

Pennine Link

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Huddersfield Canal Society Ltd

239 Mossley Road, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire, OL6 6LN

Tel: 0161 339 1332 Fax: 0161 343 2262

EMAIL: hcs@hcanals.demon.co.uk Website: www.hcanals.demon.co.uk

Administrator - Robert Gough

Neville Kenyon HCS Ltd, 239 Mossley Road, Ashton-u-Lyne, Lancs., OL6 6LN
Chairman Tel: 0161 339 1332

Trevor Ellis 20 Batley Avenue, Marsh, Huddersfield, HD1 4NA
Vice-Chairman Tel: 01484 534666

John Fryer Ramsdens, Freeman & Co., 18 Lewisham Road, Slaithwaite,
Company Secretary Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, HD7 5AL

Keith Gibson Syke Cottage, Scholes Moor Road, Holmfirth, HD9 1SJ
HCS Restoration Ltd Tel: 01484 681245

Jack Carr 19 Sycamore Avenue, Euxton, Chorley, Lancashire, PR7 6JR
West Side Social Chairman Tel: 01257 265786

Neville Kenyon HCS Ltd, 239 Mossley Road, Ashton-u-Lyne, Lancs., OL6 6LN
Membership Secretary Tel: 0161 339 1332

Brian Minor 45 Gorton Street, Peel Green, Eccles, Manchester, M30 7LZ
Editor, Pennine Link Tel: 0161 288 5324 brian.minor@btinternet.com

David Finnis Fall Bottom, Oliver Lane, Marsden, Huddersfield, HD7 6BZ
Press Officer Tel: 01484 847016

Allan Knott 64 High Street, Godley, Hyde, Cheshire, SK14 2PU
W.Side Boats Co-ordinator Tel: 0161 343 6400

David Stubbs 4 Hollowgate, Thurstonland, Huddersfield, HD4 6XY
E.Side Boats Co-ordinator Tel: 01484 865430

Vince Willey 45 Egmont Street, Mossley, Ashton-u-Lyne, Lancs., OL5 9NB
Boats Officer Tel: 0161 339 1332

Alwyn Ogborn 14 Stanhope Street, Mossley, Ashton-u-Lyne, Lancs., OL5 9LX
Special Events Co-ordinator Tel: 01457 833329

Allen Brett 31 Woodlands Road, Milnrow, Rochdale, Lancs., OL16 4EY
General Council Member Tel: 01706 641203

Keith Noble The Dene, Triangle, Sowerby Bridge, West Yorkshire, HX6 3EA
General Council Member Tel: 01422 823562

Alec Ramsden 16 Edgemoor Road, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, HD7 2HP
General Council Member Tel: 01484 662246

David Sumner 4 Whiteoak Close, Marple, Stockport, Cheshire SK6 6NT
General Council Member Tel: 0161 449 9084

Ken Wright Bridge House, Dobcross, Oldham, Lancashire, OL3 5NL
General Council Member Tel: 01457 873599

Pennine *Link*

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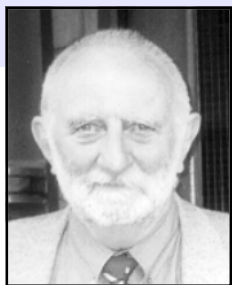
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*Front Cover: British Waterways' new boaters' facilities on the Huddersfield Narrow at Grove Road, Millbrook.
Photo: British Waterways*



Editorial

Welcome to the summer!!

As I write this, it is pouring down and there are flood warnings being issued for all the

rivers in the region. Hardly 'jolly boating weather'.

To console you there is the finish of the account by Anne Wright of their trip in the brand new boat after the National last year, and an account of an epic journey on the HNC by new contributors the Brown Family. Ed Mortimer presents some views about the possible fate of the Hollingwood Branch and Keith Gibson has some positive thoughts about the rest of the network under restoration. Hope that some of these will brighten up the time spent listening to the raindrops on the cabin roof.

Changes in the Council after the AGM. David Sumner has stepped down from Chairman after more than 20 years in the hot seat. He is still staying on the Council so we will still have his advice and good sense available to us. It will be strange not seeing him keeping us all in order and curbing some of my outbursts and non politically correct remarks!

His successor is Neville Kenyon, of whom there is a short biography on page 7. I know he will do a good job and guide the Society well. John Sully has stood down as Treasurer and has the grateful thanks of the Council for all the work and effort he has put in keeping the books balanced and the Society in a healthy position financially over the past few years.

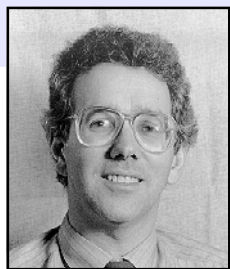
David Stubbs has been co-opted on to the Council to fill the recently vacated position of East side Boat Crew Coordinator, welcome aboard David! There will be some biographical details from him in the next issue.

On the professional side, as the activities of the Society have reduced greatly since reopening, Frank Smith's job became surplus and so Frank has left us. He goes with the thanks of the Society for the time he has worked for us. Frank worked all sorts of hours and was involved with every aspect of the Society's work. In that time the Society has seen the canal restoration finally financed and finished and Frank's efforts were a vital cog in that restoration.

Bob Gough is still with us, running the office and the boat booking systems, keeping the accounts up to date, maintaining the membership database and typesetting Pennine Link, making sure that my spelling is OK and that I do not make too many boobs! *(For instance in the caption under the picture of the three ladies at the AGM on page 15, I wanted to put a quote from Macbeth - Bob's suggestion will ensure that I don't have to eat cold dinners for a month!)*

The changes in the management structure at BW are a slight worry to us. The Society had got used to the people we dealt with and the system that was in operation. Now we will not only deal with several new (to us) people, but will have the added difficulty of dealing with two bodies as the management of the canal is to be split between North West and Yorkshire. Time will tell whether this will make for simpler contacts.

Brian Minor



Chairman's Annual Report

After the momentous events in 2001, the Society could be forgiven for taking a breather in 2002.

The lead up to the canal opening had been quite exhausting, yet exhilarating for the Society. However, a new foundation for the future was laid and we found time to celebrate our waterway with the Inland Waterways National Festival on the Huddersfield Broad in August 2002.

The Narrow Canal attracted over 800 boats in 2002 of which 200 visited the National Rally. I was honoured to chair the Festival Committee and we celebrated the opening of the Narrow and the new Pennine Ring. Our trip boat plied the Broad, Bob Gough, Frank Smith, Brian Minor *et al* manned our Society stand and tens of thousands enjoyed the festival on a vast site provided by our partners Kirklees Council.

Our boats provided a service throughout the year in Tameside and Kirklees ably manned by Alan Knott and his skilled team of volunteers. The boat committee is still considering replacement boat(s) and the most cost efficient way of providing a service.

The Society welcomed Keith Gibson's history of HCS published in the Autumn of 2002. This well researched and honest account of the 'struggle' is a testament to the Society's role in the whole restoration project. Keith's book is virtually a précis of the Council's minutes and Annual Reports since 1974.

Pennine Link's editorship moved to Brian Minor in 2002. Brian has been a stalwart of the Society since the early 80's. His frank and informed editorial policy continues to give the Society's view maintaining an independent yet honest standpoint on our Waterway and its operation. The Society works in partnership with British Waterways, but we must retain the right to be critical when necessary.

The promotion of the Huddersfield Narrow continued throughout 2002 with talks, sales and festivals. We were also pleased to be associated with the Northern Canals Association via its chairman Keith Gibson and Hon. Secretary Frank Smith. Promotion of the Huddersfield Narrow is our first aim, but encouraging other waterway societies helps our cause.

Membership remained stable in 2002. Neville Kenyon has pledged to increase our membership base and many inactive yet talented members will be contacted in the future to play an increasing role in the management of the Society and hence the Canal. British Waterways need our volunteer input to manage the Canal and promote its use. Trevor Ellis and his small team has assisted BW in the annual maintenance regime and therefore made the waterway more user friendly. More help is required. Both Neville and Trevor will be canvassing members for practical assistance.

In 2002 we pledged to invest some of our funds in the canal infrastructure after our £500,000 contribution towards the restoration via BW. Accordingly our offer of a £50,000 grant towards visitor facilities

caused BW to provide new boating facilities at Wool Road, Slaithwaite and Grove Road. In 2003 the Grove Road facility will be officially opened as a result of our input.

We are committed to encourage more boaters onto the canal and the Society is constantly appraising visitor needs - both waterborne and others. A new strategy to promote the Narrow and assist BW is being developed.

I am pleased to report that our Balance Sheet shows net assets of nearly £500,000. Our investment policy has been well considered and until a revised strategy for the Society has been approved, our funds will continue to be invested cautiously. To this end we have had to consider our revenue expenditure carefully and from July 2003 we are to reduce our full time staff to one.

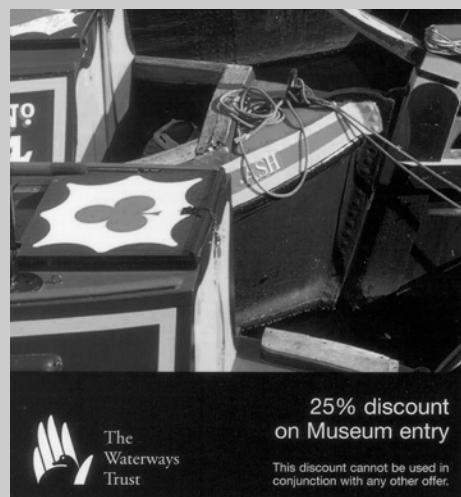
Frank Smith, after many years as our General Secretary, is to leave the company. Frank was appointed by BW as Volunteer Co-ordinator in 2001 and his employment costs were shared with BW until October 2002. His contract with HCS expires at the end of June 2003 and will not be renewed. The Society will operate from July 2003 with Bob Gough as our full-time paid Administrator. On behalf of all our members I thank Frank for his contribution to the Society and wish him well in the years to come.

The future. After this 2003 AGM and twenty years as Chairman, I will step down. Neville Kenyon will take over. It is time for a new Chairman with new ideas. Neville, like me, has a business background and his management experience will, after recent council working parties, bring a new look to HCS to continue its role in the operation of the Huddersfield Narrow.

I have enjoyed my twenty odd years as Chairman and have seen the Canal restored; from our early works at Uppermill through to the major works by the Huddersfield Canal Company culminating in the reopening in 2001.

Thank you for your support. The Huddersfield Narrow Canal's future is assured. Passage through Standedge is now free and there are plans to upgrade the canal when funds allow. Your Society has promoted the restoration by a partnership of public and private sector organisations. With your continued support this unique Waterway will stand as the beacon for the partnership approach to waterway restoration. I am proud and privileged to have been a part of this great enterprise.

David Sumner
Retiring Chairman



We have been given, by those nice people at the Waterways Trust, a dozen '25% off' entry cards to various Waterway Museums (Ellesmere port, Stoke and Gloucester) They are in the office and will go to the first members to ask for them; in person or a s.a.e. please.

New Chairman of HCS

The new Chairman of HCS is to be Neville Kenyon. Neville has been on the Council for 4 years. Before that he was on the board of HCS restoration Ltd for 11 years.

He first became involved, like many of us, through the Ashton Canal Festival. Neville was, until his recent semi-retirement, a director of The Stamford Group Limited of Stalybridge where he is currently retained as a marketing consultant on a two days per week basis.

This company with canalside premises were early supporters of the canal festival and of the Society. They were the first to realise the potential of their location and landscaped the bank long before the restoration started at the western end.

As well as advertising in the programme and financially sponsoring the festival, one of the Group companies, Mailbox, provided the litter bins around the site free of charge to us.

As restoration developed and we became responsible for the spending of large sums of money, it was realised that we needed someone with business acumen on the restoration board to make sure we didn't go astray. As a result Neville was invited to join us and his advice has always been sound and sensible. As the restoration company was wound down when the big grants came in, the directors of Restoration joined the main board.

Last year Neville took over from Jo Young as Membership Secretary, with many ideas for sorting out the administration. Once again his sound and sensible suggestions have helped the Society through a somewhat turbulent time.

The Council welcomes Neville to the 'hot seat'. His style will be different from David's, but I know he will keep cool and calm no matter what the circumstances.

Welcome aboard Neville, enjoy your stay.

Brian Minor

MARSDEN – 12TH JAZZ FESTIVAL 10TH – 12TH OCTOBER, 2003

This festival goes from strength to strength. It takes place in several venues in and around Marsden and covers all forms of jazz from the traditional to the way-out!

This year's programme is still being put together but in early June the following had been lined up:-

John Etheridge's Sweet Chorus
A tribute to Stephane Grappelli

Ben Crosland Quintet with Steve Lodder

Dennis Rollins Badbone & Co.

