

Pennine Link

Members Quarterly Journal - Issue 141 - Summer 2002



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Pennine *Link*

Summer 2002 Issue 141

Wooden Canal Boat Society at the Pennine Link Festival, June 2002



Brian Minor

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Society members, Andrew and Denise Beck, and family (including guinea pig), cruise the Cheshire Ring anti-clockwise.

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Front Cover: The Canal Society's 'Water Taxi' at Lock 31E transporting a special pair of clogs to Mossley; see page 10 for the full story. Photo: M. Clark



Editorial

Nice to have two articles in this issue by members of the boat crew team. Just proves that they are capable of more boating than the hundred yards

up and down they spend their weekends over! Being experienced boaters, it is interesting to read their thoughts on two well-used waterways, particularly the comments on the Huddersfield and its problems. I have spoken to both Tom Rowe and Michael Marshall from BW recently about the complaints we are getting and have offered them a page in this publication to put the BW view, but have not had a response though both of them thought it would be a good idea. Hopefully this will materialize for the next issue and we can have the official view of what is happening on our waterway.

Reading the Calder navigation magazine this month, it appears that their editor shares my view of the sculptures on the Huddersfield Canal. I suppose as long as they are firmly rooted so that the vandals cannot throw them into the waterway I can live with them, but I do feel that not enough thought went into placing something that has a relevance to the canal, its working life or its restoration.

A couple of letters since the last issue on the subject of volunteers. An advert on page 42 hopefully will bring them up to date on the current position. I know that BW are looking for volunteers to help on the locks and at Tunnel End in the week or two prior to the National Rally in Huddersfield at the end of August. Frank Smith at the office will be able to give more details. Incidentally, I am a long term

volunteer with Commonwealth Games this summer. They have a system of volunteer recognition, which might be adaptable to the canal, the Council is considering the schemes the Games are using and how relevant they are to us.

What a delight it was at the Stalybridge festival to see such a host of past council members, it was a meeting purely of kindred spirits, there were no 'celebrity guests', no politicians and no one the Society wanted to impress! The talk went on and on "Do you remember when" and "What happened to old" A couple of good short speeches from Alwyn Ogborn and Bob Dewey and back to the reminiscing again. Must have something to do with restoring canals how well everyone looked!

I helped bring one of Sue Day's boats down the canal for the Festival. First time I have had anything to do with a horse drawn boat and I was astounded at how difficult it has become. We had to remove one barrier completely to let the horse through and at a bridge, repairs had necessitated a ramp built round the bridge support. This was incredibly difficult to work the horse round, a horse doesn't bend in the middle and had to be coaxed, moving backward and forward round a couple of bends on a steep slope, resulting in a very unhappy horse! The actions of towpath walkers amazed me. There is a half ton of horse walking towards them on its legitimate way and they stand in the middle of the towpath inviting their infants to 'look at the lovely gee gee' not realising that said infant is in imminent danger of equinicide! (*Editorial word meaning trampled to death by large horse!*)

Brian Minor



Chairman's Annual Report

Attached is the Report of the Council of Management for our year end 31st December 2001.

I wish to remind all members of the National Waterways Festival on the August Bank Holiday weekend at Huddersfield. A leaflet is enclosed. This event will see the largest ever gathering of boats on the Huddersfield Canals.

The festival will be opened by Prunella Scales on Friday 23rd and Prunella, with her husband Timothy West, will be on site Saturday.

Once again Kirklees Council has been extremely cooperative and shown great enthusiasm for this Festival. Kirklees were the first council on the Canal to sponsor major restoration and I am pleased that Councillor George Speight of Kirklees Council, who has been with the scheme since the '80s, will accompany me as a special guest.

I hope to see you at the Festival.

Report of the Council of Management for the year ended 31 December 2001

The year 2001 saw the culmination of our dream when, at a number of events from 9 April until 3 September, we celebrated the opening of the Canal to through navigation. The many celebratory events have been fully described in our award winning magazine Pennine Link and I do not need to detail them again. However, every 'opening' had its own character, charm and sometimes excitement.

I suppose 1st May was *the* day. It was twenty seven years after John Maynard, Bob Dewey *et al* formed the Society in Huddersfield in April 1974.

Not only can one read about the events and some of the trials and tribulations experienced along the way in our magazine, but one can see the story unfold before our very eyes in the two videos 'Impossible Restoration' and 'Impossible Dream'. The latter was published in 2001, sponsored by the Canal Company and part funded by the Millennium Commission and a short version was shown on BBC TV on 18 May. *cont'd ...*



Anthony Carter (right) of Arcade Photo Services, Huddersfield, presents the Challenge Shield and binoculars to John Lower, overall winner of the 2001 Photographic Competition at Turnbridge, Huddersfield.

OBITUARY

We are saddened to report the death of Douglas Barlow of Rothwell, who died at the age of 75 in April this year. He had been a Society member since 1977 and given the Society unfailing 'armchair' support. The Society is grateful to his cousin, Barbara Paley, for passing on many of his canal-related documents for the Society archives.

The complete video includes the Royal Opening by H.R.H. The Prince of Wales on the 3 September. It concentrates on the latter years of restoration under the Canal Company. The cognoscenti armed with the earlier video will have the full picture. I urge all members to purchase both videos as a record and as an example of how major environmental public works can be undertaken.

Our magazine won another Tom Rolt award in 2001, a fitting tribute to Ken Wright's last year as Editor. At this point, I wish to thank all members who helped organise the celebrations and who often are the unsung heroes of our movement.

Our Society alone promoted the idea of restoration. We led by example against all the odds and were there at the end to share in the success with all our partners and friends. It personally gave me a buzz to persuade and work with Local Authority, British Waterways, officers and members to recreate the canal. Now it is largely down to British Waterways, financially supported by the three local authorities and the Society, to maintain and operate our waterway.

In 2001 we took the decision to replace the Standedge Pioneer at Marsden and in 2003 a new system of working will give more flexibility to boat operations whilst the Pioneer will carry larger parties on the lower Huddersfield, Ashton and lower Peak Forest canals.

Boating on the HNC in 2001 was a challenge. Members know that many lock gates are in need of replacement, more dredging is required and teething troubles are being overcome. In 2001, 450 boats passed through Standedge Tunnel and nearly 700 boats visited the Canal.

Over 40,000 visitors passed through the visitor centre. British Waterways expect to exceed the above numbers in 2002. Already 175 boats are booked to attend the National Waterways Festival this year and we expect to see over 250 boats on the 'Broad Canal' over the August Bank Holiday weekend.

Water supplies will always be of concern to British Waterways. Last year the annual allowance from Yorkshire Water was fifty per cent used by June 2001. This year with good management, extra maintenance and normal rainfall, it bodes well for the expected levels of traffic.

Some boats, including Mikron's 'Tyseley', tried the through passage and failed through gauging problems. Some locks were reconstructed and remained at 6' 10". It is possible that as locks are repaired, 7' boats may be able to navigate the canal. However, the tunnel width will determine the maximum size of craft allowable. To have reconstructed the canal to allow 7' 2" wide narrow boats would have pushed up the total restoration costs above £50 million.

The future – we have an alliance with British Waterways. Frank Smith is the Volunteer Co-ordinator jointly funded with British Waterways. Frank's role is to lever in volunteer input to the waterway. The Society has pledged to provide additional visitor facilities on the Canal. We are to rationalise our subsidiary companies. We are looking to find a new canal side home for the Society and we will investigate the creation of a lasting and useful canal side structure as a testament to the Society, for the benefit of all canal visitors.

David Sumner
Chairman



Disconnected Jottings

What was once the province of lunatic enthusiasts is now the officially recognised mantra. Waterway restoration is good news. On 19 March

British Waterways celebrated a year of waterway openings. Four hundred and fifty guests at the Glazier's Hall in London were told of the nine schemes that will be the core of the next phase of waterway renewal by BW and the Waterways Trust.

There are major restoration schemes that, like the Huddersfield Narrow, had been taken forward by successful waterway restoration societies: the Cotswold Canals (the Thames and Severn Canal and the Stroudwater Navigation), the Droitwich Canals (the Droitwich and Droitwich Junction Canals), the Montgomery Canal, the northern reaches of the Lancaster Canal, and the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal.

There are two major new-build projects, the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway involving the construction of a new canal between the Grand Union Canal and the River Great Ouse, connecting the waterways of the Fens to the main canal system, and the Leeds and Liverpool Canal Extension which will create a new canal link from the Leeds and Liverpool Canal to the Pier Head area of the Mersey waterfront in Liverpool.

The Bow Back Rivers, a network of tributaries of the River Lee in the east end of London which fell into disuse with the decline of canalside industry, are to be restored, perhaps including a new canal

link. And, finally, the Foxton Inclined Plane, on the Leicester line of the Grand Union Canal, although its not clear yet how far this will go to re-creating a working plane.

There have been other significant events too - significant especially because of the large numbers of people attending.

Following their success in raising funding for canal-sized culverts under the new Birmingham Northern Relief Road (the M6 Toll), the Lichfield and Hatherton Canals Trust arranged a Canal Forum attended by over 400 people in Cannock. Speakers included actor David Suchet, who has done much to raise the profile of the Trust.

Local enthusiasm for restoration of the northern reaches of the Lancaster Canal was demonstrated by a public meeting in Kendal arranged by the Lancaster Canal Trust and the Inland Waterways Association that was so well attended that the event had to be divided into two sessions so all could hear the presentations.

Then a public meeting in Ironville held to launch the Friends of the Cromford Canal - the forerunner to a new society to campaign for the restoration of that canal between the Erewash Canal at Langley Mill and Cromford - was attended by over 200 people. The upper section of the Cromford Canal, which is within the recently declared Derwent Valley World Heritage Site, is separated from the rest of the canal by the collapsed Butterley Tunnel and demolished aqueducts over a major road and railway - but, after the Huddersfield Narrow and the Rochdale, such obstacles no longer seem insuperable. The 'Friends,' whose founders

include several well-known names within the waterways movement, already appear to have some support from the local authorities, which, as we know from our own experience, is crucial to success.

Also, as we found, crucial to success are independent consultants reports on the costs, benefits and environmental and ecological issues involved in restoration. There is more news nationally on this front too. W.S. Atkins plc (who you may remember carried out our first engineering study of the options for a route through Stalybridge) have been awarded a contract to undertake a feasibility study to determine the practicability and viability of restoring 35 miles of waterways in South Wales - the Neath Canal, the Tennant Canal and the Swansea Canal - by a consortium including British Waterways and the local authorities.

In the South East a study commissioned by the River Stour Partnership, which includes the Environment Agency (the navigation authority for the river) and the River Stour Trust, has looked at a variety of options for further restoration of navigation on the River that Constable painted beyond the three locks already restored by the Trust at Flatford, Dedham and Cornard. Full restoration for powered craft from Sudbury to Cattamole, where a new sea lock would be constructed, would cost about £12m and bring an extra 58,000 visitors to the area annually. The danger here (where I gather a significant element of local opinion thinks boaters lower the tone of the area) is that the ultimate choice might be to restore the waterway, but limit its use to unpowered craft or those powered only by electricity or steam.

Successful consultants' reports lead to applications for funding, and our friends in the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society are working with British Waterways and English Nature in the hope that they will be able to jointly bid for Heritage Lottery money, a course that British Waterways are also hoping to develop further with the Montgomery Canal Trust and the Cotswold Canals Trust.

That bugbear of waterway restoration the lowered or culverted road crossing blocking a waterway has also raised its head again, at Maerdy on the Montgomery Canal, where a proposed trunk road improvement would have required a complicated and very expensive dropped lock to lower boats under the proposed road. After many objections from the waterway movement, the Welsh Office have applied a bit of 'joined up thinking' and decided to follow the government advice that at last applies in England, that where there is a realistic prospect of restoration, new road proposals should allow for navigation of a disused or derelict waterway.

There is so much restoration work going on at the moment that British Waterways reckon that more miles of canal are being regenerated than were built in a similar period in the canal building mania of two hundred years ago. The Huddersfield Narrow is open again, as are the Forth and Clyde and the Union Canals, and the Anderton Boat Lift. The Falkirk Wheel, to link the Forth and Clyde to the Union Canal, and the Rochdale Canal should both be reopened this year - provided the vandals who have already disrupted work at the wheel do not strike again, and that British Waterways can do the impossible in completing work on the Rochdale in

time. Three locks on the Droitwich Junction Canal are due for re-opening on 31st May, and the Ribble Link, connecting the Lancaster Canal to the rest of the waterway system, albeit by a short estuary crossing suitable only for experienced boaters, is on target for opening this summer.

Yet there are still local authorities who seem to think that government advice on the regenerative benefits of waterway restoration does not apply to their derelict canal, and are unaware that the sort of restoration problems that they believe rule out restoration of their waterway have already been resolved elsewhere.

You might remember that I chaired an event last year to show representatives of organisations on the line of the Barnsley Canal what had been achieved on the Huddersfield Narrow. Since then there have been meetings towards setting up a consortium to consider the future of the canal, and its neighbour the Dearne and Dove, but progress is slow, and Barnsley, the key local authority, was not even represented at last year's meeting. After twenty years of campaigning, the Barnsley, Dearne and Dove Canals Trust are apparently little nearer to a political breakthrough with that Council than they ever were. The Trust is in danger of giving up the fight because its lack of success has hardly been conducive to keeping old members or attracting new ones.

