

# Pennine Link

Members Quarterly Journal - Issue 134 - Autumn 2000



# Huddersfield Canal Society Ltd

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Autumn 2000 Issue 134



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*Cover: View of the canal works in Slaithwaite from the top of Globe Mills. The mobile crane is used to handle shutters, temporary sheet piles and strips of concrete. Britannia Road bridge is in the middle distance. Photo: Kirklees MC*



## Editorial

Everywhere the scene is changing! There is so much work going on that it is virtually impossible to keep pace with it. I don't think any of us,

involved since BMC (Before Millennium Commission), ever envisaged such activity as is to be seen at the moment. The design engineers and contractors have really got the bit between their collective teeth and everything seems in order. At a recent meeting (inaugural meeting, that is) of the South Pennine Ring User Group, in Manchester, Mike Marshall of British Waterways assured the assembled throng that the commissioning procedures for the whole canal - ensuring that everything is working and acceptable to health and safety scrutinies - will be complete by the end of April 2001. He went on to explain the system for operating Standedge Tunnel and has kindly written to Pennine Link so that you can all read it at first hand. Perhaps the system will not suit everybody, but my bet is that those critics, whilst wholly justified in stating their objections, will be in the minority.

At the request, nay order, of the Council we are reminding you again of the Anderton Boat Lift appeal. This restoration is very important in the national canal system. Some of you may remember that THE WIFE and I went up (and down) the lift many years ago when Saltersford and Preston Brook tunnels were both closed and Premier Boats were temporarily located on the River Weaver. My sister lived about 50 yards from the lift and we gave her her first ride up and down, as a treat. The lift was already very creaky and destined for closure. My sister's story of the reason for the creaking - involving a canal rally and a very "happy", well compensated lift operator is probably apocryphal - who knows? Whatever the reason, seeing it restored will be a wonderful sight. See if you can help.

Honours are being gathered in! That example of worldwide erudition, The Smithsonian Institution from Washington DC, has a magazine, not surprisingly called *The Smithsonian*. Glossy and very American. Well, in the June 2000 issue there is an article entitled "Afloat with Fly Boats and Leggers" with a sub-heading "England's canals are thriving anew as folks discover the historic charm and simple pleasures of life on these waterways." Interesting text, some superb photographs - and several mentions of **OUR** canal! I am negotiating the right to reprint it in Pennine Link. Keep your eyes skinned!

I have been asked by the good people of the Saddleworth White Rose Society to publicise their aims and intentions. Being a native born Lancastrian domiciled in part of the old West Riding of Yorkshire I need to be very careful what I promote! Fortunately, the intentions are honourable. The aims and objectives are to remind the world at large that Lancashire and Yorkshire are two very definite areas with very definite boundaries and that newcomers on the scene, like Greater Manchester County and Oldham District, can not alter that fact.

Since our canal lies fair and square in both camps I say "Yea and thrice yea" and let's drink to it! A joint meeting of the Real Lancashire Society and the White Rose Society could be a good excuse for a canal festival now we don't have to campaign for restoration any more. I happened onto the festivities for White Rose Day in Uppermill recently - brass bands, Morris men and draping white rose wreaths on memorials - and it was a lovely canalside occasion. With a boat or two it would have been even better!

Don't forget the Photo Competition. We had a splendid entry last year and I hope we can improve on that this year - there's so much more to photograph!

I will sign off in true White Rose fashion.

**Ken Wright,**  
Bridge House, Sugar Lane, Dobcross,  
Saddleworth, YORKSHIRE, OL3 5NL



## Chairman's Report

Flying in from holiday in Germany to Manchester in August, our aeroplane descended through

the clouds over the Pennines, Bugsworth Basin on the port side, more cloud, then Stalybridge. I could see a swathe of undeveloped land appearing to bisect the town. Perhaps not visible from space like the Great Wall of China, a new landmark has appeared and perfectly visible from the air, as yet without water, but not for long.

As you can read and observe in this current Issue, restoration continues on schedule and to budget. We are eight months away from completion and main sections - Stalybridge and Standedge - will be completed, though not commissioned, early in the New Year. Opening ceremonies are being planned, including an event to mark the completion of the project to be celebrated by all, probably at Standedge. It is likely that mini events will be held and organised by the three local authorities in each district, with HCS support.

I attended British Waterway's AGM late in July. George Greener and David Fletcher gave an impressive performance which augurs well for the future of our waterways. The Waterways Minister, Lord Whitty, prefaced the meeting and answered questions. It is clear that BW's new confidence which is underpinning future plans has emanated from the excellent working relationship with the Government and its Ministers.

British Waterways have generated, and will continue to generate, income from such diverse schemes as cables in towpaths. With the additional monies for the maintenance backlog and the support for waterways which is evident from the recent BW consultations, they have the courage to suggest new canals and restoration schemes; viz. the Fens to Milton Keynes link and the Thames and Severn project.

Next year sees the completion (or near completion) of many long-established restoration schemes. It is right that BW now see another phase of schemes provided that the political and financial support continues. I have no doubt that British Waterways now has the management in place to be innovative, daring and bold. We will, as a Society, be a part of the future waterways movement in partnership/alliance with BW after restoration.

This September, to remind ourselves of the restoration progress, your Council will have walked the length of the Canal to view progress at first hand. The tunnel section will have to wait! We shall have noted how the Society can add value to the once completed canal in order that the maximum benefits of restoration will be unlocked. We will need more volunteers to work alongside BW, as other Societies do, and help operate boats, locks and assist in the Standedge Visitor Centre. More about this and the Alliance later.

**David Sumner**



## Huddersfield Canal Company Report

The momentous changes along the canal over the last few months have continued to

impress residents and canal enthusiasts alike. Even those of us involved in the project have been surprised by the pace and extent of the construction work. No amount of looking at the drawings can prepare you for the experience of seeing the work in reality. Although we are only building narrow canal locks, the temporary works have involved major excavations within sheet piled cofferdams. Some of the accommodation works have also been extensive. An example is the retaining wall at Sellers, which has been necessary to provide space for the new grinding shed. Once more the photographs give members the best impression of the restoration activity along the canal.

At Stalybridge the new waterfront is taking shape throughout the 800 metre restoration. As I write in mid August, Mottram Road has just been reopened to its full width as the second phase of bridge construction has been completed. Lock 7W is well advanced using half of the original structure and the remainder built in reinforced concrete. The Delta section of canal has been complete for some time. The new Lock 6W in Armentières Square received its gates at the end of July and the square is being rebuilt using high quality pavings, new kerbs and embossed tarmac for the service road and new bus shelters provided by the Passenger Transport Executive. The old Melbourne Street bridge now has attractive stone parapet walls. Lock 5W is being recon-

structed, with some of the redundant stonework from Lock 7W coming in useful for the rebuilding of the demolished northern tailgate area. The concrete channel upstream of Lock 5W is virtually complete and the downstream channel is also being formed. The new Lock 4W has been built in a very short time next to the Texaco Service Station in Caroline St.

Scout Tunnel refurbishment is complete and the towpath has been reopened. Dredging work on the section between Frenches and Mann's Wharf is still suspended whilst British Waterways reviews the options for tipping arrangements.

At High Street Bridge Uppermill, the original stone bridge has been reconstructed and is now carrying traffic as work starts on excavation on the south side of the road. Wade Lock has been rebuilt and topped with new copings.

At Standedge Tunnel, rock stabilisation is continuing to make good progress with 90% of rock bolts now installed. Work is continuing on the removal of debris from rock falls, and repairs to emergency access adits and shaft bases. The new arch at the rock fall 850 metres from the Marsden Portal is well on the way to completion. British Waterways have sought design and build tenders for a tug boat.

At Slaithwaite, work is continuing apace. The second phase of Britannia Road bridge is nearing completion. Once paving across the bridge and along Carr Lane is complete at around the end of August, the bridge will be fully reopened to two-way traffic and the one-way system will be removed. At the upstream



end, the heightened river wall is now complete and the bridge units are in place for the unadopted road which will cross the Canal between Old Bank and the Moonraker Floating Tearoom. In the centre of the village, the stone walls of Lock 22E have been repaired, a new piped by-wash has been installed and stone cladding has been laid to the completed sections of concrete channel nearby. The reinforced concrete structure of Lock 21E has been completed beside Waterside Cottages. Downstream of Platt Lane, the ground has been reduced in level as has some of the old Lock 21E structure. Manholes have been installed as part of a siphon to take the Crimble Brook under the Canal at this point. Ours is not the only construction underway in central Slaithwaite as builders are altering the rear basement of the Civic Hall so that the Colne Valley Trust can move into its new canalside location.

Further down the Colne Valley, Lees Mill Bridge, Holme Mill Bridge, Golcar Aqueduct and Mark Bottoms Bridge have all been completed since my last report. The only work needed to allow navigation of the four mile stretch from Longroyd Bridge to the eastern end of Slaithwaite is some dredging, which is programmed by British Waterways for an early start.

In Huddersfield, at Sellers Engineers, Lock 3E is being constructed at the upstream end to join up with the Wickes section of restoration. Beside the large retaining wall mentioned earlier, the steel frame of the new two-storey replacement grinding shed and electrician's shop has reached full height. At the nearby Bates Mill, the tunnel roof has been fully reinstated to release all the surface back to Bates & Co. and the tunnel has been excavated over the full length, the 'breakthrough' to

Queen Street South bridge taking place on 17<sup>th</sup> July. Lock 2E upstream of Bates and its adjoining landing stage are both well progressed. Work will now concentrate on construction of the sheet piled channel downstream of Queen Street South bridge.

Aside from canal restoration, the contract for the building work to refurbish the historic warehouse building for the Standedge Visitor Centre has been let to Wakefield contractor Lemmeleg Building & Contracting Ltd. An announcement regarding the interpretation design is also imminent.

Media coverage has continued to be good and supportive. The canal magazines have keenly chronicled each milestone on the restoration project. British Waterways' press release, in conjunction with the Department of Environment Transport and the Regions' promotion of its "Waterways for Tomorrow" report, singled out the Huddersfield Narrow Canal for a special mention. This resulted in the BBC sending an outside broadcast presenter and film crew to Slaithwaite to film a piece for the national 6 o'clock news. In fact Slaithwaite has had its share of exposure recently. The canal restoration project has been photographed for the April 2000 'Yorkshire Life' edition, which featured the village, and Government Housing and Construction Minister Nick Raynsford MP, made a flying visit in July specifically to the canal restoration, with local MP Kali Mountford, and was most impressed with the work.

The partnership is still deliberating on opening events. There will be much to celebrate in 2001 and the intention is for all the local communities to be involved in the historic reopening of the Narrow.

