

# Pennine Link

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The Journal of the Huddersfield Canal Society  
Issue No 124 Spring 1998



Huddersfield Canal Company

Millennium Progress

IWAAC Report



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# hcs council members

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# contents & editorial

Council Members .....	Inside Front	Huddersfield Canals on Postcards .....	24
Contents & Editorial .....	3	Not the Wife's Tale .....	26
The Future for the Pennine "Ring o' Roses".....	4	Notification of Annual General Meeting .....	29
IWAAC and Waterway Restoration Priorities.....	6	Foxton Inclined Plane .....	30
The Huddersfield Canal Company.....	8	Profile - Brian Minor .....	32
IWA News.....	10	Forty Years of Canals .....	34
Photo Feature - Events at Wool Road .....	12	Canal Crossword 20.....	35
The Distaff Side .....	14	Boat Trip & Crew News .....	36
Canal Walk 4 by John Harwood.....	16	What the Papers Say .....	38
IWAAC Report.....	18	The Canal Harwoods & Waterway Index .....	41
HCS Council News.....	20	The Boatmaster.....	42
Restoration Survey.....	21	Letters to the Editor.....	44
Boat Hire Prices .....	22	New Members and Back Issues.....	Inside Back
Golden Rally of Boats.....	23	Coming Soon .....	Back Cover

Front Cover: *The Railway viaduct and Lock 23W (Limekiln) at Uppermill*



We've been "off" again since I last wrote, enjoying the canals of *Thailand!* There are hundreds of miles of "klongs", mostly un-navigable, but many miles that are used as highways. In Bangkok, one of the most traffic congested

and polluted cities in the world, they are filling in the klongs to make roads - sound familiar? Wait twenty years and they will be digging them out again! Would you believe they have official motor-cycle taxis which ride on the footpaths to avoid the traffic! Fortunately, they are such warm people that they do it without hassle. No horn tooting, even!

The normal type of boat on the klongs is the "long-tail"boat, looking like a large canoe and propelled by a huge lorry diesel engine with the propellor on the end of a shaft as long as a clothes prop! And do they shift? Remember the water chase in the James Bond film, "Man with the Golden Gun"? That was filmed in Bangkok, and it's like that all the time!

Back to earth. Father Christmas must have heard about my plea to have Tom Rolt's "Landscape with Canals" or "Thomas Telford" in my stocking. I actually got "Landscape with Canals", TWO "Thomas

Telfords", "George and Robert Stephenson" and "The making of a Railway"! Having swapped one Telford for a volume of Jack Tinker's theatre reviews I'm well kitted out.

Hope you like our stab at the new cover. Not easy to do when we have had a variation on the same "house style" for so long. We will try another new design next time. Let me know what you think about them. And my thanks to the people who have taken the time to work the designs up.

You will notice that there are several new items in this issue: poems, silly stories, boat crew and trip boat news, anecdotes and a "relief" writer for "The Wife's Tale" pages. All as a result of my pleas for more from YOU. Keep it coming - I will always prefer original work to that copied from elsewhere. But don't wait! The deadline for the next issue is May 11th - it comes up on you unexpectedly, as we know well!

A flattering request from the IWA Northampton Branch has reached the Pennine Link office - can they copy our crossword in their branch magazine? Of course they can! John Harwood, the compiler, has even offered to adjust the clues to make them less Huddersfield Canal orientated. All for a nice acknowledgement, of course, but it does go to show how far our news travels.

Huddersfield Canal Company are getting into the swing of things now and have

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# the future for the pennine "ring o' roses"

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Two major Millennium canal projects are at critical stages in their progress. Our scheme, piloted by Alan Stopher, who is now resident at Mossley Road and supported by our staff, is moving ahead satisfactorily and the timetable is

on schedule (see centre spread). Alan's report on behalf of the Canal Company is included in this issue. The Society welcomes Alan's move to Mossley Road as we believe both organisations will benefit from closer cooperation. Alan will use HCS services and accomodation for which we will receive a modest grant towards overheads. All five partners to the project are now locked into the Agreement with the Millennium

Commission and meetings between the partners to discuss timetables, land acquisitions, planning issues, Standedge Experience, etc. take place almost daily, moving towards the time when monies will be drawn down to start the project proper.

We are fortunate in having an owner of our Canal, British Waterways, who is fully committed to seeing the canal restored and maintained by themselves. British Waterways have geared up ready for the major contracts and have established an impressive presence at Marsden, which will be their project HQ for the scheme. Tom Rowe, an engineer with BW, is the project manager and he is supported by a team at Marsden and Northwich.

BW own most of the canal track on the Huddersfield and is committed to restoration, whilst on the Rochdale the track is largely owned by a private company,

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issued their first publicity leaflet, dated "winter 1997/98". Thousands have been distributed along the route of the canal and elsewhere to keep people informed and to give 'em the facts, man, before rumour and guesswork take over. Not everyone has the benefit of reading Pennine Link. And before you say "What about those strange progress maps in the last issue?" we have put that right now! (See Letters and centre- spread)

We are enclosing a copy of the current leaflet from the Ellesmere Port Boat Museum and elsewhere in this issue is a 20% off offer for up to four people - a saving of UP TO £4.32! We are pleased to publicise the Boat Museum in this way and invite you to take full advantage of the offer. It really is an excellent outing and we complete the day with a trip to the Cheshire Oaks Designer Outlet Village or Chester.

And finally....I have been dropping some fairly noisy hints recently about getting things moving on the sides of the Canal, in what we might call "the Private Sector"! Take note that, largely on the strength of

the Lancaster Canal joining the main system, in a Millennium scheme, TWO new boat hire bases are opening there in 1998. I remain convinced that, in the first three or four years after OUR canal is opened to through navigation, every available boat in the country will be sailed through Standedge Tunnel. And all those boaters will want feeding, watering, beering, fuelling - and pumping out! Don't say I didn't warn you - you read it here first!

Due to pressure of space we have had to leave out this issue's chapter of "Storyline". I know you will all be terribly disappointed but, don't fret, it will be back next time!

I have to apologise for the lateness of this issue (just in case it is!). The office has been in turmoil recently, coping with the moving-in of The Huddersfield Canal Co.

Also, we have been waiting to be able to give you some positive news about the Rochdale Canal's future. It should be in David's "Chairman's Report", if it arrived in time for our own extended dead-line.

Ken Wright.

Town Centre Securities, who will have little or no future involvement in the operation of the canal. However, a condition of the Millennium Grant to the Rochdale Canal Trust is that the ownership is vested in the Trust. At present, the two sides cannot agree terms and the negotiations have reached a critical stage. Allen Brett, who is Chair of the Rochdale Canal Trust and a member of HCS Council, informs me that everything is being done either to circumvent the Millennium Commission rule or to persuade the owner to reach a reasonable settlement.

**We are fortunate in having an owner of our Canal, British Waterways, who is fully committed to seeing the canal restored and maintained by themselves.**

Allen's Trust has been in contact with Chris Smith MP, the National Heritage Secretary, for assistance. To date (23rd March), and after several weeks of extended deadlines, no agreement has been reached.

Like the Huddersfield, too much has been invested in the Rochdale Canal for the

unthinkable to happen. The local authorities, including Manchester City Council, want the canal fully restored. English Partnerships want the outputs following restoration and the Millennium Commission need prestigious schemes in the regions. If there is a willingness to settle - and all parties say there is - then the representatives of the Trust, the owners of the canal and the Millennium Commission should sit down on neutral territory, perhaps with an arbiter, and not emerge until a deal is made.

Allen Brett, like myself, is an optimist. I believe his project will

succeed. Neither of us has invested so much time and energy to see the schemes fail at the final hurdle. Alan Stopher's article in this issue ends on a confident note for the Huddersfield Narrow. Let us hope that the year 1998 is also exciting and successful for the Rochdale Canal.

David Sumner

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*And a final word from the Press - Oldham Evening Chronicle "Comment" - 13th March 1998*

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## Canal talks locked

DELAYS to the multi-million pound restoration of the Rochdale Canal are now becoming critical and Oldham Council, which has invested heavily in the scheme in terms of both time and money, is understandably getting anxious.

Town Centre Securities (TCS), owner of the canal, has so far been unable to agree a price for its sale with the Rochdale Canal Trust, a consortium of four local authorities, including Oldham.

TCS clearly holds the upper hand in negotiations since it owns the canal, is well aware of the eagerness of all those involved to restore the historic waterway and knows that plans to expand the canal network cannot proceed without its stretch.

It has been said in the past that TCS is holding the Canal Trust to ransom, and while that may be a little harsh, it is clear that the company, no doubt for all the right

commercial reasons, is determined to maximise the return on its investment. It is not, after all, a charity.

The question is how should the canal trust proceed in negotiations. At this week's Oldham Council meeting, it was suggested that the weapon of publicity and public opinion should be used against TCS to persuade the company to agree what, in the eyes of the trust at least, is a fair price for the canal.

The counter-view, however, was that a public slanging match with TCS would be counter-productive and that the softly-softly approach currently employed in negotiations was likely to win in the end.

It is impossible to predict the outcome of these delicate tasks, but one thing is abundantly clear, if the imaginative and ambitious redevelopment of the canal network is to be brought to fruition, agreement must be reached with TCS no matter how it is achieved.

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# iwaac and waterway restoration priorities

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**In October, Viscountess Knollys, Chair of the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council (IWAAC) wrote to waterway restoration organisations, including HCS.**

She reminded us that IWAAC is a statutory body set up under the 1968 Transport Act to advise the Secretary of State for Environment; Transport and the Regions and British Waterways on matters affecting the use and development of the national waterways network for recreation and amenity. She said that responses to IWAAC's report "Britain's Inland Waterways - An Undervalued Asset" from funding agencies had expressed concern that there was no coherent national overview of restoration activity and no way to relate individual projects to the needs of the network as a whole.

IWAAC has, therefore, embarked on a study of restoration priorities, and wished to have the views of restoration societies on the proposed key assessment criteria:

**"Feasibility:** *Can it be demonstrated that restoration is practicable in terms of engineering work, water supply, potential funding sources, land ownership, legal considerations, statutory consents and licences needed?"*

**"Benefits:** *Can the estimated capital costs of restoration be reasonably justified by direct and indirect benefits, local, regional and national, including job creation, development opportunities, increased property values, recreational potential, conservation and enhancement of the built and natural heritage, improved access, protection and improvement of the environment, and educational and public interpretation potential?"*

**"Disbenefits:** *Would there be adverse effects on the built or natural environment, impact on existing land and property owners both on and adjacent to proposed schemes, possible pressures on adjacent waterways?"*

**"Viability, sustainability and management:** *Have the following been ascertained: Environmental considerations affecting optimum capacity/constraints on use? Future income and expenditure? How will any shortfall between income and annual costs of upkeep and long term maintenance be met? Who will operate and manage the restored waterway? What powers are needed for this?"*

**"Implementation:** *Can the restoration goal be achieved, given identified strengths and weaknesses of those proposing it; for example organisational capacity regardless of size, extent of political and public support, track record, funding status?"*

**"Vision:** *Will the scheme make a significant contribution to the national waterway system, by virtue of the strength, purpose and imaginativeness of its overall objectives and the range of benefits (economic, heritage, leisure and amenity, environmental, social) it offers for the waterway concerned, and those to which it is linked?"*

Although there are restoration proposals that will not shine under these criteria because, for example, the costs can not be justified on strictly financial criteria or, more likely, the relevant restoration society has not been plugging away long enough to resolve issues, they are appropriate at the moment. They address the issues which concern decision makers. I have two significant qualifications, however. I do not believe that potential funding sources are relevant to feasibility. Grant regimes and the availability or otherwise of funding sources at a particular time have no bearing on whether a restoration scheme is physically or legally feasible. I would think it preferable to

have "Potential Funding Sources" as a seventh assessment criterion. I also think it might be desirable to split the benefits between those relating to the waterway itself, and those relating to the national waterway system as a whole. I say this because there are schemes where it is difficult to see that the benefits accruing to the immediate area can justify the expenditure on a purely financial basis, yet where the provision of a missing link could result in benefits accruing over a much wider area.

IWAAC's decision to grasp the nettle of prioritisation has opened up a hornet's nest which has been quietly buzzing away in the restoration movement for many years. There have always been those who argued that the movement itself, probably through the Inland Waterways Association (IWA), should set out priorities. The IWA, however, refused to play. The Association's view has been, and still is, that all restoration projects are important, and for it to publicly accept that some are more important than others is dangerous. Those schemes which gained least points in a prioritisation exercise carried out by the restoration movement itself would find it difficult to get support, and could be quietly forgotten. From an HCS viewpoint this may be academic but, wearing my Chairman of Northern Canals Association hat, I have concern for schemes that are just starting out, or which have failed to overcome particular hurdles, or have yet to generate sufficient enthusiasm. From their point of view the IWA may appear to be right. But IWAAC's decision is important.

So what should the waterway restoration movement do? Should it co-operate with IWAAC, or should it refuse to take part in the survey which will first have to be carried out before priorities can be devised? There is a feeling around that maybe we can agree that restoration schemes fit into categories - between those just starting out at one end of the scale, and those near to completion at the other. Michael Handford, who resigned as Chairman of IWA's Restoration Committee some time ago, partly because

his views were at odds with the Association on this issue, says *"You can disassemble and call it categorisation if you like. As far as I am concerned you can call it "old knickers". However you dress it up, it is the same thing."* Sorry Michael, I don't agree with that.

First, I think that the restoration movement should categorise schemes. I think the categories should take differing but overlapping forms. They should identify the type of waterway - rural or urban, river or canal, long mainline or short branch, etc. They should identify the preparedness of the restoration society for the task in hand, and which key steps in the campaign have been accomplished. They should identify the type of benefits that might accrue locally and nationally from restoration. And they should identify the potential means of carrying out the scheme - by volunteers, or by contract, and the potential funding sources. This could be of benefit not just to funding bodies, but to restoration societies too, to see what they had to achieve. And if carried out well it would not stigmatise schemes as being at the bottom of the list. Although I don't see how the current Restoration Committee could carry out this task within a sensible timescale amongst its other commitments, this is a task that should not be beyond the capability of the IWA.

Secondly, I think that individual restoration societies must co-operate with IWAAC, completing the questionnaire that will be sent, and providing information as fully and accurately as possible. The availability of some view on priorities will give funding agencies confidence in the consequence of grant offers on a national scale. It could be the key to unlocking substantial grant-aid to waterway restoration. And because it is independent of the restoration movement it will not damn lower ranked schemes for ever.

Keith Gibson  
HCS Restoration Chairman

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# the huddersfield canal company

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*In this, the second of a series of articles, Alan Stopher, Project Director of the Huddersfield Canal Company updates us on recent progress.*

My last article in Plink 123 was written just after the agreement with the Millennium Commission was signed by the Company. It was duly countersigned by the Commission and came into effect on 5th November 1997. A number of conditions had to be met before any funds could be 'drawn down'. Work has continued on these and I anticipate that all but one of the conditions will be met by the time this article appears. Officers from all the partners have helped to keep the momentum up. The planners and engineers on the Executive Group have provided the technical input and the lawyers have done their stuff by preparing the deeds and certificates. Of particular note was the enacting of the Operation and Maintenance Agreement. This demonstrates that the Huddersfield Narrow Canal Restoration is a truly 'sustainable' project as British Waterways are committed to maintaining the restored canal for 125 years and operating it as a cruising waterway. To achieve this, BW will use their own income from the 'remainder waterway' together with a sinking fund built up with 20 successive annual contributions of £150,000 provided jointly by the three local authorities. Now all we have to do is finish the restoration by 31st December 2000!

The single outstanding condition which needs further work is the formal confirmation of English Partnerships £12m of match-funding. The Government's Urban Regeneration Agency still has to do its detailed appraisal of the project and has been rethinking its approach to this in recent months. It is now clear that rather than it being considered as a set of Derelict Land Grant schemes it will be considered as



an entity. This makes a lot of sense as many of the regeneration benefits which justify English Partnerships support will derive from through navigation rather than piecemeal restoration. The only drawback is that the appraisal process is more lengthy. The partners are putting considerable effort into ensuring that all the necessary supporting documentation for the appraisal process is produced for the Company over the shortest timescale possible. The first draft of the English Partnerships Development Agreement has arrived and is being examined by the Company Solicitor and officers of the partners. The Company's case is a strong one and I am optimistic that full funding will be forthcoming in due course.

While all this is going on, work continues apace on the surveys, feasibility studies and detailed design for most of the 20 restoration schemes. Whilst members will be eager to see the physical work get underway (and so will I) the kind of civil engineering works involved in the project require careful design to ensure that the finished product is robust, cost-effective and fit for the purpose of permitting through navigation for many years to come. There are also important amenity, environmental and planning considerations to be taken into account.

To give a more clear programme of timing on each scheme, Bob Gough has kindly redrawn the centre page spread to show when the site operations are likely to occur. Earlier versions had shown the start dates of survey and feasibility work. I hope that the new version gives readers a better basis on which to judge the efforts of the Company and its partners. The eagle-eyed will also spot that the schemes have been renumbered starting from the east. This brings them into line with all the documentation provided to the funding bodies and saves a lot of confusion for the



project managers.

