

# Pennine Link

Members Quarterly Journal - Issue 129 - Summer 1999



**HUDDERSFIELD  
CANAL  
SOCIETY**

**NO  
FLOWERS  
BY REQUEST**

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## Contents & Editorial

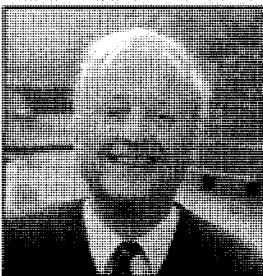
# Pennine Link

Summer 1999 Issue 129

- 2 HCS Council Members
- 3 Contents & Editorial
- 5 Chairman's Annual Report
- 8 Restoration Report
- 11 Waterways Art
- 12 Huddersfield Canal Company Report
- 14 IWA News
- 15 That Things Have Come to This
- 16 Profile - HCS Restoration Ltd
- 18 The Wife's Tale - Part 37
- 22 1999 Photographic Competition
- 24 Huddersfield Canals on Postcards
- 32 Harwood's Thames
- 35 Canal Crossword - 24
- 36 The Distaff Side - Idle Women
- 40 The Alma Street Story
- 42 Let's get some Perspective
- 44 Silver Jubilee of HCS
- 45 Goodbye & Hello to Canal Backer
- 46 Standedge Tunnel
- 48 What the Papers Say
- 51 Letters to the Editor
- 54 The Waterways Code
- 55 The Back Page

*Cover: "Canal Theme" floral display from the Flower Festival, Saddleworth Church during the Saddleworth Festival of the Arts. Design by Vera Butler, photograph by Bob Illingworth, canal ware by Peter Ashworth and doors by HCS!*

What a lousy job being a magazine editor can be. It falls upon me to



let the members of HCS, and all the other regular readers of Pennine Link, know that this could be the last issue of the magazine as we

know it. And that really isn't the worst news. HCS Restoration Ltd., the Society's full-time contracting firm, is to close down on August 31<sup>st</sup>, putting the jobs of ten people in jeopardy. And all to do with the fact that the Society has been so successful in its campaign to re-open the canal that the big guns are swinging into action and knocking the little ones aside. The scheme that is intended to create jobs all along the canal corridor, and elsewhere, starts off by getting rid of the acknowledged canal restoration experts, who are responsible for a good half of what has already been restored and without whose work "the impossible restoration" would have remained just that. More about that elsewhere.

"But what has that got to do with Pennine Link", I hear you say. Well, of course, it's all about Bob Gough, assistant editor, who is officially employed by HCS Restoration Ltd. If the firm isn't making any money we obviously can't afford to keep on the office staff and, at the time of writing, only Frank Smith and Steve Whitby will stay on after the end of August, to run down the office, dispose of assets, that kind of thing. On the positive side they will also be speeding up the process of working out the Society's future and the role for any future paid staff.

Back to Bob, though. It will not have escaped your notice that the quality and size of Pennine Link have changed noticeably in the last three issues. When I took over as editor we had 44 pages. We now have 56 and I still have to reject material. With our new computer software and Bob's skills at layout we can now produce really professional results which are the envy of many other societies. Even before the current improvements we have been regular winners of a national 'best society magazine' award.

The immediate option, if Bob can't work his spells, is to hand the work out to an independent company or a printer with the necessary skills. That would mean a lot more work for yours truly in preparation, instead of just being able to dump a disk and a bag full of photographs, books, leaflets, etc. on Bob's desk, knowing he will just get on with it!

So, we will see, keep your fingers crossed that a sensible way out is forthcoming.

Having got that off my chest I must apologise again for the last Pennine Link being late. It is mainly to do with printers. The one who produced the splendid Issue No.127 has gone out of business and, having settled on another after weeks of discussions, quotes, etc., they had problems with our new software. Hopefully, this issue will be back on course but, with the upheavals in the office, who knows?

Another apology whilst I'm at it. In Issue 127

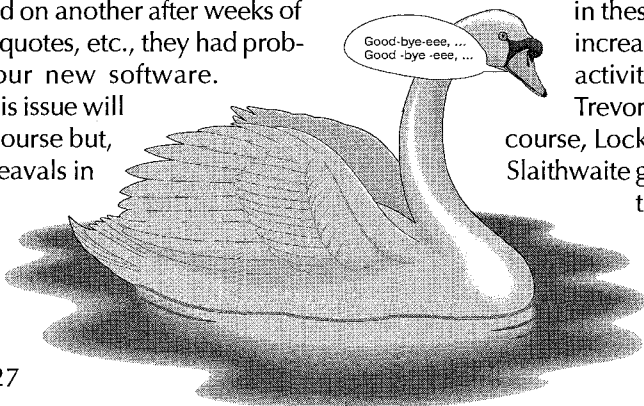
I reviewed "The south Pennine Ring" a walkers' and boaters' guide to our Canal by John Lower. In an aside I said "I spied the author's environmentally unfriendly bright orange trail boat, Schandelle". John was quickly on the 'phone to ask what was supposed to be wrong with his boat and I confessed that the only environmentally unfriendly bit was the colour! It was one of my poorer funnies, totally out of order! Sorry, John.

There is so much about decision making elsewhere in this issue that I am not putting in a separate HCS Council News this time. Any bits and pieces I will leave for the future.

Another sad fact, of course, is that the Board of HCS Restoration Ltd. will also be broken up. No more of Frank's biscuits, muffin sandwiches and repairing to the Station Hotel for a refresher. However, any directors who would like to carry on in an official capacity will be co-opted on to HCS council.

On a brighter note I can report that our TV coverage is improving! We featured prominently in the BBC2 programme "Out and About", with Martin Henfield, on May 6, as a society worth joining in these days of increased volunteer activity. Tell that to Trevor Ellis! And, of course, Lock 23E at Slaithwaite gets star billing in the credits for ITV's "Where the heart is".

**Ken Wright**





# Chairman's Annual Report

On behalf of the Council of Management, I present my report on the Company's activities and achievements for 1998 and future developments.

The highlight of our year was on 23rd December 1998 when English Partnerships confirmed that the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions had approved the £12m funding for the project. So, nearly twenty-five years after the formation of the Society, full restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal is assured.



The Society was incorporated on 28th May 1980 and I remind members the objects for which the Society is established. "The restoration, reconstruction, preservation, maintenance and improvement of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal from Aspley to Ashton-under-Lyne and the Huddersfield Broad Canal from Cooper Bridge to Aspley for the use of the public."

The Memorandum of Association gave the Society powers "to maintain and improve, for the purposes of the Society, the waterways, either alone or jointly with any other person, persons, corporations, bodies or public or local authorities ..." In 1998 we continued to pursue our objects and the spirit of co-operation and partnership impressed our funding partners culminating in the good news at the end of the year.

The vehicle to pursue restoration which we joined in May 1997, is the Huddersfield Canal Company. Its Project Director, Alan Stopher, skilfully steered the ship during the year, negotiating the various legal agreements between the funding

agencies, the local authorities, British Waterways and, to a lesser extent, ourselves.

It seems incongruous that after years of support only from the sidelines, British Waterways should now take the lead in the completion of the restoration. The Society has now

(almost) achieved its objectives and it is with grateful thanks to British Waterways and our local authority partners that they should complete the task we began in 1974. BW has underwritten the whole project guaranteeing any financial shortfall. I believe the Society should take full credit for the conversion to our cause by all our partners. Restoration has come about by co-operation and persuasion, not by confrontation, and I am proud to represent the Society at this time in the history of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal.

In the year when most progress was made to secure the future of the Narrow, little work was undertaken on the canal track. Keith Gibson commissioned Lock 23E, Slaithwaite, in the Spring. The guillotine gate was installed by HCS Restoration (90% funded by English Partnerships) and immediately disabled, awaiting full through navigation. The first of the Millennium schemes began at the end of 1998 when HCS Restoration was awarded the contract to 'restore' the Lock 22W to Wool Road section. Members will recall that it was on this stretch of canal that the restoration project began in 1981. Work is expected to be completed in July this year.

Unfortunately this is to be the last restoration project to be undertaken by our subsidiary company. Future contracts on the canal will be outside the scope of our

organisation and a decision was reluctantly taken to wind up HCS (Restoration) Ltd. The Society is unique amongst restoration societies in having a canal restoration business, which began in the early eighties on the Peak Forest Canal. We are indebted to our full time officers led by Steve Whitby for their contributions to the success of our campaign. HCS Restoration, chaired by Keith Gibson, has achieved much over the years, including employing and training over 1800 participants in government funded schemes, restoring 25 locks and dredging 6 miles of canal. Financially the company has subsidised the Society, through overhead recovery, so that we have maintained a vibrant head office staff and husbanded our assets to enable the Society to contribute a further £550,000 towards the restoration costs. We have provided for redundancy costs in our accounts.

In 1998 one of the founder members of the precursor to HCS Restoration Ltd died. David Brown, a director of Tameside Canals Development Association died on 4th May 1998. He is probably best remembered as Chairman of the Ashton Packet Boat Company and as husband to Sue Day, also a canal enthusiast. John Young died on 27th May after a long illness. John was one of the many unsung heroes of the volunteer movement within the Society. He too is sadly missed. Another volunteer and boatmaster died at the end of 1997. Peter Wright passed away on 30th December 1997. His contribution to the Yorkshire side festivals was most valuable and his humour and enthusiasm enlivened many a festival meeting.

We continued to promote the canal by events and festivals in 1998. The 21st Tameside Canals Festival was held at Portland Basin, Ashton-under-Lyne in July and attended by 55 boats, thousands of people and was opened by Frank Ruffley, Festival President and life long supporter of the canal movement and HCS. This festival, over the years, has focussed the public's attention to this waterway junction. The warehouse complex has been refurbished and extended and HCS Restoration has restored a former canal arm leading to Alma Street in Dukinfield.

The Saddleworth Festival continues to make its mark in the summer calendar of events in the Tame valley. Next year, this attractive stretch of canal will benefit from a newly dredged section and refurbished locks for the only privately operated trip boat on the canal.

Festivals and events such as these increase public awareness and in 1998 exhibitions were held and displays planned to explain the restoration plans in more detail and to obtain feedback on planned temporary disruptions such as in Saddleworth when the High Street bridge works commence. The excellently produced Stalybridge exhibition earlier this year continued the public consultation as did the displays in Slaithwaite. It is heartening to note that no serious objections to any of the plans were reported and local authority planners and engineers took note of comments made by the general public.

Other promotional events included photographic competitions and attendance by the Sales Team at many waterways and other festivals.

In 1998 we welcomed Keith Noble to Council. Keith has been a Director of HCS Restoration for some time and his sagacity and experience of the canal network particularly in Yorkshire - the Calder & Hebble and the Rochdale - makes his contribution to HCS most welcome.

We had expected that the announcement by the DETR on the Rochdale Canal scheme would have been made by now. We fully support its restoration and believe that both canals will benefit each other - a new Pennine Ring - from restoration to through navigation. Our two projects have seesawed in terms of progress over the year. I hope that the new North West Development Agency will confirm its support for the complete restoration.

Earlier this Spring, the Society held a twenty fifth anniversary celebration attended by John Maynard and Bob Dewey, two of our founder members and Society officials for many years. Margaret Sinfield was unable to attend but was with us in spirit. Bob reminded us of our early beginnings in 1974 when we had few supporters. This pleasant evening of reminiscences was held days after the funding agreement was signed between

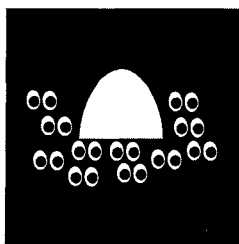
British Waterways and English Partnerships. Bob and John could never have imagined such a scenario in 1974, though both had an unshakeable belief in their ambitions for the Huddersfield Narrow.

So what is the role of the Society in the future? We are still debating our input into the restoration process (financially and physically) and believe that a 'watch dog' role is the very least of our objectives for the future. British Waterways is metamorphosing into a consultative public body. I quoted from a letter in the Spring 1999 Pennine Link from Derek Cochrane which bears this out. Alan Stopher and I will attend the postponed National Forum on June 17th to learn about BW's new plans to involve the public.

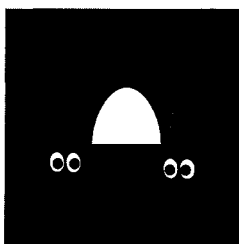
The long term operation of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal will involve all the community. We have a role to play in the Standedge Experience. We operate trip boats, lease a canalside property and have an experienced group of volunteers with many diverse relevant qualifications. We look forward to contributing to the success of our restored canal.

**David M Sumner**  
**AGM 11 June**

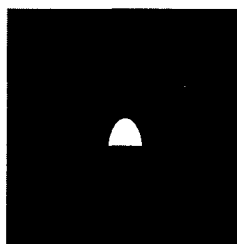
In Standedge Tunnel ...



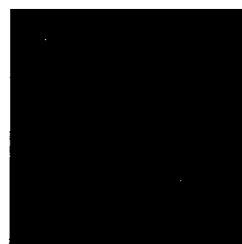
It's time to go ...



Come on you two ...



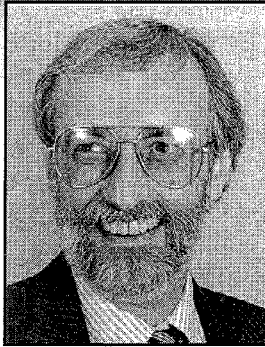
It's very bright, isn't it ...



Peace at last ...

# Restoration Report

On 5 May a joint meeting of the Board of Directors of the Society's subsidiary company HCS Restoration Ltd and the Council of Management of the Society decided that the Society had no choice but to close HCS Restoration when current contracts are completed. To continue would be far too risky for a Charity to contemplate, and could jeopardise the Society itself. Provisionally 9 staff will be made redundant on 31 August. Steve Whitby, the Managing Director of HCS Restoration, and Frank Smith, the Society's General Secretary have been guaranteed employment to 31 December so that they can wind up the operation and investigate whether there is any scope for creating a new operation away from the ownership of the Society, and so that the Society can review its future staffing requirements.



Society members and other readers of "Pennine Link" may have been aware that, despite an attempt to appear optimistic in public, it was becoming increasingly difficult for the Society to continue in the restoration contract business, and may not be surprised by this decision. It is, however, a very sad decision for the Society to have had to take. It is ironic that our staff, many of whom have worked for the Society and been actively involved in the restoration process for many years, should have to go just as we are on the final straight to restoration. Without the existence of HCS Restoration and its staff, it is unlikely that we would now be looking forward to complete restoration of the canal.

Started as Tameside Canals Development Association in 1985, becoming a subsidiary company of the Society, Tameside Canals Ltd, when canal restoration began in Tameside, and then renamed HCS Restoration Ltd. when work expanded into the Oldham and Kirklees districts, the Society's Restoration Company has served

the Society and the canal project well. It has restored 25 locks (with 2 more near completion), dredged about 6 miles of canal, rebuilt washwalls, re-laid towpaths, carried out environmental and landscaping works, restored the award winning Transhipment Warehouse, and carried out other work under contract to British Waterways and the local authorities. In addition to

having full time staff, it has provided work and training for nearly 2,000 participants in various government funded training schemes, many of whom were then able to go on to full time employment.

Physical works by the company were most effective when carrying out larger contracts that were able to include a training element such as the restoration of the Diggle flight of locks. At that time restoration by HCS Restoration apparently cost less than works by outside contractors, or the direct works staffs of partner organisations. Since these large restoration contracts came to an end the workload has been insufficient to cover the company's overheads or to continue with the government funded training schemes that the company had originally been established to provide.

We have kept the company operating however, because of loyalty to staff, because a revived HCS Restoration would have been essential if funding negotiations had failed, because there were still contracts to complete that occupied the workforce, and because the Society and the Canal Company required the support of the 3 office based staff. It was essential that the Society had this full time staff involvement in the process of bidding for funds. Without the input of staff time and the flexibility for immediate action, the partners and the Canal Company would have found it very difficult to meet the exacting requirements of the funding bodies.



The Society's Council of Management has always appreciated that in the long term the Society had no reason to be in the building contract business, but until recently there appeared to be sufficient work to keep a viable operation until the canal was reopened from a combination of:

- \* negotiated contracts for the smaller restoration projects remaining,
- \* secondary maintenance work, and
- \* providing administrative and technical support to the Canal Company.

There may also have been a possibility of work on the Rochdale Canal. It is now agreed that the contracts for the smaller restoration projects will not be let at negotiated prices, but will be subject to tender, or be carried out by British Waterways direct labour. Secondary maintenance work is being carried out by British Waterways who have increased their own maintenance staff. The need for support to the Canal Company will be less than anticipated because British Waterways is now to lead on making claims and reporting to funding agencies. This support to the Canal Company has in any case been funded by the Society to date.