**Alan Stopher**







## Stalybridge

**Top Left:** Lock 4W beside Caroline Street, Stalybridge, has been constructed to this stage in only 6 weeks. In the centre background is the Wharf Tavern and to the right, the newly-built factory at Staley Wharf. (AS)

**Top Right:** New reinforced concrete channel upstream of Lock 5W. The lock has been refurbished and the original arched chamber leading to the ground paddles is visible here. On the right is Somerfield's and in the middle distance is the original canalside warehouse, now home to 'The Lock Keeper's Kitchen'. (AS)

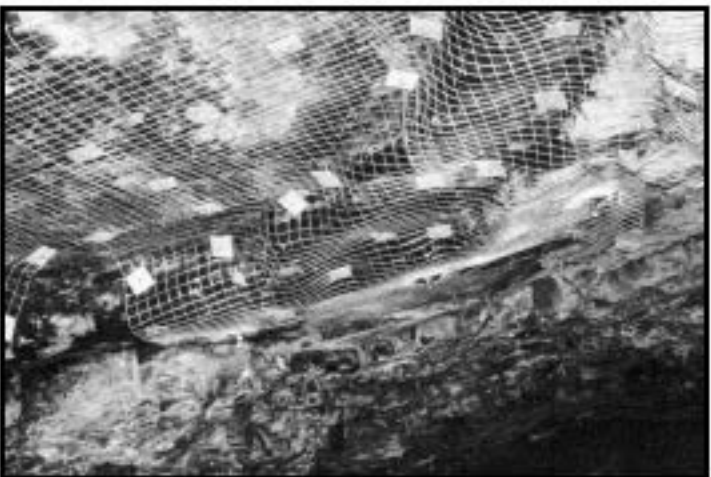
**Upper Middle Left:** Wide section of canal channel between Lock 5W and Back Melbourne Street. This was originally the site of Portman Motors and Tetlows Engineering Works. Development proposals for the land to the left are eagerly awaited. (AS)

**Lower Middle Left:** Restoration in progress on Melbourne Street, Stalybridge. A new stone parapet wall is being built on both sides. Timber rubbing strips and safety chain are in place along the new canal channel. (AS)

**Bottom Left:** Paving under way in Armentières Square, Stalybridge. A range of complementary, high quality, finishes are being laid. The service road for the buses will be to the left of the bollards. (AS)

**Bottom Right:** A view of Lock 7W tail construction looking towards Mottram Road bridge. The new towpath ramp will lead in front of the left hand side, just downstream of the tail. In the right foreground is the join with the old lock structure. (AS)







## Scout Tunnel, Division Bridge, Wade Lock, High Street, Old Sag & Wool Road

**Top Left:** Exposed mesh fixed to the roof of Scout Tunnel using rock bolts. This will ensure that no small pieces of rock accidentally fall on passing boaters. It is being left exposed to provide bat roosts. (AS)

**Top Right:** The towpath through Scout Tunnel is open once more following stabilisation work. (AS)

**Upper Middle Left:** The completed Division Bridge Aqueduct, looking towards Tameside, showing the good quality footpath, including steps down to the river level. (AS)

**Upper Middle Right:** New coping stones being placed to Wade Lock (21W) at High Street, Uppermill, to complete the restoration of the lock structure. (AS)

**Lower Middle Left:** Looking like a giant jigsaw puzzle, skilled masons are rebuilding the parapet wall at High Street, Uppermill, prior to re-opening the eastbound half of the road to traffic. An old gate post has been found and set in place. (AS)

**Bottom Left:** The completed Old Sag Aqueduct channel. Brownhills Countryside Centre is on the right bank in the distance. (AS)

**Bottom Right:** Wool Road bridge complete and open to traffic and pedestrians. Reclaimed stone has been used to finish off the reinforced concrete structure to good effect. (AS)







## Slaithwaite

**Top Left:** Reinforced concrete channel being constructed along Carr Lane, Slaithwaite. Access to the 'Full Muffin' is temporarily from Bridge Street only. (AS)

**Top Right:** The final section of reinforced concrete canal wall being constructed at Carr Lane, Slaithwaite. One way traffic and parking continue on Carr Lane. With the bulk of the heavy wall completed and a start being made on paving works, the headings have been removed. (AS)

**Upper Middle Left:** Paving is already in place on the Britannia Road Bridge pavement as canal channel works are close to completion along Carr Lane. Stone facings have been laid in the middle distance. (AS)

**Lower Middle Left:** Temporary sheet piles have been removed and the excavation around the new Lock 21E has been backfilled. The lock barrel is complete, although the head and tail areas are yet to be constructed. (AS)

**Bottom Left:** The new bridge for the unadopted road off Old Bank, Slaithwaite, required the heightening of the already tall stone wall beside the river Colne. This shows the stone wall extended with a concrete string course to take safety railings. The concrete bridge units are in place and wing walls under construction. (AS)

**Bottom Right:** High quality sett pavings are being laid beside the restored Lock 22E. (AS)





## Lees Mill & Holme Mill Bridges, Golcar Aqueduct, Mark Bottoms Bridge & Sellers

**Top Left:** Lees Mill Bridge is complete and in use. Workmen are laying edgings to the ramp down to the towpath. (AS)

**Top Right:** Completed Holme Mill Bridge which allows heavy vehicle access to the Holme Mill Complex. A gated access ramp to the towpath adjoins the steps. (BW)

**Middle Left:** The completed Golcar Aqueduct. (AS)

**Middle Right:** The completed Mark Bottoms Bridge at Stoney Battery, Paddock. (AS)

**Bottom Left:** Excavation for the new Lock 3E at Sellers showing the boom of a small excavator in the bottom left. The new buildings in the background are Earnshaws Motobikes (right) and Wickes DIY (centre). (AS)

**Bottom Right:** 6 metre high reinforced concrete retaining wall under construction to replace the original stone wall and parking space, for the new combined Grinding/Electricians workshops at Sellers. The tall rig is a concrete pump line. (AS)







## Sellers & Bates

**Top Left:** Major excavation for the Grinding Shop and its associated retaining wall (p16). The canal tunnel is under the access road between the buildings in the right and middle distance. (AS)

**Top Right:** The heavy Grinding Shop machines require major foundations. This one is for the Wide Blade Grinder. The footings for the building are to the right. This side has had to be supported on piles along the original canal line. The new tunnel is under the parked articulated lorry. (AS)

**Middle Left:** The completed steel frame of the combined Sellers building in July. Downstairs will accommodate large Grinding Shop equipment. Upstairs will house the Electricians Workshop. Both are currently along the line of the new canal off the picture to the right. The transfer of the working machines will be phased according to their order book, as it is vital Sellers are allowed to carry on their business while the canal is restored. (AS)

**Middle Right:** Business as usual at the entrance to Sellers Engineers showing how the asphalted access road and car park conceal the 200m long section of the new tunnel. The new Grinding and Electricians Shops are being constructed between the right hand Fitting Shop and the church spire. (BW)

**Bottom Left:** The landing stage under construction at the tail of new Lock 2E behind Bates Mill. The building behind houses the Carding Shed. The new tunnel portal is clearly visible along with the narrow gauge railway used to remove spoil. (AS)

**Bottom Right:** One for the train buffs! The contractor's narrow gauge loco pushes an empty skip into the tunnel following the small excavator to the face. (AS)





## Bates & Co

**Above Left:** View back 'upstream' from the face of the new Bates tunnel. The pipes are used for ventilation of the 'confined work space'. The bare concrete piled walls are visible on either side. (KMC)

**Below Left:** Bates Teasing Shed and yard reinstated above the canal tunnel roof. (AS)

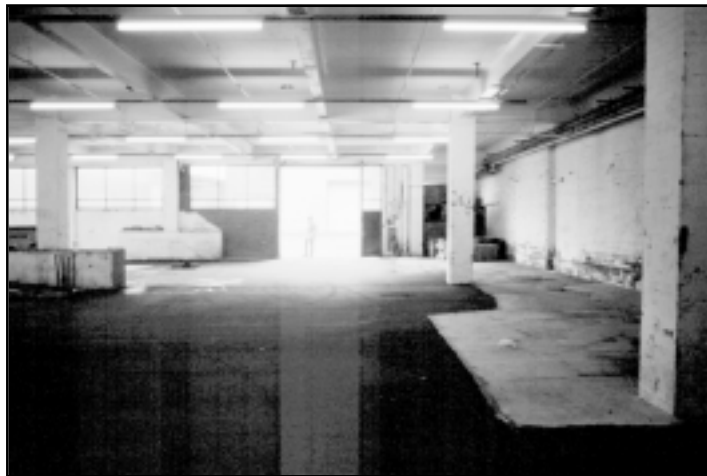
**Below Right:** View along the line of the canal tunnel from inside Bates Teasing Shed basement. This is now back in use as a storage area for wool bales. (AS)

*Photo credits:*

AS · Alan Stopher

BW · British Waterways

KMC · Kirklees Metropolitan Council



# A Minister's Visit and other things



As work progresses, I do less and less of the things I came into the Society to do originally, and I was asked at the Ashton Festival why I no longer write quarterly restoration round-ups. The answer is here in this and every recent

issue. With such astounding progress towards completion of restoration, there are no more restoration projects to plan, or wizard wheezes to get things done. But there still seem to be things to do, apart from representing you on the Board of the Canal Company.

Kali Mountford MP for Colne Valley arranged for Nick Raynsford MP, Minister of State for Housing and Planning, to see the canal in Slaithwaite on 21 July. Mike Marshall and Julie Maund represented British Waterways, John Miller and Andy Wheeler represented Kirklees Council, Keith James, the Colne Valley Trust, and I represented the Huddersfield Canal Company, and this Society.

We walked along the new canal bed through the centre of Slaithwaite, and the Minister was evidently impressed by the scale, and quality of the work. He made a statement to the press about the regenerative benefits of waterway restoration and the importance of partnerships in delivering such schemes. I was impressed by his knowledge of the scheme, and waterways restoration issues generally.

And, wearing my Chairman of Northern Canals Association hat, I still try to help other canal societies and trusts, particularly recently, our neighbours the Barnsley Canal Group. If only Nick Raynsford could talk to Barnsley Council how different their position might be. I discussed the difficulties the Group face with Ian White, British Waterways Regional Director North East at the last Northern Canals meeting, when we walked the country length of the Derby Canal. We agreed that we can

only give limited help. The big political push has to be local to have credibility and achieve anything.

I have also been helping the Inland Waterways Association respond to a consultation being carried out by English Heritage on behalf of the Government on the whole topic of historic areas and built heritage. Perhaps I should have known better. My original comments were related to what seemed to be straightforward issues, and what I saw as shortcomings in the present arrangements for Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, and Ancient Monuments and the built heritage generally. But the second stage consultation documents issued by English Heritage are very academic in approach. It is not immediately evident how the issues and examples raised can be related to the questions they ask. I toyed with the idea of suggesting that IWA should follow the very bad tongue in the cheek advice I was once given in respect of an obscure grant application form. That was to ignore the questions asked. To then simply give the answers they want to give in the order that suits their purpose, but making sure that the key word of each question is somehow included, preferably as a verb, in the appropriate answer! It might provide an amusing half hour - but not a good idea with grant applications, and, I assume not a good idea with Government consultations.

Talking of the Inland Waterways Association, their Restoration Committee held its July meeting at the Transhipment Warehouse. David Sumner, Frank Smith and I met them for lunch at "The Navigation" afterwards. We then took the members of the Committee to Stalybridge where we walked through the town centre building site. Their reaction was much like that of everyone else we show the site to. If you don't know what I mean look at the photos in this issue. And if they don't move you, go to Stalybridge now, while work is going on, and see for yourself.

**Keith Gibson**

# Volunteers Needed

As the end of restoration is now in sight, the Society intends to continue taking an active role in the future maintenance and development of the Huddersfield Narrow.

To this end, the Society will shortly sign up to a unique partnership with British Waterways (BW) in the form of an Alliance Charter. The terms set down in the Charter will enable Society volunteers to undertake a variety of canal-related activities, in return for which BW will jointly fund a Volunteer Coordinator's post.

It could be said that, in theory, there should not be much to do post restoration, especially when BW are obliged to maintain the Canal to cruising standard. However, members are reminded that although the final 30m restoration phase is removing the remaining obstructions to complete through navigation between Ashton and Huddersfield, this is not the end of the story. The grants for this programme of works, including much of the previous restoration work, did not extend to the provision of general canal furniture, eg. mooring rings, signs and various other boating facilities.

Obviously, with the Society having an active interest in the Canal's future and development potential, the HCS/BW Alliance Charter is one way Society volunteers can continue to take on an active role, as well as assisting BW in enhancing the work already undertaken.

It is anticipated that the Society will need many more active volunteers than it has at the moment, therefore, recruitment of new volunteers is seen as a No 1 priority.

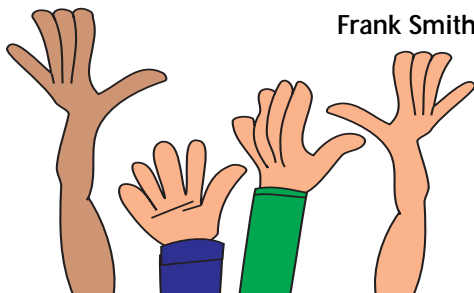
As it will take time to process and train new volunteers, especially in areas where HCS has not previously worked, it may take longer than usual to feed new volunteers into the system.