Turning to the detail, the first scheme to get underway is likely to be Scheme 15a: Lock 22 to Wool Road. British Waterways have now established the tipping arrangements for dredgings and HCS Restoration Ltd can retender for the complete scheme, including silt removal. The exact start date is dependent on the various partner agreements and funding being in place. Design work is complete on Mark Bottoms Bridge at Milnsbridge and this scheme will go out to tender by the beginning of March.

Apart from the work continuing on the last of the Derelict Land Grant schemes in Tameside, strictly speaking not part of the Millennium Commission funded project, the only physical evidence of restoration activity along the canal is the new British Waterways Project Office at Marsden. As I explained in the last *Plink*, BW has a significant role to play in the Company's restoration work as the lead authority for all the canal-track works. Their new base will enable the BW staff for the ongoing maintenance work and the project team for the bulk of the restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal to be united under one roof under the leadership of Senior Project Manager, Tom Rowe. This is a welcome demonstration that British Waterways really means business.

As for the Huddersfield Canal Company office, the Board accepted my proposal to set up a new office at the Mossley Road premises of the Canal Society. It makes a lot of sense for the Company and Society to share resources during the implementation phase and I am pleased to say that this was recognised by all the partners. I will be needing assistance on a range of activities and the ability to use the project management, computer, technical, administration, promotional and secretarial skills of the four paid staff had clear benefits over the original concept of a stand-alone office and single P.A. For the Society the much needed income will help sustain them through to the end of the restoration work. The Company will have a clear differentiation from the Canal Society's activities but have the benefit of easy access to a significant body of expertise and

archive material. Steve Whitby has already had the old conference room partitioned to create my office leaving sufficient space for meetings to be held in the remaining area. A new sign will be erected on the gable with the Company name and logo and the opportunity is being taken for improved computer facilities to be installed. A telephone line and computer at my Huddersfield home will mean I can work from both ends of the canal in readiness for restoration work starting. I've very much enjoyed my stay at Tameside where everyone has been very supportive but at 239 Mossley Road I'll have the best of both worlds as I can readily keep in touch with my Council contacts five minutes walk away.

Standedge Experience has not been forgotten in all the activity and the working group drawn from the Canal Society, British Waterways and Kirklees Council has continued to review the marketing plan and explore the best way to deliver the project in terms of design and organisational structure. Although we have a wealth of expertise amongst the partners we are considering engaging business management consultants with a strong track record in visitor/heritage centre development to review the business plan before we move on to implementing the scheme. It is essential that the Experience is financially robust and provides a balanced and complementary range of attractions.

The Marketing Group has produced its first leaflet introducing the Huddersfield Canal Company and giving a brief run-down on the restoration plan. The emphasis was very much on giving basic information over a wide distribution area along the canal and its hinterland. Later issues will be able to give more detail and answer some of the questions posed by local residents about specific schemes.

A quick scan through my diary reminds me of all the meetings attended, presentations given, and contacts made over the last quarter, but I think I've picked out the main issues of interest to members. Here's to an exciting 1998 as we really get started on the final phase of the 'impossible restoration'.

Alan Stopher

An IWA policy, based on Robert Aickman's 1960 document 'A National Waterways Conservancy', is that the future of the waterways will be best served by a management model which is non-profit making and which operates in the public interest. IWA believe that both Government and navigation authorities are slowly realising the wisdom of the message that the Association has preached for many years. IWA will go along with the current discussions for a British Waterways Trust but only insofar as they meet the Association's criteria for a management regime.

After studying Aickman's original proposals IWA will come up with their own plans for the appropriate body, although appreciating that Government may not be minded to implement a major structural change in one fell swoop. It is the ultimate goal that IWA continue to strive for.

IWA is encouraging boaters to travel the full 127 miles of the under-used Leeds and Liverpool Canal, from Stanley Dock in Liverpool to River Lock in Leeds. A plaque is being designed for presentation to such intrepid sailors. This beautiful canal is much travelled in the middle but not at the ends, particularly the Liverpool end which is a cul de sac from Wigan. (*Except for boats like N.B. Progress, I must add!* Ed).

National Chairman Audrey Smith and WRG Chairman Mike Palmer have been appointed to IWAAC (Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council) as individual members, for 3 years. A bit of pull in a useful place.

IWA have published a draft Towpath Policy (they insist on calling it a towing path policy, for some unknown reason!) for consultation. HCS have responded in suitable terms. Most of the policy is common sense, anyway.

IWA is aggrieved (*rightly!* Ed) at not being consulted over a proposal to end the closed season for fishing on canals. This

was done by the Environment Agency without the knowledge of BW, it seems. The whole thing is a hotch-potch of inconsistencies that clearly needs sorting out.

IWA is campaigning to preserve your editor's favourite canal junction, Hawkesbury or Sutton's, at the junction of the Coventry and Oxford Canals. All sorts of modern disastrous developments are being tossed around, some of which may be acceptable and others definitely not. Let us hope sense will prevail.

Good news at Banbury, though. Tooley's boatyard, where Tom Rolt's narrow boat "Cressy" was restored, has been under the threat of the hammer for some time. Tooley's almost represents the place where the modern canal movement started, arising out of Tom Rolt's "Narrow Boat" journeys in "Cressy". Lottery money has come to the yard's aid and it is hoped to re-open for visitors on the diamond jubilee of the start of "Cressy's" famous voyage, 27th July, 1999.

Heritage Lottery Fund have recently announced the "value" of volunteer help in restoration schemes. This can often be presented as "matching funding" in grant aid schemes:-

1. Time given by professional people £350 per day.
2. Skilled labour or technical services £150 per day
3. Unskilled labour - £50 per day

Now you realise what you are worth - get volunteering!

A member of the IWA Northumbria Branch - Mary Bielby - has written a delightful and quite emotional account of the re-opening of the Rochdale Canal at Tuel Lane, Sowerby Bridge. May she be around to do one for us!

Two IWA HQ strong men have met English Nature to express IWA concern

regarding the effects on inland waterways of nature conservation designations such as SACs and SSSIs. "A useful exchange of information" ensued. IWA are particularly concerned about the introduction of these areas - and the consequent possibilities of 'controlled' boating - without proper, or even any, consultation

A bit of good news! Environment Agency's plans to cancel joint licensing arrangements (e.g. for boaters crossing the R. Thames to get from the Grand Union to the Kennett and Avon canals) have been put into question, following representation from IWA. The proposals are "being reviewed" and one joint scheme is proceeding this year.

And, finally, the following in IWA publication "UNDERCURRENTS":-

A new Huddersfield Canal Company has been formed which has 10 directors, one of whom is Derek Cochrane, the Region

(BW) Manager. Tom Rowe is the Project Manager for BW on the Huddersfield Canal. He will report to Peter Sentham (BW), NW Regional Engineering Manager. Tom Rowe is responsible for managing the restoration contracts on the canal from design to completion and other members of his team include Mike Marshall (BW) Project Engineer (Planning), Colin Thompson (BW) Project Engineer (Construction) and Nicki Beardmore (BW), responsible for Publicity and Marketing.

*For brevity most of the words, but no names, have been omitted from the above article. Its origins are obscure but we would like to add (and are sure that BW would acknowledge) that there are another 9 directors of the Company, which also has a project director, and probably 20 other equivalent full-time people working at BW, in the three local authorities and at HCS. Just thought you'd like to know! Ed.*

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## obituary

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It is with sadness that we have to announce the death of one of our West Yorkshire members, Peter Wright, who died of cancer on 30th December 1997, aged 65.

Peter joined the HCS in 1994 and was an avid and active supporter of the Society's aims and objectives. He was a member of the organising committees for both the Huddersfield and Tunnel End festivals, injecting experience, humour and enthusiasm in what can be, at times, a difficult and daunting role for volunteers.

To many of his friends in HCS, Peter will best be remembered for his role as one of the Society's trip boat skippers. Having successfully taken the Department of Transport's Test and qualified as a Boatmaster, Peter's dedication was an inspiration to the newer crew members, turning out in all weathers to provide that boating professionalism now required

within the voluntary sector to operate passenger carrying vessels on commercial waters.

A man of many talents, Peter will be sadly missed. The Society's heartfelt sympathy goes out to his wife Alvis, and his family.

Rest in Peace.

Frank Smith



Peter, centre, with the Sales Team at the Linthwaite Trailboat Rally, 1995

# photo feature - events at wool road

Wool Road is not noted for events. The biggest cause of excitement in the average week is car parking at the Transhipment Shed or a police speed patrol lurking in the goods vehicle turning circle!

But within a few days recently we saw two unusual events taking place, the exposure of the old Wool Road canal bridge and the lifting of Pennine Moonraker back into the water - as the following photographs show.

*Below:* 3rd September 1960 and Leonard Kaye's photograph captures the original Wool Road bridge with integral, if overgrown, towpath.

*Bottom Left:* Heavy crane on a light morning - but too much shadow for a decent picture! Pennine Moonraker is

in slings, being lifted from the canal bank where essential maintenance work has been carried out to her bottom.

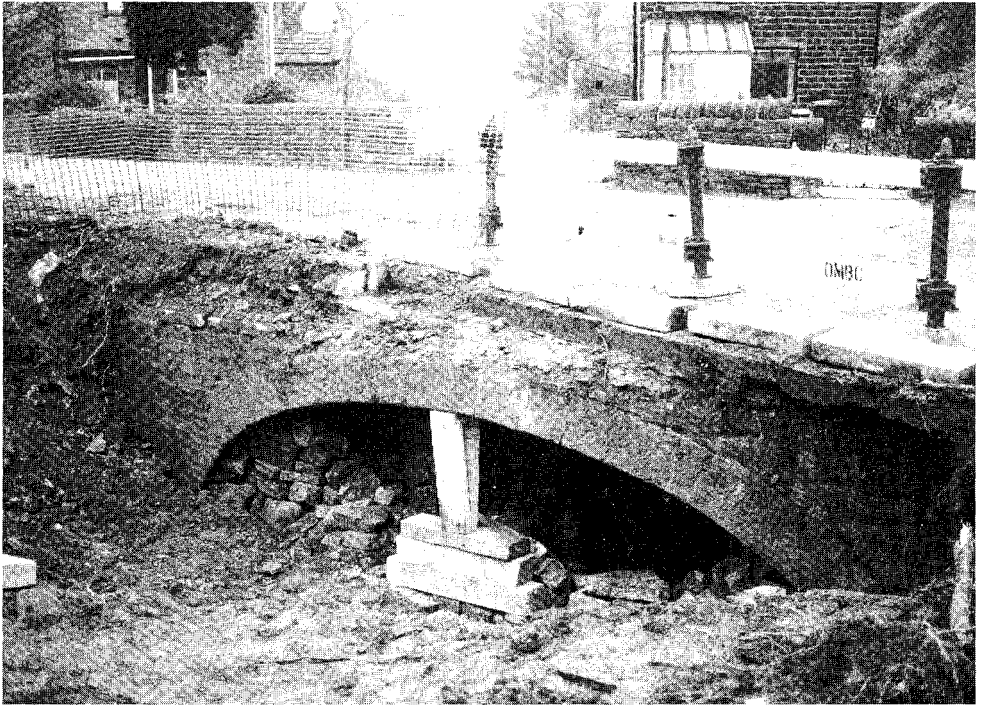
*Bottom Right:* Pennine Moonraker - the operational privately-owned trip boat - being lowered into the canal. Note the Transhipment Shed at the right, the prestigious "Wharf" residential development beyond (canalside success story!) and the camera-shy workers!

*Opposite Top:* The old Wool Road bridge exposed to check its condition (seemingly excellent) by Oldham MB. The canal runs between the two houses at the top of the picture. The bridge has a very distinct "skew".

*Opposite Bottom:* Another view looking up A670, Wool Road. The 'new' road (circa 1965) over the culverted canal is to the left. The 'old' A670 is to the right - now just an access road and part of a heavy vehicle turning circle.

*Photos:* K. Wright and L. Kaye (courtesy of Oldham Local Interest Library)





## ENTERING A MAN'S WORLD

It all began on a fateful day in 1992, when as a family, we went down to Portland Basin to have a cruise on the Greater Manchester. Unfortunately, the boat would not start and my husband, out of the kindness of his heart, fixed it.

On that day, the skipper was Allan Knott and the only people on the boat were the Wilson family, one of who was already a crewmember, the youngest Andrew. Despite the lack of customers we had a cruise up to Lumb Lane. It was great. Hmm. On the way back Allan asked me if I wanted to have a go on the tiller. Not to be out done by my son, I said yes. Unbeknown to myself I was about to have my first lesson. Despite the fact that I was nervous, I listened very carefully to Allan and had a go. I really enjoyed it despite the hard work of trying to keep the boat sailing in a straight line. It was on this journey back to Portland Basin that Allan asked if I would be interested in joining the crew list for the boats. Talk about recruiting tactics. I said that I would think about it. The journey back gave me time to think. As we were sailing back I felt very relaxed and at ease all thanks to Allan's guidance and I said ok. He said that it would mean a lot of training and commitment and he thought that I should train for skipper.

He explained that there were NO women skippers in the Society and it would be a first for Tameside and for the Society. Well the gauntlet had been thrown down. No one offers me a challenge and gets away with it. I picked up the gauntlet and accepted the challenge.

The training that I had was no different from what the men had. There were no concessions just because I was a woman, things were not made any easier for me. I had to do the same and sometimes it seemed hard and tough, but the thought of letting people down whom had faith in me kept me going. My training involved dealing with the passengers, what to do in an emergency, how to handle the boat and lock training (which was not expected). The skippers

who did take me out all had different tips for me and I learnt by them. But never did I feel like packing the whole thing in. The relaxation that sailing gave me was better than anything I had felt before. Going only 4 mph down the canal was so different than driving the car.

I had to learn all about being a crewmember inside the boat first, dealing the passengers. You have to know all about passenger safety, they are the priority. If it was not for them, then the boats would not run and restoration work on the canal could not continue. The first time that I gave the safety talk to the passengers was nerve-racking. I was not used to speaking in public. I had a try out first on the skipper and other crewmembers so I would know what to say; even though I was reading it from the file on board. Once I had got used to this, I went on to learn about the engine room and the dreaded weed-hatch. I say dreaded because, no matter how hot or warm it is weather wise, the water is always COLD and the area where the weed-hatch is on the Greater Manchester is small and cramped.

My trainers who gave me lots of training and encouragement were Allan Knott, Bob Maycock, Mike Levy and my husband John. There were of course, other skippers who put up with me and for that I am very grateful. John had got his licence the year before I took my test and he must have had plenty of patience. He needed it, it was worse than trying to teach me to drive. But that's another story. Over the two years of training, in all weathers I might add; including Christmas and New Year, I learnt how to handle the boat; expect the unexpected; do the routine maintenance and visit, thanks to Bob, various different sites to see different types of locks, and look after the passengers.

I must say this about Bob, although he is a hard taskmaster, who sometimes made me nervous; it was his with his endless patience of explaining things to me over and over again that made me confident. I found his wisdom a great source of comfort when things were going wrong for me.

Anyway, the day of the test loomed and the nerves were getting taut. Final training on the boat and Bob making me more nervous than ever; John having to spend all his free time letting me practise as well as taking other trainees out. For the use of the boat so much, I must thank Allan and Frank Smith, because if the boat were booked, then practise would not have taken place. On the day of the test, October 24th 1994) I was on first with Rod Moors. The examiner was Captain Nutman, a lovely man. Still nervous and getting more nervous by the minute. Then the hour-long test is over, nail biting time; have we passed or failed? Well, we both passed and then the tears started. Now I could start to relax. HA. My training still continues, it is never ending.

Now, every year I take out my own crew, including our son and daughter (who both passed their tests in 1996) and it is fight sometimes as to who will be skipper. But the one thing that I can say with pride, I am one of only 3 female Boatmasters in the Society.

Friends are made easily amongst the crews. We have our laughs and jokes, we can relax and most of all we can make more friends. Every year it has been a pleasure to run the boats for the festivals over on the West side. This year (97) was the first year that boats had been run at Staley Wharf in May, and that was using the Oldham Otter (my little favourite boat). Then there is Tameside Festival in July at which I have been on the boat every year either as crew or skipper and enjoying every minute of it.

Now it is my turn to help new trainees on the boats. Like Bob and Allan, I pass on my knowledge and experiences, including what it is like to fall in the canal.....COLD and WET. But what we are finding is that there are not enough women who want to become Boatmasters. All I can say is that it is fun and relaxing. Also the men have had the monopoly for so long its about time we entered their world more, even if it does mean doing the weed hatch. But then it is all part of the fun.

Janet Wilson

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## the boat museum

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### ELLESMERE PORT CHESHIRE

There is plenty of publicity for The Boat Museum in this Issue, including coloured leaflets and inviting discounts on entrance prices, plus John Harwood's descriptive 'walk'.

Here is a list of special events taking place at the Museum in the near future:-

#### **April 5th**

Pumphouse in steam

#### **April 10th-13th**

Easter Boat Gathering  
Pumphouse in steam

#### **April 26th**

'Painting for all' roadshow

#### **May 3rd-4th**

Pumphouse in steam

#### **May 25th**

Bank Holiday Celebrations  
Pumphouse in steam

#### **June 7th**

Pumphouse in steam

#### **June 20th-21st**

Roses and Castles Painting Course  
Weekend painting course - £60

#### **July 5th**

Pumphouse in steam

#### **July 26th**

Keels and Wheels. Vintage and classic car show - including model car display and model boat regatta

*For further details ring*

*Tel: 0151 355 5017*



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# canal walk 4 by john harwood

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## WALK 4 - A VISIT TO ELLESMERE PORT BOAT MUSEUM

Our next canal orientated day trip has it all. Whether you consider yourself unknowing about our canals right through to complete canal 'anorak' like the writer and your editor (*Do you mind! Ed*) this has something for you and the bonus of a discounted entry charge for Pennine Link readers.

