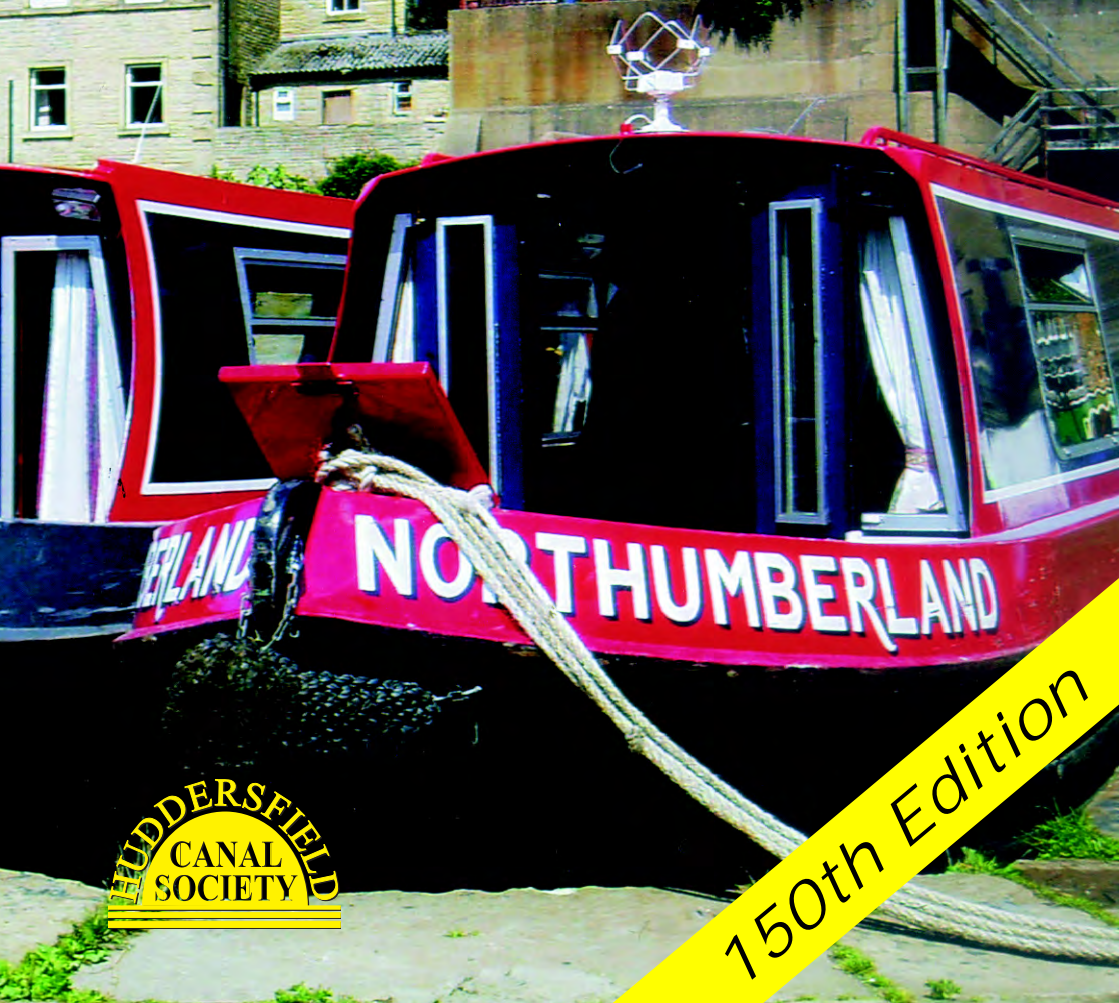


Pennine Link

Members Quarterly Journal - Issue 150 - Winter 2004



HUDDERSFIELD
CANAL
SOCIETY

Huddersfield Canal Society Ltd

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

Tel: 0161 339 1332 Fax: 0161 343 2262

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

President - David Sumner MBE Administrator - Bob Gough

HCS Council Members

Neville Kenyon Meadow Head, Tottington, Bury, Lancashire, BL8 3PP
Chairman Tel: 0161 339 1332

