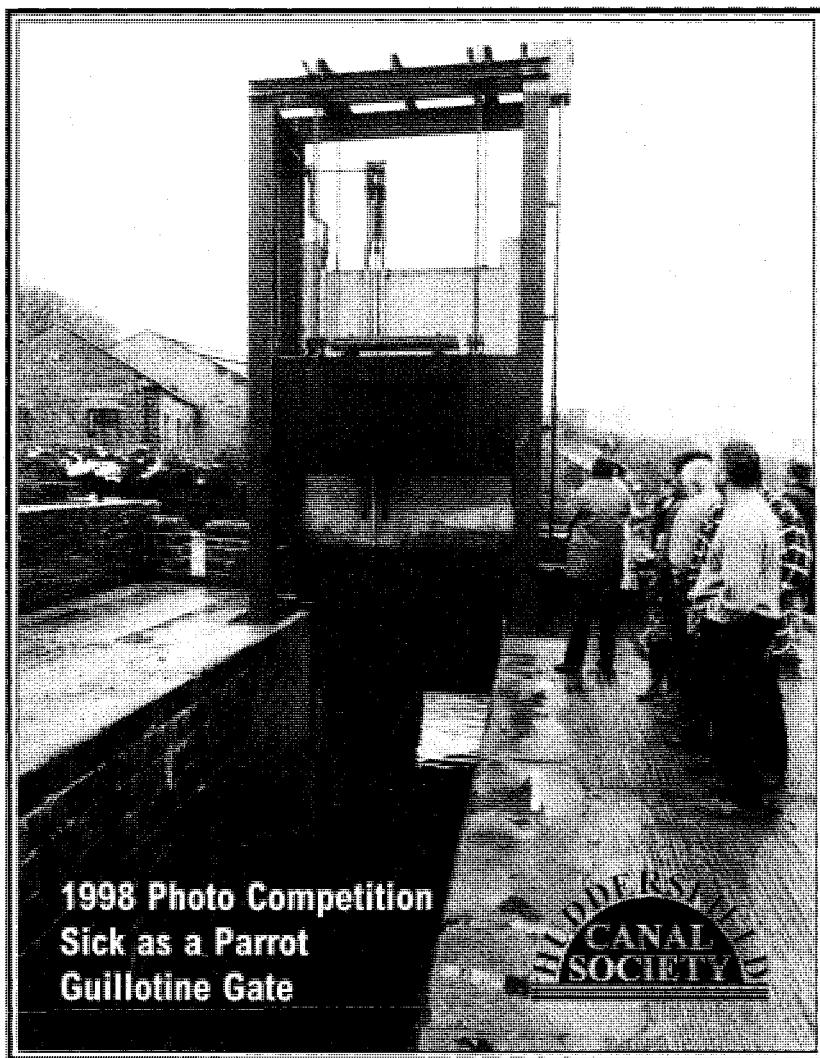


# Pennine Link

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The Journal of the Huddersfield Canal Society  
Issue No 125 Summer 1998



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Front Cover: The official commissioning of the guillotine gate at Lock 24E, Slaithwaite. Photo: R. Gough



Well, you did get Issue 124 eventually! Due to some problems at the printers it was even later than intended. And we *still*, at mid-May, haven't a clue what is happening about the Rochdale Canal. The press has been very

quiet, apart from one newsy article and another about problems with the Inquiry into the new development in Failsworth. This time you *will* get your copy on time (he says with fingers crossed!) and anybody else's problems can go hang!

Cycling on towpaths stays with us. Apart from a couple of items in "IWA News" this issue I also have to hand a Kirklees Council glossy entitled "Transport Package Proposals 1998/99", a consultation leaflet which tells us that, in Kirklees, policies are being developed to make cycling and walking more convenient by providing safe cycling networks ... Then there is nothing *except* little maps of Huddersfield (Narrow and Broad Canals) and Dewsbury (Calder and Hebble Navigation) and along each canal LITTLE RED BIKES indicating "future cycle measures". However, I am assured by Kirklees transportation planners (who I know as good, honest lads) that there are no funds for early work on the Narrow Canal and, if any schemes are proposed, they will

be only on lengths that are "appropriate" in terms of width and layout. I wonder what Oldham and Tameside say?

Writing this editorial coincides with Polling Day for local elections. It is interesting to see how the Narrow Canal features in the blurb from the prospective councillors for my bit of canal for, after all, the restoration is likely to be the most talked-about event during the next councillor's reign. In alphabetical order (!) the Conservative candidate is the President of Saddleworth Canal Festival, the Labour candidate will "ensure that the welcomed development of the Huddersfield Canal (sic) brings benefits to the whole community with minimum disruption" whilst his party have achieved a "partnership to develop the Huddersfield canal (sic, again!)". The Liberal Democrat candidate didn't acknowledge the canal's existence although, to be fair, he has had plenty to say about it in other arenas. Makes you think - I'm sure that their interest or otherwise in the canal didn't affect the outcome!

The news about potential traffic problems during work in Uppermill burst upon an unsuspecting world (see What the Papers Say). The resulting rioting, marching in the streets, petitions to Downing Street etc., etc., were (fortunately) non-existent. In fact, it seems fairly clear that most residents accept that there is going to be a mess, that if THEY (the mighty) are going to do it there

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# Chairman's Annual Report

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On behalf of the Council of Management I present my report on the Company's activities and achievements for 1997 and future developments.

We began 1997 full of hope and optimism

following the news in December 1996 of our successful Millennium application. To deliver and manage the promised £15 million from the Commission and the £12 million from English Partnerships, the Huddersfield Canal Company was incorporated on 2nd May 1997. Its Board comprises Keith Gibson and myself for the Society, and two members from each of the three local authorities plus Derek Cochrane and Jeremy Duffy from British Waterways. The organising authority for this new vehicle was Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council and special thanks are due to Mr. Roger Anderson, Assistant Chief Executive for his part in the establishment of the Company.

The new Company replaces the Huddersfield Narrow Canal Joint Steering Committee, which was formed in 1985, on which we did not have voting rights! The Joint Committee had no budget and relied wholly on members individually restoring the canal. Roger Anderson continued as Acting Project Director until July 1997 when Alan Stopher was appointed from an original application list of over 150.

We were pleased that Councillor George Speight of Kirklees Metropolitan Council

was elected Chairman on 22nd May. George has long been a supporter of full restoration and the Society and it was his Council who first began and completed major restoration works on the canal - the Marsden-Slaithwaite section. Chairmen will rotate annually, Councillor Greenwood of Oldham M.B. is the current Chairman. H.C.S. will have the honour in 1999 followed by Tameside Council and British Waterways.

The Company has an Executive Group made up of officers of the local authorities and British Waterways and officers and members of H.C.S. It meets monthly and is chaired by Alan Stopher. The Groups role is: to service and support the Board of Directors; ensure that the Company's Business Plan project objectives are met; determine the programme of work to meet the Business Plan; monitor progress against budget and timetable, and interface with the Millennium Commission and English Partnerships.

The Society is represented on this Group by Steve Whitby, Frank Smith (Secretary) and Ken Wright. Other ad hoc committees have been formed, viz Standedge Experience Group and Marketing Group. Again, we are represented by appropriate officers and members of the Society including Alec Ramsden (Press & Publicity).

During 1997 the Canal Company has prepared the various legal agreements necessary to receive Millennium Commission and English Partnerships funds. It also undertook site investigations at Bates & Co., and Sellers Engineering, commenced design work on Holme Mill and Lees Mill Bridges and negotiated with various landowners the

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*cont'd from page 3 ...*

is little that they (the rest) can do about it and that, when the fuss has died down, they will all be left with something to be proud of for at least 125 years.

I wish I didn't have to be so parochial with the news and views. Can I have somebody

to volunteer to be my Kirklees or Tameside reporter? PLEASE!

And remember, the new, exciting, PHOTO COMPETITION is under way. GET SHOOTING!

Ken Wright

route through Stalybridge prior to possible Compulsory Purchase Orders.

In October and November, Principal and Supplemental Agreements were sealed by the Company and the Millennium Commission, and the Operation and Maintenance Agreement was sealed in December.

I am pleased to report that funding amounting to £500,000 from Millennium Commission and English Partnerships has recently been agreed towards the cost of detailed design works on the canal and English Partnerships have funded the acquisition of the property known as Tetlows in Stalybridge. With a grant by Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council towards environmental improvements to be associated with Wool Road Bridge, this brings the funding commitments to over £800,000. We will also see a start by H.C.S. (Restoration) Ltd. on the Lock 22 to Wool Road Section this Autumn.

However, administrative delays in obtaining necessary approvals from English Partnerships have caused the completion date to slip to April 2001 which has been accepted by the Millennium Commission. We can now celebrate the re-opening in hopefully better weather. English Partnerships must formally ratify its £12m grant later this year following evaluations by consultants on the expected outputs/benefits which will result from restoration.

The project is well underway but not yet fully signed off. The next few months will see the conclusion of all agreements and major works commence.

In 1997 H.C.S Restoration commenced the new guillotine gate construction (Lock 24E) and in April this year it was officially opened by Keith Gibson. This lock was funded by E.P./H.C.S. and lengthens the cruisable canal between Marsden and Slaithwaite. Lock 12W is a H.C.S. Restoration project begun in 1997; this and Lock 8W are awaiting reopening ceremonies. Our subsidiary company has undertaken extensive work on the canal, has a dedicated and experienced workforce and has a future workload to continue for at least another twelve months.

Your directors believe that it will be in the best interests of the Society to keep a viable operation until at least 2001 and we shall continue to bid and negotiate for future restoration and maintenance work.

The Promotions Group ensured during 1997 that our presence at Rallies and Festivals was prominent. Trip boats operated at Ashton and Marsden and the committee are planning for re-opening celebrations. Festivals and rallies were dogged by bad weather in 1997 and by increasing competition by other events, and other leisure time activities. Despite this our membership is still strong and I wish to thank Jo Young and the Sales Team for keeping our campaign in the public eye. We still have a persuading role as the recent exhibition (May 1998) at Slaithwaite testifies. The boat crews are a highly organised and professional team of volunteers. Over forty trained certificated skippers worked on our three boats in 1997. Their experience and enthusiasm will be a valuable resource come the re-opening.

Members will remember the £1.2 million grant by Greater Manchester Council in 1986. I am pleased to report that the value of our investments and cash balances at the end of 1997 was £885,000 and currently is over £1,000,000. The balance enables H.C.S. to temporarily resource the Uppermill scheme scheduled as described above in September 1998 and provide a major part of the funding for the Standedge Experience.

Recent visitors to Marsden will note the increased presence of British Waterways on the canal. Derek Cochrane has created an impressive H.Q. to manage the restoration scheme and his team headed by Tom Rowe work on the canal to maintain its structures as per their present responsibilities and to co-ordinate work with the Huddersfield Canal Company for the future major works.

We have seen in 1997 a fully organised and professional start to the Project; in 1998 this is continuing and by the end of the year we shall see further progress towards a fully restored canal by or just after April 2001.

David Sumner

# Restoration Report



I have not written about HCS Restoration since last Autumn because I had nothing further to report.

Work has continued between Lock 12W and Scout Tunnel but the prospect of further work remained bleak.

The situation has been of concern not just to your Society, but also to the Canal Company Board who asked British Waterways and the local authorities to help resolve the workload issue. Together with David Sumner, I attended a meeting with the Chairman of the Company, Councillor George Speight, Derek Cochrane, Regional Director, British Waterways and Canal Company Project Director, Alan Stopher. Derek promised that British Waterways would explore the options. Subsequently Steve Whitby and I had two meetings in early March to consider what may be possible. We met Tom Rowe, the Project Engineer from British Waterways, who agreed that they would investigate whether they could take on the employment of our 'outdoor staff' and Frank Smith as a volunteer co-ordinator. We then met Alan Stopher to consider the effect of a transfer of staff to British Waterways on the Millennium Commission and English Partnerships, and from the loss of flexibility given by having an 'in-house' workforce.

In the event no formal offer had been made by British Waterways when Steve Whitby reviewed the work remaining in the current contract with Tameside engineer, Pete Rawson, and it became apparent that this would keep our workforce in employment longer than originally thought. This could then be followed by the long delayed

dredging work in Greenfield, which received Derelict Land Grant approval from the Department of Environment before those grants were passed to English Partnerships, and the rebuilding of the structurally suspect Dungebooth and Lime Kiln Locks in Uppermill, whose clearance and re-gating by volunteers started restoration of the canal 17 years ago. So on 25th March the Board of HCS Restoration Ltd. decided that the only realistic option open was to continue on the assumption that this work would come to our staff, a decision subsequently accepted by the HCS Council of Management. British Waterways welcomed the decision, and promise to do all possible to ensure a continuation of work.

To achieve this we will need:

- (a) The agreement of Oldham Council and British Waterways to the actual dredging work to be carried out in Greenfield. The original contract price of £60,000 is insufficient to achieve the 'as-built' profile that we now aim for subject to ecological constraints etc., but could be sufficient to achieve a navigable channel.
- (b) The agreement of Oldham Council and British Waterways to the programme and specification of work in Uppermill. Although part of the Millennium scheme, the Millennium Commission have agreed that works can commence prior to the release of the main funding if the partners are able to foot the bill. Subject to satisfactory conclusion of all of the funding agreements grant-aid would be made available retrospectively. The Society has agreed to make up to £300,000 available for this purpose, on the understanding that this will come from

our £500,000 commitment to the Standedge Experience if it is not reimbursed in grant-aid.

Steve Whitby has his work cut out to get these agreements in place!

Although I still have concerns for the future of HCS Restoration, I am rather happier than I was some months ago when it seemed we may have to close down with poor prospects of future employment for our staff. If we can continue into next year, I hope the future will be clearer. We should know what work in the main programme may be identified for our staff, and to what extent gaps in the programme remain to be filled by other work. If we can continue in this manner until restoration is almost complete, my view is that the best solution will then be for the appropriate new jobs

which must be created in maintenance, and at the Standedge Experience to be ring fenced to the staff of the five partner organisations, thus giving our staff the chance of continuing employment.

I appreciate the difficulties involved in reconciling experience and abilities, and in reconciling timescales because British Waterways see a need for increased maintenance staff sooner rather than later. However, with good will all round, and training offered as appropriate I still see this as the best long-term solution. In the meantime Steve and myself, backed by Ken Wright and the rest of the HCS Restoration Board, have done the best we can to ensure continuity of work.

Keith Gibson

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## The 1998 Festival Scene

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Unfortunately, there will only be two festivals held this year, Tameside (or Ashton) on the 10th, 11th and 12th of July and Saddleworth a fortnight later on the 24th, 25th and 26th.

The reason is simple, Tameside has been highly successful over the past 21 years and has established itself as the premier regular venue in the North of England. Saddleworth, after the rained off Bank Holiday last year, and under new management, decided that the chances of better weather in July were worth the risk of moving an established date.

Huddersfield have struggled manfully for the past few years, but have never been really able to entice the boaters in the North East to attend and a combination of job movement, anno domini and the usual lure of other attractions have decimated the committee. Hopefully this will only be a temporary loss, and that new volunteers will appear to stage an event at the 'other end' next year.

The Stalybridge rally last year and the Trail Boat Rally the year before were all only 'one offs' and may be repeated in the future, but not in 1998.

There will be many changes in both festivals this year, for instance Tameside will be running their own bar. After 20 years CAMRA decided that the festival had grown away from the beer swillers of

the past and has become much more 'family day out' orientated and as a result the beer sales did not justify the effort necessary by them.

There will be changes in the Entertainment although the tradition of Folk on Friday and Jazz on Saturday will be preserved. The cost of good entertainers has gone higher and higher and it is almost a full time job to book a full programme within the budgetary confines necessary. Saddleworth have put up the prices of their evening entertainment to take account of this rise in fees and to match the prices charged in other venues.

Both Festivals are desperate for volunteers to help on the gate. If you can give just one hour to one festival it can help stave off the coronary on the part of the organising committees. We have booked the good weather for these two weekends in July, we know the public will come in droves, all we need is YOU to give us a hand. No matter what the allegedly comic article said in these pages recently, no one in recent years has done more than two gate stints in one day and we don't intend that anyone will!

Brian Minor  
Festivals Officer

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# The Huddersfield Canal Company

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

I'm pleased to say that progress has been made on the funding front with both English Partnerships and Millennium Commission agreeing to fund the site investigation, design and estimating work necessary to give English Partnerships the necessary level of confidence to fully commit themselves to the project. This means that the partners can recoup expenditure up to a total of £500,000 in the coming months. English Partnerships have also agreed to fully fund the acquisition of the Tetlows site on the line of the canal in Stalybridge.

I mentioned before the lengthy appraisal process conducted by English Partnerships and it is now clear that this could take until December 1998 to run its course. This takes into account the fact that the full £12 million is in excess of EP Board's delegated powers and that the final decision will need to be made by the Department of Environment Transport and the Regions. Since funding of physical works will require match-funding to be in place before money can be obtained from the Millennium Commission, a further delay is inevitable. In recognition of this, the Commission has agreed to postpone opening to through navigation to 30th April 2001. This is a much better time of year to assemble a celebratory boat gathering and complete works on towpaths so it makes a lot of sense all round.

Based on the timing above, the work programme on the centre spread will be



amended again and published in a future issue of Pennine Link.

With the onset of the cruising season, the decision was made to postpone the Lock 22 to Wool Road scheme until September 1998 so as not to adversely affect the trip boat operation and the tourist business in Uppermill which depends on it. The start of this contract can be funded by the Canal Society pending drawdown of funds from the main agencies, the money-go-round finishing with contractor, HCS (Restoration) Ltd.

The Mark Bottoms Bridge contract is complete and on the shelf pending drawdown of funds. The other Kirklees bridge schemes are not far behind. Detailed design continues on all the early schemes with the intention of making a quick start in the New Year of 1999.

