.S., how's this? In the section "The following structures and features can lead to hazards" we find "Third Parties: Users (anglers, boaters, walkers, etc.), volunteer groups, British Waterways employees and other contractors"! (The exclamation mark is mine).

If you don't believe me, get your own copy from your appropriate representative, whoever that may be.

Ken Wright

Fire crew pulls foal from canal

Fire-Fighters rescued a foal from the Huddersfield Canal, at Mossley, after a passer-by spotted it struggling to keep its head above water.

The fire crew from Mossley faced a tricky situation when they arrived at Roaches Lock, on Saturday evening.

They used an old door dumped in the field to provide a ramp for the frightened animal to clamber on.

Once they persuaded it to scramble on to the door, they managed to grab its collar and lead it to safety.

The rescue operation took about half an hour.

Oldham Evening Chronicle - 26/07/97

I complained last time that there hadn't been much recent comment in the Press, and then occupied four full pages with extracts!

This time I have no less than SIXTEEN canal-type articles to choose from, thirteen of them from the Oldham Evening Chronicle - thank goodness my wish for clippings from other papers hasn't been granted!

Of the sixteen, four are about festivals and cover 280 (110) column centimetres (inches). Excellent publicity and due to a lot of hard work by various publicity officers - and no doubt our own prolific Press Officer, Alec Ramsden. I have excluded them from this article as the festivals are covered elsewhere.

Four of the articles are about the Rochdale

Canal and things seem to be getting straightened out a bit.

There is a splendid article from the Daily Mail about Chris Coburn getting 'NB Progress' stuck in mid-Orwell (see Letters to the Editor) headed "WEIR GOING NOWHERE" which I shall not embarrass Chris by repeating here.

I was pleased with one item from the Oldham Chronicle, lifted almost intact from my Editorial for Pennine Link 121, about TV cameras in the Colne Valley. Quite flattering, I thought.

Which leaves five items for your delight and information.

Society rides a wave of praise Renewal of canals 'is vital'

The trail-blazing work of the Huddersfield Canal Society has been praised by the new British Waterways chief, Dr. David Fletcher.

He forecast that changes in attitude - particularly by government - would mean more restoration of derelict waterways.

Dr. Fletcher, who has been drafted in from the private sector to spearhead a shake-up in the organisation, told the society's annual meeting: "We are following you, the Government is following you.

"But now we at British Waterways intend to lead you. We have learned our lesson. We intend to be more involved."

A long-time waterways enthusiast and narrow-boat owner, Dr. Fletcher said the status of B.W. - often regarded as a poor-relation industry which has had to beg, cap in hand, for funds - was being reviewed and there was

a growing realisation of the value of waterways, particularly as a means of regeneration.

But Dr. Fletcher said, while taking a higher profile, British Waterways paid tribute to the achievements of the volunteers.

"We recognise what you have done and are determined that the links will be strengthened," he said.

"I have travelled the world and there is nothing to match the beauty and other values of our waterways. Think about the history, the archaeology.

"Restoration of waterways is vital and we are putting an enormous effort into finding the money needed."

The society's chairman, David Sumner, said the impact of canal restoration would last for ever and 1997 would see the beginning of the end of the process.

Oldham Evening Chronicle - 20/06/97

Canal's 'millennium miracle'

OLDHAM'S Education and Leisure Committee chairman, Councillor Jim Greenwood, is the new vice-chairman of the company which will supervise the £31 million Huddersfield Narrow Canal restoration.

Councillor George Speight, of Kirklees Council, has been elected the first chairman of the company.

Councillor Speight has predicted a millennium miracle for the north with the restoration of the canal, which has a high profile, experienced chief executive as project director.

"In the past, mainly because of cash constraints, we have had to carry out restoration work in a stop-start way, winning finance from a vast variety of sources," said Councillor Speight.

"Now the money worries are over and we have finalised the setting up of the new company, we can step on the gas to achieve

what was once described as an impossible dream by the turn of the century."

The Millennium Commission is providing £14.8 million of the money, with matching funding from the Government's Regeneration Agency, English Partnerships and contributions from each of the bodies forming the new company.

Hundreds of jobs will be created during construction work and surveys have shown the future impact will mean upwards of £83 million in private sector investment, the equivalent of over 2,500 full-time jobs, 600 residential units and £3.5 million expenditure from visitors.

Oldham's other representative on the company is Councillor Riaz Ahmad, Environmental Services Committee chairman.