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

Steve Picot HCS Ltd, 239 Mossley Road, Ashton-u-Lyne, Lancs., OL6 6LN
Treasurer Tel: 0161 339 1332

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

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

David Finnis HCS Ltd, 239 Mossley Road, Ashton-u-Lyne, Lancs., OL6 6LN
Press Officer Tel: 0161 339 1332

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

David Stubbs 4 Hollowgate, Thurstonland, Huddersfield, HD4 6XY
E.Side Boats Co-ordinator Tel: 01484 667135

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

Ken Wright Bridge House, Dobcross, Oldham, Lancashire, OL3 5NL
Minutes Secretary Tel: 01457 873599

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

Eric Crosland 44 Marina Terrace, Golcar, Huddersfield, HD7 4RA
Tel: 01484 659748

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

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

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

Pennine *Link*

Winter 2004 Issue 150

Top of the Foxton Locks, Grand Union Canal



Joan Ogborn

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Cover: Mike Carhill's commended entry in the 2004 Photographic Competition: Shire Cruisers' boats at Sowerby Bridge, Rochdale Canal.



Editorial

First of all, can I commiserate with our friends in the Manchester and Bolton Canal Society over the death of their President Fred

Dibnah. Fred was a genuine one off character who took his honorary role quite seriously and supported the MBBCS on many public occasions. I last ran in to him about six months ago and was thoroughly entertained by his account of his neighbours reactions to his yard full of steam engines. He will be sadly missed, not only by those who have had the pleasure of his company, but also by the millions who were enchanted by his TV programmes.

With this issue we reach the 150th milestone. Yes, Plink is 150 issues old! Wonder whether our illustrious founders ever thought that the tiny idea they founded in a Huddersfield Hotel would still be going strong thirty years later in 2004. And with a fully restored canal!

That brings me to speculate on the future of the Society. Some other restoration projects, not just of canals, lost their glitter once the main job had been completed. We are still here two years on however, running trip boats at two places on the canal, nudging BW to make sure they keep up to the mark, running the odd festival, doing work on canalside improvements, holding on to our members and still producing (in my humble opinion!) the best canal society magazine in the country.

Thirteen years ago when Alwyn wrote the Editorial for the 100th issue he called it the

'Milestone' issue and mentioned the festivals and fund raising events that had been run in 1991. Well perhaps we don't need to be so active now, we can coast a bit after all the main job has been done. The only problem with that attitude is that the canal can rapidly go back into decline if we don't keep up the pressure on BW, Local Authorities and every other body who has an interest in our waterway. Apathy closed the canal in 1947 and it took the best part of 50 years to restore the status quo. It is up to us make sure it is still open and flourishing in 2047.

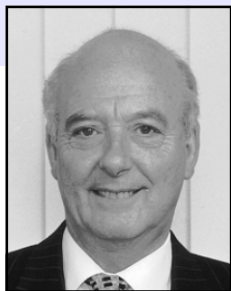
The results of the photographic competition are in this issue, congratulations to all the winners, mind you, I think the judge is biased - my entry came nowhere!

The office is looking quite smart under the new owners with a coat of paint in reception, a real bustle about the place and CCTV cameras on the door. Mind you it does mean that Bob Gough, as well as doing most of the work on Plink, is acting as doorman.

I was somewhat disappointed that the Council decided not to proceed with an HCS calendar this year. I was rather fancying becoming Mr November with a strategically placed bollard. However, looking at myself in the bathroom mirror this morning I decided that perhaps my 18 stones of flab were not quite the draw they once were and a windlass would have sufficed to cover my blushes!

Can I take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy Christmas and an outstandingly successful and healthy New Year!

Brian Minor



Chairman's Report

I have always had a deep suspicion of consultants. In the business environment they ask a lot of questions, elicit responses and then issue a report

paraphrasing the very answers the client has given them. It was therefore with some trepidation, tinged with cynicism on the part of some members, that your Council agreed to engage Marketwise Strategies of Newcastle-on-Tyne to help us develop a strategy for a viable way forward for HCS.