Some schemes are now being shown to the public. Wool Road Bridge work will need to commence at the earliest opportunity to enable it to be finished before the High Street Uppermill blockage is started. It is the least we can do to minimise disruption in Saddleworth. The chosen scheme for Wool Road is an attractive one and involves exposing the original bridge shown in the photographs on pages 12 and 13 of Plink 124. The new box culvert bridge under the new road will be kept to the minimum practical length and will allow a stretch of open cut between the two bridges. A planning application has been made by Oldham Engineers and the subsequent consultations are under way. I am pleased to say that the scheme was received favourably by Saddleworth Parish Council at a recent meeting which I attended with



colleagues from Oldham. Oldham Council has agreed to contribute £10,000 to environmental improvements which are likely to involve a good quality finish to the surface of the old road bridge at Wool Road. This is good news and I hope sets a precedent for further funds to provide detailed enhancements to the overall project.

Land acquisitions are proceeding. The scheduled Compulsory Purchase Order Inquiry for Stalybridge was averted following good work by Tameside Council colleagues. The unopposed CPOs can now run their course in parallel with negotiations over the value of the land and rights to be acquired. The long awaited CTP St James proposal for the Delta site at Stalybridge materialised in the form of a mixed supermarket/pub-restaurant/housing development. This project has the canal restoration at its heart and was well received by the Council members at the initial presentation. Technical discussions are under way with Tameside personnel prior to a full planning application.

Last week was the public consultation on the Slaithwaite scheme. Kirklees Planner, Bob Edinburgh led the team with a very effective exhibition in the Kirklees bus (*see centre pull-out for artist's impression and scheme details*). I was pleasantly surprised by the largely favourable reaction from the residents of Slaithwaite who were around 80:20 in favour of the restoration and generally happy with our proposals for alternative car parking and replacement landscaping.

The written responses to the questionnaires will be carefully evaluated and where possible ideas taken on board ready for the detailed design to proceed. A more radical Planning for Real exercise is to take place in the village in early June. This is a no holds barred approach to village planning organised by the Colne Valley Trust and is sure to come up with some innovative ideas

on how Slaithwaite should develop following its rebirth as a canal-side village. I have quizzed several knowledgeable canal enthusiasts and none have come up with a comparable village with the canal going past the front of the shops. Slaithwaite will surely be unique.

The Marketing Group has produced its second newsletter with the emphasis on public consultation and including a plan similar to the Plink centre spread. A photographic competition is planned as a promotional initiative. It differs from the Canal Societys one in being open to all with the subject categories confined to the Huddersfield Narrow Canal. Please request entry forms from me.

By the time this article is published, a leisure business consultant will have been engaged by British Waterways to update the proposals for the Standedge Experience visitor/heritage centre and provide a robust business plan. What with all the activity at Tunnel End Marsden in 1999 and 2000 it is inevitable that safety requirements will mean a restriction on public access. Kirklees Countryside Services are actively considering temporary alternative premises for their facilities until they can take their place in the completed Experience. In the meantime Tunnel End Cottages will continue to be open until the end of 1998.

If variety is the spice of life then this job is turning out to be very flavoursome. From delving into the intricacies of European Union Procurement Directives to giving an interview to Waterways World, there is never a dull moment. It was also good to meet old friends at the Chesterfield Canal Society recently to help shed some light on regeneration outputs. Here's wishing members all the best for an enjoyable summer and spare a thought for all the engineering staff in Leeds, Huddersfield, Oldham and Ashton as they design practical solutions to the impossible restoration.

Alan Stopher

*As usual we have been inundated with news from IWA. Nobody can suggest that they don't do an excellent job in purveying information - but what a task it is to render it down for a digestible piece in a quarterly magazine!*

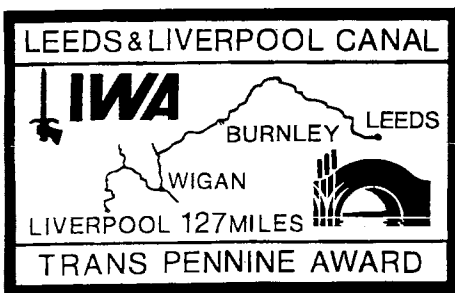
*This time I had twelve Press Releases to read, apart from the usual "Headquarters Bulletins" and "Undercurrents". I've decided to stick to the press releases this time.*

## Plaque for Trans-Pennine Crossing

IWA and BW have teamed up in a scheme to encourage more use of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. 127 miles from Stanley Dock in Liverpool to River Lock in Leeds but most people heading West turn left at Wigan and miss the last bit to Liverpool, which has a dodgy (largely unearned these days) reputation.

Boaters who want to get involved are issued with a log sheet to be filled in as proof of passage to get the brass plaque (pictured) - compliments of British Waterways.

Enquiries to Graham Eastwood, 61 School Lane, Leyland, Preston PR5 1TU.



## IWA Waterway Restoration Advice

IWA have announced new initiatives to help waterway groups to maximise grants they receive from a wide range of funding agencies. The move follows warnings that large scale funding for waterways from

National Lottery Funds is unlikely to remain at the same level as over the last two years.

IWA now provides detailed guidance notes which cover a broad range of funding opportunities and further advice can be obtained from members of IWA's Restoration Committee.

## Chinese Junk in Birmingham Canal "Torpedoed and Sunk"

The almost unbelievable planning application by British Waterways to "erect" a Chinese Junk nearly-floating restaurant in Birmingham's Gas Street Basin got the thumbs-down it so rightly deserved. IWA Birmingham Branch and West Midlands Region along with Residential Boat Owners Association led the fight.

*(Apparently another application is being put in for a "galleon" restaurant, somewhere in the Ouse/Nene area. Let's hope it suffers a similar fate! Ed.)*

## IWA Opposed to a Major Extension of Cycling on Towpaths

I have had a lot to say on this subject in the past and it is not going to go away. The following IWA statement seems to sum up most proper-thinking people's views - "IWA supports the present level of cycling on towpaths for working locks, access to boats, safety and low level recreational cycling for people who are using the towpaths because they appreciate the waterway setting. IWA does not support the expansion of towpaths into cycleways as an alternative to roads for cycling commuters. There are some urban sections of canals and navigable rivers where sufficiently wide pathways can be created without detriment to the waterway landscape, but proper consultation is needed with all existing users before such changes are made."

## IWA and BMIF Reach Agreement with BW on Yorkshire Ouse

A lot of initials and a matter which doesn't concern us, particularly, about whether BW

should become the “Competent Harbour Authority” on the Yorkshire Ouse between Goole and Selby.

### **Development of Cycling on Towpaths**

Is this a complete about face? IWA and BW are agreed that BW should continue its plans to involve national user groups and cycling organisations to develop and define safe and sustainable levels for the management of cycling on the towpath.

BW and IWA agreed the following key points:-

1. Any increase in cycling only on individual sections having regard to local needs and the waterway environment.
2. Full consultation on all aspects with all users.
3. Any development must fully protect the waterway system and way of life.
4. Cycling will be expected to contribute to the costs of maintenance and development by permits or specific grant.

Something of a relaxation of views but, hopefully, sense will prevail.

### **IWA Statement on Waterway Restoration Priorities**

You will recall earlier comment and Keith Gibson’s review of the IWAAC study (well, perhaps you will recall!). There are problems in prioritising in that small schemes or distant schemes might never get into a list whereas there is no reason why work shouldn’t continue towards the end event.

IWA believes that restoring 400 miles of canal in the past 40 years is ample evidence of the benefit of restoration and remain opposed to the principle of prioritisation. Any such scheme would be subjective and could be seen as divisive and unhelpful to the prospects of the majority of restoration schemes.

Hopefully IWAAC will work out some way of resolving the criticisms because a list *has* to be drawn up if Heritage Lottery funding is to be continued for waterways schemes.

### **IWA Calls on Government to Fund Waterway Flood Repairs**

Without going into details this is a call for

Government funding to restore some of the devastation caused by the 1998 Easter floods. Many waterways, boats, moorings, hire boat centres, etc. were damaged, some beyond recovery. National Chairman, Audrey Smith, said “This has been a terrible time for all those affected by floodwater. Many waterway businesses will find themselves in a difficult position and it is essential that navigation authorities have adequate funds at their disposal to ensure that the waterways are fully repaired as a matter of urgency.”

### **1999 National Festival**

Will be held in the City of Worcester.

### **1998 National Festival**

At Salford Quays (near Manchester!); will feature a parade of historic boats on each of the four days, not just the expected brightly-coloured narrowboats but also vintage cruisers. There will be a commentary describing each craft. (28 - 31 August).

### **IWA Finds Major Flaws in Environment Agency Fisheries Research**

The IWA has expressed concern at the Environment Agency’s use of flawed research in an attempt to achieve Government approval of changes in fishing byelaws. A study of detailed reports has been made to do with convincing a Government Minister to abandon the coarse fish close season on canals. Pressure from IWA and other navigation, recreation and conservation bodies has forced a delay in making a recommendation.

*(This Press Release was dated April 28th. It could have been April 1st for all the sense it made to me! Ed).*

And finally:

### **IWA Says “Not Enough Action” in Agency’s Plan for Navigation**

The Environment Agency has produced an “Action Plan for Navigation”. IWA is disappointed that there is very little ‘action’ planned and is calling upon the Agency to give greater urgency to tackling urgently needed structural works and also to give navigation a greater priority within their duties.

## Out & About

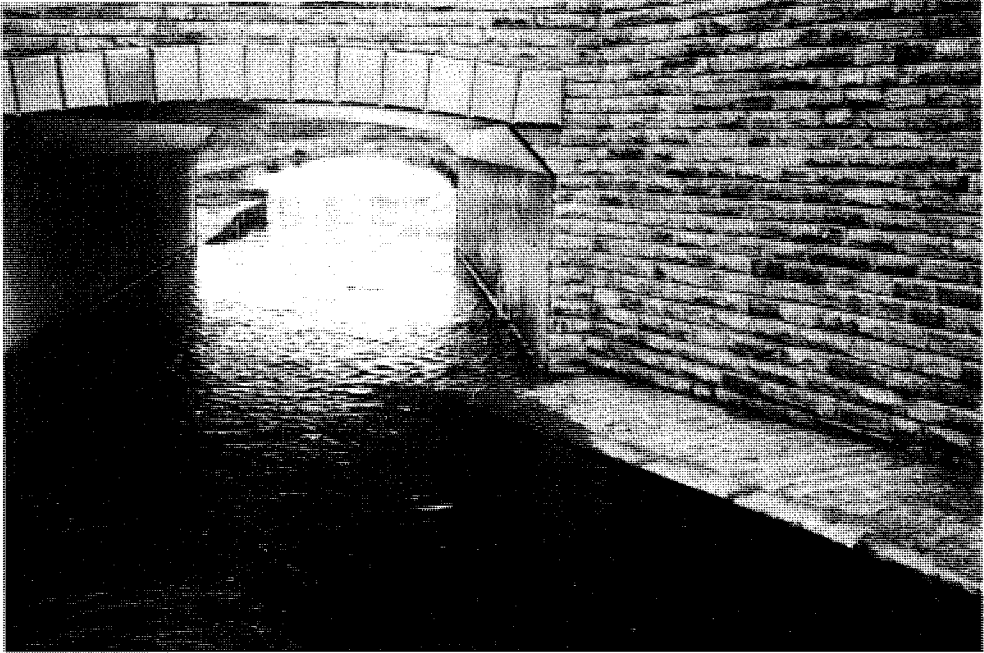


*Left:* The first Chairman of HCS Restoration, Frank Ruffley (affectionately known as 'Mr Canals') has played a vital role in promoting the restoration of the Canals in Tameside. At the tender age of 82, and having just returned from a 3 week holiday in Florida, Frank contacted the office to see if "he'd missed 'owt" whilst he was abroad.

As we had just completed the dredging from Mottram Road to Lock 11, I suggested that he should come and have a look, and at the same time he could do some snagging. (Inspect the quality of workmanship & depth of water.)

We needed a skipper & mate, so I invited the Chair and Vice-Chair, Keith & Ken - just to prove that they have their uses!, and we sailed from Mottram Road on a lovely spring morning. Apart from frightening a few ducks it was all 'plain sailing' along this most picturesque stretch of canal. Our professional tug driver, Trevor Wilkinson, followed us along and operated the gearing on the three locks, Ken was at the helm, Keith navigated and Frank & I admired the view. We all agreed that HCS should look into the possibility of running a trip boat between Mottram Road basin and the winding hole at Scout Tunnel. *Photo: K. Wright*

Steve Whitby



Above: The towpath at Grove Road Bridge, Mossley. This is what happens at Grove Road when you empty Lock 9 - and no, you can't raise the towpath or you bang your head on the bridge - and it is too late to go back to the drawing board - and, if the water level has been raised artificially to help with the dredging, WHY was it necessary? The all too vague BW standards have let us down badly, it seems! *Photo: K. Wright*

*Left:* And if you were wondering if there was life after HCS Restoration Ltd, Dobcross's husband and wife brass band playing team Steve and Susan Whitby were in the news.

The famous Harry Ramsden's restaurant arranged a contest for selected North West bands to celebrate 70 years of fish and chip sales, and Steve and Susan were invited for a bit of pre-contest publicity.

In the event, the Dobcross Band were battered into second place!

*Photo courtesy of Harry Ramsden's.*

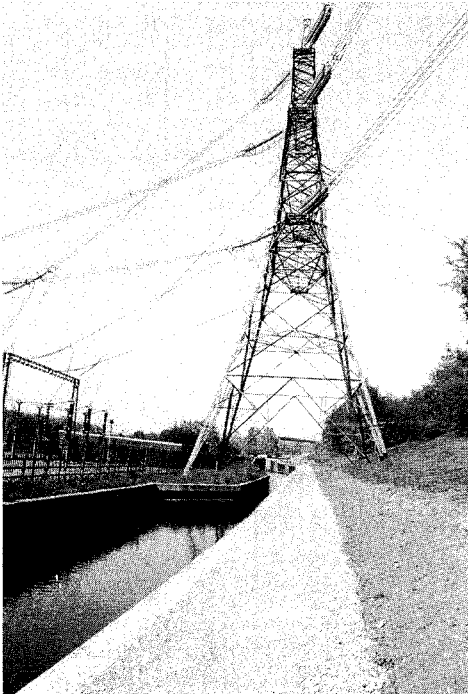


*Right:* Feature stonework concealing a drainage pipe at Peel Street bridge, Stalybridge.

*Below Left:* New towpath and landscaping works at the Hartshead section, Mossley - a unique navigational experience is in store for boaters as they manoeuvre underneath the pylon. Another first for the Narrow!

*Below Right:* Completed dredging and washwall work east of Grove Road, Mossley. Note the remains of the old swing bridge bearings in the left foreground and the high level coal conveyor system, which supplied fuel to the old power station, in the distance.

*Photos: R. Gough*



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# The Distaff Side

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Christmas '96 - Beset in the ice south of Banbury and wondering what to do with myself (the nearest shop and pub 90 minutes walk across the fields, precluding the chief entertainment of the British masses i.e. the shop until you drop, and even the seasonal excesses of liquid celebration) when the pigeon post in the shape of a visiting son delivered PLINK, bemoaning (*as usual, Ed*) lack of contributions from the distaff side. Immediately I slipped into Spring mode and began to think back to our first journey of 1996.

My doctor had advised a period of total rest and recuperation. When asked whether a trip by narrowboat with the Better Half would fit the bill, his response was most enthusiastic. Hence the Better Half and I began to plan a journey from our base on the Calder and Hebble, during which it would be possible to make visits to the surgery. What about the Selby canal? We'd heard nothing but praise for its peace, and so it proved: a narrow corridor arched over with May blossom, very little traffic, even friendly fishermen.

Eventually, into the basin at Selby we floated, sunshine and bird song all the way, to be greeted by an amiable lock keeper as we stood on the edge looking down at the Ouse. "Are you going out on the afternoon tide?" quoth he. "No," replied I, knees a-jelly, "never".

Now, one of my many failings is a super naive faith in British waterways men - they generally have such an air of confidence-inspiring dependability, not to say sagacity.

The Better Half had been gently endeavouring to persuade me Yorkwards for some time without any success, but when the lockie suggested that we take a walk round Selby, think about going out on the river and assured us that we'd never have a better day, the BH knew that the rabbit was more or less in the bag.

Some time later, with a cry of 'Go for it' we were out through the lock gates like a cork from a bottle and in no time at all were speeding upstream on the flood tide towards the bridge at Selby at what seemed a tremendous rate. Phew! Through the arch and away again. Up, up, but, fortunately, more and more calmly and, eventually, with breath to enjoy the scenery, through the lock at Naburn and in among the gin palaces of the Naburn to York stretch.

Have you ever heard of SUNWAC? The BH was indoctrinated at school, and, although hailing from the wrong side of the Pennines, has been able to chant Swale, Ure, Nidd, Wharfe, Aire and Calder from an early age. Once acquainted with the idylls of York, he turned his face and the prow of the boat towards Ripon with the intention of dipping her nose into all the waters of the aforementioned rivers and of completing his SUNWAC tick list. And so it was: through Linton and Boroughbridge to Ripon the delights unfolded, not least the hot croissants at 7.30am from the bakery at Boroughbridge. We met only 2 narrowboats - one with 2 Germans on board and the other manned by a coupla Aussies. Then back again and the bit I'd completely disregarded - what goes out often has to come back in, especially if it happens to be a narrowboat.

Into the lock at Naburn, penned with a large, luxurious cruiser and a more modest one. We were at the front of course, to avoid any holey accidents, but the crew of the luxury liner were already impatient and toad-like. "Parp, parp! As soon as we're out of the gates we need to overtake - we want to catch the tide at Goole". A gentler request from the others: "When we're out, do you mind if we pass you?" Not an unreasonable request, as the only things we've ever overtaken have been aground.