The work now potentially available to the company from restoration of the canal is very limited and that will only be by competitive tender. When I wrote the article for the last issue of "Pennine Link" we hoped that if the Society waived the £90,000 service charge to the Canal Company to help balance the books of the total project, British Waterways would nominate HCS Restoration as preferred tenderer and allow us to have sufficient certainty of future income to plan a controlled run down of the company. This would have had obvious advantages for staff and would have allowed the Society to retain the benefits of a fully staffed office, and a workforce able on occasion to help with boats, festivals etc.

British Waterways would not agree to this. It is not in accordance with their approved tendering procedures, and they say that the company as currently set up is not competitive in price. That is the nub of the problem. The company is too small to be able to compete for the larger contracts, but it is also too large to be able to compete for the smaller contracts. It has costs that are not carried by potential competitors for these projects:

- \* a larger office/workshop base than is required for a reduced scale of operation,
- \* plant and vehicles that competitors would hire in,
- \* a permanent workforce with a range of abilities and paid holidays, sickness entitlements etc. whereas likely competitors would set on and lay off staff as needed and tend to subcontract out skilled work, and
- \* the office staff who up to now have been needed to support the Society and the Canal Company.

The projected losses if the Society subsidises continuation of the existing operation are such that the Society itself would risk insolvency. To be competitive the company would have to reduce costs dramatically, making staff redundant and employing labour only when required and with very different terms of employment. There would be considerable risks in this with no apparent benefit for the Society and certainly no guarantee of employment for staff. In these circumstances the Society has no realistic choice but to end its involvement in the restoration contract business.

The Society has provided an office for Alan Stopher, the Canal Company Project Director, meeting room facilities, secretarial, administrative and technical support, heating, lighting, postage, telephone and computer facilities etc. The closure of the restoration company will not affect that. A

base will still be required for the Society, and the staff required to support the Society and the Company will be provided there, although whether the Society can now agree to waive all or part of the £90,000 service charge remains to be determined.

As usual there are people looking for scapegoats in this situation, with British Waterways naturally being seen as the prime candidate. Although British Waterways have acted correctly, it is fair to say that realistically HCS Restoration was effectively beyond redemption when British Waterways started to expand their own staff structure at Marsden to carry out the very tasks we were best equipped to tackle. Yet the Society must welcome the fact that British Waterways recognised the need to be adequately staffed to maintain the canal. Indeed we do welcome that, and would have campaigned for it had it not happened! As an ex-local authority manager I also understand only too well that public servants used to a cost cutting regime are likely to be eager to expand their workforce when the need and the opportunity arise. It is a shame though that the timing of that expansion was not delayed to be in parallel with a run down of HCS Restoration. Where else could British Waterways find an opportunity of taking on a body of people with considerable experience of canal work appropriate to their needs? Even now I hope they can find roles for some of our staff as the expansion of the Marsden workforce continues.

Regional Manager Derek Cochrane actually offered, in a spirit of partnership, to look into ways that British Waterways could keep our staff employed, and he clearly believes that he has done all that he can for the Society and its staff. Unfortunately what was then offered by his subordinate staff was not acceptable to the Society. Our staff would have stayed in our employment but worked under an agency arrangement for British Waterways as and when required.

The Society would have still been responsible for insurance cover, for sick pay and leave entitlements, and for paying wages when staff were not required. We would inevitably have made a loss on this arrangement. Although it might have been a useful standby if there had been other work available, it was not appropriate for the Society in the present circumstances.

The truth of the matter is that time and events have dictated the situation. There is only a limited amount of work left on the canal that HCS Restoration could realistically hope to be offered, and HCS Restoration has too many permanent staff, too much plant and equipment, and too many overheads to realistically bid for this work, except at considerable risk. The Society cannot now take that risk. If we succeeded in winning just one tender, then we would be committed to continuation of a loss making company. We have taken risks in the past keeping staff employed on the canal when income to the company was uncertain, but that was aimed at securing restoration of the canal, and was within the Society's budget. In the present circumstances when restoration is certain, the risks of continuing in operation would be taken solely for the sake of our staff and not to achieve the Society's aims. That would be totally irresponsible, especially as the level of losses likely could be such as to make the Society itself insolvent.

We have tried to employ people in as fair a manner as possible, and we will now treat them the same in whatever redundancy arrangements are decided on.

The thing that I find most difficult about this whole situation, and I have always been rather in the background to many of our staff, is that these are my friends who will be sacked - and there is nothing I can do about it.

**Keith Gibson**

## Waterways Art

Many of you who read the waterways press will have seen the exciting proposal for a new sculpture, depicting a man and a boy opening a canal lock gate, to be sited at the entrance to the historic Sowerby Bridge Canal Basin. Commissioned from local sculptor, Roger Burnett, and using local people from Sowerby Bridge as models, indeed one is related to the town's last lock keeper, the plaster casts and moulds for the sculpture were recently on display at the Sowerby Bridge Town and Waterways Festival, where they attracted widespread praise. The base for the sculpture has already been installed as part of the improved entrance to the basin, and fund raising is going well, but, if the moulds are to be sent to a foundry so that the completed bronze statues can be put on display in August, a further £8,700 still needs to be raised.

Canals form an integral part of Sowerby Bridge's history and this key location alongside the A58 is a great opportunity to raise the profile of the canal basin by attracting both publicity - it is the first piece of public art to be commissioned in Calderdale since the war - and visitors. It is a traditional piece of work, to a very high standard, which will provide the community with something in which it can take (indeed, is taking) great pride.

If you can make a contribution, no matter how large or small, it will be most wel-

come and should be sent to the Sowerby Bridge Sculpture Fund, c/o No 2 Warehouse, Canal Basin, Sowerby Bridge, HX6 2AG. All funders will be recognised on a plaque. Anyone wishing to learn more about the project should contact Roger Burnett on 01422 836896 or you can view a special Web Site on: <http://www.bbgallery.demon.co.uk/sculpture.html>. In addition, the sculpture can be seen on Saturday afternoons (or at

other times by appointment) in the former Bolton Brow Sunday School building in the centre of Sowerby Bridge, overlooking the basin. Do go along - I am sure you will be as impressed as I am.

**Kathryn Gibson**



Kathryn Gibson

# Huddersfield Canal Company Report

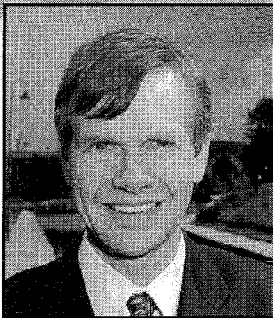
My last article concluded with the signing of the English Partnerships funding agreement.

British Waterways have since completed their agreement to receive the Millennium Commission funds so the way is clear at last for the real work to be done.

Now that the project has moved on to the implementation phase, a regular cycle of monthly submission dates and meetings has been established. In this way the funding agencies and all the partners involved in delivering the construction schemes ensure sound financial and project management. In common with so many complex projects with multiple funding regimes, there are more than enough monitors and auditors to check that the public's money is being spent wisely.

The North West Development Agency, who are acting as English Partnerships' agents, have engaged quantity surveyors, Turner & Townsend to monitor the project. The Millennium Commission are monitoring the project using consulting engineers W S Atkins. Each of the partners has their own external financial auditors and EP insisted that British Waterways engage an independent quarterly auditor to check that payments claimed for have been duly made by the partners to suppliers and contractors. The Company itself has an approving and monitoring role and I see my job as ensuring that nothing obvious is missed with regard to the overall project and that the funds are applied fairly throughout the canal. This means delving into some matters in detail whilst at the same time maintaining an overview.

Turning to the restoration proper, the information on the construction programme



in the centre spread has been updated. Work continues on Lock 21 to Wool Road.

Dungebooth Lock is back in operation and reconstruction of the lock walls at Lime Kiln is well in hand. The dredging should be completed by early June and completion of the scheme is dependent on gate delivery.

British Waterways awarded the Standedge and Scout Tunnel contract to Amalgamated Construction Ltd (AMCO) in late April and they took possession of the tunnel on 24<sup>th</sup> May. This contractor has extensive experience of deep-mining techniques which he intends to deploy to the benefit of the project. Good coverage in the local press heralded this historic stage in the restoration. Oldham Council has awarded the Wool Road Bridge contract to the local firm of DCT. Tameside Council has sought tenders for Phase 1 of the Stalybridge scheme.

Local residents of Diggle and Marsden were shown plans of the Standedge Tunnel in May. Plans for the Standedge Experience have still to be completed to a stage where they can be exhibited so a consultation in July is now in prospect.

Progress is being made on a number of marketing initiatives. The fourth newsletter has been issued. Early draft sections of the schools pack are being piloted in two schools each in Kirklees, Oldham and Tameside. A new issue of the popular Pennine Link fold out leaflet is being prepared.

I am now starting to consider how best to develop the arts project which is an integral part of the work. I envisage that this will contain something for everyone from attractive environmental features, through art and craft works to music and drama

performances. The aim is to involve the local communities throughout the Tame and Colne Valleys and providing a special sense of ownership and pride in our canal.

I very much enjoyed a three day busman's holiday on the Rochdale Canal over May Day weekend. Besides reminding me of the boating customer's perspective of the canal system it provided an excellent Bank Holiday break for five children and four adults. The crew rose splendidly to the challenge of reaching the summit with our Shire Cruisers'

narrow boat from Sowerby Bridge. We all felt fitter and refreshed from the experience and I for one am eagerly awaiting the opportunity of trying out the premier trans-pennine canal in two years' time. I'm sure the younger ones in our party will be pleasantly surprised by the relative ease of handling the narrow locks. Enjoy the summer and look out for further news of the large construction schemes getting under way.

**Alan Stopher**

## MESSAGES BOTTLED

### MIKRON THEATRE COMPANY

*Mikron Theatre Company's National Waterways Tour 1999 - Entertaining plays - with a message - delivered to your area by narrowboat.*

So begins Mikron's latest brochure.

This company, now on its 28<sup>th</sup> tour, travels in a traditional narrowboat, Tyseley, to present theatre to people who would not normally go to live theatre or live too far away from one to be able to.

Their works are all home-grown and presented in street-theatre style with minimal staging, props and costumes. But what they lack in facilities the company of three make up for in sheer talent and vitality.

This year's presentation is "Just in Time".

The story revolves around Alison, a hitch-hiker, who tumbles into a world whose mysteries are gradually revealed to her.

The sub-plot is the topical subject of transport. As our roads become more congested and polluted and our waterways are under-used, under-developed and under-funded, Mikron present a lively, controversial show focussing on this dilemma.

Space does not permit a full schedule of places and times but here is a brief summary:-

#### JULY

River Thames 1,2,3  
Kennet and Avon Canal 10,11,13,14  
River Avon 16  
Chichester Canal 17  
Basingstoke Canal 18

#### AUGUST

Grand Union Canal  
2,3,4,5,7,8,9,10,11,12,14,15,16  
Soar Navigation 18,19  
Erewash Canal 21,22  
River Trent 23,24,25,26,27  
Trent and Mersey Canal 29,30

For full details and a copy of the Autumn Tour Brochure send a medium-sized s.a.e to:-

MIKRON THEATRE COMPANY  
MARSDEN MECHANICS  
PEEL STREET  
MARSDEN  
HUDDERSFIELD HD7 6BW

Tel and Fax: 01484 843701  
e-mail: mikron-theatre@pop3.poptel.org.uk





Improved BW funding of £8 million p.a. for 3 years at least. IWA recognises that the Government has at last acknowledged the serious backlog of maintenance on BW's waterways amounting to £90 million of urgent repairs and £260 million of longer term works. The progressive writing off of BW debt is also welcomed as this could effectively add almost £2 million per annum to BW's budget. Plus BW's chance to enter into commercial partnership with the private sector, local authorities etc., should help BW to become more efficient in the future.

IWA has launched its new policy statement on the environment: "Our Waterway Environment" follows a long period of consultation with interested bodies. The statement sets out IWA position and commitment on maintenance, dredging, water quality and usage, the built heritage, waterways restoration, freight carriage and related subjects.

What IWA describes as "through rose-tinted glasses" is the information on BW's website. Try them on:  
<http://www.waterwaypartners.co.uk>

IWA are still concerned about the future of Heritage Lottery Fund grant criteria and poor communications between HLF and applicants.

IWA are making noises (probably pop-pop-pop!) about exhaust and noise emission control on boat engines and its effect on old and reproduction engines in boats. Sweeping changes afoot that make no allowance for the heritage factor of old boat engines. Exemptions seems to be the answer.

More restrictions may be in the offing relating to wild life and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Government gobbledegook includes "a legislative framework and partnership approach of the Biodiversity Species Action Plan regime for

terrestrial, avian and marine species." And beware phrases like "Michael Meacher, the Minister responsible for wildlife legislation, is sympathetic to strengthening the enforcement provisions of the Wild Life and Countryside Act 1981."

The IWA National Waterways Festival will be held at Waltham Abbey in the Lee Valley Park in year 2000 over August Bank Holiday.

Despite representations from IWA and others, no new national reciprocal licence arrangements between BW and the Environment Agency has been announced for 1999.

The three waterways museums, at Gloucester, Ellesmere Port and Stoke Bruene, are to combine under one management as part of a new Waterways Trust.

Full restoration of Anderton Boat Lift now looks certain following announcement of a £3.3 million grant from Heritage Lottery Fund towards the total cost of £7 million which includes an all-important visitor centre.

The launch of the consultation on BW's proposals for a new 'membership' scheme was delayed from May 5th to June 17th. No further news as we went to press but we hope that the venue, Regents Zoo, is not significant.

Much has been said and written about the Rochdale Canal in IWA News, in local and national papers and on television. The subject was raised at April's meeting of the Parliamentary Waterways Group when HCS Council Member, Keith Noble, earned many Brownie points for a short plea made on the Rochdale's behalf. Top level support is being given but at Plink deadline there was no news. HCS has written to the Minister supporting the Rochdale cause.

**Ken Wright**

# That Things Have Come to This

*It is with a great deal of sadness that we print, without comment, this letter from Allan Knott, Boat Crew Officer, to Frank Smith, General Secretary.*

Dear Frank,

## HCS TRIP BOATS

On Saturday 15 May 1999, Bob Maycock and trainees suffered another stone-throwing incident when a gang of ten youths threw stones from Whitelands Road in a most determined way whilst his crew were turning the Greater Manchester in the winding hole. Bill Powell suffered a blow to the head but fortunately was not apparently injured. The youths increased their hostility by running down the newly-laid stone circle area to gain a closer position for throwing but the crew managed to avoid further missiles.

This is the third stone-throwing incident in a month, the previous being mid-April when Paul Finch and Irene were attacked whilst cruising under the railway bridge at the Festival site when the two foremost windows of the Oldham Otter were smashed and a boy passenger suffered a slight cut from flying glass. The week after, Barry Edwards and Barry Garthwaite were cruising the Oldham Otter over the aqueduct at Portland Basin when they were stoned but reported no injuries or damage on that occasion. I am also aware of three isolated incidents during the 1998 season, two at the same aqueduct and the third at Romiley when John Wilson was struck on the head with stones thrown by youths on the main road bridge.

To safeguard the public, our crew members and to avoid the risk of civil litigation

against our skippers or the society, Bob and I decided to suspend all trips in the Ashton area forthwith. I have informed museum staff and a copy of this letter is being sent to all active crew members. We further fear that if another incident occurs, the boats in their present condition would not be likely to pass an examination, if subjected to scrutiny.

Kindly put these matters before the HCS Council and advise of any steps you may recommend for the future safety of crew and passengers and obtain a covering letter from the insurance company if they are prepared to offer us protection under the present circumstances.

For your information, the incidents involving Paul and Bob were reported to the police, should you consider contacting them further or informing the press of this unfortunate chain of events.

Yours sincerely,

Allan C. Knott, Boat Crew Officer

### HATE THE POOR ENGINEERS!

1. Until pressure forced a change national Yellow Pages carried the following category heading: "CIVIL ENGINEERING".

For Civil Engineering see BORING".

2. Roads and bridges, docks and piers,  
That's the stuff for engineers  
Wine and women, cards and sex,  
That's the stuff for architects.

ANON

**Our congratulations to Audrey Smith OBE, past Chair of the IWA, honoured in the Queen's Birthday List this year.**

## Profile - HCS Restoration Ltd

Up until now Profile has been about HCS Council members but, for this issue, we have decided, in view of the impending shut-down of HCS Restoration Ltd., to make a change.

We are not just shutting down a firm. We are putting most or all of ten people out of work. People who have homes and families and responsibilities. People who, because of what HCS Restoration is, and what it has stood for, are facing an uncertain future not for the first time.

The irony of the situation cannot go without comment. One of the main planks of justifying complete restoration of the canal is the creation of new jobs, and we are about to put out of work the team who, more than anybody else, have brought OUR canal to a state where full restoration is possible. The team with enormous expertise in restoring narrow locks and dredging and repairing the canal track. Our hopes that most or all of the team could be found permanent work on canal maintenance in the North Manchester/West Yorkshire areas have come to nought.