Our membership is maintaining a healthy level, our administration and management

systems are working well, but since the Canal opening there has been a lull in some of the activities and aspirations that drove us prior to restoration. We have tried navel gazing but decided it was time to seek outside, impartial advice about securing our future.

Although my views on consultants have not substantially altered, the report submitted by Marketwise Strategies certainly impressed by its perception and clarity and gave us some valuable insights. We have decided to run with a series of their ideas and the recruitment of an experienced Marketing Officer is an important first step. Watch this space!

Neville Kenyon

The Huddersfield Canal Society are seeking a Marketing Officer

The appointment, working at our office within the Oldham/Tameside area, will be on part-time basis, usually two days per week and will include the development of:

- *The trading strategy of the Society – including the introduction of products and their distribution.*
- *Liaison with British Waterways and other countryside leisure agencies and local authorities, in the promotion of the Society.*
- *Fund raising strategies.*
- *Promotion of Pennine Link magazine and its business management.*
- *Membership expansion.*
- *The HCS web site (www.hcanals.demon.co.uk).*

This is an exciting opportunity for a consumer-marketing professional to use relevant skills in developing our new ideas. Only those with related experience should apply.

A good salary is offered and travel and other expenses will be paid.

For an application form, please contact Dr. Bob Gough, Administrator, Huddersfield Canal Society Limited, 239 Mossley Road, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire OL6 6LN.
Tel: 0161 339 1332 Fax: 0161 343 2262 E-Mail: hcs@hcanals.demon.co.uk

HCS is an Equal Opportunities employer

HCS Council News

Now that Council meets bi-monthly there have only been two meetings since the last Plink but a lot of useful progress has been made. Though some Council members travel quite large distances to meetings the average attendance is about ten from a possible thirteen.

The big news recently has, of course, been the selling of our office building and this has led to renewed efforts to find a new headquarters near the canal. (We can still occupy part of the office for three years, under the terms of the sale, but there is a need to look forward.)

15th September 2004

The Council decided against an 'awards' scheme since all active members are volunteers and commit themselves as much as they can, without expecting any reward, other than the satisfaction of doing a job well.

A counter has been installed on our website at www.hcanals.demon.co.uk - give it a try.

The new owners of the office were moving in on the 19th October. Poor Bob has suffered weeks of banging and sawing whilst the top floor was being converted into a plush modern office.

We employed a firm of marketing consultants to make a "desk study" into the workings and future of the Society. Promotion is the word and we need a new Towpath Guide to do just that. It was agreed to 'close' the office one day each week so that Bob Gough could concentrate on the guide. Unfortunately there has been so much upheaval since then it just hasn't been possible!

Allan Knott, our long-standing boat organiser, has had to resign for personal reasons. We were all sorry to lose Allan, who has been a tower of strength for over 15 years, and hope that he will be able to come back to a position of responsibility before too long.

We are intending to approach BW on the difficulties we are experiencing in dealing with two different organisations since BW's East/West split cut our canal in half, administratively speaking!

The Society is still taking a keen interest in the future of the Standedge Visitor Centre but there doesn't appear to be much progress. The Oldham Regeneration Group, run by Oldham Council, has developed a new lease of life and is proposing several works on their section of the canal. More on that later.

We are now ordering a number of spare Pennine Links to use in promoting the Society and the Canal. They can be given away at canal festivals, for instance.

The suggestion that we might get involved in Father Christmas trips at Marsden Tunnel End drew a blank when an exciting proposal put forward by David Stubbs was turned down on cost, health and safety grounds. Nanny state wins again!

We are getting quite keen on the idea of promoting a back-pumping scheme at Marsden. While its main purpose would be to allow boats to travel up to Marsden, and thus assist Marsden in improving its tourist potential, it wouldn't do the canal any harm, either! We are in the process of approaching local

councillors, to raise interest in the proposals.

The problem of insufficient mooring points was discussed and it was agreed to raise the matter at both our BW User Group meetings.