Against the tide now and chugging south as fast as we dare, then flat calm and onward, then the turn of the tide and away. And so at last the Selby lock must be somewhere

near. Indeed. Once past the large moored coaster blocking the view, we saw the lock gates closed. Swirling down towards the Humber we yearned to reach safety. Desperately clinging to the tiller we aimed for the gates and with one leap I'd made fast a rope to a ring while my hysterical merriment echoed from the banks. The lockie meanwhile was racing to open the paddles as the Better Half watched in helpless dismay.

Yes, we made it! How calm the basin at Selby seemed, and on my next visit to the surgery, how positively I assured my doctor that I was now resting and recuperating.

P.S. I can't wait to try SUNWAC again. In a few days the ice might melt and we'll be heading north. Four weeks fast is long enough.

Sandra Parnell  
Holmfirth

*Perhaps we can hope for an update soon. As someone else raised on the other side of the Pennines my memory of schoolboy geography is that the mnemonic was SUNWACD - we added the DON to the end - but whatever happened to the OUSE and the TRENT? Never did understand it.*

*I must also add that I tried to get in touch with Sandra to tell her that her efforts were being printed at long last.....she was unavailable, sailing the French waterways in their narrowboat which had been shipped over there. Talk about alright for some! DEFINITELY another article there, I reckon. Ed.*

*And here it is - well, nearly! The ink was hardly dry on the previous note when a lovely letter arrived, all the way from Decize, in France. I can do no better that give it to you, to share!*

Dear Sir or Madam  
*(for thus I shall always think of you),*

I have been meaning to write to you for just about a year to thank you for writing so courteously and to tell you that your apparent rejection of my submitted article had not upset me too drastically, just fairly drastically you understand. I had also been mulling over what else I could try for you but didn't mull too energetically and didn't really come up with anything. You can imagine the excitement and surprise when our daughter told us of your 'phone call.

When I look at your letter, I see the date is 4 Feb. (1997. Ed!) How time flies! And the address - Dobcross. Eh, it fair makes me homesick, although we have just parted company with a Tjalk whose mistress talked of Chew Valley and Greenfield as though they were just round the bend. So you see from our address, very temporary, the reason we haven't been in contact or in physical support. HE decided to do a little bit of international advertising for you, had 'STALEY WHARF' painted clearly, and then shipped the narrow boat to Europe. Since last June, then, the words have been subjected to Dutch, Flemish

and French tongues, often most peculiarly pronounced and regularly prefaced with "Where is.....?". Of course we tell *them* it's the most beautiful canal in the world and that it will be open in 2000 and that they should walk it now. We have tried to get clear photos of the advert for you in amazing places, but that has been difficult so far - not the places, just the photos.

So, Ken, thanks again for keeping us informed. We do come home fairly regularly but can never say when, but I do look forward to catching up with Pennine Link.

Yours sincerely

Sandra Parnell  
Ex-Holmfirth

*(I think that we have a budding correspondent here. Sandra, how about "Letter from Europe", telling us about the delights - and otherwise - of Continental Cuts? Ed)*

# Sailing the Narrow in 1975

5th August 1975

I woke at 6.15 moored by the Grove Road Bridge near Hartshead convinced a conger eel lived in the vicinity. That latter part was perhaps a dream but in reality it was day two navigating the HNC en-route from Manchester to the IWA Rally at York. I was moored in "Superpenge", a 14ft. inflatable, which I was using to navigate as much of the HNC as possible. I spent 8 days along the HNC bits, so the pace was hardly hectic. In reality most of the canal had water in it but for the bits that didn't I had the use of a converted pushchair base as a trolley.

Anyway 5th August 1975 was a memorable day particularly as the pounds about Grove Road were in good condition and the locks were capped so I was able to row inside; them and see the masonry works and masons marks. Admittedly I had to come out again to portage these locks.

I arrived at Scout Tunnel at around 11. In those days it was bricked up at each end. There was however a 6-inch gap between the supporting beam and the water level so I was able to squeeze inside. I was therefore the first boat inside for some time. It was quite dark even though the tunnel is short, and I was able to pick out some good stonework, and a substantial towpath. I rowed through quite quickly.

Fortunately the gap at the upstream end was similar so I emerged into bright sunlight again. The pound ahead was a different story. Rushes, weeds and no visible water, so it was back to the towpath and lunch inside the pub in Mossley. I don't recall its name but the weekday lunch-time trade in August was only me so the menu was extremely limited. However I was well refreshed and continued on only to be met by a student doing a survey of canal users. Would I like to answer her questionnaire? She had the full range of questions covering every possible use including boating. I still wonder whether her tutor examining her work actually believed she found a boater on the canal making for York.

Half an hour well spent, which set me up for more difficult pounds. In particular the weed between the Royal George Aqueduct and Lock 18W was horrendous but otherwise I made steady if slow progress and arrived at Lock 20W at around 6pm. I spent an hour repairing some small leaks, and at some time fell asleep moored up in the Lock, floating on no more than a few inches of water. I was so tired that I never thought about the conger eel but I did about the prospects of even more adventures with the climb up through Uppermill to Diggle.

Mark Blackstone



"Huddersfield Examiner" photo of Mark taking the alternative to Standedge Tunnel. Presumably the trolley is under the boat somewhere. The vehicles make this an historic shot!



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# Boat Crew News

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**Hi folks! Everybody is now enjoying another season on the HCS public trip boats. To encourage our crews out of their cosy homes after the winter break we held another SOCIAL CRUISE FOR BOAT CREWS!**

This provided a chance for members to meet up with old crew mates and gave new recruits an ideal chance to have a good day out and find out more about how they could be involved in crewing during the year.

The trip was on 'Greater Manchester' on Saturday, 28th March and we left Portland Basin at 11.30 and went through the first three locks of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal for a lunch at the Wharf Tavern, Stalybridge. We had an enjoyable hot pot and apple pie lunch and arrived back at base about 4.30.

Regular members were invited to bring a guest, all on a "first come - first served" basis and many on the trip had a chance to crew on this unfamiliar new length of canal. Tea and coffee were provided and, well wrapped up, we had a super day out.

For boat crews generally, please don't wait to be asked! Get on the phone and book yourself in (0160 366 9554).

All three boats were busy over Easter weekend. Oldham Otter worked from the new "Causeway" pub at Audenshaw (next to Robertson's Jam Works) doing half hour trips to Fairfield Top Lock.

Greater Manchester did 2 hour booked trips to Hyde from Portland Basin and Standedge Pioneer worked the usual 40 minute trips from Tunnel End to Marsden railway station and return.

## HCS Boat Trips

During the 1998 season, the Society's public boat trips are operating as follows:

### Tunnel End, Marsden

Unfortunately, the Standedge Pioneer is temporarily out of service at the moment for public trips.

### Portland Basin, Ashton-under-Lyne

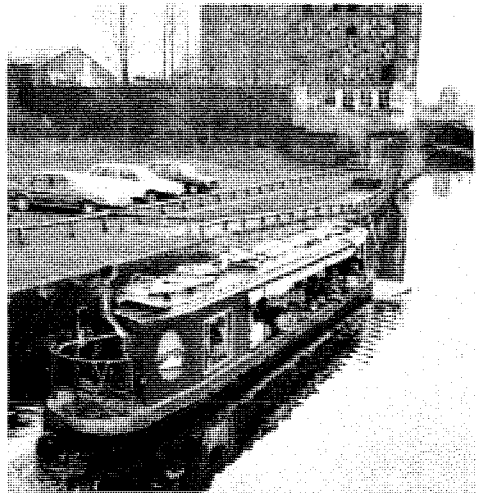
The 31 seater Greater Manchester leaves at 2.00pm every Sunday and Bank Holiday for a 2 hour trip to Hyde and back. The trip costs £2.50 for adults and £1.00 for children. Includes free tea and coffee during the trip.

### Causeway Public House, Manchester Road, Audenshaw.

From near to the Robertson's Jam factory, the 12 seater Oldham Otter operates regular half-hour trips between 1.00pm and 4.00pm, Sundays and Bank Holidays turning at Fairfield Top Lock or near to the new M60 currently under construction. Fares are £1.50 for adults and 75p for children.

Enquiries for trips or crewing to:

Allan Knott, Boat Crew Officer  
Tel: 0161 366 9554



*Right: 'Greater Manchester' cruising on the Ashton Canal. Photo: F. Smith*

# Up and Down Achievement



Denis McInnis of English Partnerships stands ready to assist Restoration chairman Keith Gibson on the guillotine gate windlass at Slaithwaite. *Photo: R. Gough*

## Really, Keith Gibson will have to start taking more exercise!

The chairman of HCS Restoration was invited to make a few turns with a lock key to officially "commission" the new guillotine gate at Lock 23 at Slaithwaite. Simple enough, but Keith soon confessed that he was running short of puff and called for assistance from Denis McInnis, English Partnerships Yorkshire Regional senior development manager.

There are conflicting reports about exactly how many turns are needed to lift the massive gate - 105 it is said, when the "slack" has not been taken up; 97 when the lifting chains are tight - but the good news for those without much muscle power is that the gate has been so designed that it can easily be converted to electrical operation when boats are queuing to use it.

But apparently, before that can happen, the unique gate will have to be tested and certificated - a point rather curtly and unnecessarily made in a letter by a certain British Waterways official who had been invited to the event. No boats, he warned,

should be allowed to pass beneath the gate until this had been done.

Designed by Neil Morton of Wild and Partners of Stockport, and made by Ron Tinker Engineering of Middleton, the gate lifted and dropped smoothly without any snags - although this was not always the case. There have been difficulties both with the gate and the framework and the official commissioning was well behind schedule.

Originally it had been hoped to organise the Press call for Bastille Day, 1996 - whose head should roll? *"It was far from easy to get the gate to work smoothly, even though it was designed and built by experts. But now it is a superb, snug fit,"* said Steve Whitby, HCS Restoration managing director.

A ceremonial ribbon was cut and there were thanks from Keith to all those involved in the operation including Henry Crowther of Elon Crowther Ltd - and particularly English Partnerships which provided fourth-fifths of the £20,000 cost of the gate. HCS coughed up the rest.

Alec Ramsden

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# Show Star Sid Upstaged

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And here's the story of how a high-flying Royal Variety Performance star was outshone by a humble dog owned by a Saddleworth Festival committee worker.

Top entertainment at the dinner and cabaret at Greenfield Conservative club, organised by festival president John Hudson (mentioned in the last issue of Pennine Link), was billed as Sid the all-action, talking, squawking parrot and his ventriloquist owner, Trevor James.

They were a hit with the London Palladium audience - but had to take second place to Teazole, a loveable five-year-old retriever collie cross guide dog, owned by Les Hankinson. For when Sid came to the climax of his act - a far from tuneful rendering of "Nellie Dean," - Teazole decided to join in. Her barking and growling drowned Sid's squawking and as the normally placid bitch became more and more annoyed with the parrot's efforts drastic action was needed.

John Wilson, Festival Committee chairman, took Teazole outside for a calming down walk so that Trevor and Sid could complete their act and disappear from the scene.

Les said that Teazole was a very discerning, intelligent dog. *"But Sid's singing just wasn't to her liking. She'd been lying quietly by my feet throughout the meal but she took an instant dislike to the parrot's voice and decided to show her feelings. If she'd been allowed to stay I think she'd have had Sid for her dinner,"* added Les.

Commented John Wilson *"She brought the house down. Like everybody else Trevor was laughing so much that he just couldn't*

*continue. Sid may have gone down big in London but Teazole was the star of our show"* he said.

And her performance was the climax of a great evening which raised nearly £600 for festival funds. *"Marvellous. We're very grateful to John Hudson for his efforts and hope for a repeat next year - although Teazole may have to be banished to a side room"* said John Wilson.

Teazole will be with her proud owner at the festival over the week-end of July 25 and 26. And Sid? Well he was just sick with the whole affair.

Alec Ramsden



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# Restoration Cash Pots Sinking

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*'Carry on the fight to win cash for restoration schemes - but realise that it's getting tougher all the time'.*

That was the message from HCS Restoration Chairman, Keith Gibson, to members of the Northern Canals Association at a meeting hosted by HCS at the Transshipment Warehouse. Keith is chairman of the NCA and he had another message for canal organisations. This was that times are a-changing - and so are many of the qualifications for the winning of the wherewithal to fund restoration projects. With Millennium funding finishing new money pots had to be investigated. *"Unfortunately many canal societies have failed to grasp that they have to move on,"* said Keith.

One possible source of cash help was the Heritage Lottery Fund, but the ideal of restoration of a waterway would probably be a non-starter in the face of fierce competition for HLF aid. But historical and heritage factors could count in the fight for finance - the location for the meeting was a prime example.

For the transshipment warehouse at Dobcross was of historical importance, but had been allowed to fall into dereliction. It should be preserved and funding had been won to refurbish it and turn it into a useful local amenity. An example, said Keith, of bringing back to life a canalside building in isolation as a historical exercise, but which could act as a catalyst in boosting restoration of a waterway.

Compared to other money pots the Heritage Lottery Fund was far from being flush with cash. *"However the HLF is on a learning curve, and if only £5m. a year is available it is new money and waterways groups should bid for it,"* said Keith. Backing for his view came from IWA chairman, Audrey Smith, who said it was certain that the HLF would make its own decisions based on heritage issues not on waterways restoration factors.

And this linked neatly to the discussion into the far-reaching study by the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council about the priorities of restoration of waterways. The eagerly awaited report, said IWAAC's Tony Jones, would not produce as some people thought - a "pecking order" of schemes. *"It is certainly not just about navigation, but everything to do with*

*waterways - the interests, the uses, the heritage, the people involved."* And he stressed that the responses of the 150 organisations asked to make their views known to the IWAAC study team were of vital importance if a balanced, constructive, useful, advice blueprint was to be made available, specifically to help funding authorities. *"We have been amazed at the number of waterways which are planned to be restored, and we are looking for core information. I have been impressed by the depth of know-how on specific issues and also by the broad perceptive knowledge which we have been receiving,"* added Tony.

And he too, thought that societies should consider the way they were thinking. It had become clear that in many cases restoration was an ideal, but basic information such as land ownership and water supplies, had not been researched. So the final report would certainly include advice to organisations with a restoration aim in view.

An interesting insight into the British Waterways organisation of the future came from Operations Director, Stewart Sim in a studious, thought provoking speech.

He highlighted the parlous state of some waterways because of a serious lack of funding, saying that there was a £94m. backlog of urgent repairs, and dilapidation estimated at £200m. - with no way of funding the remedy.

So trading income was being maximised and other cash help was being investigated from a variety of sources, including Europe, local authorities and the national lottery. And it was possible that B.W. would become a charitable trust resulting in increased investment, greater regeneration opportunities and more public participation.

*"We are looking for a new vision and involvement of the public in the conservation and enjoyment of a national asset. We must safeguard the waterways for future generations, but in the fight for government funding canals come quite a way down the list,"* said Stewart.

Alec Ramsden

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# Obituaries

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## JOHN YOUNG

It is with great sadness that we have to announce the loss of another key member of our volunteer team, John Young, who died on 27th May 1998, aged 67.

John joined the Society with his wife Jo, over eight years ago, following her retirement from the Social Services. With Jo taking up the mantle of Membership Secretary, John volunteered his services too, and was soon actively involved.

A very keen D.I.Y. man, John immediately set to work creating things out of wood that the Society had needed for ages, but didn't have the expertise to do. Over the years John produced collection boxes in the shape of lock chambers, bookends for the Sales Team to sell, notice boards for the boats and, his *pièce de résistance*, a portable membership information cabin.

Both he and Jo were always prepared to get dressed up in traditional canal costumes at



festivals and special events, and for many years took an active part in the organisation of the annual duck race - where John made a purpose-built hopper to release hundreds of plastic ducks at the start of the race.

John will also be remembered by our own boating fraternity as one of the Society's Boatmasters. He was the oldest member to train for, and pass, the Department of Transport's test - an achievement of which we know John was very proud.

A quiet, unassuming man, who could, and did, turn his hand to anything, but more importantly, was prepared to help out in any situation, no

matter how great or small.

The Society owes a great debt of gratitude to John and he will be sadly missed by his many friends and colleagues. Our deepest sympathy goes out to his widow Jo, and son Philip and family.

Frank Smith

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## DAVID BROWN

It is with regret that we have to announce the death of Dave Brown (David Lawrence Brown) who died of cancer on May 4th 1998, aged 50.

Many Society members will remember Dave from years ago as part of the small team who formed the Tameside Canals Development Association, the forerunner of Tameside Canals, and now known as HCS Restoration Ltd. It was this pioneering vision of canal restoration which put the Huddersfield Narrow on the map.

He was Chairman of the Ashton Packet Boat Company which runs the oldest canal boat in Britain, and it was through this passion for canal boats that he met Sue Day whom he later married.

Dave's main occupation was in education - teaching at Danebank and Gresswell Primary Schools in Tameside for over 25 years. Hundreds of children, many now adults, will remember the huge dinosaur models he created.

Due to the nature of his illness, Dave had time to plan his own funeral arrangements - in traditional boatman's style. His coffin was conveyed to Dukinfield Crematorium via rail, horsedrawn boat and mourning coach pulled by a pair of magnificent black horses. A unique occasion and befitting a man dedicated to the canal movement.

Our sympathies go out to his widow Sue.

Frank Smith

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# The School Trip

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Saturday morning 8.30am, what a lovely day for boating. The sun is shining already; going to be a scorcher. Geese and goslings swimming serenely round the Basin, not a cloud in the sky and the slight breeze wafts the lovely odour of freshly baked bread across the docks. What more could one wish for? Vroom Roar Toot a Toot screech, slam "Hi Skip grand day aint it", I was saying! Oh well, at least half of the crew has arrived. Hang on, that sounds like Jenny's scooter now: things are coming together.