With the ending of Millennium funding, progress might be slower in the future, but restoration will continue with our help. As a Society we do what we can to help our colleagues through our contacts in the Northern Canals Association and the IWA, and we can all do our bit as individuals to help others along. Of those

I have mentioned, the Lichfield and Hatherton Canals will benefit most from financial donations through their David Suchet Appeal (cheques payable to LHRCT - David Suchet Appeal, 29 Hall Lane, Hammerwich, Burntwood, Staffs, WS7 0JP), and the Cromford Canal by large numbers of members of the new Friends group (contact: Mrs Yvonne Shattower, Membership Secretary, 264 Bennett Street, Long Eaton, Nottingham, NG10 4JA).

If you want to help the Barnsley Canal, apart from joining the Trust (who hold members meetings at 8.00pm on the first Monday of every month at The Market Hotel, Wentworth Road, Elsecar, Barnsley, or can be contacted at 39 Hill Street, Elsecar, South Yorkshire S74 8EN), those members of HCS near to or along the line of the canal might consider ensuring that their ward Councillors know what they are missing out on by ignoring the opportunities of the canal - the jobs and economic and environmental regeneration that restoration would bring. It is almost unbelievable that so little progress is being made on that canal in an area where grants from European and government sources are so readily available, compared to the progress elsewhere.

Keith Gibson

***It is not because things
are difficult that we
do not dare ...***

***It is because we do not dare
that they are difficult.***

Seneca the Younger

Big Boots for a Big Fella - Part 2

**1 Down, 3 Up, 14 Across
or**

**Two Shoes L'eau Trek or
Big Shoes, Small Bore or
Walking Waite's
Waterway**

So you read Brian Minor's article "Big Boots for a Big Feller" in the Spring 2002 Plink? Well here's the report from your "towpath teller" Dick Amende.

SATURDAY

I joined the enterprise at its start, Saturday 23rd

March, 11ish, Hebden Bridge, along with members Bob Maycock, Martin Clark, Ed Mortimer, Sue Day plus experienced boat-dog Jet, Richard Darlington of Emmaus and helper Nigel Dix, walking alongside horseboat "Sarah Siddons" to Walkleys where Terry's Size Fourteens, ensconced in their perspex showcase, came aboard, only to be transhipped at the next Rochdale lock to C.N.S.'s launch-style narrowboat "Savile".



Emmaus, Mossley's founder, Richard Darlington (centre) with the clogs and crew of Calder Valley Cruising.

Day's end saw the clog party descending the Tuel Lane monster lock (using the full 74ft x 14ft x 24ft chamber that's an awful lot of water, when a 58ft alternative exists....) to Sowerby Bridge basin, and a warm in the pub to the clatter of Noroc Clog Dancers ... appropriate, really!

SUNDAY

Sunday saw a 9am chugaway to the superb Salterhebble flight, where the (derelict) Halifax Branch of the Calder & Hebble splits off 12 locks in barely a mile, backpump fed, wow! Down through one of the two wide Pennine guillotine bottom-gated locks where a double-decker toad clung to the wall as the lock drained (the other such lock is on the Rochdale in Todmorden). Plentiful crew ensured smooth progress through



Clog hand-over: Calder Valley Cruising horsedrawn boat to the Calder Navigation Society's motor vessel 'Savile' with Noroc Clog in attendance.

Elland (changeling bridge missing) to Brighthouse where my brother David joined us and lunch was taken in a vast converted chapel named the Richard Oastler.

Here we dropped into the River Calder, great for boaters, but the horse bridges are missing, depriving lockwheelers, horseboaters, walkers, cyclists and anglers of use of the through path, some of it tipped-on and tree-blocked, now THERE's a campaign to be fought!

Just past the giant M62 viaduct, Kirklees lock cut boasts three locks, the protective flood lock, one 80-ish footer and a standard 58 footer. Curious. Back in the river, we swept past yet another missing horsebridge where the C&H mainline bears left into Cooper Bridge lock-cut, "Savile" bearing right to gingerly enter the Huddersfield Broad's first lock hard by the weir; uphill from now on, at least for a while

New territory for me, it was good to see fully-laden wide mudboats of Land and Water preparing for the IWA National, though it being Sunday they were moored up. At the ninth (and top) lock, an oval mark witnessed a missing bridge plate. The Locomotive bridge heralded day's end and clogs placed on display in Sainsburys.

We thanked "Savile's" crew and drove to Sowerby Bridge to retrieve Martin Clark's car.

MONDAY

Monday, horribly early, saw me collecting Ed from Stalybridge, Mark Nield (and novice boat-dog Billy) from Oldham to arrive 0755 at Tunnel End, setting up "Marsden Shuttle" for an 0845 start on 42E, swooping down Marsden's ten (thanks, Ian of BW, sorry you dropped your phone in the drink), and with Nigel, Sue (and Jet) and Martin joining us later.

Advanced lockwheeling technique plus lunch on the move through Slaithwaite kept us rolling steadily, despite Mark being whisked away by car for a BW job interview. Thanks to Mr Nield Snr for finding superb sandwiches in Slawit. The guillotine gate is damned hard work, as are many of the bottom gate paddles.

Young Slawit resident Simon Woodward joined us, bolstering our (by now flagging) muscle power right down to Aspley Basin, reached at 1730. So there's your One (day) Down.

Note for BW; the Bates' Tunnel sign assumes we know it is by lock 3, but lock 3 is not identified, and why no passing-place just below (presumed) Lock 3?

Mark reappeared at Aspley, gamely staying aboard "Shuttle", savouring the hot shower, fluffy white towels, four-poster bed, gold-rimmed porcelain toilet and full English breakfast

In reality he had a very chilly night, Billy as hot water bottle, (and a Porta Potti), being Mark's only comforts.

TUESDAY

After Monday's assault course, I needed the morning off, though there was still telephoning aplenty required to coordinate crew and cars. With media coverage done in our absence, we slipped Terry's Toe 'Tectors out of Sainsburys



Richard Darlington of Emmaus accompanying the next stage on the Huddersfield Canal Society's 'Marsden Shuttle' crewed by Mark Nield, Dick Amende and Sue Day.

onto "Shuttle" and began the return voyage at 1400, getting badly stoned by kids of about twelve as we entered Sellers tunnel. We were desperately short of anti-vandal keys, and Ken Middleton's fortuitous appearance at Longroyd Bridge (with car) enabled Richard to resupply us from Aspley Marina and leapfrog his own car ahead to Milnsbridge.

Ken urged us to inform the Police of the stoning incident, this I duly did by mobile.

Lock 18E at Linthwaite proved unwilling to fill above two-thirds, a faulty towpath-side bottom gate paddle being diagnosed. Freephone Canals got us to Ian again, with a repair team expected on site c. 9am Wednesday. A full-crew debate concluded that the boat would be safest overnight actually hidden in the chamber, and "Shuttle" spent a trouble-free night hidden from towpath view (it was dark when we left), the faulty paddle ensuring the lock couldn't fill. Mark's phone got recharged and he enjoyed home comforts. (And he'd got the job!)

WEDNESDAY

0900 saw Mark, Billy and myself back at "Shuttle", assisting the BW lads who extracted the rotten remnants of what had been a paddle board, they then adapted a fresh one kept stored dry in a nearby field, Roy fitting it by feel, working from a ladder and up to his wader-tops in cold water. (We noted there were no tail stop-plank grooves at 18E, so a fabric dam or draining 17/18 would be needed to empty this lock). By early afternoon extra BW help was on hand to run water down to replenish pounds 18/19 and 19/20, Sue and Jet had arrived to help us, "Shuttle" ascending 18E about 2pm and creeping laboriously up to and through old lock 20E, (where Bob Reed paid a visit), making the "Moonraker" café boat by 4pm, mooring tight behind, ready for cakes, ices and hot drinks. Two "Shires" crept up, having to moor for the night above the guillotine lock, there being no rings or soft ground on the towpath side here. (towpath / roadway just re-tarmaced). Here Mark and Billy spent another chilly night afloat.

THURSDAY

With a fuller crew (Mark, Nigel, Martin, myself) we passed the Shires still breakfasting, having notified BW of our estimated 11am arrival at 32E, Marsden Bottom, for unpadlocking and assistance up the final ten. An easy run through glorious sunshine, with plenty of walker awareness of the clogs voyage (thanks, Huddersfield Examiner), saw us tying to the motorbike barrier at 10.50

Another call to BW told us their lads were assisting two private boats up the Linthwaite shallows, so we waited, the two Shires arrived, the level kept dropping, and finally the privates joined our convoy, the chain coming off 32E's bottom gates at 14.00. We were sent up with instructions to empty each lock behind us. Richard and Elizabeth Darlington visited by car and took banners and leaflets away to prime the Navigation pub, Brownhills Visitor Centre, and Saddleworth Museum, he still suffering with an ear infection, so trying to stay in the warm.

Barely scraping through one especially short and low pound (pity the chap moored there working inside his boat on a 30 degree list!), we met BW staff at Warehouse Hill with dire predictions of the summit pool being too low to receive any boats, but we kept plodding up, passing a pitiable inflow from the Yorkshire Water feeder sited hard by the top lock, 42E, tying about 4pm at Standedge Visitor Centre.

At a stroke we stepped from the 19th to the 21st century, with hi-tech divers (from York) fed air by umbilical cable attending to one of the electric tugs. A stone jammed between propeller and shroud was duly retrieved. Wondering aloud whether the adjacent boat lift couldn't have been used, it appeared the tugs are deeper and shorter than the passenger modules, the pound was low, the lift can't accommodate the tugs Was any experienced boatperson asked to advise on the lift's design?

TUESDAY

After the clogs had spent the Easter weekend on display in the Visitor Centre, where we were told they attracted much attention, Nigel

Dix and myself accompanied them through Standedge aboard "Pennine Pride", Fred Carter allowing me the microphone to tell our fellow passengers of the clogs' voyage. Nigel's dog Jasper was left with the Tunnel Superintendent, and travelled over with a BW vehicle. As John Lower says, that tunnel is an awesome experience! The same day, Mark Nield began work with BW, indeed he travelled through with us, crewing one of the south-west-bound convoy vessels!

Popping through the pinhole at Diggle, Fred passed the clogs to me on Ed's "Astra" (en route to Ashton for an engine transplant), from which they were ceremoniously transferred to Christine's "Saddleworth Rose", with civic dignitaries from Oldham, Mossley and Saddleworth welcoming us to their patch. After reconnecting "Astra's" alternator, Nigel and I caught up with the clogs' boat, sharing most of the Diggle flight (more new boating territory for my map!), Ed joining in with lock-wheeling down to the Navigation.

Here we parted company with the clogs, the three of us (and Jasper) taking "Astra" on to Grove Road, twenty-five locks.

SATURDAY 6th APRIL

Work, and operating our "Otter" dayboat having intervened, I missed seeing Sue and crew horseboating the clogs from Navigation to Brownhills, Brownhills to Saddleworth Museum. Early Saturday afternoon, however, I

met up with the splendid "Maria" in bright sunshine, Terry Waite, guests and clogs aboard, and period costumed crew, dog and horse working smoothly through Winterford lock (14W), and down to lock 13W, below which much brassbandery, clogmorrisdancery and excitement awaited the clogs' arrival, local press greatly in evidence, TV sadly not.

The clogs and Terry were paraded up through old mill yards into Emmaus's yard, where seemingly endless poses were struck for the Press lenses, and brave dancers and players stamped and oompahed in the bitter easterly wind, Terry finally getting to try his new shoes on (shades of Cinderella!). Terry thanked everyone involved in the clogs' epic voyage, and paid a visit to the Mossley Industrial Heritage Centre (MIHC) that shares Longlands Mill with Emmaus.

Terry then moved upstairs to the Emmaus shop, meeting and greeting and thanking once more. Finally a delicious buffet was served to voyage crew (some "Savile" people were over), with Emmaus Mossley trustees on hand. So a fitting end to a watery trek? Awareness of Emmaus has been increased, my Imrays map has highlighter on bits I never expected to boat, and Terry Waite has his clogs. Or has he?

As a footnote (hah!) spies tell me the leather was too stiff, so Walkleys are making Terry another pair using softer leather, and the glossy black and brassy clogs in their showcase

will remain in the MIHC for you to inspect. The thing being that YOU know how they got there!

If you'd like to help, Emmaus is on 01457 838608 / 835105, the Heritage Centre is 01457 832813.

Dick Amende



Terry tries out his new clogs with the Mossley Morris Men and the Rose and Clog ladies clog dancers.

All photos: M Clark

Pennine Link Festival, Stalybridge

The Stalybridge Canal Festival took place over the Jubilee Bank holiday and at the start of England's World Cup appearance.

This twin blow unfortunately helped to keep down the attendance to very small numbers. The additional problem caused by the marquee erectors refusing to put their tents on the Sandhills hard standing and moving them a further twenty feet higher on to the uncut grass and gorse of the intended caravan site exacerbated the problem.

Unless one actually entered the car park it was impossible to see the marquees from the road and many intending visitors must have driven past without realizing where it was all happening.

However for those of us who got there, the weekend was enjoyable, there were more wooden and horse drawn boats than at any other event on this side of the Pennines for many years, several good acts were booked to entertain including the wonderful Biggles Wartime Band and the excellent Stalybridge Brass Band with their lineage going back to 1809.

That stalwart of Society festivals, Ratty the Clown, was in attendance for the full three days and never gave less than 100%



entertainment value. Mikron put on some of the highlights from their new play Warehouse Hill which was appreciated by all the audience, even those who had no idea about canal restoration.