It may well even start in a tunnel - but in this case the New Wallasey tunnel from Liverpool as you make your way straight on to the M53 motorway down the Wirral to Junction 9 and the Boat Museum at Ellesmere Port or up the M53 from Junction 15 on the M56, if you are sharing the trip with a quick visit to Chester or Cheshire Oaks Designer Outlet Village. After parking enter the Reception and shop area where you will be allowed a 20% reduction on the admission charge on production of the voucher.

The Boat Museum was formed in the early 80s on the site of the former Telford warehouses (destroyed by vandals in 1970) where the Shropshire Union Canal joins the Manchester Ship Canal. The whole site was growing more derelict by the day until a group of enthusiasts, including the late Dr. David Owen (who appeared quite frequently on regional TV talking about the canals of the north west at the time), hit on the idea of turning the site into a national canal museum. From there it has gone from strength to strength, led by the indomitable (and recently honoured) director, Tony Hirst.

Within the grounds of the museum you can browse through the shop, indulging yourself in everything from 'Rosie & Jim' to serious historical books and boat chandlery. Move outside and take a boat trip along the Shropshire Union or up and down the locks or just stand and watch a working boat going through the locks. Amidst the working boats aplenty you are welcome to enter the cabins and study the cramped

living quarters of the boat people (note - not bargees, please!) noting the fold down table and bed, stove and brass lamp etc., not forgetting that the sons of the family had to sleep in the rope locker in the bow! At the inside display see the boat 'Friendship' of Joe and Rose Skinner who lived aboard near Coventry until 1959. The back cabin has been faithfully refurbished, showing the lace plates and colourful decoration used to brighten up the lives of the boat people. In the bow of this boat is a non-stop video display recalling the days of working boats. Also indoors are recreated a fender-making shop and a paint shop, a display of boat engines and of 'Measham' ware - the traditional pottery of the canals.

Move outside again to the Power House and view the Lancashire boilers which powered the pumphouse (occasionally in steam, see events list, elsewhere). These pumps forced water under pressure into the water tower next door from which hydraulic power drove the cranes and lifts inside the warehouse. Descending to the rear of the inside display you will find the restoration area where boats are being worked on for future use and display. Nearby is Porter's Row - a collection of former canal workers' cottages restored to illustrate life in previous decades of this century. A warning is in order here - if you were born in or before the fifties you will find life as you remember it - in a museum! Make sure you inspect the small room off the yard, behind the third cottage, where a surprise is in store. The upstairs of the cottages is not open for inspection as it is used as flatlets for persons doing voluntary work at the museum.

Past the phone box (if you press button B you won't get any money back!), and you will come to Grosvenor Wharf and the upper basin. From here you have a good view of the lower basins and the arms, over which the straddle warehouse stood, where boats could be unloaded under cover and where you now moor if visiting by boat. You will pass a crane showing one of the



earliest forms of containerisation, a 'Wey Barge' a 'Mersey Flat', a Leeds & Liverpool 'Short Boat' and proceed round to 'Bigmere' which served on the Bridgewater canal and 'Scorpio' a Leeds & Liverpool 'Long Boat'. The meaning of all these different titles is for you to work out on your visit!

You should now be approaching the Toll House (self explanatory) which houses the museum administration, an exhibition on the Manchester Ship Canal and a display of typical cargoes. Just outside are more narrow boats, tugs and an icebreaker. Tugs were often used in tunnels and the exhaust from steam tugs has killed several boat crews over time. Ice breakers were pulled up onto the ice by up to twenty horses, the crew (of about ten men) would grip the central rail and rock the boat violently to crash through the ice. Note the metal skin of this boat.

Cross the locks to find the Pattern Shop and an exhibition on the history of Ellesmere Port. To the right of the pattern shop are the stables which give some idea of the numbers of horses in use at the time. Within the stables is another audio display on the use of Tom Puddings on the Yorkshire Waterways. Behind the stables is the Archive centre where (by appointment) researchers can delve into the past on paper. Along this block we pass conference and school facilities and come to the blacksmith's shop where (apart from horse care) were made the many iron artefacts the canal required. The resident blacksmith (Les Lee) will happily make you a souvenir horseshoe for a nominal charge. Next door again is the Power Hall, exhibiting many engines and sources of power on and in connection with the cut (with some in operation at times).

Your energy levels will sag a little at some time during your visit here but can be recharged at the cafeteria, off the main display floor, where apart from obtaining your own 'butty' you can get light plated meals, tea, coffee and ice cream, etc.

From time to time special days are held, including painting and ropework demonstrations and courses and special tug and other events.

The real bargain is available to those who visit by boat. Your admission charge (less your voucher!) will give you seven days secure mooring and unlimited access to the museum. So if you don't know what to do with an 'ellum or chalico, would like to meet a starvationer or a dumb barge, thought a composite was something presented at the TUC conference or wouldn't know a Widdop from a Bolinder - it's all here!

Admission Charges 1998

Adults £5.40

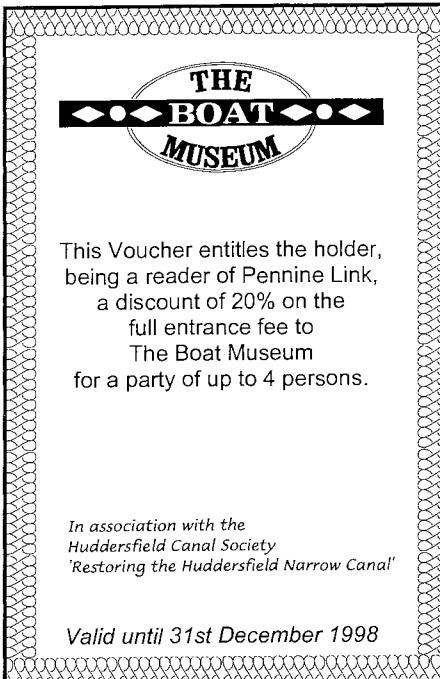
Seniors/Students £4.20

Children £3.60. Under 5's FREE

Family £16 (2 adults - up to 3 children)

Parties - by arrangement

Tel: 0150 355 5017



**THE  
BOAT  
MUSEUM**

This Voucher entitles the holder,  
being a reader of Pennine Link,  
a discount of 20% on the  
full entrance fee to  
The Boat Museum  
for a party of up to 4 persons.

*In association with the  
Huddersfield Canal Society  
'Restoring the Huddersfield Narrow Canal'*

**Valid until 31st December 1998**

## **AN UNDERVALUED ASSET Britain's Inland Waterways**

### **Report of the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council**

*An appraisal by Ken Wright*

You may recall that, in Issue No.118, Autumn 1996, we published an article on the above report and listed 31 conclusions, that IWAAC put forward for consultation purposes, in a very abbreviated form. I said then *"Reading the Conclusions in full is a real bureaucratic mind-boggle!"*

In just a year IWAAC have now completed the report on the consultation process and from the original 31 Conclusions have distilled 10 key recommendations. These have been seen, and warmly endorsed, by the British Waterways Board. They were sent by Viscountess Knollys, Chair of IWAAC, to Angela Eagle MP, Minister at the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR - used to be DoE) in June 1997.

The accompanying letter states *"In our inland waterways, Britain has a national treasure, an asset of great historic and environmental value and a resource for a whole variety of uses and activities of benefit to the nation and to local communities. We must do everything we can to sustain this heritage for future generations, to give it the place in national life which it merits, and to resource it effectively so that it continues to give value and pleasure to millions."*

VERY briefly, the recommendations are as follows:-

1. **BW Funding and Future Organisation**
  - 1.1 More money for BW.
  - 1.2 A new national navigation body.
  - 1.3 Full debate to realise 1.2 a.s.a.p.
2. **National Policy**
  - 2.1 Strategic policy framework with realistic targets.
  - 2.2 Government brief on legislative and financial framework.
  - 2.3 What the framework in 2.2 should consider.
  - 2.4 Framework published to muster support.
3. **More National Policy - Planning**
  - 3.1 2 years to review planning policy guidance.
  - 3.2 Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA) involvement.
  - 3.3 DETR to treat all navigation bodies equal to BW.
4. **And More Planning/Policy Issues**
  - 4.1 DETR promotes waterways actively and reminds Scottish and Welsh offices that they have a role, too.
  - 4.2 DETR encourage Government and Sponsored public bodies to respond - to ensure appropriate action be taken (refers back to Recommendation 2 above).
5. **Heritage Issues**
  - 5.1 National heritage and environmental agencies, LAS, BW etc. make full use of listing, conservation areas, SSSIs etc.
  - 5.2 Pursue "World Heritage" status within 2 years.
  - 5.3 Recognition of European status of former freight waterways.
6. **Management, Conservation and Restoration**
  - 6.1 Long term future of all waterways to be secured by a management plan.
  - 6.2 BW to develop its skills and culture further.
  - 6.3 DETR to encourage all waterway

authorities to draw upon the conservation and management expertise within BW (*I'm biting my tongue! Ed*).

- 6.4 Consider a "Waterways Heritage Trust" to look after old buildings and conservation issues.
- 6.5 Restoration by whoever to be carried out to conserve historical and ecological character, traditional crafts and skills wherever appropriate.

## 7. Conflict with Road Proposals

- 7.1 DETR to work with Highways Agency and Scottish and Welsh Offices to produce procedure for adequate co-ordination on road proposals affecting waterways - and vice versa. Proposed deadline of NOW for this recommendation.

## 8. Restoration

- 8.1 To establish a waterways category in European, national, regional and local funding programmes to maximise matching funding possibilities for National Lottery supported projects.
- 8.2 UK and EU to look for funding programme for heritage, leisure and tourism projects on former freight waterways.
- 8.3 Priority list for restoration projects to be reviewed annually.
- 8.4 Maximum use of Government unemployment and training schemes.
- 8.5 The professionals to improve their advice to the voluntary sector on all waterway issues.
- 8.6 All the above to be reviewed every two years.

## 9. Use and Development

- 9.1 Expansion of use by international marketing of UK waterway heritage holidays.
- 9.2 Encouragement to the private sector to develop off-line moorings and marinas.
- 9.3 Further development - water sales and transfer, angling, telecommunications etc.

activities such as licensed cycling, spending opportunities for gongoozlers.

- 9.4 Commercial freedom by BW, encouraged by Government.
- 9.5 Partnerships with LAs, disabled access, etc.
- 9.6 Visitor attractions linked to education.
- 9.7 Urban regeneration in smaller urban area.
- 9.8 Rural leisure and development to be encouraged by BW demonstration project.
- 9.9 Review all the above every 2 years.

## 10. Consultation

- 10.1 BW consider publishing long-term plans to assist consultation processes.
- 10.2 Waterway user, trade and restoration organisations consider developing one or a series of bodies complementary to the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities to improve the focus on waterway issues with AINA and Government. (*I thought we already had plenty! Ed.*)

## Conclusion

IWAAC commends these recommendations to BW and Government and believes that, if accepted, they will go a long way towards the aim of equipping the inland waterways with new terms of reference, a new structure and wider sources of funding and so ensure for them a healthy and viable future through the twenty-first century.

*Well, that's it! Nobody could say the recommendations are other than admirable. I hope I am still around to see some of them implemented. If anybody out there would like to see IWAAC's Final Report in full (it covers 11 pages of A4) I'm sure the Ashton office will send you a copy in exchange for £1 to cover copying and postage.*

**In our inland waterways,  
Britain has a national treasure,  
an asset of great historical and  
environmental value.**

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# hcs council news

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16th December, 1997

The vertical gate at Lock 24E is finished at long last. Official opening approved.

Huddersfield Canal Company is to share offices and staff with Huddersfield Canal Society. Efficient use of space and staff agreed by all.

Investments have fallen slightly in value. Probably to do with the current strong pound.

On the Millennium front things are proceeding slowly but nicely with the Millennium Commission, slowly and laboriously with English Partnerships and Standedge Experience is jogging along towards a Business Plan.

Volunteers have actually had enough dry weather to get out and about and are now looking for a nice job that will not conflict with the major restoration works.

Some discussion on the role of the trip boats during restoration work.

The scheduled discussion on the future of the Society did not take place.

25th February 1998

A lot of discussion, but mainly confidential, about the Millennium money and the future of the Society, HCS Restoration and our boats. There is to be a Special Council Meeting, probably in March, to discuss further.

Keith Noble has been co-opted onto Council. Keith is a director of HCS Restoration, a part-time member of the dredging team, an occasional subscriber to Pennine Link and a nationally well-known canal lobbyist. One of his roles will be to represent the Society at the Parliamentary Waterways Group. Welcome aboard!

## Arthur and the Boat

Now here is the tale of young Arthur Staines  
A chap of good morals, but, sadly, few brains.  
To own a canal boat was his ardent desire,  
And achieve it he would; for 'Art was a tryer.

His mind all made up and money in hand  
To the boatyard he went dressed up looking grand.  
'I've come,' said our 'Art, 'for a cut going barge,  
It's got to have flowers and small windows, not large.

The salesman just nodded showing him  
to the edge of the dock,  
Considering seriously whether to throw  
'Art down the lock  
But he soon changed his mind when  
he saw Arthur's money..  
Oh! Certainly Sir, anything more? Some tea?  
Scones with honey?

At this, spouts our lad, "There is some more, just a bit,  
I want somewhere to sleep and to eat and to sit.  
It must have a shower and toilet ... let me think.  
Ah yes and a pump to shift water in case it  
should sink"

"I don't have a horse and my wife ain't that strong,  
So it must have an engine to move it along;  
As well as all this it must have at the back  
One o' them poles. Painted red gold and Black."

Now at this the salesman got ever so peeved,  
Grabbing 'Art by the collar saying, "It's widely believed,  
That Barges were used for cargo like cotton and grain.  
You want a narrowboat lad, get that into your brain"

Then remembering the cash and the thought of  
HIS share  
Showed 'Art to the office and gave him an easy chair.  
'Sit down, lad," he said, as he gave Arthur some tea.  
"I'll find thee a boat. Just leave it to me "....."

John Wilson

TO BE CONTINUED,  
OR NOT AS THE CASE MAY BE!!!

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# restoration survey

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*For your information, some recent statistics collected by IWA and published in their magazine "Waterways". Ed.*

## **Waterway Restoration Survey**

In the past 40 years some 25 waterways totalling nearly 400 miles in length have been rescued from dereliction in England and Wales, and fully restored for boating and other recreational activities. In addition, more than 50 waterways in all parts of the country totalling over 800 miles are currently being worked on, and are at various stages from just started to nearly complete.

Behind these raw statistics lie a host of interesting facts about the progress, finance and activities of the restoration societies which IWA's Restoration Committee has investigated in some detail.

During 1995 some 49 questionnaire forms were sent to voluntary waterway restoration societies involved in active restoration projects, and 41 replies are included in the analysis. Obviously, some allowance needs to be made for missing projects, but some interesting insights still emerge.

## **Progress**

Of a total length of 652 miles of waterway currently under restoration by these societies, some 139 miles or 21% are now restored. Interestingly, the number of locks restored as a proportion of the total proposed for restoration is also 21% (124 out of 589). The total length of towpath restored is 102 miles, or 25% of that which had been closed. Prominent amongst work to be done are the 534 unnavigable road crossings which will need replacement.

When completed, 75% of the restored waterway mileage will join to the interconnected national system. The rate of completion of nearly 10 miles per year over the past 30 years looks set to double over the next 30 years, with a spurt at the millennium.

## **Finance**

The estimated cost of restoration, if done by contractors, averages at £907,000 per mile (adjusted to 1997 prices). The value of restoration work funded in the 3 years to 1995 totals, for those schemes which gave an estimate, is £8.1 million. Of this 75% came from Government, local authorities and Europe, 23% from voluntary contributions and labour, and the rest from commercial sources.

## **Benefits**

22 schemes responding estimated they would provide 27 new hire bases and 1,115 off-line moorings. 10 projects estimated that 2,793 'full-time equivalent' jobs would be generated by restoration.

## **Societies**

The total membership of societies in the survey (counting families as 2) is 17,398. The number of members in each society ranges from under 100 to over 2,000 with the majority in the 100 to 500 range. Annual subscriptions for individuals range from £2 to £10 with two peaks, at £5 and £10. Total subscription income of these societies is about £117,000 per year.

## **Activities**

Most societies produce a magazine and the majority have 4 issues per year (minimum 0, maximum 6). Some 13 societies run a total of 20 trip boats on a regular basis.

## **Councils**

76% of councils support the restorations and 73% of the total length is protected in the local plans. 42% of councils have provided significant direct assistance (worth over £10,000 in the last 3 years), and 25% are members of a Trust or similar body promoting the restoration.

These are just some of the facts contained in ResCom's analysis of their survey. The full analysis, including graphs and charts, has been made available to all societies which responded to the survey.

Phil Sharpe

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# boat hire prices

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The following letter was received last Summer, by many boat hirers, from one of the country's biggest hire firms:-

"Dear Sir,

## It's a funny old world

In March this year, a group of private canal boat owners, for reasons known only to themselves, put out a Press Release saying that the canals were running out of water and boats were going aground. This story was carried widely in the media and has been repeated many times since. Only last week we had a call from the BBC at Pebble Mill asking how we were coping with the canal closures resulting from lack of water!