Stacey Kent & her musicians

Jim Mullen Organ Trio

The Zappatistas play the music of Frank Zappa



The Society will once again be providing a boat for "Jazz on the Water" on the Sunday of the festival and also sponsoring a trad jazz band to play on the boat.

The full programme and booking form will be ready in July. You can order a copy or get more information from **01484 843701** or e-mail admin@marsdenjazzfestival.com or visit www.marsdenjazzfestival.com

Chairman's Report



The Huddersfield Canal Society has entered a brand new phase. The years of toil in achieving our "Impossible Dream" are largely at an end. Our Society therefore

needs to radically reposition itself (in marketing speak!) to appeal to different sectors with different aspirations.

After the grand opening there were those pessimists among us who predicted that our membership numbers would simply collapse, our purpose having been achieved. This has proved to be totally incorrect and it has become apparent that the people who supported us during the restoration want to stay involved and remain a part of the continuing development.

Indeed, new members are being welcomed every month. Our membership is our lifeline to our effectiveness as a Society. There are so many opportunities for us to grasp along the canal route. We have widespread support from the three relevant local authorities, Tameside, Oldham and Kirklees as well as British Waterways. We join with them all in working towards continually improving the canal facilities for all uses and potential users.

Our detailed plans have yet to fully unfold but we will concentrate our energies to improve the whole environment along the canal path for all leisure groups who wish to take advantage of its very special ambience.

Although we look to the future with enthusiasm and confidence, we should not forget those who have made a major contribution to our Society over many years and who have now decided to retire from active duty. Although appreciations will appear elsewhere at some length, as incoming Chairman I wish to personally thank David Sumner for his leadership, John Sully for his financial wizardry and Frank Smith for his secretarial services over many years.

Bob Gough will remain in our full-time employment as Administrator based at our Ashton-under-Lyne office and will be available to answer questions from members and other canal users.

Finally, thanks to all our members for your continued support. We will do all we can to ensure you get best value for your annual subscriptions. I will welcome ideas from members who wish to suggest ways in which we can help improve the canal corridor and also our administration and communications.

Another era in the story of HCS commences. When one lock closes, another opens! And long may that continue on the Huddersfield Canals – both Broad and Narrow.

Neville Kenyon

Helen Ogborn, MBE

Congratulations to Helen Ogborn from all of us in HCS on her award in the honours list. Helen, wife of Simon Ogborn and daughter of Frank Ruffley, (sister to Peter and Sue) is the Manager of the Tameside victim support Group and has taken the brunt of the relatives trauma from the Shipman murders. A well deserved honour.



Keith's Disconnected Jottings

Almost everyone involved in the waterways world will be affected by changes in the management structure of British Waterways being

instituted under new Chief Executive Robin Evans.

The current structure of 6 regions responsible for 25 waterway offices is to be replaced by 10 Waterway Units, grouping waterways together under the control of a General Manager.

In our case, the Huddersfield Narrow and Huddersfield Broad, together with the Lancaster Canal, Ribble Link, Leeds & Liverpool Canal (western half), Rochdale Canal, Calder & Hebble Navigation (western part), the Ashton Canal, the Peak Forest Canal, the Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal and the Sankey Canal, will be managed by Adrian Sains, based at Wigan.

The changes in our case may well happen sooner than nationally because Tom Rowe, our previous waterway manager, has left BW for a new job in the private sector.

There is still a role in this new structure for Regional Director, Derek Cochrane, who becomes Managing Director, North. Derek will be based in Manchester with a small specialist staff covering property development, regeneration, and engineering, together with a finance controller and marketing and public relations staff. He will report directly to the Chief Executive and will be in overall control of the General Managers of four Waterway Units

(our own North West unit; Yorkshire, managed by Laurence Morgan in Leeds; Wales & Border Counties, managed by Julie Sharman in Northwich; and East Midlands, managed by Caroline Killeavy in Newark).

John Lancaster, previously Derek's opposite number in the Midlands and South West, will take a similar role responsible for the four southern Waterway Units, but the General Managers for the units responsible for London and Scottish waterways will be outside of this hierarchy, reporting directly to the Chief Executive.

It seems sensible for the Scottish canals to have this different management path because they are cut off from the English system, the government connections are with the Scottish Executive, and the smaller number and length of canals involved make it sensible to combine the tasks that in England and Wales will be carried out by the Managing Directors and the Waterway Unit General Managers. But I don't see why the London waterways are excluded from the overall control of a regional Managing Director, unless someone is interested to see how a waterway unit manages with one less tier of management. That might seem a logical next step on paper, but could, in my opinion, be a very bad idea, losing an essential degree of coordination.

Most of the previously centralized professional staff - engineering, ecology, conservation etc. - located in Leeds and Hillmorton are to be relocated to the new Waterway Unit offices - this, I suspect, being a significant factor in determining the new structure. It will give the General

Managers far closer access to this professional expertise and, perhaps, make it easier for professional staff to relate to other disciplines and to issues on the ground; although they might feel a little isolated away from their professional colleagues.

As part of the reduction in head office functions resulting from this relocation of staff, the existing Watford-based posts of Operations Director and Technical and Environment Director are to be merged, with our old friend Stewart Sim taking on the role of Technical Director. He will be assisted by Ian White who moves from Regional Director, North East in Leeds, to be Stewart's second in command. Other head office directors responsible for finance, marketing, legal issues and personnel, will remain unchanged.

Just how the changes will affect the waterways and the waterway restoration movement is unclear. I hope that moving professional staff nearer to the operational side will help, particularly where there are potential conflicts between different users of a waterway or in seeking accommodations between natural habitats and boating.

As chairman of the Northern Canals Association, the talking shop for waterway restoration north of Birmingham, I am sorry to see Ian White move on. He regularly attended our meetings and was always willing to comment, sometimes on the harsh realities of life, to restoration societies with unrealistic aspirations, but also to give a tactful kick up the backside where a change of direction or better political awareness might change things dramatically. To be fair, Derek Cochrane also turns up on occasions and is equally frank and helpful.

Talking of Northern Canals, for my sins, I have been appointed as chairman for another three years – if only because no-one else wants to take on the task, and perhaps because I remain convinced that this three-times-a-year talking shop, originally intended mainly for the policy and restoration people of waterway societies, is worthwhile.

I will invite the new General Managers of relevant waterway units to meetings because talking to each other and sharing experiences in an informal day out has proved to be a very good way of making progress and learning from the experience of others, and it is very apparent today that waterway enthusiasts do not have a monopoly of enthusiasm. There is a great deal of enthusiasm in British Waterways, and we can learn a great deal from each other to further the cause of restoration.

Talking of enthusiasm, we should celebrate two very long-awaited re-openings. On 28th March, Environment Minister, Michael Meacher MP, officially re-opened the Rochdale Canal, and on 28th April HRH the Prince of Wales, officially re-opened the Anderton Lift and its new visitor and operations centre.

Well done to our colleagues in the Rochdale and Trent & Mersey Canal Societies who campaigned for so long, and, in both cases, especial thanks to the local authority and BW staff who were absolutely crucial to the ultimate success. And it is good to see that our friends at the Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust have been able to place an order for the new aqueduct to be built over the new M6 toll motorway on the Lichfield Canal, although they are still a little short of the target of their appeal for funds headed by their vice-president,

actor David Suchet. As before, let me remind you that financial contributions, no matter how small are welcome by the trust's finance director, Bob Williams, at Norfolk House, 29 Hall Lane, Hammerwich WS7 0JP.

Progress might appear slow on British Waterways so-called second tranche of restoration schemes, but there is a lot going on behind the scenes. Supported financially by English Heritage and the IWA, BW has commissioned a heritage survey of the Cotswold Canals - the Thames and Severn and the Stroudwater - vital for success when the intended application for a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund is submitted. You might remember that the Civic Trust produced a similar study as part of our bid for Millennium Commission funding. At a reception hosted by HRH the Prince of Wales at his Gloucestershire home, Highgrove, on 21st May, the Waterways Trust launched a major public appeal towards the matching funding that will be needed to support this application.

The Heritage Lottery Fund clearly is willing to support waterway restoration that accords with the Fund's heritage objectives, as seen from the announcement in April that a first stage approval has been given for a grant of £4.5m towards restoration of another of these 'tranche 2 schemes', the Droitwich Junction and Droitwich Barge Canals.

BW is preparing the detailed information needed to succeed in the second stage of the Heritage Lottery Fund application process. Together with contributions from Wychavon District Council and Worcestershire County Council, the money needed for this £9.5m project, whose largest cost is the £1.3m crossing of the

A449 trunk road, is nearly all in place, and it is hoped that work by volunteers from the Droitwich Canals Trust and Waterway Recovery Group will largely make up any shortfall in matching funding available for a successful lottery grant.

Another of these 'tranche 2 schemes' has also been the subject of a consultants' report. Paid for by the North West Regional Development Agency, a study by consultants Environmental Resources Management, on behalf of the Lancaster Canal Northern Reaches Group identifies likely benefits of restoring the canal back to Kendal, including the creation of over 800 jobs, an additional tourist spend of £21m, the attraction of £45m private investment, and the introduction and promotion of biodiversity, including the creation of new wetland habitats as part of bringing 35 hectares of 'brown field' land into use. The entire project to restore the canal across the M6 blockages north of Tewitfield and back to Kendal is likely to cost over £50m, and could be achieved (if the money can be found) by 2008.

The North West Development Agency have also awarded a grant of £393,000 to complete the final studies in to the proposed Liverpool Canal Link which includes a new section of canal across the Pier Head to link the Leeds & Liverpool Canal with Albert Dock, and thus create an appropriate terminal point for the canal.

Did you see that BW and the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Partnership have selected the route of the proposed new 20-mile waterway to link the river Great Ouse at Kempston near Bedford with the Grand Union Canal at Campbell Park, Milton Keynes crossing the M1 motorway between junctions 13 and 14? The route

chosen runs into the centres of both Bedford and Milton Keynes with the resulting opportunities for related development to help justify the expenditure.

The partnership intends to make an application to the Government for an order under the Transport and Works Act 1992, which would grant navigation rights and planning permission, but first has to commission a series of engineering, ecological and economic studies to confirm the detailed feasibility of the route, and the benefits of creating this important new link.

IWA have offered an initial grant of £2,000 – a small part of the figure of around £650,000 that these consultants' studies are eventually expected to cost, but possibly helping to decide the East of England Development Agency to offer £50,000 and the Environment Body for Bedfordshire to offer £25,000 from a Landfill Tax Credit scheme. A bid for further funding is being made for support from the Government's Sustainable Communities programme.

On a rather smaller scale, the Caldon Canal Society are succeeding in putting together the finance for a study of extending the Leek Arm of the Caldon Canal back into the town. And Waterway Recovery Group have held a weekend working party clearing trees and undergrowth from the derelict first lock on the Uttoxeter Canal, which connects the Caldon Canal at Froghall with a mooring basin immediately below the lock. The Caldon Canal Society is investigating the possibility of restoration of the canal from here to Uttoxeter, although that may not be easy to achieve because the Churnet Valley Railway was built over much of the line of the canal, and a very active Rail-

way Society is making rapid progress in restoring the track back along the line.

Also relatively near to home, the Sankey Canal Restoration Society is making progress, with the setting up of a St Helens Canal Steering Group including the Society, the riparian local authorities, the North West Development Agency and BW. It looks as though the key to obtaining funding to restore the canal might be the creation of yet another new canal link, this time from the St Helens Canal to the Leeds & Liverpool at Melling. This might provide the economic outputs needed to make restoration of the original canal viable.

And progress is being made with other smaller schemes. A report by consultants W.S. Atkins on the Driffield Navigation commissioned by East Riding of Yorkshire Council has concluded that navigation should be restored to Driffield, which will require repairs to the locks at Wansford, Whinhill and Town Lock in Driffield, and to the staircase locks at Snakeholme; the building of three new bridges; and dredging of the channel at a cost of £6.4m, providing a valuable resource for residents and businesses in Driffield and the surrounding villages and access to craft from the Humber.

Atkins (who you might remember did work for HCS) have also been commissioned by the Shrewsbury & Newport Canal Trust to investigate the feasibility of restoring the derelict canal from its junction with the Shropshire Union at Norbury through to Shrewsbury, examining both the engineering aspects and the potential for urban and rural regeneration along the whole length of the canal. At a contract price of £20,000 this study will only be concerned with the principles,

rather than with the detail, but it's a brilliant start for a relatively new restoration society.

It is gratifying to note from the various grants referred to how much the various regional development agencies are willing to invest in waterway related regeneration. What then is going on at the Yorkshire & Humberside Development Agency, Yorkshire Forward?

After years of considering what to do with the site, and the investment of millions of pounds on restoration of the Chesterfield Canal, the Development Agency submitted a planning application to Rotherham Council for redevelopment of the derelict Kiveton Colliery which made no apparent provision for restoration of the canal across the site at all!