Below we print a potted profile of each person involved, with their blessing. Some of the men started as trainees and became "volunteers", which meant that they did a full week's work in often filthy, cold and wet conditions, for only expenses on top of dole money, rather than sit at home doing nothing.

**We are not just shutting down a firm.  
We are putting most or all of ten  
people out of work.**

**FRANK SMITH**, aged 53. Frank is the paid General Secretary to HCS and not an employee of HCS-R. His future, however, is just as much in doubt as the others' and that is why he is included here. Married with three adult children he was formerly assistant projects officer following a long career in H.M. Forces. Tank troop leader. He has been with the Society for 11 years. He is a magistrate - FUTURE UNCERTAIN.

**STEPHEN WHITBY**, aged 40, Managing Director of HCS-R with a diploma in quantity surveying. Steve is married to Susan and they are both keen brass-banders. Daughter Catherine (11), is about to go to Grammar School. Before joining HCS-R's predecessor over 15 years ago Steve was a quantity surveyor - and cornet player. FUTURE UNCERTAIN.

**JOHN McLOUGHLIN**, aged 66, John has been with the firm for over 15 years. He is the site manager and comes from a background as a precision engineer. He is married with two grown-up daughters. FUTURE UNCERTAIN.

**BOB GOUGH**, aged 43, OM (One-Man) Technical Section, also Assistant

Editor of Pennine Link. Formerly in business as a computer consultant following an academic career during which he gained his Doctorate. Our own highly professional ecologist. Has been with us for 11 years. FUTURE UNCERTAIN.

**PAULA McLOUGHLIN**, aged 33, John Mac's daughter who was a full-time mum until joining HCS-R eleven years ago. Now works as our administration officer. FUTURE UNCERTAIN.

**ANDREW SHARP**, aged 32. Andy is our general foreman and skilled stonemason. A family man with two daughters, 7 and 10, and a boy nearly 2. A self-employed dry-stone waller before he joined us nearly twelve years ago. FUTURE UNCERTAIN.

**CHRIS SHARP**, aged 26, Andy's brother. Bricklayer and family man with 3 girls and a boy. Was in general building and has worked for us on and off for three years. FUTURE UNCERTAIN.

**ROY WILLIAMS**, aged 53, Plant operator. Married with a grown-up son and daughter. Roy was unemployed before joining HCS-R as a volunteer for 6 months. He has been fully employed by us for over 4 years. FUTURE UNCERTAIN.

**KEN WILLIAMS**, aged 49, Roy's brother. Plant operator. Married with three adult children, two girls and a boy. Was unemployed for a year when he became a volunteer for 3 months. Full employee for six years and has dredged most of the six miles cleared by HCS-R. FUTURE UNCERTAIN.

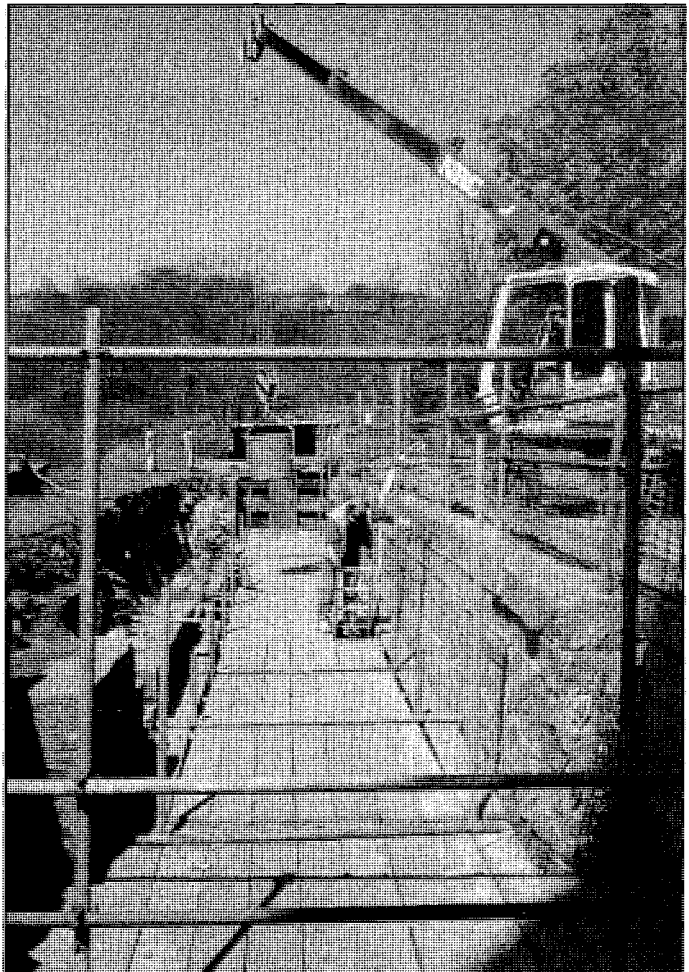
**TREVOR WILKINSON**, aged 29, a single man, Trevor is a driver and labourer. He was unemployed when he came to us as a volunteer for two

years. He has been a full employee for four years. FUTURE UNCERTAIN.

**JAMES WOOD**, aged 53, single. Jim is a labourer and, from being unemployed, has been with HCS-R for four years, the first two years as a volunteer. FUTURE UNCERTAIN.

**Ken Wright**

Full circle - HCS Restoration's last contract at Limekiln Lock where it all began.



Ken Wright

# The Wife's Tale - Part 37

MONMOUTHSHIRE & BRECON CANAL

May 16th - 23rd, 1998

Red Line Boats, Goytre Wharf, Llanover  
'RED SWAN' (RECHRISTENED 'DRAB  
DUCK')

## Saturday May 16th, 1998

A glorious, cloudless, sunny, v. hot day! Off at 9am. Little traffic - M6, M5 & M50. Stopped at service area briefly. Turned off the A40 to Raglan - big castle - to old coaching inn, the Beaufort Arms, where we had a splendid lunch, in isolation apart from a party of four who left soon after we arrived. Ken had a pint of Hook Norton which made him think all his birthdays had come at once! Everywhere was so quiet, hardly a soul to be seen, you would never think it was lunchtime on a Saturday.

On to Abergavenny for a look round as we were too early for the boat pickup - it was market day so we soon found out where all the people were! Not a parking space to be had but it was an interesting drive round and to be visited later in the week. Goytre Wharf and the Red Line boatyard were only minutes away by car (a full day's sailing by canal!). The wharf was quite bustling with people collecting boats and others just looking round the countryside park which it is part of. Very disappointed with our boat - as basic and poor as they come. Before the list of pros and cons, I must mention that the present owners had

only taken over the yard in November (we found this out at the end of the holiday) and they really had an uphill struggle and had taken on a very big commitment. It was obvious the improvements they were making and one can only wish them well. The holiday was booked through Blakes who only had two yards on their books to choose from and once you had rejected no dogs, trad stern (we prefer cruiser) and galley other than at the back (you know the reasons why) we weren't left with much choice.

Here goes - Wardrobe but no drawers, cupboards or shelves to put rest of clothes so lived out of the holdall. No hooks to hang towels or tea towels. Large narrow shelved cupboard, painted grained brown with paint peeling and no catch on door, so cupboard opened with engine vibration and all provisions fell on the floor. Ken, true to form, made a wire closure which did the trick. Top useless as no upstand, so anything placed there also fell on the floor. No peg for the 'fridge door, no bread bin but in true tradition the bread was kept in the oven (I didn't intend to use it anyway!). The front door was held open by a piece of string tied round the yale lock, which was also the door



Boatyard and lime kilns  
at Goytre Wharf  
Countryside Centre

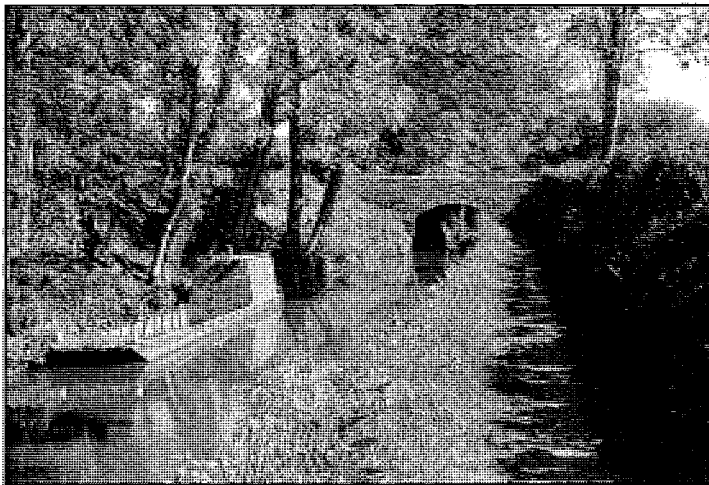


handle, and back to the curtain rail. No hooks on either the back or front doors to keep them open - and as the weather was scorching this wasn't very satisfactory. The only work surface was the draining board to the sink which was miniscule - good job we only intended to make light breakfasts and sandwiches. The loo had an ill-fitting seal so there was leakage and a constant bad smell. The 'bathroom' had not been very well cleaned, the shower tray was filthy and I found used toilet tissue on the floor behind the loo fixing. The loo brush was nearly bald and very 'used'. The woodwork was very amateurish, badly made and painted. The dining table seats were nicely upholstered, a good height and very comfortable. Unfortunately the table was dirty (a good scrub put that right) and very wobbly. Used bed linen was found in one of the lockers so it stayed put. The beds were very comfortable and bed linen, duvets and upholstery were of very good quality. Crockery, glasses and cutlery etc. good but knives very blunt - this is not unusual so from long experience had taken my own. There was a good full sized cooker with a more than adequate range of utensils. Tea towels and washing up liquid were provided but no bin liners for the very

small bin. Fortunately had brought two which would see us through until I could buy some more. Nowhere to hang wet clothes - again. Do boat fitters think we only go boating in fine weather? The lighting was a laugh, so dim in the main cabin that it was impossible to read at night without using a torch. A 5 watt on the bulkhead, the rest single 8 watt fluorescent with only one in the main cabin, two in the galley and two in the front cabin (bedroom). There was no light on the after deck. No waterproofs, no first aid kit, no boat hook, no mop, no inventory, wrong manual for the boat and that very poor. Good job HE knew what he was doing. No seats on foredeck (we bought two garden chairs in Brecon). Bow locker filled with water and hose pipe kept on roof. Mooring plank very worn with large nails protruding. The TV was black and white and, as expected, had very poor reception, but the inbuilt radio equally poor which was surprising. Also in the 'plusses' it was a good hull, good ropes, good engine and handling, excellent heating and hot water supply. We could cope!

The old gentleman who took us part way up the cut to show us the ropes was the previous

owner of the yard and we received a very long lecture - he had learned his spiel off by heart as we heard the same lecture being given to the next boat. Off at 2.45, making for Pontypool, but we had been warned to turn at Bridge 52 Pontymoile due to shallow water - and how! Could only



**Living proof that British Waterways are around, somewhere!**

do 2 mph. I was walking much quicker with the dogs and had to wait quite a while for Ken to catch me up. The scenery is quite beautiful. Much of the canal runs through very wooded stretches. Pity the canal isn't in better nick. Would be interested to find out how BW class it. A lot of natural debris, branches, large logs, etc. and badly silted up. Got slower and slower as we neared the basin. Decided to take advice and not go any further. Ken did a superb winding in a v. tight space - only had inches to spare. Moored at 6pm. Tried several places but couldn't get in to the bank. At last passed Br.64 and got in far enough to put the plank out. After dinner decided to walk as far as we could towards Pontypool and made Br.49 before turning round and the midges bit us to death! Everybody we met friendly and cordial. Cyclists even thanked us for stepping aside and holding the dogs. Very busy towpath. Back to boat by 8pm. Ken put up portable kennel (Copyright reserved by HIM!) in the dining table space - fits perfectly.

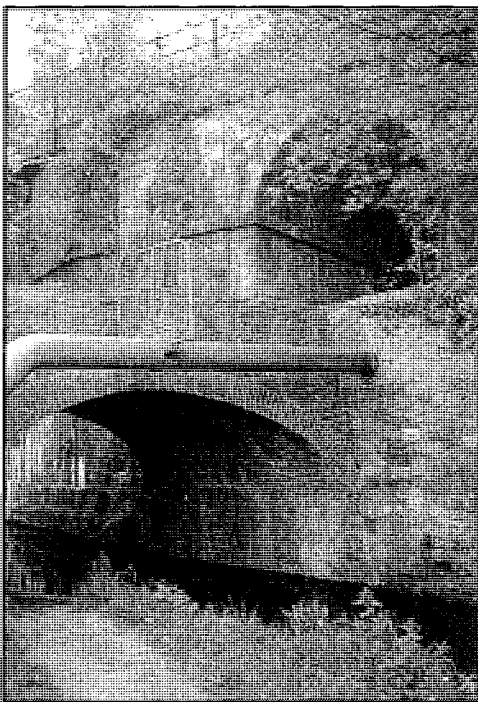
And so ended our first day - disappointed that the boat was so poor, and it wasn't cheap, but we could cope and we weren't going to let it spoil our holiday. On reflection I suppose we should have kicked up a fuss, but you don't do you?

### **Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May.**

Woken at 4.45am! by a) the dawn chorus and b) Bill wanting attention. Ken, being the chivalrous fellow he is, got up and took the dogs out. Back to sleep. Didn't wake until 8am - late for us. Clear blue skies - sunny but fresh breeze - just perfect. Quick up and off. While Ken steered I fed him, fed the dogs, made the beds, took down the kennel then fed me - I know my place! Moored at Br.62 - long way out - and walked to Mamhilad

where Nicholson said 'Stores open all day' - no shop! Decided the dogs needed a walk, so on to Br.64. This is an incredibly beautiful canal and such a pity it is not in better condition. Mooring is impossible on this stretch without a great struggle and so far using the plank all the time. Hope it improves. The scenery is quite breathtaking - and in my humble opinion whoever says the Oxford and Llangollen are the most beautiful canals need their bumps reading!

Passed through Goytre Wharf - should have stopped to complain but didn't - with its big mooring basin and good overnight moorings. Pass Br.75 and into deeper water. Could get into the bank with no problem - such a remarkable difference in the two sections. Wooded glades so picturesque - a photo at every turn. Incredible views into valley and towards Brecon Beacons - too hazy for a good camera shot. Moored at Tod's Bridge



**Unusual juxtaposition of rail, road and canal - and gas main.**

1.15pm, 20 minute walk to Llanfoist to find the Bridge Inn. Eventually found it, after directions from a local, by the River Usk and the 5 arch bridge leading to Abergavenny. Sat outside in the beer garden - a great atmosphere with so many people enjoying a perfect sunny day, good food and ale. Found a huge Safeways to have a good look round and do a bit of shopping. A long, half hour steep climb back to the boat made more enjoyable by watching about 30 paragliders/hang-glidiers swirling down.

When we got back to the boat noticed some old wharf buildings and the remains of a tramway leading up into the hillside. According to Nicholson *'In the 19thC the hills to the west were heavily mined and quarried, and many tramways were constructed to carry the coal, iron ore and limestone down to the canal to be loaded into boats. There are sometimes still traces of these tramways. At Llanfoist there is a good walk from the boathouse into the mountains, following the course of the old tramway.'*

3.15pm and off. Through woods overlooking deep valleys with the Brecon Beacons constantly in sight - passed private boat clubs, mainly cruisers, with a few small narrow

boats. Castle Boats at Gilwern looked pleasant and with immaculate boats - a reminder to get a brochure on the way back. Interesting lime kilns by the canal, worth a look on the way back. The channel now deep and sides of concrete so was able to do 4mph - makes a difference. Quite a lot of traffic which was mainly private owners but all very friendly.

So much beauty and time to enjoy the scenery. Huge well kept farms, an Italianate hotel in the valley, Gliffaes Hotel, with extensive grounds covered in azaleas and rhododendra. Some very low bridges. Br.100 so low only 2" to spare - really. We had been warned about the lack of headroom so filled up with water to sit us well down into the water. Family watched us go through convinced we were going to get stuck - I think they were rather sorry that we didn't. Although there were several canalside pubs we decided to keep going until we reached the first lock. Moored at 7.45 - right into the side for a change. Walked to the lock and the busy Coach & Horses pub opposite. (A mental note to stop for a meal on the way back). Plenty of moorings above first lock with mooring rings. Rooks making a racket

and sounds of pheasant close by. Dinner, walk, read and wrote journal. It's been a long day - all of 22 miles! Lights so dim Ken had to get his torch out to enhance the light! We are in for some early nights!

Next time - the beautiful city of Brecon.

The 'Disneyland' temporary channel at Llanfoist.

Photos: A & K Wright



# 1999 Photographic Competition

**SUMMER'S HERE  
WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE  
CAPTURE SOME ON FILM**

**SEND THEM TO PENNINE LINK!**

OR, IF YOU AREN'T NEAR WATER, SEND A FEW FROM YESTERYEAR - NO DATE BARRIER THIS YEAR. NO COUNTRY BARRIER, EITHER!