Every member will receive a small brochure highlighting the various opportunities and vacancies HCS is endeavouring to fill. In addition to new volunteer applications, existing active volunteers are also requested to complete the form so as to maintain continuity and reaffirm availability.

It goes without saying that the majority of HCS activities will be mainly between Ashton and Huddersfield, with a small concentration at the Standedge Tunnel. The Society appreciates that, for some members, distance may be a limiting factor and should be borne in mind when considering applying, especially when certain jobs will be on a regular basis.

With a new volunteer bureau, it is hoped that the Society, along with other similar organisations, will make the Huddersfield Narrow one of the most attractive canals in the country.

Frank Smith



## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

# HCS Casual Wear

Last year the Society commenced scaling down its sales operation as part of the first stage of restructuring HCS for the new Millennium and the completion of restoration works. One unfortunate side effect of this action was a delay in re-ordering sweatshirts and T-shirts, bearing the Society's logo, for members to purchase.

We have now addressed this issue and are now pleased to be in a position to be able to offer sweatshirts, T-shirts and golf shirts to members at what we believe is an affordable price.

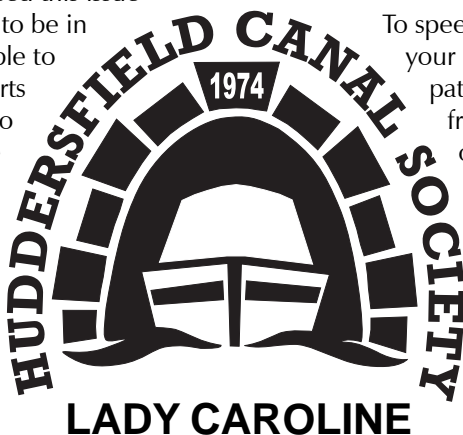
Not everyone appreciates that the existing HCS logo represents the Standedge Tunnel portal. To make the point more obvious, HCS Council has approved a new motif for use on casual wear. It is not intended to replace the official logo, which will continue to be used elsewhere.

As on previous garments, the Society's logo will be screen printed in white on Royal Blue shirts, however, this time we will also be able to offer (for a few pounds more) the option of an embroidered logo. In addition, and again for a very small charge, on embroidered shirts only, members may also wish to take the opportunity of having a name, eg. name of your boat, inserted below the logo.

To speed up delivery times, your order will be dispatched directly to you from the supplier. An order form is included with this issue of Pennine Link. Additional order forms are available from the HCS office.

The Society hopes that as many members as possible will take this opportunity to show their support and help promote HCS by wearing our bespoke casual wear.

**Frank Smith**



# Waterways for Tomorrow

*Restoration Chairman, Keith Gibson, gives his views on the Government's White Paper 'Waterways for Tomorrow'.*

Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott launched the Government's long awaited daughter White Paper on the inland waterways ("Waterways for Tomorrow") on 27 June. This follows the White Paper "A New Deal for Transport; Better for Everyone" and sets out proposals for the future of the inland waterways.

It includes the Government's response to British Waterways consultation on a suggested membership scheme, and on the proposed Waterway Trust - a major national charity able to seek funds for, and invest in, the waterways. And it places importance on the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council's (IWAAC) report "Britain's Inland Waterways: An Undervalued Asset." Produced in 1996, we might have thought that was forgotten - but the wheels of government turn slowly, and the main thrust of that report, that "... the waterways are a major national asset which must be conserved and developed in a sustainable way for future generations ..." is accepted. Indeed, it is central to the White Paper.

Although no new legislation is expected to follow, this is the most significant government policy paper for the waterways for many years. It is the first statement of national policy since Barbara Castle's 1968 Transport Act which created British Waterways (although perhaps not recognisable as the current animal), and gave us Remainder Waterways etc.

There are few surprises in the document - most of its statements having being trailed, or consulted on before. But that is

no bad thing. We have had a chance to have our say. And in many ways it is not what is said (important though that is), but the upbeat language and the beating of the drum for the waterways that is the key.

For years we have seen too many public bodies fail to recognise the importance of waterways, or adopt completely unjustified attitudes. For instance, the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society, a competent and well organised restoration society with a small scale project entirely appropriate to what will always be a quiet rural waterway away from the main network, made little progress for years because of objections from English Nature that could only have been worth considering in the unlikely event of the canal attracting the sort of boat numbers found on a busy Midlands Canal. And we have seen the unnecessary problems and costs created in the restoration of the Lichfield and Hatherton Canals by the short sighted decision to build a new motorway crossing without the provision of navigable culverts. Or worthwhile restoration projects, such as the nearby Barnsley Canal, stymied by local authorities who have been unable or unwilling to see beyond their own boundaries, and, despite all the evidence elsewhere, still do not understand that waterways can be engines for regeneration. As a government policy document, the White Paper can be hugely influential in improving the awareness of and perception of the waterways. It must be given weight by local authorities, by the Regional Development Agencies, by English Nature, and by the Highways Agency. It is too early to say that problems caused



essentially by a lack of awareness by public bodies, or a total misconception of the multi-faceted nature of waterways, will go away overnight, but the White Paper gives hope, and ammunition to the waterways movement. And the White Paper has been well publicised. Even "The Planner", the weekly journal delivered to all qualified planning officers, has included an editorial column on the massive opportunities offered by the waterways.

The White Paper acknowledges the achievements and potential of waterway restoration. At the launch, John Prescott said: *"Our inland waterways are one of our most important national assets. We value them not only for their heritage, but because they improve the quality of the environment and people's lives. By revitalising the waterways, we can deliver real benefits to the environment, to local communities and to businesses."*

To summarise the document could fill this entire issue of "Pennine Link", but certain key points are worth noting:

- \* The Government sees a positive and developing role for AINA (the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities) as a representative body for BW, the Environment Agency, the Broads Authority and the other smaller navigation authorities, and for IWAAC as an advisory resource for the waterways generally. They look to BW and the Environment Agency to implement a Collaboration Agreement quickly, and will review the Environment Agency's navigation responsibilities as part of a review of the Agency planned for later this year.

- \* The Government wants to encourage people to make use of inland waterways for leisure and recreation, tourism and sport.

- \* The Government supports the protection, conservation and enhancement of the waterways heritage and their built and natural environment.

- \* The Government wants to encourage improvement, development and restoration of the waterways network in partnership between the public, private and voluntary sectors, and looks to the Regional development Agencies to take account of waterways in their strategies, and support proposals for improvement, development and restoration.

- \* The Government's Design Manual for Roads and Bridges that deals with new road proposals will be amended to include guidance on the importance of waterway restoration projects.

- \* Noting that there has been conflict between navigation and environmental objectives when canals are being restored, the Government acknowledges that a moderate amount of boat traffic is generally helpful in sustaining biodiversity, and expects the different parties to work constructively to resolve these difficulties. Guidance is to be issued on the notification and management of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's), and English Nature are to consult the Inland Waterways Association before designating new SSSI's.

- \* The Government wishes to encourage the transfer of freight to waterways where practical, and will sponsor a study group to include representatives of BW and other navigation authorities, commercial operators, user groups etc.

- \* The Government will support the development of the inland waterways through the planning system, and will invite IWAAC to prepare a good practice document explaining the contribution of

inland waterways to regeneration, and highlighting examples of good planning. Significantly this will be published by the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions.

Not surprisingly, there will be no membership scheme for British Waterways (too few benefits to attract members, and potentially competing with the voluntary sector), but the Waterways Trust idea is accepted as an important means of funding and facilitating waterways heritage projects. It is no surprise that British Waterways' existing Waterway Trust is to be the vehicle for this, but it is intended to become a separate and accountable body with Trustees reflecting its interest in all of the waterways. (And the Trust its off to a good start with the announcement that it is to follow up its involvement in the restoration of the Rochdale Canal and the Anderton Lift, together with the creation of the Ribble Link, by co-ordinating the approach to restoration of the Cotswold Canals and the Northern Reaches of the Lancaster!)

The Government proposes to organise a national conference to discuss the White Paper and its implementation, but before that, it is inviting comments.

There are things I would like to have seen included - perhaps a specific grants scheme for waterways, or help for those voluntary bodies that are desperately short of start-up funds or expertise. And I would have liked a stronger, more specific instruction that local authorities must look towards full restoration of waterways. But I did not expect any of these, and I have to say its the best we have seen yet from any Government, of whatever political complexion. The clear official recognition of what the waterways movement has

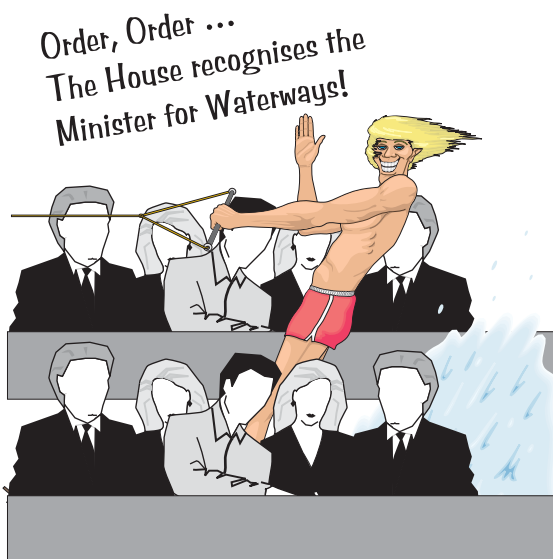
been saying for years is an outstanding achievement.

Copies of the White paper can be obtained (free) by telephoning the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions on 0870 1226 236. And comments can be made to:

Richard Bradley  
Inland Waterways Branch (IWB)  
Department of the Environment,  
Transport and the Regions  
5/D9 Ashdown House  
123 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1E 6DE

And don't think that anything you say will be ignored. Richard has been involved in advising government for considerably more years than he would care for me to reveal. I have always found him to be sensible, pragmatic, and willing to listen.

**Keith Gibson**



# The Millennium Horsedrawn Canalboat Journey - Manchester to London

A special project has recently taken place to celebrate the Millennium. Horsedrawn narrowboats were the regular means of propulsion at one time but now they are a rarity. Modern boats create many hazards for horseboats with their long tow-ropes and it was a great challenge to consider getting a horseboat from Manchester to London, a distance of over 200 miles.

"Maria" did it. She is Britain's oldest surviving narrowboat and is still in use carrying. A wooden horseboat, she was originally built in 1854 and last re-timbered in 1977 by the Ashton Packet Boat Co. Ltd., retaining the original metalwork. She now operates as a passenger carrier on public and charter trips. She is 70 feet long, 7 feet wide, weighs about 12 tons and carries a 25 ton cargo or 50 passengers.

The purpose of the journey was several-fold:-

1. To attend the National Waterways Festival in August.
2. To raise money for cancer charities (90%) and The Wooden Canal Boat Society (10% see Plink No.130).

**Right:** Sue Day leading Bonny on the Grand Union Canal.

**Below:** Ashton Packet Boat 'Maria' leaves from above Seabrook Top Lock 36 on the GUC.

Photos: John Sully

3. To introduce people to the joys and problems of horseboating.

4. To offer a tribute to David Lawrence Brown, the husband of Maria's "driver" Sue Day. David died of cancer in 1998 and was Chairman of Ashton Packet Boat Co. Ltd., who have kindly lent "Maria" for the journey.

There were no fare paying passengers on the trip. Instead, anyone joining for a ride, or to help, was asked to make a donation to the cause.

It's not too late to help. Anyone can make a contribution. Cheques should be made payable to Willow Wood Hospice (canal boat fund) and sent to Sue Day, 12 Oakwood View, Lower Beestow, Mossley, Lancs. OL5 9QL.