9.00am: You know whoever said that women were useless was totally out of order; this brew is lovely. Right lets see: boats all prepared and crew briefed, just sit back and wait now for St. Georges school party to arrive. What? The boat? Oh! O.K We're aboard the Riverside Lady a 60 foot narrowboat for passenger transportation. She seats 32 and has a laden draught of 18 ins. Her crew today consists of Jack (Stirling Moss) Burrows and Jennifer (Kersplash) Ingman, so named because she has a habit of dropping things in the cut, and of course, yours truly. We are going on a 1 day cruise to Metley, about 12 miles away, taking the local school party on a nature outing. Also they have organised a painting contest and muggings here has been elected Judge. Think I'll do a bunk now! Drat! Here they are.

9.30am: Under way at last; if I have to explain to one more child that the boat is supposed to rock when people get on or off I'm sure I'll scream. On board are 26 children (8-10years old) and 3 teachers: seems 2 kids couldnt come and sent a note from their mum (wish I'd thought of that). Mind you Jenny seems to be happy talking to Mrs. White, Miss Jones and Ms Hargreaves. Theres a thing!! Why are women Ms? An unmarried woman a Miss, a married woman is Mrs. so is Ms. married, divorced, widowed

or just trying to hide her status? If so it seems to me a silly way to do it. But hey! I'm just a man, what do I know?. Oh! Oh! Duty calls: got to open the bridge. Off we get up the towpath, "NO Jenny I've got the windlass, DON'T throw it". Kersplash!! (Mental note - tie lanyard to windlass and secure to hull).

10.30am: Managed to recover windlass; glad I had my trusty boater's magnet. Everything is now going smoothly, sun really hot now. Jack's going a nice cherry red back here on the tiller. Soon be time for the judging. I've got 26 pictures of boats of all shapes, size and colour to sift through whilst Jenny's got her hands full trying to keep the kids from jumping overboard. Think I'll brew up before I make a choice; I need the strength. What the!!! Great that's all I need; 100 green bottles standing on the wall-----JENNY!

11.30am: Whew! It's hot. Jenny's at the tiller, doing well too, Jack's telling the kids about the local wildlife and flowers whilst I've found a winner in the painting competition (OH JOY!). Mind you it's not been all fun: I mean how can anyone get seasick on a canal? I ask you! Poor Mrs. Hargreaves. At least she seemed to like it. They are calling her Mrs. Greensleeves now (Kids can be cruel can't they?). Having said that if that lad in the front seat calls me Captain Birdseye one more time I'll.... Jack no please!! We've had ten green bottles!

12.30 : Oh! Bliss. The peace and tranquillity; SILENCE. We're moored at Metley Basin, the rabble off for dinner, Jenny's gone for a look round Metley town (seems she's never been before) and Jack? Well, judging by the melodious tones coming from the roof he's catching a well-earned forty winks. Me? I'm polishing off my last sausage roll and enjoying the gentle sounds of the water

lapping melodiously around the boat. What more could one ask for? Now I know why I enjoy this work. The gentle rocking of the decks, as the towpath slowly slips past the windows.....CLUNK...AHRGG SLASH!!  
 "What the \*\*!! Jack, Jack! What the heck are you doing in the cut, man, and who untied the mooring ropes?".

1.00pm: How on earth Jack managed to control his temper with those two kids I will never know. Seems they had sneaked off from the party after dinner with the intention of getting the best seats for the trip back. However, on finding Jack asleep on the roof and yours truly out of sight in the galley, they decided to cast the boat adrift as a joke and then wake Jack to see his reaction.

They did not, however, anticipate the boat swinging across the moorings and beaching on the opposite bank, throwing Jack into the water.

Good job Jack saw the funny side. As he said, he was due for his annual bath.

2.00pm: My turn on the tiller, thank the Maker for small mercies, don't they know any other song besides Ten Green Bottles? At least the engine drowns out the....oh, no what now, why me? Am I that bad? Looks like the props well fouled. Jenny, pole to the side and get everyone off will you?

2.45pm: Has anyone lost an extra large navy blue anorak with yellow striped sleeves?

Why, you ask? Well, it has just taken over half an hour to detach it from our propeller and believe me, Jenny wants to meet you. Seems she has another use for it that she is anxious to show you. Mind you I can think of a few things as well and Jack wants to teach you about the birds and the bees (at least I think thats how the Anglo-Saxon translates).

3.30pm: Almost home; Mrs White has taught the kids a new song, OH Bliss, here we go again..10 men went to mow..... Give me strength!! No not the dog and his bone and a piece of wood. This is getting ridiculous.

3.40pm: Oh joy! Home at last, kids packed off home and only 15 minutes late. All in all a good day. Jenny really shined, sorting out the kids and mucking in with the weed hatch; hope her boyfriend doesnt blame me for her busted bra and ripped sweatshirt.

Well she did want to help out with the weed hatch and unfortunately it's very cramped down there and you have to lean over it to reach in. Poor Jenny, mind you she did say that she was in favour of women's lib. Anyway at least she didn't fall in, like Jack.

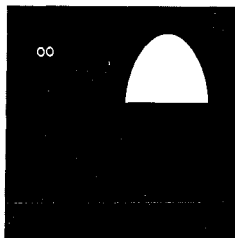
What a day!, what a day!

Roll on the next one...OH, my shoulders; my back; my arms. Where is that after-sun

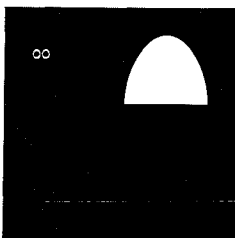
"Jack Jenny.....Jack, Jack!!" Vroommm.

John Wilson

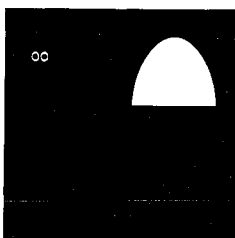
In Standedge Tunnel ...



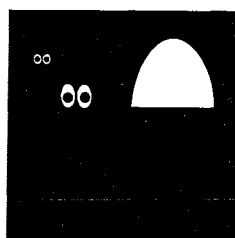
Are we nearly there? ...



St Christopher, are we nearly there? ...



I don't know lad, I can't see ...



THANK YOU!

# Huddersfield Canals on Postcards

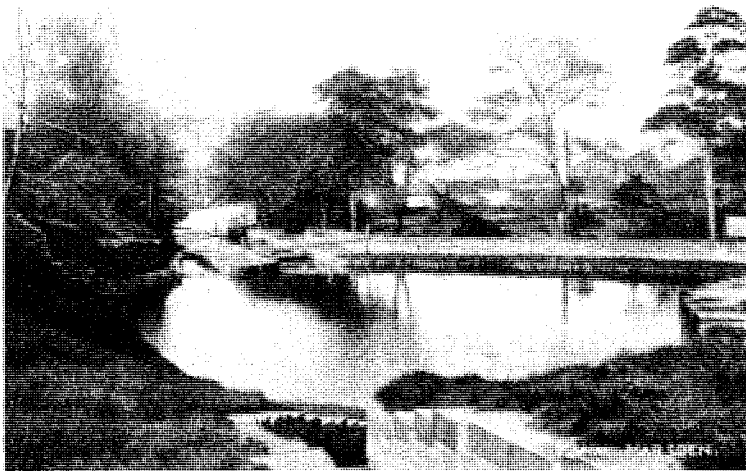
## 4) The Marsden Locks.

I am sorry that the reproduction of the "Uppermill" card in the last article was not as good as expected, and that the captions of two of the cards had become transposed in the printing. I hope that this did not spoil the article too much.

Just as the West Side of the canal had Lock 10W and its Lock House (described in the second of these articles), the East Side of the canal also seems to have had a "most photographed location". This was around Lock 34E on the Marsden Flight and the almost-circular pound above it which will be well-known to anyone who has walked that length. I have no less than five different cards of this area. Unlike the Lock House, none of them are published directly by national companies, though

some were produced by Balmforth's for a local stationer.

Three of the views look down from near Lock 35E, two from the towpath and one from the area near the bywash. The scene appears little-changed today, apart from the disappearance of the stout post at the head of the lock, which was presumably to help with the towline as the boathorse found its way around the edge of the nearly-circular pound. These views would have been harder to recognise on the ground in the 1970's.

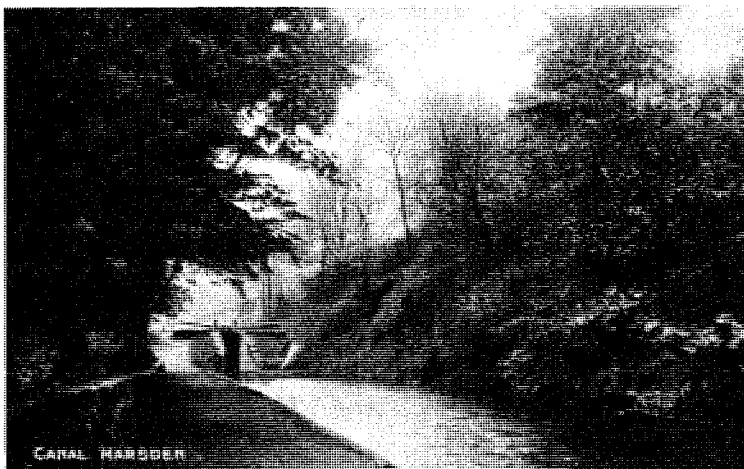


*Above:*

"Canal, Marsden".  
View from the bywash  
weir of Lock 35E,  
looking  
towards Lock 34E  
across  
the circular pound.

*Left:*

"Canal, Marsden".  
View from the towpath  
towards the bottom  
gates of Lock 34E.





## Canal Cruises

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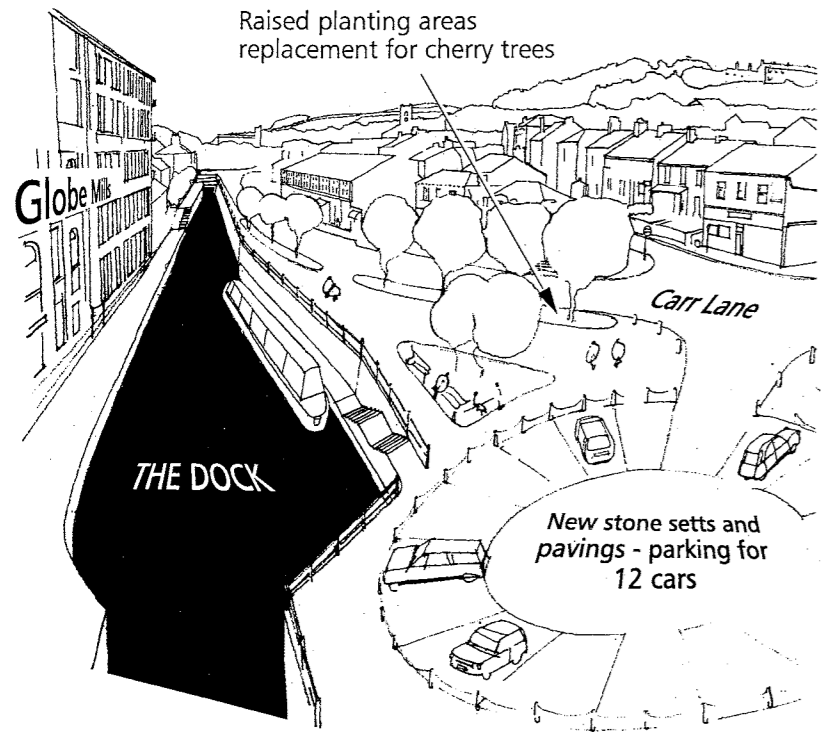
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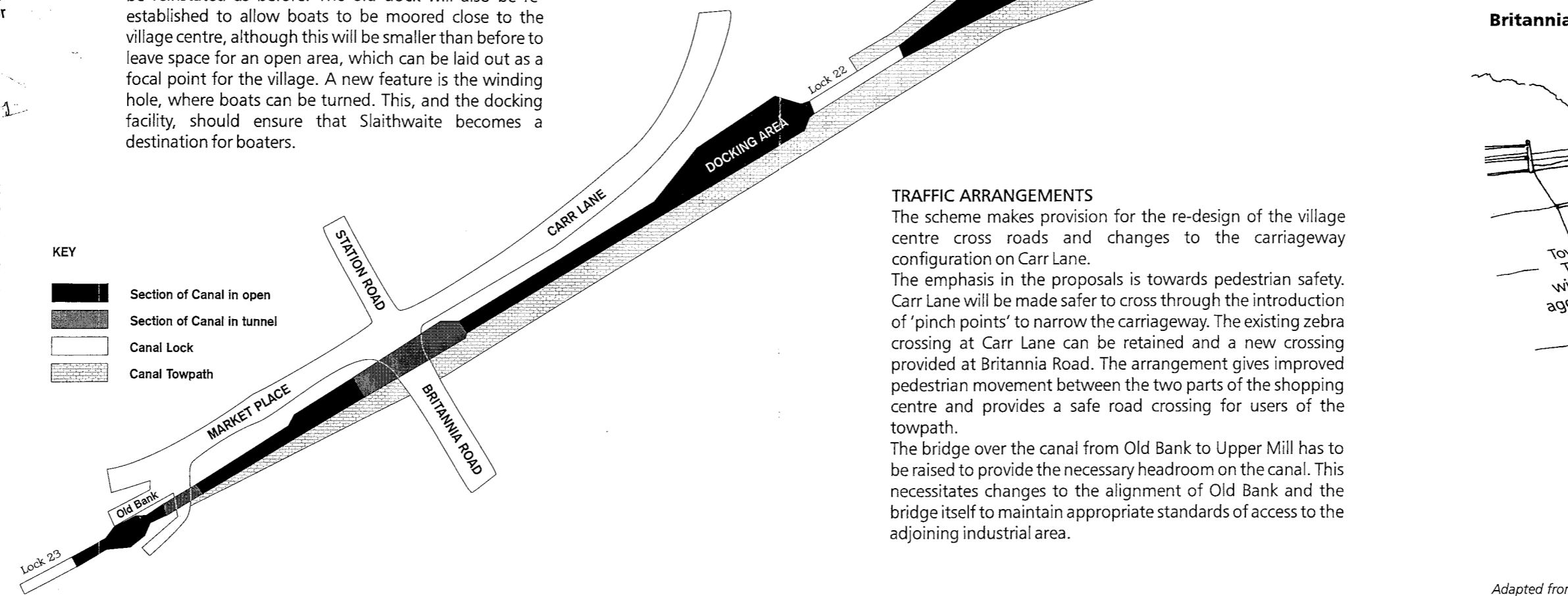
# Huddersfield Narrow Canal Restoration - SLAITHWAITE



**CAR PARKING PROVISION**  
 The restoration of the canal will displace off-street parking spaces at the Globe Mills car park and there is a need to make alternative provision close to the village centre. The existing car park contains spaces for 47 cars. Whilst it is often full at peak shopping times, around half of the spaces are occupied by cars which stay for most of the day. The main requirement, therefore, is for around 25 spaces for short stay users, although ideally, a similar number for long stay parking would also be desirable. Two possibilities can be considered:-  
 Option 1 - would involve a single car park on the site of the disused council depot on New Street. By utilising the whole site, accommodation could be made for over 50 cars for short and long stay use, in addition to the 12 adjoining the dock.  
 Option 2 - would involve extension of the Globe Mills car park in the area currently occupied by garages. A scheme to retain existing trees would provide 12 extra spaces (24 in total, including those around the dock), which could be managed for short stay use to serve the needs of the shopping centre. Provision for long stay users in this option could be made on part of the site of the disused depot, allowing the other part to be used for something else.

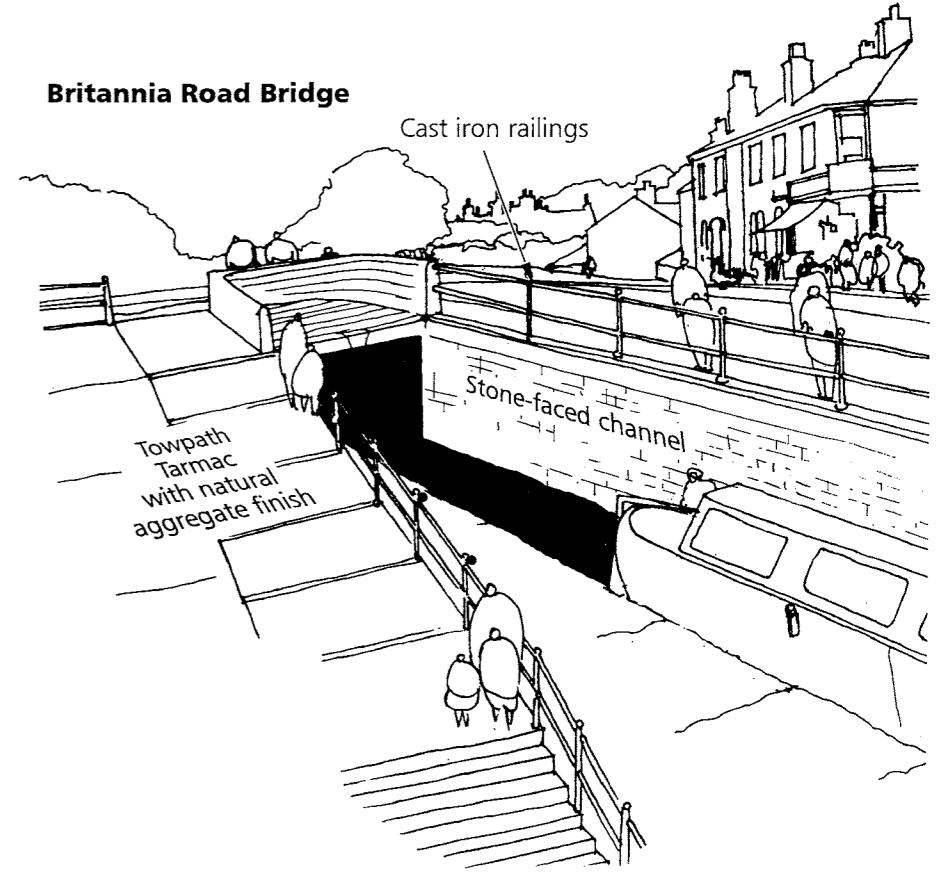
**THE SCHEME**  
 The filled-in section of the canal in Slaithwaite represents the only significant blockage to navigation between Standedge Tunnel and Huddersfield town centre. Works to remove the blockage are due to commence in the first half of 1999. Whilst these are in progress, every effort will be made to minimise the amount of disruption and liaison arrangements will be put in place to ensure that any problems at the time of construction can be quickly resolved.