## Great News!

The reality is very different. Earlier this year British Waterways put in hand engineering works costing nearly £1 million to transfer water to where it would be needed. As a result the water supply situation for most of the canal system is better than it has been for some years. Indeed, just recently many of the already minimal lock restrictions were lifted.

## Can we tempt you?

The perception that the canals are short of water has undoubtedly had an adverse effect

on our bookings. Between now and the end of September we still have about 250 weeks of canal holidays available. We have therefore decided to make them available to our previous customers at a discount of

## 25% off the brochure price.

We have to put a few restrictions on this offer etc. etc.

*When will it occur to these people that their prices are extortionate? Asking £700 plus for a four-berth narrow boat for one week in summer is commonplace. It is not unknown for a luxury 2-berth boat to cost over £800!*

*One reason is that the boats are now better equipped than most people's homes - all the 240 volt gadgets imaginable - and quite unnecessary on what is, basically, a camping holiday. In any case, with pub food being what it is these days, the main meal is frequently taken away from the boat.*

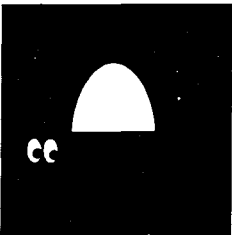
*Remember Beeching. He put up rail fares to make railways pay and less people travelled! The result, forced closure of many rail lines.*

*Come on hire firms! Close your eyes, take a deep breath and LOWER YOUR PRICES. You won't have a boat left in the yard - nothing to do with water shortages!*

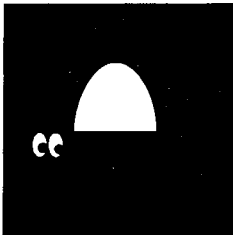
Ken Wright

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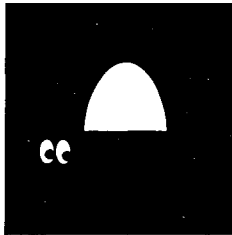
In Standedge Tunnel ...



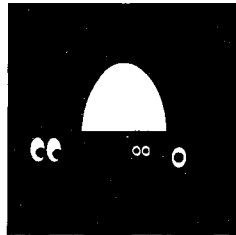
Are you ready yet ...



I don't want to be late ...



It is fancy dress you know ...



Pieces of Eight!

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# golden rally of boats

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*Last year, member Dave Dawson from Sheffield joined Alwyn Ogborn's boat rally to celebrate the opening of the canal to Stalybridge. Not without problems, but they served to make the trip more memorable! Here, Dave tells his story. Ed.*

**Exploring the towpath from Dukinfield to Stalybridge always used to inspire a spirit of adventure in the 1980s when our family first discovered it. Not only were there the various natural objects to overcome, such as weeds and mud, there were various contracted workmen who assured us that we couldn't get through, and usually adding that the restoration itself would never get through. (I wonder if the original navvies had such pessimists among their numbers....." That Mr. Outram's daft! A tunnel under them 'ills - never do it I tell yer! ) The cut itself was hidden by a dense and luxurious growth reminiscent of Peru in Summer.**

The memories of these expeditions flooded back to us as our boat negotiated the turn from the Lower Peak Forest and onto the Ashton, my wife Kate pointing out that ten years ago we would have struggled through a raft of polythene, polystyrene, garbage and assorted filth. The modern boater has no such problems to contend with.

At the bottom lock of the Huddersfield we paused to join the others who were waiting to ascend and it was at this point that we were informed of the water shortage. "The level's down and everyone's getting stuck in the tunnel" we were told. True to form, once we were through the lock we ran firmly aground in the narrows, but with Kate, myself and a fellow boater heaving on the ropes, the engine in forward gear and a little extra water from the lock above, narrow boat Bosworth bounced over the obstruction.

At the next lock it was those damned B.W. hydraulic paddles that caused the grief. A top paddle was stuck in the UP position, and even the most vigorous twirling of a windlass had no effect. A large mooring pin and a half remembered physics lesson from thirty something years ago on the subject of levers provided a crude but effective solution.

Once up to the Stalybridge level the water problem was fairly bloody, and ahead of us were two deep drafted ex-working boats, Alton and Joel, who were taking turns in getting stuck. Tempers however remained unfrayed, and everyone worked as a team to get the boats through. Just beyond the aqueduct, though, we came upon a shoal that defeated all the tricks of the boating trade, until a B.W. Landrover hove into view. First Alton threw a line that was tied onto the Landrover, which then reversed, pulling the boat over the muck. Joel followed suit, and then it was our turn.

Finally, as darkness approached, we tied up at Staley Wharf and prayed that B.W. would send some water down.

The rally itself was most enjoyable, particularly visits to the "greasy trucker" transport cafe, cholesterol and chips being my especial vice.

A fellow boating enthusiast, Terry Holtby, said that as he lived locally he could show me the line that the canal used to take through town. A mutual friend overheard this and said that he'd like to come too. In the end there were seventeen of us on this unofficial guided tour, and we had to turn several members of the general public away. Terry proved to be the best of guides with an amazing stock of local knowledge, and now I can't wait to boat through the town.

As I woke up on Monday morning I could feel the boat moving slightly. This is a good thing in a boat, as it means that it's actually floating. I drew the cabin slide back, and behold! A miracle! The water level had risen right up during the night, and some boats were already on the move. We decided to visit the Doorstep cafe for one last big breakfast before going down the locks ourselves, which in the event proved no real difficulty at all.

As we departed, Alwyn Ogborn called over and thanked us for having taken the trouble to come. We asked him to pass on our thanks to all those who'd helped in the organisation for, ultimately, troubles such as this can prove to be the greatest of pleasures.

Dave Dawson

# huddersfield canals on postcards

## 3. The Working Canals

I have said a lot about the history of the postcard in the first two articles, but what does the postcard have to tell us about the history and working life of the two canals? The answer is "not a lot", particularly in the case of the Narrow Canal. By the time that the postcard came on the scene, working boats were already few and far between.

Probably the best-known view of a working boat on the HNC is the view of a loaded boat about to leave Wade Lock in Uppermill. This appears both as a

"local photographic" view and as a colour-printed card by F & G Pollard of Oldham. My copy of the latter was posted in 1906 so the photograph is certainly older than that. The interesting question is "what was the boat carrying and where to?" The article "Last Traffics on the

HNC?" published in "Waterways World" some years ago gives no real clue, despite being the best analysis available. Buckley and Newton of Stalybridge, who were one of the last carriers over the summit, appear to have sent their boats empty in the easterly direction, judging by the article and the postcard which was reproduced with it of one of their boats in Lock 20E below Slaithwaite.

All of my other views of the Narrow show a deserted canal, though at least one view of



Above Left: Wade Lock, Uppermill.

A loaded boat about to leave Wade Lock in Uppermill. A 'real photographic' card from the early 1900's.



Left: The Wharfe, Aspley, Huddersfield.

Two A. & C.N. keels at their depot. Crane and stone warehouse near the bridge survive today.



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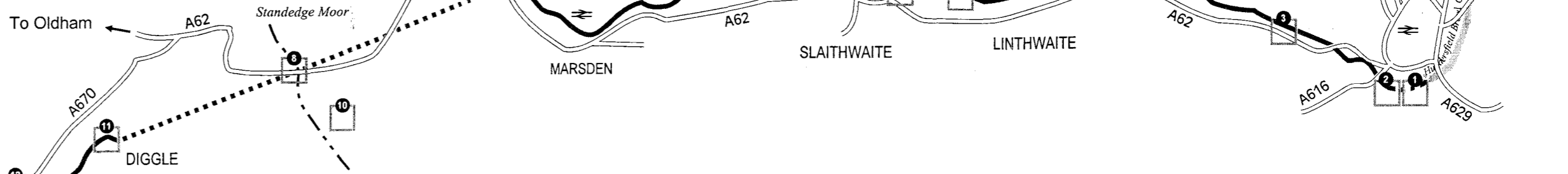


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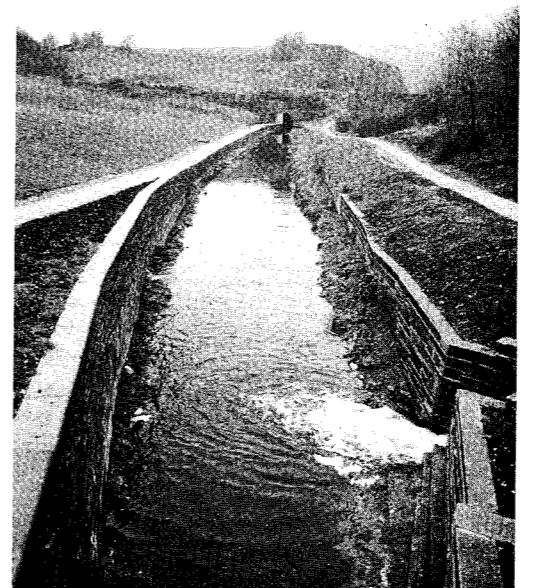
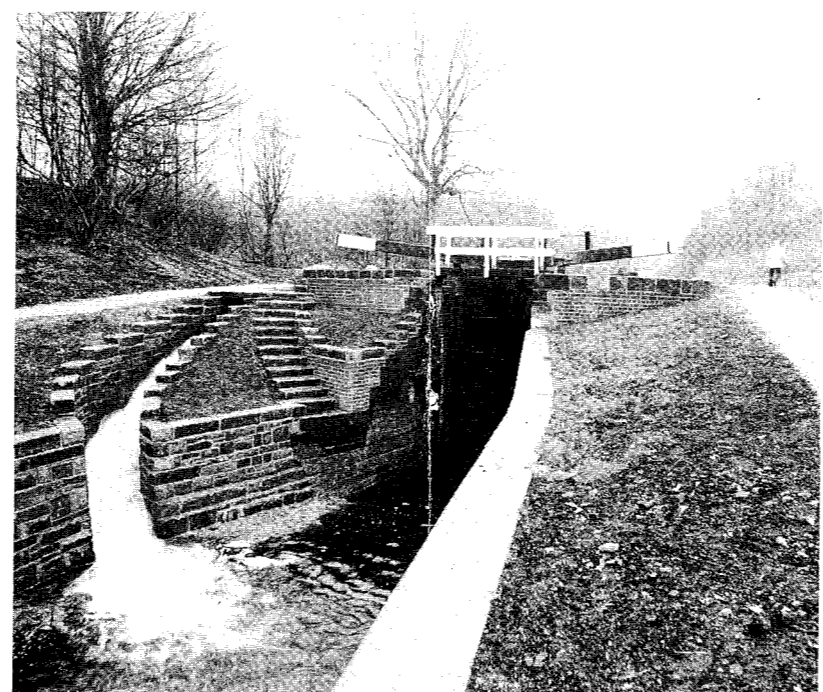
Bayley Street, Stalybridge,  
Cheshire SK15 1QQ  
Tel: 0161 330 6511  
Fax: 0161 330 5576

# The Remaining Blockages on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal - Spring 1998



Work completed at Lock 12W, Scout Green, Mossley

Below: Lock 12W fully restored with the bywash in full flood!  
 Right: The re-aligned canal channel with restored wash walls and towpath. Boaters should not panic at the rather low water level; at this time British Waterways were clearing material from Scout Tunnel and required a measure of dewatering. Temporary stop planks have now been fitted at the far end of the tunnel and the water level has returned to current BW specifications.



Photos: R.Gough

- 20** Stalybridge Town Centre  
*'Excavation of old canal line with new locks and bridges'*  
Start Date - 1st Quarter 1999  
Finish Date - 4th Quarter 2000
- 19** Scout Tunnel  
*'Internal repairs'*  
Start Date - 3rd Quarter 1998  
Finish Date - 4th Quarter 1998
- 18** Division Bridge Aqueduct  
*'Structural repairs'*  
Start Date - 1st Quarter 1999  
Finish Date - 2nd Quarter 1999
- 17** Mann's Wharf to Frenches  
*'Dredging'*  
Start Date - 3rd Quarter 1999  
Finish Date - 4th Quarter 1999
- 16** Frenches to High Street  
*'Dredging'*  
Start Date - 2nd Quarter 2000  
Finish Date - 3rd Quarter 2000

- 15a** Lock 22W to Wool Road  
*'Dredging and lock repairs'*  
Start Date - 2nd Quarter 1998  
Finish Date - 4th Quarter 1998
- 14** High Street Bridge & Wade Lock  
*'New navigable culvert and repairs to lock'*  
Start Date - 3rd Quarter 1999  
Finish Date - 2nd Quarter 2000
- 13** Old Sag Aqueduct  
*'Structural repairs'*  
Start Date - 1st Quarter 1999  
Finish Date - 2nd Quarter 1999
- 12** Wool Road Bridge & Lock 24W  
*'New navigable culvert and repairs to lock'*  
Start Date - 4th Quarter 1998  
Finish Date - 2nd Quarter 1999
- 11** Ward Lane to Standedge  
*'Dredging'*  
Start Date - 3rd Quarter 2000  
Finish Date - 3rd Quarter 2000

- 10** Water Supply Works  
*'Improvements to reservoir feeders'*  
Start Date - 3rd Quarter 1999  
Finish Date - 4th Quarter 1999
- 9** Standedge Experience  
*'Visitor/Heritage centre'*  
Start Date - 4th Quarter 1999  
Finish Date - 4th Quarter 2000
- 8** Standedge Tunnel  
*'Repairs and dredging'*  
Start Date - 4th Quarter 1998  
Finish Date - 4th Quarter 2000
- 7** Slaithwaite Town Centre  
*'New section of canal on old line'*  
Start Date - 2nd Quarter 1999  
Finish Date - 4th Quarter 2000
- 6** Lees Mill Bridge  
*'Replacement bridge'*  
Start Date - 3rd Quarter 1998  
Finish Date - 1st Quarter 1999
- 5** Holme Mill Bridge  
*'Replacement bridge'*  
Start Date - 3rd Quarter 1998  
Finish Date - 1st Quarter 1999
- 4** Golcar Aqueduct  
*'Structural repairs'*  
Start Date - 3rd Quarter 1998  
Finish Date - 4th Quarter 1998
- 3** Mark Bottoms Bridge  
*'New bridge'*  
Start Date - 2nd Quarter 1998  
Finish Date - 4th Quarter 1998
- 2** Sellers & Co  
*'New section of canal through mill yard'*  
Start Date - 3rd Quarter 1999  
Finish Date - 4th Quarter 2000
- 1** Bates & Co  
*'Navigable culvert under building'*  
Start Date - 2nd Quarter 1999  
Finish Date - 3rd Quarter 2000

Denotes Project at Planning and Design stage  
 Denotes Construction has commenced with level of progress

\* Start and finish dates refer to physical works on site and may be subject to alteration.

Scale approx. 1" to 1 mile

# TOP LOCK MARINE

M.D. & A.M. Allcard

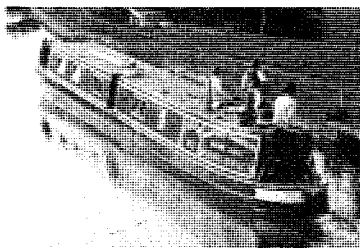
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a maintenance boat at Marsden exists and there are a couple of other views. The situation on the Broad Canal is rather better, as would be expected where traffic lasted into the early 1950's and a view of Jarratt, Pyrah and Armitage's timber yard at Turnbridge with three boats alongside was included in the first of these articles.

The view of two A & CN boats alongside that company's warehouses at Aspley was posted in 1909 and is taken from the bridge over the goit, looking towards Wakefield Road. The nearer boat is moored alongside what is now the University car park and site of the Huddersfield Canals Festivals, while the far one is under the hoist of the

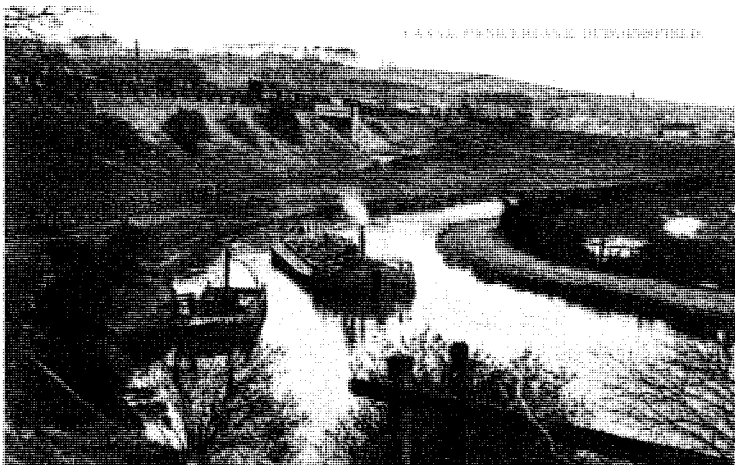
warehouse recently converted into flats. This card was published in colour in the "Magalden Series", possibly the most numerous series of cards of the Huddersfield area.

The actual Turnbridge features in the background of a barge moored by the chimney of John L Brierley's mill. This card is undated and appears to be a fairly amateur production.