17th November, 2004

The meeting was held in the Transshipment Warehouse, canalside at Dobcross, for reasons which became obvious when the Chairman talked about new HQ premises. Various locations in Ashton and Slaithwaite had proved unsatisfactory and "the shed" was the latest suggestion. Whilst it did not immediately fit the bill, the idea had been put both to the owners (BW) and the Council planners and neither had any basic objection. We are now going ahead with a feasibility study, including finding out if we can alter the building in any way, it being Grade II listed.

We agreed that we needed some help with promotion and marketing, following the desk top study mentioned in the last meeting and we are hoping to employ a part-time marketing assistant from next Spring/Summer. Any hopefuls should form an orderly queue.

Whilst looking for more help - we also want to start doing canalside volunteer work (painting, vegetation clearing, etc.) during weekdays. An excellent opportunity for retired folk to get some fresh air and do a useful job. Only one day a week, or more if you want. To be publicised in Pennine Link.

All sorts of promotional ideas came up at the meeting: helping another society to run a boat gathering in Uppermill; promoting the "74 Club" for people who have sailed the full length HNC;

canalside advertising of the '74' plaque; even an HCS calendar and Christmas cards. Your Chairman has not volunteered to strip off (thank goodness!). On a more serious note we agreed to investigate a "teacher's pack" to promote canal activities (canoeing, environmental, wildlife, etc.) among the young. We may even publicise ourselves on the mushrooming digital radio stations system!

We have been invited to take a boat to the re-opening (is it the second or third try?) of the Bugsworth Basin and hope to have a display stand there as well - if we have created up to date display boards by then.

We have had a busy time going to BW User Group meetings and we now hope to be represented on a new group involved with regeneration in Marsden and Slaithwaite, hence the continuing interest in a Marsden back-pumping scheme.

On the Oldham Regeneration Group front we are involved in schemes for creating a visitor attraction at Diggle Tunnel End with new, attractive iron gates, a landscaping scheme and appropriate interpretive displays. Along the full length of the Oldham section (through Saddleworth) there will be a new signing scheme, directing people to the canal and to destinations along the canal. Hopefully, we will also see the arrival of the long-awaited signs where the canal crosses under road bridges. The Society will be making a substantial contribution to these works, in exchange for permanent on-site recognition/publicity. These works should take place before next summer.

Ken Wright



Was it all Worth it?

The Huddersfield Narrow Canal reopened to navigation from end to end in 2001, followed by the Rochdale

Canal in 2002. Both Canals had been restored over approximately a 20 year period. About 50 miles of derelict waterway had been brought back to life at a total cost of around £90m (divided more or less equally between the two canals). Both restorations were started by volunteers and involved local authorities and British Waterways. Both required complex negotiations to obtain grants from various sources and were completed with substantial help from the National Lottery.

Although members of the Huddersfield and Rochdale Canal Societies know that reopening the canals was worthwhile, the grants that made it all possible were not given to benefit waterway enthusiasts but because of the regenerative effects of restoring the canals on the waterside communities. It is important that the benefits predicted when those grants were applied for actually happen, and can be shown to have happened. Otherwise large grants for other waterway restorations will be much harder to come by.

Being mindful of this, British Waterways commissioned a study of the benefits that had already accrued shortly after the Heritage Lottery funded works to complete restoration of the Kennet & Avon Canal finished. That, perhaps, did not give the full picture however, because

the canal had been completely open for navigation since 1990 and the expensive works to improve the state of the canal had been carried out after that reopening. British Waterways have followed this with a study of the economic impact of restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow and Rochdale Canals, carried out by ECOTEC Research and Consultancy. Even this will not give a complete picture, however, because many of the benefits - in terms of new jobs based on leisure and tourism, or in terms of the development of often previously derelict canalside sites and increased property values - will develop over a number of years after reopening of the canals.