With an avalanche of objections from local people, the Chesterfield Canal Society, BW, the Chesterfield Canal Partnership, the other local authorities on the line of the canal, the IWA etc., Rotherham Council have asked the Development Agency to think again. Let's hope that, at last, the penny drops and the Agency takes note of government advice concerning the regeneration benefits of waterway restoration, and of the huge amount of work already done on this canal. Maybe they will then even consider the plight of the Barnsley and Dearne & Dove projects, because, without their backing, progress there is likely to remain slow.

Finally, did you see that yet again the Environment Agency has failed to grasp the nettle of returning navigation to the river Stour on the Essex and Suffolk border? The River Stour Trust have been campaigning for rather longer than HCS, and have restored several locks on this

historic river navigation, where no-one doubts that there is a right of navigation, but that right is severely curtailed by bylaw to use by sail and manually powered craft only, apart from use by the Trust's own small trip boats.

Following a public consultation exercise the Environment Agency has decided to support boating use of the river, but still only by light craft such as canoes, small sailing craft and rowing boats. This decision was recommended by the Agency's Regional Fisheries, Ecology and Recreation Committee – but I understand that has a majority of fisheries interests. And, no matter how effective the campaigning activity of the Trust, they have never been able to overcome the apparent resistance of riparian landowners to increased public access to the river.

This seems yet another missed opportunity in what has been a rather sad saga of the failure to restore some of our historic river navigations, for reasons that seem to be not quite related to reality, and which are apparently biased in favour of some sectional interests at the expense of others. I find it hard to believe that the limited use of a river such as the Stour for boating can do anything but good. The occasional boat would not seriously reduce landowners' privacy from what is, after all, a public asset, and the devastation of natural habitats or fisheries predicted by some as a result of a small number of powered boats has from what I can see been grossly overstated.

Keith Gibson

2003 Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held on 5th June at the Watersedge Restaurant, Marsden. Only 22 people had informed Frank that they were coming so food was ordered for that number and knowing what you are all like, 40 chairs were set out in the upstairs room.

Well over 50 members attended and the room was somewhat crowded! However it made for a very good meeting.

Michael Marshall from BW gave his views on the canal operations. He said that there had been several early problems, but measures had been taken this year to iron some of them out. He listed four main problems:-

1/ WATER - BW have restored some original sources and improved management, over abstraction from Yorkshire Water could be expensive in the future and therefore will be avoided.

2/ LOCKS - Many boaters have needed re-education on the operation of locks and persuaded not to leave paddles up. They had stopped most leaks and developed new techniques with grout sealants.

3/ TUNNEL - Early damage to boats had now almost been eliminated as the crews had become more proficient. It was hoped the lifting of Tunnel charges will increase use.

4/ FACILITIES - The new Facility at Stalybridge had opened, (although there was a general feeling around the room of unhappiness with the decor of this) Others were in the planning stage, On behalf of BW, Mike thanked HCS for their input to creating these facilities.



The Standedge Visitor Centre from the AGM venue at the Watersedge Restaurant, Marsden.



And a good turnout by Council and Society members.

He then went on to talk about the imminent reorganisation of BW, Derek Cochrane is to be MD of the Northern half of the country (congratulations from HCS for this). Adrian Sains has been appointed as General Manager for the canals in the North West including the HNC. The boundary between the new Yorkshire unit and North West one is still under discussion. However both units will report to Derek Cochrane to ensure consistency throughout the canals.

Photos: B.Minor



Vice Chairman, Trevor Ellis (left) presents to retiring Chairman David Sumner.



And in turn, David Sumner presents a gift to Frank Smith on his leaving, in recognition of 15 years service to the Society.

Members questioned him closely about this and about the somewhat garish signs going on the canal. The collapse of a retaining wall in Ashton was mentioned and Mike spoke about the cost of the repair and the problem of the site access. He was also questioned about the operation of the Marsden flight and the use boaters are making of the town of Marsden.

David Sumner in his remarks said that the Society, although in a sound financial position, now needed to examine all its outgoings, and as a result it had been decided not to renew Frank Smith's contract. David said that Frank had worked well for the Society over the past 15 years, but knew that he was working himself out of a job with the reopening of the Canal. He made a presentation to Frank on behalf of the Society.

David then said that he was standing down as Chairman after 20 years as he felt the time was ripe for him to do so. The Council had selected Neville Kenyon to be his successor. On behalf of the Society, Vice Chairman Trevor Ellis presented David with a set of champagne glasses and a bottle to go with them!



Behind every great man (Left to right) Diane Sumner, Kath Gibson and Ann Minor.

The accounts were passed after one or two queries were dealt with, mainly about boat operations and finances.

All the retiring Directors were re-elected en masse.

Questions from the floor concerned the insurance for volunteers. This is in place, but it is needed to have a copy of the certificate displayed on the boats.

The meeting ended with a buffet supper, with generous portions for everyone.

Brian Minor

Frank Smith - An Appreciation

As most members know our Volunteer Co-ordinator (and 50% of the HCS staff)

Frank Smith left at the end of June when it was decided not to renew his contract as the opening of the canal had reduced the work load enormously.

Frank has been employed by the Society for nearly 15 years, doing a wide variety of tasks in that time, so it is fitting to let him write his own 'obituary'!

I started work with HCS in October 1988 as Assistant Projects Officer. One of the points which helped me get the job, I believe, was with my army background I could scrounge/acquire useable items. However, Les Winnard soon asked me to purchase material instead, as he had to justify/substantiate the grant from the DOE which had enabled HCS to employ me full time and Mike Thompson part time.

The job title changed soon after because of the Society's General Secretary, Sue Chadwick, leaving Council, and it fell to me to carry on with the good work. I have never stopped typing since - initially on a typewriter and then upgrading to computers, courtesy of Steve Whitby.

At one stage, I was secretary to most of the Society's Festival Committees, plus various Council sub committees, and eventually, secretary to the various Huddersfield Canal Company sub committees, some 15+ all told. It wasn't all secretarial work, I did some graft. Dis-mantling and delivering market stalls from Batley to Marsden for the Tunnel End Fair is not a job I would like to repeat.

Festivals were a shock at first, but once I became familiar on how they operated it became easier. On occasion I even designed the brass plaques. Collecting plaques was sometimes difficult when the only instruction I was given was to meet a person I had never met, at a lay-by off the M6 in the Stafford area, and on arrival found at least 30 cars parked up!

Over the years I have gained experience via a variety of courses which included Media Presentation, Effective Brochure Production, First Aid at Work, Welcome Host, Minute Taking, and Boatmaster (the original license allowed sailing of boats carrying up to 250 passengers). On occasion, and when no one else was available, I have been interviewed on the radio, helped make several television programmes, and made it onto the front page of The Times a few years ago.

In some respects, the Society operated boats have caused me the biggest headache. Gone now are the pleasures of a weekend phone call informing me that Stan or one of the other boats had either been vandalised or sunk. The Society splashed out on a new boat, unfortunately, the boat builder went into liquidation, and following a phone call from an interested party, Steve and his men, plus crane and trailer, did a day light raid and recovered what was financially the Society's property. The Marsden Shuttle, as it was aptly named, has shuttled around the canal to suit a variety of events on requirements. I have transported this boat around the canal for many years, fortunately for me, without any disasters.

Most of the passengers carried by HCS always had an enjoyable time, even when, e.g. Benji's engine had broken down and we had to bow-haul it from Marsden to west Slaithwaite and provide a special buffet at Spath reservoir. Bow-hauling was the norm with Benjamin Outram due to its useless engine. It was whilst pulling the boat that I fell in the canal - my one and only time.

I inherited a small caravan used initially by Fiona Tewson (Brian Minor's daughter) which was designated as the sales caravan. This was superseded when I acquired a more purpose built caravan which was fitted out, again, courtesy of Steve Whitby's staff. Eventually the Society decided to have a special sales trailer built. I helped design it, and with the help of the sales volunteers, have looked after it ever since.

Providing illustrated talks was another of my activities. I have spoken to most groups in the region and have travelled as far north as Kendal, east to Hull, south as far as Amersham, and as far west as Dublin, where I had the privilege of addressing the World Canals Conference on behalf of HCS.

I was also Secretary to the Northern Canals Association which also took me and Keith Gibson to the majority of canals north of Birmingham.

One of the many facets of my job was arranging special events. I have met Councillors, Mayors, Government Ministers, Lords, and at the opening of the canal in September 2001, had the pleasure of being introduced to HRH Prince Charles. Had my regimental tie on, which is the same as his, although a different regiment (guaranteed to attract his attention though).

I have enjoyed my time immensely with HCS, and hope that in some small way I have helped the Society achieve its aim to restore the Huddersfield Narrow Canal to full and through navigation. My thanks to Bob Gough for all the computer assistance, and the numerous HCS members I have got to know over the years. Yes, OK, I have put on a few stone since I joined the Society, but when most meetings are either at a pub or end up at one, and food is taken on the hoof, so to speak, what can you expect - but it was worth it.

Frank Smith, Volunteer Co-ordinator
12 June 2003

Frank at the 2002 IWA National



Huddersfield Examiner

All the members of Council and members of HCS are grateful for all the hard work that Frank has done over these past years and the effort he has put in to the job. We wish him well whatever he does in the future, whether that is simply putting his feet up in the garden or working for some other organisation. Thank you Frank.

Brian Minor

Update on Operation of the HNC

British Waterways' Project Manager, Mike Marshall, reports:

We are now well into the third year of operation of the canal since reopening. Boat numbers are very similar to last year although have increased recently due to recent closures on the Rochdale Canal because of the problems with some of the old lock gates.

Standedge Tunnel operation is running reasonably well with increased usage partly due to the removal of the £35 charge. We have purchased a new communication system for the tunnel which will improve public safety by increasing the contactability to and from the convoy to the tunnel foreman, Diggle portal, the Standedge Visitor Centre and, if necessary, the Fire Brigade. We will shortly be installing a signal cable along both sides of the tunnel to ensure reception is available throughout the tunnel length.

The grouting works to cure chamber wall leakage is continuing and to date we have been very pleased with the results. Around seven locks have had a bentonite grout injected into the voids which acts as

an impermeable barrier. This work has been carried out with minimum disruption to the operation of the locks.

As you are aware, with the assistance of funding from the Canal Society, we have improved customer facilities along the canal at strategic locations. These are beginning to be used by boats and have been generally well received. Pictures of the new service station at Grove Road and the outdoor facility at Slaithwaite are attached. Mooring rings, bollards and improved signage are currently being installed throughout the canal to enhance the customer experience. Designated moorings will be identified at strategic locations and consideration will be given to the depth of the water at the canal edge in these locations. Dredging and improved waterway walls may be required.

Finally, can I thank HCS members for their continued support and I was pleased to see so many of you attend the recent AGM meeting at the Watersedge, Tunnel End. I will update you on our winter works in my next report.

Michael Marshall
Project Manager

East-side Boat Co-ordinator and Society member David Stubbs of Huddersfield has made the following offer:-

I have approximately 20 British Waterways Inland Cruising Guides for various waterways dated from the 1950s to 1970. They are now historical documents and I am sure that someone can

find a good home and use for these. It would be sacrilege to just throw them away!

If you are interested please call me on 01484 667135 to arrange for their collection.

Tameside Canals Festival 2003

The Tameside Canals Festival, Portland Basin, Ashton-under-Lyne

Friday 11th to Sunday 13th June 2003

"Last year, we raised £6,000 for Willow Wood hospice and this year we hope to do even better", said John Squirrel, Chair of the voluntary committee responsible for organising the annual boaters delight that is the Tameside Canals Festival.

This year sees the 26th annual canals festival at the idyllic canal side location of Portland Basin and late booking boaters as well as craft stall operators are still welcome to attend the event. Tameside Council continues its support for our local canals network by acting as the main sponsor for this event, through the Ashton-under-Lyne District Assembly.

The event kicks off at 7.30pm on Friday night with an hour of line dancing for everyone, followed by the zany madcap music of the 'Biggles Wartime Band' who are making a welcome return to the Festival. The mega-beer tent will once again be open all weekend offering the usual range of real ales, lagers and wines as well as non-alcoholic refreshments.

The site will reopen at 11.00am on Saturday and offer a great selection of entertainment for all the family. Manchester Airport has once again sponsored the Festival of Dance, and there will also be live brass band music, children's entertainment and a large craft tent. The Civic Mayor of Tameside, Councillor Margaret Downs will perform the official opening at 2pm and there will be boat rides as well as refreshments available until 5pm. The fascinating, award winning Portland Basin museum will be open with free admission

and the 'Café On The Wharf' will also be open, offering sumptuous snacks to our visitors.