Yes, the rules have changed again, just to keep you on your toes. Any photographs, from any year, can be entered within the four categories, and from any waterway, worldwide, in categories c) and d).

## RULES

- \* Prints only, black & white or colour - winning entries will be published in Pennine Link 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 waterways - Senior
  - d) Other waterways - Junior (16 or under)
- \* Open only to bona fide members of HCS and their immediate families.
- \* Entry fee of 50p per print.
- \* Postage required for return of prints.

## HOW TO ENTER

1. Send your prints (maximum 5 per person in each category) to:-

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

2. Include details of the photographs (captions if you so wish) and age of the 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. Include PO. or cheque (payable to HCS) totaling 50p for each print submitted.
6. CLOSING DATE: FRIDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 1999.

## PRIZES

The judge will again be Geoffrey Hope, Past President of Oldham Photographic Society who will write a critical comment for each print submitted.

There will be a winner and a runner-up in each of the four categories a) to d) and each will receive a certificate and a cash prize.

The overall winner will receive the Pennine Link Challenge shield for one year, a replica to keep, a waterways book and a signed certificate.

All winning prints will be published in Pennine Link, with the judge's comments.

Any queries to The Editor, Ken Wright  
Tel. 01457 873599

THE VALUE OF THE PRIZES WILL  
DEPEND ON THE NUMBER OF ENTRIES  
SO - GET SHOOTING OR SEARCHING -  
AND MAKE IT WORTHWHILE!

And to help you on your way our judge, Geoff Hope, has put together a few hints and tips on how to take that winning shot!

"It is always difficult to know how much of the technical side of photography people know or indeed wish to know. But, with apologies to the better informed, I would just like to mention a couple of the principal pitfalls that the unwary can fall into.

One of the biggest problems we get, particularly last year, is rather flat lighting, and pictures have suffered as a result. A bit of cross lighting on the subject works wonders for colour and texture and can lift a normal snapshot up to being a winning picture. However, brilliant sunshine, particularly at midday when it is overhead, throws very harsh shadows producing a contrast that is beyond the range that most film, both colour or monochrome, can usually handle. As a result of

this we find that the kindest light for photography usually happens in early to mid-morning or late afternoon; as a result of this we find that a lot of serious landscape photographers put their cameras away over the mid-day period, particularly in midsummer (assuming we have one of course!).

Another point to watch out for is "Out of Focus" pictures. Sometimes it is caused by 'camera shake', in which case a support or better still a tripod will cure it. However, with the advent of modern cameras with auto focus we can soon fall into a trap, for they are usually designed to focus only on the subject that is in the dead centre of the view finder, which of course is not always what we desire. Reading the individual instructions for each camera we usually find that if we aim the camera directly at the point we wish to be in sharp focus, then half press the shutter release and hold it there

we can now reposition the camera to give us the desired picture in the viewfinder. Further pressure on the shutter release and the picture is taken, but this time the point of sharp focus is where we intended it to be.

Cameras with manual focus of course do not suffer from this problem and it is left to the photographer to arrange his or her picture as they want it. The overall depth of focus of course can be controlled by aperture setting with which things can be put in or out of focus as desired. However this is a lecture in itself and I am boring you enough as it is.

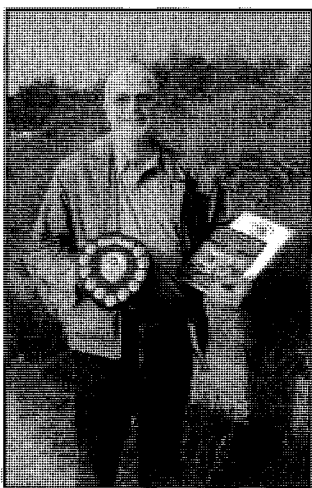
As well as taking pretty pictures I think one of the principal uses of the camera for your members should be to record times, places and events to help future generations to appreciate the life and history of the canal system and indeed I take this into consideration during my deliberations."

**Geoff Hope**

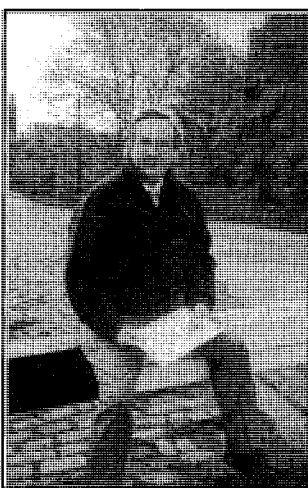
## ROGUE'S GALLERY

### The 1998 Competition Winners

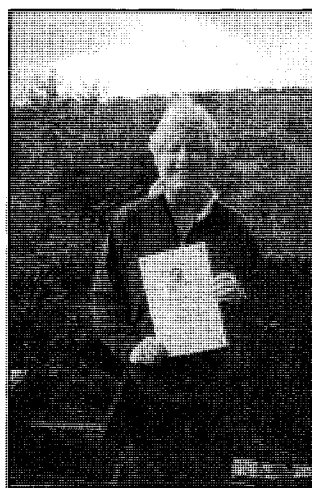
Photos: K Wright



**PAUL WHITE** from Mossley. Winner in Category A and Overall Winner, with the Challenge Shield, replica, certificate and book prize.



**ANTHONY CARTER** from Huddersfield. Runner-up in Category B.



**ANNE WRIGHT** from Dobcross. Winner in Category B and runner-up in Category A.



# Huddersfield Canals on Postcards

The first card this time is the opposite view to the Broad Canal view used under "Bridges". It shows "Deighton Red Dole(s) Lock", looking east this time with the bridge beyond. Personally, I would not describe the location as Deighton at all, but this may depend on who published the card and where they intended to sell it, as in the case of the many cards of the Lock House at Lock 10W. There are no clues on the card. Red Doles Lock would certainly be on a regular walk from Deighton into Huddersfield.

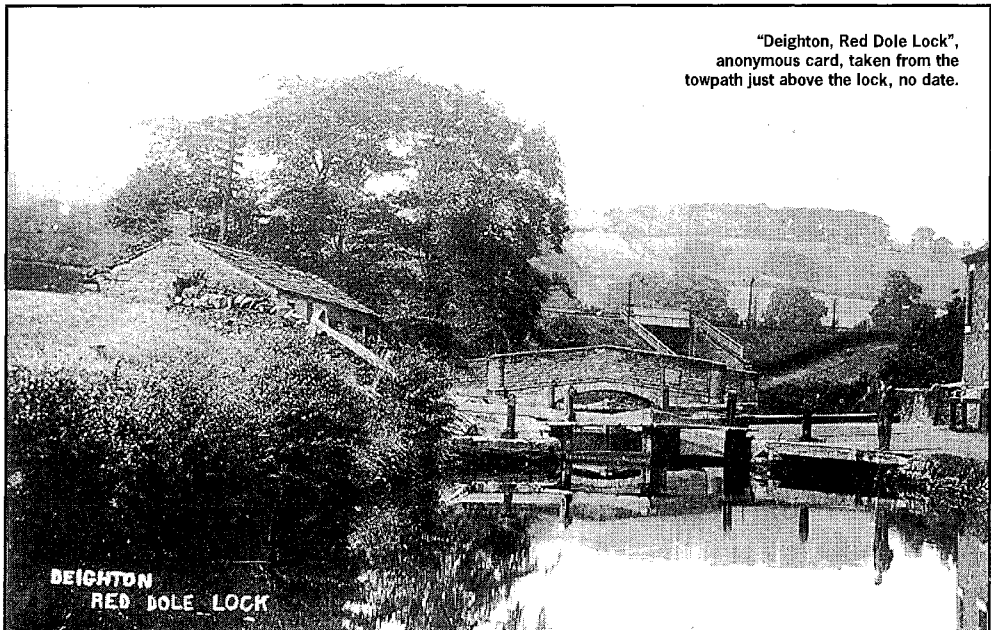
The second view has appeared in several publications about the canal and was featured in the display at Tunnel End. It is "Canal Lock & Bridge, Linthwaite", published in the "Realm" Series and posted in 1908. A few more trees have grown in the 90 years since - in fact a lot more trees have grown everywhere on the canal, particularly since we published the "Towpath Guide" in the early 1980's. I know from some work I did for an update (so far

unpublished) that what were then open views are now often well-wooded.

The third view is also well-known, though this is taken from the "Black and White" version of "Canal Lock near Holme Mill Slaithwaite" (actually Lock 29E, seen from West Slaithwaite Road Bridge. The colour version was published by "E.G. & Co." of Huddersfield and the card was posted in 1906.

To round off this series on "Locks", we may as well revisit Uppermill. "Saddleworth Viaduct No.2", another card by Abel Heywood & Son of Oldham in their "Branch" Series. This is a colour version of the classic view of Dungebooth Lock (22W). It claims to be printed in Saxony. Prior to WW1 this was a normally a guarantee of the best in colour printing, though this must have been done on one of their off-days, looking at the standard of printing on the card.

**Trevor Ellis**

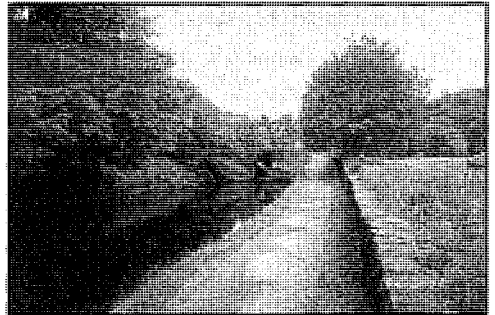
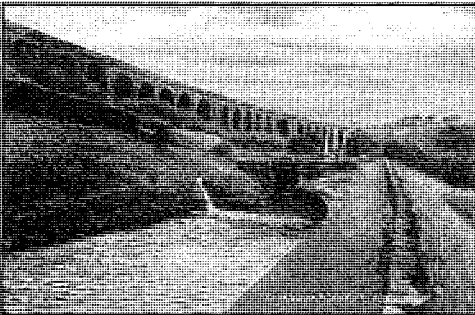
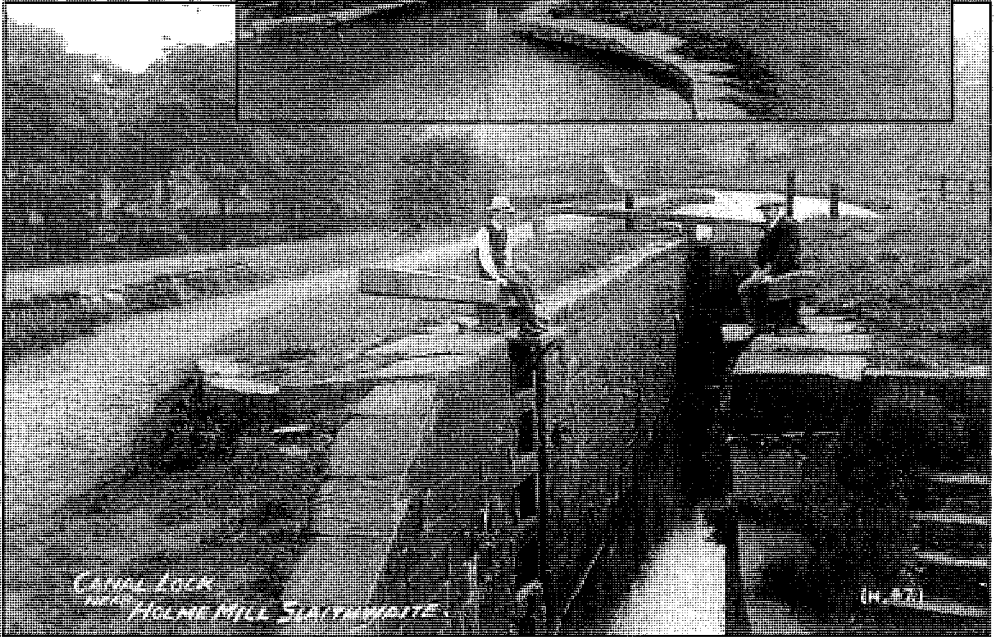


# 8 - Locks

Right: "Canal Lock & Bridge, Littlewaite" from the Realist Series, looking from the towpath above Lock 15E. Posted in 1908.



Below: "Canal Lock near Holme Mill Slaitwaite". A colour version by E.G. & Co. of Huddersfield was posted in 1906.



"Saddleworth Viaduct No.2" by Abel Heywood & Son of Oldham in their "Branch Series" (I have taken the liberty of adding to Trevor's postcards! Trevor has referred to the increase in the number of trees over the years, presumably to do with better atmospheric conditions. My picture shows the same view of Dungebooth Lock but taken in May, 1999. Ed.)

# The Stamford Group



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# The Remaining Blockages on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal - Summer 1999

**20** Stalybridge Town Centre  
 'Excavation of old canal line with new locks and bridges'  
 3rd Quarter 1999 to 4th Quarter 2000

**19** Scout Tunnel  
 'Internal repairs'  
 Work in progress - completion April 2001

**18** Division Bridge Aqueduct  
 'Structural repairs'  
 3rd Quarter 1999 to 4th Quarter 2000

**17** Mann's Wharf to Frenches  
 'Dredging'  
 3rd Quarter 1999 to 3rd Quarter 2000

**16** Frenches to High Street  
 'Dredging'  
 3rd Quarter 1999 to 3rd Quarter 2000

**15** Lock 21W to Wool Road  
 'Dredging and lock repairs'  
 Work in progress - completion July 1999

**14** High Street Bridge & Wade Lock  
 'New navigable culvert and repairs to lock'  
 1st Quarter 2000 to 2nd Quarter 2001

**13** Old Sag Aqueduct  
 'Structural repairs'  
 3rd Quarter 1999 to 2nd Quarter 2000

**12** Wool Road Bridge & Lock 24W  
 'New navigable culvert and repairs to lock'  
 3rd Quarter 1999 to 1st Quarter 2000

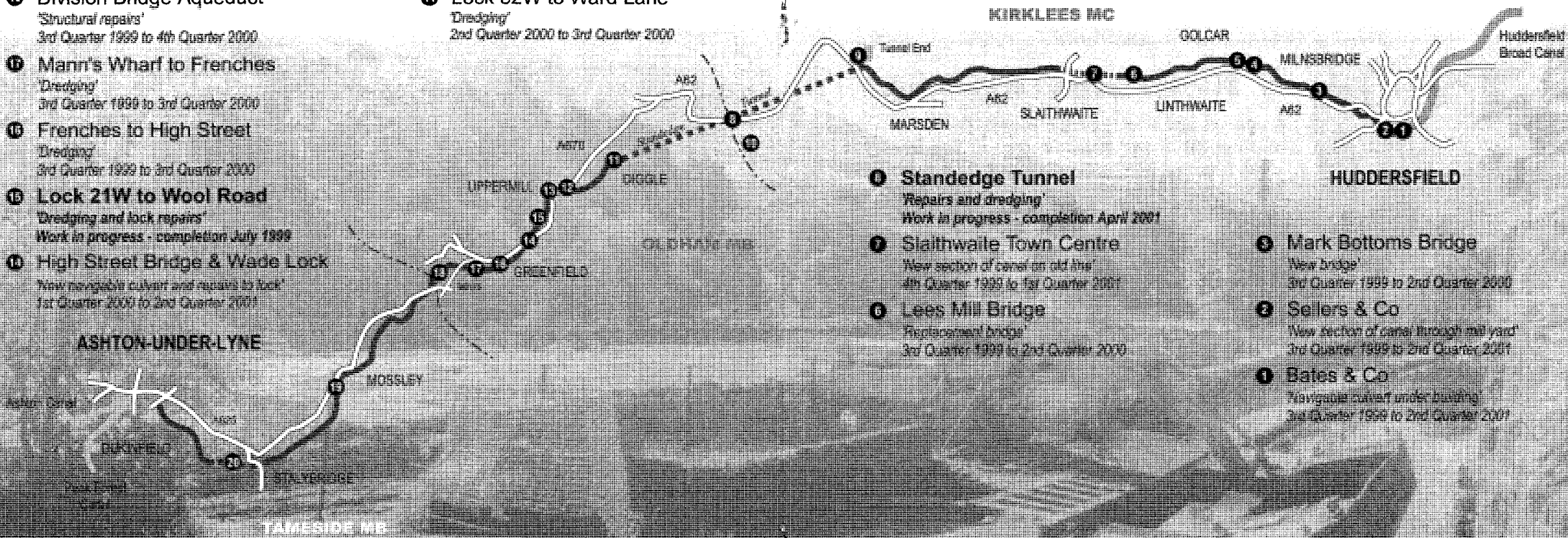
**11** Lock 32W to Ward Lane  
 'Dredging'  
 2nd Quarter 2000 to 3rd Quarter 2000

**10** Water Supply Works  
 'Improvements to reservoir feeders'  
 4th Quarter 1999 to 4th Quarter 2000

**9** Standedge Experience  
 'Visitor/Heritage Centre'  
 1st Quarter 2000 to 1st Quarter 2001

**5** Holme Mill Bridge  
 'Replacement bridge'  
 3rd Quarter 1999 to 2nd Quarter 2000

**4** Golcar Aqueduct  
 'Structural repairs'  
 3rd Quarter 1999 to 2nd Quarter 2000



**1** Standedge Tunnel  
 'Repairs and dredging'  
 Work in progress - completion April 2001

**7** Slithwaite Town Centre  
 'New section of canal on old line'  
 4th Quarter 1999 to 1st Quarter 2001

**6** Lees Mill Bridge  
 'Replacement bridge'  
 3rd Quarter 1999 to 2nd Quarter 2000

**3** Mark Bottoms Bridge  
 'New bridge'  
 3rd Quarter 1999 to 2nd Quarter 2000

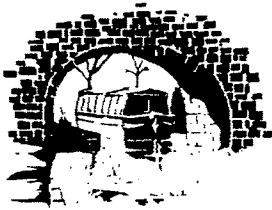
**2** Sellers & Co  
 'New section of canal through mill yard'  
 3rd Quarter 1999 to 2nd Quarter 2001

**1** Bates & Co  
 'Navigable culvert under building'  
 3rd Quarter 1999 to 2nd Quarter 2001

# Canal Cruises

## 'PENNINE MOONRAKER'

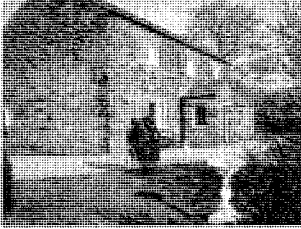
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## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Owing to the restoration work on Standedge Tunnel and the planned works at Tunnel End, Marsden, the Tunnel End Canal and Countryside Centre, will be closing down permanently as of 31st December 1998.