ECOTEC say that in 2003 the Huddersfield Narrow Canal witnessed 2.3 million tourism and leisure visits, and the Rochdale Canal 3.8 million visits. These supported net expenditure, respectively, of around £2.6m and between £2.5m and £4.1m. As a result, expenditure on tourism and leisure visits supported around 130 full time equivalent jobs dependent on the Huddersfield Narrow and over 150 full time equivalent jobs on the Rochdale. Between £88m and £107m was invested in property developments alongside the Huddersfield Narrow in the years 1990-2003, and £221m to £261m alongside the Rochdale in the same period. This property development supported around 380 full time equivalent jobs in the case of the Huddersfield Narrow and as many as 3,300 full time equivalent jobs in the case of the Rochdale. Not all of these property related jobs can be directly associated with restoration of the canals

because there were other factors involved in decisions to invest, such as the increasing popularity of apartment properties in converted mill buildings or, to take a specific case, the need for new teaching space and student accommodation at Huddersfield University. ECOTEC believe that of the property development jobs they have identified, around 18-19% are dependent on the restored canal in the case of the Huddersfield Narrow and about 13% in the case of the Rochdale.

The report says that *“economic activity adjacent to the canals is significant.”* The canals *“have acted as attractive magnets for tourism and leisure activity, and have influenced ... the design, price and siting of residential developments”*. It concludes that *“future developments will tend to be more canal-focussed and therefore more dependent on the restored canals”* and that, *“many of the anticipated ... developments will further enhance the tourism offer ...”*.

It will be interesting to compare these figures with those produced in similar reports for HCS by L&R Leisure Consultants in 1986 and Coopers & Lybrand in 1994. A word of caution, however. Direct comparisons are meaningless because the timescales of the research are different and because the best estimates of consultants making a case for a client seeking grants inevitably tend to be more optimistic than the estimates of consultants asked to check what has actually happened. Also - and here there is a problem for all post-restoration studies - developers listing their reasons for carrying out work alongside the restored canal will frequently take the restored canal as a given part of the environment and not

even see it as a reason for their choice of development (perhaps even being unaware that the canal was ever derelict). Figures for development related to restoration of the canal may, therefore, underestimate dependency on the canal, except in the case of developments carried out immediately around the time of the relevant restoration work.

My main conclusion is that ECOTEC's report shows that there have been definite benefits to the canalside communities as a result of restoration of the canals. I do not know how the Treasury or grant-giving bodies judge value for money in terms of benefits accrued per £1 spent, but I think we can be cautiously optimistic that the Huddersfield Narrow and Rochdale cases will allow those who gave grants to help restoration to feel a degree of satisfaction with the outcome of the restoration work.

I know that many waterway enthusiasts are rightly concerned that canalside developments are changing the character of our waterways - often for the worse. That, however, is a different issue relating to the choice of suitable sites for development and the nature and design of that development. There are still sufficient derelict brownfield sites to build on and disused (often historic) buildings to restore and convert to new uses alongside the canals of the Pennine Ring of waterways to allow for a very significant amount of further development to take place without spoiling the waterway environment, provided that the quality of those developments is suitably controlled.

Keith Gibson

HCS Crews News

Bob Maycock gives an end of season summary of boat crew matters in the light of recent changes within the Tameside Canal Boat Trust, owners of the 'Still Waters' at Portland Basin.

End of season, new temporary writer for this column. What to say?

David Stubbs organised an excellent pub lunch in October at the Tunnel End Inn, enjoyed good company, good food and chance to meet the Chairman, Neville Kenyon to hear his views on current canal topics. Thank you David and Neville.

Congratulations to Ian and Emma who have become Mr and Mrs Spencer.

Commiserations to Denise Beck who tripped, slipped and landed on a hard part of Huddersfield containing a door post and became a casualty; one leg, one arm and part of her head being rendered not so good. I hear that she is now less recumbent and may pass her crutches on to a local football team. Anyway, a lot of people would be pleased to be on a diet of Sparkling Aspirin Wine and Nurofen Toasties. Get well soon, please.

Keith Noble, already busy on our behalf as Director and BW User Group representative has been asked to be Waterspace Manager at the IWA National Festival at Preston Brook in August. I might take my cruiser along and wave to him graciously from the steering deck.