Saturday evening will commence when the site reopens following a tidy-up, at 7pm with a festival disco followed by some good time music played live by Mossley based rockers, 'Union'.

On Sunday at 10am, prior to the site reopening at 11am, there will be a Church Service for all led by the Reverend Dennis Thomas. This will be followed by another afternoon of family fun not to be missed!

Admission charges have again been held at previous levels - that's just £1.50 for adults during the daytime sessions (with accompanied children free!) and £2.50 for the evening concerts.

If you do attend and would like to find out more about helping organise the 2004 Festival, look out for any of the committee members on site and say hello (we don't bite!). If you can't make it but are still interested, please contact: 0161 339 3040.

Peter Hawley
TCF Committee

Caravan/Tent Entry forms:

Robert Maycock
9 Warwick Close
Shaw
Lancashire OL2 7DZ

Trade Stall forms:

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

HCS Crews News



Over the last year, the trip boats at Marsden, namely 'Marsden Shuttle' and N.B. Astra raised over £3,000 in fares, with 'Still Waters' at Ashton realizing over

£4,700. The boats

operate every weekend from March to October plus special events during winter.

On Still Waters, the PA system has now been fitted with a new microphone, so karaoke fans taking a trip are most welcome to entertain the passengers. Also, the ghost of Richard Hillman is sometimes heard by passengers travelling through ASDA tunnel (depending who is on the back!).

Crews have also offered to hire out fishing nets at £20 a time to fish for Gail's wedding ring, but to date have had no takers. However, the dramatic scenes shown on 'Corrie' last February have certainly increased the number of passengers carried so far this year.

Boat Crew 'Uniform' - Crew members who have attained at least three days sailings are issued with a HCS polo or sweatshirt and after eight turnouts are eligible for our new super-duper waterproofs complete with logo! Applications from crew should be made via David Stubbs or Allan Knott (east and west side boat crew co-ordinators).

New crew members will be made most welcome and training will be given as appropriate. As well as sharing the pleasure of boating, HCS crew members help to recruit new Society members, increase interest in canals generally and, by their professional behaviour and conduct, act as a 'shop window' for the Society.

DAY BOAT HIRE

For those who would like to hire a 12 seater, self-drive narrowboat for the day, Astra is now operating as such from Portland Basin Marina. The daily rate is £60 per weekday and £80 at weekends. Enquiries should be made to the Marina on 0161 330 3133.

HCS TRIP BOAT 'STILL WATERS'

As a result of much interest shown at the AGM in the operation of trip boats operated by the Society, I wish to clarify the mystery of ownership of the 70' tug and butty 'Still Waters', currently based at Portland Basin.

The boat was commissioned by the Society about 8 years ago to operate specifically at Marsden between the top lock and Tunnel End. As the 12 seater Marsden Shuttle was too small to cope with increasing demand, it was decided to build a 50 seater boat to ferry passengers between the locations. As there isn't a winding hole at Marsden top lock, a boat had to be designed to run in both directions without having to reverse the full length; hence the 'tug and butty' ('butty being a passenger module, not a sandwich!).

The boat, built by Sagar Marine at Brighouse and named 'Standedge Pioneer', was launched by the actor who played Compo in Last of the Summer Wine (the late Bill Owen), and ran successfully for three years. Then followed three years of 'drought' as the summit pound was drained for the amazing refurbishment of Standedge Tunnel. During this time, the Pioneer sat languishing on the silted-up canal bed and suffered a degree of damage at the hands, or rather feet, of vandals as the skylights were kicked in and other damage caused.

However, all was repaired and the boat was made ready for the opening of Standedge Visitor Centre just prior to the complete re-

opening of the whole canal. To accommodate the passage of most modern canal boats, the summit pound was dropped by about 22cm to give more headroom through the Tunnel, which was a great idea, except that the Pioneer with a draught of 1 metre, now dragged laboriously along the bottom of the canal bed.

The Mayor and his entourage arrived at Marsden station for their boat trip to open the new Visitor Centre and with the ratchet straps, which hold the tug and butty together, having been stolen, one had to be very good at tying knots to hold 25 tonnes of steel together as the combination snaked along the channel, scraping the bottom on its way.

It was therefore decided to transfer the Standedge Pioneer to Ashton for operation; though for the first few weeks after re-opening on that glorious 1st May 2001, it was used by British Waterways for their short half-hour tunnel trips at Marsden. The water is much deeper in the Tunnel and new ratchet straps were obtained, so the venture was quite a successful exercise in partnership between HCS & BW.

There was a last minute panic, however, just three days before re-opening of the canal, when it was realised that the Press would only be able to take pictures of the tunnel walls and not straight ahead! The end panels of the butty were made of solid steel. With the speedy assistance of Guy Holding at Portland Basin Marina, a window at the front of the butty was hastily designed and fitted, giving the Press the opportunity of splendid 'straight ahead' tunnel photos - as published in all the local and many National newspapers.

Since the launch of Standedge Pioneer, the Marsden Shuttle had operated at Portland Basin, so a swap over was arranged. The little red Shuttle received a splendid refit whilst down at Ashton and was duly

returned to its original berth, with Astra for company; another 12 seater on lease from HCS member Ed Mortimer.

Now, back in the 1970's, Councillor Frank Ruffley, who proudly has a bridge in Stalybridge named after him, raised enough money, along with other trustees, to buy a boat for the disabled, named 'Still Waters'. That boat was about 60' long with the capacity to carry 12 passengers in wheelchairs for short holidays and day trips; hence the Tameside Canal Boat Trust was formed.

In the mid 1980's, HCS acquired a 37 seater 'Greater Manchester' which plied from Portland Basin for several years but was not designed to carry wheelchairs. Sadly, the original Still Waters was sunk by vandals, but the Trust received suitable compensation from the Insurers.

Several years later, with money accrued, the Trust were able to purchase Standedge Pioneer, now re-named 'Still Waters' after the original boat. Together with Frank Ruffley, his son Peter, Simon Ogborn and Allan Knott now exercise trusteeship of the boat and funds, and operate in partnership with HCS, whose volunteers crew the boat week after week.

So we now have a boat which carries both able-bodied and passengers with disabilities alike, providing excellent wheelchair access on and off the boat together with toilet facilities designed for wheelchair users.

Hence the mystery of ownership is no more; we have in operation an excellent partnership between HCS and the Trust, providing a service to the community and hopefully increasing awareness of our wonderful canal system.

Allan Knott
West Side Boat Co-ordinator

East Side Boat Co-ordinator Steps Down

Retiring East Side Boat Co-ordinator, Mo O'Neill writes:

First of all, on the subject of my relinquishing the heady pleasure of being East Side Crew Co-ordinator; may I extend a very big thank you to everyone for their help and support to me. I came to the job knowing only a few people and now feel I have gained many new friends – you're all lovely people and it's been a great opportunity to get to know you better.

We had a super "handover party" night at the Tunnel End Inn and it was wonderful that so many people turned out to make sure I really went! Thank you for coming, thank you for the flowers (down to Allan Knott I know) thank you for the commemorative autographed plate (down to Denis Broadbent) and thank you for the special copy of the Beano from Mr Broadbent Junior! I'm sorry I was such a pain about being photographed but I'm just not the photogenic type.

A special thank you to my best buddy Ronnie Rose who is an absolute treasure. We've got on really well and had a lot of laughs, which I know will continue to be the case. Ronnie is something of an unsung hero who turns up rain or shine to help the crew volunteers and keeps a close eye on what's happening at Tunnel End. We couldn't do without you Ronnie, thank you.

Good luck to David Stubbs who takes over from me as co-ordinator. I'm sure he'll do the job twice as efficiently in half the time and the plus point is he won't be anything like as bossy or cheeky as I've been! Go for it David ... get 'em sorted out!

Although the new boating season only started at Easter, we on the east side have not been idle during the winter months. The more intrepid of us have been setting off on little jaunts around the countryside with "Sherpa Ronnie" as our guide. It's been great fun and everyone is keen to continue throughout the year. If anyone else is interested in joining us when you're not crewing then by all means give me a ring and I'll let you know when and where the next expedition is planned.



East Side crews enjoying some winter sun; guide Ronnie and Mo far right.

Incidentally, we'd quite like to get up a trip to the Anderton Boat Lift, so again, if you'd like to be included just give me a ring and we'll see what we can arrange between us.

Now for the really exciting stuff - the east side volunteers would like to throw down a challenge to the west siders. How about an East/West Quiz night? We could hold it at the Tunnel End Inn so it's reasonably central and I'll even try and dream up a daft prize. How can you possibly resist? Prospective contestants please get in touch once you've formulated your battle strategy.

Well I guess that's about it from me. As you can see, I've not really gone anywhere and I'm still hovering about in the background to haunt you all!

Mo O'Neill

Comical Cruising - 2

John Harwood continues his compilation of unusual names associated with our canal network.

By starting in Birmingham and the Black Country we have set ourselves a bit of a challenge which may take some beating but let's make a start in looking for more unusual Bridge, Lock and Junction names on the Leicester line from Trent Lock. Proceeding up the River Soar we will soon round the **Devil's Elbow** before reaching **Zouch**, we then take rather a big leap through to Leicester to find **Swan's Nest Bridge** and weir. Lest we forget that name we will soon reach **Memory Lane Wharf** but as we don't want bad memories of mooring in Leicester we will push on towards **Friday Street Bridge** which on one side reaches **Frog Island** where canal and river separate. Above **Mary's Mill Lock** we will find **Pebble Beach** this far inland!

Eager to get away from the city into the country we shall have to pass **Blue Bank Lock** and under **Knight's Bridge** – be sure the knight is of good character because before long we pass under **Vice's Bridge**. Beware of the sting in **Bumblebee Lock** and you will know exactly how far it is from **Bottom Half Mile Lock** to **Top Half Mile Lock** and it won't be much further before you can find out whether **Ivy Bridge** is so adorned. Avoid depression in **Saddington Tunnel** and get ready for **Gumley and Binley's Bridges**. Does **Pat's Bridge** date back to the navvies?

On a trip down the Market Harborough arm you can get off at **Gallows Hill Bridge** and walk $\frac{1}{2}$ of a mile to **Uncle Tom's Bridge** – I say walk because it's about 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles by canal! The Leicester

summit pound does not seem to have a lot to offer this exercise apart from **Honey Pot Farm Bridge** perhaps, it does sound sweet though, so let's double back for a very quick cruise up the Erewash. If you haven't got your laundry done yet you could try **Sheetstores Basin** to see if anyone can help before pressing on (the pun is accidental) past **Gallows Inn** to **Greens and Potters Locks** which seem to be telling us something, but I'm not sure what.

The Trent and Mersey is one of the longer canals and so should have something to offer us. Let's start at **Long Horse Bridge** which passes over the Cavendish extension but I do suspect that it is the Bridge that is long and not the horse! In Shardlow wartime memories of the women boaters might be recalled under **Idle Bridge** but before we get involved in that argument let's get through **Cow Pasture** and **Fine George's Bridges**. Power on towards Willington and let your imagination run riot whilst passing **Coach and Horses Bridge**. If being beside the A38 is boring try to guess how **Catholme Bridge** got its name, I certainly don't know but there's a fair guess as to why **Cow Bridge** was named. If this intellectual exercise is getting a bit much come down to earth at **Common Lock** but get ready for **Hunts and Keepers Locks** before refreshment appears at the Black Swan.