**FEATURES OF THE CANAL RESTORATION**  
 The new canal will follow the old line through the centre of the village. It will even be possible to re-use some of the original features. For instance, the eastern section will, where possible, use the old canal banks and Lock 22 can be reinstated to allow boats to be moored close to the village centre, although this will be smaller than before to leave space for an open area, which can be laid out as a focal point for the village. A new feature is the winding hole, where boats can be turned. This, and the docking facility, should ensure that Slaithwaite becomes a destination for boaters.



**TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS**  
 The scheme makes provision for the re-design of the village centre cross roads and changes to the carriageway configuration on Carr Lane. The emphasis in the proposals is towards pedestrian safety. Carr Lane will be made safer to cross through the introduction of 'pinch points' to narrow the carriageway. The existing zebra crossing at Carr Lane can be retained and a new crossing provided at Britannia Road. The arrangement gives improved pedestrian movement between the two parts of the shopping centre and provides a safe road crossing for users of the towpath.  
 The bridge over the canal from Old Bank to Upper Mill has to be raised to provide the necessary headroom on the canal. This necessitates changes to the alignment of Old Bank and the bridge itself to maintain appropriate standards of access to the adjoining industrial area.

**SAFETY AND AMENITY CONSIDERATIONS**  
 It is important that the canal is both safe and pleasing in appearance. Traditional finishes, including coursed stone walling and copings, and stone flags and setts, will be used to complement the appearance of the existing canal. The design of the canal between the docking area and Old Bank will receive special attention, since this is a prominent part of the route and within Slaithwaite Conservation Area. Safety is also an important consideration in this area, because there are high levels of pedestrian activity, and railings and walls will be introduced alongside the channel, to provide safety.



*Adapted from an information leaflet produced by Kirklees Planning Services with kind permission*

# TOP LOCK MARINE

M.D. & A.M. Allcard

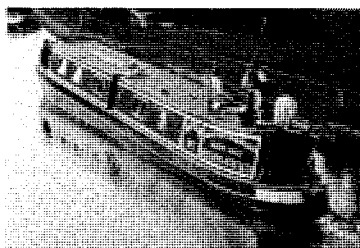
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Following the difficulty with the "real photographic" card of Uppermill, I have reproduced a colour-printed card by Balmforth's for F.Russell, Stationer, of Marsden.

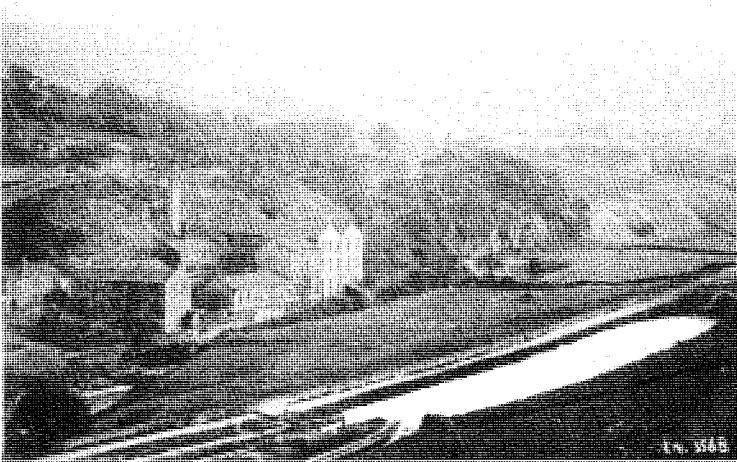
I have two opposite views of the pound below Lock 34E, one looking from the lock and one towards it. Again, this is a location little-changed. I have included another card by Frederick Russell, presumably by Balmforth's again on style grounds alone, though this is not mentioned on the card. The view is towards Lock 34E and includes more of interest than the view from the lock of a straight canal bordered by trees.

The one card that I do have of the pound between Locks 35E and 34E does look rather different today. I suspect that the main factor is that the tip on the towpath side has gained considerably in height and that this, coupled with greater growth of trees, now prevents the view. In addition the mill has probably decreased in size and Marsden now occupies much of the far hillside. The field in the foreground is now the gardens of houses on the road from which the view was taken. This card was posted from Marsden in 1907.

Finally, a view of "Sandhill, Marsden", looking across Sparth Reservoir towards

Cellars Clough Mill and showing Lock 33E bottom right and Lock 32E centre. The latter is probably safely described as the bottom lock of the Marsden Flight, though dividing this canal into flights has always been fairly academic!

Trevor Ellis

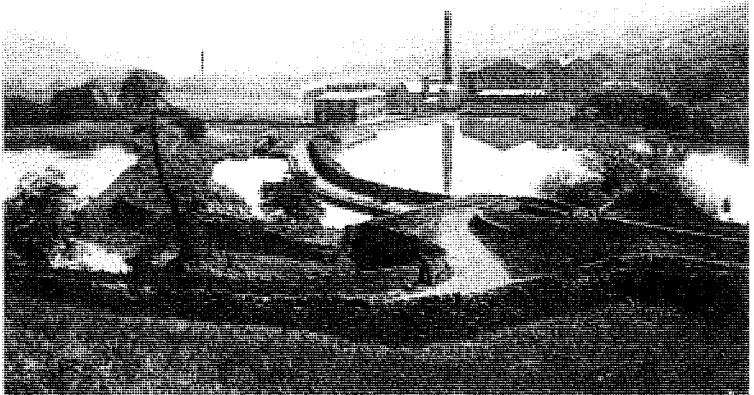


*Above:*

View across the valley with canal in foreground. Lock 35E left.

*Right:*

"Sandhill, Marsden". Lock 33E right. Sparth Reservoir left and Cellars Clough Mill dam to right. Lock 32E centre with Sandhill Cottages and the mill beyond.



**SANDHILL, MARSDEN.**

# Not The Wife's Tale

*Following her article in the last Pennine Link, Winifred Wilson completes the story of her memorable boat trip from the South Oxford canal to Huddersfield.*

*Winifred and her husband Paul have arrived at Aspley Basin, Huddersfield. It is Summer, 1996.*

## Familiar country from a new angle

Mooring at Aspley Basin was a bit like sitting in the middle of a roundabout. The most frequent sound over the general traffic noise seemed to be loud hoots that the fire engines make here - obviously, no-one takes any notice of the sirens. It reminded us too forcibly of that tanker bearing down on us at Knottingley.

On Sunday morning we got ready to do our usual thing of turning up at the nearest church around 10.30 and hoping we were within half an hour of a service time. Fortunately we were ready in good time today because at 09.50 Auntie Barbara arrived on her way to the 10.00am service at the Parish Church. We piled into Andrew's car and hurried in before the end of the first hymn. The Boaters' Christian Fellowship, formed in 1995, of which we are founder members, has compiled a Church Directory to help us avoid this kind of uncertainty and we are encouraging churches near the waterways to display their service times near mooring places, where possible. We found folks at St. Peter's

friendly and welcoming, especially with A.B. to introduce us, over a cup of coffee after the service. The inhabitants of Huddersfield seem to be more aware of their canals than is the case in many towns and to have a positive attitude to them too. Something to do with the stalwart work of a certain canal society? The local press also seems to be interested and sympathetic. In some places we visit, folks hardly know they have a canal. In Leicester, earlier in the summer, two lots of local visitors had quite a job finding us, and one of them had been born and brought up in the city!

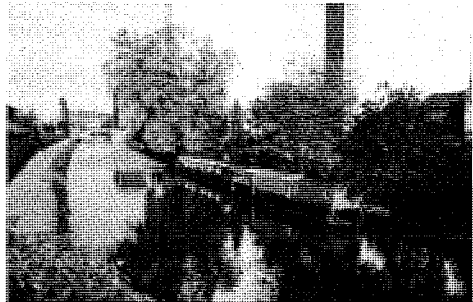
We enjoyed 3 days seeing the familiar town from this unfamiliar viewpoint and spending time with family. Paul's parents came home from a few days away to an extra washing-day - the boat's curtains badly needed freshening up after the winter's wood-smoke and condensation - but they also enjoyed a meal out at *The Aspley*, with half-price tokens from Bran Flakes!

On Monday we moved back round the corner to take on water and then found a quieter mooring opposite Sainsbury's. We were amused by the technique of a lady on a cruiser whose large dog started eating Toby's tea: she simply removed it by hooking its collar with the boat-hook. Must remember that one.

It was time to retrace our steps down the nine locks and Wednesday was a pleasant day for it. As I was closing the barrier at Turnbridge, a man called from his 4 x 4:



Toby enjoying the garden at Suggden's flour mill, Brighouse.



Offside mooring opposite the mural-decorated market, Brighouse.

"What's the problem?" "No problem", I replied, "I'm putting the bridge up for a boat!" Whereupon, looking rather sheepish, he turned and drove off. He must have thought better of finding another route, though, for he was soon across when I lowered the bridge again.

Now, a question. Can someone please tell me the purpose of the horizontal rollers fixed on the canal-side in several places along this stretch? None of the guide-books mentions them.

Going down the locks with our 60' boat was tricky, because of the sill (cill? - BW are inconsistent!). The few inches of the overhang of the stem post makes all the difference on the way up. Gradually, we worked out a system, which also had to be employed all the way down the Calder & Hebble. Point the bow into one corner, trying to keep the stern in the middle of the lock, and keeping the front rope on-shore. When the lock is empty, take the rope to the far side, open that gate, pull the bow across, throw the rope on board. In some of the locks, the bow couldn't clear the mitre and Paul then had to lift the front fender up while I heaved on the rope - warm work.

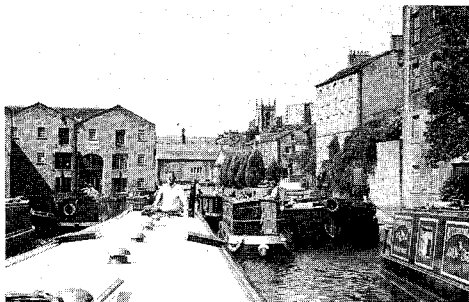
Down at lock 1, the lady from the cottage asked me to leave the bottom gate open, which I did gladly, remembering my experience of disembarking there on the way up!

In our 5 days on the Huddersfield Broad, we had met one boat on the way up (the cruiser that had had to turn back), four boats came up after us and we met no-one on the return trip. This was in the second

week of July. Mind you, none of the waterways we had been on this season had been busy, apart from the Llangollen, where we had foolishly found ourselves crossing Pontcysyllte on the May Day holiday!

Brighouse was an attractive place to stop that night, next to the beautiful little garden on the offside at Sugden's flour mill. There was a loud constant hum, but we did sleep, although it took me until lunch-time to feel normal! I enjoyed the wild flowers on my walks between locks. After nearly 2 years on board *Veritas*, I am getting to know them and find it interesting to make notes of what I see in different parts of the country. The change in flora as you cross the Pennines on the Leeds & Liverpool is fascinating - just like the weather as you drive along the M62! In 1996, British Waterways produced a survey form for boaters to record their sightings of five different 'rare' species of wildlife. I sent for one of these early in the season, and by the autumn had completed and returned 11 cards! I look forward to seeing the published results of the survey and hope BW will repeat the experiment with different species. It is good to know that they are taking such an active interest in the wildlife of the waterways.

The guillotine gate at Salterhebble presented no problems - I'm good at pressing buttons now - but the two locks above are very short. The last pound at Sowerby Bridge is a lovely relaxing cruise after all the locks, and the basin there with its interesting old warehouses and chapels a suitable climax.



Looks like a Sowerby Bridge traffic jam!



Kirklees Lock and hotel.



## Encounters on the Calder & Hebble

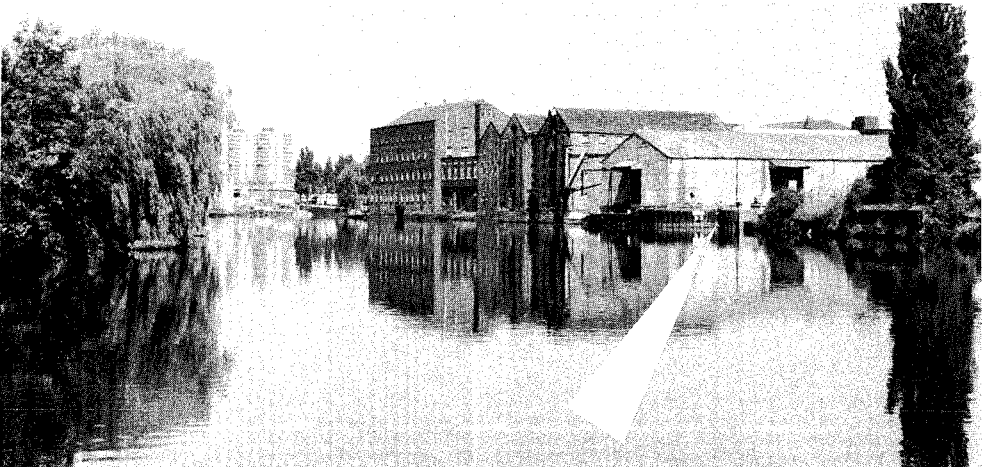
The atmosphere created by what the locals of Sowerby Bridge referred to as 'Canal Weekend' - the opening of the Tuel Lane Lock - seemed still to permeate the small town. The general excitement was reflected in the June newsletter of the parish church, which had been fully involved in the celebrations. We considered going on up the Rochdale, but decided to save that experience for another occasion, as by now we were thinking ahead for a change - two friends from Oxford were joining us for a week's holiday on the Leeds & Liverpool quite soon.

So, after 3 enjoyable days at Sowerby Bridge seeing various friends, we were off again, bracing ourselves for Salterhebble Locks. The lock-keeper saw us coming and asked our length, on hearing which he advised us to go down the first two locks stern first and 'spin round' at the bottom, so we did. Fortunately, there is room to spin round both above and below these locks, otherwise we might have made even slower progress to Brighouse than we did. A very small hire boat was coming up the second lock with two very nervous Frenchmen in charge. The reason for their anxiety, the one on the lock-side told me, was that, earlier, someone had 'dived in the lock' after a rope - I think this was accidental from his tone. We stopped for lunch after spinning round,

but the short pound, which looks so pretty, is not an ideal mooring. Our dog didn't make it up the steep bank and had to be left ashore to dry out; and when *Hereford* came down and filled the third lock, we edged up on to the bank.

Our slow progress was, of course, due to the laborious system we had developed for getting our 60' of boat out of the bottom gates of the (roughly) 57'6" locks. It wasn't long before a shorter narrowboat was following us down but, unlike many boaters, who would be pleased to come and lend a hand, thereby moving us all ahead a bit faster, the (male) lock-wheeler merely waited for us to go out before whipping up a top paddle - usually before I had got the gate shut and once before I'd even dropped the paddle, at which I let out a yell, which stopped him. How much more enjoyable for everyone to work together. Sometimes I find myself setting a lock two or three times, when there's a bit of queue - you meet two or three times the number of interesting people! Perhaps he couldn't cope with our system - the few gongoozlers we met were certainly bemused by it.

Fortunately, friendly boaters are far more numerous than unfriendly ones and none more than the crew of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme boat *E Austen Johnson*, whom we met next day between the locks at Brighouse. The skipper wanted



Warehouse on the River Calder at Wakefield - spot the lock gate! (*been there, have done, arrowed. Ed!*)

to know our exact route from the South Oxford - a fairly long and convoluted story, only some of which you have heard.

On Wednesday we were expecting our friend John Halliday to join us for the day and Paul wanted to go up the Dewsbury Arm for the night, so that he wouldn't have too far to walk to meet us. However, as we came out of Thornhill Double Locks, from my perspective on the bank I was pretty sure that *Veritas* would not be able to turn the sharp corner back to the left through the bridge, but I should have known better than to say 'You'll never make it', because he was then determined to try. On this occasion I was right, and after a few attempts we moored up below the junction and phoned John, who said helpfully: "You could do it from the other direction." We arranged to meet him at Horbury Bridge, but he walked up and joined us at Figure of Three Locks.

The log records that it was the first calm day we had had - for weeks, it seemed. Sitting on the high bank with their legs dangling at Thornes Flood Lock were several men in business suits. One of them asked whether I was reading something interesting and when I said 'a flower book', he asked if I had a butterfly book. They wanted to know what those long blue things were - damselflies. There were certainly lots of them about on this warm sunny day.

