

Pennine Link

Members Quarterly Journal - Issue 144 - Spring 2003



HUDDERSFIELD
CANAL
SOCIETY

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Society member, Andrew Shortridge, concludes his account of cruising the Scottish waterways.

Members hoping to read the conclusion to Anne Wright's account aboard Challenger Syndicate's 'Blackbird', will have to wait for the Summer Issue, I'm afraid. Ed.

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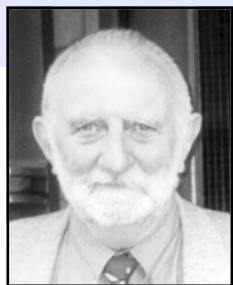
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Front Cover: A convoy of boats arrives at Marsden having passed through Standedge Tunnel en route to the 2002 National Festival. And boaters will be celebrating after the news that transit charges are to be scrapped. From 1st April, British Waterways will allow boaters through the Tunnel for free! Photo: K. Wright



Editorial

It's a quiet time of the year just now, a little too cold for holding a tiller for long periods, a time for hot toddies rather than the clink of the ice in the

G&T's! However the last few days have been bright and the sun has shone albeit not very warmly. So Summer and the joys of the waterways are not far away.

In this Issue there are some reminders of past glories and a few ideas for places to visit in the new season. The Scottish Odyssey of member Andrew Shortridge reaches its conclusion and there is an introduction to the delights of the Basingstoke.

A possible new crusade for some of us in the Hollinwood Branch restoration suggested by Ed Mortimer might send a few of us walking on new territory. On our own Canal, we detail BW's report on the necessary works to achieve perfection.

The Inter Canal Society Quiz will be on us shortly, (see page 38) and the Society would like to put a team or teams in for this. I have been in the HCS team on a couple of occasions and although we have thoroughly enjoyed the evening, we were each time abysmally bottom! Its not that our team was particularly dim but some of the local boaters have an encyclopaedic knowledge of obscure corners of the Waterway system. So please – there MUST be some keen boaters out there who can restore the honour of HCS! Ring Frank in the Office to join a team or ring Alwyn Ogborn for the full horror story of our past failure! I notice that the MBBC Society who are running it this year have chosen a pub with decent beer, must have been me complaining, a

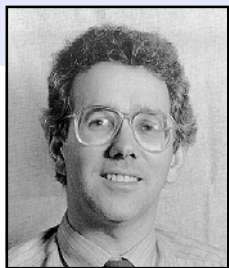
couple of years ago, about the fizzy keg rubbish the venue was dispensing.

We haven't had many letters to the Editor this quarter, I am sure it is not that the Council have got everything right this time! This is your magazine and it must reflect the views of all our members. Brickbats or bouquets are both welcome, if possible, please e.mail letters to me or directly to the Office. If you aren't on the electronic highway don't worry, just send them in anyway.

Chairman David hasn't been too well in recent months – I hear he is back at work again now. The work that David has done for the canal is phenomenal. He smooths out squabbles in council, acts as spokesman with groups as diverse as Parliamentary Commissions and local anglers, knows everyone who is anyone in the canal and local authority world and usually gets the first round in after meetings! Glad you're back, boss. We need you!

The news that BW are to waive the Tunnel charges from the 1st of April has delighted all members of the Council. Although the charge did not deter a dedicated boater from making the trip along the length of the canal, it would certainly have been a consideration for the less adventurous. The work being done on smoothing out the high spots on the problem locks and removing the 'pinch points' also means that the pioneering days of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal as a cruising waterway are over. Our canal can take its place with the rest of the system as a superb place to visit selling itself on the outstanding beauty of the border country and the friendliness of the local people.

Brian Minor



Chairman's Report

I stated in the last issue that BW, HCS and our partners are committed to improve the waterway year on year. At the User

Group meeting on 3rd December at Standedge Visitor Centre, Mike Marshall(BW) presented a report on the HNC and Rochdale Canal.

In the months since reopening there has been much discussion and criticism about the navigation and facilities for boaters. I note the letter in the last issue by Marty Seymour and her observations which were forwarded to BW. Whilst the comments are helpful, Mrs Seymour and the many hundreds of boaters fortunate enough to navigate our new waterway, will of course be aware of the struggle we had to achieve the funding necessary to reopen the Canal to ANY standard.

We knew that the first few years would be difficult and challenging, but BW's commitment to improve the navigation should reassure all. Indeed budgeted expenditure is in excess of £500,000 for the current year, including emergency repair works to Locks 3W and 20W. Facility improvements include a new sanitary station at Mossley, to which HCS is contributing £50,000, and works to upgrade the Wool Road facilities and at Slaithwaite.

We all read of the visit by Tyseley - Mike Lucas's narrowboat - in 2001 and of the disappointment by a few that the Canal had not been restored to accommodate all narrowboats. We are all aware of the difficulties and BW has stated that they are "committed to developing a network that is capable of enabling boats of 7ft. gauge to navigate freely.....".

As reported in the last issue, a survey of the Canal has been completed and BW is now at the first stage of meeting that commitment. A report was produced by the BW Waterways Regeneration Task Force and every pinch point has been mapped and remedial works costed. Certain locks were rebuilt "as original" ie. prior to restoration. All new Locks were constructed to "over 7ft". Problem Locks include 21W, 22W and 41E, 42E. The tunnel profile also has pinch points which relate more to the "wriggle" of the walls and the impact of changes in water levels. However, craft over 6.10ins. may navigate by prior arrangement with BW.

Two phases of works are proposed and have been costed. The estimated total costs (November 2002) are £8.26m. Some works to Locks will be undertaken under normal repair and maintenance regimes. Other works will need third party funding and no timetable has been set. Tunnel re-profiling costs are estimated at over £3.5m and these and other major works are necessary to allow the full navigation standards as described above. With our partners, we shall discuss how best to achieve the raised standard, including prioritising to produce the optimum benefits for the canal corridor. Like the Kennet and Avon Canal, it might be ten years after the opening before everyone will be satisfied with our Canal.

Meanwhile the Society has plans for the future. I look forward to outlining these at our AGM at Standedge in June, at which BW will also attend and report on the first two years of operation and the plans for the future.

David Sumner

Towpath Games

Visitors to the canal towpath between Ward Lane and the Tunnel portal at Diggle can see one of the 'Percent for Arts' projects in the form of a towpath game.

A variation on that old board game favourite, Snakes and Ladders, significant negative and positive events in the history of the Canal have been used to control progress along the linear flagstone 'board'. And dice are provided in the form of bespoke, stainless steel tumblers, frame mounted, alongside the 'course'.

Bob Gough

The towpath game between Ward Lane and the Diggle portal. Volunteer Co-ordinator, Frank Smith, in the distance, weighs up his chances. Inset: One of the 'ladders' indicating the benefit of joining the Canal Society! Above: One of the frame mounted dice. Photos: R. Gough





Keith's Disconnected Jottings

I finished the last issue on an optimistic note about the Barnsley and Dearne & Dove Canals. The current issue of 'The Keel', the journal of the

Barnsley, Dearne & Dove Canals Trust, reports that, after their visit to see the Huddersfield Narrow, the Scrutiny Commission of Barnsley Council is recommending the Council to adopt a policy of supporting restoration of the canals. This could be the key step in at last persuading Barnsley Council to join with Wakefield and Rotherham Councils and British Waterways in a consortium to consider regeneration of the canal corridor. Keep your fingers crossed!

Talking of the Dearne & Dove, I see that Waterway Recovery Group has a new line in "pre-soiled" T shirts for budding navies available in various colours including Elsecar Black! Maybe the B, D & D Canals Trust should start bottling the mud from Elsecar again. It was a splendid sales gimmick.

Major national charitable heritage organisations including the National Trust, the Civic Trust, the Council for the Protection of Rural England, the Waterways Trust and the Inland Waterways Association have linked together to form The Heritage Link, with the intention of having greater strength for lobbying government on heritage and environmental issues. It has been apparent for some time that there was a need for these organisations to speak with one voice. I hope that they will press for the return of an environmental projects grants scheme – a belated successor to Derelict Land Grant. You might remember that DLC was very helpful in restoring our canal (the Diggle flight and bridges in Saddleworth)

and the Rochdale (Tuel Lane at Sowerby Bridge) in the short window of opportunity whilst that grant scheme allowed for environment-based works between periods of major government grants being based largely on economic and community regeneration benefits.

It's all very well basing grants on regeneration in an urban environment, but it has proved very difficult for rural waterways – that's why it is taking so long to restore the Montgomery, for instance. It's simply not in the right place to be eligible for grants. Still our friend, Regional Director of British Waterways, Derek Cochrane, has confirmed to the Montgomery Canal Trust and the Shropshire Union Canal Society that restoration of that canal still has the support of BW, and that he hopes the canal will be restored up to Montgomery by 2007. Although there are still no clear ideas for progress beyond on the section not in BW ownership to Newtown, BW's confirmation of support for the Montgomery gives the SUCS more confidence to continue with restoration of Newhouse Lock on that section. And at last the Aston to Maesbury section of the canal is to be formally opened on 4th April after many years work by Waterway Recovery Group to restore the Aston lock flight.

Still on the subject of long running restoration sagas of derelict rural waterways, it is good to hear that IWA Vice President (and recently retired Chief Executive of BW), Dave Fletcher, is to formally open the new Drungewick Aqueduct on the Wey & Arun Canal in May built by the Wey & Arun Canal Trust at a cost of £276,000. This was met partly by grants from charitable trusts, local authorities, the IWA and funds from the Landfill Tax Credits scheme but, like all these rural canals, a large amount had to be found by the Trust and local fundraising.

It's very hard to make progress on these rural waterways – even in the affluent south east.

Staying in the south, did you see the photo in the waterways magazines of the floodlighting of the Caen Hill flight of locks at Devizes on the Kennet & Avon Canal over Christmas to celebrate the completion of the £30m Heritage Lottery Fund backed improvement works to that canal? Not that work is actually complete even then as a £1m restoration of John Rennie's magnificent Dundas Aqueduct near Bath has commenced. As I mentioned in the last issue, British Waterways is commissioning a study of the economic benefits that have actually been achieved by restoration of the Kennet & Avon Canal. Economic consultants, Ecotec have now been appointed to carry out this study, and their brief is crucially extended to look also at the likely benefits of restoring the Cotswold Canals (the Thames and Severn Canal and the Stroudwater Navigation). At the same time BW themselves are beginning consideration of the economics of restoring the North Wilts Canal from the Thames & Severn towards Swindon.

As part of our application to the Millennium Commission we included a Heritage Study of our Canal. That obviously is part of the way forward for largely rural waterways to find funding for restoration. Nigel Crowe, Heritage Manager at British Waterways, is to be the manager of a project to carry out a similar study of the Cotswold Canals with the help of grants of £19,200 from the Heritage Lottery Fund and £10,000 from the Inland Waterways Association. And there is actual physical progress, if only in a small way, on these waterways which are expected to be a centrepiece of the next generation of large restoration schemes. A new bridge is under construction to take the Thames & Severn under the so-called Western Spine Road to the Cotswold Water

Park near South Cerney, at a cost of nearly £500,000, with funding from the Countryside Agency (Aggregates Tax), Landfill Tax Credits, Gloucestershire County Council and the IWA, but more than £100,000 has had to be found by the Cotswold Canals Trust.

The Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Trust must now have joined the big league of waterway restoration societies with all the new members who have joined them as a result of the publicity for the fantastically successful David Suchet fund-raising appeal to raise money for the crossings of their canals by the new M6 Toll motorway. The money raised by the appeal has largely been spent on culverts under the motorway at Churchbridge to the south of Cannock required for the restoration of the Cannock Extension & Hatherton Canals, but the Trust's efforts are now largely concentrated on building the aqueduct required to take the Lichfield Canal (as they have appropriately renamed the derelict section of the Wyrley & Essington Canal) over the motorway further east near Brownhills where the side abutments and the centre column to support the steel aqueduct trough have been built. The motorway could open like that, with only a limited amount of disruption to put the trough in place later, but it will cost much less if the aqueduct trough can be constructed before the motorway is complete. This section is expected to be finished by August. The David Suchet appeal and a large grant to the Trust from the Manifold Trust account for about two-thirds of the money needed, but the Trust were still £100,000 short last I heard, and there seems little chance of any more government money for these road crossings. Donations, payable to the Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Trust, are urgently required by their Treasurer, Bob Williams, Norfolk House, 29 Hall Lane, Hammerwich, WS7 0JP.

The Lichfield & Hatherton Canals are further in the news, having been offered a £267,250 grant from the European Regional Development Fund towards consultant's reports on the Hatherton Canal providing a detailed route definition and engineering report, including water supply and hydrology, and an economic benefit study and an environmental assessment. In addition a small part of the grant will go towards acquisition of key sections of land in private ownership, and to pay for further work associated with the M6 Toll motorway at Churchbridge, although it may be too late for the full benefits of that to be obtained at this late stage in the road construction programme.