Oldham Evening Chronicle - 23/06/97

Canal team seeking volunteers

VOLUNTEERS still have a crucial role to play in the restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal - but numbers are dwindling and a drive for more recruits has just been launched.

The number of willing, unpaid navvies slumped after it was announced that £31 million was available to restore the waterway by the millennium.

But Trevor Ellis, the man in charge of the Huddersfield Canal Society's voluntary task force, says: *"While it is a huge amount of money, every penny is spoken for and it will still need a tremendous injection of time and effort by the voluntary sector."*

Trevor is also vice-chairman of the society, which kick-started the restoration of the 20-mile-long

canal, which runs from Ashton via Stalybridge, Mossley and Saddleworth to Huddersfield, more than 20 years ago.

The small voluntary team is currently undertaking an in-depth survey of a restored stretch between Slaithwaite and Marsden.

Check duties are also to be undertaken on the western side of the Pennines and other work may include the creation of special landing stages to help with wheelchair access to trip boats.

"The work is interesting and varied, with lots of job satisfaction," says Trevor.

Volunteers should contact the society's secretary, Frank Smith, at the head office at Mossley Road, Ashton (339 1332).

Oldham Evening Chronicle - 19/06/97

The following item was also 'lifted' from the last issue of Pennine Link and forestalled any announcement by the Millennium Commission in the National Press, of Alan Stopher's appointment. Only a government organisation could be 'scooped' by a quarterly magazine!

First day for head of canal company

The project director of the newly-formed Huddersfield Canal Company, Alan Stopher, took up his duties today.

Mr. Stopher, an inland waterways enthusiast for over 20 years, joins the company on a £40,000-a-year-plus package from RJB Mining (UK) Ltd, where he was the senior manager for the £25 million canal and river diversion at St. Aidans, on the Aire and Calder.

Supervise

A married man, with two children, he lives at Birkby, Huddersfield.

The new company was formed to supervise the £31 million project, made possible thanks to a Millennium Fund grant of nearly £15 million, to restore the Huddersfield Narrow Canal.

Mr. Stopher will be a member of the board of directors, which includes two representatives from Oldham, Tameside and Kirklees councils, British Waterways and the Huddersfield Canal Society.

A member of the society, he was one of six people shortlisted from 150 applicants.

Oldham Evening Chronicle - 01/07/97

The final item strikes fear into my heart! See Editorial.

Tunnel task is fine for Batman

HOLY canals, Batman! Robert Stebbings is out to track down the fly-by-night mammals in their lair at Standedge Tunnel.

He wants to do what the Joker, Catwoman, and Mr Freeze failed to achieve - move the bat out of its traditional home.

The bats' shadowy underworld holds no fears for Robert, an expert on their lives and colonies. He is working with British Waterways ecologist Jonathan Briggs, examining their habitat.

The 10-mile labyrinth of tunnels for trains and the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, which enter the hillside at Diggle and emerge at Marsden, could house up to eight species.

The tunnels - one for the canal, one for the main Leeds-Manchester rail line, and two disused rail lines - link up together at several points, making an ideal home for bat colonies.

Jonathan is helping to relocate them before engineering work begins on the canal tunnel, centre-piece of the £31 million Huddersfield Narrow Canal restoration scheme.

Examining the bats' habitat is invaluable in determining how to carry out the work with least disruption to the bats, and finding places suitable for bat roosts during the contract.

The canal tunnel is the UK's longest, highest and deepest, and is managed by British Waterways, which has already helped to relocate several bat colonies along Britain's 2,000-mile canal system.

Spokesman Guy Lawson said: *"We have placed netting at dusk over the tunnels to deter the bats, while providing another roost close by, and we have provided bat bricks to give them somewhere safe to roost."*

Oldham Evening Chronicle - 01/08/97

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

PART 3 - ORGANISATION

Having obtained the Act necessary for the building of our canal we can now set about the important bit - setting up the organisation and actually building it.

The organisation fits neatly into two departments, namely: the 'hands-on' area - digging, building locks, bridges etc., and the administration - office work, money collection, payments etc.

The most important person in the first area is the Chief Engineer - this will be where the well known names such as Brindley, Telford, Rennie, Smeaton, etc., come to the fore. Bearing in mind that at this time there was no formal education structure in this area all their learning was 'hands-on'. The Chief Engineer was the person who originally surveyed the proposed line, set it out, decided on the siting and design of locks, bridges, aqueducts, tunnels, etc. and, most importantly, considered the matter of water supply. Relations between the Chief Engineer and the committee were traditionally somewhat tense as the engineer was the professional in charge of the groundwork whereas the committee, of course, had charge of the funds. Thus whilst the engineer was an employee of the committee (and could potentially be sacked by them) the committee were helpless without the engineer! Once building work was in progress the Chief Engineer would move off on to other projects, just making an occasional visit to check on progress. This left the day to day works in the charge of the Resident Engineer and his assistants.