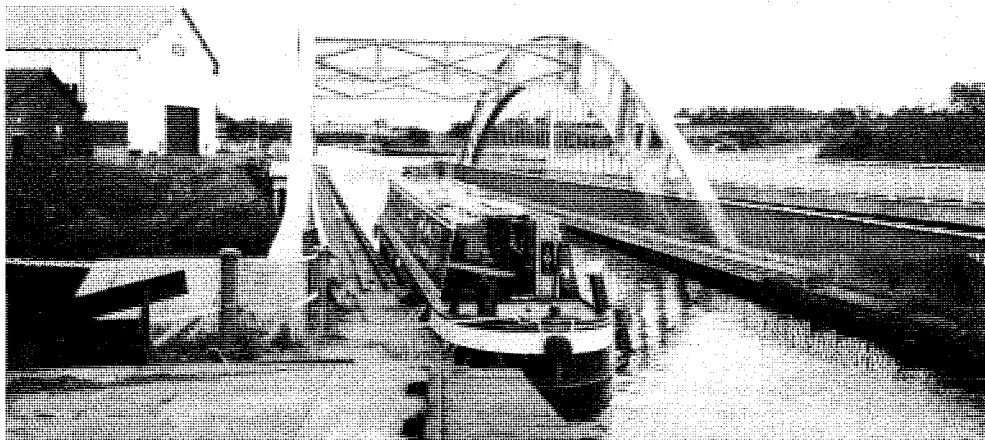
Below Fall Ing Lock, a couple on a boat coming up the river called out: "Is it electric?". They had a shock coming to them! (*I'll vouch for that! Ed.*)

At Stanley Ferry, where we had acquired our hand-spike, Paul asked me if I wanted to keep it, or claim back £3 from the chandlers. I found to my surprise that I had become quite attached to it and even thought we might return one day, so it is still propped up in the boatman's cabin, a tangible reminder of our cruise to Huddersfield.

*What a lovely story - more, any time, Winifred. The horizontal rollers are capstans, located at "bed plugs", wooden doors - about 2'0" square - on the bottom of the canal. They are used to empty a pound, when necessary, and have attached to them a large chain which is normally lying on the bottom of the cut. When required, the chain is fished out, attached to the capstan/barrel and - hey presto! There are lots of them along the full length of the Huddersfield Broad and Narrow canals.*

*I endorse the comments about the E. Austen Johnson. "The Wife" and I skipped it regularly a few years ago and were very impressed by all involved.*

**NEXT TIME** - "The Wife" returns with an account of a 'long break' trip on the Lancaster Canal.



Stanley Ferry, old and new aqueducts.

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# Standedge Experience Storyline

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*The fifth part of a serialisation of 'Storyline', the background material prepared for the Society by Archaemedia Ltd., as part of our Millennium Bid report on the Standedge Experience.*

## **THE STANDEGE TUNNEL**

### **Tunnels in General**

**The digging of the Standedge Tunnel was a formidable, if not foolhardy, project, and it filled observers with awe - "(this) certainly is the most stupendous Piece of Work, of its kind, that has ever been projected in this Kingdom, both for Depth and Length". During construction its costs escalated inexorably above Outram's original estimate of £55,187, and the date of completion receded into the future. A combination of inexperience, poor planning on behalf of the committee, a persistent and occasionally chronic shortage of capital, and the absence of general contractors to undertake the work meant that the whole canal project was held up by as much as ten years.**

Of all canal works, those that took the greatest toll in terms of effort and hard work - and injuries and death - were the tunnels. From the very first, the canal tunnel was an engineer's nightmare. On the Trent and Mersey Canal James Brindley achieved the famously 'impossible' aqueduct at Barton with little trouble, but he never lived to see the end of the eleven years that were spent on the old Harecastle Tunnel (1755 to 1766). Yet, as a piece of engineering, the Harecastle was crude, unfinished, a rough hole through the hillside. But its 2,880 yards all had to be cut through the most difficult ground with only the most primitive of techniques. Harecastle Old was constructed like an 18th century coal mine - it was bored narrow, cramped and a little wonky, and it had no towpath, with its portal a simple semicircular hole let into a curving brick wall.

The technology of tunnelling came from the mines, and the men who did the skilled work in canal tunnelling mostly came from the same source. Tunnel building involved digging, shoring up, mucking out and lining with bricks - water, fire,

collapsing roofs and walls, mud, sand and hard rock were expected hazards. The basic plan of work was the same for most tunnels. Firstly a survey would be made and a line pegged out. Drainage headings would be dug alongside the line of the tunnel to take away water and shafts sunk down from the hill to the depth of the tunnel at regular intervals. Miners would then be sent down these shafts and digging begun in both directions at once. The 'English Method' of tunnelling meant driving a narrow heading or pilot tunnel first which was then extended sideways and downwards to make the tunnel proper. As work progressed the shafts were used both to take rubble out of the works, and as access for lowering and raising the workers themselves. The rock would be blasted out with gunpowder, but the bulk of the work was carried out by men wielding picks and shovels. It was hard and terribly dangerous work to do, as witnessed by the comments of the Reverend Stebbing Shaw ('A Tour To The West of England in 1788') when he visited a tunnel excavation:

*"Thus far in the mountain, with the aid of lights, 'tis easy enough of access; but such a horrid gloom, such rattling of wagons, noise of workmen boring the rocks under your feet, such explosions in blasting, and such a dreadful gulph to descend, present a scene of terror that few people, who are not versed in mining, care to pass through ... On the passage down, the constant blasting of the rocks, louder than the loudest thunder, seems to roll and shake the whole body of the mountain ... the glimmering light of candles, and suffocating smell of sulphur and gunpowder, all conspire to increase surprise and heighten apprehension .. at the same time figure to yourself the sooty complexions of the miners, their labour, and mode of living, and you may truly fancy yourself in another world."*

The self-induced and pleasurable horror that Shaw describes is something of a stock reaction from an 18th century gentleman (these were the same generations who used to visit the 'madhouses' for education/entertainment), but the conditions in the narrow tunnel workings were truly terrible. Even in the 1830s, with sixty years of tunnelling experience in canal works to draw on, the railway tunnellers worked under the same conditions. In 'An Account

of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway' (1830) the author Henry Booth said:

*"On some occasions the miners refused to work ... Nor is this surprising, considering the nature of the operation: boring their way almost in the dark, with the water streaming round them and uncertain whether the props and stays would bear the pressure from above till the arch-work should be completed. Those who visit the Tunnel in its present state ... will not easily picture to themselves the original dark and dangerous cavern, with the roof and side supported by shores, while the miners pursued their arduous task by the light of a few candles, whose feeble glimmer glancing on the water which ran down the sides, or which spread out in a sheet below, was barely sufficient to show the dreariness of the place."*

Work on the great tunnels went on night and day, and, indeed, in those gloomy holes there was very little difference between the two. Excavation was chancy because of lack of geological information, although shaft-sinking provided some guide, and water was another great danger. It could be lifted out of the shafts by horses or men winding out buckets, or by pumps, either wind or steam, as was the spoil which was usually just dumped beside the mouth of the shaft. The tools used by the workmen were as simple as they come - pick, shovel, crowbar, and an auger for drilling the shot holes. Illumination was by candle, in spite of the threat of firedamp in tunnels which passed through coal measures. Ventilation was a difficult problem to solve, but one way was to light a fire at the bottom of one shaft in order to create a rising stream of warm air, which in turn would bring fresh air down an adjacent shaft, but only if the works had advanced to that point where they were connected. If the tunnel needed lining due to bad rock then the most common material used was brick, although masonry was used sometimes. In many examples the tunnel was not lined at all which would prove to be a great saving of money.

It was in tunnelling that the worst accidents happened: the falls of earth, trapping and suffocating a man; the damage from blasting; the inevitable accidents that happened when men took the precarious ride up and down the shafts, travelling in buckets suspended by ropes. The Company records seldom mentioned the accidents that happened in the works, but parish registers show a number of deaths to 'strangers' that coincided with a period of canal construction.

Occasionally there is some mention of compensation, but canal companies and contractors were not particularly noted for their benevolence towards the men who were injured and maimed in the workings. The Huddersfield Canal Company, in charge of the largest of all the tunnelling projects, kept no record of the accidents that must have happened in the tunnel, but there is witness to their frequency in the Company's minute book: *"Whereas several of the Workmen of this company have been much hurt and bruised in the Company's Works, it is thought that Mr. Rooth should subscribe to the Manchester Infirmary."*

Because of the economics of the privately financed British canals, tunnels were built to small dimensions, the width of a single narrow boat and without towpaths. Some had chains or wires stapled to the walls of the tunnel for boatmen to haul themselves along, but in most the form of propulsion was legging, sometimes replaced by steam tugs in later years. To speed traffic, some tunnels were widened into passing places, and Standedge had four of these, fitted with mooring rings.

Taking a horse-powered boat through a tunnel, especially a long one with no towpath, was hard work. Some of the early tunnels look incredibly small from the outside, and inside there was only enough room for one boat. It was damp and claustrophobic and not surprisingly tunnels bred strange stories, fed by the dark journeys and eerie effects. There was always the frightening possibility of a boat foundering and sinking while deep underground. At the entrance to a tunnel with no towpath a horse was unhitched and led away over the top via a horse-path to rejoin its boat on the other side. As the horse was led over the hill, its boat would be shafted by poles, pulled along by chains, or more commonly 'legged' through the tunnel. Legging was the process where a man was placed at each side of the boat and simply walked along the tunnel wall and drove the boat forwards. It was usually done by boat crews themselves but occasionally professional leggers were provided by the Canal Companies, who housed them in huts or cottages at the tunnel entrances. It could take hours to leg a boat through a long tunnel and every hour was numbingly the same as the last, with bodies cramped and twisted in the damp air. The effect of the candlelit tunnel walls moving slowly past was hypnotic: when the journalist John Hillingshead was legged through the Blisworth

Tunnel in 1858 he found that the combination of the slow darkness and the boatmen's songs filled his mind with the *"large masses of misery and the utter nothingness of the things of the upper world"*.

### The Tunnel Under Standedge

The initial efforts to cut the subterranean passage through the millstone grit and shale which underlie Standedge came soon after the company's Act had been obtained. The intention was to open the tunnel simultaneously from both ends, and also from a series of eighteen shafts to be sunk from the moorland above, but economy immediately dictated the abandonment of four of these. Outram clearly hoped that time would be saved by working from many points, but a combination of factors soon ruined his intention. The use of so many shafts immediately created huge drainage problems as surface water seeped steadily into the workings. Characteristically, the annual report of 1796 made a lame attempt to turn even this into an advantage by stating that: *"From the springs already opened, and general nature of the Strata, there is great reason to expect a very copious supply of water from the tunnel, probably sufficient for the summit of the canal, without the aid of reservoirs."*

In June 1796 Outram reported to the General Assembly that 445 yards of tunnel had been cut at the east end and 350 yards at the west, whilst four of the shafts were finished and the other ten being worked 24 hours a day. Outram had erected eight *'water engines'* to help lift the spoil from the shafts, but the high volume of water emerging from the millstone grit had caused one *'large steam engine'* to be in use full-time at Red Brook to drain the works, with three smaller ones working part-time at other shafts. The costs of dealing with this water eventually meant that they stopped work at some of the shafts entirely. Whitworth's report pointed out that the Company were too concerned with employing machinery to clear the excess water rather than dealing with the problem itself, an issue which was to lead to much of the delays in the construction of the tunnel. The water-balance engines required the construction of complicated feeder systems and drainage adits, which were also intended to be drains for surface water. All this used up precious time and money, and by 1796 1,485 yards of small tunnels had been built for these adits, equal to more than a quarter of the intended length of the great tunnel itself. Furthermore, gangs of labourers had to be dispersed over several locations to keep up with this extra, unplanned workload, which complicated

the problem of supervision and required the building of navy settlements on Standedge Moor beside these sites.

All this distracted the Company's efforts away from the main work on the tunnel, but what little had been completed had produced even more problems. Elementary surveying errors had led to the heading at Diggle being much higher than that at Marsden. When the Diggle end was reworked to the correct level, the foundations of the stone sidewalls and arches were undermined, and these had to be completely rebuilt. As if this was not enough, the supposedly straight tunnel was beginning to diverge from its intended course - in later years, after Telford had made his survey, the section between Red Brook and Brun Clough was driven through with an alignment error of up to an astounding 7.9 metres.

The excavation work struggled on, but a further opportunity to put the work on a steadier footing was missed in 1799 when Outram's offer to take over responsibility for the tunnel works between Brun Clough and Pule Hill was allowed to pass due to the Committee's procrastinations. Before they could consider the offer the crises caused by that summer's floods overtook them and work on the tunnel ground to a virtual standstill for several years. In October 1801 John Rooth was given the responsibility for overseeing the use of direct labour to drive the work from both ends of the tunnel, and at the same time Outram quietly withdrew from his involvement with the project, probably frustrated by the persistent lack of progress under Standedge. Little changed in the ensuing five years as the Company battled with the physical problems of the tunnelling and with the bigger overall problems they were facing with the financing of the project. By June 1806 there remained in total 1,387 yards where work had not even begun, and the £75,755 expended had already exceeded the original estimate of £55,187 by over a third.

It was the arrival of Thomas Telford that blew life into the enterprise with the great engineer concentrating most of his efforts on the tunnel. His report in January 1807 was impressively detailed and authoritative, giving exact details of how the work should proceed, how long it would take, and how much it would cost. Telford's certainty was partly fostered by his discovery that the drainage problem had eased, with the shale *"in general becoming dry and firm"*. He also concluded that, *"From this investigation it appears that there is*

reason to expect the tunnel will be completed in December 1810: I think this may be considered as the extreme limit". The Committee followed Telford's instructions although his estimate of £55,290 needed to finish the tunnel was almost exactly the same figure as Outram's original estimate for the construction of the entire tunnel in 1793.

From this point on the tunnel excavation work proceeded in a regular fashion and in June 1809 Rooth reported that "the tunnel is perforated and the line and level agree". A year and a half later, on the 10th December 1810, a boat passed along the full length of the Standedge Tunnel for the first time, just as Telford had predicted. Like the project as a whole, the tunnel cost well over double of the original estimate to complete, with a final outlay of £123,804 out of £396,267 spent. Critics heaped odium on the Company and this apparent waste of money: "Such an expensive narrow canal as this, I think, was never heard of in the world before". They pointed out that even for the expense much of the work was of very poor quality, with poorly situated and constructed reservoirs and locks that "which, at last, become little better than a heap of rubbish."

However exaggerated some of these criticisms were, it is clear that the project was handicapped from the start by the inexperience of the engineers entrusted with designing and building the works, and much of the criticism at the time revolved around the extra expense that had been unnecessarily wasted due to this. What was universally ignored was the cost in human lives that building the canal and tunnel had entailed, with over fifty deaths attributed to the building of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal. Contemporary references to this steady wastage of human life are sparse and often consisted of brief, matter-of-fact statements outlining the bare details of someone's violent demise; for example "... one George Sparth, a respectable member of society who was killed in the (Standedge) tunnel in an instant by an explosion of gunpowder" (June, 1803 Parish Records, Marsden). Such terse descriptions afford only a glimpse of a harsh working environment in which the scale and daring of the enterprise could sometimes back-fire on the men who were making it reality.

Next time "The Reservoirs and the end game"

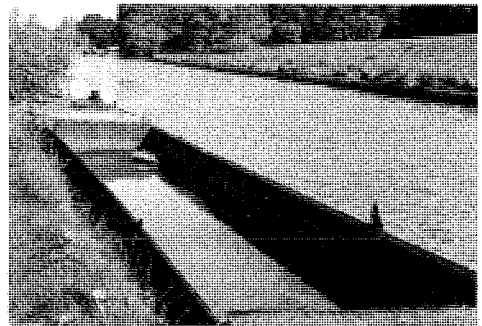
## WATER MATTERS

Waterways World recently reported a British Waterways announcement that they intended to implement a new initiative on their waterways.

Following several years of lower than average rainfall and consequently lower water levels it had been decided to set up a task force. The task force would be supplied with a fleet of steel narrowboats, positioned strategically, and at the first sign of declining water levels a boat could be rushed to the spot to discharge its valuable cargo. A BW spokesman was quoted as saying "As soon as we get a report of low water anywhere on the canal system you can rely on us to get stuck in".

The photograph, opposite, and credited to Gordon Mills, shows one of the water-carrying emergency boats.....which looks amazingly like one of our mud hoppers after a few days inactivity and a couple of rain showers.

Further investigation reveals the date of the Waterways World - April 1998 - and the implementation date for the initiative - April 1st! Well done, WW!



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# Profile - Alec Ramsden

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Here we go again. I think I'm about to fall out with Editor Ken - not for the first time. Why? Because I don't approve of this type of column.

I'm firmly of the opinion that autobiographical articles aren't the best way of uncovering a person's abilities, achievements, failures, weaknesses. After all who is going to write "*I am a long winded egotistical twit, puffed up with my own importance, determined to inflate my own ego and out for all I can get?*" Much better, in my considered view, as a cynical, long-in-the-tooth journalist, to have an interviewer asking sometimes probing but appropriate, questions and analysing the answers. So, hoping that Ken won't be wielding his blue pencil again, here's Ramsden interviewing Ramsden.

*What's your personal background?*

Married to Margaret with a son, Graham. Been a newspaper journalist all my working life. For 25 years was Chief Reporter at the Huddersfield office of the "Yorkshire Post" and took early retirement about four years ago. Still cobble out the odd piece on my WP and report Huddersfield Giants RL matches.

*When did you become interested in the campaign to restore the Narrow Canal?*

The first link goes back to 1958 when, as a young reporter on the "Huddersfield Examiner" I was diaried to join a cruise through Standedge Tunnel. Passengers included local schoolchildren and we stopped several times while engineers inspected the fabric of the tunnel. It took about four hours, I was bored almost to tears and annoyed - the pub was closed when we reached Diggle.

I knew quite a few of the early HCS pioneers, including Messrs Maynard, Dewey and Kirkham, but my first full scale feature about restoration concerned the Rochdale. That marvellous man David Hutchings, who achieved a miracle in bringing about re-opening of the River Avon, came North to talk about his work to Rochdale Canal

Society members. I interviewed him and did a piece about the possibility of creating a cruisable Ring of Roses. A few years ago I renewed acquaintance with David while cruising the Avon and Severn and reminded him that one of his forecasts was wrong - the Narrow had not been restored by "the early eighties!"