# Harwood's Thames

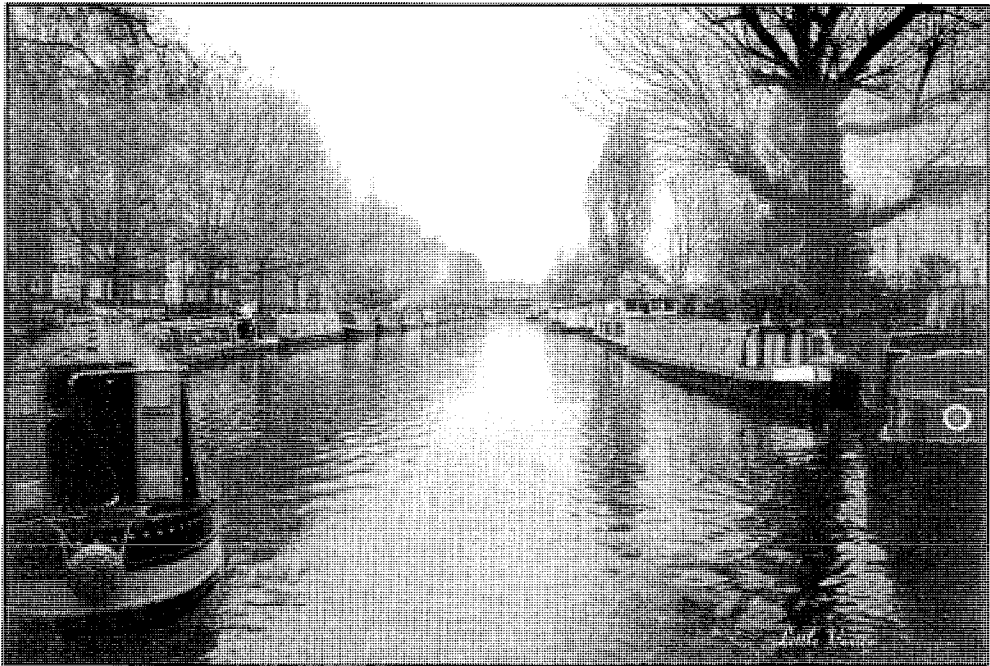
## BARGING ON THE THAMES !

*In the absence of any more questions for John Harwood he took himself off for a trip on Old Father Thames. Needless to say, being John, you would expect him to get down to the heart of the matter! Here is the first episode.*

Let's get two things straight. I am a Northerner (born, bred and living) and I am a canalcoholic. That doesn't mean I hate Southerners or rivers - I just have my preferences. This year's Spring trip had (at the request of my daughter and son in law) been decided on as the Thames - when you find a hire company, therefore, that will let you take a boat through central London this is a trip that has to be done! One began to wonder about the omens however on hearing that the other half of the family's car had been broken into

overnight leaving them with a smashed window. Never mind - sticky tape, plastic and the window company can do it at the boatyard.

Having not been south of Brum (other than by boat) for over twenty years the M1, M25 and M4 bits of this trip were not the bits I was looking forward to most - however it wasn't too bad, the only bit of the M25 that was stationary was going (or rather not going) the other way! Boatyard found, cars unloaded and off on the twenty minute trip to Tesco at the former Bulls Bridge depot. Granted, the supermarket was very convenient for boats, but I couldn't help trying to picture the scene 50-100 years ago with dozens of narrow boats, chimneys smoking, waiting for orders for their next trip. Whilst pondering I realised that there wasn't a BW key on



the boat - call out number one.

Next morning sees us off up the Paddington arm which was - dull. Good views of Kensal Green Cemetery and the Eurostar depot but the trip began at Little Venice. Here rows of brightly painted boats, smoky chimneys, bring warmth to the canaler's heart. All too quickly and it's past and into Maida Hill tunnel - and out into Regent's Park where you get the feeling that the rates have just gone up 10000%. Very pleasant area though especially when you pass under Macclesfield Road (Blow Up) bridge knowing that in 1874 a boat laden with gunpowder exploded beneath the bridge with somewhat spectacular results! The bridge was rebuilt using the original columns - now leaving us to ponder how the rope grooves got onto the wrong side of the columns! On through the zoo and

past the famous Snowdon Aviary until we reach Camden Market in full flow on a Saturday afternoon. Noise, bustle, activity seemingly centred around the canal - quite pleasant in fact - until you have to get the alcoholics off the lock beams. Still, that sounds worse than it actually proved to be.

Knowing (as all Plinkers do) the welcome offered to boaters at the Ellesmere Port Boat Museum we decide to spend the night at the London canal museum with a view to looking round in the morning. Being aware of the sensitivity of mooring in London we made sure by checking at museum reception before tying up for the night. No problem - stay just where you are and a quiet night would be enjoyed by all. In the morning we check into the museum and are asked if we've just spent



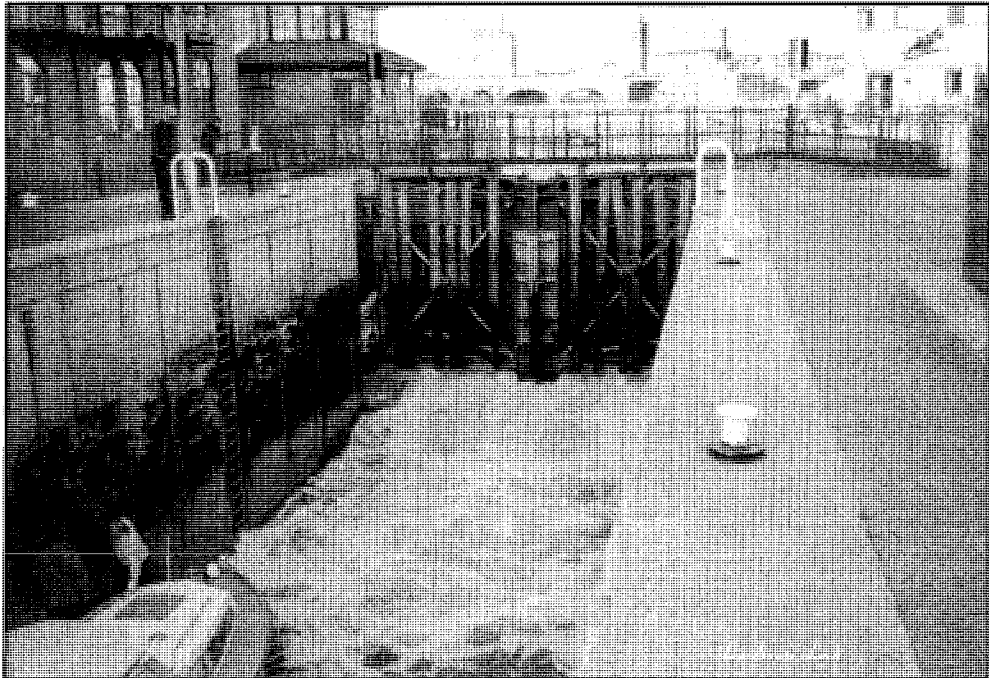
the night where we are moored - horrors - that's private mooring - you shouldn't have been there - you should have been here - what's more if you had been here (as opposed to there) I would have charged you for mooring! At this stage I politely suggested to the museum that if they had attempted to charge me for mooring without informing me in advance that I was to be charged it wouldn't have gone down very well - apart from then having to pay admission as well! Still I did manage to purchase a very nice replica Measham teapot - something I've wanted for a bit (the genuine article being beyond my reach), and is it me or does it make very nice tea?

Excitement rises in the family as we approach Old Ford Lock (home of the Big Breakfast) only to find out that there's

another Old Ford Lock elsewhere! Nice timing brings us to Limehouse Basin in the early evening ready for the morning tide. Tied up at the pontoon, filling with water, we are approached by a character who wants £14.50 (including VAT!) to allow us to moor for the night. Further questioning reveals the fact that the moorings 50 yards away are free and begs one to point out that stupid questions beget stupid answers - still the adventure starts on the tide at 9am tomorrow.

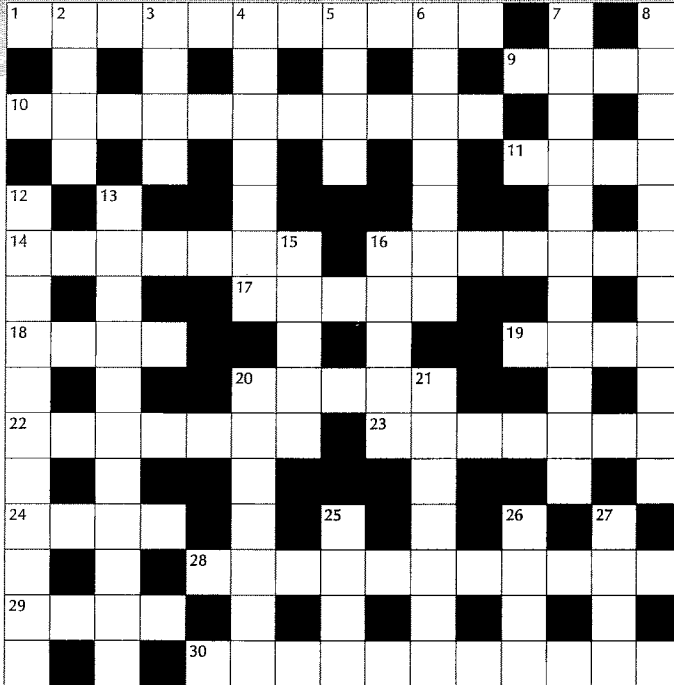
**John Harwood**

*Next time John has an interesting confrontation with Chiswick Bridge!*



Photos: J. Harwood

# Canal Crossword - 25



- 22 Sainly lady goes east with cooked meat between Abingdon and Oxford (7).  
 23 Leap par when wearing appropriate raiment (7).  
 24 Oils Superman needs when lonely (4).  
 28 Revise merry sea shanty whilst sailing it's estuary (5,6).  
 29 Vicar plays his fish being a piscatory person (4).  
 30 I beam shabby show at a Thames side centre of football excellence (6,5).

## DOWN

- 2 In alphabetical terms one Greek short of two fistfuls (4).  
 3 In Plink find the key to joining the Lancaster canal to the River Ribble (4).

## ACROSS

- 1 Sids bailing out a boat sunk in Worcester (6,5).  
 9 Scandinavian branching out from the Weaver in Northwich (4).  
 10 Canal builders who left their mark on the infrastructure (11).  
 11 180 scored in Totnes (4).  
 14 Get lost aft when sailing the Aire and Calder below Wakefield (7).  
 16 Greek Gods of the west wind often found blowing around gently in summer (7).  
 17 Terse instructions given to the one with the tiller in his hand (5).  
 18 Labial appurtenances (4).  
 19 Put a knot in a fashionable style of cooking we hear (4).  
 20 Use an Apple Mac routinely to expand abbreviated computer instructions (5).

- 4 International politicians holding meetings on BW's highest waterways (7).  
 5 Where peas might be found in church (4).  
 6 Ring tie found on a gas cooker (7).  
 7 Where brightly coloured finches of the genus Serinus are unloaded in London's docklands (6,5).  
 8 Where a small Elizabeth owned a meadow by the Llangollen canal we hear (11).  
 12 Flick gallon barrel onto a boat in Wakefield (4,3,4).  
 13 Beak on a salary (11).  
 15 Boat driven by meats cooked in a boiler (5).  
 16 Animal that lays down in the road (5).  
 20 Pre prandial refreshment better shaken than stirred (7).  
 21 Pick one mother for the best solution (7).  
 25 Fishing net favoured by one of Adam's sons (4).  
 26 Garb seen on a JCB where WERGS are working (4).  
 27 Rivers meet below Worcester (4).

*Crossword Solution on Page 55*

# The Distaff Side

Part three of the stories of the middle class young ladies who volunteered to work on canal boats during the 1939-45 War. M & M Baldwin, Publishers of the 'Working Waterway' series of books, have given us permission to print excerpts from four of their books which feature these courageous women in action.

The extracts this time are from "Idle Women" by Susan Woolfitt who, at the age of 37, was one of the older volunteers. She had married actor Donald Woolfitt (his stage name was Donald Wolfitt) in 1934 but by 1944 their marriage was in severe difficulties and she was looking for a new perspective and some absorbing interest into which she could pour her considerable energies and talents. She had two young children at boarding school so was "available" in term-time.

An advertisement in an evening paper caught her eye, showing a young woman, standing on top of a barge and wielding a boat-hook. It was a Ministry of War Transport advertisement, recruiting women to work as canal boatwomen. She persuaded the authorities to let her work part-time and wrote 'Idle Women' to describe her year on the boats.

The book was first published by Ernest Benn Ltd. in 1947 and Baldwin's new edition was issued in 1986 with additional photographs. The present edition is a reprint of the 1986 edition.

—oOo—

Daphne began to tell me about the work in the gloomiest possible terms. This technique was always adopted by the trainers when an aspirant fell to them for interview, in an endeavour to sort out the sheep from the goats as early as possible. So many applicants came with the idea that the life was one long glide through sunny meadows, an arm thrown lazily over the tiller and a good spice of romance to brighten things up. She told me of the dirt, the difficulty of learning to manage the boats, the wet and icy hands of winter-time boating and

the primitiveness of it all. She said nothing about plumbing, any sign of which was conspicuous by its absence. I didn't like to ask.

—oOo—

"Can you be ready by Tuesday?" said the F.L.V. (No, not possibly but I shall.) "Your trainer will be Miss Gayford" . . . (what about Daphne?) . . . "your boats the Battersea and the Uttoxeter" . . . (so much for romance!) . . . "you will take the 2.7 train from Paddington to Hayes where Miss Gayford will meet you with your luggage . . . have you got a mattress? You'll have to get one somehow. The other trainee will be another term-time mother like yourself . . ." (so my idea had worked?) . . . "don't forget the strong belt . . . very important . . . goodbye and good luck!"

—oOo—

And so it started; all from a picture in the paper. The most interesting, original and enviable year I ever spent in my life; a year that I never could have spent if it hadn't been for the war; a year that I wouldn't have missed for anything in the world; a picture of life that I had no knowledge of, of companionship and gruelling hard work, of learning how the other half live and love and make friends . . . a picture from the paper.

—oOo—

I elicited all there was to know on the subject of sanitation which can be briefly summed up, once and for all, by the word Bucket. I have a joyous recollection of Vera's face as she earnestly assured me: ". . . really, ours is awfully comfortable." This superb line upset me completely and at the same time dispelled my last doubts in a wild fit of giggles.

—oOo—

If anybody had told me then that I should learn to steer the motor and simultaneously prime and light a Primus, boil a kettle and make a pot of tea, at the same time dodging bridge-holes and avoiding other boats and think nothing of it at all, I should have thought them raving mad. Yet I did. We all did.



# Idle Women

"I know," said Kit. "I think this morning we will go and have a little instruction in the engine-room, only a very little because you're going to have a proper talk from Mr. Curtis this afternoon and then we will go up and have a look at Cowley." I asked, what was Cowley and what was there to look at there? "There is a lock at Cowley," said Kit and I am surprised that there was not an off-stage clap of thunder or some other awful phenomenon to accompany her words, so momentous an utterance was it.