For any further enquiries about "Maria", phone: 07711 121056 or 01457 834863. Website: [www.horseboat.com](http://www.horseboat.com)



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# Restoration Progress - Autumn 2000

**20 Stalybridge Town Centre**  
*'Excavation of old canal line with new locks and bridges'*  
*Work in progress - completion February 2001*

**18 Scout Tunnel**  
*'Internal repairs'*  
*Work completed May 2000*

**11 Division Bridge Aqueduct**  
*'Structural repairs'*  
*Work completed May 2000*

**17 Mann's Wharf to Frenches**  
*'Dredging'*  
*Work suspended, due to restart September 2000*

**16 Frenches to High Street**  
*'Dredging'*  
*Work suspended, due to restart September 2000*

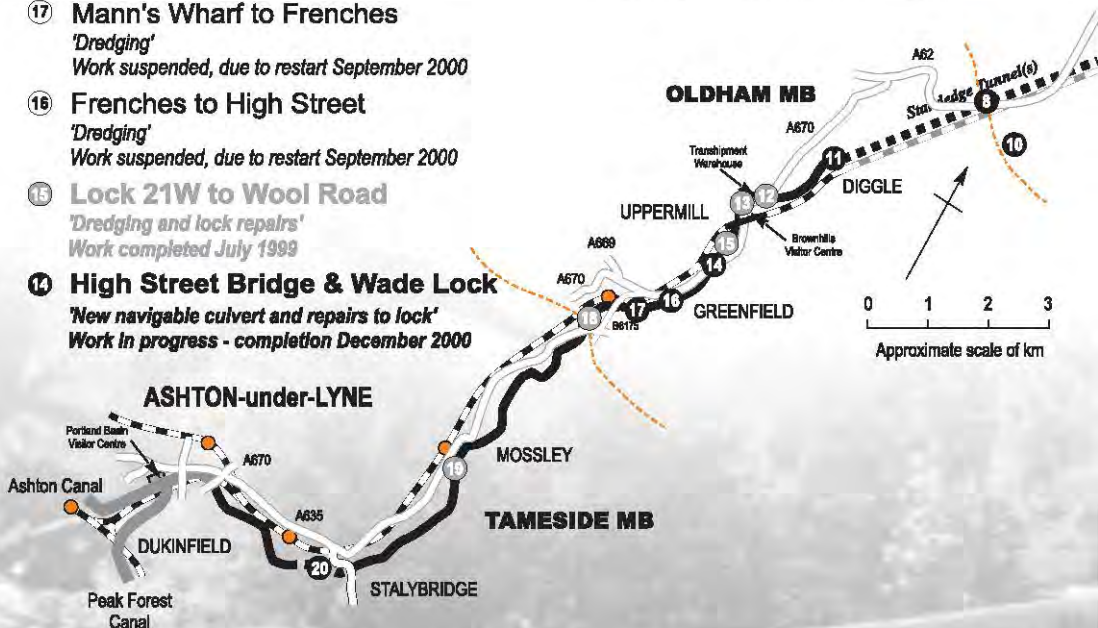
**15 Lock 21W to Wool Road**  
*'Dredging and lock repairs'*  
*Work completed July 1999*

**14 High Street Bridge & Wade Lock**  
*'New navigable culvert and repairs to lock'*  
*Work in progress - completion December 2000*

**13 Old Sag Aqueduct**  
*'Structural repairs'*  
*Work completed May 2000*

**12 Wool Road Bridge & Lock 24W**  
*'New navigable culvert and repairs to lock'*  
*Work completed May 2000*

**11 Lock 32W to Ward Lane**  
*'Dredging'*  
*3rd Quarter 2000 to 4th Quarter 2000*



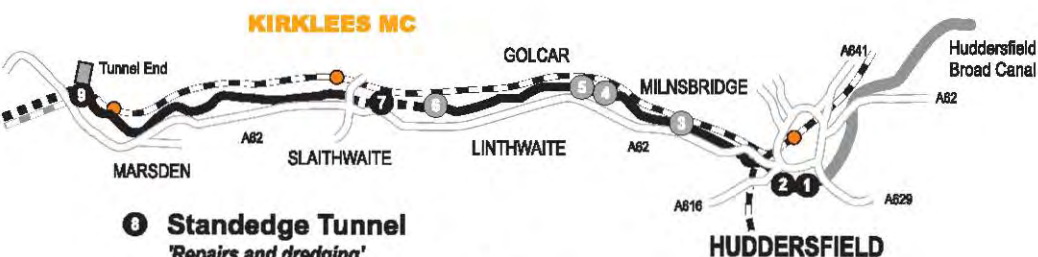


- 10 Water Supply Works**  
*'Improvements to canal feeders'*  
 3rd Quarter 2000 to 4th Quarter 2000

- 9 Standedge Visitor Centre**  
*'Visitor/Heritage Centre'*  
 Work in progress - completion April 2001

- 5 Holme Mill Bridge**  
*'Replacement bridge'*  
 Work completed July 2000

- 4 Golcar Aqueduct**  
*'Structural repairs'*  
 Work completed July 2000



- 8 Standedge Tunnel**  
*'Repairs and dredging'*  
 Work in progress - completion April 2001
- 7 Slaithwaite Town Centre**  
*'New section of canal on old line'*  
 Work in progress - completion February 2001

- 6 Lees Mill Bridge**  
*'Replacement bridge'*  
 Work completed July 2000

- 3 Mark Bottoms Bridge**  
*'New bridge'*  
 Work completed July 2000

- 2 Sellers & Co**  
*'New section of canal through mill yard'*  
 Work in progress - completion April 2001

- 1 Bates & Co**  
*'Navigable culvert under building'*  
 Work in progress - completion April 2001







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# The Riqueval Tunnel

*Project Director, Alan Stopher, takes the opportunity of a family holiday to see how the French tackle transiting their 'Standedge Tunnel'.*

As we all know the Standedge Tunnel is the 'longest highest and deepest canal tunnel in the UK', but where are there longer canal tunnels and how are they operated? In an attempt to find out more, the last full day of my summer holiday was a busman's one as I dragged the family around various canal sites in northern France and Belgium. Of the structures I visited that day, the one which has the most in common with the HNC is the canal tunnel at Riqueval, just north of Saint Quentin in Northern France, which is 5.6 km in length. Although slightly longer than our 5.2km long Standedge it crosses rolling farmland, a landscape which is not nearly as impressive as our own Pennines.

Visiting on a Sunday morning meant that there was little sign of activity and the small 'Museum of Towing' was not yet open for visitors. I have since gleaned

some information from the world wide web and doubtless some members will know much more about Standedge's continental relative.

Riqueval is not the longest canal tunnel in France. If my information is correct, this honour goes to the Souterrains de Rove near Marseilles which is 7.3 km long although now closed because of a collapse. Riqueval was opened by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1810 just one year before Standedge. It is relatively broad by UK standards and has no towpath, so presumably legging was the normal method of propulsion in the nineteenth century. For much of the twentieth century propulsion has been by an overhead electric tug pulling on a submerged chain and although I did not

**Below:** Southern portal of the 5.6km long Riqueval Tunnel. Hidden in the trees above is the 'Museum of Towing'. The electric catenary is clearly visible. The main road N44 runs parallel to the canal a short distance to the right.

**Right:** Close up of the tunnel portal showing concrete structures presumably placed to form a lead in for towing; timber rubbing strips are fixed to both sides.





*Left: Taken from a French website, (Musee du Touage), this is the only image I could find of a tug in use.*

see any activity on my visit, it is apparent that convoys of boats are still towed in this fashion. The Voies Navigables de France (French equivalent of British Waterways) website indicates that the charge for towing a 'pleasure boat' over 12 metres long is 152ff (around £15). Charges are also quoted for shorter 'pleasure boats' and loaded and unloaded freight boats. Towing through takes two hours and works at fixed times every day in one direction only, suggesting only one tug is used. The photographs are all taken at the southern end of the tunnel near the Musée de Touage.

The canal at Riqueval has another claim to fame as it coincided with the

Hindenburg line in 1918, a strongly fortified front defended by the Germans. It made the news on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1918 when a company of the North Staffordshire Regiment captured Riqueval bridge, the last one intact over the St Quentin canal. This was a key moment in the offensive to drive back the German forces which ended with the victorious final offensive and the armistice on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1918.

Does anyone know of other world contenders for the longest canal tunnel or is Standedge going to be the second longest operational canal tunnel in the world?

**Alan Stopher**

*Below: Electric towing tug moored out of use and showing signs of dereliction. The towing chain would pass over the pulleys and round a drum in the centre of the boat. The buildings on the left, house an electricity sub-station. The deep cutting on the southern approach is around 2km long.*



# Letters to the Editor - Feature

## STANDEGE TUNNEL

### THE END OF THE SAGA?

*Three letters this time and all pretty forceful in their own way. They are all very relevant in that they relate to Standedge Tunnel so I have decided to combine them into a feature article. Fortunately, I don't have to reply. British Waterways are well on the way to solving the problems at the tunnel and their Mike Marshall has replied to the letters and explained the latest thoughts on the tunnel operation. Hopefully I would like to use the editor's "This correspondence is now closed" following Mike's explanation but, somehow, I don't think I will get away with it!*

**Ken Wright**

*Here are the first two letters which are critical of the method of operation of the tunnel, as known about so far.*

Dear Sir,

In the wake of the Hiltons' letter in last month's issue, I should like to add my two penn'orth. I too was dismayed to hear that the 'nanny state' had decided that after restoration we boaters would not be capable of negotiating the longest canal tunnel in Britain. The idea of having to be towed in a daisy chain, all sitting in a tug being fed propaganda for 2½ hours seems appalling. It is, however, perhaps better than nothing, which is what the Hiltons are suggesting for themselves. However, there are a number of points which I would like you to clear up if you can.

Firstly, why 2½ hours for individual boats? I have negotiated many tunnels in the

canal system and usually reckon that 2½ to 3mph is a manageable safe speed. This would put travel time at about 1½ hours. (In fact, my worst experience in a tunnel was being behind another boat which was going so slowly that even on tickover I was catching up! This necessitated disengaging drive every so often, thus losing 80% of manoeuvrability and drifting off into one side or the other while the safe gap between us was restored!)

Secondly, how come in **this** tunnel, which was presumably hewn for the purpose, are the sides and roof so far away as to be out of sight! Did the navvies come across natural caves in the hill as they dug through or did they just get a bit carried away?

Thirdly, surely the shafts between the railway line and the canal tunnel could be closed to access by unauthorised people by barred gates. This would still allow free flow of air between the tunnels, thus helping to extract fumes, but not posing a danger to boat crews who decided to stop and investigate the adjoining tunnel (as you do, of course!).

Fourthly, (I really haven't done my homework here so please bear with me) - if there is no towpath so boats could not be horse-towed, the roof and side are out of sight, so boats could not be 'legged', and it takes so long to get through with a diesel engine that everyone is going to be asphyxiated, how the H... did they use the tunnel when it was first built?

I love the Huddersfield Canal and have supported it in thought, word and deed (if mostly in monetary deed). My partner and I regularly drive down to investigate

the restoration progress and look forward with anticipation to the opening, but the tunnel is a real letdown!

Yours faithfully,

**Alex Sisson, Harrogate.**

*(Far too many questions to answer in depth - perhaps they will answer themselves in time. The point about tunnel widths can be sorted out, though. The lengths of the tunnel in unsupported rock are far from a regular tunnel shape. The primitive blasting techniques used by the builders meant that explosives took the path of least resistance and blew down varying amounts of rock as tunneling progressed. Furthermore there are several "wides" where the tunnel was deliberately widened to allow boats to pass in opposite directions - these were the cause of many subterranean clashes between boaters! Presumably "legging" gave way to "poling" over these lengths. Ed.)*

Dear Editor,

As far as I can establish, navigation of the tunnel is still proposed as a tug pulling up to 8 boats. As an HCS boating member hoping to make the passage one day soon, I am concerned that this system appears to be still current.