Simon Ogborn has resigned from his maintenance and advisory role on 'Still Waters'. Thanks to Simon for all his exertions and advice to date.

Barry Edwards is mobile and smiling but has surrendered his Boatmaster's Licence.

Ronnie Rose looks well but still supports Huddersfield Town. Thanks are due to Andrew Broadbent and Mo O'Niell for all the work they have done, but they are handing in their windlasses and going to love (*sic*) in the USA; they go with our best wishes, but what's wrong wi' Batley Market.

Gerald Edinburgh, not surprisingly, has stepped down from the Board of the Canal Boat Trust, but hopes to be more available as a Boatmaster. This could be good news because his lady, Denise E. is fully bilingual in Yorkshie and Lancashie and can even order basic necessities in Cheshie (well, in that bit round Dukki).

Enormous thanks are due to Allan Knott who has retired from all five of his management jobs. Only now are we finding out how much effort he has been putting in for what must be at least 15 years; if he gets to spend the extra time with his partner, Pam, he has made a shrewd move. No one person can reasonably fill Allan's positions on a voluntary basis, so the provisional arrangements at the time of writing are:

- Vince Willey obviously retains overall financial and managerial control as before.
- David Stubbs continues as East Side Boat Co-ordinator, no change there.
- Alan Kershaw takes on my old job of Crew Examination Officer with specific responsibility for Boatmaster training, almost certainly extending to a general

overview of crew training because of changing regulatory requirements. He should also join the HCS Boat Group.

- Denise Beck, when she recovers, will continue with Boatmaster training in specialised areas and probably advise on the general overview element.
- Peter Ruffley, in addition to being Chairman of Tameside Canal Boat Trust, will take on day to day management of the boat 'Still Waters' at Portland Basin (and lead some of the basic training until the next reshuffle).
- I will undertake the Hon. Sec./Admin./Liaison jobs for HCS crew and the Trust to assist Bob Gough in boat related matters.
- The post of West Side Boat Co-ordinator remains vacant pending further reorganisation and recruitment. The job will be done on an informal basis by Alan Kershaw, Peter and myself for the time being.

What next?

There will only be Santa Cruises on board Still Waters at Portland Basin - *(December 18th and 19th from Noon, 40min trip, no advance booking required), after which ...*

2005 is off to a jolly start, we need 3 sets of boat crew for the Easter weekend (25th to 28th March). One set for Marsden, one for Portland Basin and one for the reopening of Bugsworth Basin at Whaley Bridge, where we have been asked to

run a water bus. The Bugsworth job includes delivering and un-delivering a boat from Stalybridge to Whaley Bridge. Marsden and Bugsworth volunteers should contact David Stubbs. Portland Basin volunteers should contact Peter Ruffley (via the Office for the time being).

Provisionally, 'Still Waters' is to be lifted out on April 9th to be prepared for the statutory 'out of water' survey; volunteers with scrapers and paint brushes will be required for about six days, then we need a qualified crew for the slipping and short sailing test.

Very importantly and very shortly we have to secure funding for the statutory examinations and revalidations.

Last, but not least, we should support our Directors in their efforts to get more boats and more activity into the top pound at Marsden which could and should be a cruise destination in its own right. I have not put in 21 years just to look at a deserted piece of canal.

Cope with Christmas, I have to!