Finally, another "Magalden Series" card, which shows a loaded boat heading away down the canal from Red Doles Lock. This also appears as a "real photographic" card, though as the only copy I have seen of that

had an asking price of well over £20, the illustration is taken from the colour printed version! Of particular interest is the punt-like boat in the left foreground with some kind of apparatus in it; very similar to the craft which appeared on a card of the Lock House at Mossley in the previous article.

Trevor Ellis

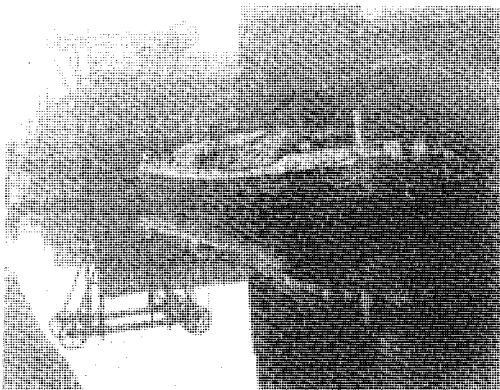


*Above Right:* Untitled card of Turnbridge.

A keel moored on the offside with the bridge beyond. How much of the original bridge actually survives in today's listed structure is debatable - much of the structure at the time of this view was timber!

*Right:* Canal, Canker Lane, Huddersfield.

A loaded boat heading away down the canal from Red Doles Lock. The cargo would appear to be bricks, but it is as well to take the colouring on the original 'with a pinch of salt'. Card colourers were inclined to brighten up views, and many cards shows northern towns with red tiled roofs which look more like Tuscany!



# not the wife's tale

*Whilst "The Wife" has a well-earned respite, member Winifred Wilson takes us on a memorable journey from the South Oxford canal to her husband's home town - HUDDERSFIELD!*

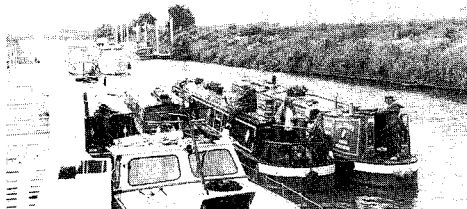
## TRAVELLING HOPEFULLY TOWARDS HUDDERSFIELD

Robert Louis Stevenson said that to travel hopefully is better than to arrive, but ever since my husband Paul and I bought our 60' residential narrowboat *Veritas* in the summer of 1993 it had been an aim of his to attempt to reach his home town of Huddersfield by boat. I say 'attempt' advisedly because we weren't at all sure that we would fit in the reputedly fierce 57'6" locks of the Calder & Hebble and the Huddersfield Broad. If not, the ambition would have to keep until 2000. 1996 was the year. Having already given up things like house and jobs for a while, we had plenty of time for the cruise north from our South Oxford moorings and, after attending a family wedding in Leicester, we were off down the Soar, and heading for Nottingham and the Trent in late June. I agree with 'The Wife' about the Trent having its own weather system: my hand-knitted balaclava, inspired by the Thames the previous November, came into its own and even the captain was persuaded to wear a woolly hat.

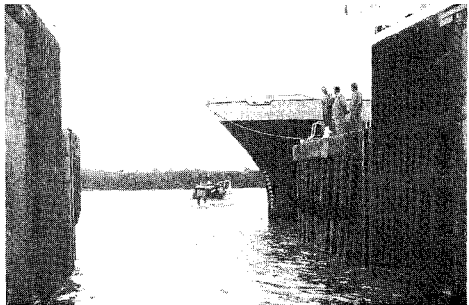
Despite going aground on an ebbing tide at Laneham (a notorious spot, I discovered, on confessing to the Torksey lock-keeper - yes, I was steering at the time) and losing the charts overboard in the gale next day, we made it to the comparative safety of Keadby Lock - yes, you have to hold very tight to your ropes going up - and breathed a sigh of relief at being back on a canal. There was no waiting at the amazing Vazon Bridge, whose railway lines slid smoothly aside at our approach. The wind, however, was still with us, and made things tricky at all those swing- and lift-bridges

on the Stainforth & Keadby and the New Junction Canals. I made a discovery at one, when I spotted a large British Waterways vessel approaching from the opposite direction. All my instincts were to wait for it to come through, but it would take some time, and Paul was yelling at me to close the bridge and get on board. Just then, I turned round and saw a BW employee standing behind me, waiting to deal with the bridge, and parked at the side of the road was his van! Talk about lock-wheeling! Once on the Aire & Calder, we saw the system in operation - locks expensively mechanised for boater operation, but lock-keepers (-wheelers?) dashing from one lock to the next whenever a tanker was due. The one we pitied most was at Castleford where, from our overnight mooring, we quickly became accustomed to seeing the white car with familiar logo whizzing along the far side of the wide cut between Bulholme Lock and Castleford Flood Lock to change the traffic lights!

The Aire & Calder was, if anything, more exciting than the Trent. It would have been interesting enough meeting these large tankers and the tugs for the compartment coal boats buzzing about all over the place at Kellingley, (not to mention the dredger right in the middle, ignoring everyone else), without the very strong cross-wind, which threatened to blow us right in to the bank and keep us there. One feels one needs a certain amount of control in this traffic and control was just what we felt short of. The most heart-stopping moment was, when approaching a substantial brick bridge on a bend in Knottingley, we heard a long, loud hoot and simultaneously saw the bows of an unloaded tanker looming in the arch. Somehow, Paul managed to slow enough to avoid it without losing steerage-way in the wind and, as I clung to our cratch-board and watched the bow wave approaching, I registered the mate on the side-deck of the tanker, presumably getting ready to fend off if necessary!



Waiting for the tide below Torksey Lock, off the River Trent.



Keadby Lock on the River Trent: tide racing up from port, coaster to starboard!

The lock-keeper at Ferrybridge called to us to watch out for another tanker 'somewhere on the river', so we were watching round each of the many bends of the next stretch, where a nature reserve is being established very successfully on former mining land. It was only as we approached Bulholme Lock that we saw it - in the lock. As I leapt off with the rope, onto the very short landing-stage, I had to laugh at the sign there: 'For pleasure boats only! Out came the tanker, slowly, and the captain slid open his window and shouted: 'He says to go in when you're ready!'

For the second time in two days, as we came in to moor at Castleford, two ladies from the same very short narrowboat caught our bow rope and, as I jumped off after it, said: 'We broke down on the river and had to be towed in!' That would be my worst nightmare, I think, but they seemed quite calm.

#### Crab-wise to Huddersfield

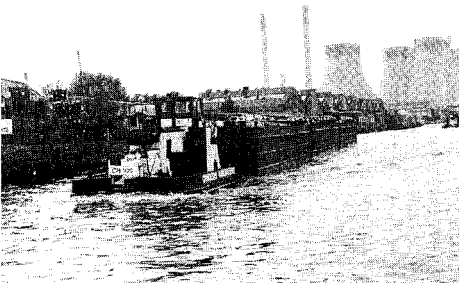
Castleford turned out to be a useful and even interesting town, and by the time we had had three overnight stops there amongst a variety of vessels, we had become quite attached to the place. We are not members of that family of boaters who rise at the crack of dawn and set off munching bacon butties as they head for their first lock at 7 a.m. (*It takes all sorts!* Ed.) That is not our idea of enjoying ourselves, and I especially am fit for nothing until I have sat silently through breakfast, washed up and made the bed. So by the time all that is done and Paul has walked our elderly dog, Toby (since, sadly, passed on), the early morning rush has passed and we have no trouble with queues - that's how to beat the rush! In the case of the Aire & Calder, it also had the advantage that *Trentaire* and *Trentcal*, our friendly tankers, passed with waves (human and tidal) as we were surfacing for early-morning tea.

We had already noted the bend in the Flood Lock which, as the junction immediately follows, is a bit worrying, even with the traffic lights in our favour. There seems to be a little confusion as to the meaning of the amber lights at some of these automated locks,

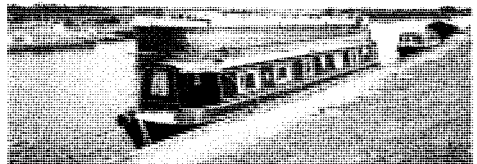
which appears to depend on whether they are manned or not. Further adventures were to follow at Castleford, but on this occasion all was clear, and we headed straight forward at the cross-roads and up the wide Calder towards Wakefield.

Out came our copy of Pearson's new guide to 'Pennine Waters', which was published just after we left the Leeds & Liverpool the previous summer. We have something of a love-hate relationship with dear Pearson. The Canal Companions are always entertaining, although the spelling and sometimes excruciating prose often have us groaning. We keep buying them anyway, and the pictures and maps are good.

After all the press-button locks we had been through, Fail Ings looked as daunting as it does in Pearson's superb photo and lived up to appearances. As I was struggling to get the gates shut, I detected a familiar ripple in the water away at the last bend of the river and, sure enough, in a moment another boat appeared! It was no hardship to wait for *Surrey* from Shire Cruisers to reach us, although none of us was sure that the boats could squeeze in together. However, squeeze we did, with our 60' in first and their 50' alongside. I was full of admiration for Mum, who did most of the steering - you'll perhaps have noticed that I prefer to be up on the lock-side! Dad climbed off with his hand-spike like a professional, and it was only after the first few locks that I discovered they were on a one-way cruise from Burnley and not returning the way they had already been. They also had some very fancy windlasses with long handles and extra holes, which I envied. I later found myself carting about the heavy, unwieldy hand-spike, a long-handled windlass for raising stiff paddles, and a normal one for lowering them and for those gate-paddles where the beam doesn't leave room for the long handle - rather cumbersome. Even a lock-keeper said: 'And you have to take them all because you don't know which you'll need at any one lock!' - that just about sums up the Calder & Hebble - no two locks are the same!



Empty compartment boats, high out of the water, being towed from Ferrybridge Power Station to Kellingley Colliery.



*Veritas*, securely moored at Castleford Junction, is dwarfed by *Trentaire*. Since this picture was taken, the effluent traffic has ceased.



Surrey's efficient crew included a strong and willing teenage boy and two 11-year-olds who did things with ropes.

Perhaps an indication of how few boats people expected to see came when, at Mill Bank Lock, a couple walking ahead of me found a convenient seat for a rest - on the plank of the bottom gate! They were very surprised when I apologetically asked them to move, but even more so when I couldn't shift the paddle and neither could the man. After a long wait while the lock emptied through the other paddle and the leaking top gates filled it up again, the first paddle decided to work; then one of the bottom gates refused to shut. After much pushing and pulling, two of us on the beam and two more pushing the other end with a shaft, it closed. That finished us for the day and we found a lovely mooring below Thornhill Double Locks, while our friends carried on to The Perseverance. We next saw them a week later at Sowerby Bridge, after their cruise up the Rochdale.

Next day was Saturday and Paul had made a phone-call to see if any of his cousins was free to crew for us, but we hadn't made direct contact. We enjoyed our cruise in and out of the Calder - flood locks into and normal locks out of the river - the more so because it was nothing like Pearson's uncomplimentary description. After lunch at Mirfield and negotiating Cooper Bridge Lock with half an eye on the large chained dog leaning an elbow on the garden wall to watch us, we emerged from under the road bridge to see a couple sitting on a bench under a bus stop: a water-bus stop. I turned to point it out to Paul, then thought the couple looked familiar - cousin Andrew, with Jan, who had walked down from Aspley Basin to meet us! It was the first time we had picked up passengers from a bus stop; none too soon, as the approach to the first lock on the Huddersfield Broad took me by surprise. Andrew was quick to jump off and had the paddles up before my second attempt, when I somehow rolled off on to the bank on my tummy, while Paul shouted: 'Hurry up, the weir's taking me!' This

alarming statement hung in the air, but we soon had the gates open and *Veritas* inside. The next challenge was the lock on the top ground paddle, in which our BW key stuck fast without unlocking it. Eventually, we gave up and cautiously raised the gate paddles and, at length, a lot of fiddling released the key.

It was a tight squeeze in these locks, but easier going up, with a strong crew, than it turned out to be descending, without! Jan, fairly recently pregnant (Hannah was born on 17th January 1997), encouraged us from the front well, where Toby enjoyed her company. For the last couple of years' cruising he was kept firmly inside at locks, and when setting off and tying up, after giving me several frights by trying to jump off at the wrong moment and missing. At one stage I became adept at jumping off with the rope in one hand and pulling him out with the other before the space between boat and bank became less than Toby-sized. He had always got excited about 10 miles from Huddersfield when approaching by car, but this was a new experience in a dog's life of great variety.

Jan and Andrew had met a cruiser on their way down, which had had to turn back because of a low pound between locks 4 and 5. We were soon told all about it by several small boys on bikes, who then accompanied us most of the way up the flight. Andrew and I walked up to lock 5 and let lots of water through but, even so, Paul had to do some poling and then throw us the bow rope, with which we - Andrew anyway - pulled *Veritas* into the lock. By the time the lock was filled, we were ready for some refreshment, so decided the best place to have it was in the lock! It didn't seem likely that we would cause a hold-up by doing so, and in fact we felt a bit like pioneers battling through the shallows and green weed, with not another boat in sight. The rest of the cruise was uneventful and very pleasant in the warm sun, and we reached our goal of Aspley Basin with a great feeling of achievement.

*Next time: Familiar country from a new angle.*



A variety of craft in the evening sunshine at Castleford



Ambition achieved: *Veritas*, in the distance, at Aspley Basin, Huddersfield.

# HUDDERSFIELD CANAL SOCIETY LIMITED

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ABOVE NAMED COMPANY WILL BE HELD AT THE WOOL ROAD TRANSHIPMENT WAREHOUSE, DOBCROSS, OLDHAM, ON FRIDAY THE 5TH DAY OF JUNE 1998, AT 7.30PM TO TRANSACT THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS:

- A. To receive and adopt the Accounts for the Company for the year ending 31st December 1997 together with the Report of the Council of Management and of the Auditors thereon.
- B. To re-elect Messrs Neville Russell of Huddersfield as Auditors and to authorise the Council of Management to fix their remuneration.
- C. To re-elect Mr Allen J. Brett as a Member of the Council of Management retiring by rotation.
- D. To re-elect Mr Alwyn P. Ogborn as a Member of the Council of Management retiring by rotation.
- E. To re-elect Mr John M. Sully as a Member of the Council of Management retiring by rotation.
- F. To re-elect Mr Kenneth Wright as a Member of the Council of Management retiring by rotation.
- G. To re-elect Mrs Josephine A. Young as a Member of the Council of Management retiring by rotation.
- H. To consider any other nominations.
- I. Any other business.

DATED the 8th day of January 1998

By Order of the Council

J. M. Fryer

Company Secretary

N.B. A Member entitled to attend and vote at the Meeting is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and vote on his/her behalf. A proxy must be a member of the Company.

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# foxton inclined plane

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## Northern Canals Association Visit to the Foxton Inclined Plane

For the benefit of new members, N.C.A. is a loose affiliation of canal societies, trusts, IWA and other waterway organisations from the midlands upwards, who are responsible for most of the voluntary restoration work taking place on northern waterways today.

Members meet three times a year at various locations to discuss topical issues and offer mutual assistance. It must be said that, along with the sister organisation, Southern Canals Association, N.C.A. has most of the waterway experts in the country and what they don't know about restoration, legislation and environmental issues is probably not worth knowing.

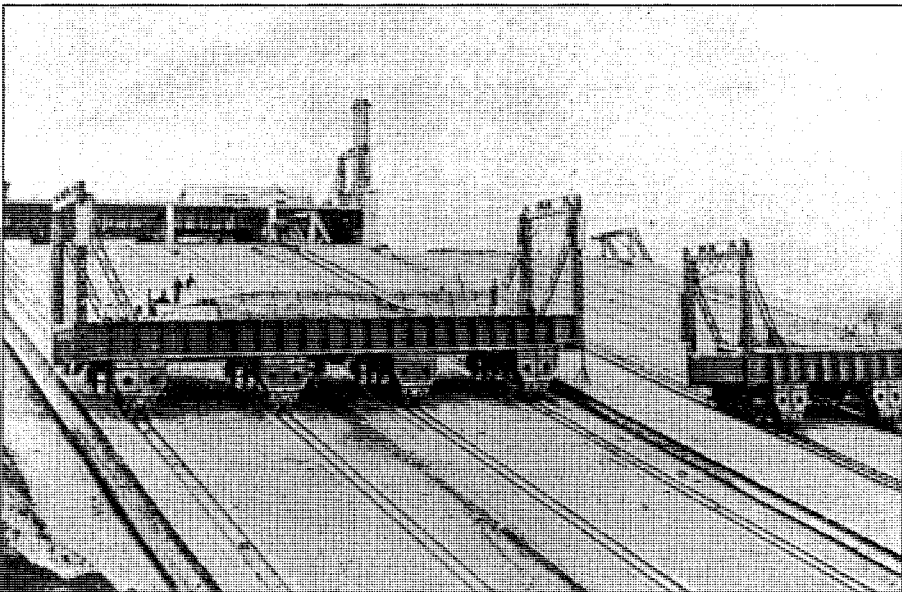
Foxton Inclined Plane Trust were the hosts for the October meeting. The site is adjacent to the Leicester section of the Grand Union Canal close to Market Harborough.

Officially opened in 1900, the Inclined Plane was designed to provide a quick and easy method of transporting boats from one level of the canal to another and, in doing so, replace the ageing flight of 10 locks. Each of the two moveable docks was capable of accommodating two 35 ton narrow boats or one 70 ton barge, operated by a counter-balance system.