I have no desire to have my unmanned boat towed in a procession, banging from one side of the tunnel to the other, especially as a 'tail end Charlie' where the most movement of all is likely to be experienced.

Maybe I am overlooking some fundamental point, but what is wrong with a more normal, already proven approach? Viz:-

1. Standedge is approximately twice the length of Harecastle tunnel.

2. Place extraction fans in the centre of the tunnel (old construction shaft?). This in effect now makes it like two Harecastles.

3. Have 'Harecastle doors' at BOTH ends. As up to 8 boats enter at one end, the door is left open, the door at the other end remaining shut. If the passage time is (say) 2 hours, then after an hour, the door at the far end is opened and the entrance door closed, which then equates, in terms of air flow, to the current, successful Harecastle system.

4. I have heard that one reason for the proposed system is the prevention of access to the railway tunnel(s). These could be bricked up and, if needed, have included, emergency doors. This worry re railway access seems strange anyway as the railways are even more accessible from the tunnel ends or outside the tunnel, all over the country.

5. Maintenance costs must be readily available, the same as Harecastle tunnel costs plus maintenance or a second door.

6. The costs of the above must be set against the cost of buying, maintaining and manning a tug system.

7. The costs of a tug and batteries is an estimate at best. (Would batteries be duplicated, one set in use the other on charge?) What happens for example if the tug is at one end and there are boats at the other, is it to travel 'light' through the tunnel? It could be that the majority of traffic tends to be one way.

8. How are the boats to be coupled? There are so many variations on height and curve of the bows, there are curved and square sterns at different heights. Both ends display a wide range of fenders,

both in material of manufacture and shape. The safe coupling of ALL the possible combinations to prevent 'whipping' is mind boggling, if not impossible. When boats emerge with damaged paintwork, or worse, who is responsible? Who pays for reinstatement?

Unless I am missing some basic criteria, the existing proven Harecastle system appears a more realistic method than the proposal I believe to be current.

As a long-standing canal boater and member of HCS, I am very much looking forward to the re-opening of the Huddersfield Narrow and look forward to your comments with something of an invested interest.

Yours sincerely,

**L.A. Wood, Romiley, Stockport.**

*British Waterway's Deputy Project Manager, Mike Marshall, replies:*

## **OPERATION OF STANEDGE TUNNEL**

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to respond to the concerns raised by your members regarding the proposed method of operation of the Standedge Tunnel.

Firstly, can I say that the proposal is the outcome of much consideration, discussion and debate both within British Waterways and externally with consultants, statutory bodies and Railtrack. This was followed by a period of consultation with local user group representatives to explain our proposals and the reason why we had chosen the preferred option.

A ventilation study carried out by Ove Arup and Partners in 1993 concluded that the present ventilation system within the tunnel is very poor and insufficient to allow the use of petrol or diesel engines.

Options for forced ventilation were considered by Ove Arup but concluded not to be feasible, due to cost, excessive noise and the required air velocity.

British Waterways set up a working group three years ago, to consider the options available for operation that would ensure safe passage. It was concluded that a towed convoy utilising electric tugs was the most feasible option. This would reduce and eliminate most of the potential hazards and provide an acceptable way of dealing with an emergency situation if it were to arise.

I accept that there are serious concerns about allowing our customers' 'pride and joy' to be towed at the mercy of a British Waterways' tunnel skipper. However, I can assure you that we will be training our staff to the highest standards and testing the operation rigorously before we allow the tunnel to be opened in May next year.

Standedge Tunnel has a complex arrangement of interconnections with both the live and disused rail tunnels along its 5.2km length, making it a unique challenge in providing a safe journey. We believe that our solution provides safe passage for all our customers to enjoy and we hope that once experienced will provide an everlasting memory of the wonders of Standedge.

Yours faithfully,

**Mike Marshall**  
**Deputy Project Manager**

*(What Mike hasn't told us is the proposed way of coping with boats of various shapes. However, a little bird who was at the July User Group meeting tells me that BW currently propose to provide inflatable polypropylene bags which will fill the space between the boats and protect them*



*from abrasion. The rear boat of the train will carry a "false stern", - a reversed "Jebus" to them what knows! - to shield it from the effects of flapping about. Trains are likely to be limited to 250 feet in length. Ed.)*

*And, somewhat by way of contrast, what you might almost call the counter argument from a member in Bedfordshire, plus a lot of very nice things about HCS.*

Dear Editor,

Sorry if this is a bit long winded.

Although spending the whole of my formative years in Saddleworth until I left for university in 1982 I am new to membership of the Society. I had always taken an interest in the canal after my family had moved to Diggle in the early 1970s. At that time the locks were in process of being infilled and cascaded and all seemed lost for the navigation, save for a collection of wildly optimistic individuals who called themselves the Huddersfield Canal Society. I well remember visiting a stand at Diggle fete sometime in the mid 70s and purchasing a pamphlet on the future of the canal. Glancing down the list of work required the phrases 'new bridge required' and 'new section of canal needed' were liberally sprinkled throughout. I was no civil engineer then (indeed I'm not now) but it hardly needed Thomas Telford to work out that the scale and expense of the work involved was vast. The Society's chief source of income in those days appeared to consist of selling small stuffed furry creatures called 'Diggles' which were supposed to inhabit the western end of the Standedge tunnel. The casual observer, indeed the professional observer, needless to say had no difficulty in concluding that this was a bunch of hopeless dreamers with eyes full

of moon. These were people who enjoyed rustling up a soft toy and perhaps making a little marmalade. Harmless enough.

History will of course record how very wrong we were. One has only to take the time to visit Stalybridge as I did last week. I won't wax on about this, your readers have probably seen it for themselves, other than to say that the scale and magnificence of the work here is breathtaking. More than that it is a credit to those who have worked so hard over the years against what must have seemed impossible odds. £30 million is a lot of stuffed toys. I know that some of you will resent us Johnny-come-latelys, but if I repent my cynicism will you forgive me?

On a more prosaic note I'd like to ask a couple of those sorts of questions that newcomers always ask.

Firstly, when I have visited the canal lately I have observed that it is practise to keep the water level in the lock chambers at the level of the lower pound. From a safety point of view, is this a good idea? If I was to fall into a lock I would rate my chances of survival as much greater if it was full of water and I could scramble to the edge, rather than falling some feet where there must be a real danger of hitting the bottom, being knocked unconscious and consequently drowning. The tragedy of this happening to a child would be terrible enough not to mention the adverse publicity for the project. *(Couldn't agree more - also the fact that empty locks allow bottom gates to dry out and leak. Policies seem to vary on different stretches of canal, though. Of course, when the canal is working, locks will be left full or empty, depending on which direction the last boat through was travelling. Ed.)*

Secondly I believe that I am correct in thinking that some 50 or so men were killed in construction of the canal - mostly in the completion of Standedge tunnel. I wondered if any thought has been given to erecting some sort of memorial, say a plaque at the tunnel mouth, to these largely forgotten individuals? (*Yes it has - probably as one of the "percent for art" schemes. Any sponsors? Ed.*)

Lastly an observation on Mr. & Mrs. Hilton's letter in the summer edition of Plink regarding navigation through the tunnel. As a youth, at a time when I had less sense than I hope I do now, I walked through one of the disused Standedge railways tunnels which in those days had no gates to protect their entrance. The darkness inside the tunnel was oppressive and very disorientating. Although as I recall one end of the tunnel is always visible, this represented the tiniest pinprick of light and offered no practical illumination at all. It is a well worn cliché but even though me and my companions carried torches it was literally impossible to see our hands in front of our faces.

Despite the high ceiling the tunnel was thick with diesel fumes from the working railway tunnel and the experience was so horrendous that, despite being exhausted from stumbling over three miles in total darkness, we chose to make the return trip from Marsden overland, despite this being a much longer and more strenuous route. When I finally get to make the journey by boat in the even more claustrophobic environment of the canal tunnel I will be grateful for the opportunity to let somebody else do the steering.

Lastly I'd just like to say that had it not been for Martin Clarke's excellent Penine Waterways website I would never have caught up with the canal again (I now live in Bedfordshire). If anyone hasn't looked at this yet - do so! It's worth buying a computer for alone.

Well done HCS I salute you - here's to the next 200 years!!

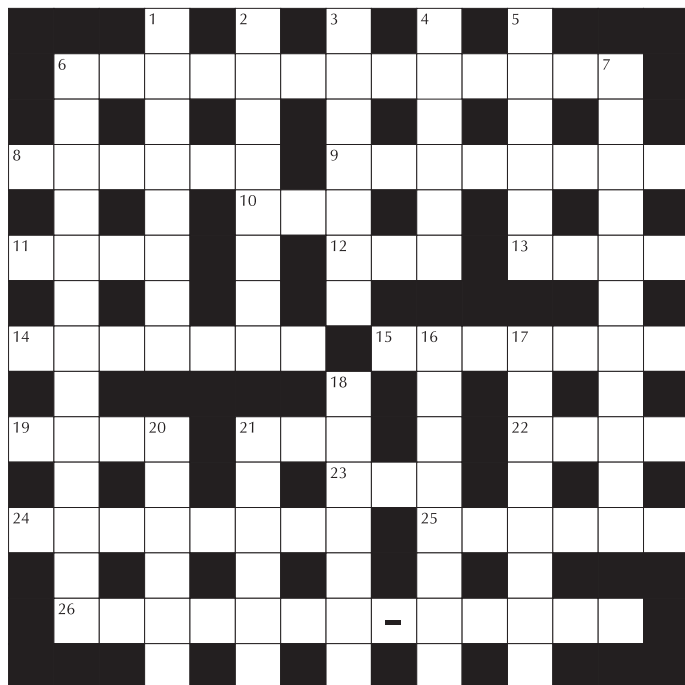
**M. Kerfoot.**

(P.S. You may not need reminding but the website address is [www.penninewaterways.co.uk](http://www.penninewaterways.co.uk))



*A boater's dream or claustrophobe's nightmare?*

# Crossword - 30



- 22 Diet of Worms found below this line (4).  
 23 A negative French ballet step (3).  
 24 Australian state capital found in a dock on the Grand Union? (8).  
 25 Former 'Green' type of K & A lock (6).  
 26 Where long electric fish may display their lights on the Basingstoke canal? (7-5).

## DOWN

- 1 What the quality gents hairdresser will give you after finishing (8).  
 2 Moody Rob taking comfort in the Dog & Doublet at the bottom of Curdworth locks (8).  
 3 A roofless tunnel Fenny found here on the Oxford (7).  
 4 Chants at the site of a

## ACROSS

- 6 Menswear sold on the river in a brewery town (6,2,5).  
 8 Tom Rolt's boat named after a famous French battle we hear (6).  
 9 Nine pens found above Standedge (8).  
 10 The ship's cat's place of repose? (3).  
 11 The dome which should be seen at the start of a hire boat holiday (4).  
 12 Sound of the steerer when given a large mug of Typhoo? (3).  
 13 Amphibians found in the left side bank of the canal (4).  
 14 Connections with burnt coal and a shallow crossing found on the A6 north of Bakewell (7).  
 15 Place of employment for a barman and caretaker on an aqueduct above the New Main line (7).  
 19 Food for the steerer, a screw holding the prop on and a larval insect (4).  
 21 Seen a lot by 21 down (3).

temporary dam (6).

- 5 Second city to Birmingham for miles of canal? (6).  
 6 Apt place for a dog to cross the canal below Farmers Bridge locks? (7,6).  
 7 River crossing noted for cricket? (5,6).  
 16 Hint given to employees by a sheriff's officer (8).  
 17 Wat weary horse plodding beside this (8).  
 18 A camper seen by a former loop of the Old Main Line (4,3).  
 20 How Captain Kirk went with his split infinitive (6).  
 21 This character spends most of his time at 21A (6).