But the highlight of the weekend was the gathering of as many of the former members of the council of this Society as could be contacted for a formal thank you for all their efforts over the years leading

Boats from the 'Wooden Canal Boat Society' gathered at the Festival site.



B Minor

to restoration. It was indeed a pleasure to associate with all those illustrious names from the start of the Society, none of them looking any older or greyer than they were nearly 30 years ago when the first meetings were held. It was unfortunate that chairman David was unable to be present due to ill health, all the members and former members wish him well and a speedy return to full activity.

The Society had hired the day boat 'Otter' for the festival, providing trips along the canal for visitors - our volunteer boat crews were kept very busy for all three days, again showing what a draw a restored canal can be. And talking of draws, we ran a successful Jubilee Raffle and this is a good point to publish the winners:

1st Prize, Hire Boat for a day:
Mr I Spencer, Huddersfield

2nd Prize, Meal for two:
Angela (White Hart)

3rd Prize, Gallon of Real Ale:
Mr D Shipley, Stockport

Congratulations to the winners and a big thank you to all those who supported the raffle and indeed, those who attended this, the first Festival on the Huddersfield Narrow since re-opening.

Discussions are underway for a similar event next year, probably located on the Yorkshire side of the Canal, to

continue to promote the benefits of a restored waterway for all.

Brian Minor
Festival Committee

Overleaf: The 'Old & Bold' of the Huddersfield Canal Society gathered at the Pennine Link Festival.

The 'Old & Bold' at the Pennine Link Festival



B Minor



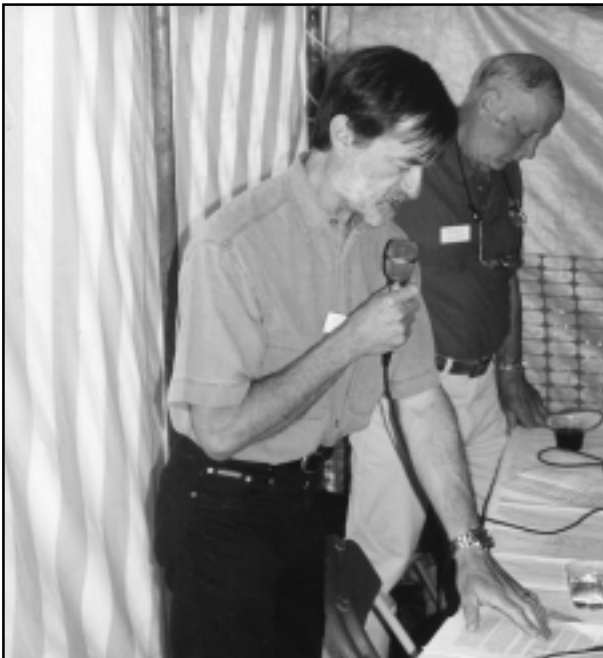
B Minor

Top Left: Back to the beginnings - Margaret Sinfield, John Maynard and Derek Walker in festive mood.

Bottom Left: Former Editors of Pennine Link, Alwyn Ogborn and Sue Chadwick, preparing to give their advice to the current incumbent.

Top Right: Bob Dewey checks his script of reminiscences while Alwyn looks pensive.

Bottom Right: The former Council Members queue for lunch (prepared by ex-Sales Officer, Fiona Tewson - behind table).



B Minor



B Minor

'Welcome to Marsden' Exhibition

Mike Harding 'unlocks' the 'Welcome to Marsden' exhibition.

Comedian, writer and broadcaster, Mike Harding, was in Marsden, on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, recently to officially unlock the 'Welcome to Marsden' exhibition at The National Trust, Marsden Moor Estate Office on the Old Goods Yard.

Property Manager, (and HCS Press Officer) David L Finnis, said "The exhibition traces the development of Marsden, from its early pre-history to the present day and has a particular focus on transport, including the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, and wildlife. In addition, there is information on what there is to see and do in the area. As part of the exhibition, we have also produced a special heritage trail which is designed to focus on many of the villages' historical aspects and we

hope this will entice visitors and residents alike into Marsden to explore this fascinating area further and also support local traders. It has to be a 'must' for those visiting the 'National' via the Huddersfield later in the summer."

He continues "We are very grateful for the financial support we have received from Yorkshire Forward, Npower, The National Trust Holme & Calder Assoc., Kirklees Economic Development Service & Leisure & Recreation Service, English Nature and the Cuckoo's Nest Charity Shop in Marsden. In addition, we have also received tremendous help and support regarding old photographs from Dorothy Lindley and historical information from local historians, Lesley Kipling and Geoff Brown."

Children from the recently started 'Norwich Union Guardianship' with Marsden Infants School were on hand to assist Mike Harding with the official opening.



Mike said "Whenever you walk on the hills, moors or valleys around here you walk on the bones of those who've been here before you, from Roman legions to itinerant packmen. If you listen carefully enough, you can hear the echoes of their voices still ringing in the wind."

HCS Press Officer, Dave Finnis (left) and comedian Mike Harding at the launch of the 'Welcome to Marsden' exhibition.

Volunteer Activities

WORKING PARTIES

Trevor Ellis, Society Vice-Chairman and Working Party Co-ordinator, has produced a provisional list of dates and activities he and his volunteer team(s) hope to tackle on the Huddersfield Narrow over the next few months.

Unfortunately, due to the publishing date of Pennine Link, the June dates could not be included, however, volunteers are being notified separately about these with more details as to where and when to meet and where each activity is taking place etc.

Sunday 21 July - Painting Locks

Sunday 4 August - Oil & Greasing Locks in preparation for the IWA National Rally.

Sunday 18 August - Oil & Greasing Locks in preparation for the IWA National Rally.

Similar work will continue into September & October, subject to the weather and the numbers of volunteers who attend. Following this maintenance work, the volunteers will begin a programme of installation of the newly designed bridge number plates.



BOAT CREWS – MORE WANTED

With the boating season well underway, plus the Jubilee Bank Holiday celebrations in Stalybridge, the Society boat crews have and are being kept very busy at both the Standedge Visitor Centre, Marsden and the Portland Basin Museum, Ashton-u-Lyne.

Several of our boat crew have successfully achieved their Boatmaster's Certificates and some gone on to gain employment with British Waterways at Tunnel End - we hope the training and experience gained on the Society trip boats helped them.

It is the increasing requests from community and private groups for boat trips on both sides of the Pennines, especially during the week and Bank Holidays, that is beginning to stretch our volunteer crews to the limit.

If you would like to volunteer your services, whether as Cabin Crew or with a view to improving your 'skippering' skills, or would just like further information, please contact the HCS office. Fully supervised training is given whatever the role you choose.



Hoots Mon! Scottish Canals an a' That

Anne & Ken Wright head for Scotland for a family wedding and find – CANALS!

We thought we were only going to a wedding. And, well, we did. Family affair in Edinburgh, tour 'bus round the city, lots of kilts, splendid service and reception and a jolly wee time was had by all. First hint of a canal weekend? Our step-brother's wife's sister's husband is Stewart Sim, British Waterways' Operations Director, once from the North but now at HQ in Watford.

And then home again? Well, no. We had taken the caravan with us and were ensconced for a few days at the beautiful Caravan Club site overlooking the Firth of Forth and half a mile from the Royal Yacht Britannia. What should we do with our time? The main event was obviously the Falkirk Wheel, then Edinburgh Castle, the Britannia and whatever else turned up.

On the Sunday we went to look at the Forth bridges but the mist meant we only saw the nearest half of them and that part of Scotland (Queensferry) was definitely shut! So we drifted on and found Linlithgow on our way to the Falkirk Wheel. We passed a wee sign saying "Canal Basin" (everything in Scotland is 'wee') and noted it without

realizing the significance. What a surprise Linlithgow was. The ancient capital of Scotland with the magnificent St. Michael's parish church (almost cathedral standards) and the wonderful Palace, where Mary, Queen of Scots was born. We had to have a good look at that on our reciprocal membership with English Heritage. As it happened the entrance that day was FREE! Very glad we stopped (best castle ever, according to Mrs. W's log).

Went on to Falkirk and got hopelessly lost when the A803 went round a roundabout then stopped dead at a "No Through Road" sign! We meandered round a few side roads and suddenly found a canal. Not the Union Canal that we were looking for but the Forth and Clyde Canal. And right at Lock 16, the top of the flight from Grangemouth and the foot of the original flight of eleven locks up to the Union Canal, which was way up above us on a hillside. Luckily we were also outside the Union Inn, an old canal pub with a brand new restaurant extension and a huge outdoor mural of "THE WHEEL". We enjoyed a good lunch there and then set off along the mile or so of towpath to the Wheel, seeing the regular trip boat on the way.



Union Inn, Firth & Clyde Canal

A & K Wright

Any photographs you have seen of the Wheel do not do it justice. It is truly awe-inspiring. As a civil engineer I could only boggle my mind at the sheer artistry and skill in the design and execution of this masterpiece. Unfortunately we were on the wrong side of the canal to get up close (the new swing bridge was not operating yet). We immediately promised to return for "the trip" as soon as possible.

Everybody locally was full of admiration and local pride and keenly awaiting the Queen's visit on May 24th. How sad that the day after we left Scotland the Wheel was vandalized to the tune of £200,000 and the earlier opening of the wheel for the May Bank Holiday put back by several weeks.

On our way back through Linlithgow we went to look for the "Canal Basin". And there it was perched, like a lot of the Union Canal, on the side of a hill. Busy with trip

boats, hire boats and a canal museum in stables which also act as home to the Linlithgow Union Canal Society. Two canal visits in one day. Not bad. But wait, he says!

Monday was fine and warm and we did Edinburgh in the morning. Having seen most of the sights from the tour 'bus on the Saturday we put off the Castle (it's not going anywhere) and decided to visit the Edinburgh Canal Centre at Ratho, on the



Linlithgow Canal Basin

A & K Wright



The Falkirk Wheel from the air

Jim Mackintosh Photography

Edinburgh Canal Centre, Ratho

A & K Wright



outskirts of the city, which we had found on our brand new OS map. Another great surprise. The 'canal centre' is, in fact, the centre of canal excellence surrounding Ronnie Rusack MBE, the Scottish canal king. Ronnie has been at the canalside Bridge Inn for 30 years and has built up a thriving boating business involving restaurant and trip boats.

His gong is for his restoration work and for starting the Seagull Trust, a charity providing free boating outings for disabled and disadvantaged people. The Trust is based next to the Bridge Inn, with its own boat sheds and dry dock, as well as being active in other parts of Scotland.

What a character is the (in)famous Ronnie! Once he saw my Huddersfield Narrow Canal sweatshirt we were away! Talking ten to the dozen



about matters of mutual interest in the restoration field. The pub is full of canal memorabilia and old photographs and, at the drop of a hat, Ronnie will put on the short video of the Falkirk Wheel turning during one of its trials. Ronnie described with gusto the proposed "wheel trip" on the amphibious vehicle. He also told of his concerns over proposed mooring and licence fees on the newly opened canal and how, under the new Scottish Executive, he was able to speak directly to the Minister of Transport about his misgivings. There is something to be said for devolution after all!

The menu at the Bridge Inn is very extensive and the quality of the very reasonably priced food is excellent. We even got an armful of local canal literature and a complimentary box of Bridge Inn fudge! Ronnie typifies the wonderful hospitality we received from everyone we met in Scotland. I should also mention the pub's family room, which has a special menu and a life size Rosie and Jim draped over a bar stool!

We even took the opportunity to have a canal trip on the "Ratho Princess" a rescued and restored Edwardian boat from Norfolk, done out in art deco style, and admired the skill with which trainee boatmaster David Wright (no relation) handled the craft.

Tuesday was another lovely day. We visited Leith (where, apparently, the police never dismissed anybody) and went round Royal Yacht Britannia. A very interesting (and illuminating) experience, all done very tastefully. The 'infrastructure' of the access tower and gangways at each level has been done in an appropriate grand style. Afterwards we looked round the new "Ocean Terminal", a huge shopping and entertainment complex incorporating Britannia's 'entrance' which is like a modern airport terminal.

The development is getting ready for the start of Edinburgh's new trade, receiving world-class cruise liners. The whole dock

area at Leith, which is huge, is in the throes of redevelopment – again the local shopkeepers and taxi drivers can't wait to quote facts and figures in their enthusiasm. We finished the morning with a visit to Pringle's Mill, did some shopping, talked at length to the shop assistants (!) and had our clan histories reproduced for free, on production of our tickets for Britannia (normal price £6.99 – Britannia cost £6.50 – there's logic in there somewhere). It seems everybody has a Scottish connection!

In the afternoon went National Trusting (again a reciprocal arrangement) to the Georgian House in Edinburgh's famous Charlotte Square. Unlike in NT houses in England the room stewards in Edinburgh insist on telling you all the details of the rooms with real interest and the same enthusiasm we encountered everywhere. We never inspected the dining-room though. Mr. Raeburn, the room steward, just happened to be interested in canals so we were off again! Half an hour later – and after another lady in the room had said "excuse me butting in, but I'm from Slaithwaite" – we left, having discovered that Mr. Raeburn's daughter-in-law is none other than Ailsa Raeburn, British Waterway's Commercial Manager in the Midlands! Mr. Raeburn told us a tale about opening up the Forth & Clyde Canal through a housing estate in Glasgow. The authorities were surprised at how little opposition there was to the proposal, not realizing that the canal track would necessitate the removal of the local police station!