The time taken to complete the operation was 12 minutes, compared with the average time of 45 minutes negotiating the locks. An obvious saving, especially at a time when the canal company was facing severe competition from the railways.

Although the canal and locks are still operational, sadly the Inclined Plane disappeared nearly 80 years ago and the machinery was sold for scrap in 1928.

N.C.A. members received a very interesting presentation by the Trust and a guided tour of the site. The main guest speaker of the



An early photograph of the Inclined Plane in operation.  
*Courtesy of the Foxton Inclined Plane Trust*

day was Dr. Anthony Streeten, Head of East Midlands Conservation Team - English Heritage. He emphasised that English Heritage was about conservation and preservation, and not restoration, and expressed his concern on 'gentrification' of important structures where brick work was being damaged by sand blasting and gave an example of where new handrails had been installed with 'rope' marks created by an angle grinder.

Interestingly, Dr. Streeten spoke about the importance of local distinctiveness under Planning Policy Guidance Notes, which highlighted the possible conflict where British Waterways' corporate identity and standardisation of maintenance may cut across the boundaries.

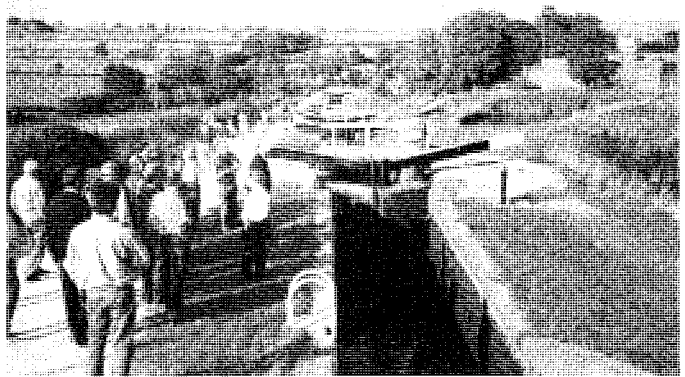
N.C.A. members were amazed at the number of visitors they encountered at Foxton as, in theory, it's in the middle of nowhere. The Trust estimates that the Foxton area already has 300,000 visitors per annum and that any significant change to the facilities at Foxton, e.g. a restored lift, could seriously damage the local infrastructure. Hence a major study would need to be commissioned at the appropriate time.

During the meeting, Keith Gibson, N.C.A. Chairman, and HCS Council member, presented Keith Ayling, Chairman of the Chesterfield Canal Society with their 1997 Canal & Riverboat Tom Rolt Award for the best society magazine. That's rubbing the salt in, as HCS also entered the competition this year! (*Grrrrr! Ed.*) The IWA Leicestershire Branch presented a cheque for

£250 to the Foxton Inclined Plane Trust.

A very enjoyable day out, proving yet again the dedication of the voluntary sector in restoring the country's waterway network, and of the numerous benefits Britain's waterways are bringing via tourism, leisure and development opportunities.

Frank Smith



*Above:* NCA members being briefed on the Foxton Flight and the Inclined Plane Engine House (now a museum) on the right.

*Below:* Remains at the top of the lift. Old boat, arrowed, indicates where the entry/exit point was to the moveable docks.

*Photos: F. Smith*



## **BRIAN MINOR - Festival Officer**

(A MORAL TALE FOR CHILDREN)

Contrary to the belief of some people, when I was born in Moston, Manchester, my parents were married!

I was educated all over the place. First of all at a primary school in Moston, then in Altrincham and took my 11 plus in Keswick. At that time I came top of the county, but my educational attainments have slipped downwards since then. I went to Grammar school in Altrincham, but left at 16 to join the R.A.F. for four years. (I signed on for life and it took me that long to get out!) I went out to Kenya as a member of the police force to battle against the Mau Mau (and various unnamed ladies in Happy Valley) and spent two memorable years as the sun went down on the end of the British Empire. I still argue that the benevolent paternalism of Colonialism was far better for the indigenous peoples than their current anarchy.

Returning to the UK I spent most of my time in a variety of Sales /promotional jobs. I have sold advertising space, snack foods, stationery, finance and, for four years, politicians! After that I worked for myself running a driving school and various retail establishments. I worked in the leisure industry for some time running clubs and pubs until I moved into the company I am with now where I am in the marketing department of a manufacturer of construction equipment sold all over the world. I buy the print and look after all the sales brochures, I help with exhibitions, trade shows and demonstrations, I deal with customers, both distributors and end users from all over the world (85% of our production is exported) We were taken over by a giant in the industry last year and as their European operation is controlled from Paris I am learning French in self defence. I went to Paris a couple of times last year and will be doing a few more trips this year with a bit of luck. ( Whilst everyone else in the

department is whizzing off to exotic places I always get sent on the show to Milton Keynes!)

Apart from my involvement with the Canal Society I have played Rugby since I was nine years old, that is for well over 50 years now. I currently play for, and am secretary of, a geriatric side called EGOR. All of us are over 40, our oldest player is 82, several are over 70 and we can put out a full team of pensioners! The club travels extensively to find comparably aged fixtures and there is an international golden oldies tournament every two years in a different continent each time. These attract anything up to 140 teams from 70/80 countries and are great fun. I am on the Lancashire County Rugby Union Committee and for the past four years have been a member of the disciplinary committee. I am Secretary of the Lancashire South /Cheshire Two League. All this keeps me quite busy during the winter.

My involvement in the Canal Society started about fifteen years ago when my wife and a friend of hers decided to do their Shirley Valentines and go to Greece. The other Husband and I were talking to Hugh Wainwright in the Rugby Club about our temporary Bachelorhood and he invited us to join him on his boat for the Ashton Canals Festival, where he was the current President. After the initial gasps of 'who wants to go to Ashton in July?' etc., we joined him for the weekend. I never drew a sober breath, thought it was marvellous and found out two weeks later when my membership card came through that I had joined the, to me, unknown Huddersfield Canal Society. In fact I won a draw and got my first year free!

A few months later I met David Sumner at a social function and told him of some criticisms I had of the Festival. "There's a meeting of the new committee next week," he says, "go and tell them". So off I went in all innocence, and as soon as I opened my mouth Hazel Maskell stuck a file in my hands and Ken Baker had me proposed as

entertainments officer for the year! I was Chairman for the following two years, and have done most other jobs since. It has been a pleasure to be involved for the past fifteen years with as crazy a bunch of otherwise rational people as you could wish to meet.

I did one of the early towpath walks (got my dog sponsored, but he refused to walk on his own) and felt that we would never see full restoration, but as everyone involved were nice people and incredibly enthusiastic, I would stay for the ride. And as everyone knows that enthusiasm has paid off with the certainty of full restoration early in the next century.

I came on to Council when Hazel resigned as Festivals Officer. As we decided to give our profits from the Ashton Festival to the newly formed Tameside Canals Company I was invited to become a founder director of that company and stayed with it when it became HCS Restoration Limited. Everyone on Council or its sub committees are volunteers, but we have a dedicated and highly professional staff as back up, providing the services that we are unable to

perform with full time jobs.

You cannot be as involved as I am without family approval. My wife has been on the Tameside Festival Committee for some years and this year she is in charge of 'loos and litter'. My daughter Fiona, came on to Council as Sales Officer until the demands of a growing family curtailed her activities! My Grandson was at one time the youngest member of the society.

I am on the list of members who will give talks on the Canal and the Restoration to outside bodies - the ones I enjoy are the Ladies Circle type where the audience is entirely female! The ones I enjoy least are the erudite historical gatherings where their members know a lot more than me (It's not difficult! Ed. *He wrote that for me!*) and like to ask tortuous questions.

Provided my wind and legs last out I will be winding away at some of the lock gates for that first boat to make the complete passage since 1948!

Brian Minor



40th Wedding Anniversary gathering, left to right, Fiona & Naomi, Stuart, Anne & George and Yours Truly.

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# forty years of canals

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## **Surely it can't be that long?**

**My interest in canals was started by my parents' joys of a Sunday afternoon walk along the canal - living in north west London that was inevitably along the Grand Union in the Watford/Rickmansworth area. I recall that I took an old exercise book and made a linear map which we marked off as we walked along the various sections. We never did make Bulls Bridge - but that's another story. My father also obtained a copy of Rolt's 'Inland Waterways of England' - surely should include 'Wales' in the title? - and I used to enjoy the photographs - especially one of a scene showing the entrance to Standedge Tunnel at Marsden.**

When I moved to Yorkshire for my first job, it was therefore not surprising that I should seek out the scene for myself. I soon found myself amazed that a canal abandoned for some thirty years should look to be in such excellent repair. Memories of the heavily eroded banks of the Grand Union (still in regular commercial use at the time) made it difficult to see why the canal was not used. My walk took me to Marsden station to see the destruction wrought upon lock 42E and then the others - many with walls broken down and all totally unusable and almost unrecognisable as locks.

The actual order of events from then is slightly confused. We found ourselves at Sowerby Bridge Boat Rally (I don't think they were 'festivals' in those days) and I joined the Peak Forest Canal Society. I assume I must already have been a member of IWA - perhaps following my first boating holiday on the Fens in 1970. At that time, PFCS was busy working on both Ashton and Lower Peak Forest Canals and I took a small part in some of the works to bring the Cheshire Ring back into use. It was however a note from Margaret Sinfield - then Chairman of IWA (West Riding) branch that really began

the rebirth of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal. There were already moves afoot to re-open the Rochdale - Margaret's note basically asked whether there was any support for a campaign for the other derelict trans-Pennine Canal.

She managed to bring together John Maynard (first HCS Chairman), the late Ralph Kirkham (Chair of Calder Navigation Society) herself and me to a meeting on the converted Yorkshire Keel 'Elizabeth' moored in Aspley Basin. By this time I had obtained large scale maps of the canal and had walked most of it so I knew the extent of the problems.

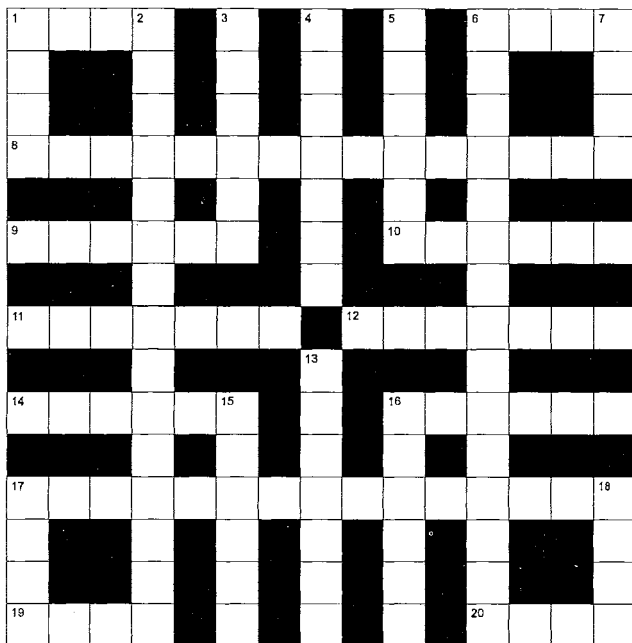
By this time, the restoration of the Peak Forest was reaching a conclusion and there was a suggestion that there might be enough support from there to continue restoration efforts across the Pennines. A meeting was called and as is recorded elsewhere, the meeting room was nowhere near big enough to fit all the people who wished to be involved.

I seem to recall suggesting that the work could be completed in 10 years - a slight underestimate but at least it is being done. I am to claim my meal from one sceptic (in the George Hotel Huddersfield) when the section from Aspley to Marsden re-opens.

In the meantime I watch the project with interest and envy - I wish I could be there to be involved as the project comes to fruition. Heartiest congratulations to those of you who have helped to bring my dream to reality.

Bob Dewey

# canal crossword - 20



## ACROSS

1. Town on the River Bure famous for lace? (4)
6. Mate of a contributor to the Tyne (4)
8. The French females in a subterranean lake on the Llangollen! (9,6)
9. An area where the waterways are definitely not narrow! (6)
10. Spot on mid-day make a right turn by a priory on the Bridgewater canal (6)
11. Cowardly lock on the Rufford branch of the L & L (7)
12. Wherein to find Northgate locks (7)
14. Rugby League player initially grateful for BUPA cover having injured himself handling coarse sacking (6)
16. T & M apart one could sail past Trumpton on the G & S (6)

17. Formerly the only place on the Lancaster to get a lift (10,5)
19. L & L town specialising in interment? (4)
20. In Bonsai lies the secret of wind power (4)

## DOWN

1. 'E', an atmospheric Yorkshire river (4)
2. Really coil scree at mines on the Dearne and Dove canal (7,8)
3. Mrs. Thatcher, in Grantham, establishes a capital river (6)
4. Polly's Devonian river? (7)
5. Not limousine reversing on the Caldron canal (6)
6. GU water sources (5,10)
7. Lion attack suffered whilst hammering in oakum? (4)
13. Area of the BCN where Mikron Theatre moor regularly? (7)
15. Asthmatic Scottish coaster (6)
16. Lair of a bear found canalside leaving Leeds? (6)
17. Atom bomb found at 19A? (4)
18. In Honolulu assess the clue to a regressive G & S junction (4)

*The solution to this crossword is given on the inside back page.*



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# boat trip & crew news

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***In response to the Editor's challenge in the last edition of PLINK, here is some up to date information about the Society's three public trip boats, crews and skippers.***

The purpose in having trip boats is to use them as the Society's shop window, to draw attention to restored sections of waterway and our aim to completely restore the Huddersfield Narrow Canal. They are also an ideal vehicle for recruiting new members to the Society, as passengers become a captive audience for at least half an hour so cannot escape our commentaries and sales patter!

The chartered trips, in particular, are used for passengers to take in our canal heritage in addition to soaking up the therapeutic qualities that only a canal boat trip can give. The regular use of the boats also helps to keep channels navigable whilst we wait for the day when there will be through traffic!

## **BOATS**

The Society currently has three steel narrow boats, all of which operate on Bank Holidays, Saturday and Sunday afternoons in the boating season, plus weekdays for chartered bookings.

The 23 foot Oldham Otter, currently secured at Portland Basin, Ashton-under-Lyne, but destined for the Oldham section this Spring, is ideal as a 'starter boat' for inexperienced crew or those who find the larger boats heavy to handle. Being completely enclosed, it is also an ideal winter boat and is kept running out of season where there is a demand from the public.

The 54 foot Greater Manchester, also at Ashton, is our oldest boat, built by Birkenhead shipyard apprentices, hence it handles like a battleship! Although hard to set up due to it having canvas sides which have to be rolled up, passengers do enjoy the forward facing outlook as they cruise on this open-sided 33-seater hulk of a narrow boat.

Over the Pennines at Tunnel End is our newest boat, the Standedge Pioneer, a tug and butty forming a 70 foot narrow boat when linked together. In preparation for the Standedge Experience, this 50-seater craft conveys passengers on the beautiful half mile stretch between Marsden Railway station and the Tunnel End Visitor Centre. Being unable to turn round, the push tug is disconnected at each end and re-linked by the use of straps with ratchet handles which take up the slack and make the two sections effectively into one rigid craft.

## **CREWS & SKIPPERS**

We currently have as many as 60 active crew members to operate the three boats, but bearing in mind that we usually operate with a crew of three on each boat (or even four on the Pioneer) we can be fully stretched to find crew for all three boats, particularly on Bank Holiday weekends in summer. Trainees are teamed up with more experienced crew members and the Greater Manchester and the Standedge Pioneer must by law be skippered by a Licensed Boatmaster who has qualified by taking a test of competence under the Marine Safety Agency regulations.

There are presently 23 Licensed Boatmasters available to skipper the craft, three of whom are female, despite the official title. Each year, a few crew members, who have shown sufficient commitment and gained enough experience, are selected to train for and take the official test which includes first aid, tying of knots and a theoretical test as well as being required to give the examiner a safe and competent half hour cruise in whatever weather conditions are prevailing (except in winds of Force 6 or above, in which public trips are prohibited!).

## **TRIBUTE TO PETER WRIGHT**

A special mention must be made of Peter Wright who, although not at all well,

notched up most cruising hours last year, always making himself available, particularly at short notice, for the many mid-week charter trips as well as the normal weekend workings. Peter has since died and will be much missed by his fellow members on the boat crews.

Finally, for details of our Spring Social Trips for crew members and Taster Trips for potential crew, please contact me, Allan Knott, on 0160 366 9554.

*(Obituary to Peter Wright is on page 11. Ed.)*

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***We hear a lot these days about "Fly on the Wall" documentaries on TV. We are unlikely to be featured there (even though we can beat some of their newly famous characters hands down!) So here is a chance to peep in at what goes on behind the scenes in the trip boat operations.***

I wish to welcome the 12 new recruits and thank the rest of you for all the time you have put into operating the HCS trip boats during 1997 and especially those who have carried out painting and maintenance tasks to keep the boats running. It needs to be made clear that we do not have a posse of little handy-men with boats! Please therefore, if you see a job that needs doing, and can do it yourself, let Gerald, myself or Frank at the office know about it (0161 339 1332) and we can arrange remuneration for any minor items purchased to solve the problem. Also check that the boat is not out on a trip at the time you wish to make repairs!