Moving ahead somewhat the stretch beyond Great Haywood Junction could be made for fish and chip lovers as naturally enough **Brinepit Bridge** leads on towards **Salt Bridge**. Don't get that full that you can't play at **Flute Meadow**

cont'd on page 31

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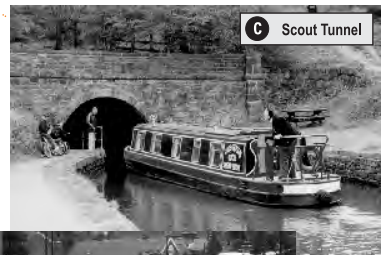
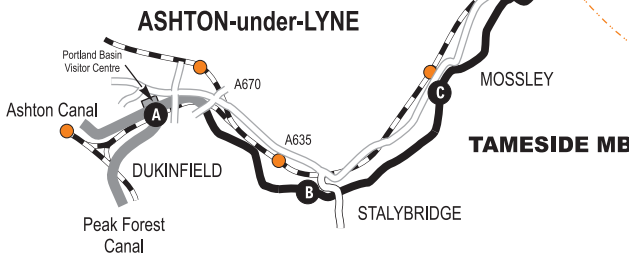
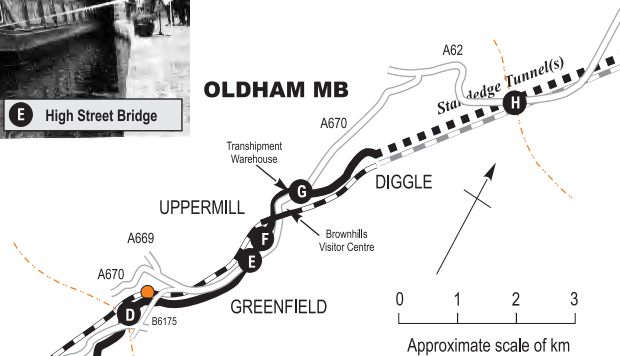


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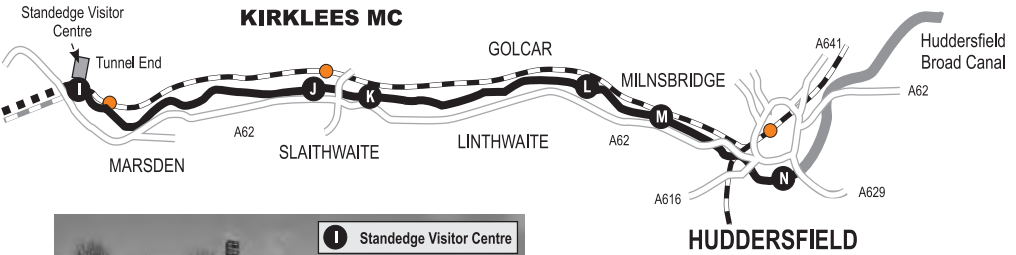




H Standedge Tunnel



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

BED & BREAKFAST at NEWBARN

A warm welcome awaits tourists & business people from a local couple at this modern farmhouse on a working sheep farm. Lovely views over the village and just 5 minutes from Standedge Tunnel. Parking for any size of vehicle.
OS Pathfinder Map 714 (GR 010090).

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Canal Cruises 'PENNINE MOONRAKER'

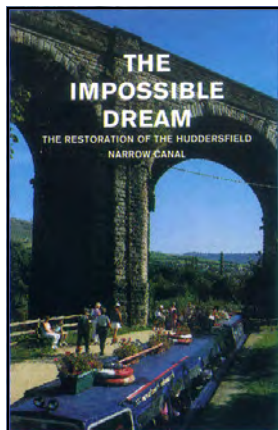
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HCS Videos

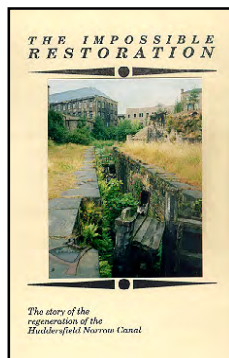


The new video, 'The Impossible Dream', is available from the Society offices, price £10.99 plus £1.95 p+p.

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

Running time: 56 mins

Please make cheques payable to 'Loxvend Ltd'



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

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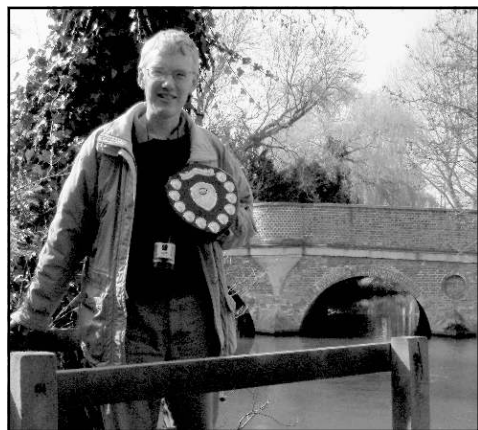


2003 Photographic Competition

Now in its eighth year our Photo Competition goes from strength to strength. In 1997 we had 36 entries from 9 photographers. Last year we had 95 entries from 18 photographers. This year we want to beat that. Past President of Oldham Photographic Society, Geoff Hope, has once again agreed to be our judge.

We still have a very poor response from juniors. Surely with all their developing interest in computers, and the proliferation of cheaper and cheaper digital cameras, there should be lots of opportunity for encouraging the younger end to have a go. And, in addition to cash prizes, we now have the "judge's prize" for the junior winner, which last year was an excellent pair of binoculars, so there should be plenty of incentive. School SUMMER HOLIDAYS are on the way so GET THEM OUT THERE!

Of course, old photos are also acceptable but there is so much happening on the canals at the moment that new, up to date photos must be encouraged.



AWARDS

The Challenge Shield (and a replica to keep) for the overall winner and a pair of binoculars generously donated by member **Anthony Carter of Arcade Cameras, Imperial Arcade, New Street, Huddersfield.**

Other winners and runners-up will receive a cash prize and a signed certificate and the 'best junior effort' will get the special judge's prize. Further, every photo entered will be commented upon by the judge and the comments passed on to the entrant.

RULES

Prints only, black and white or colour – winning entries will be printed in Pennine Link in black and white. Minimum size 6" x 4", maximum **overall** size 8" x 6".

PRINTS MUST NOT BE MOUNTED.

Any canal-related subject is acceptable in the following categories:-

- a. Huddersfield Narrow – Seniors
- b. Huddersfield Narrow – Juniors (16 or under)
- c. Other waterways – Senior
- d. Other waterways – Junior (16 or under)

HOW TO ENTER

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

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

Proud winner of the 2002 Photographic Competition, Julian Morgan of Guildford, with the Challenge Shield and binoculars.

Include details of the photographs (captioned if you so wish) and age of the photographer if 16 or under.

Include your name and address and the name of the HCS member you are related to and return postage or SAE if you want your prints back.

Include a PO or cheque (payable to Huddersfield Canal Society) totalling 50 pence for each print submitted.

CLOSING DATE FRIDAY 7TH NOVEMBER, 2003

PRIZES

Overall Winner - Challenge Shield for one year

- Replica Shield to keep
- Pair of binoculars
- Signed certificate

Winners/runners up

In all categories - Cash prize, signed certificate

Best Junior entry - Special Judge's prize

Plus selected "highly commended" and "commended" certificates.

PLEASE NOTE

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

Any queries to the organiser, Ken Wright

Tel:- 01457 873599

E-mail:- wright.ken@talk21.com

FINALLY

Digital photography encouraged.

Let's get modern.

Encourage those JUNIORS!

Ken Wright

cont'd from page 23

Bridge and if you can find out at **Andre Mills Bridge** who Andre was let me know! I wouldn't try sailing through **Sideway Bridge** in the manner it suggests, it's not wide enough and neither is **Harecastle Tunnel** of course. Don't wave any rags whilst working through **Red Bull** and think of Harry Potter as you go over **Snapes Aqueduct** and the various Galls we have found as you work **Pierpoint Locks** (you need to be of an age, or to have read this Issue out of sequence, to recall the last official hangman to get that one)!

Last October we spent a night at **Malkins Bank** before going under **Rookery** and **Crows Nest Bridges** and the less said about **Stud Green** the better perhaps. We were going to go for a rump steak in the pub by **Rump's Lock** but it was closed for redecoration.

Beyond Middlewich if you ever get the chance to spend a night on a boat at **Bramble Cuttings** it is as lovely and rural as the name suggests. Of course on this stretch you have to watch out for flashes, at **Broken Cross** don't let your spirit be broken by the dreadful chemical works which follows soon.

As you approach the Anderton lift be ready for **Old Check Office Bridge** and perhaps put a hat on before going under **Soote Hill Bridge**. At **Ryan's Bridge** you could look for his daughter and if you find her take her to the Horns for the evening, it's only a few yards down the road and I have eaten and drunk well there before now!

I'm off now to dream of our next cruise.

John Harwood

The Wife's (Very Final) Tale - 42ish

Those of you with a good memory will remember that I was in the middle of a boating holiday to Chester when I was rudely cut off by the Spring edition of Plink, which had run out of space.

Those of you with an exceptional memory will recall that we had WON the holiday, in a Canal and Riverboat magazine competition, and were at the launching of the boat, Blackbird, at the IWA National last August.

Here is the story of the rest of that memorable week.

Tuesday 24th September, 2002

Moored up outside son Simon's house in Chester

Sunny

Me and HIM and long-haired dachshunds Bill and Neil.

Woke to another cloudless sky, lots of sun but a bit nippy. Had breakfast and set off to post daughter Sarah's card and find a paper while HE fiddled with stern greasers and weed hatches and other technical (you wouldn't understand, dear!) types of thing. He just enjoys fiddling about in the brand new engine room. Anyway, successful with the card – unsuccessful with the paper – left at 9.30. Water at historic Taylor's Yard at 9.45 – moored up in Chester basin at 10.10! Very exciting!

Walked down the Dee branch to the river lock through new (not altogether appropriate) residential development, (the rest of the Chester Basin is destined to be submerged in fancy housing before long!) found a park and gave the dogs a run and returned to the boat – not a paper shop in sight!

I sat reading in the sunshine whilst Ken set off for a paper and eventually found one about a mile away, on Northgate, one of Chester's old 'village' centres with great views down onto the canal from a lovely cast iron bridge next to the old gaol.

Lunched and changed and walked into Chester at 1.10. Walked the walls to the famous clock and through Grosvenor Arcade (Grosvenor is a common word in Chester since he owns most of it – Duke of Westminster – Mr. Grosvenor – that is). Found Lakeland (for ever to be confused with other Lakeland which used to be Lakeland Plastics) and bought HIM some super slippers. They had leather coats and jackets to die for. To M & S for milk and



Blackbird at Chester Basin

bread and back to the boat. We had managed to lock ourselves out! However, the roof slide was only retained by a small brass bolt so a quick shove by HIM and we were inside. Something for the owners to correct if Blackbird is going to be left on exposed moorings.

Sat and read and talked to one English and one American couple who admired the boat and the dogs. Simon and Kathryn met us after work and we set off at 6.30 and reached the top of Northgate Staircase at 7pm. Super bit of team work – but the height of those gates – I was glad to be on the bank! No room on the town moorings so we went on to near Old Harkers (by the lead shot tower) to a nice quiet spot. All had a super meal at Old Harkers – worth a trip to Chester for that alone. Back to boat for coffee and drinks. S & K left us at 9.30. Sad to see them go. Remark from small boy (about 12) at Chester Basin “Yours is the best boat here today”. We didn’t disagree.

Wednesday, September 25th, 2002

Woke to yet another sunny day – leisurely get up – HE went for a paper and discov-

ered we had moored next to a major archeological site! Much furious digging before modern buildings and car parks occupied the site. The “remains” seemed to be 18th and 19th C workers’ housing – the site is Witter Place, very close to where Society friend Robin Witter and his family made towbars until a recent move to new premises.

Set of 9.20, walked all 5 locks and through by 10.50 – not bad now we’re working as a pair. Moored up for lunch at mid-day between bridges 116 and 117. Still sunny but not as nice as Chester and wind getting up. Left 1.25 and at 2.50 came across a line of moorings. As we were approaching a narrowboat slowly swung out in front of us – we slowed down, as you do, to let him carry on and then realized that it was unoccupied and by this time it was completely blocking the canal. It had been very poorly tied up and a welded cleat had snapped off which held the only line to the front of the boat. Anyway HE soon sorted it out with a bit of Boy Scout rope trick (plus several years’ experience on the Society dredger and tug). Reached Shady Oak at 3.15 and

moored for the night. Took dogs for a walk and to inspect the “railway house” remembered from years ago for the garden full of miniature railway. Hard luck! The owner has erected high brick walls round the lot! A real shame – his garden and railway used to be super, but who can blame him



Archaeology at Witter Place, Chester

for wanting a bit of privacy from us gongoozlers! Dinner on board – makes a change. Rang friends B & G to work out when and where they can meet us – they can't! Pity.

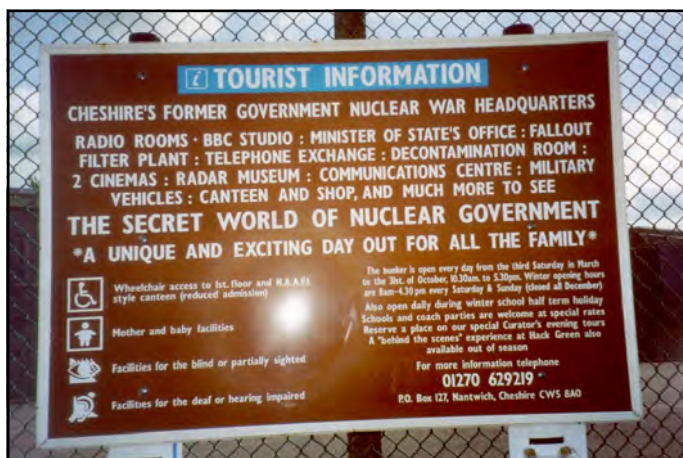
Thursday 26th September, 2002

Mixed sun and cloud.