Canal terminus (definitely!), Edinburgh

A & K Wright

Our final canal visit was to the terminal at "Edinburgh Quay" right next to a huge brewery! We had recently learnt from Mr. Raeburn that this whole semi-derelict area is to be transformed into a hotel, car park, marina, moorings and associated industry. After going round a one-way system about three times we found the wharf – just over a wall from where we started looking. Empty of water now for the building of a huge new Leamington Lift Bridge.

So ended our wedding outing in Edinburgh. We were left to journey home with very pleasant memories of lovely people who have great pride in their surroundings and enjoy demonstrating that pride to anybody who will listen. Without exception everyone we met was a delight and waiting with great anticipation for the opening of their NEW CANAL.

Thank you, Edinburgh, we'll be back!

To follow our route and find out a lot more about the canals (including the Crinan Canal) you could do worse than buy the GEO Projects descriptive map, price £4.75. Tel: 0118 939 3567.

Ken Wright

The Oldham Group

The latest activity on the canalside in the Oldham Metropolitan Borough.

The promised information boards are in the process of being erected (mid-May) and provide additional interest for the many canal walkers.

Most of the sculptures are now in place, including a number of "stepping-stones" near Lock 32W (Geoffrey Dickens Lock). These are in the form of flagstones containing inscriptions which form a sort of "snakes and ladders" game around the history of the canal. "Tunnel explosion, go back four places," kind of thing. This is the Society's contribution to the "Percent for Art" scheme and there will be more detail later.

A formal opening of the adventure playground and sculpture features in Diggle took place in March and another is being organised later in the year in Greenfield.

Incidentally, in the picture on page 50 of the last Plink I referred to a 'tiller' at the entrance to the toddlers' playground. Whilst it is definitely tiller-shaped it is, in fact, one end of a 'voice tube', through which the young ones can whisper to each other. Clever, eh?

In May the Society presented £500 to the Saddleworth Museum for the introduction of a canal feature in the museum. There is already a small 'canal corner' with the famous model of Standedge tunnel on display and an old 1920s car wheel that I dredged up (your dear Editor somehow missed this corner in his museum visit last issue) but the museum is looking forward to having much more. Suitable items for

inclusion would be much appreciated. Let me know if you have anything (01457 873599).

The long-awaited final decision on the development at Royal George Mills has been given in favour of putting 66 dwellings on the site. Good news for those of us interested in seeing the historic mill buildings brought back into use (and the treatment has got to be very sympathetic to the location) but understandably disappointing to the local inhabitants who are fearful of all the extra traffic. My view is shared by many and that is that the alternative industrial development would probably never have materialised and would have introduced far worse traffic problems. But then, we don't live there!

One useful spin-off is that the original stone arch bridge, over the canal, leading to the mills, has been listed to prevent it being altered in any way.

No further news yet on three other potential developments at Victoria Works, Dobcross, Knoll Mills, Greenfield and Shaw Hall Bank Close, Greenfield.

On the volunteer front, the Society is looking to get a number of volunteer 'lengthsmen' to keep an informal eye on a stretch of the canal. Also in Saddleworth, the Oldham Countryside Wardens at Brownhill Visitor Centre are acting as the collecting agency for any information about vandalism, hazards, etc. which they will pass on formally to British Waterways. Hopefully this formal approach will be preferable to unsolicited reports flying into BW from all directions!

Ken Wright

Civic Trust Award

Stalybridge Town Centre Canal Scheme Wins Civic Trust Award

Out of over five hundred major projects considered - including the London Eye, Millennium and Gateshead Bridges and the Lowry Centre - the Stalybridge Canal Scheme was one of only 50 to receive this prestigious award. The Civic Trust press release from the awards ceremony commented '*This extremely imaginative scheme has transformed the town centre with an impressive piece of urban design.*'

The scheme was also short listed by the Civic Trust as one of three for a Special Centre Vision Award - for the scheme that has contributed most to the improvement of a town or city centre - Stalybridge, recently dubbed Staly-Venice on the BBC National 6 o'clock News, was

pipped at the post by Castlefield, Manchester.

Stalybridge also featured extensively in the May edition of Cheshire Life in an article entitled 'Stalybridge Renaissance' that acknowledged the effect of the restoration of the canal on the ongoing regeneration of the town.

The Civic Trust is to send a representative to formally present the award during the Summer.

And Stalybridge continues to be the centre of attention. Over 20,000 people are reported to have attended the 'Stalybridge Splash' event, centred around the canal, on the Jubilee Bank Holiday and Armentieres Square will feature on 'Songs of Praise', which is to be filmed on Sunday 21st of July and screened in the Autumn.

Congratulations to all involved!



Left to Right: Town Manager, Rick Malone, Councillors Kevin Welsh and Charles Meredith (Chair and Deputy Chair of Stalybridge District Assembly), and Peter Rawson (Scheme Project Manager) with the Civic Trust Award at Armentieres Square.

Brian Malpas: TMB

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The Huddersfield Narrow Canal



F Approaching L21W



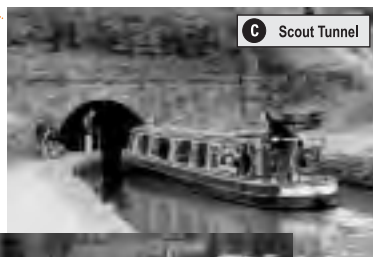
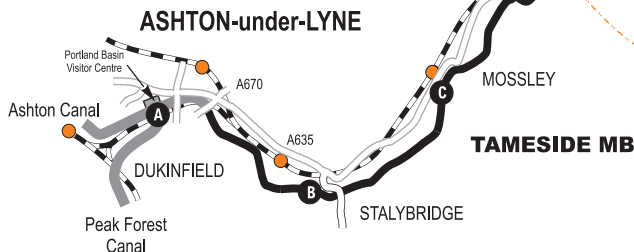
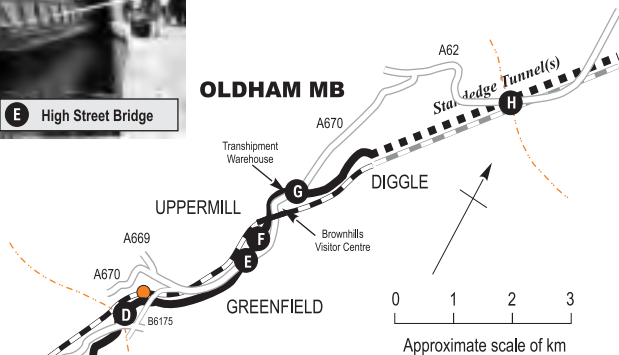
G Wool Road Bridge



E High Street Bridge



D Division Bridge Aqueduct



C Scout Tunnel



A Portland Basin Museum



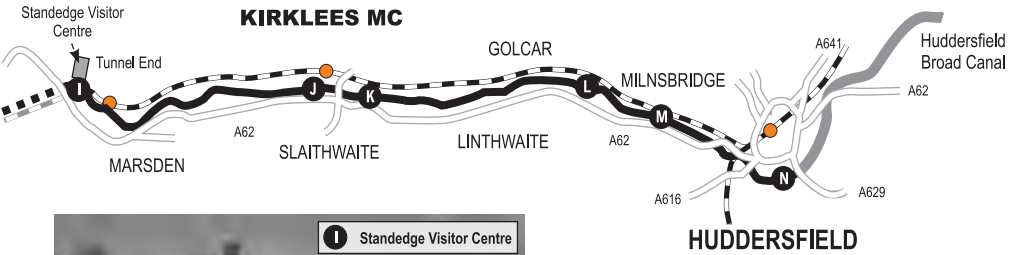
B Stalybridge Town Centre



H Standedge Tunnel



N Approach to Bates tunnel



I Standedge Visitor Centre



L Golcar Aqueduct



J Guillotine gate, L24E



K Slaithwaite Town Centre



M Mark Bottoms Bridge



Health & Hygiene Certificate and Heartbeat Award

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Wrong Way Round the Ring

Society members, Andrew and Denise Beck, and family, cruise the Cheshire Ring anti-clockwise.

There are a lot of rings around at the moment. From the celluloid revival of Tolkein to Radio 4's serialisation of Tarka, the endless loop seems to hold a fascination. Nowhere is this more true than of the world of canal cruising. The Four Counties, the Avon, the Warwickshire, the Black Country, the Cheshire - BW even have a section calling itself the "Pennine Ring", the mooted restoration of the Thames & Severn will create - what - a "West Country Ring" and the Barnsley Canal Society has talked about the Yorkshire Ring before now.

Over - good grief - now nearly thirty years, on and off, we've rung (wrung?) well anyway, circumnavigated all of the available ones, with one exception. You never tour your own back door, right? So living in Huddersfield we never touched the Aire & Calder, Calder and Hebble, Leeds and Liverpool. And we'd never been round the Cheshire Ring.

With the Anderton lift coming back into commission, the Huddersfield now open and canals generally enjoying something of a revival at last, the time had come. Ever since we were hospitably welcomed in the early 80's at their Midlands base, with a crew of 10 teenagers and someone else's hireboat, we have been great fans of Alvechurch Boat Centres. So we perused the web and found their Anderton base ideally located for the ring. The "Alvechurch Attitude" has remained. Visit other marinas and signs say "slow down" "mooring for customers only" and such like. Alvechurch's signage says

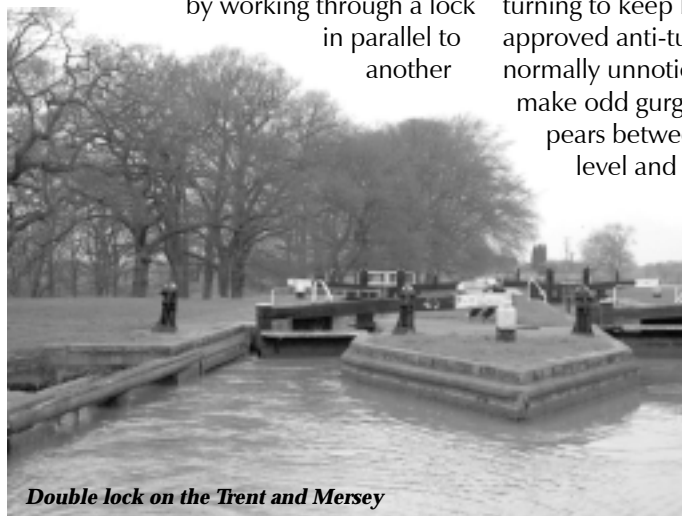
"Welcome" and "visit our shop" and "tearoom open". Refreshing, isn't it? And it pervades the whole organisation. If you were out and about on the water in Easter week this year you might have waved at Grey Partridge. Hello again!

We planned all the stopping points, average speeds according to the canal (fast on the Bridgewater, slow on the Peak Forest), as a clockwise experience. This, apparently is what most people do from Anderton. But fate had a trick to play - a few tens of yards above the almost-ready-to-be-opened lift, there was a bank breach and the canal was closed. No Manchester-bound traffic at all. So we scurried to load our stuff quickly and played the "we're tripboat crew" card to get a fast handover, and dashed off out of the Marina ahead of the "I suppose you point the stick to where you want to go?" brigade.

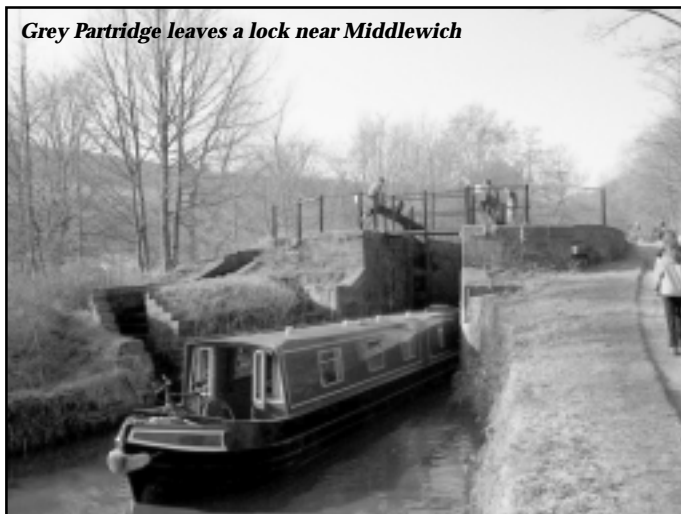
Weekend starts are a great thing for making the most of a working family's time off, but plunging straight into the veritable armada of private boats (how can you tell the 100% owners from the timesharers?) all of whom have to be back safe in the marina by tomorrow evening and so can chug along at whatever snail's pace they like. We try to keep the original spirit of the waterways alive by setting, as does any serious transport system, impossible deadlines - and then trying to stick to them. Alvechurch's "Eco" hull seems to allow faster water speed without creating wash. This is achieved with a canal version of a super-tanker's bow bulge. It's a great asset for the enterprising ring-cycler. We planned to do the ring, plus a bit of the upper Peak Forest and as much of the

Huddersfield as possible without passing through Standedge. Ambitious, aren't we? We lost count of how many people just assumed we had a fortnight's holiday. This is our activity break, and active we will be! The Summer slump comes later.