Nearer home, the Friends of the Cromford Canal have had what could be an important early success. Bolsover District Council has agreed to protect the line of the canal, and to consider its restoration as a navigable

waterway in a forthcoming review of the Local Plan. Possibly more on this subject next time as the next Northern Canals Association meeting is at Ironville on the route of that canal. Even nearer and returning to the subject of grants, the North West Regional Development Agency have offered £150,000 to British Waterways to fund an engineering report on the Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal to follow from the economic benefit report by DTZ Pida which showed that spending £32m on restoring the canal would lead to the creation of 6,000 new jobs and training opportunities, £180m in private development investment, 1,300 new homes and an annual leisure spend of £5.6m in the local economy. With those figures the money for restoration should be forthcoming too.

Keith Gibson

Obituary - Alex Thomsom, MBE

HCS lost a great friend and ally with the death in February of Alex Thomson.

Appointed as coordinator for job creation and training schemes by the British Waterways Board in 1982, we first met Alex on the Huddersfield Narrow when he chaired the regular progress meetings for the job creation schemes run by Kirklees on the East side and HCS on the West. Ours were British Waterways' first big job creation restoration schemes after the Kennet & Avon.

Alex had learned a lot from those schemes and put that experience to good use. He delighted in cutting through bureaucracy and inspired both BW and local authority officers to do next week what they would otherwise have done next month. His solid presence as chairman of the officers working groups was crucial.

When we moved on from job creation to training schemes he was appointed to the Board of HCS Restoration, displaying a remarkable ability to discuss issues from an HCS perspective, separate from any BW views.

Then, after the change from government schemes to grant aided work, Alex stayed on the Board, coming to meetings in Ashton regularly from his home in Gloucester at his own expense if he had no other BW business in the North West, and even after his retirement.

In the early years, middle level BW staff found it hard to believe that a group of volunteers could manage a scheme employing over 100 people restoring their canal, but Alex had faith in us and waved away the doubts with his characteristic sense of humour. We owe a lot to him.

Keith Gibson

The Hollinwood Branch

Society member, Ed Mortimer, muses over a future for the abandoned Hollinwood Branch of the Ashton Canal.

Walking the Past

In 1975 I walked from Portland Basin up the Huddersfield Narrow Canal to Stalybridge. Most of the canal was built over, and I knew nothing could be done: the canal through Stalybridge was lost forever.

Now it is 2003 and I live in a house right next to the canal in Stalybridge. The canal has been rebuilt and the town transformed. There is a new town square and I walk the towpath to do my weekly shopping.

Recently I walked the route of the Hollinwood Branch. I'd walked it before. Derelict and forgotten. Bits built over. It reminded me of my walk along the HNC 28 years ago.

When I got back home, I looked again at the maps. I could see that a short link had been

proposed in 1791 between the Hollinwood Branch and the Rochdale Canal. If this was built, could Hollinwood and Droylsden experience the same regeneration as Stalybridge. Should anything be done?

Short History of the Ashton Canal

The Ashton Canal was proposed as the Manchester, Ashton and Oldham Canal and opened in 1797. The canal included branches to Hollinwood and Stockport and a short spur at Dukinfield. Extensions included the Fairbottom Branch, off the Hollinwood, and the uncompleted Beat Bank Branch, off the Stockport.

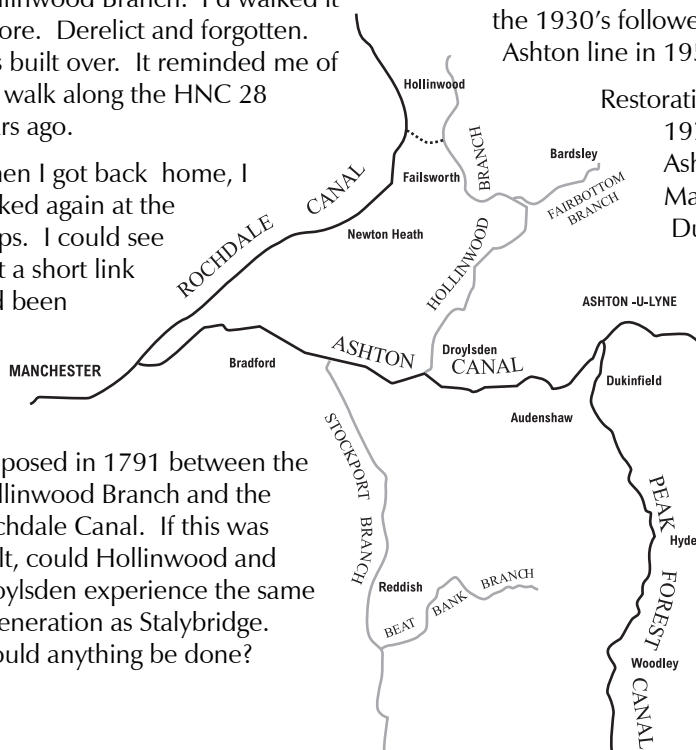
The opening of the Ashton enabled the Huddersfield Narrow Canal to have a direct link into Manchester. Two years later, the Peak Forest Canal, constructed mainly to carry Derbyshire limestone, opened, joining the Ashton Canal at Dukinfield Junction.

The Hollinwood and Stockport Branches fell into disuse for commercial traffic in the 1930's followed by the main Ashton line in 1957.

Restoration work in the mid 1970s reopened the Ashton Canal from Manchester to Dukinfield Junction

and today, with the restored Peak Forest Canal, forms part of the very popular 'Cheshire Ring'.

The Hollinwood, Fairbottom and Stockport Branches are all now derelict and partially infilled or built over.



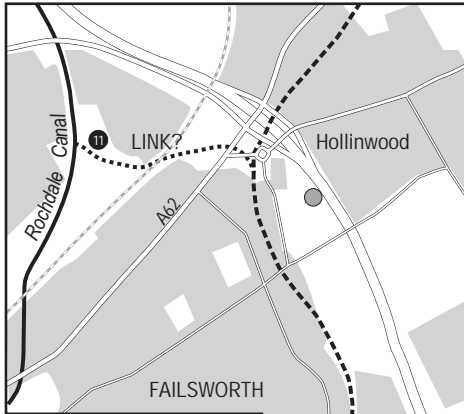
The Hollinwood Branch

Fairfield Junction to Hollinwood Wharf: 4¾ miles

Locks: 4 (at Daisy Nook Country Park)

4 (Bradley Bent Bridge to Hollinwood Top Wharf)

A new through route: The first 4 miles and four locks of the Hollinwood Branch with a new canal (as first proposed in 1791) 800 metres long with 2 new locks.



Much of the route of the canal can be explored on foot. It can easily be followed using the Ordnance Survey maps or the Manchester A-Z map. The area around Waterhouses Junction in Daisy Nook Country Park is especially worth visiting. Some parts of the canal route in Droylsden and in Hollinwood are not accessible.



Lime Side

Bardsley

A627

Limehurst

Crime Lake

Daisy Nook Country Park

Locks 19-22

Fairbottom Branch

Woodhouses

M60

Line of the Hollinwood Branch

Little Moss

ASHTON MOSS

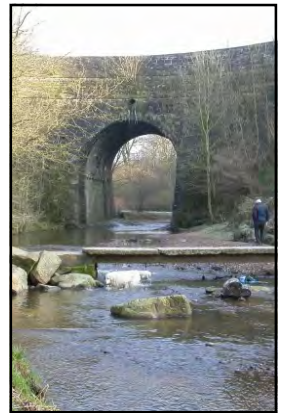
Discontinued Railway







A635

A662

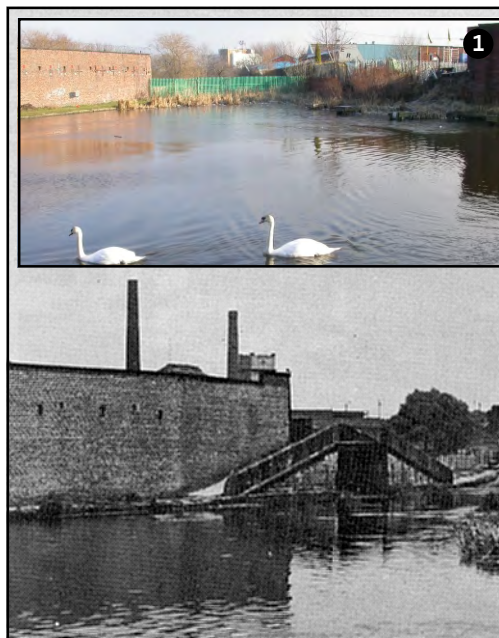
Fairfield Jcn.

Ashton Canal



-  Built-up area
-  Railway
-  Road network
-  Motorway
-  M60
-  Photo Location

0 500
Scale of metres



Entrance to the Hollinwood Branch at Fairfield Junction on the Ashton Canal in 1960. Inset: The view in 2003.

Let's go to Hollinwood

My walk to Hollinwood started at Fairfield Junction, (the start of the Hollinwood Branch), above the 18 locks that drop the Ashton Canal down to Manchester. Now the junction is just a wide winding hole. The start of the Branch is filled in. Almost immediately on the left there was a short arm (also filled in) with a towpath bridge over it; the remains of which are clearly visible.

The towpath is on the left hand side and remains so all the way to Hollinwood.

This first section of the Branch is currently the subject of redevelopment proposals. The proposals do not include the provision of the canal route through to the first bridge. The bridge still exists, carrying the present day A662. I had the feeling of being at a 'canal zoo' peering through the safety railings at the time-locked exhibit below!



Manchester Road Bridge (A662), Droylsden.



Beneath Manchester Road Bridge

Beyond the bridge is Tesco's Superstore and a gap by the side of it where the canal once ran. Trying to restore the canal looks impossible and so I decided I would turn back on my expedition. Then I remembered that same feeling in Stalybridge 28 years ago. This time I must continue!

A short distance further is Greenside Lane Bridge, which still exists. Maybe things are not so bad after all!

The canal cannot be followed until Cliffords Bridge (now Sunnyside Road). This was originally a swing bridge (and a footbridge). Beyond here the canal route can be more easily spotted. The route is infilled and is a grassy, public footpath.



A little further, past some playing fields and a rather forlorn running track, the canal skirted Lumb Clough and crossed the railway on an aqueduct. Now there is only a modern footbridge.



Shortly after crossing the railway, the footpath follows the line of the towpath through the Medlock Valley all the way to Daisy Nook Country Park.



Quite a lot of this stretch of the canal is weeded up, and partly in water. Some of it shows the effects of mining subsidence (the towpath wall has been raised up).

When I last walked along the Branch, the M60 had not been built. Now this motorway slices across the canal, and only a footpath bridge was constructed. There is no canal, and getting the Branch restored here looks expensive!



Once again I wanted to turn back. But just a short distance further is the 'fairytale' location at Daisy Nook: aqueducts, a junction, four locks (two as a staircase pair), all forming an amazing sight.

The locks are capped and some of the stonework has been taken down, but many details are still to be seen (such as the brackets, or so-called 'A' frames, that used to hold the lock gates.)



Staircase pair and 'A' Frame detail, Daisy Nook Country Park

Above the fourth lock (Lock No. 22 - the numbering continues in sequence from the 18 locks on the Ashton Canal) is Waterhouses Junction. Turning right takes you along the Fairbottom Branch to Bardsley; about a mile in length.

The canal is in water at the junction, and it is easy to imagine that a boat could appear any minute! Keeping on the Hollinwood Branch, beyond the junction is Crime Lake.



Crime Lake, Daisy Nook Country Park

This was a lake created by flooding a small valley. The lake was never planned, but during the construction of the canal

embankment, the stream culvert underneath it became blocked and was never cleared. Instead, the valley was allowed to slowly fill up and only the towpath bank of the embankment was completed so forming a dam across the valley.

The area is popular now for walking and fishing. But it used to be popular for pleasure boating as well: up until the 1930s, rowing boats could be hired out. And for one year, around 1897, a steam launch even operated on the lake, as part of a timetabled service from Hollinwood to Bardsley Bridge.

Beyond Crime Lake, and the infilled canal at Bank Bridge, the route enters an overgrown cutting. This cutting is now itself crossed by the M60, also in a cutting.



Infilled canal beyond Bank Bridge

From here to the Roxy Cinema at Hollinwood the line of the canal is mostly difficult to follow, though there are remains to be spotted if you look carefully.

The Hollinwood Branch is crossed by the M60 motorway (again!) and then there were originally four more locks to Hollinwood Wharf.

A new link to the Rochdale could leave the Hollinwood Branch before the final four locks, to follow a similar line to the proposed route of 1791.

I do not know how this link could now be built, but the actual distance is not very great (about 800 metres). There is no easy route on foot either, but looking across the A62 from behind the Roxy Cinema, I could orientate on some prominent stacks of blue pallets on land acquired by Manchester Cabins.