Off at 8.30. Had rained overnight. 9.05 at Beeston Iron Lock (still falling apart). Work due to start on 4th November putting it right. Walked to village for paper and passed the Cattle Auction. Memories of Bill and swans at Tilston Lock. Through Bunbury locks at 11.10 and Barbridge Inn for 12.00. Passed Nantwich boat-yard at 12.50 and on to Hack Green where we winded at 1.45. A fair walk took us to Hack Green (Secret – used to be) Nuclear Bunker. What an experience! We were there well over an hour (□4.30 concession and worth every penny). Stretches for ever – films, emergency TV and radio studios, technical equipment – including Iron Curtain stuff. Quite frightening really – especially the nuclear aftermath propaganda films. Back to boat 3.45. Sat in sun and read (again) – lots of boats passing in both directions. Walked the dogs – dinner – TV. Last day tomorrow. Sorry to leave this magnificent boat but always glad to get home.

Friday September 27th, 2002

Grey sky – not allowed! No gas for morning cuppa kettle. We thought we could smell gas on a couple of occasions but couldn't find a leak. There clearly was



Hack Green Nuclear HQ - "A good time was had by all!"

one! Both large connected cylinders were empty! Luckily, on this super boat, there was a spare third! Ken attached it and turned it off every time we finished using it from then. The accident that could have happened doesn't bear thinking about!

Off at 8.30, Barbridge 10.15. Discovered village shop had been closed for three years! Rang friends N & B and they are bringing us some odds and sods of shopping. Talked at length to a couple on their boat across the cut. They are close friends of people we also know and with the people who now live in Ken's first marital home! Small world. N & B arrived at 12.00 on the dot and we lunched at Barbridge Inn. Off at 1.50 to take them down the Middlewich Branch for a quick trip. Turned at the second winding hole and back to Barbridge by 4.00. Had drinks and a long chat to occupants of Challenger shareboat Vanquish – nothing but praise for the Challenger folk and the organisation. They agreed with us that the boats were a luxury 2, a comfortable 4 but not a six. Said goodbye to our friends – they'd enjoyed their first trip on a narrowboat albeit so brief. Off at 5.20 and

found a quiet overnight spot at 5.35.
Never seen so many boats on the move.

Ken cleaned, I sorted. Tea, TV and a bit more packing ready for a quick off tomorrow. The last night always being the saddest we enjoyed our sparkling Jacob's Creek (courtesy of Challenger).

Saturday 28th September, 2002

Up at 7.15 to what promises to be a lovely day. Off at 8.10 having packed up, dogs walked and breakfasted. Efficient hand-over at yard. Very concerned about the gas leak. I think they were impressed by the condition of the boat. Home by 10.30. Excellent week.

Anne Wright

NOW FOR THE BOAT!

HIS Comments

Not often does one get the opportunity to sample a brand new 'state of the art' narrowboat worth probably something like £70,000! Obviously there might be teething troubles but, apart from the gas leak which could have had disastrous consequences, nothing else of any importance occurred.

The weak fastening on the roof slide obviously needed toughening up, as did the fastenings on the front double doors, although it has to be said that breaking into the average narrowboat is a doddle for any reasonably competent burglar - so why make it difficult and encourage horrendous damage?

The design of the boat wasn't to my taste if I was thinking of being an owner. I just



Blackbird's main cabin



Blackbird's galley (note microwave)

do not know why “trads” and “semi-trads” are so popular. It can only be that the skipper/owner likes solitude, because anybody sharing the after deck can only stand on the 4” wide side deck (trad) or be cooped up in a high-sided tin box (semi-trad).

Since the large majority of narrowboats are designed for holiday use the open cruiser stern, where the whole ship’s complement can enjoy the company, sunshine and view, must be a winner.

OK, so there is the front well but the steerer can hardly join the crew there. On Blackbird the front well is without the usual bench/locker arrangement so, to sit down without perching on the side deck, it is necessary to carry chairs from the cabin – and there are only two provided. “That’s the preference from our owners” was Challenger’s answer to my queries. It takes all kinds

The internal arrangement of various choices of table layout seemed a bit over-complicated but well done.

There was a steel angle around the after well that cut into one’s back just about kidney level and made steering, or even lounging, very uncomfortable and that, Challenger promised, would be sorted out.



Challenger base at Nantwich Basin

The rest of the boat and its facilities were truly excellent. And, I have to confess, I became an instant convert to the (previously considered cissy) bow-thruster! It was hydraulic which means it is constantly ready for immediate use if the engine is running and is controlled by a simple toggle switch at the steerer’s elbow. What a super toy. Achieves the impossible of allowing you to drive the boat SIDEWAYS. Very useful for impressing the natives and helps enormously when entering a lock with a nasty by-wash.

Criticisms apart, I shall have no hesitation in accepting another free week on a Challenger boat and I place on record my sincere thanks for being allowed to try Blackbird out.

Ken Wright

All photos: Anne Wright



Sitting in the dentist's waiting room I was thumbing through May's "Yorkshire Life" (very up to date, my dentist!) when I came across the picture of a bikini-clad lady reproduced above. Realising it was part of a full-page advertisement, I read on ...

"...come home to your luxury apartment, work out in the gym, have a dip in the pool, then round the evening off in the restaurant – it's all going to be at Titanic Mill."

Yes, OUR Titanic Mill, at Linthwaite, on the A62 and slap bang against the canal – well, only a small field away.

"Nestling in a peaceful valley, and enjoying a superb waterside location bordered by the River Colne and the famous Huddersfield Narrow Canal".

This is what regeneration is all about, folks! Riding on the back of our successful re-opening of the canal the old, derelict Titanic Mill is being converted into a huge, modern complete environment of luxury apartments, starting from £88,950.

And for the ecological, how about this? "All Titanic Mill's heat and a high proportion of its electricity will be created on site by an advanced Combined Heat and Power unit, fuelled by willow cuttings. Photovoltaic cells will provide additional electricity for the recharging of electric vehicles. Water is planned to be pumped from the mill's own private bore-hole."

A real new lease of life for this huge old mill which dates, of course, from 1912 when another Titanic hit the headlines!

For more information telephone 01484 845333 and have your cheque book ready!

Ken Wright

Illustrations: Advertisement feature Yorkshire Life, May 2003



Archive - The Late Ted Kaye

Quite a number of Society members have, over the years, compiled their own photographic records to follow the progress of restoration. In many cases, collections have been supported by press cuttings from local newspapers.

There are of course, probably just as many non-members who have the same interest. Sadly, we only tend to find out about these other enthusiasts following a family bereavement. The following is one such case.

Mr. G.E. (Ted) Kaye of Dalton, Huddersfield, sadly died in February this year aged 88. His son-in-law, David Raynor, who lives in Lincolnshire, has very kindly donated to the Society, three of Mr. Dalton's albums of old photographs and press cuttings taken between the mid 1980's and the late 1990's.

The Society endeavours to give credit to any material used in our publications or exhibitions. Quite often we find that non-HCS contributors have been known to Society members via other associations, e.g. local photographic clubs, or by where they live, hence the reason for publishing names etc.

It was interesting reading Ted Kaye's press clips to be reminded of the various campaigns over the years, both for and against the restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow, and of the characters and officials that have been associated with the scheme and the Society.

News items included schemes or proposals that were either successful, e.g. reinstating the canal on the original line through Slaithwaite and not diverting into the river, to others which did not even get

off the ground, e.g. relocating Sellers Engineering and building a glass domed shopping centre on the site, with canal boats sailing inside the centre.

Although the photographs reproduced in this publication may not necessarily do justice to the originals, you can see the striking changes and improvements that have been made by restoration - not only to the canal but to its environs as well.

The Society is endeavouring to collect and preserve for posterity, as many photographs, slides, or any relevant material on the Huddersfield Narrow and Broad Canals. It does not necessarily have to be historic - material gathered since the Millennium/re-opening is just as important, as in some circumstances, it is actually in short supply.

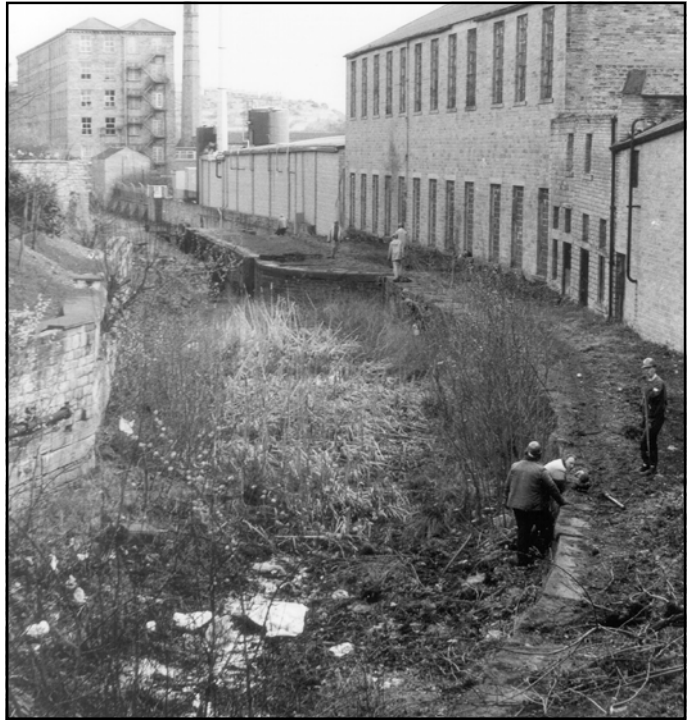
Should any HCS member or their family have any relevant material they would like to donate, please send it to our Ashton office, or get in touch.

Frank Smith

Footnote:

Quite by coincidence, one of Ted's press cuttings from July 1992 features that mystery photograph we reproduced in the Autumn Edition 142. In the article by Mike Shaw, canal and railway historian, and Society member Geoff Brown of Birkby, attributes the picture to work on the railway tunnel through Standedge and dates the picture around 1890.

However, in our article, we cited the appearance of the tungsten lamp as evidence of a post 1908 date and member Ian Spencer has E-mailed to say he has seen something very similar in 'More Memories of Old Wakefield', published by True North Books Ltd, Elland, ISBN 1 900463 89 X. We shall make use of inter-library loan and investigate further!



Historic photographs from Ted Kaye's albums;
 Right: Canal Cleanup, above Lock 2E, Huddersfield, March 1993.
 Below: Rebuilding Lock 25E, Slaithwaite, July 1987.



Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir/Madam,

We recently travelled the Huddersfield Canal (sic) and really enjoyed the experience. The boat didn't enjoy it as much, being very scratched and dented because the towing strap came off twice in the tunnel. (Never mind, it's not a floating palace: the paintwork has been touched up, and the dent is regarded as a souvenir.)

We had no problems with low pounds, difficult local youths or any of the other matters we had heard of. We did get trapped at a lock entrance by the flow from one by-weir, and some of the paddle gear was exceptionally heavy, but we regard those as part of the infinite variety of boating.

The Society has done a marvellous job - without its effort and enthusiasm over many years I am sure the Lottery money would never have been forthcoming. We therefore enclose a small donation to help with the work.

One simple practical way in which the Society could perhaps assist boaters is by a programme of installing rings at some of the popular mooring sites.

Yours faithfully,

Peter & Quita Brown

Market Drayton

Thanks for your generous donation and so pleased to read that you consider the ups and downs as part of the adventure. Here is the Brown's log of their travels aboard their boat 'Nimrod'. Ed.

From Nimrod's Log

Friday

The first gate at Ashton was a bit of a menace, with hydraulically operated bottom gates, very slow. Then at the second we found *Somerset* tied up, and two BW men

in attendance. This too has hydraulic gear, and the mechanism had failed. The BW men didn't know anything about hydraulics, which didn't help, and they didn't even have a key to the box with the workings. They took some instructions by phone, tut-tutted that they couldn't get a fitter until tomorrow, and drove off, saying they would be back.

By now, Somerset was aground and they couldn't get off. The steerer thought the pound was dropping, so I walked back to check that we had left the previous lock correctly (which we had). I calculated that us using that lock would have dropped the pound by about five inches, but he thought it was down by more. We, meanwhile, were unaffected, as I had told Quita [my wife] to bring *Nimrod* in between *Somerset* and the lock so that it was likely to have a reasonable depth of water.

The men returned, opened the box, put in some hydraulic fluid - and it worked! Then up to into Stalybridge town 'helped' by a group of four boys of mixed ages. We moored for the night outside Tesco's.