Another innovation that helps the thrusting navigator is the double lock. After a bleak stretch past the Cheshire salt plains, the so-called "heartbreak hill" climbs up a paltry 26 locks spread lazily over almost 7 miles. This is nothing to us BCN veterans. We remember the Wolverhampton 21, Aston and Farmer's Bridge, Black Delph and of course Tardebigge! And most of the heartbreakers are doubled, with two sets of everything. This allows the switched-on boating family to demonstrate its efficiency and prowess by working through a lock in parallel to another



Grey Partridge leaves a lock near Middlewich



boat - but faster - to the point where a polite overtake is feasible.

Well that's how it should have been. And when the crew ahead failed to notice that the left-hand lock was already empty and stayed with the right-hand as per habit so far, we knew we'd won. "D'you mind if we go ahead?" Graciously "No, not at all, *we're* not rushing". We glow with pride in navigational skills and excellence at diplomacy. Until the propeller - slowly turning to keep bows on the gate in the approved anti-turbulence manner - the normally unnoticed propeller, starts to make odd gurgling noises. A gap appears between counter and water level and it becomes apparent that somewhere below the water line the eco-hull's protuberance is caught on the ancient protecting strips of the lock cill. This has kept the bow down as the water level has risen, to the point where the cockpit drains are

Running repairs; tiller in safe hands



working in reverse, and the rapidly flooding cockpit is threatening to cascade the whole boat to the bottom of the lock. The newspaper headlines, insurance claims, shamefaced explanations all flash before my eyes as I dash to close the top paddles. Then the gate swings open, the bow bounces up and the cockpit drains revert to normal mode. How close was that! We need to keep an eye on the shape of the cill protectors in future. I wonder if the hull designers know about that? The blood returns to my face, and my heartbeat to normal.

Shaken but not deterred we make Harding's Wood near Congleton by the end of the first full day. Harding's Wood is a veritable motorway flyover of a junction. From the North one passes under a substantial aqueduct, only to rise by two locks (the lock falls on the Trent & Mersey are big), turn right, and pass over the same aqueduct. This takes about 20 minutes, long enough for one to have

forgotten details, but soon enough for everything to look very familiar albeit from another angle. Despite the indications on many maps, the aqueduct is actually part of the Trent & Mersey canal, the Macclesfield not beginning until one has passed through that quaint reminder of the competitive past of the waterway system, the stop-lock. Rising less than a foot the lock ensures that water flows from the newcomer waterway (in this case the Macclesfield) to the older one (the T&M). Inexplicably after 26 locks with single top gates on a 9-10 feet fall, this one has a full mitre set both ends, although the fall is as many inches.

Early next morning our youngest crew member, remarks that it's strange how locks do not feature in canal navigation until the morning is past. This is phrased in a manner that suggests that they develop in the heat of the afternoon like some tropical flower or seedcase. Well, full marks for observation, but perhaps there might be a less, err, organic explanation for this correlation? Nevertheless, as predicted by statistics, locks do crop up later in the day. What could be causing it?

Bosley is an unsung beauty of a flight which in sunny weather must look stunning. Twelve is a nice number of locks, and their ground paddles spit at the enthusiastic paddle-lifter as surprisingly and unavoidably as anything on the BCN. Charming.

HCS could learn a lot about being the society for an open canal, from the Macclesfield Canal Society. Guide/Maps in a box - "donations please" - opened by the BW key; restored and recreated mileposts; numbered bridges; lubricated paddle gear. We feel so welcomed that



A classic 'change bridge', Macclesfield

Our twenty year-old Pearson's Guide says that Bugworth is "under restoration" (and the Huddersfield is "presently un-navigable") so perhaps Bugworth is open by now as well? A passing private boat advises that we're missing the best bits, which is not what we want to hear. The not-best bits are still rather pretty in the sunshine. Turns out they were

we decide to visit the town itself.

The "visitors' moorings" further encourage us in a vague sort of way. Town is a walk from the canal and it's not till we get started on the 108 steps back down to the railway that we reflect that the canal is as high as the town, but on the other side of this valley. Perhaps we over-shopped a bit.

Next morning the locks are out early (must be the sunshine), but we avoid them by turning right towards Whaley Bridge. The objective is to arrive tonight at or near our old tripboat haunts in Ashton to make an assault on the Huddersfield on Wednesday. Timing 4 hours for 16 locks according to tradition (4 locks or 4 miles in one hour) we turn around at New Mills before reaching the terminus.

right as we rattle down the well-oiled Marple locks in just a tad over two hours, without really rushing anything. Never mind, we'll be back!

Over-nighting in countryside just outside Dukinfield, we wake to another glorious morning. Huddersfield Canal day! We plan our attack, not forgetting that a retreat is needed as well. The pile of hardcore holding up a road just out of Portland Basin is a shock. Touching



Shopping bearers return from the town

Portland Basin, Ashton-u-Lyne



ground we just manage to push through. "Temporary is it?" to a builder type on top of said pile. "Aye, six months so far". To an experienced east-sider the lower west side is not really very pleasant. The stretch up to Stalybridge, familiar from trip-boat operations has interesting features (the vastly improved Eli Whalley's wharf, the missed opportunity garden centre that "welcomes canal travellers" with a sheet steel fence topped by razor wire, that iron aqueduct with towpath in stone). But most of the cut is hemmed in by ancient festering scrapyards and other industrial dereliction. Something Must Be Done!

Stalybridge, which has virtually a new canal,

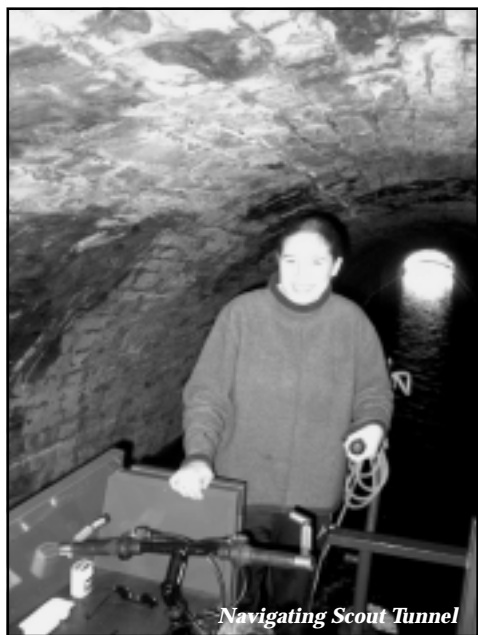
is pristine, sparkling and welcoming. Coming up into Armentieres square is almost as dramatic as turning off the Avon into the Stratford theatre forecourt. Except that the Stalybridge gongoozlers are quite happy to chat in a friendly manner over the protective railings. It's a bit of a shock, though, to find the usual short-cut steps in the lock tails missing, necessitating a long walk to the gap in the railings and back the other side. Also, the new lock gear is incredibly stiff. As a Society, we really should try to help BW with oiling and greasing. The pop-out paddle locking mechanisms, however are a real boon, compared to the cumbersome swinging arms elsewhere. Whoever designed them deserves an accolade of some sort. I only hope they prove to be robust. It makes such a difference to the boater's experience when everything works well. One feels more welcome somehow. Nevertheless we are tempted to shop for lunch, bike bits, and super-market fodder. You can't not, really.

Above Stalybridge the countryside gives the impression that Mother Nature is doing her best to reclaim land that



The Becks at Stalybridge Town Centre

industry has discarded. Pretty woodlands have been battered by off-road motorcycling; a huge covered gantry strides out from a hillside to stop abruptly, no longer needed, high above the canal; a wooded hillside is topped by bright orange lorries; small paddocks of transformers and switchgear herald the enormous pylon which straddles the cut. Here banks are steel piled way-high - presumably by the electricity company - and provide refuge for a sun-dried frog, mummified in an action pose and a floating Heron (dead) which tries to share a lock with us. As the canal rises towards Scout tunnel, however, nature seems gradually to win, and even receives a little help from nearby councils. We moor for lunch at a pleasant little jetty with a picnic table. Next the small tunnel. Scout is only lined for a few yards at each end: the interior gives an idea of what the Standedge Experience must be like with its bare rock walls. How on earth men used to leg these I do not



Navigating Scout Tunnel

know. We make it almost to Mossley before turnaround time. Twelve locks out, twelve back. Not even half way!

On the way back some workmen are sanding and repainting 'our' picnic bench. We didn't mess it up that much, so I assume this is just coincidence. The return trip seems shorter, as they always do, but the lock gear is still extremely hard work. The heron swims back into the lock as we pass through, presumably still anxious to hitch a ride to a higher level. We meet no other boats.

Chugging back into Portland Basin we find the boats that set off with us from Anderton just arriving. "Where are we supposed to moor". Didn't know there were rules. Everyone from Pearson onwards seems to have the impression that the stretch from Dukinfield to Castlefields is hostile territory. It's hard not to be frightened or at least made wary by this almost universal panic. People tell tales of marauding gangs marching through boats and pillaging as they go. The phrase 'urban myth' springs to mind as no-one reports it actually happening to them. It's always a story told third hand at least. Can't do the regeneration prospects any good, though.

Still, Portland is OK for us. Next morning our normally stay-abed colleagues are all up and in action as the sun rises at 6am. Must get through the badlands in one go! Well, there's no point in four boats turning up at a narrow lock flight in convoy so we try to photographically replicate a drawing we have of the roving bridge, only with our boat in the frame. An hour later we set off. I really can't see this stretch as badlands particularly. All down the Fairfield and Clayton locks the canal backs onto residential gardens,

retirement homes and parks and seems as threatening as any shortcut through town. As we pass through Beswick locks, a twenty-something, oddly hooded in the warm sunshine, insists on crossing the lock and looks rather hard at our locked-up bicycles, then examines the deck and seats closer than most before passing on. Casing for a quick theft? Could be.

Passing the Stadium site we see big diggers behind steel piling excavating the new basins described in Pennine Link (Spring 2002) I hope they plant some trees or this will be a very bleak place to pass the night. Impressive though the regeneration is, it somehow doesn't seem to quite involve the canal as it might. Perhaps that will improve as the landscaping gets nearer completion, but at the moment one is still peering over hoardings to see what's going on. Dropping down the Beswick locks we see a group of young lads engaged in manhandling a couple of mudhoppers (why are BW incapable of securing their boats?) around the corner. As we pass by, BW staff and the landscaping contractors catch up with them. Not one of these dozen or so grown men says a word to the lads. The lads insist they need to board our boat, but are scared off by the sight of a semi-tamed Secondary School teacher brandishing a windlass. Another theft opportunity? Again they had a good look at the bikes. In my day we'd just have been out for mischief and would've legged it as soon as adults appeared for fear of a clip round the ear.

Behind Piccadilly station the wharves have been filled with very nice houses and flats. There are mooring rings and lift bridges across the dock entrances. Do they welcome visitors? Is it safe to stop? Who knows. There are signs naming and

dating the development but no indication if these are visitor moorings or for residents only. So we pass on into Ducie Street. The amount of work going on here has to be seen to be believed. As in Birmingham the virtually secret Gas Street was opened out and exposed to public view, so with Ducie Street. Glue sniffers are banished (good) and office types stroll the paved banks with their lunch packs. Streetlights and CCTV masts sprout by the ancient waterways. Perhaps it'll be nice when it's finished but I still wish the Rochdale Canal Company's arch lead to a wharf instead of a car park. After a brief tour of the shopping facilities of Manchester (we have girls on board) we eat our lunch on a comfy bench, being entertained by firemen who seem very pleased when one succeeds in throwing his Baywatch-style float-on-a-rope across the Rochdale canal. Takes all sorts.

No one turns up to share the broad-lock experience with us, so we press on anyway. I said it takes all sorts, didn't I? Well a lot of the human variety is provided along the nine locks of the Rochdale canal that link the Ashton canal to the Bridgewater under the heart of Manchester. Unhelpfully to a ring-traveller, the locks are numbered from Rochdale, so are all Number ninety



something. This has escaped Pearson's attention so we just travel hopefully. The first one, in the pound below which a skyscraper stands on wonky and battered legs, is reserved for (male) gay prostitutes. Some are friendly and help with the lock. Oddly the ground paddles as we fill the lock discharge above water level. A peculiarity of the Rochdale, perhaps? Emerging between the skyscraper legs, it dawns that water level should be about three feet higher. Well, the Piccadilly level was spilling out over the half-completed landscaping to the river below



so we have no qualms about opening a bottom gate and a top paddle to flush ourselves through. The locals smile encouragingly and wander off in search of trade.

The next eight locks, oddly enough, have plenty of water. At least two of them have no towpath, the adjoining road levels having been raised and fenced off with stone slabs. There is evidence of steps that have been removed and bridge accesses closed off. Early drinkers enjoying pavement tables in the sunshine eye us cynically. What a lot of effort! Each pound has a different drinking establishment, each seeming to cater for a different clientele. Young singles chatting and generally behaving like the sex-obsessed ducks that have been celebrating the spring in more

rural areas; Gay males staring longingly at each other over a cigarette; Homosexual females snogging hungrily in the open air. By comparison the evidence of hard-drug use and casual sex that litter the towpath seem quite commonplace. After all, the kids have been told about *drugs* at school.