Following the road under the railway line and then left by the transporter car park for the Mirror Group printing works, I could see the pallets again, on the horizon, from a vantage point on extensive waste ground adjacent to the car park.

I scrambled on through the trees, and there it was, the Rochdale Canal!

A Link Too Far?

Too far fetched - a link from the Huddersfield Narrow / Ashton to the Rochdale Canal? Is there a danger of thinking that every disused canal must be restored? Or should we be looking now into the huge potential benefits that a route back to Hollinwood and the Rochdale could bring?

All those years ago I did not believe that Stalybridge would ever have a canal again, or that it could cause such a positive transformation. I was proved wrong.

Would anyone else like to look at going to Hollinwood? If so, please contact me on 0161 303 7635, write to me at 68 Knowl Street, Stalybridge, SK15 3AJ, or EMail the Society office: hbc@hcanals.demon.co.uk

Ed Mortimer

All photos: R Gough, unless otherwise credited



The Other Societies

One of the nice things about the job of Editor is reading the magazines of other societies and seeing how they go about the job of restoration.

Endeavour – the publication of the Northampton branch of the IWA has a picture on the cover of the Rose and Castle Morris Dancers performing at Stoke Bruerne on New Years Day. A first glance made me think they were our very own Saddleworth Morris Men, as these guys wear a very similar costume with flowered bowler hats and even bear a resemblance to some of the lads I see in the Church at Uppermill!

There is also the latest instalment of the saga of one Anthony Finch who makes a living from stealing from moored boats in the Milton Keynes area. Apparently this man was released on bail after serving time for this offence but headed straight back to the towpath. However, a local boater recognized him and called the police and friend Anthony is back behind bars!

They also mention that plans for the Bedford to Milton Keynes link are not going too well due to English Partnerships not wanting a waterway through land it owns.

They have a crossword prepared by our contributor John Harwood, but it is one that has appeared in our pages first. Remember you saw it here first folks!!

There is a mention that the Waterways Trust are compiling a book of ghost stories about the whole network and mentions that there is one inside Blisworth Tunnel. They say that any such stories can be e.mailed to haunted@thewaterwaystrust.co.uk

It contains an application form for the Northampton Boat Gathering on 2nd to 5th may this year. If anyone is interested, let me know and I will pass on the details.

The magazine of the **Manchester Bolton and Bury Society** (which took the award at the National for the best Society Magazine) has three articles by chairman Margaret Fletcher as well as her Chairmans page! To be fair, Margaret travels extensively around the canal network and attends meetings of both North and South Canals groups.

There is a very interesting article about the MBBC on old maps. There is a list of what is happening at their monthly meetings, to which everyone is invited – I've been and had a warm welcome.

The article about the BW trailer and team traveling the area and talking to locals shows how much effort BW are putting in to the restoration of the MB&BC and bodes well for its opening in the near future.

The third Canal Magazine I have seen is **Dragonfly**, the quarterly of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust. I believe the name comes from the Inspection launch used on the canal in 1893.

The canal ran from the K & A at Melksham to the Thames at Abingdon with a North Wilts branch to the Thames and Severn Canal at Cricklade, the whole lot about 80 miles long. There are 8 or 9 sections fully restored and most of the line is evident, apart from the section through Swindon.

The canal seems to run through some pleasant country and would be an asset, when restored, to the network. They have recently celebrated their 25th anniversary and seem to be very well organised. The Trust has 10 or 11 branches operating along the length of the canal and the magazine keeps them up to date on what all the others are doing. There are many nice stories of restoration, all of which seems to be done by voluntary effort.

Brian Minor



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.



New Facilities for Boaters on the H.N.C.

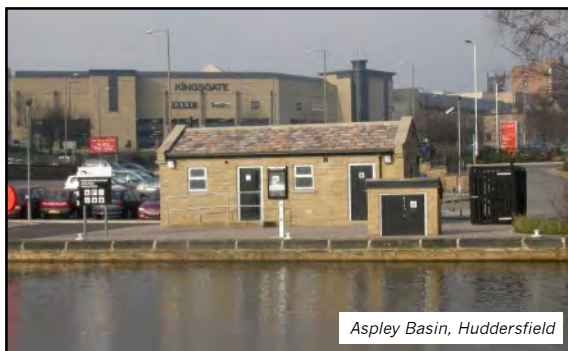
British Waterways continues its drive to add to the existing services for boaters along the H.N.C.

Boaters who have already travelled along the Huddersfield Narrow will remember that during the first 18 months since re-opening, facilities were somewhat limited to say the least. A toilet, water tap and Elsan point at Wool Road, Dobcross and a water tap at Tunnel End were just about the lot

B.W. did promise that as money became available they would

improve and create additional facilities for boaters. A £200,000 programme of improvement works is currently underway, and is anticipated to be completed by the start of the boating season. This is of course in addition to the general repairs and maintenance to the canal itself. The following article illustrates where and what has been installed so far.

Opened last year in time for the I.W.A. National, albeit by B.W. N.E. Region, is a brand new service station at Aspley Basin, Huddersfield (Broad Canal). On the same side as Sainsbury's, it provides Water, Toilets, Chemical Closet Disposal, Showers, Pump-Out and Refuse Disposal.



At Milnsbridge, and the site of the former swing bridge, is a sign advertising Holme Mills Services. This is probably more for emergencies, as boaters who wish to use the service are required to telephone the agent who will bring along water and a mobile pump-out. Being a private service, boaters will obviously have to pay the agent.



Mid-way in the Colne Valley is Slaithwaite. Adjacent to Lock 21E is a water tap and a large wheelie-bin for refuse. An Elsan Disposal Unit is proposed but not yet installed. The wording on the sign over the bin has caused some debate in that it refers to barges not narrow boats.

However, it is generally accepted that the majority of the non-boating public refers to all types of canal boats as 'barges' - it is presumably up to those who know different to re-educate people!





Tunnel End, Marsden

At Tunnel End, Marsden, boaters could be excused for missing the water point in their haste to connect up to the tunnel convoy, however, there is a water tap there located on one of the tug charging point columns adjacent to the Standedge Visitor Centre.



Tunnel Portal, Diggle

A similar situation exists at the Diggle end of the tunnel. The water point is a few yards from the tunnel entrance. In any respects, water is now available for those who need it.



Wool Road, Dobcross

At the bottom of the Diggle Flight (below Lock 24W) is the Wool Road Services. Formally a male/female toilet built by the Society for the Transshipment Warehouse, it has been converted by B.W. into a Service Station. Services now include Water, Elsan Disposal, and a newly installed Pump-out. Due to no road access, refuse disposal is being arranged on the towpath side (opposite) so that council refuse wagons can collect.



Uppermill

In Uppermill, B.W. have installed a new water point. It's on the towpath side and is nearly opposite the museum and winding hole.



Between Mossley and Stalybridge is Grove Road, a B.W. Section Office adjacent to Lock 8W. This is the site for a new service station, incorporating facilities for the disabled, providing water, toilets, Elsan and refuse disposal. The water point is installed and the new building is under construction.



That's the lot so far on the H.N.C. However, in Ashton-u-Lyne (Dukinfield Junction), a pump-out service is provided by Portland Basin Marina, and water is available, courtesy of Portland Basin Museum. (The tap, lurking in the shadows, is located on the wall of the water wheel pump house, detailed.)



Words: Frank Smith
Pictures: Bob Gough

The Huddersfield (Too) Narrow Canal

Since the canal re-opened on 1 May 2001 British Waterways have recommended that only craft within certain limiting dimensions can safely navigate the canal.

Most boats are within these dimensions and 'fit' the canal – but for many that fit is 'only just', and some boats, even within these dimensions, have had difficulties because they did not sit vertically in the water or because of particular problems at certain tight spots. Some of these have been resolved by minor work already.

But the real problems are for historic traditional working boats which are broader than 6' 10", even though some have managed to traverse the canal. The difficulties for these and other boats broader than 6' 10" relate both to locks and to Standedge Tunnel. There has been criticism that the canal was not restored to a suitable gauge for all narrow beam boats.

But, as I have become tired of pointing out, we did the best we could with the money available to create a canal that could be navigated by most boats; that was quite some achievement. Critics have forgotten that twenty years ago the Huddersfield Narrow was described as 'The Impossible Restoration.'

British Waterways have now carried out an extensive survey of the dimensions of locks and Standedge Tunnel and in November 2002, British Waterways' South Pennine Ring Waterways Regeneration Task Force published a report entitled 'Huddersfield Narrow Canal - Report on Implementing 7ft Standard'. We are grateful to Mike Marshall in giving permission to quote from the report.

Keith Gibson

'Huddersfield Narrow Canal - Report on Implementing 7ft Standard'

1. Aim

The Huddersfield Narrow Canal reopened on 1st May 2001 after 25 years of restoration, culminating in the Millennium Commission / English Partnerships funded project to reopen the final 12 out of 74 locks. This restoration work resulted in the following limiting craft dimensions:-

Width	6'10"
Length	70'0"
Height above water	6'2"
Draught	3'0"

Because of the arch of the roof, Standedge Tunnel also has an above water profile restriction of 6'10" to a height above water of 4'10", then tapering in to 4'10" wide at a maximum height of 6'2" above water level.

The desirable profile to meet some customers' needs was compromised due to limited funding. However, British Waterways aspiration is as follows:

"British Waterways is committed to developing a network that is capable of enabling boats of 7ft gauge to navigate freely ... we will identify and publish the pinch points and there will be a forward programme of works to remedy"

2. Known problems prior to survey

In addition to correspondence, all operational issues reported to bankside staff and office staff are logged. From this data we have recorded the following locations:

2.1 East Side

*** Old lock 21E chamber at Slaithwaite** (problem with draught, not width; dealt with by BW) - **Problem resolved.**

* **Lock 22E** (historic lock in Slaithwaite, dug out and partially rebuilt by BW as part of restoration)

* **Lock 32E** (historic lock, tapers toward headgate end)

* **Lock 41E** (historic lock, tight at headgate end)

* **Lock 42E** (historic lock, walls outside lock on tail approach taper inwards from coping)

2.2 Standedge Tunnel

* **boats measuring over 6'10"** have failed to pass the original masonry lining of the Tunnel between Adit Nos. 33 and 34 near the Marsden Portal.

* there are numerous other locations with the tunnel where convoys of boats pass through tight "squeezes" (where the profile of a given point is close to the minimum) or "wriggles" (where the boats are required to follow a very tight line because of the alignment of the tunnel).

These are obviously likely to pose more of a problem to 7'0" boats. During the first few convoy trips in 2001 these tight areas were identified as requiring care in passage ...

2.3 West Side

* **Lock 22W** (historic lock)

* **Lock 21W** (historic lock, some protruding stonework was trimmed off during restoration works)

* **Lock 13W** (historic lock, overhanging copings have been reset by BW) - **Problem Resolved**

3. Original and Restored dimensions

Rather than discuss various secondary sources' differing views on the historical dimensions of the canal, all that is relevant to this study is the identification of areas which may, at present, not allow the safe passage of a 7'0" x 70' craft.

3.1 HCS have stated (letter from David Sumner to M. Lucas 18 Dec 2001) that:

"When locks were restored in the early days no lock wall was taken down to the invert. However, we tried wherever possible to maintain the width or better."

3.2 BW's standard for locks and other structures in the final phase of Restoration (Bates' and Sellers' Tunnels, new locks in Slaithwaite and Stalybridge, new bridges) was 7'4" or wider.

3.3 Within Standedge Tunnel, works were designed to BW's national minimum profile.

Where this profile would not fit over a 70' length, works were included to increase the tunnel profile. Where stabilisation works were required, rock was cut back to a *larger* profile to ensure that the mesh, rock bolting and concrete added would not then project into the minimum profile ...

Water level in the Tunnel is critical. During the Restoration water level was lowered back to a level close to original (having been raised over the years to force Marsden feed water through to the Diggle side). This restored water level was also essential to provide a minimum height clearance. The Tunnel is still operated on the basis of an increase of 2" in water level being unacceptable for safe boat passage.

In general, the key issue in the Tunnel is not the width restriction on any given point, but the "wriggle" - the line a canal boat has to take to get through offset walls. All of the sticking points within the Tunnel are areas of original masonry or stabilised live rock, and would have obstructed a 7' x 70' boat prior to Restoration (i.e. they are **not** created by width reductions arising from Restoration works such as new walls, fendering, relining or rock-bolting) ...

Sections 4 & 5 give detailed accounts of the Survey Methods and tabulated Results respectively.

6. What is the target profile?

We already know from the Standedge Tunnel operation the difficulty in meeting a rigid target like 6'10". We have had several boats which customers are sure are 6'10" still get stuck in the Tunnel. These have all been found on closer examination to have an area at 6'11" or greater. This is usually associated with the method of construction, or due to spreading.

It is also easy for boats to list slightly and we have seen boats stick in locks or the Tunnel because they are not true to vertical.