*Solution at the foot of page 55*

# HCS Council News

Reading through this item in Plink 133, to see where we are now up to, I find precious little change. We are still waiting to sign agreements, we are still waiting for someone to recognise a potential traffic management problem in Marsden, we are still tying up loose ends with HCS(R) Ltd and we are still entering ourselves for national competitions with Pennine Link!

This doesn't mean that nothing has happened for three months, just that some things take longer than others. And the meetings! We have had meetings to sort out matters for more meetings. And all the talking has borne fruit in that we have now made DECISIONS!

Two Council meetings have taken place, the first dating back to 24<sup>th</sup> May. I managed a quick addendum to the last Council report to tell you about the donation to Mikron Theatre. Here's the rest from that meeting.

Trevor Ellis shares the concern of many of us that there is a serious backlog on "secondary maintenance" i.e. putting into working order the lengths already restored years ago. A lot of this is dredging, unbunging seized-up locks and repairing towpaths.

On the financial side our investments continue to do well and we have just over £400k in various accounts, even after our commitments are met. The main commitment is £250,000 towards the Standedge Visitor Centre and that is the end of our major gifts! The rest is there to support the Society's future activities.

John Mac is still tying up HCS(R)'s affairs. These will not be finalised until all the retention monies from various contracts

have been paid to us - and there is still half a chance that some towpath work in Tameside could come our way. That is why HCS(R) is not being closed down completely.

Agreed that meetings about the future of HCS involving strategy, boat and volunteer groups should take place as a matter of urgency to provide decisions to help us agree with the requirements of the Alliance Charter with BW. A deadline of 30 October will allow us to have new systems well in place before the "big opening".

It was suggested that the Society should do some PR to raise public profile. Not many people know just how successful HCS has been over 25 years, raising nearly £40 million. We must avoid being swamped by positive press reports from BW and the local authorities. (Strange as it may seem the Society does not have a Press Officer - although Alec Ramsden was listed in the front of Plink 133, he hasn't been in the job for over a year. Don't ask!)

Several sponsors have come forward with offers to help with bridge number plates, benches, bollards etc.. Not as easy as it seems with BW approvals needed etc., but it will happen. (See the decision at July meeting which really oils the wheels!)

Council agreed that a donation to Anderton Lift was outside the Society's scope but decided to promote the Appeal in Pennine Link; see page 49.

Council agreed to write a letter in support of the campaign to reopen Diggle Halt as this would have long term benefits for the area, the canal and tourism generally.

The Society is shifting its emphasis on 'sales' to concentrate on items specific to our canal. We are to have new issues of sweatshirts, golf shirts and T-shirts featuring a new logo to be used on the garments.

The meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> July concentrated on the reports from the three groups dealing with the future, strategy, boats and volunteers. All the groups' reports were approved, with a few minor amendments, and largely follow the 22 items I spelled out in the last issue.

The following changes or matters of detail are worth recording.

## STRATEGY

Frank Smith and Bob Gough are to be kept on at least until the end of April 2002 to allow the necessary full-time support whilst Society reorganisation takes place.

Volunteer operational groups will look after specific lengths of the canal and report to the Society member(s) on the main Operational Liaison Group involving BW and the three local authorities.

Tunnel End is going to be the most significant tourist and boating area on the canal and is probably our favourite for the main official opening ceremony next summer.

The Chairman hopes to have a "big bash" next summer that all members will be invited to. Deciding on the format will prove difficult!

Keith Gibson is currently working on a history of the Society for publication. The office, with others, is preparing a new Towpath Guide. Ken Wright is retiring as Editor of Pennine Link after the official opening and nobody has yet started a

queue to replace him!

An in depth study of festivals needs to take place. With campaigning more or less over, there has to be a new *raison d'être*.

## BOATS

A new "tug and butty" for the water taxi at Marsden will have a tug that doubles as a 12-seater taxi and a dumb butty to convert it into a 50-seater. Many more qualified skippers will be needed, training courses etc - and volunteers generally.

Tenders are already being organised and fingers are crossed that some boat builder can have it ready for next April/May.

BW are being asked to ensure that a safe mooring is available at Tunnel End and that work is done to enable the boat to get into the side at each end of its trip. The existing set-up has necessitated "walking the plank".

## VOLUNTEERS

All levels of volunteers will be required from managers, administrators and clerks to lock-wheelers, grass-cutters and tug operators. Apart from the boat crews already mentioned. A recruitment drive is to take place but volunteers will only be called up a few at a time to allow for training and initiation.

The "volunteer co-ordinator" (Frank Smith) will liaise between BW and the Society to arrange work on canal related tasks. Managers of volunteer groups will be incorporated in a new Council structure.

Volunteers will be called upon on a regular basis and it will be necessary to pay travelling expenses and to provide certain items of clothing.

*cont'd over ...*

# IWA News

The Inland Waterways Handbook 2001 is now on sale. A5 size, 96 pages, and colour, it is filled with info. about IWA and its activities. There are regional maps with waterway dimensions (*NOT depths, I assume, as these are a moveable feast! Ed*) and local notes. Useful as a general source of information. Order by 'phone to IWA (Sales) Ltd. on 01923 711114 at £3.25 per copy or £2.50 to IWA members.

BW are to review the Boat Safety Scheme after many complaints that, although the intentions are honourable, the whole thing has become far too complicated and restrictive.

Response to the Anderton Boat Lift Appeal has been extremely encouraging especially amongst IWA members. See elsewhere for more details of how to help.

After all the consultation BW have come up with proposals to establish their "Partnership with the People" initiative. The five elements are:-

1. Improved consultation procedures.

2. The new charitable trust shall be The Waterways Trust (*Surprise, surprise! Ed.*)

3. New information service by subscription but not a "membership scheme."

4. BW and the Trust should work together with others in partnership (*Since most people count BW and the Trust as the same thing, hear hear! Ed.*)

5. BW will get the Trust to fund projects outside its own remit (e.g. *the Rochdale Canal? Ed.*)

New warnings issued about carbon monoxide poisoning on boats following a single, tragic fatality.

IWA has asked the Environment Minister how he proposes to consult on wildlife matters when there is no provision in the Countryside and Rights of Way Bill. This sort of watchdog role is bread and butter to IWA.

English Nature is trying to become (canal) user friendly! And "will work in partnership with others to reduce adverse

---

...cont'd from page 41

## GENERAL

To get the volunteers "off the ground" Council voted a budget of £10,000 for the provision of mooring bollards and rings, canal side benches and bridge number plates.

All HCS members will be advised of the recruitment drive but, obviously, the main effort will be concentrated in the Colne and Tame Valley areas.

All in all a useful amount of progress since the last report. Lots of 'i dotting' and 't crossing' and more to come. The main thing is to get those volunteers in. If you have any skills that you think might be useful to the Society and you have some time to spare, especially on weekdays, let the office know - get on the list - 0161 339 1332. Those of you who expressed certain interests at the time of joining the Society or on renewal, will be contacted in due course.

**Ken Wright**

impacts of adjacent land management and development, in particular pollution, nutrient enrichment and depletion of water resources."

IWA is asking for nominations for its annual awards. By the time you read this we will know how Pennine Link fared in this year's Tom Rolt Awards!

The National Waterways Museum at Gloucester Docks has reopened, following a £1.5 million refurb. Paid for by Heritage Lottery grant money.

IWA is concerned that, contrary to its express aims at opening all waterways for public enjoyment and use, on a number of waterways the authorities are applying restrictions to boating and other uses - usually for nature conservation or other 'management' reasons. IWA has adopted new policies to counter such actions, based mainly on prior consultation and agreement.

Waterways, the IWA magazine, is to be quarterly instead of 4 monthly.

One full page of update on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal is full of conjecture - their correspondent only had to ask! Still, they do point to member Martin Clark's [www.penninewaterways.co.uk/latest](http://www.penninewaterways.co.uk/latest) as the way to keep really up to date!

The Environment Agency is reviewing bye laws for eels. Apparently the nets (eel-fishers', that is) are causing damage to boats without much hope of recovering costs. Slippery creatures! Thought you would like to know.

The Deputy Prime Minister, no less, launched the "Waterways for Tomorrow" initiative, which is the first Government policy paper for over 30 years and is the

first to acknowledge the achievements and potential of waterway restoration. It will help to persuade local authorities and regional planners to take "greater notice of inland waterways than previous". A very interesting and informative document which can be obtained, in full, from DETR, Tel 0870 1226 236 or downloaded from their web site [www.detr.gov.uk](http://www.detr.gov.uk)

IWA has made two donations towards studies on "Impact of User Distribution on the wildlife of Waterways" and "The incidence and impact of summer flooding of the Ouse Washes". Fascinating stuff.

And another whopping contribution of £20,000 to the Wey and Arun Canal Trust for their Drungewick Bridge Project. The largest grant ever, from IWA Larger Grants Fund. Total cost of project is £250,000.

And, finally, we got a lovely leaflet for this year's National Waterway Festival at Waltham Abbey. A whole host of attractions, including motorcycle stunts, cavalry horses, steam engines, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, falconry, quad bikes .... it goes on and on. The food bit interested me - Thai, German, wild boar (?), Indian, Mexican, crepes, baguettes, spit roast and vegetarian! Over 2000 exhibits, 300 boats and other floating exhibits.

I'll bet it was a real good do. It ended on August 28<sup>th</sup>!

**Ken Wright**



# Harwood's Suez

*John Harwood continues his series of journeys round the world's canals.*

## THE SUEZ CANAL

We've all heard of Ferdinand de Lesseps haven't we? The famous French engineer who built the Suez Canal and played a big part in the building of the Panama Canal. Researching the history of the Suez area produces a few surprises - this project actually started during the reign of the Pharaohs!

The names of Tuthmosis III, Necho, Seti 1 and Ramses II all crop up along with dates varying between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BC (yes BC) for attempts at shortening the sea route between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. During the Persian invasion of Egypt King Darius I ordered the completion of the Red Sea canal, which linked the Red Sea to the Great Bitter Lake and thence, a connection to one of the branches of the Nile delta. The canal was still in use during Ptolemy's period but fell into disuse thereafter. The Roman Emperor Trajan ordered repairs but by the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD it had fallen out of use.

Now we can begin the history we are all more familiar with. Developments in world trade and mapping brought about a realisation that the route between Europe and the Far East could be a lot shorter than round Africa. Enter Napoleon who had studies made, which concluded that there was a ten-metre difference in sea level between the Med and the Red Sea. It was rapidly decided that whichever way this might cause water to run would not be a good idea (imagine if Napoleon had been responsible for the Mediterranean

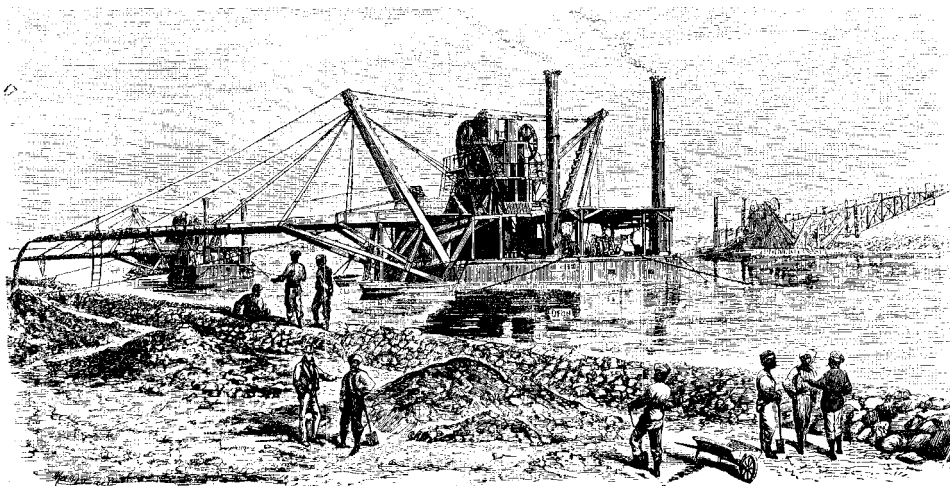
being ten metres higher!) (*Or emptying it! Ed.*) By the time de Lesseps appears on the scene this ten-metre difference had become a surveying error, which made life a lot easier!