Approaching Castlefields the watering holes get smarter until at the final lock, a bar named after the lock gives us problems only in that to cross to the offside we need to negotiate a bridge packed with gleaming sports cars. Don't forget that we are swinging windlasses and are watched every step by those who are paying for these status symbols on a monthly basis. Around the corner, Castlefields itself is almost post-regeneration. The restored canal arms contain boats, the wharves have smart buildings and all is calm. The Manchester trams scream across a Victorian iron bridge like shiny silver banshees on their way to calmer suburbs, whilst sleek dark, serious minded trains rumble comparatively silently over a brick viaduct that stalks off to other important cities. There's a film catering unit waiting for the Industrial Museum to close, but we decide to stay anyway. We must come back one day with enough time to see the Museums and exhibitions. For now, a stroll around and a look at the reconstructed fort parts will suffice. Brown water at supper time reminds us to refill the water tank, so we disconnect the film crew from the BW tap. No one seems to mind.

Our final full day dawns clear and cold yet again, and we bash off down the Bridgewater. As promised by Pearson, this is broad and deep and therefore speedy. Locks to the ship canal appear to have been restored. Who for, we wonder?

At first the canal is interesting - we even spotted a factory with its canal dock completely intact, including crane - but later it's just rather boring suburban. I don't think I would hesitate to moor here, though. So, as far as we're concerned "badlands" stretches from just above the Ancoats locks to Castlefields. Even then, Piccadilly will be a possibility if it decides whether it's interested in boats or not. After a while the fast and straight is spoiled by local "cruising clubs" with mile after mile of linear moorings necessitating a crawl speed even with the eco hull. I sympathise with BW's desire to remove these activities to marinas. It must be better for passing boater and moored-up boat owner alike. Interestingly each of the generous Bridgewater bridges is provided with a set of stop planks and a dedicated manual crane to lift them with. None seemed to have been vandalised, surely a missed opportunity.

Gradually the Bridgewater leaves behind the trams and railways and becomes a prettier, slower and more rural canal. Today, being a Bank Holiday, many more boats are "cruising", some from the clubs locally, and some seemingly having been held up by the breach at Anderton. Bridges seem rare and mini-aqueducts, "underbridges", are counted as well. Lymm, Grappenhall and other villages provide us with shopping, a lakeside walk and a pub lunch. Preston Brook shows us chandlery, and we arrive at the tunnel bang in the middle of the 10 minute slot allocated for south-bound travel each hour.

It's very smoky in there, the north portal gradually dimming to deep orange like a sunset over the sea. Out in the daylight again we queue briefly for Dutton stop - why are the bottom gates wider than the top? Clearly someone was quite mad! We chug past more moored boats and find a nice cosy cutting for the night.

Bright and early again, we pass the other boats from our fleet and earn smiley points (and the berth nearest the car park) by being back first. They're impressed that our breakage list is small, and more so that we have added to the inventory by liberating a gangplank from the canal, and purchasing a deck mop in Macclesfield. They seem content at the exchange. As we're in Anderton we visit the imposing Anderton Lift, now restored to operation. BW's display is impressive although it seems a shame that the campaigners who saved the thing from destruction in the eighties are only indirectly referred to. It also seems remarkable that although the original canal company had to look no further than Stockport for their hydraulic equipment, today's engineers have chosen to use suppliers from Germany and the Netherlands to recreate a modern version of the original system.

It's a strange experience - having waved and acknowledged so many people from the tiller - to be returning the courtesy from the towpath. Suddenly a boater no longer.

Until next time, that is.

Andy Beck

Photos: A & D Beck



60th Birthday Party

Approximately 40 guests recently enjoyed a Saturday afternoon trip to Woodley aboard the Society trip boat Still Waters. The occasion was to celebrate the 60th Birthday of Society member and Boat Crew Skipper Peter Ruffley. An excellent buffet and bar was provided and guests thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The trip was also a test for the recently modified tug which performed very well and gave us hope for a trouble-free, trip boating season.

B. Edwards

Peter sporting his 'I AM 60' badge with wife Sylvia



B Edwards



DAY HIRE BOAT "OTTER"

Self-steer, for up to twelve people.

HAVE A SPECIAL DAY OUT ON THE HUDDERSFIELD NARROW!

Thorough tuition in boat handling and lock working included.

Huge table, ample seating, kitchen & toilet.

*Ring Ed 0161-303-7635
or Dick 01457-831038
(HCS Members)*



SOCIETY VOLUNTEERS

'Wanted'

From its formation in 1974, the Society has relied upon its volunteers to manage its resources, promote restoration, and maintain momentum, continuity and general interest. As a result, 27 years and 12 days later the dream, which was once dubbed 'The Impossible Restoration', became a reality when the H.N.C. was re-opened to navigation in May 2001.

The financial cost to the Society escalated over the years as restoration gained pace. Coincidentally, the Society both started and finished its restoration work on the Uppermill to Dobcross section. The initial project undertaken by volunteers cost a few hundred pounds, whereas the final and similar scheme completed by the Society's subsidiary company, H.C.S. Restoration Limited, cost approximately £300,000.

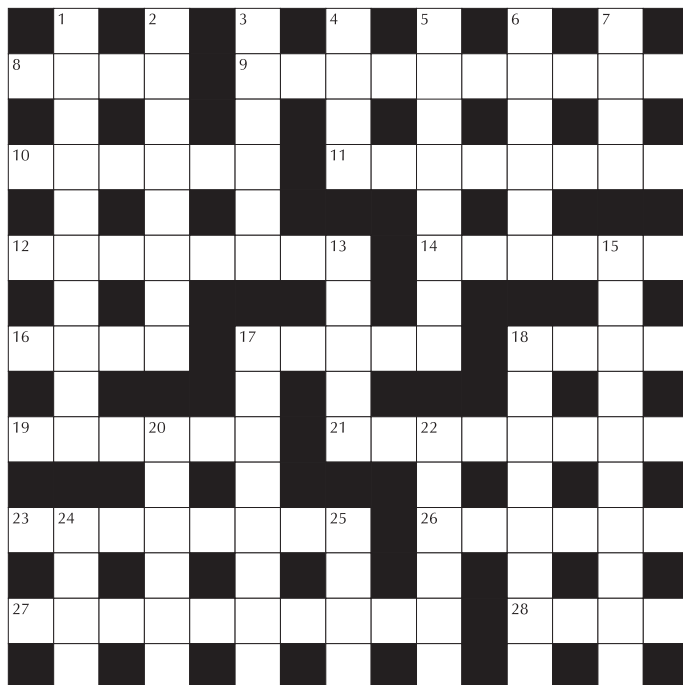
Although the day-to-day restoration work was taken over by the Society's full-time workforce, members continued to undertake smaller canal projects. Other volunteers, as now, crewed and maintained trip boats, and organised the various annual canal festivals, e.g. Ashton ran for 24 years.

Although the canal has re-opened there is still work to be done. The Society's aim, in support of British Waterways, is to enhance, maintain and develop the Huddersfield Narrow. For example, we hope to provide additional mooring rings, bollards, seats, signs, bridge plates and service stations for boaters etc, i.e. items which we could not provide at the time.

This is why we need more volunteers than ever before, a few hours once or twice a month can make all the difference. Any member requiring further information or an update on any of the Society's activities, with a view to volunteering their services, please contact the Society's Ashton office.



Canal Crossword - 37



23 The connecting rod broke at the pump on an HNC reservoir (8)

26 Sybil takes an easterly course through a Leicester line lock (6)

27 The builder of a tunnel on the Ashby canal is to be congratulated on its ornateness (10)

28 Place the Inland Revenue under constraint within an iron case and get a nice warm boat (4)

Down

1 Filled sock with water whilst working the L & L above Apperley Bridge (5,5)

2 When this cable snaps you could choke someone quite happily (8)

3 In Leeds I fill the boat with fuel (6)

4 Above Oxford they named the Thames twice (4)

Across

8 Finishers having done away with the rinse, take the result of offering the bait (4)

9 Pin notices to the board to remind me that the Safety Certificate is due (10)

10 In Oslo ops start to prepare for completion of sailing vessels (6)

11 A lump of turf and a dwelling combine at a lock on the Market Weighton canal (3,5)

12 Fill a lot of forms before getting many ships to sail together (8)

14 Navigate a branch of the River Thurne to hear a lad hum (6)

16and likewise up a branch of the River Bure to find lace (4)

17 BW got out of bowsters to allow for decoration of narrow boats (5)

18 Where to clean up after restoring the Kennet & Avon? (4)

19 After clearing the stove of ash Ted set off up some central Birmingham locks (6)

21 Sail a narrowboat from here to Dieppe? (8)

5 Last wide lock before the National Waterways Festival (3,5)

6 Gain lost by a goods train whilst passing through a former tunnel shared by railway and canal (6)

7 Where the fletcher should sit on a boat? (4)

13 Capstans on the bank of the Macclesfield at Poynton where engines are unloaded for display at a museum (5)

15 Restful bay found on the Severn below Lincomb lock (6,4)

17 Terraced house without a trace of occupation by an unluckily numbered lock on the Aylesbury Arm (8)

18 Between Anderton and Falkirk, 2002 will be a good year for this type of canal machinery (8)

20 Plenty burn wood on the Birmingham and Fazeley approach to Birmingham (6)

22 Yews is in fashion on a Norfolk river leading to Stoke Ferry (6)

24 Premium Bond picker lost a vowel to become an Irish river (4)

25 Frank not Bill tied the rope that came undone (4)

Solution on Page 54

Letters to the Editor

Dear Mr Minor,

May I broach a delicate matter? I am pleased to see the increase of traffic on the Canal: trip boats, hire boats, private boats and even huge hotel boats: it all looks like being a bumper Summer! However, a great deal of waste is being generated as they take their leisurely journeys. How is this disposed of? In HCS's early days, plans were outlined for sanitary stations at strategic points along the Huddersfield Narrow. Are these now in place? I have seen some rather dubious practices, so I would be glad to have some reassurance.

As one who fought hard, but unsuccessfully, to prevent the locks being filled in some 30 years ago, I am delighted at HCS's success and wish them all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

M Miles

Greenfield, Saddleworth

PS Am I alone in finding that the sculpture features are settling into the landscape and beginning to exert a strange appeal?

There are plans for sanitary stations at various places along the canal and hopefully there will be other sorts of a waste-disposal points set up very shortly. The shock of the new so often leads to familiarity breeding content or is it contempt?! Ed.

Dear Brian

The Narrow Canal appears to be standing up well to the new season. Last weekend (27/28 April) I saw both sides of it, on the Saturday helping a pair of hotel boats making their way from Slaithwaite to Marsden. In all, that day, there were three boats going up the Canal from Slaithwaite to Marsden and three making their way down the same section, all passing in the area

between the Booth turning circle and West Slaithwaite.

The only problem was water - not that there wasn't enough of it, just being not in the right place at the right time for the private boaters. With a little patience and using it sensibly, all were satisfied, and on their way they went without the assistance of British Waterways, which two had been quick to summon by mobile phone with the cry "there isn't any water, we're stuck on the bottom".

The next day I accompanied a party of young disabled on a Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme exploration along the Canal from Mossley to Stalybridge and then by minibus to Portland Basin. From the Basin, as a part of their project on canals, they had a trip on "Still Waters" skippered by Alan Knott and members of the Canal Society along the Peak Forest Canal followed by an afternoon at the Basin's excellent museum.

Arising from that I have a criticism for British Waterways. In January, on my last walk down from Mossley to Stalybridge, British Waterways staff were there working - on a Sunday - on towpath improvements and to do so, had closed off a half mile stretch of the towpath, east of Grove Road. Now, in April, that work appears to have been abandoned, the grills marking the closure at each end are present but ineffective and the towpath has been left in a bad state with a yard wide waterlogged muddy channel awaiting the arrival of new gravel infill. Can we, as a Society, not make representations for such works to be managed properly?

Keith W Sykes

East Side Correspondent

Thanks for the press cuttings Keith, please keep them coming. I agree with you entirely about the towpath near Grove Road. I was one of a party helping Sue day bring a horse

drawn boat through this section prior to the Stalybridge Festival and it was atrocious and almost impassable. Ed.

Dear Brian,

No doubt something has already been said about H C S having another three licensed boatmasters and having now joined that elite band. A word of thanks for those involved.

Many thanks to: Robert Maycock for your time and thorough training that made the test relatively straightforward. John Lund for having the courage to let a bunch of strangers loose with your trip boat and passing on valuable boat handling skills. Alan Kershaw for giving your time and the benefit of your experience with the Test last year. Denise Beck for an excellent grounding in first aid, very necessary but hopefully not needed. Also to others, including Allan Knott and Ian Spencer, for working the locks and words of encouragement.

To any of you boat crews out there, think about giving it a go. It's a very satisfying feeling having got that little blue book. You could say I've now been certified! (some may say not before time!)

Can we now have a bigger boat on the East side to play with please. Again, many thanks to all those involved for the time and effort put in it, not only for us new licensees but hopefully for the benefit of the Society as well.

Terry Lomas

Garforth, Leeds

Having been one of the very early boat Masters, I remember the satisfaction of passing my test and having official acknowledgement of my prowess! Congratulations to all the newly-qualified skippers. The Society now has more qualified boat drivers than any other group in the country. Ed.

As organiser of the annual photographic competition, Ken Wright received the following E-Mail from former Project Director of the Huddersfield Canal Company, Alan Stopher.