Regrettably, the jobs that are often neglected are sweeping out and mopping the boats, clearing the prop and removing rubbish. Some charter trips on the Greater Manchester have been delayed due to a fouled up prop. As there is no council bin at Portland Basin, the best thing is to place the rubbish in a poly bag and put it in your own wheelie-bin back home, also please DO NOT OVER-TIGHTEN weedhatch and ropes etc. Additionally, it has been necessary to increase charges slightly, so that general fares on *all boats* are now £1.50 for adults, 75p children, and £1.00 for O.A.P's. Party

booking fares vary between boats. Greater Manchester is based on £30 per hour (after discount for schools) and Standedge Pioneer is £25.00 for the return trip (whichever the smaller amount).

It is anticipated that the Oldham Otter will be moved to Mossley (adjacent to the builders' yard) later this year. Unfortunately, initial movement will be limited as B.W. need to effect repairs on the up-stream locks to enable us to cruise up to Roaches etc. Although tourist traffic is not expected to be great, it will be a useful vessel to help to train new crews.

The future operation of the 'Standedge Pioneer' during restoration work on the tunnel is uncertain at the moment until B.W. have decided how they are going to tackle the job. Obviously water supply, or the lack of it, will be the governing factor. Current thinking is to remove all the debris/silt from the tunnel and at the same time permanently reduce the water level in the top pound by 9-12 inches. This will affect navigational depth, and, therefore, will require additional dredging which may help us to get the boat into the side. Depending on where they cut the water off will ultimately decide on our operation base.

Regarding the replacement boat for 'Greater Manchester', the Canal Boat Trust are still keen on the idea, however, the timing is dependent upon the completion date of the new heritage/visitor centre at Portland Basin. Once a date is set, the Society will negotiate with the Trust about a replacement.

Allan Knott, Boat Crew Officer



Standedge Pioneer at Marsden. Photo: F.Smith

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## what the papers say

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*A much reduced bunch, this time, probably due to the state of limbo restoration is in during this waiting period. As usual the Oldham Evening Chronicle (plus one from Oldham M.B.'s own publicity handout) get all the credit - although even they have had to rely on Pennine Link for half their material. Still, it's a nice relationship! In the Chron's "Northern Scrapbook" for 31st December, 1997 John Gaunt looked forward to items of interest in 1998. Out of three very special events in Oldham's 1998 was the start of the final push on Huddersfield Narrow Canal. Great! Ed.*

*I shouldn't have spoken! No sooner had I put the above on disk and packed it off to Bob exactly on Press Date (9th. Feb) than a whole avalanche of stuff hit the "Chron" and "North West Tonight", on BBC TV, about the Rochdale Canal Millennium Bid. Seems like it could be very bad news, but with yet more extended deadlines, hopefully.*

*No space for the Rochdale news here, but read the Chairman's report for the latest position.*

*There were also some more usual "newsy" items so they are here, for your information.*

### Canal 'is threat to village access'

**Careful planning to ensure Uppermill is not cut off by canal restoration has been called for by Councillor Chris Davies.**

Bridge works are needed at both ends of the village and he fears the village could face massive traffic disruptions.

Councillor Davies has been told that Oldham's Director of Environmental Services, Les Coop, would like to begin the Wool Road, Dobcross, scheme in spring next year, with the bridge at Wade Lock in High Street perhaps starting later in the year.

But the actual dates are subject to detailed discussions with the funding agencies and the other partners involved in the millennium bid, which has guaranteed the canal's restoration.

Mr. Coop is said to be fully aware of the concerns of local councillors, residents and businesses, regarding potential disruption.

Detailed design work is progressing on the two projects, which will need planning permission.

*"This reply does not remove my concerns," said Councillor Davies. "I hope the Director of Technical Services will plan carefully."*

While Railtrack might re-open the redundant rail tunnels at Stanedge (sic), Councillor Davies has also been told it will not affect canal restoration.

British Waterways has agreed the key principles for using the rail tunnels for access during restoration, and if the Railtrack scheme goes ahead it is likely to take some time to implement.

**Oldham Evening Chronicle 11.11.97**

### Canal openings will benefit districts

Saddleworth, Failsworth, Hollinwood and Chadderton will be the main beneficiaries of the ambitious Huddersfield Canal and Rochdale Canal restoration projects following the signing of agreements for £27 million of funding from the Millennium Commission.

The completion of the Huddersfield Canal scheme by the end of the year 2000 and the Rochdale Canal project about a year later is expected to create over 300 new jobs for Oldham.

Most of these will be in the expanded tourism and leisure markets that will come about from the re-opening of the two historic waterways. The Huddersfield Canal project will re-open the waterway between Ashton-under-Lyne and Huddersfield including the sections in Saddleworth and the Standedge Tunnel.

In addition to the £14.85 million funding from the Millennium Commission, English Partnerships will contribute £12 million.

The Rochdale Canal scheme involves 32 miles of waterway between Manchester and Calderdale, including stretches through Failsworth, Hollinwood and Chadderton.

The £12 million secured from the Commission represents about half the total required to complete the scheme.

**Oldham M.B. News No.10  
December '97**

The always-readable (even when they have a dig at me for minor inaccuracies) "Pennine Link", magazine of the Huddersfield Canal Society, reminds me of an item that appeared in the highbrow people's daily, the Independent, which gives me a chance to have a go at national newspapers for *major* inaccuracies.

The plan announced by Railtrack in late October - that the railway tunnels at Stanedge (sic) might be re-opened to cope with the supposed boom in railway freight - led to the nationals kicking their graphic artists to life for illustrations.

The result, in the Independent, showed four tunnels through the hills between Oldham and Marsden, one of which was marked "waterlogged". You guessed it: *that was the canal tunnel ...!*

Actually I think I would be more worried that Railtrack, which presumably supplied the details for the paper to draw, might have that legend marked on its plan drawings. I mean, you would think they would know ...

**Oldham Evening Chronicle  
Northern Scrapbook 23.12.97**

## Canal project boosts economy

Restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal will be a major boost to the economy in Oldham, Tameside and Kirklees, creating around 2,000 jobs and bringing many historic buildings back into use.

The £30 million project will also create an attractive area for visitors and people using the canal, and improve the environment along its length, says the first news sheet produced by the Huddersfield Canal Company.

The company was formed in May last year, following the award of £15 million from the Millennium Commission and £12 million from English Partnerships, to set the direction of work and monitor progress, under the guidance of project director Alan Stopher.

Each of the five partners in the company - British Waterways, the Huddersfield Canal Society, Oldham, Tameside and Kirklees councils - has contributed to the funding and has two representatives on the board, who give their time voluntarily.

The company aims to see the canal fully navigable by the end of 2000 and will ensure it is maintained to cruising standard until at least the year 2125.

Twenty blockages still exist on the 20-mile-long canal, which has already been restored over three-quarters of its length. Within Saddleworth these include blockages at Wool Road, Dobcross; Wade Lock, Uppermill; and Stanedge (sic) Tunnel, which runs from Diggle beneath the Pennines to Marsden.

**Oldham Evening Chronicle 22.1.98**

## Wrong place, right shot

Just to show you that the highest principles of fairness and honour are not lost in 1998, I print this section-winning photograph from a recent competition organised by the Huddersfield Canal Society.

The shot of a bridge on the Lancaster Canal drew high praise from judge Geoffrey Hope of Oldham Photographic Society, who spoke of its "*beautiful composition, exceptional sharpness and perfect exposure*", and that its photographer had "*artistic flair and is a natural photographer*".

This was slightly embarrassing for Ken Wright of Dobcross - editor of "Pennine Link", the society's award-winning magazine, which published the competition winners' entries and results.

For the naturally gifted photographer of foreign canals (i.e. not the one they are concerned with restoring), is none other than his wife Anne, who also adds canal boat driving, navigation, writing, singing and acting to her talents!

Anne has been writing a regular journal of canal boat cruising life, "The Wife's Tale" in the magazine for years and this picture was snapped during one of the couple's excursions.

"*My penance for allowing the win to happen will be having to live with her,*" joked Ken. "*she is going to be insufferable after reading the judge's comments.*"

**Oldham Evening Chronicle  
Northern Scrapbook 6.1.98**

## SID IS ON COURSE TO RAISE FUNDS FOR CHARITY

DINERS won't be sick when Sid the Parrot is offered as an extra "course" at a special Saddleworth charity event next month.

Sid, who with owner Trevor James was a big hit at the Royal Variety Performance at the London Palladium, will be on the menu when Councillor John Hudson stages dinner and cabaret, at Greenfield Conservative Club, on March 26, to raise funds for the Saddleworth Canal Festival, in July.

*"Trevor and Sid went down very well at the Palladium and are much in demand,"* said Councillor Hudson, who is president of the festival committee.

### Quality

*"Staging the festival is expensive and I am looking for a sell-out event."*

Festival chairman John Wilson believes the event, on July 25 and 26, will be the best yet.

*"We are opting for top-class quality, but it costs and we are glad of John's practical help,"* he said.

Tickets for the cabaret, which has a limit of 90, are available from Councillor Hudson on 01457 870143.

**Oldham Evening Chronicle 10.2.98**

*Don't rush to ring John.  
He sold out in no time! Ed.*

## CANAL RECORDS SET TO FALL

**ROCHDALE canal might be having problems over finances at the moment, but on the Huddersfield Canal, everything is at the moment extremely unruffled.**

Which will probably be more than adequately reflected at this year's Tameside Canals Festival at Portland Basin in July. It is the 21st birthday of the festival and there is plenty to celebrate, not least the progress of the canal's restoration.

The organisers expect record-breaking crowds - the current record is 10,000 - and more boats than the existing tally of 100.

First held in 1978, and every July since (Usually rainy, but I don't think they choose the date for that feature, exactly), the festival is a tremendously popular event with boaters and supporters alike, and is the biggest regular event of its kind in the North.

This year the event will actually be surpassed by the National Waterways Festival at Salford Quays in August, which expects at least five times as many boats and up to 10 times as many visitors - but that will be the national's first visit in 10 years.

The Tameside event sees some changes this year, mainly in the absence, for the first time, of CAMRA behind the bar at the beer tent. This year the festival organisers will be running the show.

*"We are confident that the records will fall this year,"* said spokesman Brian Minor.

**Oldham Evening Chronicle  
Northern Scrapbook 10.2.98**

## WATERWAYS BASE OFFICIALLY OPENED

BRITISH Waterways chief executive David Fletcher has officially opened the organisation's new offices beside the Huddersfield Canal, at Marsden.

The premises will play a vital part in the £31.1 million restoration of the canal, providing a base for a complex programme of engineering works.

They are situated at the eastern end of the Stanedge (sic) Tunnel - the longest, highest, deepest in the country - which takes the waterway through the Pennines.

The tunnel is the centre-piece of the restoration and will form a major attraction for visitors, by boat or land, and will become one of the focal points on the 2,000-mile network of inland waterways.

**Oldham Evening Chronicle 11.2.98**

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# the canal harwoods & waterways index

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**Those of you who have been following the excerpts from Tom Rolt's "Narrow Boat" closely will recall the photograph on page 39 in issue 122 of "Mr. Harwood on Searchlight at Banbury" and the paragraph alongside "... I looked on one evening while he dextrously fitted a new key spring to a melodeon belonging to John Harwood of the 'Searchlight'".**

Was it pure coincidence, I wondered, that our crossword compiler and writer of various articles on canal history and canalside walks was also John Harwood?

It appears that John had wondered himself if he were related to that famous "No.1" boatman. ("No.1"s were owner/operators of boats and the elite of the canal system towards the end of its heyday).

So far he has managed to trace the following Harwoods who had canal connections:-

Henry Harwood of Stourport who had a daughter in 1830.

William Harwood of Birmingham who had a daughter baptised in 1844

John Harwood who was master of a Severn Trow "Abbey" built in 1744.

John H. Harwood who worked the boat "Searchlight" for Coventry Canal Co. - the boat being re-registered as "Raleigh" in 1948 for S.E. Barlow and Co. This should be the man referred to in "Narrow Boat". Rolt has him retired in 1944, which could account for the boat's eventual sale and change of name.

*Our John Harwood can establish no family connections with any of the above but perhaps you can! After all, Harwood is not a particularly common name. Any information that can help John in his search will be most welcome. Give me a call or write to me. And your information could also help the Inland Waterway Index. Keep reading! Ed.*

**THE WATERWAY INDEX was started in 1979 by the late Mrs. Ethel Bingham who was unable to locate the baptism of her Great Grandfather Joseph Millard born in 1841 in London but, it appears, not registered.**

It now contains about 10,000 slips which have references to persons who had (or have)

connections with the canals and navigable rivers in the United Kingdom i.e. those with occupations given in records as boatman, waterman, flatman, boatbuilder, lock-keeper, toll-collector, canal or river company clerk, canal agent, boat owner, navigator (navvies), wharfinger etc., etc.

The majority of the information has and is still being sent in by fellow genealogists who have taken the time and trouble to extract details from their own family records or from census returns, parish registers etc. Items are therefore received from a wide variety of contributors and because there is an entry from a source it does not necessarily mean that all the references to that name or to the occupations have been extracted from that document or that the information has been correctly or fully copied. It must therefore be regarded very much as an aid i.e. as a pointer to the original records. No fee is required (although donations are very welcome). A 9" x 4" STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE will suffice and if possible information for inclusion in the index.

## **OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION UNIQUE TO WATERWAYS**

### **REGISTER OF BOATS AND BARGES - 1795.**

Inland waterway craft were required to be registered by the Clerk of the Peace from 1795. Registers are usually deposited at local record offices.

**PUBLIC HEALTH REGISTERS** - Kept under the Canal Boat Acts 1877 to 1884 and administered by the Local or Port Authority through whose district a canal or river navigation passed. The Acts were introduced to prevent overcrowding, and to improve living standards on the cabin boats. Boats with living accommodation had to be registered and were issued with a numbered certificate. The number together with the town was usually painted on the cabin side. These registers may be deposited at the local record office but some are still with the Authority concerned.

**GAUGING TABLES** - Kept by each Navigation Company showing details of a boats carrying capacity. Other details vary but they usually contain the owner's name and address. Registers may be at the National Waterways Museum, Llanthony Warehouse, Gloucester Docks, Gloucester GL1 2EL.

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# the boatmaster

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## A View from the other side of the Towpath ...

Time 9.30am. I jump out of bed as the alarm goes off. Is that the time? Drat, late again!

Dressing rapidly and rushing down the stairs I hastily jump into my trainers, nearly falling headlong over the dog, and rush out of the front door. Hang on ... Isn't it Sunday, day of rest an' all that? Who the heck set the alarm for that time??

As my addled brain kicks into gear it dawns ... I did.... I'm boating today. Oh well, back indoors, pat the dog, on with the TV to check the weather and into the kitchen to put the kettle on.

One sumptuous boating type breakfast later (the usual soggy toast and marmalade), weather checked as bright and sunny, bag packed with towel, butties and hot flask of tea - we're off.(Thank the Maker for loving wives).

Time 10.45am. Out of the avenue onto the main road, seat belt on, radio on, wipers on, lights on.

HANG ON!! So much for Ceefax and bright and sunny. Mind you it is June and we did have those two sunny days last week. Oh well, back to business. Let's see, my crew are Ian and Ted; both know the ropes and we've got the 'Little Mailard' a trim little craft, twenty foot long twelve seater, built in the traditional narrowboat style with access fore and aft. Known to one and all as the floating bathtub because it handles just like one. Mind you, it does have a certain character but it eludes me for now.

Time 11.00am. Arrive at the dock, grab the gear and boat keys, lock the car and stroll nautically over to the dock gates. (You know that drunken type of swagger sailors do). Trying hard to put on a smile.

Only to be met with "Hi, skipper, you're late this morning, thought you weren't coming, been here ages." Boy how I hate keen crew. We don't start sailing until noon.

Time 11.45am. Boat all ship- shape (whatever that means; must look it up someday). All checks done, crew briefed and Ian elected to be first on tiller (That should dampen his spirits, mind you, he seemed to like the idea.). Meanwhile Ted has been despatched to set up the information boards and the boarding notice. Things are coming together nicely. "Right, Ian, take her over to the moorings - I've let go forward." Just time for a brew I think. Now where did I put that flask?

Time Noon. Do you know I love this job, sat here in the nice dry cabin sipping tea, the soft lapping of the water against the hull, the ducks gently floating past outside the window, the scream of an over- revved outboard motor What the? ... "Heads up skipper, some moron with a yacht coming " Ian yells. (He never was one for craft identification). Up on deck to find a little 14' Cruiser zigzagging wildly across the canal scattering ducks and geese all over the place. (Quite frankly, I never knew ducks could move that fast).

Now there's a thing I didn't know. Ted is fluent in Anglo- Saxon and various forms of semaphore. Mind you I must ask him what that last one was, not familiar with it at all; oh, well, you live and learn.

"OK lads. Ian check the top, Ted check the mooring pins, I'll check inside. Oh, no! not my brew! Drat, where's the mop."

Time 12.30pm. First customers of the day - Mum, Dad and Junior, a lovely little lad around six who keeps pestering Ted to show him Rosie and Jim. (! just hope Ted doesn't try and teach him Anglo-Saxon.). Also on board - three lovely pensioners who remember the canal in its heyday. They must be all over one hundred, as the canal system in this area has not seen commercial traffic in over sixty years, but hey, what the heck, who am I to disagree with three lovely old ladies. And as if that is not enough to make you want to abandon ship the sun has come out and it's getting quite warm.... I just can't win.