6.1 Locks

Clearly, some tolerance has to be given to this. In order to allow full "free" navigation by craft of 7' width and up to 70'0" length, we would need to be sure of at least 1" clearance to each side along the entire length and height of a lock.

The standard for locks to allow 7'0" width passage is therefore at least 7'2"

maximum clear opening. Where lock walls have to be rebuilt, they will be rebuilt to ensure a minimum of 7'4" width throughout.

6.2 Standedge Tunnel

In the Tunnel the issues relate more to the "wriggle" of the walls, and the potential for craft to strike the rock above water level, and the impact that changes in water level can have on the "fit" (with many sections tapering in below the water line).

For the Tunnel, the minimum requirement is for the 7'2" standard identified above to stretch from at least 1m (3'3") below normal water level to at least 1.48m (4'10") above normal water, which is where the existing profile tapers inwards.

This minimum profile to be maintained over a straight line so that a 70' long boat can pass through the "wriggle". In places this will require cutting back to a greater width or installing fendering to prevent boats

sluicing into projecting rock as they pass through.

6.3 Interim Standard

It is recognised that certain boaters have, despite the stated standard of 6'10" for the HNC, navigated sections of the Canal successfully in 7'0" wide craft since it was reopened in 2001. These sections include structures which do not meet the target standards above.

While BW maintain that in order to allow free navigation by all 7' craft the canal needs to meet the targets identified, we are keen to enable navigation by experienced boaters, probably with the assistance/supervision by BW staff, over the widest possible area, as soon as possible. To this end, the following sections (7, 8 ...) are prioritised to identify the minimum works required to allow controlled navigation by 7' craft (*Phase One works*) and we propose the following Interim Arrangements will apply to the Canal until such time as all structures are to the required standard:

Craft over 6'10" width may navigate the Canal from 1st January 2003 by prior arrangement with the Waterway Office. This booking will allow British Waterways to advise of the current status of all structures, which ones are passable with care and which will not yet accommodate a 7'0" craft in any circumstances and should not be attempted. It will also allow local staff to be ready to assist customers should they encounter difficulties at any location.

7. Areas that fail the requirements:

Areas which fail the standards set out in section 6 above are ...

7.1 Phase One

... priority Phase One works which BW feel are necessary to allow ANY 7'0" boat to navigate safely. Primarily they are points

where a 7'0" boat will not physically pass under any circumstances at present.

For the Locks, this comprises Nos. 22E, 42E, 21W, 22W, 26W, 31W

In the Tunnel, this includes four sections between Ch. 574 and 840 (near the Marsden end of the Tunnel), sections at Ch. 2520 and Ch. 2600-2635 (centre of tunnel) and Ch. 4360 - 4390 near Diggle end.

7.2 Phase Two

Phase Two works are those which are required to meet the free navigation standards set out in section 6 above. They will be actioned after Phase One works in most cases.

They comprise the bulk of the works, but structures can be physically navigated under the Interim Arrangements in section 6.3

8. Works proposed

Works proposed fall into several key categories:

- Trimming back stonework
- Rebuilding lock walls
- Relining tunnel sections
- Cutting back rock overhangs and projections
- Guiding through wriggles / fendering through live rock

Trimming back stonework on lock walls

can be carried out by BW staff within the general works programmes (GWP) for small patches. Larger areas will require the lock to be set up as a formal work site and may be put out to contract. BW will take a view on the appropriateness of cutting back walls as opposed to rebuilding them based on the location and extent of the area to be effected, given our commitments to conserve the heritage of the structures. Clearly trimming back large areas of stonework is not desirable from either an aesthetic or structural viewpoint.

Rebuilding lock walls will involve works during the winter stoppage seasons, as locks will have to be closed off. Walls will be taken down stone by stone either to the lock chamber floor or until the projection is cleared and then rebuilt to meet the new profile. This can also be carried out by BW staff under the GWP, subject to funding, but will need to fit within a wider programme because of the time required and need to meet materials and plant costs.

ALL the work in the Standedge Tunnel

requires further detailed design work to ensure that the stability of the structure is maintained. This will include the need to partially or totally de-water the Tunnel for those sections involving re-lining or works below normal water level.

Tunnel relining will require a Winter stoppage. Masonry sections cannot be cut back, they must be relined, it will not be structurally safe to take 2" or 3" of masonry walls bearing tunnel loading. There will be significant set-up costs in de-watering the tunnel and providing safe access and working conditions.

Cutting back rock in the Tunnel above water level could be carried out by boat at certain times of the year without disrupting normal traffic. Those below water level will require at least a partial de-watering and consequently a stoppage. Given the nature of working in the Tunnel, this will always be put out to contract.

Guiding and fendering could be installed by BW staff through the GWP in times of low traffic, without need for a stoppage. As the work has significant materials costs it would be subject to securing third party funding.

Section 9 summarises the costs of the various Phases of works and estimates the Phase One works at £3.61m and the Phase Two works at £4.66m.

Volunteer Rembrandts

Society founder member, John Maynard, snapped these shots of Working Party Co-ordinator, Trevor Ellis (right) and his volunteers repainting a balance beam and associated lock ironwork on the Huddersfield Narrow.

Any members interested in helping Trevor and his gang should, contact our Volunteer Co-ordinator, Frank Smith, at the Society offices (0161 339 1332).



10 Timetable for achieving raised standard:

As works become necessary on structures along the canal, we will incorporate repairs and / or rebuild to the higher standards. Apart from these major works and from any minor improvements which we can accommodate in our maintenance programme, it is likely that other major works required in the next few years will have to be funded from third party sources.

Phase One works will be given a higher priority than Phase Two and BW will look at expediting any lock works which would free up large areas of canal which are currently inaccessible or provide access to key features (i.e. 22E to open up the upper east

side, 42E to provide access to Standedge Visitor Centre and 21W to provide access to the Uppermill facilities and moorings).

There are other constraints on the programme, as discussed in section 8. For instance:

Detailed design work on tunnel works requires de-watering of the Tunnel which will require a stoppage of navigation. This will not be possible until winter 2003/04 at the earliest. Therefore the tunnel works could not be undertaken before stoppages in winter 2004/05.

A complete copy of this report is available for reference, by prior arrangement, at the Society's office.

The Stamford Group



The Stamford Group are delighted to be associated with the Huddersfield Canal Society and wish them continued success.

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The Huddersfield Narrow Canal



F Approaching L21W



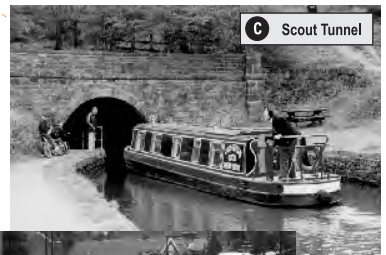
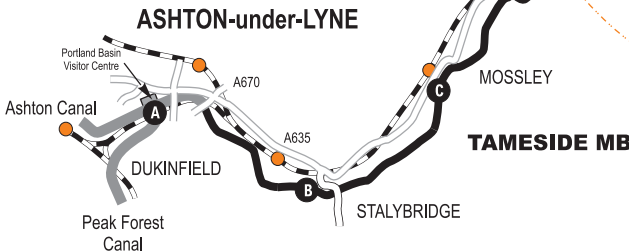
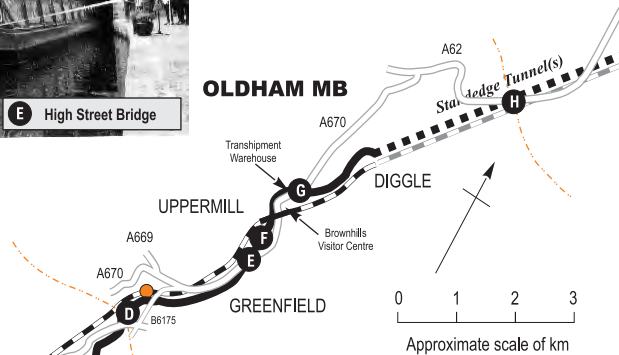
G Wool Road Bridge



E High Street Bridge



D Division Bridge Aqueduct



C Scout Tunnel



A Portland Basin Museum



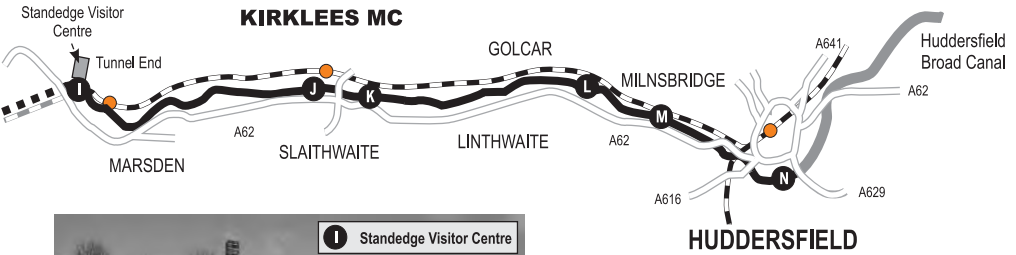
B Stalybridge Town Centre



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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The Anderton Lift

Keith and Margaret Sykes take a ride on the Anderton Lift.

Photos: K & M Sykes

At the end of July 2002, in transit from the Llangollen Canal to the newly restored Rochdale, we took our boat "Morning Mist" down the Anderton Lift.

We had booked passage down a week earlier, despite BW saying it wasn't necessary till the day before. We wanted to be sure.

Anyway passage was booked for the first descent on Monday morning and *en route* north along the Trent and Mersey on the Sunday we stopped at the Lion Salt Works but found little improvement from the last time we visited seven years earlier, being basically abandoned buildings with a small one room exhibition. The weather was hot - so seeking shade, we went along a further mile and stopped on the offside at Marbury Country Park. Here purpose-made moorings with picnic tables gave us access directly onto the park's network of paths.

Late in the afternoon we moved up to Anderton Lift and were surprised by the continuous line of towpath side moored boats for the last half mile all the way to the lift entrance - well nearly all way



for right at the end were two spaces indicating they were reserved for boats making the next passage. That was us and we joined the boat already there, our partner for the next morning's descent.

The descent is a series of stages, first into the basin off the main line and there to await being called on to the approach gantry. Guillotine gates allowed water first to equalise between the basin and approach gantry, then after both boats were called onto the gantry that closed behind us before the water was equalised with the caisson and the second set of gates lifted to allow us entry onto the caisson itself ready to descend, the gates then being closed behind both boats.

Two narrowboats, each moored to the sides of the caisson, took 21 minutes to reach the level of the River Weaver below in a series of small jerks. (We understand the equipment has since been improved, the jerks removed and the time shortened.)

However, unlike the Standedge Tunnel, for this one you stay on your boat, even on the stern pretending you are still in charge, but there is only one direction you are going - down! At the same time

as you are going down the other caisson is coming up, with two other narrowboats (or the glass roofed wide beam trip boat), and all can pass the time of day as they slowly pass.

Once down water levels are equalised again, the front guillotine gate this time is raised and out you go onto the River Weaver. We just pulled round the corner, moored and went into the free exhibition and booked our return passage for two days later, the last passage on the Wednesday. We had heard dire warnings on the radio of storms with potential flooding due late in the week so we didn't want to be caught up in that on the river.

Then it was off upstream to Northwich, which we had never visited before. By the BW painted black and white Town Swing Bridge we found plenty of mooring spaces - spoilt for choice - and a sanitary station. A quick visit into town with its Victorian "Tudor" buildings - built of wood so they could keep being jacked up when the land below them sank due to salt extraction.

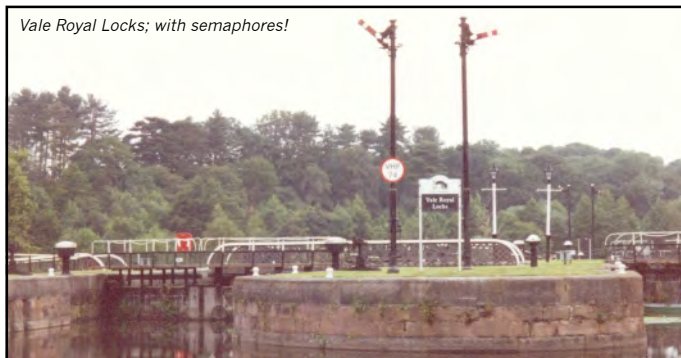
On we then went up through our first two Weaver locks each having double chambers, large and small, the smaller suitable

for four narrowboats. The influence of railway ownership showed with them having miniature size semaphore signals to indicate their state of readiness and to which side you should go, only a pity they, the signals, were no longer operational. Each lock is worked by a keeper to whom you simply pass up your ropes.

The guide books mention low swinging bridges, but for our



Vale Royal Locks; with semaphores!



narrowboat none had to be swung except for one, a footbridge in the middle of Vale Royal Lock that has to be wound open by the lock keeper every time the lock is used.