Dear Ken,

Having just read through the latest edition of Plink I was interested by the debate about digital and traditional photography. As a keen amateur photographer and (over the last three years a contributor of images to the Society's excellent journal) I would like to offer a few thoughts on the subject. There has indeed been some controversy in amateur photographic circles in the last two years but this has largely subsided for the technical reasons accurately described by John Lower in the Spring Plink. In my experience even most digital 'sceptics' have accepted that the new digital techniques have opened the field of home colour processing to a much wider audience. Although club membership tends to still be on the decline - this is a trend across the board with all clubs and is not a result of the new techniques - I firmly believe that the new accessibility to image production and the ready link between computers and youth is very much a plus point in encouraging young people to take up a worthwhile pastime. Plink itself has been created using digital techniques for a number of years so all the pictures you see in the journal are from digital files even if many have been scanned originally from negatives or slides. My club, the Huddersfield Camera Circle, in common with most societies in Yorkshire, makes no distinction between prints from darkroom or computer origins as long as prints are from the author's own work and based on a photographic image(s).

My recommendation is that the Society should adopt the same approach so as to encourage entries from all and avoid getting in to technical difficulties. Here's to an

excellent year for pictures of colourful narrow boats on our favourite local waterway!

Regards

Alan Stopher

Birkby, Huddersfield

This letter was sent to Membership Secretary, Jo Young.

Dear Jo,

Thank you for your letter, and I enclose a duly completed renewal form and banker's order.

Having been a member since 1977, I have no intention of leaving the Society just because the Canal is open! I used to own a factory in Greenfield and live in Mossley, and many hours were spent walking by the lifeless Canal. I look forward to making a trip back later this year to see the transformation.

From the reports there is clearly much to do to improve facilities on the Canal, to progress from the euphoria of an open waterway to canal that can be cruised and enjoyed by the majority. The K and A have been through this already, and provide a good example of how long it takes to achieve this important stage.

I now live too far away to contribute physically, but may I offer you and the rest of the team my thanks for all the hard work to date, and best wishes for the still challenging times ahead.

Yours sincerely

HJR Dermott

Windlesham, Surrey

We will obviously be delighted to see Mr Dermott whenever he comes back from his southern Odyssey and perhaps he would like to have a trip in one of our boats. Ed.

Dear Brian,

More good news. On the 16th of April, Terry Lomas, Peter Taylor and Jim Anderson, members of the HCS boat crew, qualified as Boatmasters Grade 3 after taking their examination and test on board John Lund's trip boat, Pennine Moonraker, in Uppermill.



Left to Right: Terry Lomas, Bob Maycock, Capt. Aye-Mung (MSA), Peter Taylor and Jim Anderson.

A Knott

As last year, John's contribution to the success was very significant. Not only did the Society have the use of Pennine Moonraker, John also passed on his wide knowledge of administration and emergency procedures and acted as tutor in boathandling. We also have to thank Station Officer Ian Taylor of Greater Manchester Fire Service for his specialist advice on fire prevention and fire fighting.

The training team this year was strengthened and expanded in that Allan Knott, Peter Ruffley and Denise Beck were joined, in a very much 'hands on' capacity, by Alan Kershaw and it is now clear that this team approach will be an important factor in the success of any future HCS boat training programme.

Even more good news, Mark Nield, one of last year's examination candidates, has achieved three honourable mentions; first off, following HCS training, he passed his Boatmasters Test, next he shakes hands with the Prince of Wales and now we hear that he has been employed by British Waterways as a Boatmaster. Good news indeed, but

more work for HCS, because Mark was a regular and frequent HCS crew member and we now have to train a replacement. Any volunteers?

Robert Maycock

HCS Crew Examination Officer

Rather nice letter from Clodagh Brown now resident in London with her reasons for missing the Stalybridge 'Pennine Link Festival'

To the members and Committee of the Huddersfield Canal Society, on the occasion of the Pennine Link Festival.

Please accept my apologies for absence at the Festival, and particularly at the Special Commemorative event on Sunday 2nd June 2002. My absence was entirely your fault, and if you will bear with me for a moment, I will get round to telling you why.

I am the individual who designed the HCS's 'corporate identity' - consisting of the blue 'tunnel entrance' logo, letterheading and membership application leaflet. "*Use your pen or your spade*" - that was me. I also produced the Society's first portable exhibition, which first went up in Stalybridge library where it became a useful teaching aid for local schools, residents and local Councillors.

Apart from the actual canal, there are many things which are unique about the Huddersfield Canal Society and its achievements. After 28 years (HOW MANY?!!) it is my view that it will be the extraordinary coming together of minds and passions, locally and globally, and against all the odds which should put down as a special moment in British history equal to the actual reconstruction. So many life stories, so many other interests, one common goal, which was so spectacularly daft, so 'Barnes- Wallace' that it just had to be made to come off. Well we did a 'Dewey' and it could only have happened here.

Looking back there are several routes to my ultimate connection with the Society. I first knew the canal as a design student in the 1960's, when my sister, Annabel Herriott, moved from Newcastle upon Tyne to White Leigh above Marsden, right above the tunnel entrance, derelict cottages and water feature. It was love at first sight.

By the mid 1970's I was the graphic and interior designer for A&P Appledore International, Marine Consultants, whose Chief Executive, Dr Roger Vaughan, a naval architect and member of HCS pointed me in your direction. This bunch of Yorkshire canal-nutters had got it into their heads that a huge stretch of waterway, which people were doing their best to fill in and forget, should be revived and reopened. In today's parlance, the view of the sceptics was "I don't think so". But you did think so. You'd surveyed the stretch and done a remarkable feasibility study. It could be done - you had the thing worked out- all you needed to make it happen was to spread your conviction to 5 local authorities, miles and miles of residents and businesses, the British Waterways Board, the rest of the British public - and anglers.

I was involved with the first big festival at the Ashton-under-Lyne site, producing direction signs and banners and general corporate stuff in an attempt to add a bit of an official air to events, and met some wonderful boat owners with the most beautiful and authentic narrow boats to grace the waterways.

To hedge its bets and try to get someone (anyone) important to open the event, the committee had invited several suitable VIPs including canal enthusiasts Sir George and Lady Kenyon, local MP Tom Pendry, the Mayor and Mayoress of Ashton, the Senior Engineer of British Waterways and a Junior Minister. By dint of sheer serendipity they all accepted and two boatloads of VIPs were shipped across the basin to get things going.

The juggling for the microphone was memorable, as was the moment when the party were being shown up the towpath towards the CAMRA beer tent the Mayoral lady, a publican by trade, whispered to the officer guarding her chain that she hoped 'they'd' got some scotch - and a large one. 'They' didn't. 'They' had real ale and plenty of it. The sight of the Junior Minister's wife in a hat fit for a wedding, sipping at half a pint of warm beer will be with me when I come up for the third time.

By dint of great kindness, we managed to offer hospitality on the above-mentioned narrowboat and peeled them off in twos and threes to enjoy the contents of a capacious booze cabinet, tea from a barge teapot and much bonhomie. As a narrow boat can only accommodate so many VIPs at once, the invitees were shamelessly manipulated into small parties of pro and anti restorationists, and the pros got to work. Sir George Kenyon, the Chairman of William and Glynns Bank, really played a blinder and, somewhere in a narrowboat archive is a visitors book which was signed by each and every one of them (with the exception of the junior minister who had to leave 'for another engagement').

As I lived in London and came to Huddersfield at weekends, I knew relatively few people, but those I did taught me things I would never otherwise have known, and which are largely responsible for my absence today. I was taught grit and courage in the face of impossible odds. I was taught sheer bloody-mindedness. I was taught to take notice of my visions and believe in my dreams.

I cannot be with you today because, as Chairperson of the Andrew Reed House Residents' Association, I am hosting a Jubilee tea party for the village elders on our Wandsworth council estate in South London. This is a 14 story 60's grey concrete tower block and my lessons from

HCS have taught me how to persuade a Tory Council to come round to our way of thinking, to paint our tower block yellow and install a meeting room, sound workshop, activity area, recycling facilities, secure cycle park and child safe organic communal garden. We have done it together and are very proud of it.

I cannot leave London on Monday or Tuesday because, as Sea Cadet of the Year in our local unit on Putney Embankment, my 17 year old daughter Julia will be parading down the Mall before her Sovereign and I want to be there with my Union Jack waving them both on.

I am very disappointed that I can't be in two places at once, but even the Huddersfield canal Society couldn't teach me how to do that!

Love and best wishes to everyone and have a great day!

Clodagh Brown

Wandsworth, S. London

Many thanks for the memories Clodagh, you would have enjoyed seeing all those old friends who are all keeping their youthful appearances. I can assure you that the Society still has its full quota of the awkward squad! Your comments about the opening of the first Ashton Festival remind me when I was Chairman of the committee for that event for the first time. About three days before the opening we realised that the Chairman of BW and the Mayor had both been invited to open the Festival. So the President, Hugh Wainwright and I had a couple of very liquid sessions to decide who was going to break the news to one of them! If I remember correctly the job was delegated to the Chairman of HCS who at that time worked for Hugh. Rank having its privileges! Ed.

New Boaters' Booklets

Ken Wright reviews two new booklets, one produced to help inland waterways users generally and the other for those on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal particularly.

THE BOATER'S HANDBOOK

Not sure about the apostrophe but that's where the publishers have put it! This A5, 40 page booklet is produced by British Waterways and the Environment Agency, the two largest members of AINA, the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities and is fully endorsed by that Association. It replaces, as far as BW are concerned, The Waterways Code and

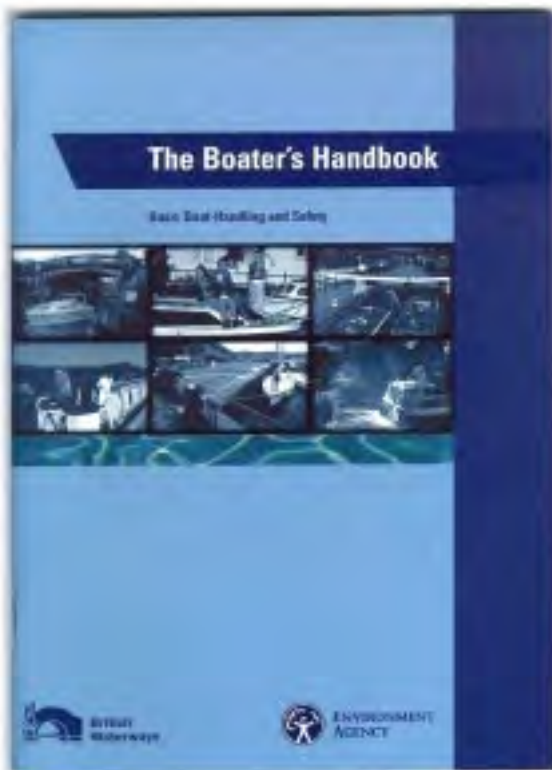
The Waterways Code for Boaters and is sub-titled "Basic Boat-Handling and Safety". It goes further, though, and includes the Waterways Code, bits about environment and litter and consideration of other canal users, etc.

The publication has been assisted "by the many boating experts who gave their time generously to help us make sure that this handbook is useful, relevant and easy to understand". The "dozen or so boaters

Rack and pinion
paddle gear

Safety
catch

Windlass



who gave the proof copies a thorough test-drive" are also acknowledged so I can't really dare to criticise the content!

The layout is smart and modern and the diagrams are very clear and well captioned. Safety messages in each section are highlighted by six separate diagrams covering falls, collisions, crushing, operating injuries, fire/explosion/fumes and vandalism/aggression.

There are numerous "boxes" in pink and various shades of grey containing helpful snippets and "true stories", warning of hazards

and pitfalls in a very chatty way.

Example 1.

Tools that bite back. Take a lesson from this hire boat crew, coming across their first lock. One of the helpers left the windlass on the spindle and then let go. The ratchet slipped and spun the handle round, breaking her nose and teeth.

Example 2.

Thugs with too much bottle. A gang of teenagers, fooling around on the canal towpath, asked a passing boater to give them a ride. When the skipper turned them down, they turned nasty. Ten minutes later, they were back – this time waiting on a bridge, armed with bricks and bottles. The crafty boater scared them off by taking photos of them from a safe distance.

(Pretending to use a mobile 'phone can have the same effect!)

There are six parts to the booklet, under the headings Introduction, Boat Handling, Boating Safety, Rules of the Road, Good boating behaviour and Further Information. The back cover has a "fold-in" page, which can be removed and given to boat passengers, entitled "Passenger Safety Checklist". It starts with the following – "As a passenger, you don't need to know how to steer a boat, operate a lock or tie a rope – you can just sit back and enjoy the trip, To avoid accidents, though, you should know the safety basics. And if there are children on your boat, check that they understand them too".

All in all, a jolly good read! Omissions are always difficult to spot (impossible, one might say!) but two that I noticed were that there is no guidance anywhere about boating in a strong cross wind, nor is there

any indication of where one can obtain copies of the booklet. Oh, and you have to assume that it's free!