—oOo—

A sudden jet of boiling water from a factory steaming and spurting into the dirty cut water, a cemetery, a Lock hospital, a barge loaded with timber, a piercing whistle from yet another train, more barges, more horses, more boats . . . and in the midst of it all our own particular pair of boats, our home at night, our work by day, threading in and out of the noise, dirt and smell with a definite job to do, on National Service and playing its own tiny part in the upheaval of the world's titanic strain and stress.

I never got used to the incredible idea that I really belonged to all this: it was a perpetual marvel to me that I should be allowed here, part of it all and accepted by the men of the cut, boaters and lock-keepers and toll-office clerks. Gold braid and red tabs could not have made me prouder than I was, in my nondescript sweater and trousers, dirty, untidy, muscles aching and fingernails torn and split, dead tired and often ravenously hungry.

Next morning, while waiting for the new arrival, we cleaned out the cabin thoroughly, black-leaded the stove till it shone, cleaned all the brasswork, chopped the fire-wood, cooked enough food to last us two days, exchanged gossip with the neighbouring boat families, learned a few more knots from Kit, did our "home-work", which consisted in making out a route-book of our own copied from a model supplied by Kit, and several other odd jobs, in all what Kit called in disgust "a morning off" . . .!

—oOo—

Kit threw me and the bicycle off at a bridge-hole, and told me to go and see if the next lock was ready, and if not, to get it ready. That was a nasty moment; it was also the first time I had ridden Kit's bicycle, which was nastier.

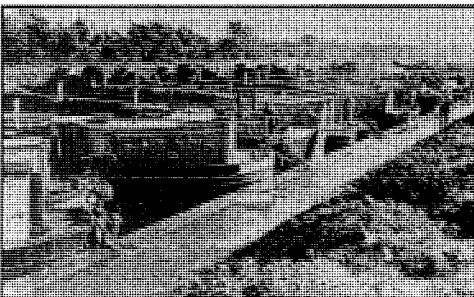
Kit said it was thirty years old and I never found any grounds for disbelieving her. It had no mudguards, no brakes, practically no paint, and would have been more comfortable with no seat.

("What did you do in the Second Great War, Mummy?" . . . "Rode Kit's bicycle from London to Birmingham, darling!")

—oOo—

In spite of a phenomenally cold winter that followed the autumn, I did not get a cold of any kind the whole time I was in the job. A doctor friend and I were discussing this the other day and I said I was sure it was due to the constant fresh air; he said unsympathetically, that it was more likely to be

Grand Union Carrying Company boats at Bulls Bridge



Women boaters at Bulls Bridge



because I was "disgustingly well." Perhaps he is right; I certainly felt as fit as a fiddle all the time, and had an appetite like a horse.

—oOo—

I cannot imagine how the boatmen managed: three lamb cutlets a week is not a sufficient ration for a grown man doing over a hundred hours very hard work a week. They did not even get the agricultural cheese ration which would have helped a bit. The answer was bread, bread and again bread . . . but after the first week of the month it was bread with not much on it: one pound of preserves for boat-people as for everyone else. Many of the boaters have large and young families and I can only suppose that the "missus" would see to it that "Dad" got the lion's share at every meal. But that is hardly what the Ministry of Food intended for the children.

—oOo—

(Suffering from abdominal pains, Susan visits the boaters' Nurse at Stoke Bruerne) "Come in, come in! I shan't be a moment," called a voice from somewhere above my head and I walked into the cleanest room I have ever been in in my life. Everything seemed to be white; the chairs were draped in it, and the muslin curtains were tied up with bandages. All round the walls were hung First Aid charts and diagrams of the human body. At that moment in floated Sister Mary, shooting her cuffs and beaming at me. I say "floated" because, with her white veil streaming behind, she did not look as if she was in need of any other form of propulsion. I was led next door into the sitting-room, which I took to be a mark of special favour, and a clean snowy sheet was spread on the sofa for me.

"But, Sister Mary, I can't lie on that . . . I'm filthy," I protested, but she would not listen and soon I was stretched in all my boat grease and dirt on that virgin surface. I was thankful that at least I had a clean vest on.

—oOo—

I used to worry myself sick in tunnels in case someone from the butty had fallen in and I was none the wiser. Of course it never happened but something very like it did happen to a pair of the women's boats.

They were coming through empty, which meant that the butty was tied up close behind the motor, but there is not nearly so much strain as with a loaded boat. At the tunnel mouth the motor emerged into the daylight and the steerer looked round casually, to perceive with icy horror that she had lost her butty! The cross straps had slipped somewhere in the tunnel, she had no idea when, and the butty was somewhere inside.

—oOo—

There are certain things to be said on the credit side for tunnels. It is a wonderful opportunity to sing at the top of your voice - if, like me, you love singing but have not been blessed with the wherewithal to do it. In the tunnels I could bellow to my heart's content, no one could hear me and be hurt by it. Or alternatively, I

**Sister Mary, still working at Stoke Bruerne in about 1961**



would recite pages of poetry or long speeches from Shakespeare without risk of being thought mental; the closed-in walls gave tremendous resonance to the voice, too, so that I sounded simply magnificent . . . it also had the effect of taking my mind off all but the major crashes.

—oOo—

The towing process is known as "bow-hauling," and is accomplished by means of a line fastened on the stud at the fore-end of the butty, draped over the shoulder, clasped in both hands and then simply PULL and PULL again.

I felt very hard used when asked to turn myself into a beast of burden in this way. It was fortunate that I had no foreknowledge of a later trip when we had to bow-haul loaded butties from Knapton Junction to Oxford, and got stuck in the too-narrow locks into the bargain!

I felt more hardly used still when I discovered the dirt of the rope I was holding. The whole of the towpath here is small gravelly stones, permeated through and through with oil, grease, soot and noisome vapours from the factories at the cut side. That is at its best; at its worst it is black mud, through which the rope drags and falls as the bow hauler creeps onwards. It is no exaggeration to say that by the time we got out into the open country, we had a black stripe over our backs and shoulders, which penetrated right through to the skin, and which stayed there till we could scrub it off in a bath. We used to tow the ropes in the water for a mile or so, to clean them.

As we progressed and I saw whole families of small children helping their "mums" to pull the butty, their boots leaking and their clothes filthy, I could visualise what this meant in terms of human wear and tear. The state of the cabins at the end of the day . . . the condition of the kids' already threadbare clothes . . . the strain on their immature bodies . . . the harm done to the boater's pregnant wife . . . I felt that we had progressed not at all since the scandal of child labour during the Industrial Revolution.

*After the war Susan Woolfitt became an early member of the Inland Waterways Association and lectured extensively about her experiences on the boats. She was actively involved in Womens' Institute and amateur theatre matters and died, aged 71, in August 1978.*

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Cleobury Mortimer,  
KIDDERMINSTER, DY14 8BY.  
Tel and Fax: 01299 270110*

*'Idle Women' is £7.50 plus £1.00 post and packing. Credit card orders by 'phone are welcomed.*

**Ken Wright**

**Idle Woman - 1944**



# The Alma Street Story

Over the last few years several occasions have arisen to save the bacon of HCS (Restoration) Ltd. Just when it looked as if work had run out another job would spring up from somewhere. The classic instance came perhaps five years ago when the nation suddenly decided that canals were derelict land and were eligible for grants.

All that ran out towards the end of 1998 and work started at Uppermill. Very quickly the dredging team finished the first leg in the top and middle pounds and were, in cotton-spinning terms, "stuck for bobbins". The Good Fairy came again, in the form of a contract negotiated by Steve Whitby with Tameside Council, to restore an old canal arm on the Ashton Canal near Portland Basin in Ashton.

The Alma Street canal arm is over 100 metres long with a dry dock at the end of it. The arm was infilled and acted as part of the yard for a collection of old and

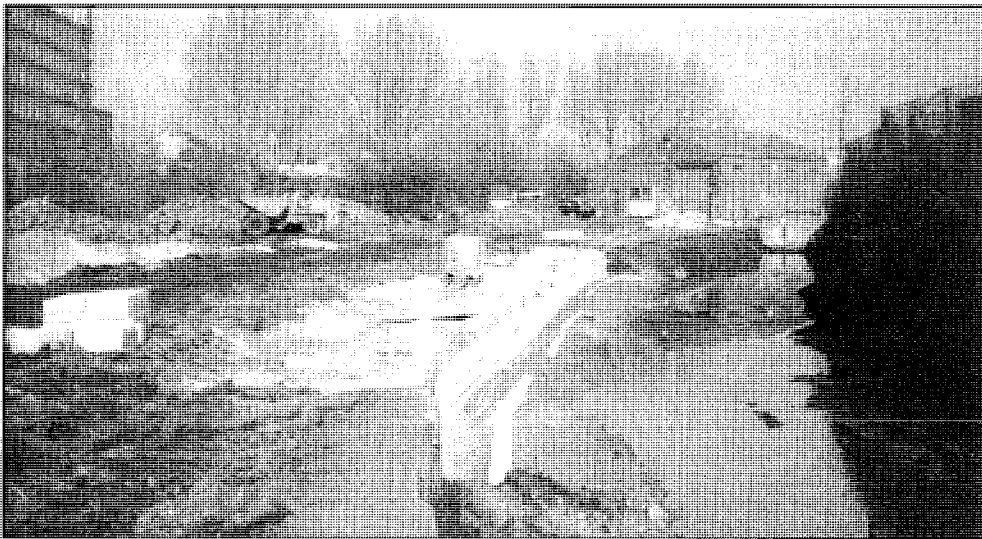
"middle-aged" industrial buildings trapped between the canal arm and the river and accessed either from the canal or from Alma Street under a very low railway bridge. It was once used to 'export' cast iron columns, pillars and beams from the adjacent iron works for use in the frantic mill building period of the Industrial Revolution.

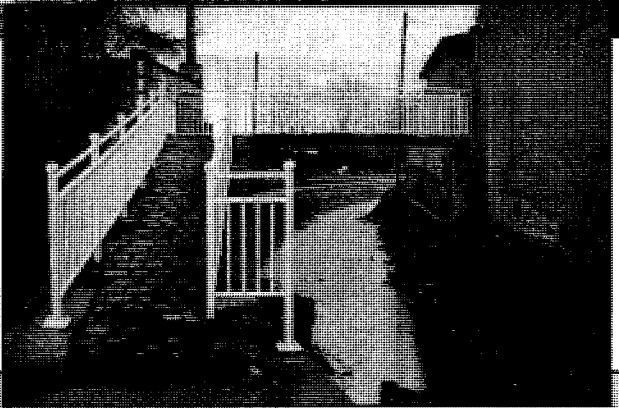
Our work consisted of site clearance, land-based dredging of the arm, rebuilding several lengths of wash wall, reconstructing the entrance to the Ashton Canal, restoring a brick footbridge over the arm including new handrails and carrying out towpath and footpath works and general landscaping. Every picture tells a story and the accompanying pictures illustrate a good job well done and finished in time.

The restored site is to be developed as a boatyard with dry-dock and repair facilities, bringing to fruition a long held dream by the developer, Guy Holding.

**Ken Wright**

Alma Street - General view over the site





Above: 'During' shot from the main canal  
Right: The finished footbridge  
Below: 'After' shot from the main canal

Photos: K. Wright



## Let's get some Perspective

**W**e print below a letter to the editor of the Oldham Evening Chronicle which takes the Society to task over environmental and conservation issues.

*I am surprised that the Chairman of the Huddersfield Canal Society, David Sumner, talked about its "amazing success" (April 27), but perhaps that is because both he and John Wilson, who put the scheme to reopen the Pennine Standedge canal tunnel on the Internet, put boats well before the conservation of wild life.*

*Other canal groups have not only restored canals in their areas, while preserving existing wild life, but have also managed to set aside specific conservation areas which encourage even more wild life into their area.*

*The HCS boasts about restoring the canal which, in their words, was in places nothing but "watery rubbish dumps". I wonder why they did not mention that some areas of the canal were home to endangered and rare species? Was it because, at the Huddersfield end of the canal, the HCS's restoration work not only devastated such sites but also drastically reduced fish stocks, killed nesting birds and destroyed some uncommon plant communities?*

*Perhaps the chairman regards it as part of HCS's achievements the fact that in Kirklees, after they lowered the water level to make it easier for them to work, a complete community of endangered freshwater crayfish were left to die in canal silt without any attempt to save any of them. Had these same creatures been killed in the same way by a shop or aquarium specialising in displaying and/or selling water life, they would have ended up before the courts. At the same time, the HCS wiped out a very unique colony of water snails.*

*Has the Huddersfield Canal Society, as part of its past and present restoration schemes, produced reports on the impact its restoration work would have on local canal wild life. At the same time, there are many of us who would like to know where their planned wild-life havens are and also what the HCS has done about returning endangered species to areas along the Huddersfield Canal where it wiped them out.*

*Finally, perhaps John Wilson might put on the Internet what will be done to make certain that restoration of the Standedge canal tunnel does not disturb endangered bats and also give details what active steps the HCS will take to ensure that bats will not be driven out by boat-owners, once the tunnel is again active in use.*

*Michael J.N. Newby,  
Wragby, Market Rasen, Lincs.*

*We would answer the letter point by point but suffice to say that HCS has done very little work 'at the Huddersfield end' and the BW bat study of Standedge Tunnel produced virtually nil results. All our work is checked and scrutinised by English Nature and BW's own Fishery Officer.*

*The official reply was appended to the Oldham Chronicle letter and comes from Alan Stopher.*

*Mr. Alan Stopher, project director of the Huddersfield Canal Company, said: "Knowledge and appreciation of the environmental importance of our waterways has developed significantly since work began on the restoration of the canal.*

*"In restoring the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, an important agreement was achieved with the wild-life conservation body, English Nature, which ensures that restoration and future use of the canal even through the most sensitive lengths does not harm wild life.*

*"Far from endangering species, reopening of currently blocked sections increases the available open water for plants and animals.*

*"British Waterways, which runs the canals over 2,000 miles of inland waterways, has a resident ecologist (at Marsden) playing a key role in developing measures to conserve and foster the development of wildlife.*

*"All future dredging, for example, will be carried out by water-based equipment, but refuges are being installed in both tunnels, and vegetation will be retained on the opposite side from the towpath.*

*"The funding bodies - the Millennium Commission and the Regional Development Agency - have both satisfied themselves that*



*wild-life protection is a key part of this flagship environmental project.*

*"Mr. Newby can rest assured that the best practices are being adopted to ensure that restoration of the canal safeguards its uniquely important environment."*

From the Society's point of view we are in the game of canal restoration and that means making the waterway available as a linear park to give enjoyment, exercise and recreation to boaters, anglers, walkers, some cyclists - and what enhances the environment is a good mix of flora and fauna. We can not be blamed for commenting on those bodies who would leave the waterway system to become so overgrown as to be useless again.

The pressure from such bodies has led to restrictions on boat movements, and such restrictions have been proved to be detrimental to the environment.

The letter below was published in Waterways World in January 1999. It is firmly tongue in cheek but expresses the fears of many of us that boaters could become the 'poor relations' on the cut.