On the 25<sup>th</sup> April 1859 excavation began on what we recognise today. By today's standards it was built by 'slave labour'. Ten years later, at a cost of \$100million, the canal was open and de Lesseps reputation was made. How many of us devotees of classical music know that Verdi's opera 'Aida' was actually commissioned for the opening ceremony but unfortunately not finished in time (actually premiered a year later).

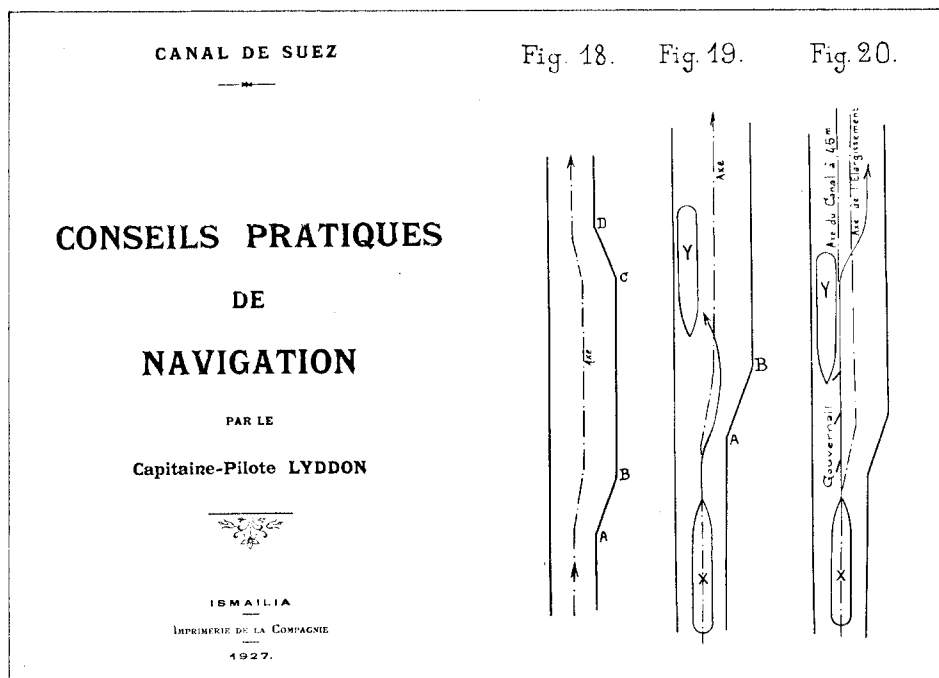
The more recent history of the Suez Canal involves more politics than canal history and can be left for study by those with other interests however its statistics make interesting reading. It is 121 miles long with a minimum bottom width of 197 feet. Thus ships of up to 150,000 tons fully laden and with a draught of up to 53 feet can make a passage. Although good lengths are for single passage only there are many opportunities for passing, thus up to 100 ships a day make the passage, saving a tremendous mileage compared to rounding Africa. Use of a toll calculator available on the Internet reveals that to transit in a 15 ton narrowboat would cost 108.15. Unfortunately we are not told in what currency, to take with us on the trip!

**John Harwood**





Dredges and elevators at work during the last stages of making the Suez Canal. Most of the canal was cut by such machines, used as soon as enough water could be introduced along the line, though portions, as at the Chalouf rock cutting near Suez, had to be entirely hand cut.



The work of a Suez Canal Company's pilot. In 1927 Capitaine - Pilote Lyddon wrote a handbook to pilotage, which was printed at the company's works at Ismailia. Its careful instructions and drawings included advice (right) upon how to use the channel's passing places. Later the company initiated the convoy system, by which a line of ships transited the canal one way, to be succeeded by another going the other, thus making passing places unnecessary. Finally, canal widening made passing practicable along most of its length.

# Photo Competition 2000

## ANOTHER PAIR OF BINOCULARS TO BE WON!

**With so much happening on our canal at the moment you should all be out there with your cameras! What an opportunity to see restoration in action and have a crack at winning a pair of binoculars, or a cash prize or a beautifully illuminated certificate!**

Following the success of last year's competition, we are again waiving the place and time rules of previous years! Any inland waterway shot, worldwide, from the invention of the camera to the present day will qualify - the only other criteria being that the photographer must be (or be directly related to) a bona fide member of HCS.

*And there's ANOTHER PAIR OF BINOCULARS!*

Yes, member Anthony Carter who runs ARCADE PHOTO SERVICES, IMPERIAL ARCADE, NEW STREET, HUDDERSFIELD has again generously offered a pair of binoculars as a tempting prize for the overall winner of our competition. And there will be other cash prizes again, their size being solely dependent upon the number of entries! Last year's prizes were boosted by part of the money award Pennine Link got from the Inland Waterways Association. We're trying to win that one again, naturally!

## **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 - Senior
- b) Huddersfield Narrow - 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 P.O. or cheque (payable to HCS) totalling 50p for each print submitted.

**6. CLOSING DATE - 17th November 2000. Don't miss it!**

## **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. There will also be certificates for "highly commended" and "commended" categories.

The overall winner will receive the Pennine Link Challenge Shield for one year, a replica to keep, a pair of binoculars 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!**

# What the Papers Say

*Another mixed bag. The local papers have gone a bit quiet, especially on the east side where my correspondent has gone walkabout - on his boat! So I have culled a few snippets from here and there as printed in the national broadsheets. Makes a change!*

## **Oldham Chron - May 22**

Large article and photo (similar to the one on the back of the last Plink) about the opening of Wool Road.

## **Oldham Chron - May 22**

Nice story about maintaining the stone-work on Capesthorpe Hall, near Macclesfield. "So what?", you ask. Well, the photo shows our own ex-HCS(R) mason Andy Sharp working on the 200 year old balustrade.

## **Oldham Chron - June 1**

Report on cancellation of Stalybridge boat rally in May 2001. Probably now in 2002 so as not to compete with grand official opening or Tameside Canal Festival.

## **Oldham Chron - June 13**

Article and editorial on the green light for the redevelopment of the Co-op site in Failsworth - one of the major obstacles on the Rochdale Canal.

## **Oldham Chron - June 14**

Warning motorists to stay away from Uppermill on Whit Friday (June 15) and Saturday June 16<sup>th</sup> because a combination of Whit Walks, Beer Walks and traffic lights would cause chaos. They didn't!

## **Oldham Chron - June 27**

Trumpet blowing article about "Waterways for Tomorrow" the new BW charter

and how the Rochdale Canal will help create 9000 permanent jobs, 4700 temporary jobs and 445 new homes. I always wonder who is going to count them!

## **Oldham Chron - July 1**

Notice of "Cotton and Canals" a free, guided 3-mile walk in Mossley taking in the historic relationship between local canals and mills.

## **Oldham Chron - July 5**

Report and photo of vandalism on re-stored locks on the Rochdale Canal. White paint everywhere, a real mess.

*And, as we spread the net a bit wider! All in July.*

Kennet and Avon Canal is shortlisted for British Construction Industry Award (*New Civil Engineer*).

Canals are to be used to move drinking water to the parched south-east from the saturated north-west with the canals acting as reservoirs in direct competition with water companies (*The Guardian*).

5000 miles of the Sustrans National Cycle Network is now complete. (*THE BEANO!*)

A third set of locks on the Panama Canal, to take today's largest ships, is bound to go ahead at a cost of £2 - 3 billion. "The canal either expands or dies" says canal chief. (*Financial Times*).

The UK's first "drop lock" will open on Scotland's Millennium canal scheme next year. This drops a boat under a major road and brings it up again at the other side. 2000 cubic metres of water to be pumped out each time. (*New Civil Engineer*)

Thousands watch the reopening of Scotland's Union Canal at Boxburn - a bit different from Wool Road! A new picture of the proposed boat lift (The Falkirk Wheel - opposite), already designated one of the "wonders of the modern world". Hope it is more successful than the Dome! (*New Civil Engineer*)

BW is planning to build Britain's first canal for more than 100 years from Bedford to Milton Keynes and is prepared to spend more than £70m to open up East Anglia to more freight and boating. (*Financial Times*)

Back to Reality!

### Oldham Chron - July 20

Full page of colour photographs of Tameside Canal Festival concentrating on the fancy-dress parade of boats.

### Oldham Chron - July 23

£180 billion boost for transport could mean the odd bob or two to restore the railway station at Diggle. Looking increasingly hopeful.

### Oldham Chron - July 25

"Canal work causing few problems".



Council members at Saddleworth praised all the efforts at Wade Lock and agreed to write to "the canal restorers" to congratulate them on their work. PLEASE - don't leave the contractors out this time!

"Villagers in Saddleworth expect the restored canal to have a considerable effect on the local economy. A tourism boost is expected, and new shops and supply points for canal traffic are expected to spring up beside the canal bank".

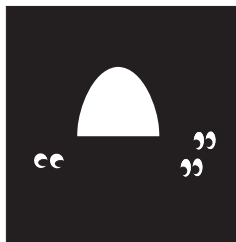
A good note to end on - and the end of the cuttings for this Pennine Link. I, too, am too far away to read the papers!

**Ken Wright**

In Standedge Tunnel ...



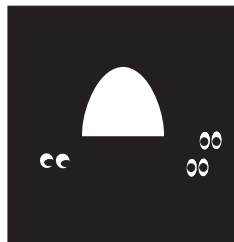
Go on, Grandad, tell us  
about the old days ...



Eee, well now ...



I can remember ...



when all this wer' solid rock!  
Lived int' cracks then, Millstone  
Grit as far as th'eye could  
see, dreamt of living int'  
crevice; nowadays, airy  
tunnel, rock bolts, sprayed  
concrete, visitor centre, ee tha  
don't know how lucky th'are.

# Anderton Boat Lift Appeal

*Copies of the Appeals flyer "Start Her Up" were included with the last issue of Pennine Link and I am following that up with another appeal, from the Society, for help with this incredibly worthwhile venture. I can do no better than quote parts of an open letter from Martin Bell MP, President of the Appeal. Ed.*

"Something extraordinary is happening down on the canal at Anderton. Girder by massive girder, Britain's only Boat Lift is finally being restored.

It's a unique project and today I urge you to come aboard. For a small monthly contribution to the Anderton Boat Lift Appeal, you can help revive this wonder of the waterways.

The Anderton Boat Lift is the canals' Eiffel Tower. It's a magnificent symbol of the industrial age, precious to the whole nation. In fact, when Edwin Clarke built the first Boat Lift 125 years ago, its awesome design inspired engineers throughout the world.

This world-class heritage feature has stood idle for too long. It is 17 years since a boat was last lowered from the Trent and Mersey Canal to the River Weaver.

A partnership of waterways organisations and businesses has raised much of the funding for this unique project in living history. Now, with a final £250,000 needed to ensure the success of the Appeal, we are turning to individual waterways lovers.

· If you can contribute £240 or more (£5 a month over four years) you will receive the valuable benefits of becoming a Sponsor of the Appeal, including an exclusive commemorative plaque *(and a newsletter and a chance to ride in the lift.Ed)*

· And if your society, company or club could offer its collective support, please telephone to join our charity's Patrons.

These tax-efficient methods of supporting the Appeal are described in the leaflet which you should already have seen. Additional copies are available from Amy Illidge on 01606 77415.

***Join up now on 01923 201383.***

With thanks,

(signed)

Martin Bell MP



1908



1983



2001

# The Sustrans National Cycle Network - and canals

The National Cycle Network has been in the news in many and varied ways recently.

First, there's the official pamphlet from Sustrans (it stands for Sustainable Transport) asking for donations to complete the matching funding required to "unlock" all the £43 million pledged by the Millennium Commission.