Saturday

Five hours for less than five miles! And we're soaked and in need of comfort. It has been overcast most of the day and usually raining. The canal gains a lot of surface water run-off, so the by-weirs flow even faster than on the Llangollen - and many of them are even worse placed, at right angles, just below the lock. Add to this a sharp bend at the lock entrance immediately opposite the byweir outflow and you get a lock (14W) which is almost impossible to get into. Quita was steerer; both ends were stuck; I couldn't get aboard, pull, or help in any other way. She tried poling and powering, and moved a few inches. I thought of opening a gate paddle to try to

reduce the power of the byweir - Quita did some more poling and powering - the boat moved a few feet then became stuck on both sides at the front, skew, held by the friction of the stonework of the lock. Now, though, I could get on board, and with me poling and Quita controlling the power, the boat juddered in.

Most locks had some difficulty: few had easy methods of getting on shore, two had only one ground paddle working, and at most I had to walk through puddles. Never mind; we're now happily tied up at Uppermill, having first tried to stop above lock 17W but finding we couldn't get the pins in because of the wide stone edging.

Sunday

During the afternoon we moved on to Wool Road Lock (24W), where we are to meet the BW men tomorrow. Although we went through only two locks, one (23W) gave me great difficulty. The arrangement of the ground paddles was odd: two on the off side, none by the balance beam. These two were leaning backwards at a steep angle and had a crude and simple flap-pawl - and I couldn't wind either paddle up. Eventually I succeeded by brute force.

Monday

The day started with the three waiting boats, *Somerset*, *Hamilton Young* and *Nimrod*, being escorted by two BW employees from lock 24W up to the summit at 32W. These locks have exceptionally heavy paddlegear, so people in the know have a long-throw windlass. (I really struggled, and only just managed a couple of the lower paddles.) Unusually, they have single gates top and bottom: heavy but well balanced. These bottom paddles are having Fenner 5:1 reduction gear fitted, making them easy (but needing 40 turns - I'm never happy!). One had been taken from some locks for the fitting of that gear at Northwich Depot, leaving just one, of course, so these locks were desperately slow to empty.



Lock 28W (*above*) gave the real problem, which we feared might cause hours of delay. It had just the single bottom paddle mechanism, and when *Somerset* wound it up, a weld broke on the one inch diameter bar which linked the mechanism with the paddle. Both the steerer of *Somerset* and I independently made the same suggestion: move the paddle gear assembly over to the second position, where the assembly had been taken to Northwich leaving the rod sticking up bare. This the BW men did - borrowing my tool-kit - and it worked.

We were taken through Standedge Tunnel at the end of the convoy: first the passenger boat, then the tug, then *Hamilton Young*, *Somerset* and *Nimrod*. We were the only one that sustained damage, with quite severe buckling of the front left cabin corner, paint off the same place on the opposite side, and extensive scrapings on the paintwork of the hull. The towing straps had parted twice, throwing the boat against the rough unlined side of the tunnel. I was told they sort the boats according to the difference in height between the rear stud



Preparing the convoy for Standedge Tunnel; inflatable jebus being positioned between the boats.

of one boat and the front stud of another, because if this is too great the strap can come off. They don't seem to pay any regard to the shape of the stud: *Nimrod* has T-studs, front & back, which nothing could come off, whereas *Somerset* has 'concave cylinders', not designed for ropes going *up* at an angle.

We took almost exactly two & a half hours to go through the tunnel, pausing twice because of that problem with the straps. The boats which had come the other way that morning had had a much longer delay, some hour & a half, because the 'shadow van', the support vehicle which goes through a former railway tunnel had had a puncture, and they didn't have the right equipment to mend it.

The tunnel is a great experience. Quita was in the body of the passenger vessel most of the time, in the dry and relatively warm (where the baby from *Somerset* slept on the floor most of the way through), but I was usually out the front with the driver, and occasionally in the open area at the back, from where you could see the towed boats. Most of the tunnel is unlined - bare jagged limestone - some lined in stone, some in old bricks, some in relatively new bricks. There are a number of cascades, one being the heaviest I have seen in a canal tunnel. At regular intervals there are adits to the old railway tunnel, where we could see the lights of the van. Occasionally you can hear

the trains in the 1894 tunnel. The alignment of the various headings was not particularly good, so there are some kinks and one bad S-bend, where the error was some 14 feet. This last was taken particularly cautiously.

Tuesday

Today was hard work, though we finished at 2.15pm at Slaithwaite. Two BW men accompanied the trio of boats down from lock 42E to lock 32E but they weren't much help to us because ours was the middle boat and they were with the first and last. Indeed, at one lock after a short pound, the BW man opened the paddles of the lock above too early, sending a huge rush of water over the back gate of our lock.

Lock 32E gave us a new experience, acting on the BW man's advice. The balance beam is quite short, so we were advised to put a rope round the upright of the gate and to pull it back with the boat (*below*). I tied it, Quita controlled the boat, I pushed on the balance beam, and everything worked according to plan.



At lock 27E the side of the lock was spouting so much water that it flooded the back deck. Then at lock 25E someone left one bottom paddle up but I didn't notice it for ages - like most of the locks in the flight, the gear is hydraulic. Lock 24E is a guillotine and was operated by BW because of water problems - excess water, that is.

Wednesday

We took almost seven hours for the five miles, despite a local friend's help from lock 11E onwards. At one lock (12E) we had to use the trick we were taught yesterday, pulling the outer gate post with the boat.

Two tunnels today, Sellers (*right above - ready for the off*) and Bates, both narrow, both with a lock at the top end, both with the site of an old lock at the bottom end; and Sellers is so shaped that you can't see through it. For boaters there is a problem: someone can come up through the tunnel whilst you are working the lock to go down. This actually happened to us in the second, shorter, case - when we opened the bottom gates, the steerer saw Westmorland in the distance. By the time the latter had realised what was going on it was too late - they had to back more than half the length of the tunnel (*right below - Westmorland waits patiently having backed out of Bates tunnel*). Boater-operated traffic lights are needed.

We moored in Aspley Basin, washed the boat, and did the necessary repainting. Although on Monday we were very annoyed about the damage, now we are treating it as 'honourable scars of war' - a souvenir of the boat's adventure.

Peter & Quita Brown
All photos: P & Q Brown



Obituary - John Leslie

The Canal Society once more regrets having to record the passing of another long time supporter.

John Leslie was family member of the Canal Society for over 20 years and died on the 29th March this year.

Both John and his wife Joan were key festival committee members for many

years with the Huddersfield Canals Festival and John became Festival Chairman in 1995.

The Society extends its deepest sympathy to John's widow, Joan, and is saddened at the loss of another Society stalwart.

Bob Gough

Where do we go from here?

Ed Mortimer continues his thoughts on the future of the Hollinwood Branch in the light of the response to his original article last Issue.

I have been genuinely surprised by the response to my musings on a future for the Hollinwood Branch; here are those encouraging letters:

Hello Ed,

I was thrilled to find your article in the latest Plink. I too have spent some years (20 approx.) investigating our local canals, including the Huddersfield Narrow, the Hollinwood Branch & the Stockport Canal.

My interest in the Hollinwood started when things were very quiet on the Huddersfield & my curiosity was aroused again by the canal through Daisy Nook, which I have known since I was a youngster.

Like you I have for some time been intrigued by the possibility of linking Daisy Nook to the Ashton, & some 10 years ago I first explored the proposition of a link between the Ashton & the Rochdale. I hope I can find my old photographs.

More recently I have again been re-acquainting myself with this prospect after hearing a rumour that British Waterways were giving serious consideration to this idea. The M60 & new housing developments in Droylsden are both setbacks, but I hold to the idea that this is still possible along alternative routes/diversions.

I hope soon to revisit my own suggested link which I found some time ago, to see

if this is still a possibility (branch line to the Snipe Pit), but I am concerned that there may not be sufficient headroom again over the M60 & this route is also under threat of development & crosses the line of the new metrolink.

I do think, although obstacles & costs may be daunting, that a new connection between the Ashton & the Rochdale is a very real possibility.

Yours,

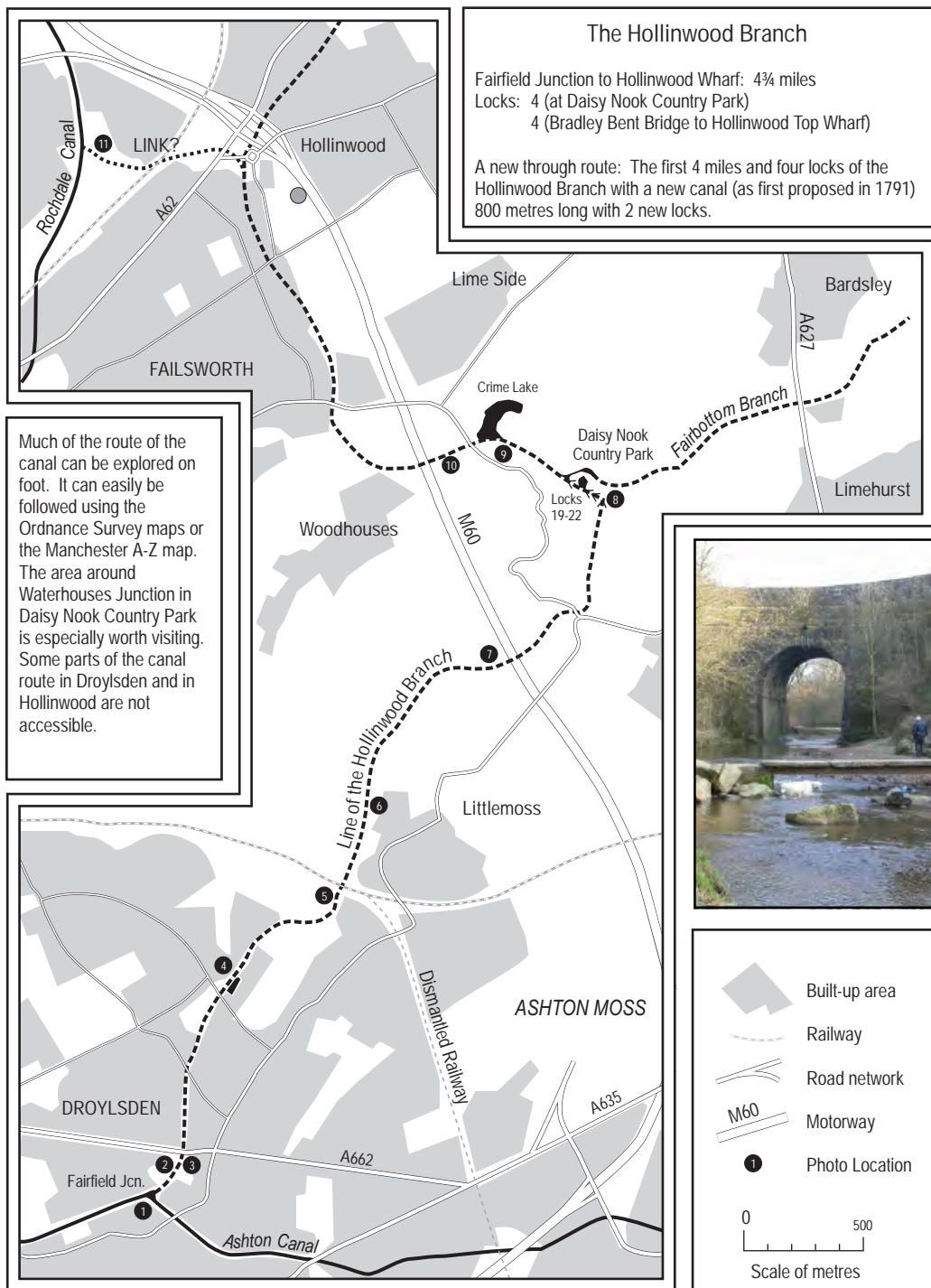
Ian Davenport.

Web author and Society member Martin Clark included a version of Ed Mortimer's article on the Hollinwood Branch on his Pennine Waterways website. In response to this, Martin has received two Emails:

Ed,

I don't know how practical your ideas about the Hollinwood Branch are, but I wish you luck with them all the same. When on that particular stretch of the Ashton, it would be nice to think that you could reach a little bit of pleasant greenery to counterbalance the factories and general dereliction of that area - I hadn't walked the Hollinwood and Fairbottom until a few months ago, and was amazed to see how nice it is round there.

There seem to be a lot of obstacles to the reopening, but who knows? I remember walking the Rochdale about 12 months before it reopened, and thinking that the article I'd recently read saying that it was to reopen must have been mistaken, there were so many obstacles (supermarkets, motorways etc.) it just seemed an



This plan of the Hollinwood Branch is being reprinted here as, owing to a software problem, the original print in the Spring Issue was of very poor quality. Please refer to the original article for the photo locations.

impossible task. And now I see boats going through the locks whenever I visit it! I'm sure that if people like you manage to drum up enough public support, any canal could be resurrected (or even every canal - that would be a nice thought).