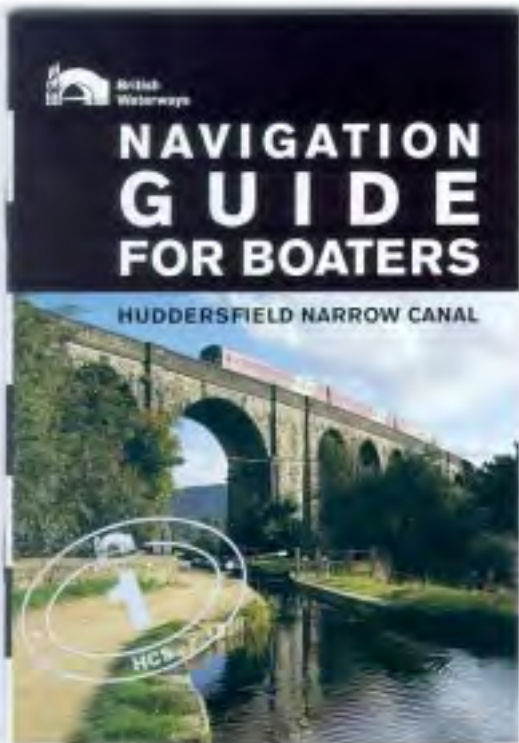
NAVIGATION GUIDE FOR BOATERS, HUDDERSFIELD NARROW CANAL

I have a particular interest in this publication, having been one of four 'private' individuals, representing various canal interests, who helped to put the booklet together. I was the canal society person and the others were John Fletcher (IWA), Keith Noble (Boat owner) and Nigel Stevens (Hire Boat Operator, Shire Cruisers).

This is a first edition of a fairly complicated little document and, consequently, there are some hiccups in it! Having said that, it is very informative, very well presented and very necessary!

This is a genuine "pocket-book" being half A5 in size with 14 pages of text and 5 pages for notes.

The front cover is a picture of Saddleworth Viaduct and Lock 23W (rapidly becoming the picture of the HNC), inside the front cover is a map of the inland waterway system (very small scale and omitting the Barnsley Canal!) which folds out to reveal an A5 map of our Canal. This map contains 31 beer mug signs, 13 train station signs, 15 stars, one 'M' a BW 'bridge' and NO KEY! There are various omissions; Saddleworth Museum, Brownhill Visitor Centre, the name 'Dobcross' which is referred to in the text and so on. Probably the worst feature of the booklet and very needful of a complete revision for the next edition.



The main purpose of the booklet is to be complementary to the Boaters' Handbook, reviewed above, giving additional information specific to the Huddersfield Narrow, and it does just that. There are details of boat dimensions and our "little problem" with boat widths, Plain English to the fore, "any modern or historic boat a fraction over 6'10" will get stuck"! (My exclamation mark!)

The Huddersfield Narrow is idiosyncratic, to say the least, and the booklet covers all the quirks and foibles in a simple, easily understood manner.

There are some areas which remain unclear. The types of facilities available at various locations, cross-referencing of Standedge Tunnel details, the 'downhill

rule' for coping with narrows, etc., and a few more.

All in all, a good try. If you ask why, as one of the group who put the booklet together, I didn't spot the errors and omissions earlier, it is only because the four 'private' advisors never saw the final draft, a serious omission on BW's part. Due to lack of time? Hardly, the booklet is a year late anyway.

Carping over, it is still a good read and well produced. The next edition will be terrific! And, the Society is well represented by having its initials included on the front cover as part of a mock-up of a bridge number plate.

I liked this demonstration of the 'readable' style. "If you come to a low pound, don't run the water down, call British Waterways whose enthusiastic staff will help

you". "Hear, hear" to that!

P.S. A professional comment from Nigel Stevens, whose hire boats have been plying the route regularly for over a year now. *"It's very pleasing to see the canal operating more smoothly this year, after much effort by BW staff. Better information for boaters plays its part in this, and our customers (who mostly don't already know the canal) will find this guide useful."*

With this, plus John Lower's excellent guide, the Geoprojects map and a new Pearson's, we are very well equipped.

Ken Wright

What the Papers Said

Back-tracking a little to early February:

CVC - February 1st

Short piece about the boat crews, council members and the festival committee meeting for a social. The group watched the videos of the 2001 Tameside Canals Festival and an excursion of the *Marsden Shuttle* from Tunnel End to Warehouse Hill. Event was organised by Alan Kershaw who was presented with his certificate at the social.

HDE - February 5th

Short article with the heading 'Learning all about the Canal'. This is about a Young Persons' Project co-ordinated by the Colne Valley Trust and it is based on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal. It will be run over the next 12 months.

CVC - February 8th

Article with the heading 'Plug pulled on narrow canal work'. Sub-heading is other projects will get priority says British Waterways. The article then goes on to say that the Huddersfield Narrow Canal cannot be made wider for larger boats it was revealed this week. People with old fashioned barges have found their vessels are too big to fit through some locks on the Trans Pennine waterway. British Waterways which runs the inland waterway system normally builds new locks to a width of the 7 ft 4 inches. But some boats had become stuck in some locks on the Huddersfield Narrow because the locks were only 6ft 8 inches. Boats bigger than 6ft 10 inches are also barred from using the three miles Standedge Tunnel which runs from Marsden to Diggle.

HDE - February 19th

Letter to the editor, lady who had treated her husband to a Valentine's evening going into Standedge tunnel and having a meal at the Water's Edge restaurant. She was highly

delighted and very appreciative of the British Waterways staff.

And also:

Article with the heading 'Plan to develop canalside jobs and economy'. The article describes how members of Kirklees Council will travel to Uppermill by boat to see how the investment put into the Canal will regenerate the areas through which the Canal flows. The article lists the various things that need to be examined to maximise the impact of the Canal on the environment.

OC - March 1st

Letter from a Mr K. Wrigley of Greenfield being very embittered about the final restoration of the Canal, blaming mainly the water shortage and British Waterways, the letter ends "If this is success I would not like to see a failure"

OC - March 5th

Letter signed 'localisation' very critical of poor parking in Uppermill and saying the village will not benefit from the wonderfully restored Huddersfield Canal if all visitors can do is drive through due to the inability to find a parking space.

Following week, one signed 'globalisation' saying that visitors should park at "Staley Vegas's Tesco car park and then get on John (the boat) Lund's narrow boat and slow down to 4 miles per hour and reach Uppermill in the tranquil state of mind that this village used to be renowned for"

AA - March 6th

Report about the proposed development at Wellington Mills Greenfield. Containing a 15m marina.

OC - March 12th

Small statement about the proposed canalside development at Greenfield.

Saddleworth Council are to consider plans for a pub and restaurant at Frenches Wharf, Greenfield.

OC - March 13th

Report that Wiggett Constructions plans to build 66 homes close to the Canal at Royal George Mills was turned down as an inappropriate development in a green belt conservation area.

OC - March 14th

Pictures and long article about the rubbish and graffiti on the Failsworth section of the Rochdale Canal.

OC - March 15th

Leading article about the idiot vandals who are spoiling the restoration work on the Rochdale by throwing rubbish in the water and putting graffiti on lock walls.

OC - March 15th

Picture of boat going under the railway viaduct at Brownhills and story that boating season has started on the Huddersfield.

OC - March 15th

Full page article with pictures about the new childrens' play areas in Diggle near the Canal and made possible by the Millenium Commission. One is in the form of a canal basin and children have to get round without touching the ground. The other for younger children is shaped like a canal barge (sic).

HDE - March 18th

Article with the heading 'Just clogging along the Canal'. The article describes the parcel being sent along the Huddersfield Narrow Canal for Mr Terry Waite and it is his first pair of clogs. Mr Waite has size 14 shoes and has had them made for him by Walkleys in Hebden Bridge and they are being delivered to him in Mossley by Canal. Once they have arrived Mr Waite will be taught to clog dance.

OC - March 26th

Article saying that the future of John Lund's boat at Uppermill was secure as his moorings were not needed for visiting boats as threatened by British Waterways.

OC - April 2nd

Article with coloured pictures about the imminent voyage of Tery Waite's clogs from Hebden Bridge to Mossley. Pictures of Terry being measured and the clog maker at work accompany an article describing the journey via the Huddersfield Canals the clogs will take.

OC - April 3rd

Report and picture of how campaigners in the Saddleworth Civic Trust have got a Grade II listing for the bridge at Royal George Mills as it is one of the few remaining built by Benjiman Outram.

OC - April 4th

Picture outside Tunnel End cottages with accompanying article saying how the Huddersfield restoration is being hailed as an example for other areas to follow.

OC - April 4th

Letter expressing dismay at the dead heron that lived on the canal in Diggle. It was apparently caught up in a discarded fishing line. Final sentence - I, for one, will greatly miss the sight of the heron on the canal in the mornings - far more than I would miss the sight of the anglers.

HDE - April 11th

Picture showing a boat called Somerset jammed in a bridge hole; the heading was sudden halt to boating holiday. The story was of a group of holidaymakers who spent 20 hours stuck on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal after one of their boats was wedged fast by a chunk of timber. The party of seven friends was returning from Marsden when they found themselves in a real tourist trap. They were on the stretch of the canal

running through the premises of Sellers Engineers at Chapel Hill. John Knight, one of the stranded travellers, joked that they had finished watching the Bill last night and so things were getting desperate!

CVC - April 19th

Picture of Standedge Visitor Centre at Marsden and an article talking about the Colne Valley Museum receiving international acclaim. The Standedge Visitor Centre has been named in the Civic Trust lists of the National Urban Design Awards. The judge has decided that the centre should be mentioned in the category for projects bringing social economic or cultural benefits to their communities.

OC - April 25th

Coloured picture, once more outside Tunnel End cottages, accompanying an article quoting David Sumner's remarks in the last edition of Plink saying that "The canal will see its heaviest traffic for many a year and probably since the mid 19th century."

OC - May 7th

Article about the nationally sponsored walk to be taken, in aid of building a school for the blind in West Africa, along inland waterways, including the Huddersfield Canal. On Sunday July 14th there will be a six and a half mile walk from Milnsbridge ending at the Standedge Visitor Centre.

OC - May 13th

Article headed Canal's bumper season hope, gives a report from Mike Marshall of BW about the repairs and improvements to water supplies for this year.

OC - May 16th

Article about the donation of the profits of last year's concert held in Uppermill to the Saddleworth Museum to help stage a canal commemorating exhibition. The money was handed over by the illustrious previous editor Ken Wright who was the organiser of

the concert held last June. There was also a picture of the handover with Ken, the Museum Curator, the Treasurer of the Museum Trustees and an Oldham Councillor.

OC - May 17th

Picture of the work being done in Failsworth on the Rochdale Canal to enable the 'Ring of Roses' to be opened later this year.

Select Magazine

Two page article describing walk up from Huddersfield to Marsden well illustrated with pictures and concluding with the recommendation to take a trip into the Tunnel.

Finally – not on our canal but still relevant:

Two articles from the Engineer about the sabotage, by mindless idiots, of the Falkirk Wheel and how the local police are near to catching the perpetrators.

Brian Minor

Papers featured:

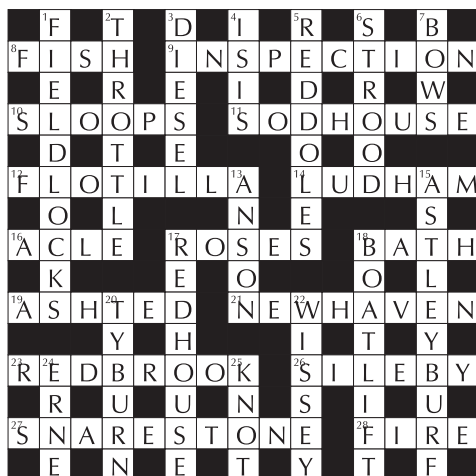
AA - Ashton Advertiser

CVC - Colne Valley Chronicle

HDE - Huddersfield Daily Examiner

OC - Oldham Chronicle

Solution to Crossword 37



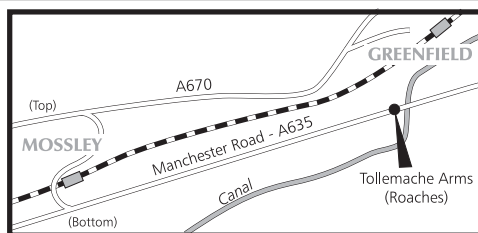
THE SOCIETY WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS:

2648 The Archivist,
2649 Mr Badminton,
2650 Mrs Badminton,
2651 Mr Bradshaw,
2652 Mrs Clarke,

2653 Mr Hunter,
2654 Mr Shaw,
2655 Mrs Dorpmann,
2656 Mr & Mrs Beck,

WEST SIDE SOCIAL MEETINGS:

Similar to previous years, it has been decided to suspend social meetings between July and September. Therefore, the date for the next meeting at the Tollemache Arms will be at 8.00pm on the 9th October 2002.



PENNINE LINK BACK NUMBERS:

The following back issues are available free from John Maynard, 29 Thick Hollins Drive, Meltham, Yorkshire, HD7 3DL. Please send an A5 stamped, addressed envelope (44p) or A4 sized envelope (76p) for joint issue 81/82.

25, 54, 56, 58, 59, 65, 66, 72, 77, 79 to 83, 86 to 89, 92 to 99, 101, 103 to 114, 116, 117, 121, 123, 124, 126, 128 to 131, 133 to 135, 137 to 141

These are the only back issues available, please do not request issues which are not on this list.

MEMBERSHIP RATES

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Associate	£15.00
Corporate	£150.00

COPY DATE

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	Per Issue	Per Year
Quarter	£9.38	£37.50
Half	£18.75	£75.00
Full	£37.50	£150.00



The original 1992 video commissioned by the Canal Society. Copies are available from the Society offices, price £10.99 plus £1.95 p+p.



The new video, 'The Impossible Dream', is available from the Society offices, price £10.99 plus £1.95 p+p.

This video, commissioned by the Huddersfield Canal Company, tells the story of the complete restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, from an idea by enthusiasts in the early 1970's, through to the official re-opening by HRH the Prince of Wales, in September 2001.

Running time: 56 mins

Please make all cheques payable to 'Loxvend Ltd'