### **BASINGSTOKE ECO-FREAKS**

*This year, Jean and I though we'd take our annual two weeks' holiday on the Basingstoke Canal. Apart from the Thames we've never been outside of British Waterways' jurisdiction for the last ten years and it was quite an experience.*

*The canal itself is beautiful, often rural and there is far more than the usual density of "sites of special narrowboaters' interest" ranging from the Flashes to the Airborne Forces Museum.*

*The canal available for use is the section between Greywell and Deepcut, more or less the summit level, and we knew before we went that there were 'lock restrictions' in the summer preventing access down the remainder of the canal to Guildford, the Wey and the Thames. This was October after a wet summer.*

*As instructed we enquired at the Canal Authority offices a mile or so before Deepcut Top Lock. Very politely we were told "No, due*

*to water shortages the locks cannot be used, maybe November". Now, to a simple soul, the sight of water running to waste over a number of the weirs because the canal is inches from overflowing the surrounding countryside doesn't sit comfortably with the idea of a water shortage - but I'm no canal manager.*

*We had a nice look round the canal centre. Here was an interesting mock-up of Greywell Tunnel, un-navigable but fascinating for its bat population. Quite a big section on wildlife, how the canal had been retrieved from the brink of abandonment by up to 600 volunteers, and a fascinating computer display which showed how the use of the canal by boats destroys the water weed and has a mega-impact on the diversity of wildlife. Then realisation began to dawn when the ideal number of boat movements per year was given as 1,300 in order to protect the banks, the weed and the wildlife. That's four a day; hardly justification for a £1.7m grant towards back-pumping!*

*With clearing vision we began to understand how lock keepers become canal rangers responsible for educating the visitors about wildlife. How stopping every hundred yards to clear weed from the prop (the last few miles above Deep Cut) is good for the water creatures. Above all we began to understand how it's possible to see no other moving boat and no more than three or four moored ones in a two-day period.*

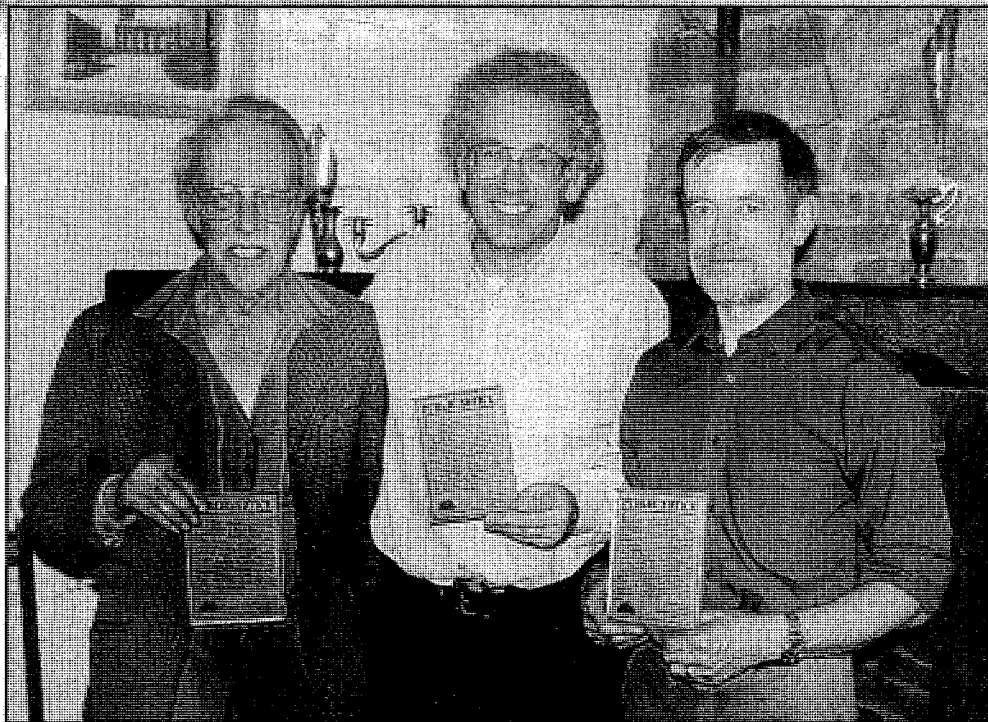
*The eco-freaks are here, this won't be a navigation much longer, it's going to be a linear wildlife park where the lucky few may be allowed to walk, perhaps to cycle, in due course probably not to fish and most certainly not to navigate.*

*Cruise it now, I say, it won't be there fore use much longer. Give the back-pumping grant to a canal that wants boats on it, I say. Above all, make sure the management of our waterways ends up in the hands of an organisation which at least gives boaters equal weight with other users of the canal system.*

*Christopher H. Shaw,  
Guernsey.*

**Ken Wright**

## Silver Jubilee of HCS



Past (John Maynard) and present (David Sumner) chairmen and founder secretary (Bob Dewey)

The atmosphere in the "no smoking" room at the Church Inn, Uppermill, was thick with nostalgia.

The occasion was a "silver jubilee" get-together for past and present members of H.C.S. Council and many of the "veterans" who had been involved at the start of the campaign to restore the Narrow Canal twenty-five years ago, turned up to swap stories of the trials and tribulations and the occasional triumphs of the early days.

Founder secretary Bob Dewey was there - he's still active in the "nitty gritty" of canal restoration by applying his expertise to the Montgomery - and so was founder chairman, John Maynard, in reminiscent mood as he renewed acquaintance with friends.

Margaret Sinfield, who as chairman of the West Riding Branch of the I.W.A. was also in at the beginning with the late Ralph Kirkham, of the Calder Navigation Society, could not attend but

sent a message of support and congratulations via chairman, David Sumner.

She expressed her "overwhelming admiration" for what had been achieved since the occasion on April 19, 1974, when at the Zetland Hotel, Huddersfield (since, unfortunately re-named), 52 people decided that they wanted to keep open the Huddersfield Broad Canal and to work to re-open the Narrow. Certificates of appreciation for their efforts were presented by David to Bob and John and one was also sent to Margaret.

Praising the dedication of the founder pioneers, and recalling the early struggles David said that the campaign was regarded as something of a hare-brained scheme. "We have had to prove our case and we have done it by example and by persuasion. The campaign has been all about regeneration and thanks to our efforts there have been

# Goodbye and Hello to Scribe Canal Backer

Oldham Evening Chronicle



**HCS Press Officer, Alec Ramsden** (right), presents a framed certificate of appreciation to Ian Bennett, who has officially retired after thirty-three years as the Oldham Evening Chronicle's man in Saddleworth.

Ian has been a consistent supporter of the Narrow Canal restoration drive from the start, cobbling out many hundreds of column inches in support of the campaign - and occasionally some critical ones.

momentous developments and we are nearly there. The Millennium Commission believed us, so did English Partnerships. We were the movers and the shakers. We have been professional and persistent and now the local authorities and British Waterways are coming through with us. By April, 2001, when the canal is re-opened, we shall have seen a dream come true," he said.

Bob recalled that there were many setbacks a quarter of a century ago, with British Waterways Board opposed to re-opening of the waterway. He believed that one of the first crucial "happenings" was when H.C.S. stalwart Chris Farrar had a chance meeting on a train with BW's David Pyrah and the talk turned, naturally, to canals, and particularly the Narrow.

And the good news is that although Ian has shaken off the shackles of full time work he is staying on as a part-timer, still operating from his home and office in High Street, Uppermill.

Alec and Ian go back a long way together, for Saddleworth was at one time in Yorkshire and was in the circulation area of the Yorkshire Post, with whom Alec was Chief Reporter at the Huddersfield Office for a quarter of a century.

"So we came into contact when there was a Saddleworth story which my own newspaper wanted to use," said Alec. "Ian has been a staunch supporter of the restoration cause and it's good to know that he'll still

be around to cover stories - and to meet me for a pint and a natter."

Ian who will have more time to indulge his golfing hobby, said he had been happy to help in the canal campaign. "There's no doubt that re-opening the canal, end-to-end, will have a major, beneficial effect," he said.

**Alec Ramsden**

He also recalled restoration of the two locks at Uppermill, an illegal trip through Standedge Tunnel, a rubber dinghy which started hissing, and the production of two detailed reports which showed that restoration was both desirable and achievable. "In the early days we were enthusiastic amateurs. But then there were indications that this lunatic idea was really possible. Now it is," said Bob.

The story swapping continued and event organiser Alwyn Ogborn proposed champagne toasts to the pioneers and H.C.S. Then everybody went home - pledging to meet again on April 4, 2001.

**Alec Ramsden**

# Standedge Tunnel

Now that the contract for the works on Standedge Tunnel has been awarded to Amalgamated Construction Ltd. of Barnsley, and work has actually started, the time draws nearer when boaters will actually be able to go through.

So far British Waterways have indicated that the passage will be by electric tug drawing a maximum of four boats behind it, probably two journeys per day in each direction, all the passengers to be in the towing vessel protected by a glass(?) roof. This proposal was presented in the waterways press a couple of months ago and raised lots of comment and not inconsiderable protest from boaters and boating organisations. They were concerned about loss of liberty, regimentation, advance booking, cost, means of connecting boats, means of protecting boats from tunnel walls, etc. etc.

So far nothing. Calder Navigation Society, in the person of Hon. Sec. Keith Noble, wrote to Tom Rowe at BW Marsden in February and most of that letter is reproduced below. An acknowledgement promised a full reply after in-depth research. It is still awaited.

*"There are two issues which concern us:-*

- firstly the intention to prohibit boaters from passing through under their own power*
- secondly, if a system of towage is really essential, how it would be operated.*

*We do understand BW's concerns about safety in tunnels and we recognise the importance of putting in place a regime which will reduce the risk of an accident. As at BW's other long tunnels a degree of management is essential.*

*However, we are concerned that BW seems to have determined a way forward which appears to us to be overly restrictive on boaters even before approaching the Health & Safety people. When you do, you will be starting from a base position which can only become more restrictive.*

*It is essential to remember that people enjoy boating because they are generally not constrained by having to be at a particular place at a specific time. Some sort of control will be essential, but by limiting the number of boats passing to 8 a day, pre-booking will be necessary with the consequent need to make the rendezvous at one end of the tunnel or the other. A system such as that applied at Harecastle does not restrict the number of boats entering at any one time. You mentioned the Dudley Tunnel as a precedent for towed passage but because of the low headroom, very few boats are able to pass through anyway.*

*It is further relevant to point out that for many people it is an element of exploration and adventure which attracts people to boating. To be towed through in an enclosed trip boat with floodlighting will kill any sense of achievement. A towed passage will not offer the memorable trip which brings people back to canals again and again. Nevertheless, if a trip boat is going through anyway, we appreciate that it may be convenient to tow other boats at the same time. However, if the crews are allowed to remain on board their own boats, there will be more seats available for the general public.*

*I know that you commissioned a study of the ventilation aspects of restoring the tunnel to regular usage and that it put a*

*pessimistic view on the adequacy of existing ventilation. However, its conclusions do seem at variance with common sense and it is an aspect of tunnel operation which ought to be looked at again before any commitment is taken as to the method of operation. At nearly 5700 yards Standedge is less than twice the length of Harecastle Tunnel but does have several ventilation shafts which that tunnel lacks. Fans in one or more of the shafts could surely provide sufficient ventilation with the railway tunnels admitting fresh air. No doubt the consultants looked at this but we should be grateful for the opportunity to study their report to discover if and why they rejected it. You appear to have rejected it anyway.*

*A simple system of timed entry works well elsewhere and it would be a pity to establish a more complex and unnecessarily expensive regime unless it is absolutely essential. Whatever level of charge is applied, you will be asking boaters to pay for a service which they don't want. Even if there were a need to limit the number of boats passing under their own power at peak times, at quiet times boats could be allowed to enter unattended in ones or twos.*

*If a system of towage has to be accepted, there is considerable concern about potential damage to unattended boats. Where sections of the tunnel are unlined and the width varies, how do you intend to ensure that towed boats are not snagged on or scraped by jagged rock?*

*Why is it necessary to limit the number of boats in one tow to four? It may be that for much of the year, 8 boats a day will meet the average demand. However, demand*

*will not be evenly distributed and the need to pre-book will discourage some boaters from going through at all. Will you be prepared to meet demand, if necessary by operating extra passages or running more tugs to increase capacity?*

*Not to go through the tunnel will be a disappointment for many hirers but from existing bases it will take most of them 2 or 3 days to get to there. The delay time waiting a turn to go in or the need to pre-book will deter many of them from going through at all. Furthermore, as most of them will have started at a weekend, they will arrive together mid-week and not all will be able to go through whether or not they have pre-booked.*

*Operationally, everything should be done to encourage maximum use of the canal if the benefits of restoration are to be realised. Any restraint on the free use of the tunnel will be counter-productive in reaching that objective.*

*I hope that there will be an opportunity for the user group to discuss these issues again more fully before any final decisions are taken."*

Keith does not mention the existence of many cross adits linking the canal tunnel to the dry disused rail tunnels which are an additional safety factor unique to Standedge Tunnel. I can also state that, having travelled the complete three mile tunnel journey mainly on foot and in a combination of canal and rail tunnels, I have never had any fears about air quality.

If you have a view on this let me know. We can join in the debate before it is too late.

Ken Wright

# What the Papers Say

*A really bumper bundle this time - far too many for me to give you any more than a taster. The press is realising that things are starting to move - and there is more feeling and not a little criticism becoming evident. Once again the large majority of the news is from the Oldham Evening Chronicle (OEC).*

*February 23 - OEC - Concern that the proposals for diverted traffic around the works at High Street Uppermill, will introduce extraneous traffic into residential areas.*

*February 25 - OEC - Yet another crucial deadline for the Rochdale Canal. At the time of writing (mid-May) it is still awaiting decisions.*

*February 26 - Colne Valley Chronicle - A Slaithwaite burial ground is to be dug up to make way for the canal.*

*February 26 - Colne Valley Chronicle - Slaithwaite Environmental Group asking for volunteers to help lift the snowdrops from around the Carr Lane cherry trees.*

*February 26 - Colne Valley Chronicle - over half a page, including two excellent pictures, of the cherry trees in Slaithwaite and the story of their future, including a picture of the sort of chair they may turn into!*

*March 1 - OEC - Early details of Saddlewoth Canal Festival, now dated September 11 and 12, with free moorings for the first twenty boats to sail from Dobcross to Uppermill.*

*March 5 - OEC - First news of the proposal to close High Street Uppermill for a total of nine weeks during restoration work. Report of meeting with officials and traders.*

*March 10 - OEC - More details of the consultation process for High Street and some description of the works.*

*March 10 - OEC - Our own Press Officer, Alec Ramsden, gets in a big letter to the Chronicle Editor entitled 'Canal Society Future'*

Your Scrapbook item "On the canal without a direction" (February 25) is absolutely right -

Huddersfield Canal Society hasn't decided what to do next now that end-to-end restoration of the narrow canal is guaranteed.

But when working parties have deliberated and decided, HCS Council should have a blueprint to put to the membership.

What is certain, however, is that having fought major battles against officialdom over the years and been the major player in the campaign to win the vital Millennium and English Partnerships funding - despite what others might claim - we're not going to disappear. To do so would be an insult to those who have worked so devotedly using expertise, initiatives and determination to turn a dream into reality.

A watchdog role will be vital, for, having been in the early days, totally opposed to the restoration project, British Waterways has done a U-turn and is now adopting a "we're in charge" stance. There are a number of grey-haired or balding, long-serving members of HCS Council (myself included) who are cynical about the attitude of BW. Outwardly, there are expressions of admiration and appreciation for what HCS has achieved, but internally? Perhaps it would be better if HCS didn't exist.

I had a personal illustration of this recently. Over the years I have generated the major proportion of publicity about the narrow canal restoration scheme - and the partners seemed happy with this arrangement. But when I decided to send out an interesting little story connected with the current Uppermill scheme it was vetoed by BW. Yet HCS sank £300,000 into the scheme to get it under way and work is being done by HCS Restoration. It could be that in future instead of sending out press releases I will have to meet reporters, furtively, in the corner of some quiet pub to pass on snippets of information.

Ideally, after restoration, the Huddersfield Canal Company should continue, with HCS as a partner, in management of the canal. But BW is likely to veto this. Surely, however, both HCS and the local authorities involved, have earned some rights to have a say in the future of the



waterway. We fear that BW will adopt an arrogant "take all, give nothing" stance.

Similarly with the Stanedge Experience project, which, unfortunately, has had to be watered down from the original exciting concept. Both HCS and Kirklees Council are putting money into the scheme and so have a claim to be involved, perhaps as members of a steering committee.

It should be pointed out, of course, that in a bid for Millennium funding many friends were recruited to persuade the authorities of the virtue of restoring the canal. The Chronicle has always been a sterling supporter of the scheme. Our message to these friends is that we hope we don't let you down when we finally decide on the way ahead."

*March 10 - OEC - Another letter severely criticising the High Street proposals and opting for the two-way bridge, which officials have said is not an option! (Much of the criticism of the scheme can be put down to not understanding the proposals or not believing the Council officials and Members. Ed.)*

*March 15 - OEC - Recording the retirement of Ian Bennett, long-serving Saddleworth reporter for the Chronicle and a long-term supporter of canal restoration. Hopefully he will continue to write about us on a part-time basis.*

*March 19 - Oldham Advertiser - We learn at last the identity of the new owner of the Dobcross Victoria Works, the now empty plastics works. It is builders Chapman (Saddleworth) Ltd. The land has planning permission for a 10/14 bedroomed hotel/pub/restaurant, four homes with craft facilities, a chandler's shop for boaters and 65 car parking spaces. It is likely to be the end of 1999 before any more detail is forthcoming.*

*March 26 - OEC - Favourite retired doctor speaks out against High Street proposals. He fears that public safety will be at risk. Philip Barrett, Oldham's Director of Technical Services, answered all the points made. Only time will tell!*

*April 1 - OEC - Oldham Environmental Services Committee hear about tourist facilities around the canal in Diggle.*

*April 5 - OEC - Ex Magistrates' Clerk gets in the news with a letter to The Editor about the "potential for chaos" at High Street Uppermill. A proposal to take emergency vehicles around the road closures through residential streets is becoming a regular source of criticism. The rejected two-way bridge again becomes the "only one viable option".*

*April 6 - OEC LEADER - The Editorial joins in by criticising the consultation procedures because the two way bridge had been discounted before the consultation process began.*

*April 9 - OEC - More about the two-way bridge and the Council's insistence that the delay on a one-way bridge with traffic signals will only be 1° minutes.*

*April 15 - Tameside Reporter - Unfortunate article about the closure of SID's sports hall (Castle Hall) in Stalybridge. Seems like a public relations disaster from the article, which alleges that Stalybridge will be without an indoor sports facility indefinitely. The comments reputedly made by a Council spokesman are insensitive, to say the least - "We are talking to developers about a potential leisure development in that area, but it is early days at the moment. What I can categorically say is that there will be a gap between this facility closing and any new facility opening up". (See Letters to the Editor).*

*April 15 - OEC - Pioneers Behind Canal's Rebirth are Honoured. Headline of an article about our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration when three founder members, John Maynard, Bob Dewey and Margaret Sinfield were presented with inscribed plaques, "We were total amateurs but we refused to take no for an answer, learned quickly and eventually showed that this lunatic idea was really possible," said Bob Dewey. (See Alec Ramsden's article, elsewhere. Ed.)*

*April 19 - Huddersfield Examiner* - On the exact 20th birthday of the Society an excellent report based on Alec's Press Release.