The whole of the area is dominated by its salt connection and no more so than as you approach the Winsford mine that has become the sole supplier of grit and salt for Britain's roads. The area is overshadowed by huge mountains of the stuff.

On the way to Anderton we had spoken to others about their experience and heard of moorings at Winsford Bottom Flash, the head of the navigation, that cost £3 a night - no way were we, who had done the whole of the Thames without paying for a mooring, going to pay £3.

Well that is until suddenly we came out of the industry of Winsford and onto the flash itself. The view was stunning, the sun still shining down - we paid our £3 gladly to moor against mown grass at the bottom of a small caravan park. Easy chairs out, into

the shade under the trees again, and we just watched others float by - well that was until one of us fell asleep. Idyllic, and what we did come to realise, for there were several narrow boats about, was how far onto the flash you could go.

The next morning we had a go ourselves, heeding advice, keeping near the bank on the way out for a half mile, before crossing to the other side opposite the sailing club and keeping near the opposite bank on the return. A few twirls then off back down the River Weaver, calling at Northwich again for a longer visit to the town and its Salt Museum - which was very interesting.

The afternoon found us passing Anderton again and, as we went downstream, meeting up with our partner from the lift

Moorings at Winsford Bottom Flash



Manchester Ship Canal Cruises

Mersey Ferries are once again running a series of cruises from Liverpool to Manchester, returning by bus, and then in the reverse direction the next day, during the summer.

These generally leave Liverpool on Saturday and Manchester on Sunday although there are two mid-week cruises. The boats used are the large passenger ferries with all the usual fittings of bars and saloons.

The cost is £28.00 per head for the return journey. The cruise takes 6 hours and the bus approximately one hour to return. The bars are open during the trip and snacks are available. There is a discount for parties of 20 or more.

descent at the fourth and final Dutton Lock. Still in sunshine, but with clouds now gathering, we both moored up a mile further along below Pickering's Wharf. No wharf actually existed, for on this lower stretch all we found was a continuous concrete sill about 6" above the water line. I managed to get lines on the bank behind and above the sill level.

Earlier than had been predicted at the beginning of the week the first of several thunderstorms arrived. We slackened our lines, the rains started and continued, with the weather forecast now indicating still worse was to come over the next two days and the week long heat wave over, the monsoon season had arrived. It rained most of the evening and night!

That next morning at 5am we awoke and found the continuous sill was not 6" above, but now 9" below the water line. We monitored the water level, found it was dropping slightly and by 6am we had set off back towards Dutton Lock and

I made one of these trips a couple of years ago and found it thoroughly enjoyable and a very civilized way of seeing a canal. (Although I could live without the commentary!)

The first trip from Liverpool is May 17th and the final return from Salford Quays is on Sunday 12th October with the trip taking place on most weekends in between.

Full details from Mersey Ferries on 0151 330 1444 who will send you a list of sailing dates or you can refer to their website at www.merseyferries.co.uk

Brian Minor

moored in Pickering Cut waiting for the lock keeper to arrive. By 10 am, two locks negotiated, we were back at the bottom of Anderton lift, but with every ascent booked we had still to wait for our late afternoon booking.

Luckily by 4pm the rains had stopped and the rise back was just as exhilarating as the descent with everything, except the boat, in reverse, chatting with our partners about our river experiences.

Storms came again on the next two days, but now as we were back on a proper canal we just sat them out, and heard of the devastation they had caused to the east - houses flooded in July!

So we have now the excuse to return, for we haven't seen all the Weaver as we planned, and next time, we hear, it will also be free to go down and back up the lift!

Keith and Margaret Sykes

Tameside Canals Festival - 2003



The 26th Tameside Canals Festival, in association with Willow Wood Hospice, will be held on its traditional site at Portland Basin, Ashton-under-Lyne, from Friday 11th July to Sunday 13th July 2003.

Portland Basin is at the Dukinfield Junction of the Lower Peak Forest and Ashton Canals.

The entry charge for boats and caravans is £10 and for tents £8; this includes a plaque and weekend passes for two persons. Accompanied children will be admitted free.

Boat Entry forms are available from:

Shirley Rowbottom
Toll House
71 Iver Lane
Cowley
Uxbridge UB8 2JE

Caravan/Tent Entry forms from:

Robert Maycock
9 Warwick Close
Shaw
Lancashire OL2 7DZ

Trade Stall forms from:

Sue Ruffley
31 Middle Green
Ashton-under-Lyne
Lancashire OL6 9JP

Robert Maycock

Obituary - Colin Thompson

Society Members will be saddened to hear of the sudden death of BW engineer, Colin Thompson on the 30th January 2003 whilst playing football with BW colleagues.

Colin was closely involved in many of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal projects west of the Pennines, in the pre-Millennium funding days; especially HCS Restoration's biggest project, the Diggle Flight, in 1995/6. It was a testament to Colin's tact and flexibility that the other canal users suffered the minimum of disruption during this part of the restoration programme.

Festival goers at the 1998 Tameside Canals Festival may recall that Colin skippered a pair of traditional working boats, bringing them from Northwich to the site at Portland Basin.

Society member Keith Sykes recalls when Colin was based at Tunnel End, Marsden, he had contact with him in obtaining permission for the local Scouts to have access to the canal for expeditions in the Scout sailing centre's rigid inflatable boats. For the years that Colin was there he gave permission freely, as long as we had insurance cover, and was always very supportive of our efforts to utilise the restored Canal.

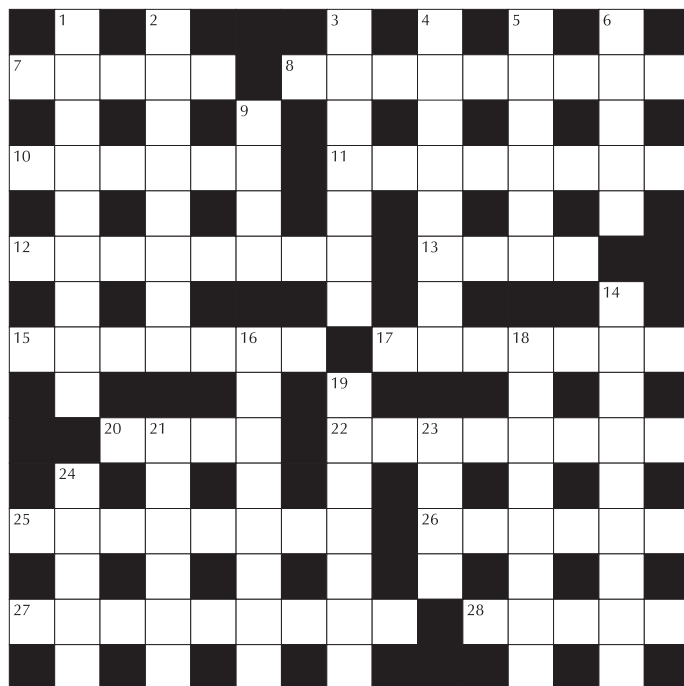
Huddersfield Canal Society



Colin on the Airdale Valley towpath

British Waterways

Canal Crossword - 40



Across

- 7 Worst boats found on the River Severn? (5)
 8 Heavy river crossing used by 'Disgusted' we hear (9)
 10 Owl Ken saw by the first wide locks south of Birmingham (6)
 11 Confusing or what - a small Scottish Church found in an Oldham suburb but on the East side! (8)
 12 Grade I BW lock above Bratch (8)
 13 Find an Armoire that's lost it's ROM on the river in Leeds (4)
 15 Go most of the way up the Rother, stop, add a Fenland cathedral city and end up on the banks of the Soar north of Leicester (7)
 17 Find a far from old flour preparation facility near Wootton Rivers on the K & A (3,4)
 20 Pay mooring dues to this college at Windsor (4)
 22 Monster residence? (4,4)
 25 Crocodile tears the editor shed when his

- restoration of a Welsh canal (8)
 5 A piece of boat equipment still erroneously called the rudder (6)
 6 Greet a heron? (5)
 9 BW agree developing banks with natural growth is best (4)
 14 Births low this year in the tunnel near Sister Mary's place of work (9)
 16 SWMBO in a pub or B & B (8)
 18 After crossing the water the monk landed on a canal in Scotland (8)
 19 So cruel of BW to stop cruising for canal repairs (7)
 21 Water precedes the name of a hire firm based at Atherley (6)
 23 Copings with the pin removed give a clue to the heart of a machine (4)
 24 Prisoner of war initially, is incarcerated in a castle overlooking the canal at Welshpool (5)

article on small highly manouverable boats was refused (8)

26 Where a co author of Steptoe and Son might cross the New Main Line? (6)

27 Fluvial one hundred and eighty! (5,4)

28 Measure speed where two ropes join (5)

Down

- 1 Could the Bard now do another play set in a canal tunnel? (9)
 2 Heading northwestward from Nottingham lose the trend but find a viaduct overlooking the Erewash canal (8)
 3 A Trent junction built by tykes or Romans (7)
 4 Feelings are bared fighting for the

Solution on page 54

Pennine Inter Canal Society Quiz

We have received this invitation from Margaret Fletcher, Chairman of the MB&BCS

As the winners of the quiz last year it is our responsibility to host the quiz in 2003. We have arranged the next Pennine Inter Canal Society Quiz at 7.30pm on 15 April 2003 at the Jolly Carter, Church Street Little Lever, Bolton. Directions are included.

The Huddersfield Canal Society is invited to take part in the quiz.

For those who have an interest in such things "Real Ales" are served at the Jolly Carter.

During the break the following will be served at £3 per meal.

Meat and Potato Pie.

Or for Vegetarians, a vegetarian toastie served with chips.

If you wish to order a meal please contact me on 01204 844671 before 1.4.2003.

Please state which meal you wish to order.

Additional meals will not be available on the night, they must be ordered in advance.

The Question Master will be Ben Williams a member of council of the Manchester Bolton & Bury Canal Society and a Vice President of Manchester Branch of the Inland Waterways Association.

There is only one over-riding rule and that is the winner hosts and arranges the quiz for the following year.

Maximum team size 6. No charge. You may enter up to two teams. Supporters welcome. Mixture of waterway and general knowledge questions.

We look forward to welcoming representatives of your society/group on the evening. It would help us to make arrangements if you confirmed the number

of teams to me. Those of you who have set quiz questions know how much work this entails and it would be nice if Ben could be supported by your attendance.

Directions to the venue at the Jolly Carter, Church Street, Little Lever, Bolton.

*At **M60 Junction 15** (formerly M62 Junction 14) initially follow M61 Preston, then on reaching a 4 lane section of junction move to the right two lanes for A666 Bolton.*

*This becomes two lane section, then as more lanes join from the left get to the extreme left lane **A6053 Farnworth***

Up slip road to roundabout. First exit from roundabout (A6053)

Into right lane immediately - before first lights in 200 yards, where you bear slightly right (still A6053). Continue straight on for about a mile (many lights/crossings).

Immediately after a road trails in from left at lights you may notice Moses Gate Station (very diminutive) on left.

Prepare to turn right at lights (still A6053). Immediately after turning you go under the A666 expressway, descend and cross River Croal, ascend far side and after passing a school on the left the Jolly Carter is the first pub on the left - car park entrance immediately BEFORE the pub. It is almost exactly 1 mile from going under the expressway. Grid reference SD750073.

Margaret Fletcher



(Points may be awarded for contestants' orienteering skills! Any members interested in forming a team should contact the Society Office in the first instance; contact details on the inside front cover.)

Comical Cruising

Trawling round the world of canals can bring you in touch with some unusual names and words. We have taken a look at some strange words for objects with canal associations in the past so let's have a look at some canals, junctions and other locations.

Birmingham, besides being the hub of the English canal network, also leads the league table of odd and unusual names.

Let's start on the Dudley canal with **Bumblehole Turn** which is associated with the **Boshboil Arm** both of which used to lead to **Baptist's End** and **Butteries Basin**.

Moving to the centre of Birmingham, we reach the famous **Gas Street Basin** with **Worcester Bar** and **Oozells Street Loop**. Not far away used to be **Friday Bridge** which is close to **Saturday Bridge** which is still there, neither of these were far from **Baskerville Basin**.

Moving west on the Old Main line we find **Whimsey Bridge** close to the **Titford Branch** off which was the **Jim Crow Arm**, presumably it was this which led to Oldbury locks being commonly known as the 'Crow' whilst at the top of Oldbury locks is the **Tat Bank Branch**. Not far away on the new Main Line at **Pudding Green Junction** used to be the **Izon Branch** whilst **Tipton Green** boasted **Watery Lane Junction** and the **Three Furnace Branch**.

On the former **Bradley Branch** was a **Partridge Bridge** which joined on to **Howls Bridge** (perhaps that's where the H went when helm became 'ellum).

Off what is left of the **Ridgacre Branch** there used to be a **Balls Hill Branch** from which, looking down the hill, you would have been able to see **Dank's Branch** and **Doe Green Junction**.