I wrote quite a few articles about how the campaigns to re-open the Narrow and the Rochdale were proceeding, joined HCS and then, about 15 years ago, was "invited" by Keith Gibson to become Press Officer.

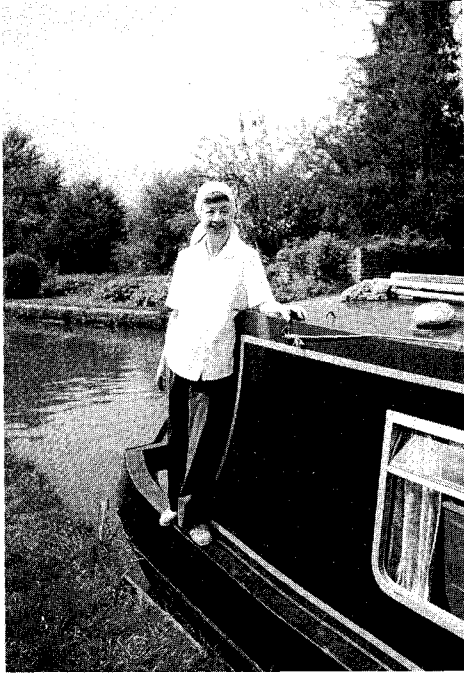
Over the years I've produced a vast variety of releases and articles about the restoration drive. In the early days it was nitty-gritty stuff - one of the first was about Sue Chadwick winning the award for the best canal society magazine. Then came the setting up of HCS Restoration, the formation of the Joint Committee and the major events which led to the successful Millennium bid - after a lot of hard work by quite a number of HCS staff and others.

I think I can claim (justifiably blowing my own trumpet) to have produced at least three-quarters of the positive articles about the restoration drive - that means around 200 stories - "biggies" and "smallies." Now I'm having to take a back seat on the publicity side as HCS itself is, following the setting up of the Huddersfield Canal Company, but I serve on the Company's Marketing Group, the Promotions Group and the Saddleworth Festival Committee.

*What do waterways generally mean to you?*

Quite a lot since I discovered their attractions way back in the early 1970's with a family holiday on a hire boat operating from Tewksbury on the River Avon. It was hardly an auspicious introduction for the boat, "Gay Glamour" (no comments please), was a tiny plastic cruiser with the most basic of facilities, including a 15 gallon water tank - and this supply of the wet stuff had to be used for cooking AND personal hygiene. There was one luxury - a flush toilet, discharging straight into the Avon which is

*Right:* Father and son relax at the tiller while Mum (*below*) adopts a boatside pose.



And there are happy recollections of Saturdays spent helping hire boaters along the Broad to Shepley Bridge. I was particularly impressed by the ability of a surgeon from Edinburgh. Before L.B. Holliday's we had emptied a bottle of ten-year-old malt - he must have had at least three quarters, but he never turned a hair.

*What gets you annoyed?*

At the time of writing the fact that although it's 18 months since the announcement was joyfully made of Millennium and English Partnerships funding) not a single scheme has got off the ground. It's about time that the Narrow was buzzing with the sound of JCB's and pedantic nit-picking ended. Alan Stopher, the Project director, has, currently, a full head of hair. The way things are going (or aren't), he's likely to have torn most of it out in frustration by the turn of the century.

*Do you have any faults?*

I must confess that I'm not perfect. For example, as I said at the start of this article, I occasionally fall out with people. And... Oh, sorry, I'm afraid I've run out of space.

**Alec Ramsden**  
Press Officer

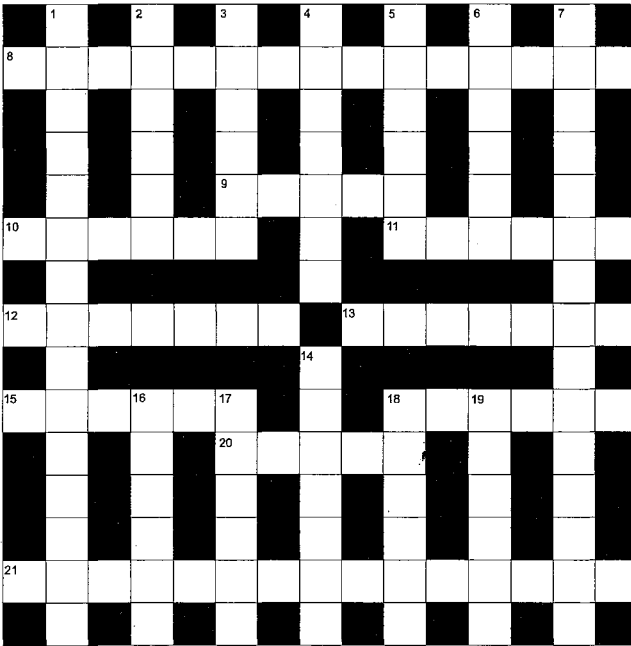
a popular fishing river. I've never eaten trout since!

Hire boat cruising has been a vital part of the Ramsden holiday scene since. This year we clock up our 35th hiring and we've cruised most of the country's waterways. Then there have been other "experiences" including boat deliveries and a memorable month-long cruise (from Huddersfield), round the Cheshire Ring with friends, who regarded it as an opportunity to get away from domestic restraints and (disgraceful) drink to excess.

Other boating has included stints crewing the "Calder Lady" when it operated on "booze cruises" on the Broad Canal. On one of these, on a miserable drenchingly wet night, wearing my wellies and woolly cap I had my identify changed by a lady passenger. "My God, it's Compo" she said as I requested drinks for the "on top" navigator and assistants. But she had demolished a bottle of sweet Martini.



# Canal Crossword - 21



21. Pepper then, on lot  
riverside NW of York (6,9).

## DOWN

1. North of Stoke Bruerne go  
subterranean for 3057 yards  
(9,6).
2. I know less than you about  
the wide locks on the G.U. (6).
3. Boil in river below a  
Bridgewater aqueduct (6).
4. Son lags boat below some  
Lancaster canal locks (7).
5. Dial number twice on  
waterways away from the  
coast (6).
6. Not tall culvert required  
here on the Thames and  
Severn (6).
7. Stay ration stain at  
canalside facilities (8,7).

## ACROSS

8. Apt location for a waterways singing  
festival (10,5).
9. Nibs with two points used by a  
Norwegian author (5).
10. Alcoholic nephews use nepote  
in Ireland (6).
11. Mad hun found beside the Bridgewater  
canal (6).
12. Swans nests on the T & M south of  
Derby (7).
13. Sole toy selling boatyard in Banbury in  
former times (7).
15. Bleats heard where a horse should be -  
strange! (6).
18. Finding a twee pigs home enables you  
to describe the N Oxford canal in its original  
state (6).
20. Fish made mainly of coal (5).

14. A very indefinite article  
found between a very definite French article  
and an example of arboreal multiplicity  
where water is lifted into the Cromford  
canal (7).
16. Bert and the Health Service initially have  
a solution to onboard sleeping  
accommodation shortage (6).
17. Dutch elm or English oak found  
Sevenside below Gloucester (6).
18. With the help of Mr. Nicholson find out  
where you have a Boat, a Jolly Boatman,  
Aubrey and BW in one place on the  
southern Oxford! (6).
19. A river which causes the symptoms of  
scabies we hear (6).

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

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# The Waterways Code

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Preparing to set forth on another canal holiday - this time on the "Mon & Brec" in Wales - the boat hirers sent us a video of "The Waterways Code" to study. Produced by British Waterways and endorsed by the Association of Pleasure Craft Operators, it offers a typical day out on a canal narrowboat.

The film, which is only seventeen minutes long, is well produced, narrated by Peter Davison, (who claims to be an enthusiast), and accompanied by (probably electronic) plummy string music.

The intention is obviously to give boat hirers more information on canal boating than is usually possible on a hand-over - remember our German reader's comments in PLink 124!

In most of this it succeeds and we are told about buoyancy aids, fire precautions, passing on the right - all in the first twenty seconds. On to different kinds of locks and how to operate different paddle gear, handling a windlass properly, pushing a balance beam with your backside, looking for cills and keeping feet clear.

We are advised to re-board from the back of the boat, which is not always possible.

The different procedures at broad locks and river locks are described, and the usefulness of lock-keepers.

On to swing bridges and lift bridges - operate without the help of children or "passers-by".

A very silly knot is used which has never featured on any sailing course or Scout "knot-board". Probably traditional - but so were lacy hats!

A few cautionary notes about overheating/loss of power and weed hatches, keeping speed down, considering all other canal user types.

And finally, a nice trip through a tunnel, a lovely sunset, and a reminder that using canals correctly is well worth the effort.

And all very well, as far as it goes, but I feel that a further five or ten minutes would have filled in a few important gaps.

My list of errors and omissions - and I suppose everyone's would be different! - is:-

*How did he fill the first lock?*

*Never use feet in locks or anywhere else!*

*What happened to horn signals?*

*It is quicker at locks to wind paddles down while waiting for the boat to enter or leave.*

*On rivers it can be hazardous re-boarding "at the back".*

*No hints on leaving a bankside without scraping along for half a mile.*

*Experience teaches us to stop the boat immediately after a lock or bridge.*

*At swing or lift bridges it is as well to check for traffic!*

*On rivers adults should also wear buoyancy aids.*

*There is no comment anywhere about problems at bridge holes, dealing with moorings, observing 'private' land, protecting mooring pins and other everyday matters.*

All in all a good attempt - and certainly better than nothing! About 8 out of 10 - could try harder!

Ken Wright

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# Canal Walk 5 by John Harwood

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## WHERE TO GET THE CANAL BUGS

One day when you are planning a day out to Buxton or the Peak District spare yourself an hour (or more) to have a walk round Buxworth basin. Coming from Stockport along the A6 watch for Furness Vale Marina and shortly thereafter a railway bridge, take a hard left immediately through the bridge on the Chinley road and you will find Buxworth in about 1½ miles. From Glossop you can follow the road over Chunal Hill to Hayfield and keep straight on until you reach a junction under another railway bridge. A right here towards (and through) Chinley will bring you towards Buxworth. The basins are to be found on the left coming from Chinley (after passing under the railway twice) and the right travelling towards Chinley. Park a few yards down the hill on the left and be prepared to be immersed in canal history.

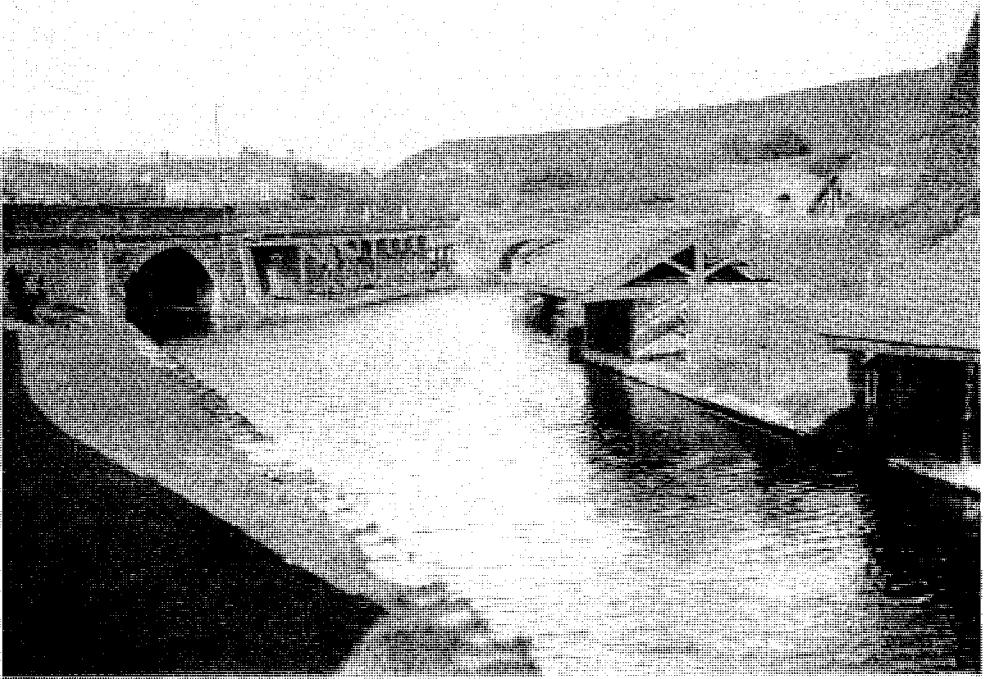
The name Bugsworth (or Buggesworth) was something of an irritant to the locals so it was changed to Buxworth by popular vote in 1932 and is the location of the interchange between the plateways which brought in limestone from the local quarries, principally those at Dove Holes, and the Peak Forest Canal. The stone was loaded for transport into Manchester as was burnt lime (the former lime kilns are part of the site) which was used for agricultural purposes. Coal (for the kilns) and other goods formed the return loads.

Start your stroll by walking to the western end of the basins (where the canal leaves towards Manchester) where you will find the gauging lock, not so much a lock as a short narrow stretch where, using a gauging stick, the toll collector would measure how deep a boat was lying at four points and then by averaging those readings and referring to the gauging book (boats were tested with sample weights when they were first launched) calculate the tonnage of cargo. Some boats would be charged cash

for the toll whereas company boats could well be recorded for monthly invoicing direct to the boat company office. To one side you will find the toll collector's cottages commonly referred to as "Teapot Row". Reputedly they were built so small that you could empty the teapot through the back or front window without leaving your seat.

Facing back towards the basins you can begin to appreciate the amount of work done by the Inland Waterways Protection Society who have been on site continuously since 1968 fighting the effects of dereliction, leaky canal beds and the possible elimination of the site by the by-pass almost directly above you. Their efforts, which continue to this day, were rewarded with a bronze plaque in 1970 from the European Conservation Year Countryside Awards. One of the bridges you see has been painted by the efforts of just one person.

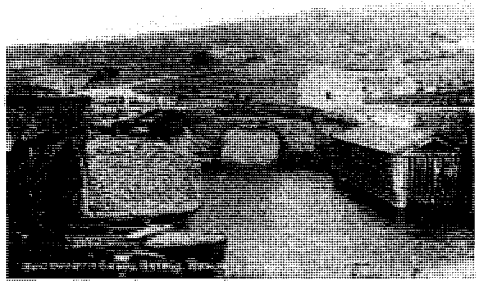
However, let us return to the history of the place. Originally formed of just one basin it is now in several parts. Away to your right (below the by-pass) is a basin thought to have been used mainly for the storage and marshalling of empty boats. Retracing your steps you will pass 'The Island' on which used to be sheds for the storage of burnt lime, with covers so that it could be loaded without getting damp (note the foundations which carried the shed roof). To your left is a short arm on which can be seen the remains of some of the many lime kilns that used to be sited here. The plateway led to the top of the kilns so that coal and stone could be fed in in alternate layers. As you cross the road you pass the site of the former 'Tiplers' - equipment which could pick up the wagons from the rails and tip the stone contents directly into boats; these used to be powered by human effort, by a treadmill. Everywhere note the stone blocks which carried the rails of the plateways. On the opposite bank can be seen the foundation of a crane which helped in the loading and unloading of boats. Looking away to the east are the tracks of the



*Above:* Bugsworth Basin photographed in June 1928, showing the Tramway unloading wharf.

*Below Left:* Bugsworth. The line in the foreground leads to the top of the Lime Kilns. The building on the right is the weighbridge for checking the amount of stone supplied.

*Below Right:* Bugsworth Canal Bridge with a lime transfer shed on the right and a boat emerging from the Buxton Lime Firms' private wharf on the left.



railways, totalling some twenty three miles to various quarries, down which the horse-drawn wagons loaded with stone arrived. Between here and Dove Holes there used to be a long inclined plane where the full trucks (travelling downwards) hauled the empty returning trucks upwards. The trucks were slowed or stopped by a brakeman who had to insert a handspike between the wheel spokes and the truck undercarriage

whilst the truck was in motion - the cause of more than a few injuries!

Now back at your car, turn your back on the canal and you will see the local pub - what else but 'The Navigation'! Venture inside for some refreshment and food after your exercise and with the aid of the many photographs on display you can tell whether your mental picture of Buxworth basin in its working heyday was correct.

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# What The Papers Say

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There has been quite a lot of 'press' again since the deadline for the last Pennine Link, so I will summarise the events before giving you some verbatim. All from the Oldham Chronicle - again - but that's nothing new. I don't think anybody in the Examiner or Reporter areas hears my pleas!

Fund-raising Dinner - Made about £600 for the Saddleworth Festival; the actual evening was livened up by an exchange between a guide dog and a parrot - the Chron's heading was "DOGGED HECKLER LEAVES A STAR TURN AS SICK AS A PARROT". See Alec Ramsden's article elsewhere.

Rochdale Canal - Still nothing on the political and financial problems of the Rochdale - and quite some fuss over the inquiry into the proposed major development around the canal in Failsforth. However there was one long newsy feature about the good work done so far in Chadderton (*which looks like the worst of Docklands to me. Ed!*) and one about about moving an electricity pylon.

Uppermill - A carefully prepared public relations exercise was scuppered by a political row about the possibility or not of two-way traffic during the High St, Uppermill (Wade Lock) works. The whole world now knows that there will be one-way working, with signals, for a considerable time and that High St. will be closed completely for short periods. Even so, there has only been one letter on the subject, and that was not critical of the scheme as a whole. In fact, the politicians were quick to say they were all in favour of the canal restoration. Like us all, they want the minimum of disruption in the process.

That leaves us with four separate articles on the opening of the guillotine lock gate, a step-forward planning application for the Wool Road work in Dobcross, a Chron. comment on the Rochdale, and a nice snippet to demonstrate Oldham Council's growing interest in the after-effects of restoration.