Good luck

Marc Phillips

Dear Ed,

I have also studied and walked the Hollinwood Branch canal and had similar thoughts to you. But it seems that now it is down to how many jobs it will create. Another thing that should be preserved is the Navigation pub almost at the canal's terminus. (Not many tiled pubs left). Is there a Hollinwood Canal Society, if not why not start one?

All the best.

Geoff Peel

And lastly, Alan & Anita Crosby write:

There was an excellent article by Ed Mortimer (re 'Hollinwood Branch'), in the Spring Edition of our Pennine Link Journal. This no doubt raised great interest for many other members and certainly did so for my wife Anita and myself.

We live about one hundred and fifty yards from Daisy Nook and the line of the old Hollinwood Branch Canal. Thirty odd years ago, we purchased a cottage on Lumb Lane at Littlemoss and moved there from Oldham. The property had originally been self built in the 1930s, by an ex-bargee who had worked on the same canal for many years until its closure.

I am a bricklayer builder by trade and have carried out many alterations to the



The Crosby's property and feature ,stained glass windows.

property over many years. The latest is practically finished and incorporates some items relating to this and other local canals. A curved wall feature contains three windows rising up along a stairway. These are glazed with leaded, coloured glass and show various local items, rivers and canals. Using many photographs and many visits to sites, my wife Anita designed these windows and with the help and mutual shared excitement of a local glass company, a great final product has emerged.

My first contact with the Hollinwood Branch Canal came in 1939 when I started to attend my first school. This was

Corpus Christi School, Chadderton. It was literally only a few hundred yards from the then terminus of the canal at Hardman Fold. This was adjacent to a messy muddy area dotted with the rotting, disappearing remains of several barges, known as Angels Meadow, anything but! The Navigation pub on Manchester Rd. faced this area and Canal Street also lead to it. The locks towards Drury Lane still had water in at that time.

Around 1954 I was working for an Oldham Construction company Whitworth Whittaker Ltd. I was a twenty-year old apprentice bricklayer. Whittakers were constructing a large factory building lower down Manchester Road below Drury Lane on the opposite side and just off the main road. This factory backed on to the Hollinwood Branch Canal opposite a set of locks. The canal and locks were well in water at this time. What is more, they were still being put to good use at this particular period.

The main entrance to the factory site was up a short narrow street from Manchester Road by the side of a pub which did not have one of the canal connection names that perhaps would have been expected. The pub was named 'Help the Poor Struggler' and the licensee at that time was none other than Albert Pierrepont, our own official hangman.

The joint work of various local authorities in the seventies, to form the Daisy Nook Country Park, was very welcome and helped to save the area for years to come. However, with the more enlightened views on canals that now prevail, perhaps more could have been done. The locks and canal kept in their real environment? What a place Crime Lake could have been, or perhaps still can?

Thank you as always for a very special Pennine Link!

Alan Crosby, Littlemoss

Ed continues:

Yet curiously, despite these clear messages of support, I feel weighed down by the huge difference between initial support and the vision of boats working up the locks at Daisy Nook.

Perhaps I should stop dreaming. Then, recently, I was reading a leaflet from The Waterways Trust soliciting help for the Cotswold Canals, which contained the following statement:

"The grand plan

Working with others, The Waterways Trust plans to restore waterways that have been lost, and renovate those that have become derelict, until our unique 5,000 mile network of waterways is thriving once more."

I stared at the statement in disbelief - I never, ever believed the Huddersfield Narrow would be restored - so is someone really suggesting that ALL waterways should have the same sort of future?

Maybe the Trust's statement points the way forward. Though we could consider calling a public meeting and forming a Society, I believe real progress on the scheme's feasibility could come from the 'shakers and movers'; British Waterways, The Waterways Trust, the IWA and the local authorities of Tameside and Oldham.

What do you think? Please send your comments to hbc@hcanals.demon.co.uk or by post to the Society offices.

Ed Mortimer

What the Papers Said

HDE - February 10th

Story and Picture about the continuing closure of the lift bridge at Turnbridge. Health and Safety considerations are causing the delay in reopening apparently. From a promised eight weeks repair, it has taken so far eight months and is still closed.

HDE - February 24th

Nice story with pictures about the Slaithwaite Moonraker Festival which ended on the canal bank. It was estimated that 2000 local people had joined in the fun.

HDE - March 31st

Story about a man being rescued from the canal in Milnsbridge the previous night. Firemen used a throwline to help drag him out.

I didn't know the canal was anywhere deep enough to cause concern to an average sized adult. Ed.

HDE April 2nd

Large picture of artist, and short article describing the work of art created by Cate Clark and erected in Slaithwaite. This resembles a flag pole with scenes of the areas activities depicted on it.

Not too sure about these 'art works' up and down the canal. I haven't seen this one, but it looks as though it fits in with the location. Don't forget our letters page is there for your comments on these items. Ed.

HDE - April 18th

Report that three canal based projects had won awards in the Waterways Renaissance competition. All three – the restoration of the canal, the Standedge Visitor centre and the Safe Anchor Trust were runners up in their different categories.

HDE - April 18th

Short paragraph on how Kirklees council are

to use the canal to attract more visitors, more jobs and new businesses.

As Kirklees were one of the staunchest supporters of the canal restoration everyone at HCS wishes them every success with this initiative. Ed.

CVC - February 21st

Article on page one and continued inside on how BW are to scrap charges for boaters using the Tunnel.

CVC - February 28th

Exactly the same report mentioned above (word for word!) Must have been short of copy – know the feeling well!! – mind you good news like that bears repeating.

CVC - February 28th

Front page and inside stories about the Slaithwaite Moonraker festival. Sounds as though it was great fun!

CVC - April 4th

Not strictly about the canal, but obviously caused by the restoration, an account of how the Titanic Mill in Milnsbridge – well known to all of us who were there for the trailboat rally a few years ago – is to be restored and made into trendy apartments.

CVC - April 24th

TWO pages no less, about Keith Gibson's book on the canal. (*Any member who hasn't got a copy ought to be ashamed of themselves – available from the HCS office*) Very good publicity for it with many pictures of society activities. One of these pictures has your editor in a boat with Bill Owen, unfortunately the caption describes my grandson as Jo Young! Both young George and Jo will be equally chagrined about this!

CVC - April 25th

Front page and inside page article the initiative being set up by Kirklees Council to

use the canal to bring in business, jobs and tourists to the area. More power to their elbow!

MEN - Feb 5th

Article about the humble Donkey Stone and the biggest manufacturer was Eli Whalley – with his wharf at Ashton. Apparently the business made some 2.5 million stones annually. His machinery is now in the museum at Portland basin. They can still be purchased in Ashton market.

TR - February 6th

Letter from a former Ashton man who has emigrated to Canada. He came back for a visit recently and was amazed at the restored canals and had a trip on one of our boats from Portland Basin.

Same Issue

Story about Stalybridge Town manager Rick Malone going to Stroud in Gloucester to talk about the benefits that accrue from a restored canal. BBC Gloucester are making a documentary on their restoration and are expected to come to Stalybridge to film a success story.

TA - February 20th

Nice little piece about the Coronation Street Storyline that showed a car being driven into the canal at Portland Basin.

Boat Crew organiser Alan Knott said afterwards that the researcher had used 'Still Waters' to check the depth of the water by dipping the boat pole in, but when the actual filming took place they had forgotten the silt and the car vanished!

TA - March 6th

Sad story about an angler having his gear stolen by youths on motor bikes near to Woodend Mill in Mossley. He reckoned that about £3000 worth of tackle was stolen in the grab and go raid.

Eds note – BW must stop these lunatics riding motorcycles on the towpaths as a

matter of urgency. Not only does it make this type of crime easy, they are a menace to every other towpath user. None of them use taxed or insured bikes and they seem to be totally ignored by the authorities.

The Oldham papers this quarter have only really mentioned the Rochdale Canal, in a way that is good as it means that nothing awful is happening on our water!

OA - March 6th

Report on the consultants proposals for the district centre at Farnworth to include a marina. This centre is expected to provide some 15,000 jobs and help to revitalise the whole canal corridor.

OEC - March 26th

Report on how the MP Michael Meacher will declare the Rochdale Canal open officially arriving on a boat. Once again the report speaks of the 18 months restoration, forgetting, as on the Huddersfield, the enormous amount of time and effort put in by the Rochdale Canal Society over the past 20 years.

OEC - June 5th

The only mention of the HNC is a story and picture of a steam train on the line alongside the Diggle flight, returning to York from an open day at the Crewe rail works.

The Oldhamer (Council Free Paper)

Article on the new broad beam boat being built for the Oldham 'Kickstart' project to help troubled young people.

Brian Minor

Papers featured:

CVC - Colne Valley Chronicle

HDE - Huddersfield Daily Examiner

MEN - Manchester Evening News

OA - Oldham Advertiser

OEC - Oldham Evening Chronicle

TA - Tameside Advertiser

TR - Tameside Reporter

Review - The Water Road

A Narrowboat Odyssey Through England

This is a nice, fat (364 pages), glossy hardback by Paul Gogarty, a travel writer contributing to the Daily Telegraph, Daily Mail and Guardian. He has won numerous awards for his travel journalism and has also worked as a presenter for BBC 1's "Holiday" programme. He lives in North London with his wife and two children.

"The Water Road" is the story of a magical journey through backdoor England. To escape the hurrysickness of modern life Paul Gogarty disappears for four months into a maze of canals linking the Thames with the Severn, Mersey and Trent. Here he discovers a world no less enchanted than Alice's, a secret network as powerful as ley lines.

On the journey across the face of England – a hidden garden flashed with kingfishers and brilliant narrowboats, glorious sunshine, sleeting rain – the author weaves a mesmerising tale packed with drama, hilarious encounters and illuminating reflection as he revels in the canal network's second golden age following more than a century of neglect.

"The Water Road" is both a celebration of a secret England and a powerful personal odyssey, in which the author marks his own rite of passage.

Most of the above comes from the flyleaf of the book and I couldn't hope to better it as a description of what the book holds. It is a fascinating documentary, written in a 'modern' style with a fair amount of 'strong' language but, if you had set out alone, totally inexperienced, onto the tidal Thames you may be excused for the odd curse or two!

This is what Paul Gogarty did in 2001, arriving home after four months just in time to watch the Twin Towers crumble. He hired a boat in London and set out to cover the old "Grand Cross" of canals almost single-handed (he had occasional help from family and friends). His 900-mile journey took him up the Grand Union, across Birmingham and up the Staffs and Worcs and the Trent and Mersey (nearly) to Manchester. Then round the Leeds and Liverpool and the Aire and Calder, up the Trent, down the Oxford and so back to the Thames and home.

His ability to stop and chat with a host of 'characters' is amazing. And we meet again people who have graced the pages of Pennine Link in past times – the "Idle Women" of wartime history, Chris Coburn, Britain's most adventurous narrowboater and Audrey Smith, past national Chairman of the Inland Waterways Association.

The one surprise for me was that, having arrived on the outskirts of Manchester the author turns left and heads for the Leeds and Liverpool instead of making a small detour and seeing the fantastic rebirth of the Manchester canal system at Castlefield. Detours were not forbidden, he had already been up and down the Caldon Canal.

Putting that minor criticism aside this is a terrific read for canalcoholics but also for anyone who enjoys a good travel tale rather on the lines of Bill Bryson but with far more detail.

Published by Robson Books at £18.95 this may be one to borrow from the library! However you get it, read it!

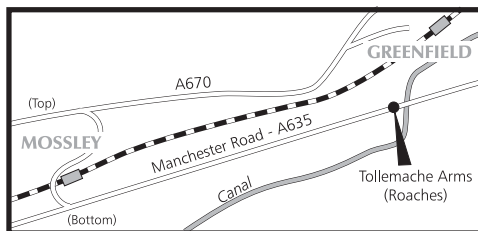
Ken Wright

THE SOCIETY WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS:

2665 Mr Armitage,
2666 Mrs Lentin,
2667 Mr Bradbury,
2668 Mr Healey,
2669 Mr Baines,
2670 Mrs Worsley,
2671 Mr & Mrs Lee,
2672 Mr Bennison,

WEST SIDE SOCIAL MEETINGS:

Owing to Officers and members taking their Summer holidays, it has been decided to suspend the meetings between July and September. The next social meeting will be at the Tollemache Arms at 8.00pm on the 8th of October 2003.



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 144

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

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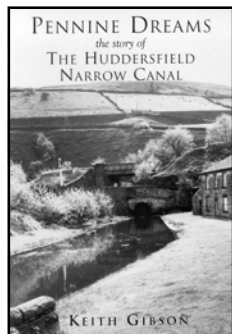
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COPY DATE

Articles, letters and comments for Issue 146 of Pennine Link should reach the Editor at 45 Gorton Street, Peel Green, Eccles, Manchester, M30 7LZ by 11th August 2003

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