On the **Wyrley** (pronounced werely) and **Essington Canal** (the curly Wyrley) you still pass **Sneyd Junction** whilst on the way to **Ogley Junction**. On the way you would have passed under bridges called **Devil's Elbow**, **Coal Pool**, **Pratt's Mill** and **Crimea**. Making a turn at **Catshill Junction** on to the **Daw** (pronounced Doe) **End Branch** will lead you under more bridges like **Black Cock** and **Dumble Derry** until you arrive at **Longwood Junction** on to the **Rushall Canal** which boasts **Gillity Bridge**. You are now approaching the Tame Valley canal which has a **Crankhall Lane Bridge** and a **Spouthouse Aqueduct**.

Earlier on I missed a selection like **Rotton Brunt** and **Pothouse Bridges** and **Sally's Meadow Wharf** not to mention **Catchems' Corner Bridge** which is conveniently close to **Gibbet Lane Bridge** which is about 100 yards from the more romantic sounding **Osier Bed Basin**.

When all is said and done perhaps we should finish at **Typhoo Basin** unless we need to unload the used tea bags at **Salvage Turn**.

Birmingham and the Black Country have now filled a page for us on their own so taking the worldwide view will have to wait for another issue.

John Harwood

The Basingstoke Canal

Having now spent some two weeks of our 2002 Summer cruise on this beautiful Canal, I would encourage all boaters to visit this unique waterway.

It is some 150 years since the heyday of the Canal which originally ran from the river Wey to Basingstoke, but is now truncated by the collapse of the Greywell Tunnel near Odiham. The plan was to transport timber for shipbuilding plus malt, flour and other produce from Hampshire farms to London. The return run would be of coal, china, draperies, groceries and other commodities.

All went well until the 1830s, when the railway arrived. In 1854 the Canal Company was saved for a short time by the development of the army camp at Aldershot, for which large quantities of building material were shipped.

The Canal was then left dormant until 1960 when interest in full restoration started with a rally at Woking. The Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society was founded in 1966.

There has always been a shortage of water on the Canal. It is fed primarily from springs near Greywell Tunnel. In fact, if you cruise to the limit and moor up, it is like sitting in an aquarium, as the water is so clear!

As our narrowboat "Dill" is moored at Stourport on Severn we did have some planning to do. Not only was the Basingstoke on our agenda, but cruising the Tideway from Limehouse plus all the Wey navigation, which is owned by the National Trust, and all of the Thames and Kennet and Avon Canal!

A phone-call produced all the information plus licence application form. In fact you cannot apply for a short-term licence earlier than one month before your proposed trip. This is probably because of the water problems and may now be changing.

In the event, the Canal Company were very helpful and went out of their way to get us and other boats on to the waterway. We were in transit and therefore, although the book says that the licence will be available for you at Thames Lock on the Wey, the Warden actually arrived at Lock one with all the paperwork.

Thames Lock on the Wey is interesting as it is 'keeper operated' and for narrowboats is used like two locks in a staircase. A transit fee of £4 is payable to the National Trust.

The Basingstoke is operated by wardens. Very helpful people who check your progress and close lock flights after use at the end of the day - primarily for water conservation purposes.

Cruising the Basingstoke is an experience. Don't expect nice piled mooring places. The message here is moor where you like - bow in, stern out and use your plank. There are some wonderful wooded areas at which to stop and we were just in time to see the glorious display of rhododendrons in full bloom. Plenty of wildlife - kingfishers and mink - the lot!

Restoration has not meant lots of lock landings and other structures. The wide locks are not too difficult to work and my wife and I had no problems. Water points are relatively few but this is being addressed. What is there is adequate if you

IWA News

December 2002

IWA have asked BW to set up a new appeals procedure to review decisions of substance by navigation authority managers that affect significant numbers of waterway users, where there is no other sensible means of scrutiny for such decisions.

IWA Chairman, John Fletcher's comment on this was *"Our main concern is to provide a mechanism where navigations authorities can independently demonstrate their decisions are fair and reasonable, and waterway users can have the reassurance of an independent review of any decision that affects them and which they believe is unfair or unreasonable"*

January 2003

IWA have given £25K towards the cost of building a bridge to take the Thames and Severn Canal under the Western Spine Road, which leads to the Cotswold Water Park. This is a key step in the canal restoration programme. Total cost of the bridge will be £447K.

plan accordingly. There are only two pump out facilities, so again some planning is required. All this is compensated for by a beautiful, quiet canal; unspoilt by progress.

As to the lack of water, you have no doubt read in various publications that the IWA and other bodies have contributed to the water back pumping schemes on the St. John's flight and this, plus use of the scheme on the Woodham flight, should all but eliminate this difficulty.

Visit Odiham village (Tim Henman was married in the Church). One of the

The IWA on behalf of the Waterway Recovery Group are launching an appeal entitled 'The Right Tool for the Right Job'.

This appeal hopes to raise £75k for the purchase of a whole variety of equipment. This covers not only basic hand tools and specialist gear for stone masonry work, but includes minibuses as well!

The Waterway Recovery Group have been in existence now for 34 years and badly need new equipment to keep up their standard and scope of work on the canals still to be restored.

If you would like more information about this Appeal, you can contact the IWA at PO Box 114, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, WD3 1ZY.

Brian Minor



biggest villages in the country and very friendly people. A good shopping centre. We were there over the Golden Jubilee weekend. St John's Castle can also be visited. It is from here that King John left to sign the Magna Carta. Keep your head down at the end of Farnborough airfield runway! And don't try to keep up with the soldiers doing their fitness training in the area.

Don't hurry. You could do it in a week but take at least 10 days or you'll miss so much.

David Stubbs

What the Papers Said

Many thanks to everyone who sent me cuttings - especially to A Knott, K Sykes and K Wright.

Manchester Evening News

22nd January

Full page article on the price of house in the Stalybridge area, illustrated with properties available and headed with a large picture of the HNC in the town centre with the caption that 'the reopened HNC has boosted the regeneration of Stalybridge'

Tameside Advertiser

2nd January

Article about the £50,000 statue to be a tribute to the canals history as part of the Stalybridge renaissance.

Short piece about Keith Gibson's new book on the Canal. *(Get it from us folks. Copies available at the office! Ed)*

23rd January

Article headed £94M jobs bonanza and saying that tourism is worth that amount to the local economy and also funds 2000 full time jobs in the borough. The article is illustrated with a picture of the 'Marsden Shuttle' in Portland Basin with a caption that this is one of the highlights for visitors to Tameside. *(Unfortunately, the MS left Portland Basin in May 2001! Ed)*

Tameside Reporter

9th January

Picture of happy crowd of children after a cruise on the canal run by the Society as it ran its annual Santa Cruises.

Huddersfield Daily Examiner

26th November 2002

Picture taken in Stalybridge with Chairman David Sumner to the forefront and article about the awards won. The headline was 'Prescott gets invite to see restored canal' *(That's nearly three months ago and we ain't seen him yet! Ed.)*

16th December 2002

Story and Picture about the 35th Huddersfield pack of Cubs holding an investiture ceremony for new members inside Standedge tunnel.

12th January

Picture of the road closed over the Locomotive bridge in Huddersfield and an article commenting on the fact it has taken seven months to reopen. BW quoted about the difficulties with historic structures causing the delay.

Colne Valley Chronicle

22nd November 2002

Quite a good issue for the Canal – three items printed about different aspects.

On the front page a colour picture of the youngsters involved in the Locks Docks and Beyond project in Slaithwaite and a description of the efforts they had made in this work (Reported in the last two issues of Pennine Link)

On the inside is the same story as in the Huddersfield Daily Examiner of the award ceremony in Stalybridge and the invitation to Mr Prescott.

Next to it is a picture of one of the sculptures being made to decorate the banks of the restored canal. In this, the sculptor is being assisted by local children. *(Unfortunately it is described, twice, as being of a **Barge**. Hope the schools teach the kids the real name! Ed.)*

New Civil Engineer

November 2002

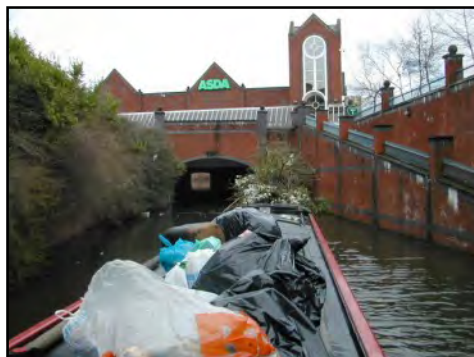
Nothing to do with 'our ' canal, but a report about the Falkirk Wheel winning the Saltire award for civil engineering excellence in Scotland. Congratulations to BW.

The Oldhamer (Council free newsheet)

November 2002

Story about the council support for the newly reopened Rochdale Canal.

Litter Squad



Photos: P Peacock

Our volunteer boat crews enjoy nothing more than cruising our local waterways with an appreciative group on board. And yet, they have, quite naturally, been embarrassed by the amount of rubbish on the towpath along the course of their route.

Not being ones for sitting back and blaming others' inactivity for dealing with the problem, they have 'led by example'.

Armed with refuse sacks and 'litter pickers', they braved the elements to clear a section of towpath from Portland Basin to the ASDA Superstore. Pictured above left are, (left to right) David Hansell, Pam Romanski and young Alex Peacock.

The day's haul is being transported on top of the trip boat (above) to be disposed of properly; a magnificent job, well done all!

Oldham Chronicle

9th December 2002

This paper had five copies of Keith Gibson's Book to give away and listed the winners with the comment that the book was bound to be a best seller if the number of entries to the competition was anything to go by!

7th January

Nice pictures of a cold canal illustrating an article about the Winter weather. Same issue has an article about the row over the development at Frenches Wharf, with a local resident pointing out that the name actually applies to the land on the other side of the canal.

20th January

Short review of Keith's book and details where it can be purchased. (Incl. the Society Office)

4th February

Report that Standedge Visitor Centre is to

stage a series of theatre workshops during the forthcoming half term break.

4th February

Report on the 'Kickstart' project in Failsworth being funded by Oldham Council. The 12-seater boat on the Rochdale Canal, which is part of the scheme, is to be paid for by funds from Oldham Council's Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

Oldham Advertiser

2nd January

Very glowing criticism of Keith's Book, From the quite lengthy article I think the reviewer had actually read it!

29th January

A similar article to the Chronicle's giving the story of the 'Kickstart' project in Failsworth, which is to be based on the Rochdale Canal.

Brian Minor

Scottish Marathon - Part 2

Society member, Andrew Shortridge, concludes his account of cruising the Scottish waterways ... Photos: A Shortridge

We started at 8.40 the following morning. The first lift bridge at Bonnybridge is less than 30 mins cruise from the wheel. It is operated by BW staff and they are not allowed to operate it before 9-15. Indeed, we were told that this and the other swing/lift bridges in this area could not be operated during rush-hour or when any buses were imminent. We arrived at the bridge just after the appointed time, just to witness another example of car madness. The warning lights were flashing and the barriers about to come down when a car drove onto the bridge. Having got onto the bridge, he found his exit blocked by the fallen barrier. Reversing, he got off before the other barrier had come down. He was lucky; speaking to the BW men, the automatic process to lift the bridge is impossible to stop once started.

Once through Lock 20, and after a cup of tea in the lock with the team who had taken us through, we were passed over to the other team to take us through to Glasgow. We were now on the summit pound and here the F & C is at its best. For nearly a mile before Auchinstarry we went through a dead straight section of pound with water-lilies lining the centre of the navigation. Past Auchinstarry, through to the out-skirts of Glasgow the canal is very peaceful and quiet. It has both very attractive scenery and appears very remote in places (even though you know you are near to Glasgow). Passing Auchinstarry at 12.15 we set our time to turn back at 2.45 at the latest. About 2.20 we knew we were nearing Glasgow as we had pylons carrying the national grid overhead, we could see the high rise flats in the near distance and whilst the area was not built up, we passed two

burned out cars in the canal. We got to Maryhill junction and, instead of heading into Glasgow, we headed to the top lock down to the Clyde; we knew there would be a landing stage for us to refuel here. There is no apparent footpath on the summit pound. Indeed, from the Wheel westwards, it appears very difficult to moor up. This, together with the fact it was a windy day, meant that we were most grateful for the help with the locks and bridges. We had no need to get off our boat for any locks or bridges on the Lowlands Canals – normally I like working locks/swing-bridges etc but in these conditions it was honestly a Godsend.

Arriving back at Auchinstarry(*), Kilsyth's canal port, at 5.15, the hard work really started. One of the BW workmen kindly gave us a lift to Croy station where we had to catch two trains. The first was to Edinburgh Haymarket where we changed for Broxburn. Here we had to get a taxi from the station to the Leisure centre and the car and trailer (it was far too far to walk). It wasn't until nearly 10pm that we got back to the boat. Yes, we had stopped for Fish & Chips in Linlithgow, but we also took a wrong turning (Onto the B803 in Falkirk instead of the A803 and added 10-15 miles of windy roads to our journey).