*April 27 - OEC* - A lengthy article based on a press release by Alec Ramsden, Press Officer, about the formation of the Society and the results of 25 years of effort towards restoration.

*May 10 - OEC* - A letter from "Realist" who says "The Huddersfield Canal Society and Oldham Council have a total disregard for the residents, businesses, industry and parents of schoolchildren in and around Uppermill". "Can either the council or the Society tell us what advantages the canal work will bring to the area? My answer is none". Realist then goes on to criticise the Uppermill scheme yet again and finishes up proposing that a 'NO' campaign should be started. *(It seems that those who criticise the consultation process may have a point. Clearly something has gone awry in the provision of information. There is no suggestion anywhere that the Society is even involved, beyond being a member of the partnership! Ed.)*

*May 11 - Huddersfield Examiner* - Ten jobs are to go with the closure of HCS-R. Even said the firm had been 'axed' as a preferred tenderer, not strictly correct!

*May 12 - OEC* - The sad announcement that HCS Restoration Ltd., is to be wound up at the end of August. Jobs go as pioneering group folds.

A pioneering subsidiary of the Huddersfield Canal Society, which has played a crucial part in the restoration of the trans-Pennine Huddersfield Narrow Canal, is to fold.

Ten staff from Oldham and Tameside will lose their jobs with the closure of HCS Restoration Ltd at the end of August, although key personnel will stay until Christmas to organise an orderly rundown of the company, including disposal of assets.

The wind-up decision was made by the parent organisation, HCS Council, following a recommendation from the HCS Restoration directors, who said the company had no future

as it existed. Redundancy terms are being worked out and will be as generous as possible.

"It is the hardest and saddest decision we have ever taken, but there was no alternative. Without any guarantee of future work, there would have been no income to pay wages," said HCS chairman David Sumner.

"HCS Restoration has played a vital role in the canal-reopening campaign and its achievements and the dedication and expertise of its staff were very important in winning the funding to guarantee reopening in 2001."

More than £30 million is now available to complete the task and, while 25 years ago, HCS was the solo player in the fight to reopen the 20-mile-long waterway, the contracts to clear 19 major blockages will go to bigger companies - with British Waterways unable to nominate HCS Restoration as a preferred tenderer and give preferential treatment.

"We are proud of our achievements," said Mr. Keith Gibson, the HCS Restoration chairman. These have included restoring 27 locks, dredging six miles of canal and other jobs, which provided work and training for nearly 2,000 people on various Government-funded schemes.

A report says that, without HCS's existence, it is unlikely people would now be anticipating reopening.

Ironically, the company's final contract is the present scheme at Uppermill, which included the rebuilding of Dungebooth and Lime Kiln locks - the first pair restored by volunteers 17 years ago.

*May 21 - Colne Valley Chronicle* - Nice picture of canalside mill being converted into apartments at Milnsbridge.

## Letters to the Editor

*Quite a good bunch this time and quite varied in their content and origins. Keep them coming!*

Dear Sir,

I have just received your winter edition of 'Pennine Link', may I congratulate you on a very professional magazine. The quality of the photographic reproduction was excellent, the front cover very attractive, especially the addition of colour and the restoration map in the centre pages an absolute credit to your team, both in terms of colour and content.

I feel your magazine is far superior to some costing £2.00 or more, keep up the good work. May I also wish you much success in the continuing restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow canal, roll on the year 2001!

Yours truly,

**Jennifer Blood,**  
HCS Member, Stalybridge.

*The next letter was sent to the Secretary but I purloined it for general reading because of its origin and content. Ed.*

Dear Secretary,

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Bob Hogg and I was born in Linthwaite in 1929 and lived there for six years before the family went South.

I remember the Huddersfield Narrow well enough from that time, having frequently had to walk to "Slawit" and back for shopping. My strongest memories of it, however, were from the first year of World War II, when I was sent to live in Golcar. The local reach (the "Appleyard" if memory serves) was one of our favourite illicit playgrounds. Occasional trading boats were still to be seen, so I suppose I must be one of the few still alive who knew it as a working canal, albeit only just working.

Since retiring, I have managed to get back to U.K. every two or three years, mostly to visit my sister who lives in Chadderton, quite near the Rochdale Canal. It was she who sparked off this letter, when she sent me a clipping from the Oldham Evening Chronicle of 28 Jan 99,

reporting the great news about funding for the full restoration of the H.N.C.

On my last few visits I have got in quite a lot of canal-walking (no better exercise for those beginning to puff a bit on the hills!). I've done the H.N.C. from Tunnel End to Longroyd Bridge several times, the stretch at Uppermill; the Rochdale all around Oldham and from Smithy Bridge to Hebden Bridge; the Leeds & Liverpool from Gargrave to Skipton; and all stretches of the Macclesfield and Peak Forest Canals radiating from Marple. All very enjoyable.

If you can spare a moment at this inevitably busy time for the Society, I would really appreciate it if you could tell me how the boats will be got through the Standedge? One imagines that fume-producing engines would be taboo, but does this mean a return to the original "leggers"? Also, I was amazed at the implication that the canal was to be opened up again right through Slaithwaite - the impact on the road traffic system will be massive, and I had always assumed that that particular stretch was lost for all time.

In addition, if you have any facility for overseas membership of the Society, I should be glad if you would let me know.

Yours sincerely,

**Bob Hogg,**  
Victoria, Australia.

*We would all like a clear picture of how boats will get through Standedge Tunnel. BW are not rushing to elaborate on earlier suggested schemes and many boaters are extremely critical of those proposals. See article elsewhere. Ed.*

Dear Ken,

**Congratulations!**

I would like to offer my congratulations to all who have worked so hard for so long. Finally getting the money, and seeing the end of the restoration in sight, is an excellent reward for all the effort. I have watched the progress you have made, from down here in Sunny Worthing, with growing elation and hope over

the 77 years that I have been down here, and am delighted that this magnificent canal will be restored while I can still come and visit it from what seems like the other end of the world!

No doubt no one there will remember me now? I was fortunate enough to be involved in the very early days and was one of the small group who went on that historic towpath walk with Bob Dewey, Margaret Sinfield, John Maynard et al - which ended up in the pub where the Society was formed. Naturally I was one of its first members, and was on the committee of several Huddersfield Canal Festivals at that time - and of course I am still a member of the Society to this day!

Congratulations again to all involved in this achievement.

**Dr. Peter A. Fryer,**  
Worthing, W. Sussex.

P.S. Just for your info: I was also on the committees of the NE Region IWA and the West Riding Branch, as well as the IWA National Festival in Leeds, which helped alert the Local Councils to the needs of their local canals at that time!

Dear Ken,

As a distant member I always look forward to the new Pennine Link and have just finished reading another fascinating edition. Keep up the good work.

The reference to the "Livy" in your personal profile stirred some memories. In 1963 I was negotiating to buy a six plank Runcorn butty conversion called "Hazel" tied by the Watch House at Stretford. The next boat was a similar butty called "Livy", at that time home to an older couple. Having bought "Hazel", which I had first seen at the Banbury rally of 1955, Sheila and I and our young family lived on her at Warings Green on the Stratford canal. I seem to remember that in 1967 "Livy" passed by on her way to Aylesbury for sale at the boatyard set up by Ran Meinertzhagen. I never heard of her again.

We sold "Hazel" in 1968 and after several more owners she is now in the care of the Wooden Canal Boat Society and moored in Portland Basin, the last surviving full length Simpson Davies six plank boat. The WCBS, of which I am a member, are hoping to rebuild "Hazel" with future use as a boat to give mentally handicapped people restful holidays. The search for a suitable canalside base for the rebuild and operations is currently directed towards a site in Knowle Street, Stalybridge. Although this is not ideal perhaps two exciting projects can proceed side by side. I shall hope to watch both with interest.

Best wishes,

**Colin Scrivener,**  
Bromsgrove, Worcs.

*Nice to hear some news about 'Livy'. She was certainly a houseboat at Stretford before my legal acquaintances got hold of her.*

Dear Ken,

I enclose a press cutting for possible use in Pennine Links "What the papers say", with certain paragraphs highlighted by me.

Unfortunately, this kind of publicity shows that not everyone sees canal restoration as beneficial, and perhaps some further clarification in Pennine Link might be appropriate, on the paragraph in the article concerning the alleged possibility of withdrawal of EP funds if "no deal signed by 19<sup>th</sup> March"?

Yours sincerely,

**Ray Smith,**  
Mossley.

*The article enclosed with Ray's letter criticises Tameside Council for demolishing Stalybridge's only indoor sports facility to make way for the canal. A spokesman for the Council certainly didn't help with some rather unfortunate comments including a real red herring about EP funding, leading one of the hall's users to comment "much more people will be hit by this than the amount of people who will want to come through the town on canal boats - they will have us all wearing flat caps and clogs*

*next? A piece of really badly handled news amongst all the positive stuff. Ed.*

Dear Sir,

First of all, congratulations on your excellent magazine - I always enjoy reading it, although I live so far away from the action!

On a rare visit to your part of the country last week-end, I was disappointed not to meet any fellow-members of the Society - but perhaps I did, passing a few people walking the tow-path on Sunday near Tunnel End, which looks in a sorry state at present, understandably so. How would I recognise a member of the H.C.S.? Do you have a badge or any other insignia? Perhaps you do, in which case I would be pleased to buy one, though I doubt if I shall manage another visit to the area before the grand re-opening in 2001.

I thought to find a supporter when taking the short trip on Pennine Moonraker on Saturday, but it seems the gentleman is not too enamoured of the Society at the moment!

Anyway congratulations on winning the necessary funding, and here's to success in the not too distant future.

Yours sincerely,

**Eileen Hughes**, (Member No. 1228)  
Leigh-on-Sea, Essex.

*We used to have all sorts of insignia, starting with sweat-shirts and T-shirts and a regular order form in Pennine Link. Due to printing costs and a virtually nil return this was discontinued but I will ask Frank Smith, our Secretary, to think about doing it again, if only occasionally.*

*I have had words with John Lund, who runs the Pennine Moonraker! His business is being severely affected by the work in Uppermill and he is justifiably not very enamoured of anybody at times. He is still talking to me, though! Ed.*

Dear Ken,

You're trying to confuse me! After studying page 9 of Plink 128 to see the ground paddles

referred to in the caption to the photograph, and seeing only gate paddles in the foreground, I tried the crossword, but became stuck, as I hadn't realised that there was such a word as guaging!

Seriously, I write to comment on the review of a trip down the Manchester Ship Canal. The locks and bridges are not operated by hydro-electric power generated by the flow of the canal water, but by hydraulic power (i.e. compressed water) which is provided by pumping canal water under pressure round the system. Electric power drives the pumps, although formerly steam, gas or oil engines were used. The pressure is maintained in the water before use by pumping up a heavily weighted "accumulator" in a distinctive tower. So the power is provided in the opposite sense: electricity is used to provide powerful canal water, rather than the canal water generating electricity.

Yours sincerely,

**Geoff Wheat**,  
Leeds.

*Page 9 was only one of our not-so-deliberate mistakes! And the crossword compiler checked his spelling with Nicholson, only to find out the error when it was much too late to correct. Another good one you missed was where we didn't know our left from our right on p.33 (photo caption). My excuse for these and other, mainly typographical errors is that I was prevented from proof checking by problems at the printers - it won't happen again!*

*Thanks, anyway, for your correction of the MSC error. That was a genuine misunderstanding on John Harwood's part. I've said before, Geoff, with your expertise you should be writing articles? Ed.*

—ooOoo—

*I also got an E-mail, my first, from Council member Keith Noble, who was getting a few things off his chest before casting-off for the summer. He found fit to comment on or criticise seven different points in the last issue. I have ignored some and covered others elsewhere in this issue! Have a good time, Keith. Ed.*

# The Waterways Code

British Waterways have issued a new (June 1998) Waterways Code in "folded A5" format. In semi-gloss bright orange with black and white text and stylised graphics it is a very attractive document.

In this second excerpt we conclude the general matters and deal specifically with anglers!

## Everyone

### Take care

**Spot the dangers.** For example ...

Not all towpaths give smooth, easy walking or cycling.

If the water appears frozen, **never** trust the ice to take your weight.

Watch out for concealed mooring pins or ropes across the path beside moored boats.

The risks are small, but tell your doctor if you become ill within two weeks of getting canal, river or reservoir water into your mouth or an open wound.

Be prepared for changes in weather and local water conditions.

Always keep young children under supervision.

Swimming is prohibited - it's dangerous.

**Take safety advice.** Watch out for warning signs.

**Children: don't go alone.**

Go with a friend who can help you if you're in trouble.

Always make sure an adult knows where you are going and when you will be back.

**Learn what to do in an emergency.**

Keep calm - think before you act. Don't put yourself in danger.

Phone or send for help.

If a person or pet falls in, don't jump in.

Instead ...

**reach** with a stick, pole, piece of clothing or similar. Crouch or lie down to avoid being pulled in. If this is not possible, then ...

**throw** - a rope is best - you can then pull the person out. Otherwise throw something

inflatable to help keep them afloat until help arrives.

**wade** - test the depth with a long stick before wading in. Then use the stick to reach out.

Hold on to someone else on the bank.

## Anglers

### Look after your waterways

Discarded hooks and lines, bottles and tins can kill or injure wildlife. Gather them up and take them away with you.

### Consider others

Make sure the towpath is easily passable by keeping your fishing tackle tidy.

Don't obstruct locks, bridges, designated moorings, water points or turning points.

Boat crews need access to the bank within 25 metres of locks or moveable bridges so do not fish there.

Use a pole cup if you need to feed close to boats: don't throw or catapult groundbait onto the decks or against the hulls of boats - it damages paintwork.

Don't bounce tackle off boats or tap them with pole tips - chipped paint is expensive to repair, and hooks in ropes can put people in hospital.

Respect the privacy of people on occupied moored boats, including those on the opposite bank. Try to fish at least 15 metres away.

Some boats will not be able to avoid you if you fish on the outside of bends.

### Take care

Don't fish within 30 metres of overhead power lines. Look out and look up - electricity kills!

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Next time: Boaters, cyclists, unpowered craft.



# The Back Page

## THE SOCIETY WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS:

- 2518 Mr Lysons, [REDACTED]
- 2519 Mr Harrison, [REDACTED]
- 2520 Mr & Ms Hooper & Cantona, [REDACTED]
- 2521 Mr Milner, [REDACTED]
- 2522 Mr Mitchell, [REDACTED]
- 2523 Mr Land, [REDACTED]
- 2524 Mr & Mrs Kilner, [REDACTED]
- 2525 Mr Leeming, [REDACTED]

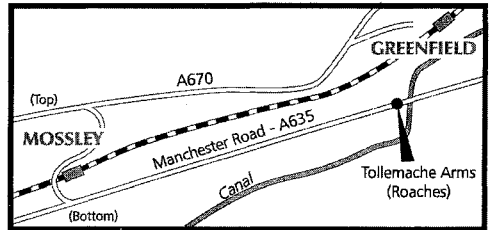
### SOCIAL MEETINGS:

Members are reminded that social meetings will commence again in September following the Summer break.

As usual, the venue will be the 'Tollemache Arms', Manchester Road, Mossley (Roaches) on the second Wednesday of the month commencing at 8.00pm.

The September 8th meeting will concentrate on updating members on the major projects being undertaken this year under the

management of the Huddersfield Canal Company. In addition, it is hoped to briefly outline future proposals being considered to take H.C.S. into the next Millennium.



### PENNINE LINK ARCHIVE:

The following back issues are available free from John Maynard, 29 Thick Hollins Drive, Meltham, Yorkshire. Please send an A5 stamped, addressed envelope (38p) or A4 sized

envelope (64p) for issues 81/82, 91 and 100.

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COPY DATE
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#### Solution to Crossword No. 25:

ACROSS: 1. DIGLISBASIN 9. DANE 10. STONEMASONS 11. DART 14. ALTOFTS 16. ZEPHYRS 17. STEER 18. LIPS 19. THAI 20. MACRO 22. NUNEHAM 23. APPAREL 24. LOIS 28. RIVERMERSEY 29. CARP 30. BISHAMABBEY  
 DOWN: 2. IOTA 3. LINK 4. SUMMITS 5. APSE 6. IGNITER 7. CANARYWHARF 8. BETTISFIELD 12. FALLINGLOCK 13. STIPENDIARY 15. STEAM 16. ZEBRA 20. MARTINI 21. OPTIMUM 25. MESH 26. GRAB 27. TEME

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