Reading the leaflet we find that "over one-third of the Network will be entirely traffic-free, built along old railway lines, **Canal Towpaths** (*my bold, Ed.*), riversides and derelict land. These high quality routes will be open to cyclists and pedestrians and in the majority of cases will be ideal for push-chairs and wheel-chairs too."

Hardly "traffic-free" in my estimation! The overall feeling is that "traffic" other than cyclists is allowed to share their space. Canal towpath walkers know only too well what they have to contend with - and does the fact that other wheeled items such as push-chairs and wheel-chairs will be allowed mean that tarmac surfacing and street-lighting will be next?

Remember the quotation from Tom Rolt's "Narrow Boat" - "To step down from some busy thoroughfare onto the quiet towpath of a canal ... is to step backward a hundred years or more and to see things in a different, and perhaps more balanced perspective."

Elsewhere the Sustrans leaflet, under the heading "Who benefits from the National Cycle Network?" lists "Routes to Progress". One of these routes is "HERITAGE - Countless historic landmarks like canals, bridges, viaducts and old railways are being given a new lease of life". I can't see Sustrans actually restoring many canals just to create cycle routes. Rather, they adopt a parasitic approach and jump on the back of newly repaired towpaths.

British Waterways have been quiet on this topic recently - in my hearing, anyway.

They have said in the past that they would not consider a towpath as a cycle way unless it was over 2.5 metres wide. You may remember "The Wife's Tale" talking about the new cycle way on the Mon and Brec near Brecon. That is so wide that pedestrians on it feel as though they are intruding onto a vehicle carriageway!

Recently, in New Civil Engineer, there was a sort of debate between two knowledgeable folk - the former City Engineer of London and a senior engineer with the Traffic Director for London. They had very contrary views on the question "Do plans to give cyclists more road space run counter to Government plans to reduce road accidents by 40%?" The City Engineer said "YES" to this and "within the cycling community there is almost total disregard of the Highway Code and a general lack of discipline. This is part of a wider problem and I do not believe the wholesale provision of dedicated cycle facilities would improve the situation". He went on to say, "The cycling community does not contribute to the upkeep of the road network in the same way as motorists, and yet they demand that a larger slice of the corporate cake be spent on cycling measures".

The counter argument quoted all the benefits from cycling, no air or noise pollution, health giving, fuel-free, use by children, occupying little space. "A shift to cycling from a non-sustainable mode of transport should be given much encouragement." A provision of "whole routes" would help to encourage more cyclists and to make cycling safer, the design of the whole road network must become more cycle friendly.

We must accept that there are good arguments on both sides. Our special concerns are about cyclists on inadequate towpaths.

Council member Keith Noble has been a leader in the cycle discussion for a long time and recently wrote the following plea to New Civil Engineer which is, of course, read by all



# Ashton (Tameside) Canals Festival - 2000

Once again the Tameside committee did the weather wizardry right. The warmest weekend in July, with no rain and blue skies, looked down benevolently on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Festival. Boaters were down in numbers this year, even with the Millennium Commission's sponsorship paying for all the boat entries and giving effective free entrance to all the participating boaters. A rush at the death brought in a total of 50 boats, up on last year but well below the record of 100 a few years ago. The other special events for this millennium year and increased vandalism in the area were two reasons advanced for this drop. We had no problems at all this year with vandalism and the only *slightly* inebriates were all part of the festival. I think it is very noticeable that everyone seems to be getting older! (Not the ladies on the committee I hasten to add, they must all have this portrait in the attic!)

The opening concert on Friday night featured local group 'The Five Penny Piece' and although the marquee was crammed full, there was a loss on the night as 'name' bands are expensive. However it got the festival off to a rousing start and set the tone for the weekend. John Squirrel worked wonders with the Festival of Dance and had thick crowds round the dance area all day Saturday and Sunday - and it wasn't just for the belly dancer! The gymnastics of the Ukrainian Dancers were well worth the price of admission and some highly choreographed footwork by a team of clog dancers was well appreciated. John's own team, the Mossley Morris men, performed with their usual imperturbable perfection.

The official opening on Saturday had one slight hiccup. The two young girls who were to make the presentations to the mayor went with the Police launch at the start of the Civic Cruise, but instead of landing they persuaded the bobbies to take them on an extended trip! The presentation was made by Ann Minor, who was the only committee lady in traditional costume. Afterwards in the refreshment tent we were treated to the sight of the Mayor showing how to pull pints - and a super job he made of it!

The twin town of Armentières sent their youth accordion band which teamed up with the locals to have a 50/60 strong band playing on Saturday afternoon. Also during the day Ratty the clown with his magic and Punch and Judy, and Pete Zee with his amazing feats of balance, kept the crowds enthralled. Free boat trips sponsored by the Millennium Commission and run by HCS boat crew proved a day-long draw. Saturday finished with the bangs and flashes from 'Walk the Plank', an extravaganza funded by Greater Manchester. Their cost per show throughout the districts will work out slightly more than the cost of the festival's entire weekend!

We were down on Traders this year and particularly in the Craft Tent. As everyone reported record business last year I can only assume that the awkwardness of getting on and off the site was too much for them. We are tentatively looking at the possibilities of another site within Tameside, but nowhere else has quite the same feel about it.



As a long-standing committee member can I congratulate Madam Chairman Shirley Rowbottom for keeping us in order all year and for the shortest speech on record at the opening!

We will have some new faces next year. The Ogborns, Alwyn and Simon, who have produced electricity practically out of thin air for years, and spent the best part of a week on site setting up and keeping the flow going, are retiring from the committee. So is Joan Harvey who must have done most jobs in her years on the committee. The rest of us wish them a happy retirement!

The weekend is hard work, but at the end of the day is the inner warmth of another successful show, and another five or six thousand people sent away with smiles on their faces.

### Brian Minor Festivals Officer

**Top:** Festival President Malcolm Allcard officially opens the 2000 Tameside Canals Festival with (left to right) Cllr. Ann Denham, Mayor of Kirklees, Shirley Rowbottom, TCF Chairman, Cllr. Brian Wild, Mayor of Tameside and Cllr. John Dillon, Mayor of Oldham, in attendance.

**Middle:** George Tewson, one of the younger 'members' of HCS, helps with litter collection - the only way we could get him to help was to let him drive the tractor.

**Bottom:** Winner of the 'Best Decorated Boat' competition, Alan Knott and Pam Romanski's 'Anonymous'.



B. Minor



B. Minor



B. Minor

# Two Routes in One

Member Ian France has been wandering about in the hills above Marsden, trying to find the best way for the boat horses of old. We are talking about "transshipment" before the tunnel was open not leading the horses over whilst boats were "legged" through.

I can't help mentioning my own theory about Wool Road. What we call the Transshipment Warehouse was, in fact, the wool shed for the mill. It is on the wrong side of the canal for transshipping from boats to horses and carts. The real transshipment warehouse was on the site of the existing car park, nearly as large as the one at Marsden and accessed by its own wharf which exists in part and was adapted to create the new slip-way. Ed.

For a number of months I've been back and forward over Standedge watching the progress of the restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal. Part of the time was to check on 'Boat Lane' for a walk which I was leading.

What nattered me about the current route was that it is far too 'bendy'. So I looked into the purpose of 'Boat Lane' and came to the conclusion that the current route actually combines two routes!

Looking at the map it can be seen that the first Transshipment Warehouses were at Wool Road, Uppermill and Warehouse Hill, Marsden. The most direct route from Marsden incorporates the second turnpike of 1777, up and round the back of Redbrook Reservoir. It then joins the familiar track down to Diggle, then to Wool Road. This is another mystery to solve later since a track wide enough for a

horse and cart would be required. This is my first route.

The second one is from Tunnel End Marsden to Diggle, where warehouses were built as the construction of the canal progressed. Buildings at the side of the dock on the original line at Diggle resemble warehouses.

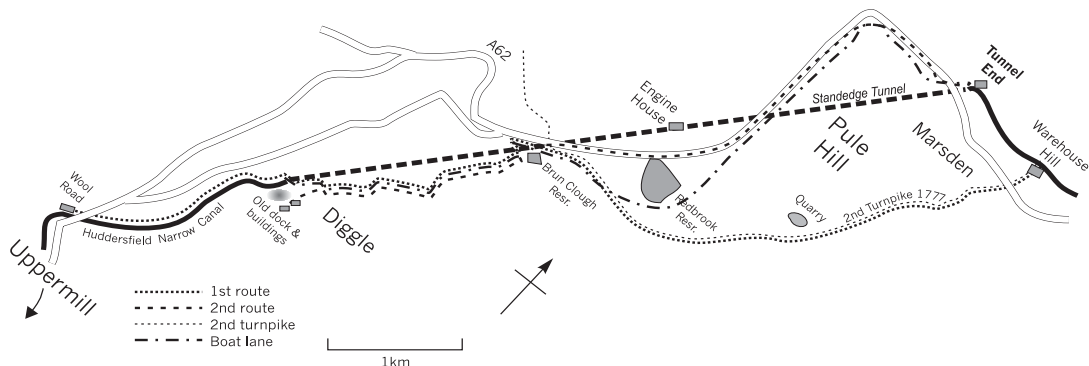
From Tunnel End my route goes up onto the A62 (third turnpike) via Ainsley Lane. The current Boat Lane then follows a track round the back of Owl's Farm to Flint Pit, then on to Old Mount Road (second turnpike). I personally feel that this is not wide enough for horses and it has been suggested that it was for Pule Hill Quarry workers from Marsden. I hope the map makes it all clear!

I plump for a direct route, after all time is money! This follows the third turnpike up towards Flint, then between Redbrook and the Engine House and finally Brun Clough, all of which were under construction at the same time, so there must have been access between them. Then it was down into Diggle on the familiar route for a well earned bag of corn and water for the horses. (Not to mention a pint at the Diggle O! Ed.)

Members of Dewsbury Boat Club walked from Uppermill to Marsden and had to stop off at the Great Western Hotel on Standedge!!

**Ian France**

*I have taken the liberty of changing Ian's spelling of trans-shipment to the Society's acceptable alternative - at least in my dictionary - of transshipment! Ed.*



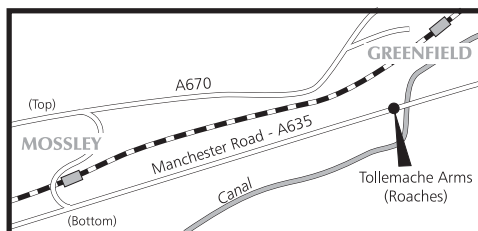
# The Back Page

## THE SOCIETY WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS:

2572	Mr Murray,	[REDACTED]
2573	Mr Stowell,	[REDACTED]
2574	Mr Blewitt,	[REDACTED]
2575	Mr & Mrs Sykes,	[REDACTED]
2576	Mr Brothers,	[REDACTED]
2577	Mr Brooksbank,	[REDACTED]
2578	Miss Singer,	[REDACTED]
2579	Mr Thomas,	[REDACTED]
2580	Mr Pryor,	[REDACTED]
2581	Mr & Mrs Aibey,	[REDACTED]
2582	Mr & Mrs Fletcher,	[REDACTED]
2583	Mrs Ritchie,	[REDACTED]
2584	Mr Conquer,	[REDACTED]
2585	Mr Burrell,	[REDACTED]

## WEST SIDE SOCIAL MEETINGS:

As usual, the venue is the Tollemache Arms, Manchester Road, Mossley (Roaches) on the second Wednesday of the month commencing at 8.00pm. Forthcoming meetings are: 11th October, 8th November, 13th December.



## PENNINE LINK ARCHIVE:

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Articles, letters and comments for Issue 135 of Pennine Link should reach the Editor at Bridge House, Dobcross, Oldham, OL3 5NL by 3rd November

### ADVERTISING RATES

	Per Issue	Per Year
Quarter	£9.38	£37.50
Half	£18.50	£75.00
Full	£37.50	£150.00

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