Auchinstarry is a nice little marina in a surprisingly remote area. It is made all the nicer by the valley in which it is situated. We shared the marina with one other narrowboat on permanent moorings. Also, much to the surprise of Anne at home in Skipton, it was still so light that the streetlights did not go on until nearly 10.30. The rest of the evening was spent preparing for the following morning. What could be packed in the car was etc, etc, etc.

(*) Canal boats were loaded here to supply Glasgow with coal and 'whinstone' basalt to pave her streets.

The slipway at Auchinstarry is of low gradient. I needed the electric winch so that the trailer could get into deep enough water for the boat to float onto it. I hence needed to go into the water knee deep to get the boat onto the trailer. These two items between them must be among the most useful items I have bought for the boat. The winch especially has come in useful, no longer do I need to fight a silted-up slipway with the clutch of my Mondeo. I had used the slipway of Huddersfield University after doing the Narrow last year. It wasn't too bad but there was clearly some silt there and I had needed to really rev the engine to get sufficient torque to pull the boat out. Whether it would have helped me on the Macclesfield earlier this year is more debatable. A slipway with mud on the hard-core slip and an element of silt caused me hours of problems. It even ended up where I couldn't pull the trailer out (without the boat). Hand winching had failed as well, as the boat and trailer were pulling the car backwards. The solution had been to commandeer a JCB that was being used on-site. Ropes were tied around the trailer and the JCB's arm and the boat and trailer came easily out of the water. Plenty of people had stopped on the towpath to witness this. I can see the humorous side of this now. It had seemed strange that bigger boats than mine had been pulled out earlier that week, not so when you realise that a Land-Rover had pulled them out.

Pulling the boat out of the water went smoothly. In fact, the only delay was caused by us chatting to the BW man who had helped us the day before. He explained the teething problems being faced by users on the Lowlands Canals. They basically amounted to depth problems. Sea going yachts sailing the F & C would get into problems with their keels, and narrow-boats would get into problems on the Union. The other big issue was the cost of using the wheel. It costs £35 per return trip, and

there is no concession for multi-users. The Wheel, being where it is, basically splits the Canals here in half, and use of the Wheel is not included in the cost of the annual licence and there is no charging structure that gives unlimited usage in a 12 month period, like at Anderton.

Anyway, onwards and upwards. We set off at 9.30 to head towards Fort William. As with the rest of the trip the route selected had been taken from the AA's route planner on their website as suitable for caravans. The route outlined was the M80, M9 to Stirling, then the A84 and A85 to Crianlarich, and the A82 over Glencoe to Fort William. I had recollections of the Glencoe road from a trip to Fort William years before. I envisaged a long, steep and windy climb out of Crianlarich to Glencoe (at the foot of Ben Nevis). I had worried enough to consider heading north on the Inverness road and then heading west on the A86 to Fort William. I need never have worried. Either the road has been drastically improved or my memory has played tricks with me. The trip to Crianlarich was uneventful and the climb to Glencoe was done at a steady 40-45 mph all the way. The road, also used by juggernauts, does not have hairpin bends or steep inclines that drop your speed to a crawl. Oddly enough, the worst road for towing on the whole trip was the A65 Kirby Lonsdale to Skipton road taken on the return journey. (I didn't do the A66, A1 on the return solely because I had missed the turning off the M6 – no other reason). We got to Fort William at about 2.30 and put the boat into the water at Loch Aber Yacht Club with the help of Richard Rumney and his Land-Rover. I was allowed to leave the trailer at the yacht club and Richard very kindly allowed me to leave my car in his driveway. The heavens had opened as the boat was being put into the water and I was again reliant on the kindness of Richard who had loaned me a club's rowing boat to get

back to the shore from the boat after launching. Both myself and my Mum had climbed aboard the boat before Richard had launched us. After launching I had tied up to a swinging mooring to row ashore to park up etc. On rowing back out to the boat I tied the rowing boat to the swinging mooring for Richard to collect later and we set off. It was now 4.30.

The lock keeper was expecting us but did not want us immediately as he was about to see a cruise ship through. We therefore decided to sail into Loch Eil for an hour and a half. To enter Loch Eil you need to go through The Narrows. The Narrows are only narrow relatively speaking but it is not straight, containing a steady right hand curve. At the end of The Narrows, as we came out into the Loch, the incoming tide caused little whirlpools which as you sail over throw the boat off centre. Frightening no, unnerving at first, yes.

It being a fine day now, the view of Ben Nevis is clear and spectacular. On a more personal note, we saw the Linnhe Caravan Park. I had stayed here in a mobile home at new year in 1995/6 with Anne and six other friends. The owner had offered us our money back before coming north as the water was all frozen but we still went. It was cold, it reached minus 20 C whilst we were there. It was cold at night as well. One night I had left my balaclava up against the mirror. The following morning our condensation had frozen and stuck the balaclava to the mirror. It came away with a chunk of ice. However, what I will always remember about the holiday was seeing the mist rise over the Loch. As in the words of the song, it looked just like there was smoke on the water. Anyway, returning to the present, we exited the Loch through the narrows, taking the inside line as the current was less strong there. Indeed, it appeared to flow against the prevailing tide in places. We spent the night in the pound between

the Sea-lock and the two Corpach locks. In hindsight, it might have been better to have moored on the floating pontoon outside the sea-lock. It was about a four foot drop from the towpath to water level (2 ½ feet to the stern of the boat). This was OK for me but a lot harder for my Mum. To get ashore she had to climb some steps that I could hang off the towpath and onto the side of the boat. To get back in, she had to sit down at the waters-edge and hang her feet over the side. This was made easier by the wooden pole that I could fit into the fishing-rod holder fitted into the stern of the boat. This had been done with the intention of making things easier for her, the suggestion coming from Guy of the Portland Basin Marina. It is better than the original idea of a hand-rail as it can be but away when it is not in use. It was also cheaper. [This approach is similar to that used on the water taxi at Marsden that Guy had installed]. As it was a pleasant Scottish evening, the idea of eating in the cockpit with the canopy down appealed. Not for long... Those b***dy midges became unbearable.

Wednesday saw another early start, 8am. The proximity of the Neptune staircase flight meant that unless we went through the Corpach locks with the first passage at 8.30, we would miss the first passage up the flight at 9.30 and then have to wait until at least 12.30 to go up. We went through the locks with four other sea going sailing yachts. One had a party of American teenagers on board and they helped us with our ropes. We arrived at the bottom of the Neptune flight at Bonavie in plenty of time and had to hold our boats in the middle of the cut for about 20 minutes for the first passage down. The flight is of eight locks that raise the canal 64 feet in 500 yards. Before mechanisation, capstans were used to open the lock gates, 126 turns of which were needed to pass through the whole flight.

The entrance to the locks are guarded by

two swing bridges. One carries the Fort William - Mallaig road and the other the railway line. I am also a railway enthusiast, being a member of the Embsay and Bolton Abbey steam railway near Skipton. My enthusiasm is for Steam trains, but when I thought I heard a diesel's horn I got my camera ready. I was mistaken. Putting the camera down, I untied the boat and threw the ropes aboard as I prepared to take the boat through to the third lock. At that moment 'The Jacobite', the daily steam hauled special pulled by LNER class B1 No 61264 went onto the swing bridge (*pictured above*). I now proceeded to break all the rules. I jumped off the boat to take a



number of photographs, returning to find the boat adrift in the middle of the lock and reliant on the crew of the boat besides mine.

Clearing the top of the flight at about mid-day, we stopped to fill up with water and have a proper tidy-up. By the time we had finished all our belongings, stores etc were taken out of boxes and stored in their correct locations. This was the first time that we had unpacked everything. On the Lowlands we had decided not to as we would only have had to repack them the following day.

After a stop of about an hour we headed up the canal. The scenery along the whole of the canal is really stunning. The canal is 60 miles long, of which only 22 are cut, the remainder being made up of the four Lochs, Lochy, Oich, Ness and Dochfour. (Loch Ness itself is 22 miles long). Entering Loch Lochy (*pictured left*) gave me the chance to open up the throttle on Elicasu, but instead of going up the centre of the Loch we criss-crossed from one side to the other exploring the various inlets on the Loch. By the time we had reached the head of the Loch we had caught up and passed the flotilla of sailing boats that we had earlier shared the locks with. They had all shut down their engines and opened their sails up the loch.



Laggan Locks were shared with the cruise boat 'The Spirit of Loch Ness'. She sails the Caledonian throughout the season. After the lock we left spirit behind and headed up Loch Oich. This is the shallowest of the four lochs and only four miles long. During construction of the canal Thomas Telford, realising that it had to be dredged, used one of the earliest examples of a steam bucket dredging the lock.

We cleared Loch Oich and arrived at the Cullochry Lock at 6pm. This proved to be the end of our day as the lock-keepers work 8am to 5.30pm. Anyway, this didn't matter. The solitude was ideal, and the floating pontoon was ideal for mooring up to, and cooking an evening barbeque (a gas fired BBQ I hasten to add). Supper was spent in the aft cockpit, with the canopy down, enjoying the marvellous scenery, tranquillity, and a couple of bottles of Red wine.

Before the meal we helped some Belgian rowers. A group had come from Belgium to row the length of the canal, each boat had three crew, two rowing and one coxing. Before exiting Loch Oich we had seen about half a dozen of these boats rowing down the Loch. Apparently, one had had to stop at Fort Augustus for supplies and was trying to catch the others up who had now cleared the Loch before mooring up at Laggan. During opening hours these row-boats go through the locks but lifting these boats out of the water and carrying them around the lock was not easy for four of us. They are bulky and they weigh 80kgs each. The following day saw us reach the other



bottle-neck on the canal. The Fort Augustus staircase locks (above) that takes the canal down 40ft to Loch Ness in 5 locks.

Thursday morning, first passage down is regarded by the lock keepers as one of the busiest as a number of hire boats have to be back at Caley Marine (our eventual destination for different reasons) on Friday morning. We shared the lock with 14 other boats, being tied up alongside a Caley hire-cruiser, and entering the lock following the instructions 3rd on the right. The lock-keepers are very efficient here and are obviously well practised at this manoeuvre. To get 14 boats into a lock as quickly as they did is an art. [Four boats across the front of the lock, tied in pairs. Four rows of boats going backward, all those down the right tied in pairs. The middle two boats were three wide but the back row, like the front, was four across. It was also made up of sailing yachts. All the other 10 boats were cruisers].

Fort Augustus is a small village built around the flight of locks. It contains shops from which supplies can be bought, a highlands woollens shop, two museums, one to the Highlands of Scotland and one to the Caledonian Canal, and most practically a filling station.



4 tank No 80105. From Aviemore we headed to Culloden to look around the battlefield. It is really eerie looking around the field and seeing where each unit of the English and Jacobite armies stood on that fateful day. Looking at the terrain and knowing that it has changed little over the years, one wonders what English history would be today if the

After stopping here for three hours we headed out onto the loch. This was the roughest part of the trip, with the wind blowing from west to east down the loch it was really choppy. Apart from slowing down and taking a closer look at Urquart castle we basically cleared the Loch as quickly as we could before heading straight into Loch Dochfour and mooring up for the night on the pontoon above Lock Dochgarroch (above). The narrow outlet from Loch Ness into Loch Dochfour, despite not appearing to offer much shelter, has a very calming effect on the water and the one mile of Loch Dochfour was cruised in complete calm.

Friday brought about a change in plan. Rather than continue our cruise into Inverness that would have taken less than two hours we decided to spend it collecting our car and trailer. Having obtained permission from the lock-keeper to leave our boat for the day in one of the permanent moorings we caught the bus for the two hour journey to Fort-William. Instead of heading straight back to the boat, we headed east to Aviemore for a trip on the Strathspey Steam Railway, which has recently extended its run to Broomhall Station, as seen on the TV series *Monarch of the Glen*. We were hauled by BR Standard

site chosen for that inevitable battle had been more suited to the Highlanders and the famous Highland charge.

Returning to the boat soon after six, before settling down for a BBQ and a quiet night on board, we headed back out into Loch Ness. Despite the fact it had rained heavily on and off all day it had now cleared up to a nice fine evening. Loch Ness in fine weather is a totally different proposition. We spent a pleasant hour cruising around its eastern end.

Saturday saw us head down to Caley Marine where the boating part of the holiday finished. However, we still had a 383 mile, two day trip, back to Leeds, stopping overnight at a Travel-Inn/Travel-Lodge near Carlisle. (Sods Law- on returning by taxi from Caley Marine to collect the car and trailer I discovered I had a flat tyre - luckily I carry a spare tyre. Both my trailer tyres had been bought new the week before we had set off on this trip. I have never had a puncture before or since).