Bob Maycock



The Upper Reaches

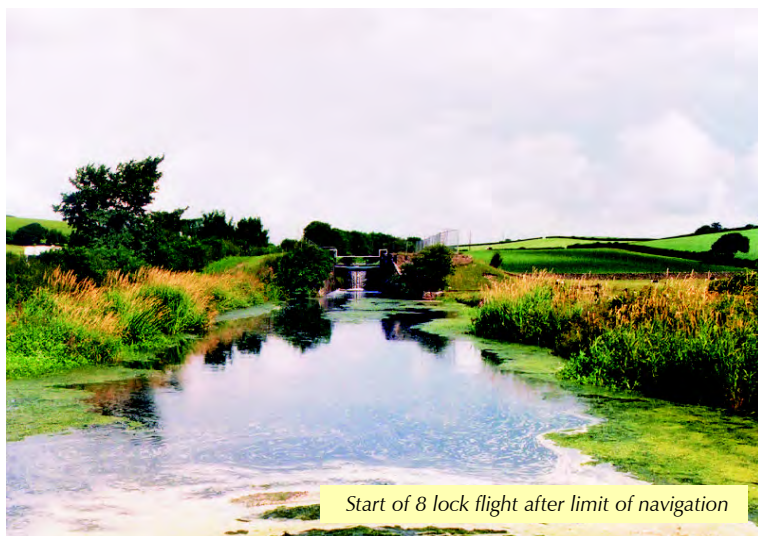
Past Editor Alwyn Ogborn and his wife Joan, explore the Lancaster beyond Tewitfield in the company of Brian and Ann Minor.

In 2003 Joan & I decided to holiday on the Lancaster Canal on our narrowboat, the Auntie 'B'. This meant going via the strong tidal sections of the rivers Douglas and Ribble. This we did with the extra crew of your highly steaming Editor Brian. (See Brian's article in Pennine Link Issue 146) The effort was well worthwhile however, for we found the Lancaster Canal a delight throughout its length and finished up spending longer than planned on its waters, but that's another story.

Reaching the limit of navigation at Tewitfield we were again joined by Brian,

this time with his wife Ann who were on a short break in their caravan at Burton-in-Kendal. One of the forays we took together from the end of navigation, was to walk the next mile or so of canal alongside the only lock flight of the main line. (The only other locks being the 6 down to Glasson Dock). This took us past the 8 derelict locks up to the first motorway blockage.

The canal and towpath now disappeared into a thickly overgrown section and into a culvert. This was where sadness and doubt about future restoration began to nibble at the edges of confident expectations. The locks we had passed have already seen the loving





Joan & I decided to walk the rest of the upper reaches to Kendal.

The thot plickend and in order to split the walking into manageable sections we decided to find accommodation at about the half way stage and walk South one day and North the next.

A room was duly booked at the Crooklands Hotel, (surprisingly in Crooklands, a small village near the M6 junc 36). We travelled in two cars to the bridge we had previously walked to the year before, and left one car there. Travelling on to the hotel, we had some lunch and set off walking back.

attention of WRG, chambers and by-washes having been cleared of vegetation and spruced up in preparation for the intended restoration. This blockage looked serious.

In order to get past this blockage, we had to retrace our steps and cross the M6 via a minor (not Brian & Ann's) road bridge, re-joining the towpath by about a half-mile detour. We walked a further half mile to the next road bridge and then away from the canal to enter the M6 Burton service station by the back door for a cup of tea and a sticky bun.

This was the extent of our exploration for the time being but the seed was sown. The seed germinated in early 2004 and

At first the canal looked in good shape, wide and deep with little weed. Then we reached the 3rd M6 blockage. This was another culvert although in this case with





Downstream from 3rd M6 blockage

ample headroom for future navigation. Beyond this the channel was narrowed and water level dropped. The line of canal took a pleasant sweep away from the motorway but then swung back to meet it again at road level and the 2nd M6 blockage.

This promises to be the most challenging obstacle to full restoration. Our walk continued to where we had left the car and we returned to the hotel for a brew and feet up.

The next day we set off for Kendal. Again, the first section was in good condition and the Lancaster Canal Trust

keep their trip boat, 'Crooklands', here. We continued for about 2 miles of 'in water' until it came to an abrupt halt near the village of Stainton. Here it became a tree filled trough. And dried up completely a little further on. We then had to detour by road again to the approach to Hincaster Tunnel. This section and the tunnel itself has been the subject of a clean up and publicity campaign and was a damp ditch rather than completely dry.

We had to cross the tunnel via the horse lane and were met at the other end by what can only be described as a linear rain forest. The vegetation growing in the damp canal bed has to be seen to be believed.