Time 1.15pm. T-shirt time. The temperature is soaring; maybe the weatherman was right after all.

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cont'd from page 41 ....

### BRITISH TRANSPORT HISTORICAL RECORDS

- A collection of documents, canal company minute books, maps etc., etc.- kept at the Public Record Office, Kew, London.

You can contact the 'Index' at

**INLAND WATERWAY INDEX**  
**52 ST. ANDREWS ROAD,**  
**SUTTON COLDFIELD,**  
**WEST MIDLANDS B75 6UH**

Ted's turn to take the tiller. On board a party of ten screaming kids. Me and my BIG mouth.....

It's like this; Dad turns up with two kids. "How much is it?" he asks. " £1.50p for adults, 75p for children, sir" I reply. "Do the kids need to be accompanied by a parent?" he enquires." Not necessarily, sir " I reply. At this Dad yells to his mates and we end up babysitting ten kids whilst Dad and pals disappear up the pub for half an hour... Like I said, me and my big mouth!

Time 2.00pm. Limped back into the mooring with fouled prop; finally got rid of the kids after convincing them we needed the life rings more than they did. Poor Ian, there is something about him and children. It must be his Rosie and Jim T- shirt, or it could be that he let them sit on the bow? Hmm.

Hello, Ted's doing a lot of cursing down the weed hatch. Seems his Anglo-Saxon is improving.

Time 2.45pm. Brew time, a steaming cup of tea and a ham sandwich. Ian's gone off up the towpath looking for a fisherman; seems he wants to return his hook, line and sinker that he found wrapped around the prop. (Wonder why he took the windlass?)

Meanwhile Ted's looking at the polythene sack he and I removed from the prop. It seems he is thinking of suing the builders' merchant who supplied it as it says in bold letters 'Biggit & Bung Builders. Easy Remove Cover. It comes off easily to give YOU more time.' (Hope they speak Anglo-Saxon!)

Ah, here comes Ian, he looks happy, and we have more passengers. Oh, Joy!

Time 3.00pm. My turn on the tiller. It seems Ian found the angler concerned and taught him how to tie knots and fix his net so that his line wouldn't slip again. (At least, that's what I think he meant. He said he'd told him to "get knotted and stitch that"). Either way we decided that it would be for the best if we took a different route this trip.

So it was that with a full boat we set off towards the tunnel under the local supermarket. Lights on , a long blast on the horn and in we go ... OOOH! ECHOO! WHEEE! WHOOWOO! "Ian, calm those kids down will you. I can hardly hear myself think up here." "What kids, Skip, we ain't got any on board this trip." OOPS, well we're all big kids at heart, aren't we? I'll just turn the lights out for a bit.

Out of the other end we emerge - another toot on the horn as we prepare to enter a rather tricky narrow round the next bend. Lined up perfectly. Oh, I'm good, me. If I carry on like this I'll need a bigger hat.

Ease her round the bend, line up for the narrow, back

on the throttle, only a foot clearance here, perfect, just absolutely ... screech, grind, screee, clunk, THUD! What the....? "Ian, you see anything? Ted, anything up front?" Great, that's ALL I need. Think, man, think. Calm the passengers, check for breaches, check for leaks, grab a raincoat. OH, GREAT! What else can go wrong? Why me, Lord, WHY ME?

Time 3.45pm. Finally got clear of the narrow, absolutely saturated, mind you so are Ted and Ian. Along with three passengers. (Seems we might have three new additions to our boating team soon).

The offending obstruction now takes pride of place on the bow as we wind and make our way through the narrows back to the moorings. Any one want a slightly dented supermarket trolley? I wonder, if we take it back, will they refund the deposit? The joys of boating - don't you just love it?

I just wish this rain would ease off. Even my precious cigarettes are wet through.

Time 4.30pm. Think I'll write to the BBC and complain about their weather forecasters. You've heard the saying "Lovely weather for ducks!" Well, even the ruddy ducks are sheltering from this rain!

And to make matters worse, I've run out of tea. "Right, lads, lets put her to bed ... it's whose turn to do the weed hatch ?\*~&%!"

Time 5.15pm. Captain's log; Star Date 68 ... Oops, really must lay off those Star Trek videos. Oh well, weed hatch not so bad, just a few weeds - yes, weeds - you know that must be worth a mention in the log.

All hatches battened, locks locked and moorings moored, vote of thanks to the crew - they played a belter. (That's a boating term for 'Were very competent') Takings counted and surprisingly plentiful.

All things considered not a bad day. Still, glad to be heading home. I'm absolutely wet through. "Night Ian, 'Night Ted. Thanks a lot for the help. See you next time."

Lock the dock gates, squelch over to the car, fling the soggy bag into the boot then open the door and slip into the driver's seat. Ah, dry at last. Not been a bad day at all. Made a change from my usual hectic working life. Yep, it was worth it, roll on the next boating day.

Key in the ignition. Whirr, click, click. Oh, sugar! I forgot to turn the lights off this morning...

"IAN ... TED... ANY CHANCE OF A PUSH LADS? EH? EH? IAN? (There's that signal again. Hmm!)

John Wilson



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# letters to the editor

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## Photo Competition et al

Dear Ken,

Thank you for returning my entries to last year's competition. The judge's comments were greatly appreciated - a real confidence booster to an amateur such as myself, and if you plan to run the comp. again, I shall hope to re-enter as I'm usually snapping (mostly) local scenes through the seasons and it will be worth entering just for the helpful criticism, let alone the possible bonus of a prize. (Apart from winning the Northern Schools' Latin Verse Speaking Competition (circa 1955) this, as far as I can recall, is the first time I've won ANYTHING!)

Please feel free to use the original if the society thinks it would be suitable for a Xmas card/ calendar etc., but an acknowledgement to "Marsden Home Hostel" would be appreciated and I assume there would be no objection to it being submitted to Y.T.V.'s weather caption photo-file. (The success has gone to my head!)

Whilst on the subject of photos I wonder if you could find out for me the date of the aerial photo of our neighbourhood and the Old Goods Yard Marsden - part of the run which you advertised in "Pennine Link" - which we have on display in what will soon be the Common Room-cum-Dining Room of our "home hostel". Any other info. which you have to hand regarding the photo which would be of interest to guests would also be appreciated.

I hope "P.L." will be interested in the plans of our local residents' association (Smithy Holme And Grange Estate Residents' Association, Marsden) to hold a "regatta" using the facilities at Marsden Band club and the canal (and Sparth Res?) on Sunday 31st May, '98. Discussion with B.W. and Kirklees Recreation Dept. about this are underway.

So call in here, Ken, when you're 'over the top' - Heulwen and I are at home most of the time putting the finishing touches to our B & B which we hope to be ready to open in the next 10-14 days. As Editor of such a prestigious magazine we'd be glad to offer you a complimentary sauna session!

Kind Regards,

John Goodall, Marsden.

*I must bear that tempting invitation in mind. And, if you are intrigued by the references to the "Marsden Home Hostel", see their advert in the Summer Edition. News about the future of the Photo Competition is on page 46. Information about the photo supplied by the office. Ed.*

## Sorting out the Projects

Dear Ken,

Looking at the centre-spread of Issue 123 giving details of "The remaining blockages - Winter 1997", I was struck by the fact that well over half of the 18 projects show a 1997 "Start Date" in the text, but are not shown as "Project Started" using the symbols at the foot of the page. This is at December 1997 when Issue 123 arrived.

Readers could therefore perhaps be forgiven for wondering how the canal will achieve "Year 2000 fully open" target when apparently over half the remaining schemes are behind schedule with barely 3 years to go!

However it is clear from other reports etc. that even where the "Project Started" symbol is not yet appropriate, most if not all the schemes involved are at planning or "tendering" stage. So perhaps instead of "Project Scheduled" and "Project Started" symbols, these should be "Project in Planning/Tendering" (or similar), and "Construction Started", to give a clearer indication of progress?

I remain a firm supporter of the H.C.S., and wish the entire project every success, through to the full re-opening and beyond.

Yours sincerely,

Ray Smith, Mossley

*Ray is absolutely right! The centre-fold map, as published in Pennine Link 123 looked quite silly, with start dates as early as "first quarter 1997" and not a single "thermometer" showing anything. The "start" dates referred to were selected from a programme which, in the case of schemes with a long lead-in time, was the start of survey and design work. We are revising the whole thing this time - including renumbering all the schemes to tie in with the numbering system used by Huddersfield Canal Company and all the other partners! Just to confuse you completely.*

*Ray also had some complaints about the communication system relating to new volunteers and, hopefully, that has been sorted out. Ed.*

## Canal Walk Observation

Dear Ken,

Further to the Canal Walks 2 & 3 published in Plink 123, perusal of the top right of the diagram on p.20 shows an indent in the Ship Canal bank, like a winding hole. This is the tail end of Barton Lock (5'-9" fall) on the earlier Mersey & Irwell Navigation. A weir ran across the River Irwell, before it was renamed the Ship Canal, just upstream of the present machinery island.

Note also that the road bridge can swing either way, but because of its specially shaped ends, the aqueduct cannot.

Yours sincerely,

Geoff Wheat, Leeds.

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## Official Re-openings

Dear Ken,

I wondered whether the enclosed ramblings might be of any use if you ever need to fill a gap in PLINK? I would love to come to some of the official re-openings of bridges etc. as they happen - is there a diary somewhere?

Thoroughly enjoy reading the magazine; if there is anything I can do to help, please do let me know.

Bob Dewey, Flint.

*Bob, as many of you will know, was one of the few at the inaugural meeting of the Society in 1974 and was the Society's first secretary. He was a very active member until he emigrated to Wales.*

*Thanks for your continued interest, Bob. I'm sure Frank will let you know if you can help in any way. In the meantime - keep writing!*

*It will always be difficult to inform people of "openings" - but we will try! Bob's article "40 Years of Canals" is elsewhere. Ed.*

---

## Questions of Restoration

Dear Ken,

I am always interested in the centre supplement of PLINK, but the dates given often seem to be more fiction than fact and sometimes are contradicted by other dates given in the magazine. Check dates carefully - e.g. High Street, Uppermill says start date FIRST QUARTER 1997. Does this mean design work?

Could you please give details in the magazine about the leaks at Lock 9E and near Scout Tunnel. How are these leaks going to be stopped? Timescale?

When will Scout Tunnel be open again? I often have visitors from abroad and a trip through Scout Tunnel is an interesting experience for them!!

Now that dredgings have to go through 3 locks how many loads can be dealt with daily? Is the amount determined by the time for each load to be collected or by the water flow?

Is it worth writing to English Nature about restrictions they seem to be putting on the restoration or will it antagonise them?

Yours sincerely,

Joseph Yeomans, South Reddish, STOCKPORT

*The answers to Joseph's letters are usually longer than the letters are! Here goes!*

*We are well aware of the confusion over the way the dates were displayed in the centre-fold of Issue 123 and we hope that you notice a considerable improvement this time. It must have been the Christmas spirit!*

*The leaks near Lock 9E and Scout Tunnel will be repaired by our gang while they are in the area. It is intended to empty the canal, clean out the silt, remove the clay lining, put down an impervious plastic lining and then replace the clay and the water. Sounds easy, but a very messy operation.*

*Scout Tunnel will not be re-opened until repair works have been carried out. These are likely to take the form of removing loose material from the roof and walls and then pointing the brickwork. The start will be soon after the adjacent works of dredging and leak repairs are completed. Work should take about six months.*

*The long haul of dredgings through three locks obviously has a serious affect on the "turn-round" time. The time to fill a hopper - half an hour - and the time to empty one - quarter of an hour - remain constant. The round journey trip varies enormously. This determines the number of loads per day but five or six is about the best we can expect at present. This makes for slow and expensive work, obviously. There is plenty of water at present, so that is no problem.*

*Our relationship with English Nature has always been good, even though their strict conditions often seem very frustrating when we want to plough on with the job. It is their involvement elsewhere in the country that is causing concern. Perhaps we ought to leave it to those concerned to do the arguing and keep our own fingers crossed! Ed.*

## Deutscher Boaters

Dear Ken,

P-Link 123 - Winter 1997 - another welcome and interesting issue of the quarterly journal. For us it is a good link to "our" society, good reading anyhow.

Very good the "Distaff Side" (Yes - why do have most hire-boats the kitchen in the front?) or "Festival dogsbody for hire" (are all Captains like that?). Very interesting also the "Wife's Tale".

Reading "Wife's Tale" I find repeated complaints about German boaters acting strange, specially when going through locks. This urges me to put pen to paper and to take a look from the other side.

First, I must admit that Gerhild (She) and I must not have looked very clever when we were boating first time in 1984, but we found fellow boaters most helpful and I think we do a lot better now. Second, from my experience, strange - or even rude - behaviour is not strictly confined to overseas visitors nor hireboat crews.

Canal-boating is advertised over here with the slogan "No boating licence required". At the end this often comes down to "no idea about boating required". The introduction at the boatyard is (as far as first-timers is concerned) not always adequate. This is no surprise: when

during high season several parties are waiting for the hand-over of the boat, there is rarely time for a comprehensive course in canal-boating. Next, just imagine an overseas visitor, equipped with schoolbook English (perhaps polished up during last winter's evening-class) is confronted with a boatyard-crew using lots of special "canal" - terms, and speaking in a local accent. At best only half of all explanations will be understood.

So, what am I trying to say - if you meet some overseas visitors boating and doing strange things, just take your time, be friendly and give them some advice. I think very few will be ignorant and, who knows, at the end you might even win a new society member.

Yours sincerely

Bernhard Weiss, Goch, Germany.

*Bernhard is our only German member - Goch is in western Germany, near the Dutch border. "The Wife's" comments about German boaters on the Lapworth Flight apply to other foreign (and, indeed, not so foreign!) tourists and Bernhard clearly explains why.*

*I think you should send a version of this letter to all the hire-boat yards, Bernhard. Thanks, anyway, for your valued comments, and keep on coming! Ed.*

### PHOTO COMPETITION 1998

In response to the enormous interest shown in last year's Competition we are having another one. Our judge has offered a decent prize and suggested that we have a small entrance fee per photo to provide better prizes and encourage competition. More details in the next issue but, in the meantime -

**GET SHOOTING!**

### VENUE WITH A DIFFERENCE!

**The historic Wool Road Transhipment Warehouse, scenically located on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, is an ideal venue for Meetings, Seminars and Community Groups.**

**Seating for up to 40 people.**

**For further details and bookings, please contact:**

**Ken Wright on 01457 873599**

A plea from the organisers of the Saddleworth Canal Festival for practical assistance from HCS members.

A change this year from the traditional May Bank holiday date. Instead, the festival will be on July 25th and 26th at the King George V Playing Fields, Uppermill, and the Transhipment Warehouse site.

# HELP

It's hoped to make the event the biggest and best yet and anybody willing to get involved on either of the two days (or both) is asked to contact the manning officer, Alan Siddall on 01457 820882, or a message can be left with Frank Smith at the HCS Offices in Ashton on 0161 339 1332.

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# new members & back issues

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## THE SOCIETY WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS:

- 2472 Mr Hare, [REDACTED]  
2473 Mr Braddock, [REDACTED]  
2474 Miss Mills, [REDACTED]  
2475 Miss Evans, [REDACTED]  
2476 Mr Rhodes, [REDACTED]  
2477 Mr Crookall, [REDACTED]  
2478 Miss Parkin, [REDACTED]  
2479 Mr Shorrocks, [REDACTED]  
2480 Mr Saxon, [REDACTED]  
2481 Mr Jones, [REDACTED]  
2482 Mr O'Loughlin, [REDACTED]  
2483 Mr & Mrs Lister, [REDACTED]

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## THE FOLLOWING BACK NUMBERS ARE AVAILABLE FREE FROM:

John Maynard, 29 Thick Hollins Drive, Meltham, Yorkshire.

*Please send an A5 size stamped, addressed envelope (38p)  
or A4 sized stamped (64p) for issues marked with an asterisk.*

24, 25, 38, 47, 48, 49, 54, 56, 58, 59, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68,  
74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81/82\*, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89,  
90, 91\*, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 99, 100\*, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105  
106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115,  
116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123

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

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## SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD NO. 20

### Across

1. Acle 6. Team 8. Ellesmere Tunnel 9. Broads 10. Norton 11. Chicken 12. Chester  
14. Burlap 16. Purton 17. Tewitfield Locks 19. Bury 20. Sail

### Down

1. Aire 2. Elsecar Colliery 3. Thames 4. Parrett 5. Milton 6. Tring Reservoirs 7. Maul  
13. Tyseley 15. Puffer 16. Pudsey 17. Tomb 18. Saul

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# coming soon

## WEST SIDE MEETINGS

- Wednesday 8th April      General Meeting at the Tollemache Arms, Mossley, 8.00pm.  
Wednesday 13th May      A guided tour of the Society Offices, meet at 239 Mossley Road, Ashton-u-Lyne at 7.30pm for 7.45pm.  
Wednesday 10th June      Out & About viewing the restoration works at Scout Green, meet at Grove Road at 7.30pm for 7.45pm.

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

Profile - Alec Ramsden  
Standedge Experience Storyline  
Canal Walk - Bugsworth Basin  
Canal Festivals Preview

.... plus all the regular features

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### COPY DATE

Articles, letters, etc., for Issue 125 of Pennine Link should reach the Editor by 11th May 1998

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