So, was it worth it? An eight day holiday had resulted in four days boating, three days towing and a day car retrieving. The answer is definitely "Yes". The Falkirk Wheel, in my opinion, is definitely *the* wonder of the modern waterways. The only structure that



A fine evening on Loch Ness, looking westward. (Always knew they'd be a peaceful and relaxing bit at the end! Ed.)

runs it close is Pontcysyllte Aqueduct. OK, we are talking different ages here and Anderton deserves recognition in its own right. However, the Neptune and Fort Augustus staircase-flights of locks, the Avon and Almond aqueducts, in such relatively short distances of waterway make the waterways in Scotland stand out, and add to that the truly stunning scenery. [The Neptune flight was in the shortlist for the Seven Wonders of the waterways network and in my opinion should replace the Five

Rise at Bingley. How the Avon Aqueduct didn't make the short-list, I do not know]. The boating was really relaxing. All the locks were worked for you. If I could have planned differently I would have had a bit longer, cruised up the Maryhill branch into Glasgow, possibly spending more time in Loch Linnhe and Loch Eil at Fort William. I also would have liked to have visited the Bowes Steam railway near Edinburgh.

Andrew Shortridge

OBITUARY

The Society is saddened to report the death of one of its life members Mr Claude Hamilton Bradbury.

Hamilton, as he liked to be known, died peacefully in Oldham Royal Hospital on the 29th October 2002.

Though he suffered failing eyesight toward the end, he had managed to visit the

canal at Huddersfield soon after re-opening and could share in the Society's pride in achieving 'the impossible'.

It was, in no small part, the 'armchair support' of members such as Hamilton, that helped secure the major funding to complete the canal restoration work.

Bob Gough

Letters to the Editor

Dear Mr Minor

Mrs Seymour's response to my letter (Christmas Plink) demonstrated both the severe difficulties that boaters have to overcome, when disposing of waste without polluting the canal, and particularly their conscientiousness in attempting to overcome these difficulties.

However if boaters have to wait until the 'coast is clear' before emptying their toilets and have to rely on public toilets being open, it is not suprising that a small minority resort to 'dubious practises' to dispose of the various liquid wastes that are generated; the greater the number aboard, the greater the problem of disposal.

I share with Mrs Seymour the belief that boating can only be a force for economic good along the canal networks if we get the infrastructure right and I appreciate the hard work that HCS are undertaking to get these facilities in place.

Any chance of an update?

Sincerely,

M Miles, Greenfield

Coincidentally, we have a feature on sanitary and other facilities on the Canal in this issue; see page 18 Ed.

Facilities at Wool Road, Dobcross



Dear Brian

I read your article with interest on the measurement of locks on the Huddersfield Narrow having watched the process on Lock 22E outside Globe Mills, Slaithwaite. Restored using the old walls but supplied by BW with new gates and gearing.

Yes the measurements taken were indicating that the lock sides were suitable for a narrow boat but that missed the point. All summer there have been complaints to BW about the bottom set of lock gates not opening fully with some boats getting stuck as they entered or exited.

I mentioned this to the BW staff doing the measurements but my comments appeared not to be appreciated. I then had a wry smile when, after taking the measurements, the new bottom gates, as usual, would not open fully and they struggled to extricate their workboat.

One of the other main problems all the way down the east side, with many of its gates restored in the initial stages of restoration, is that they do not now fit properly. The leakage through the bottom set at the time of use causing pounds above to become low and sometimes empty.

In your meetings with BW can you impress on them that an urgent priority is for those gates to be made watertight so saving them the loss of water and assisting the easier passage of boats over the heavily locked sections from Huddersfield to Marsden.

Yours sincerely,

Keith W Sykes, Slaithwaite

John Lund, proprietor of the Pennine Moonraker operating on the Huddersfield Narrow at Uppermill, responds to Mrs Seymour's observations published in the Winter 2002 issue of Pennine Link.

The Pennine Moonraker is a professional trip boat and crew, being examined, passed and operating under the auspices of the Maritime Coastguard Agency.

I consider some of the objects of my business are to pass on my love and enjoyment of the canal to the many thousands of passengers carried. 'Roaring' around would not aid this objective.

Our trip already has a 15 minute leeway in case of hold-ups and difficulties, again to avoid haste and aid enjoyment.

As an experienced boater, Mrs. Seymour should know that even at slow speeds a 70ft boat with 2ft 6" draft, in a shallow canal would still cause disturbance. But, then again what experienced boater would moor in 'soft earth' instead of mooring in a more suitable spot.

One point I might agree with in "Boaters in a Hurry" whose impervious conduct and lack of willingness to give way causes problems for all.

Finally, perhaps some of the many 'boat-ers with problems' I have helped in the last couple of years repairing propellers, control cables, water pumps, etc, might like to write to H.C.S. in my support.

Yours faithfully

John Lund, SKIPPER

BW are providing '48 hour' moorings in Uppermill, but at particularly busy times, it is inevitable that there will be insufficient fixed moorings and use of ground spikes will have to continue. Ed.

West Side Boats Coordinator, Allan Knott, has written to let us know about the season's sailings of our trip boats at Portland Basin and Marsden.

The volunteer boat crews are pleased to announce that the boats will resume after the Winter break a couple of weeks before Easter, operating every weekend and Bank Holiday, for public trips, throughout the season until the end of October.

The boat 'Still Waters', operating from Portland Basin, Ashton-u-Lyne, will also be available for charter during the week. Please call the Society Office on 0161 339 1332 for further details and charter bookings.

And talking of the crew ...

One of our Boat Crew Volunteers, John Banks of Huddersfield, has been unable to be actively involved in boat trips for the last couple of years or so due to being dependant on dialysis support.

After waiting for 21 months, he was matched with a new kidney and we are pleased to hear 'they' are getting on well together!

HCS wish both John and his wife Gail much happiness together as they now re-discover the freedom of not being constrained by a dialysis machine. We look forward to seeing them back at the helm again.

Best wishes,

Allan Knott

West Side Boat Crew Coordinator

Notice of the 2003 AGM

HUDDERSFIELD CANAL SOCIETY LIMITED

Notice is hereby given that the Twenty Third Annual General Meeting of the above named Company will be held at the Waters Edge Restaurant, Tunnel End, Marsden* on Friday the 6th day of June 2003 at 7.30pm to Transact the following Business:

1. To approve the Minutes of the 2002 Annual General Meeting.
2. To receive and adopt the Accounts for the Company for the year ending 31st December 2002 together with the Report of the Council of Management and of the Auditors thereon.
3. To re-elect Mazars of Huddersfield as Auditors and to authorise the Council of Management to fix their remuneration.
4. To re-elect Mr. J. A. Carr as a member of the Council of Management retiring by rotation.
5. To re-elect Mr. K. E. Gibson as a member of the Council of Management retiring by rotation.
6. To re-elect Mr. N. A. Kenyon as a member of the Council of Management retiring by rotation.
7. To re-elect Mr. G. B. Minor as a member of the Council of Management retiring by rotation.
8. To re-elect Mr. W. A. Ramsden as a member of the Council of Management retiring by rotation.
9. To re-elect Mr. D. M. Sumner as a member of the Council of Management retiring by rotation.
10. To confirm the appointment of Ms M. O'Neill co-opted during the year.
11. To consider any other nominations.
12. Any other business.

DATED the 3rd day of March 2003
By Order of the Council

J.M.Fryer, Company Secretary

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

* If there are too many members attending to be safely accommodated in the Waters Edge Restaurant, the AGM will move across to the Standedge Visitors Centre.

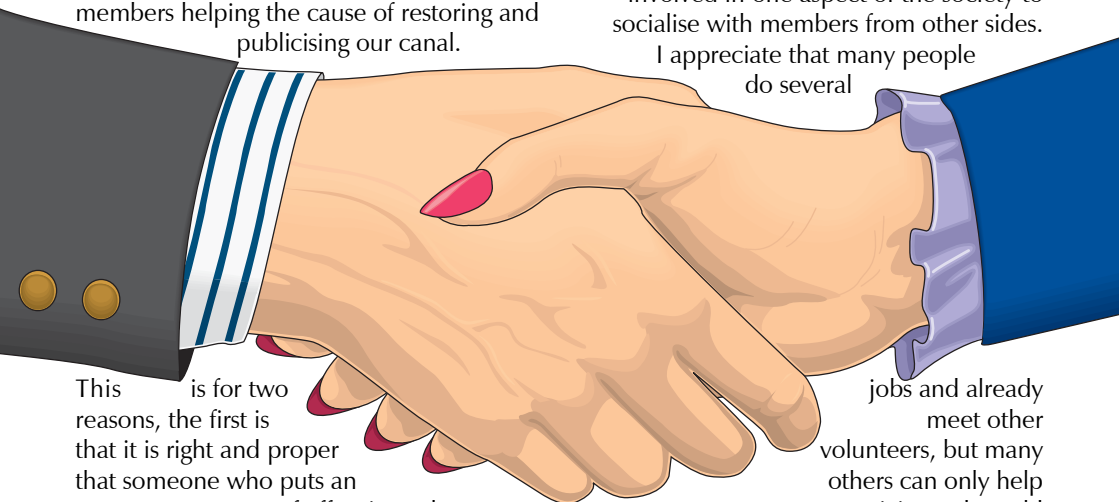
Volunteer Recognition

As you may have read in the last edition of Pennine Link, HCS Council has decided to start a system of recognising the time put in by all our volunteers as boat crew, navvies, festival organisers, envelope stuffers; in fact the hundred and one jobs done by members helping the cause of restoring and publicising our canal.

will receive them with pride as a tangible recognition of their efforts.

An 'awards ceremony' will be held 3 to 4 times per year for these presentations, giving a chance for members who are heavily involved in one aspect of the society to socialise with members from other sides.

I appreciate that many people do several



This is for two reasons, the first is that it is right and proper that someone who puts an enormous amount of effort in to the Society should be recognised as such by the rest of the membership. Secondly it helps in any future grant bids if we can accurately count the amount of volunteer input to any scheme.

Although many people have already put thousands of hours of work and effort into restoring the HNC, this new scheme started this year. It would be impossible to do an accurate count of the time earned previously.

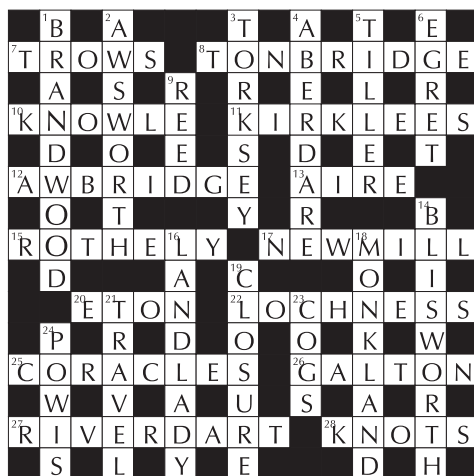
From January 2003, co-ordinators of the various Society activities will keep a log of individuals' hours and when reaching the required recognition levels, e.g. 50 hours completed, will submit members' names to the HCS Awards Committee.

Many other bodies use a similar type of system. The actual value of the award is negligible, but it is hoped that members

jobs and already meet other volunteers, but many others can only help out on one activity and would welcome the chance to socialise with practitioners of other disciplines.

Brian Minor

Solution to Crossword 40

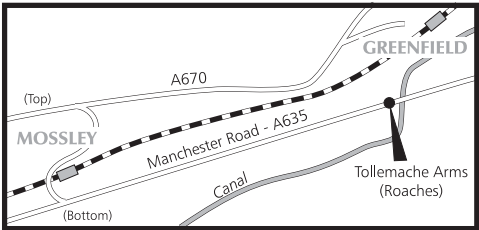


THE SOCIETY WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBER:

2664 Mr Armitage, [REDACTED]

WEST SIDE SOCIAL MEETINGS:

As usual, the venue is the Tollemache Arms, Manchester Road, Mossley on the second Wednesday of the month commencing at 8.00pm.
Forthcoming meetings for 2003 are:
9th April, 14th May & 11th June.



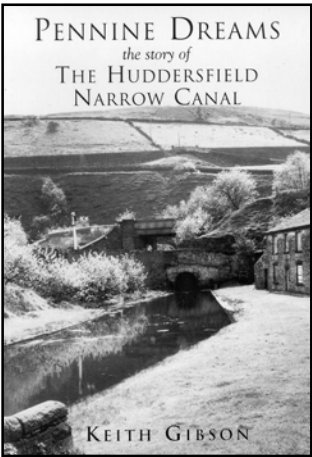
PENNINE LINK BACK NUMBERS:

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 143

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

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Individual £9.00	Articles, letters and comments	Per Issue Per Year
Family £11.00	for Issue 145 of Pennine Link	Quarter £9.38 £37.50
Life £90.00	should reach the Editor at	Half £18.75 £75.00
Associate £15.00	45 Gorton Street, Peel Green,	Full £37.50 £150.00
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