*This first piece occupied well over half a page and was accompanied by two excellent colour pictures.*

## Unique lock is a new feature on the skyline

A UNIQUE guillotine sliced through the waters of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal yesterday.

Far less deadly than the device made infamous during the French Revolution - but no less effective - this guillotine is a huge, specially-designed vertical gate, and is the only one in use on a British narrow canal.

Its giant framework, which is now a feature of the skyline at Slaithwaite, had to be built as part of the canal's multi-million pound restoration. This is because a bridge, widened after the waterway was closed, makes the use of a conventional lock gate impossible.

The £20,000 gate was officially commissioned by Dennis MacInnes, senior development manager of the Yorkshire region of English Partnerships, the Government agency which contributed 80 per cent of the cost, and Keith Gibson, chairman of Huddersfield Canal Society Restoration Ltd., which designed, manufactured and fitted the gate.

The structure includes a two-tonne counterbalance linked to a complicated system of pulleys and chains, enabling the 16ft gate to be lifted with a conventional lock key.

### Electrified

A fair amount of energy was needed for the test lift at the commissioning ceremony - 105 turns of a lock key were needed to raise the gate to its full height.

Boat crews may have an easier task at some stage, after the canal is fully operational, for the design permits the introduction of electrified operation.

Steve Whitby, managing director of HCS Restoration, said: *"The gate was tailor-made, designed and built by experts, but it was far from easy to get it to work smoothly. Now it is a superb, snug fit."*

Mr. Gibson said the project was expected to be the last linking the Huddersfield Canal Society, which contributed the remaining £4,000 towards the gate's cost, and English Partnerships, because future projects will be under the control of the Huddersfield Canal Company, which has been formed to oversee the final stages of restoration.

Oldham Evening Chronicle  
16th. April 1998

## CANAL VISION IS A STEP CLOSER

The vision of brightly-painted canal boats cruising through Saddleworth is coming a little nearer.

Oldham Council has applied for planning permission to reopen the Huddersfield Canal beneath Wool Road, Dobcross.

This is the last but one blockage on the popular waterway within the Oldham borough.

The other is where High Street, Uppermill, crosses the waterway at Wade Lock, near Saddleworth Museum.

Residents and visitors alike are expected to welcome a steady stream of narrow boats moving along the canal.

At present only one trip boat operates short cruises from Uppermill to Dobcross.

And the Huddersfield Canal Society believes the spin-off for tourism will be considerable.

It will provide a waterway link between Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire once the Stanedge Tunnel is reopened for navigation.

Meanwhile at Wool Road, council officers envisage a new stone-faced canal and pedestrian tunnel.

Oldham Council's Director of Technical Services, Philip Barrett, said the plan would not affect a near-by turning circle on the road.

And it would form an attractive entrance by canal to Uppermill.

It is expected that the work, which is part of a £14.85 million Millennium Commission-funded project, will start in late summer.

But formal planning approval will have to be granted by Oldham Council.

Oldham Evening Chronicle  
21st. April 1998

*(I am sick of 'sic'ing Stanedge in Chron. articles. They have a reason for doing it, I am told, that was explained in an article years ago. I wish they would repeat it for my benefit! Ed)*

## WATERWAY TRANSFORMED

The work on the Rochdale Canal at Chadderton has brought about an amazing transformation and is proof positive of the value to the environment and to recreation facilities that canal restoration can bring about.

From a rubbish-filled festering waterhole, the canal has been transformed into a broad sweeping waterway with a modern tunnel, a guide rail and an attractive coloured towpath. It is a vast improvement and gives an exciting glimpse of what the whole of the Rochdale Canal will look like when current disputes are ironed out and it is developed along its entire route.

The restoration of the canal at Chadderton - part of a £22.7 million project - is a lasting tribute to the enterprise and effort of the members of the Rochdale Canal Society, which was formed in 1974 with what must have seemed at the time, the impossible mission of restoring the near 200-year-old canal.

Various grants, outside engineering skills and a professional project co-ordinator have all played a major part in the restoration of the canal, but without the vision of those early pioneers of the canal society, it is likely that none of the work would have gone ahead and that when it came to building the motorway, what was left of the old

canal would simply have been filled in.

And what a tragedy that would have been. Although the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, on the other side of the borough, captures most of the headlines because of its passage through Stanedge tunnel and its largely rural setting, the Rochdale Canal has its own place in the history of the region.

Oldham Chronicle Comment  
1st. May 1998

## NORTHERN SCRAPBOOK

While we are on the subject of Oldham countryside service, what would *you* do to change the canalside at Brownhill Centre in

Dobcross, to make it more appropriate to canal-drawn visitors when the Huddersfield Narrow reopens in 2000-2001?

To find out your ideas, the centre is holding a suggestions day tomorrow, (*Wednesday 6th May. Ed*) (11am-4pm), during which you can have your say. If you are in the area drop in.

### Oldham Evening Chronicle 5th. May 1998

*(This event was followed up by a wine and cheese evening on the following day when interested parties, including HCS, were invited. Unfortunately, we couldn't attend but we look forward to getting the results of the two-day effort. Ed)*



## MOOR FOR EVERYONE



*The National Trust have recently published a leaflet which includes six self-guided walks interpreting their moorland estate surrounding Marsden and the eastern end of Standedge Tunnel.*

Property Manager (and long-standing HCS member) Dave Finnis says "In 1998 there will be even "moor" for everyone with walks ranging from a short evening gentle stroll (approx. 2 miles) to a long hard trek (not for the faint-hearted) which will cover some 18 miles of the wild Marsden Moorland, together with horse and cycle rides.

Visitors will have a chance to plant heather and trees, learn about photography, participate in a plant fair, country day, coffee mornings and a Christmas Fair".

Typical Events are:-

**20th June** - Early Morning Madness  
Annual 9 mile slog + meat and tatty pie

**26th July** - Moorland Wildlife

**19th August** - Cream Tea Special.  
3 miles, steep climbs, cream tea.

**23rd August** - Roman Wonder.  
5 mile theme walk to Castleshaw Roman Camp.

**13th September** - Standedge Trail.  
12 miles, tracing the development of transport in the area.

**And so it goes on. Some fascinating details in the well-produced glossy leaflets - S.A.E. please to:-**

**The National Trust,  
The Old Goods Yard,  
Station Road,  
Marsden,  
HUDDERSFIELD  
HD7 6DH**

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# Letters to The Editor

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## NARROW CANAL IN 1975

Dear Ken,

The pictures of Lock 12W, in the recent edition, reminded me of my trip in 1975. The canal here was as bad as it was anywhere and such a comparison to the pounds the other side of Scout Tunnel. Regrettably, I have very few decent photos of my trip, but I milked the publicity for IWA and HCS - hence the photo of the Standedge portage.

I must say I had great help from Bob Dewey in the pre-planning stages and from John Maynard once I made Yorkshire including the opportunity to have a bath. Thanks.

The whole trip took place in glorious weather all the way to York (3 weeks).

The other days had their points but the contrasts on the 5th August were just magic.

MARK BLACKSTONE  
Bristol.

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*Mark's article is elsewhere. Thanks for the item, Mark, nice to know the 'outposts' are still alive and kicking! Ed.*

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## GERMAN MEMBERSHIP

Dear Sir,

I refer to the letter on p.46 of Pennine Link No. 124. Bernhard is not your only German member: I am a member (since last April) and German too!

When starting my lifetime membership I had given you my sister's address in the UK as I thought the posting would be cheaper for the society.

Kind Regards,

CHRISTIANE E GDANIEC  
Tönis

*Sorry! We could only go by the address list, unfortunately. Ed.*

## MOORING IN STALYBRIDGE

Dear Ken,

I write to you as a resident of Stalybridge town centre and a boat owner based on the Peak Forest Canal.

We constantly hear from our councillors in Stalybridge of the great benefit the opening of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal is going to have on the centre of Stalybridge. There is no doubt that a great number of boats are going to use this route, particularly in the first few years, but I am concerned about the amount of mooring positions available in Stalybridge town centre.

Am I right in thinking that there are no mooring positions available in Armentières Square, which would in fact make an ideal position for boats to tie up and visit local shops. This would also provide a picturesque addition to the town centre attracting visitors to the town.

If adequate mooring is not available we will find boats passing through Stalybridge and into Saddleworth with good moorings in Uppermill - where you can rest assured that Saddleworth will jump on the 'band waggon' and welcome them with open arms.

Perhaps you can clarify the mooring situation in Stalybridge for me and I hope that my fears are ill founded.

Yours sincerely

PETER BENT  
Stalybridge

*I am told (by British Waterways and Tameside MB) that it is early days yet - certainly the intention is to provide mooring spaces in Stalybridge town centre, probably between Trinity Street and Mottram Road, where there is more space. Ed.*



## DEWEY'S HUMILITY

Dear Ken,

Bob Dewey is far too modest. (Forty years of Canals. Plink 124). He was more responsible than anyone for the beginning of the 'rebirth'.

All right, some of us had talked, and worried, and regretted, and vaguely hoped, but until Bob came along I don't think one of us had more than a very inexact knowledge of the state of the canal, the problems involved in restoration - if indeed that was possible - or even the exact route. Bob knew. He talked practical sense, he'd thought it out and knew what he was talking about.

Ralph Kirkham and John Maynard and I were enthusiastic and supportive, but it was Bob who knew what to DO. I was the most ignorant, but proud to have been involved in any way in the very beginning of it all.

Thank you Bob.

MARGARET SINFIELD  
Stoke-on-Trent.

P.S. I hope John agrees with all this!

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## SPOON DREDGER?

Dear Ken,

In PLink 124, page 25, Trevor Ellis comments on the "punt-like boat" near Red Doles, in the old postcard reproduced.

I suggest this might be a spoon dredger, with the spoon suspended from the mast, over one side, and the winch shown being used to draw the spoon along the bottom and upwards.

Yours sincerely,

GEOFF WHEAT  
Leeds.

*This is the second piece of expert comment from Geoff recently. How about an article or two, Geoff? Ed.*

## PROGRESS MAPS

Dear Mr. Wright,

I much liked the new map of progress with the "improved" dates for implementation, the only snag being the time span for each job relies on interpretation of those dates. As one used to work analysis, it struck me that a chart of the attached type might be an improvement in the communication process - it shows the relative magnitude of the differing tasks for instance and how the timing of each comes together.

At reduced size it could be fitted where the two pictures were in 124 and the title of each task and its scope (first 2 lines of each item) could be fitted either in the block or above/below.

Just a suggestion.

Regards,

KEITH WATSON  
Derby

*Thanks for your excellent suggestion, Keith. Needless to say diagrams similar to the one you have designed proliferate at the regular progress meetings and I am sure that, when we get really going, one will surface in Pennine Link. Your version has gone to Alan Stopher at HCC for his information. Ed.*

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## TOWPATH OBSERVATIONS

- 1) Seen beside the towpath, leaning against the railway bridge abutment approaching Tunnel End from Marsden circa 23/24 April '98, a notice inscribed "CAUTION TOE-PATH NARROWS".  
A case of watch your *putting* for the road runners?
- 2) A question from an onlooker as to what the initials "A.C.H.D." stand for on the stone also inscribed "7m 7f 1941-83" outside the Tunnel End Canal and Countryside Centre. All the assistant inside could offer was 'A memorial to a member of HCS'. Can anyone provide a fuller biography and background to the stone?

JOHN GOODALL  
Marsden

# Boat Museum Events



## OUR SUPER OFFER STILL GOES!

Continuing our list of events worth seeing at ELLESMERE PORT BOAT MUSEUM - and as an extra this time why not make the effort to visit the Cheshire Oaks Designer Outlet Village. They have just installed a purpose-built steel barge standing on dry land but with a hole in the side to enable visitors to get inside and enjoy all the facilities of A FULL-BLOWN RESTAURANT!

### Events at the Museum

*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.

*August 1st - 23rd*

Painting Exhibition

*August 2nd*

Pumphouse in steam.

*August 15th - 16th*

Russell Newbery Register Boat Rally

*August 30th - 31st*

Model Boat Convention  
Pumphouse in Steam

*September 12th - 13th*

Roses and Castles Painting Course  
Weekend Painting Course £60.

*October 4th*

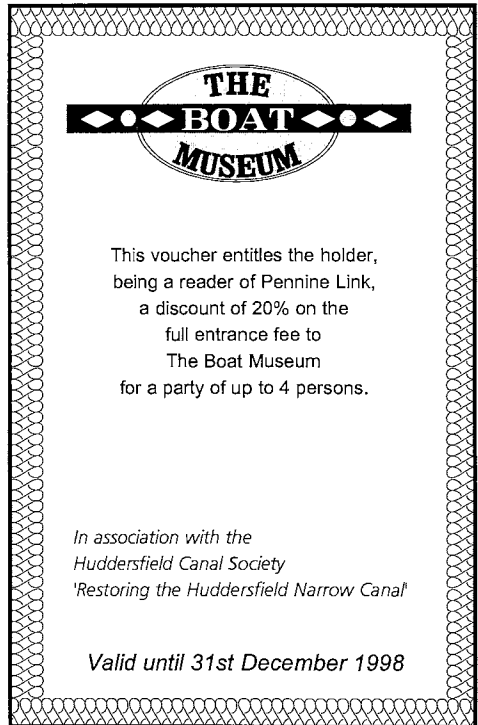
Pulling Power - Static Engine Display  
Pumphouse in steam.

*October 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th*

Spooky Ghost Tours  
Pre-booking essential.

For further details ring the Museum on:  
0151 355 5017

*And remember that our reduced price offer for entry to the Museum is valid until the end of the year, using the voucher below:*



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# 1998 Photo Competition

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**SUMMER IS HERE ...  
HOLIDAYS AFLOAT OR NEAR  
WATERWAYS LOOMING ...  
CHANCE FOR AN AWARD ...**

***GET OUT THAT CAMERA!***

Following last year's successful competition we are running another one with almost the same rules - the main difference being that we are having an entrance fee and better prizes, one of which, for the overall winner, will be provided by our judge, Mr. Geoffrey Hope, of Oldham Photographic Society.

## **RULES**

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

- \* Prints only - black & white or colour - but winning entries will be reproduced in black and white.
- \* Minimum size 6" x 4", maximum 8" x 6".
- \* Any canal-related subject is acceptable in the following categories:-
  - a. Huddersfield Narrow Canal - Senior
  - b. Huddersfield Narrow Canal - Junior (16 or under)
  - c. Other British Waterways - Senior
  - d. Other British Waterways - Junior (16 or under)
- \* Open only to bona fide members of HCS and their immediate families.
- \* Entry fee of 50p per print (Cheques payable to "HCS")
- \* Postage required for return of prints.

## HOW TO ENTER

1. Send your photographs (maximum 5 per person), suitably reinforced with thin card, to:-  
PHOTO COMPETITION,  
HUDDERSFIELD CANAL SOCIETY,  
239 MOSSLEY ROAD,  
ASHTON-U-LYNE,  
OL6 6LN
2. Include details of the photographs (where and when), captions if you so wish and age of photographer, if 16 or under.
3. Include your name and address and the name of the HCS member you are related to.
4. Include return postage if you want your prints back.
5. CLOSING DATE:  
MONDAY 9TH NOVEMBER 1998.

## PRIZES

There will be a winner and runner-up in each of the four categories (senior and junior) and each will receive a signed certificate and a voucher for photographic materials.

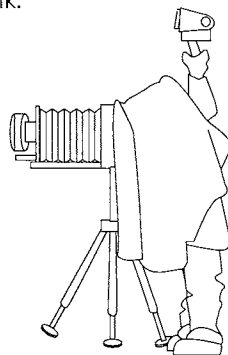
The overall winner will receive a signed certificate and the JUDGE'S PRIZE.

The value of the prizes will depend on the number of entries so - get shooting - and make it worthwhile.

All winning pictures will be published in December's Pennine Link.

*Any queries to:*

*The Editor, Ken Wright,  
Tel: 01457 873599*



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# New Members & Back Issues

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## THE SOCIETY WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS:

2484	Mr & Mrs Ablewhite, [REDACTED]
2485	Mr Ayres, [REDACTED]
2486	Mr Roper, [REDACTED]
2487	Mr Macbeth, [REDACTED]
2488	Mr Guariento, [REDACTED]
2489	Dr Davey, [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, 54, 56, 58, 59, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68,  
74, 75, 77, 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, 111, 112, 113, 114,  
115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124

*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 21

ACROSS:- 8. Llangollen canal 9. Ibsen 10. Poteen 11. Dunham 12. Stenson  
13. Tooleys 15. Stable 18. Twists 20. Loach 21. Netherpoppleton

DOWN:- 1. Blisworth tunnel 2. Knowle 3. Bollin 4. Glasson 5. Inland 6. Latton  
7. Sanitary station 14. Leawood 16. Berths 17. Elmore 18. Thrupp  
19. Itchen

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# Coming Soon

## WEST SIDE MEETINGS

Wednesday 8th July	General Meeting at the Tollemache Arms, Mossley, 8.00pm.
Wednesday 12th August	Out & About. A walk over Boat Lane; meet at the Diggle Hotel at 7.30pm.
Wednesday 9th September	Out & About. A canal ramble from the Tollemache Arms to Wellihole Bridge; meet at the Tollemache Arms at 7.30pm.

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

Profile - Jack Carr

Standedge Experience Storyline

Canal Walk - Cromford Canal

Canal Festival Reports

.... plus all the regular features

### ADVERTISING

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Quarter Page	£9.38	£37.50
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### COPY DATE

Articles, letters, etc., for  
Issue 126 of Pennine Link  
should reach the Editor  
by 31st August 1998

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Individual	£9.00
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Huddersfield Canal Society is a member of:



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