The Resident Engineer's basic job description was to put into place on the ground the plans which the Chief laid out on paper. To help him there was a team of assistant engineers who were organised differently on different canals. In some cases the assistants had responsibility for a set length of canal and on others there would be an assistant in charge of digging, one in charge of bridges, aqueducts,

tunnels etc. Between them the Resident and his assistants laid out the line in detail, organised direct labour or let contracts for specific lengths or structures. Responsibilities would also include the building of brickworks, discussions with landowners, arranging for materials to get to site, resolving disputes with contractors and the million and one other matters which arose on a day to day basis. The Resident would have to answer to the committee about lack of progress, exceeding the budget, trouble caused by navvies drinking, rioting or striking - almost anything that went wrong landed at his door.

Whilst the engineers were struggling on outside the man in charge of administration - the Company Secretary - would be struggling to maintain order in the office. His responsibilities included collecting and accounting for income and supervising all payments in accordance with committee's decisions. He would have to ensure that sub-contractors had completed work for which they applied to be paid, and that goods had actually been received before payments were authorised. He would deal with correspondence from irate landlords, and the public, where the path of the canal caused upset or the actual digging or behaviour of the navvies became a matter of concern to the locals. On his desk would land claims for compensation for loss of land, crops and other matters. One of his most important responsibilities was to ensure that shareholders paid up as and when calls became due. Shareholders were notorious for a lack of enthusiasm in producing more and more money as projects went over budget when the actual opening of the canal (and thus some income for the company) was still perhaps years ahead.

In spite of all this the problems were, of course, at last overcome and eventually the canal would open. The committee would scrape the barrel and find enough money for a grand opening ceremony with bands, formal refreshments for the gentry and barrels of ale, roast pigs and sides of beef for the workers - at last we're in business!

THE SOCIETY WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS:

- 2453 Mr Blackburn, [REDACTED]
- 2436 Mr & Mrs Rowntree, [REDACTED]
- 2437 Mr Gamble, Grasscroft, [REDACTED]
- 2438 Mr Oxley, [REDACTED]
- 2439 Mr Dowson, [REDACTED]
- 2440 Mr Elder, [REDACTED]
- 2441 Miss Gregory, [REDACTED]
- 2442 Mr Mooney, [REDACTED]
- 2443 Ms Cockin, [REDACTED]
- 2444 Mr Weighell, [REDACTED]
- 2445 Mrs Murphy, [REDACTED]
- 2446 Mr Booth, New [REDACTED]
- 2447 Mrs Cater, [REDACTED]
- 2448 Mr Bradford, [REDACTED]
- 2449 Mr & Mrs Hipkins, [REDACTED]
- 2450 Mr Flynn, [REDACTED]
- 2451 Ms Dean & Mr Venskunas, [REDACTED]
- 2452 Mr Morrison, [REDACTED]
- 2453 Mr & Ms Baines & Hay, [REDACTED]
- 2454 Mr Whittaker, [REDACTED]
- 2455 Mr Latham, [REDACTED]
- 2456 Mr Pickering, [REDACTED]

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80, 81/82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 99
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28. Swarkestone lock*

*DOWN 1. Gloucester docks 2. Eyes 3. Sarno 4. Onboard 5. Grill 6. Lugg 7. Kentishtown lock
8. Foxton locks 9. Enniskillen 12. Chalico 13. Ethanol 18. Skillet 22. Piece 23. Aryan 25. Soar
26. Coal*

WEST SIDE MEETINGS

Wednesday 8th October	General Meeting at the Tollemache Arms, Mossley, 8.00pm.
Wednesday 12th November	General Meeting at the Tollemache Arms, Mossley, 8.00pm.
Wednesday 10th December	General Meeting at the Tollemache Arms, Mossley, 8.00pm.

In the next Issue of Pennine Link ...

Pearson's Canal Companions
 Profile - Jo Young, Membership Secretary
 Results of our Photographic Competition
 Continuing the Huddersfield Narrow in old Postcards
 Canal Walks: Barton Aqueduct
 Bridgewater Canal at Worsley

.... plus all the regular features

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