This soon petered out as the A590 sliced across the line of canal. Another, much longer, detour by road was needed. We picked up the line again in what is now a field. Walking through the field brought us to the bizarre sight of what is obviously a canal bridge in the middle of a field. Beyond this the line of canal

appears again in places, then back to a field and through a wood where the 'rain forest in a damp ditch' re-asserts itself.

Passing through this the canal becomes in-filled right into Kendal, although the line is clearly evident.



Dried up section east of Hincaster Tunnel

Another 'dry' canal bridge announces the entry into the original Kendal Basin, now a car park and civic refuse depot.

The 3rd day of our break we took advantage of the Lancaster Canal Trust being in attendance with their trip boat. We had a very pleasant sail along towards Kendal and a good chat to the volunteers running the boat.

As we knew, the promised funding had been knocked back looking for 'more cost effective solutions' and the restoration would now have to be done in three tranches.

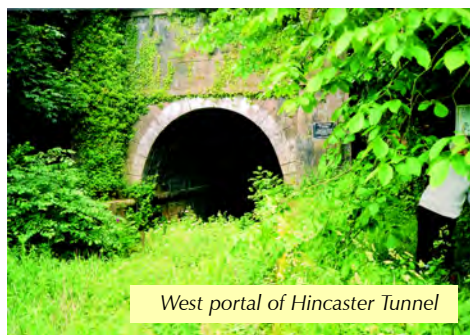
We joined the Trust and expect to follow restoration progress with a view to sailing all the way to Kendal one day.

Alwyn Ogborn

Photos: A Ogborn



Lancaster Canal Trust trip boat



West portal of Hincaster Tunnel



Canal bed 'forest'



Bridge to nowhere

Maria - The First 150 Years

Maria is a wooden narrowboat built as a horseboat in 1854. Therefore she began to celebrate her 150 years of history in 2004. She is believed to be Britain's oldest surviving wooden narrowboat, and possibly the oldest full length (70 feet) narrowboat still afloat. She was abandoned, left sunk, on the Ashton Canal in the 1960s when canals were falling into dereliction, until being restored by the Ashton Packet Boat Co. in 1977/8. They have encouraged her operation as a horseboat on long journeys since they ceased trading with her as a horsedrawn passenger trip boat from 1979-99. The Huddersfield Canal Society kindly sponsored two days of horseboating by donating £150 per day.

The first outing of the year was to Marple, where *Maria* had been built at James Jinks' yard above the top lock. She was given a mooring at the canal junction from where

she could be seen by the crowds attending the unveiling of a plaque there at Easter. For many people *Maria* seemed unrecognisable because during the winter she had been deconverted (that is, her long cabin put on in 1977 was removed) and restored to her livery of 1854. Bonny the Boathorse is of more recent origin, being 12 years old!

There had been hopes that Bugsworth Basin would reopen at Easter and *Maria* had been invited to attend her original workplace under horsepower. Unfortunately more leaks prevented the opening, and we were led to believe this would be postponed to late summer. We decided to wait for the official opening for the horseboating trip and instead towed *Maria* with wooden motorboat *Joel* to Whaley Bridge. We inspected on foot the works going on in the Bugsworth Basins. Also we arranged for a cargo load of stone to be left on site, ready for *Maria* to re-enact her trade of 1854 to approximately 1900 of carrying stone from the crusher. *Maria* worked with many other boats to carry limestone from Bugsworth Basin, which was one of the busiest inland ports at that time. Her cargo was carried along the Upper and Lower Peak Forest Canals to Manchester and perhaps beyond.

Left: *Maria* is painted - covering the Ashton Packet Boat Co. cabin sides to 'Millennium Maria' for 2000

Below: Bonny pulls *Maria* along the Regents Canal





'A Bit of Leg'ing - Islington Tunnel

Fortunately the Ashton Packet Boat Co. revived their horse skills to get *Maria* to Marple again for 'Marple 200', the bi-centenary of the locks in July. From the top lock we carried costumed passengers – Samuel Oldknow and his apprentices – to the festival site. After being on display all day to the public, we horseboated down the locks watched by many interested onlookers.

Due to my injured shoulder, the plans had to be cancelled of taking *Maria* around the Cheshire Ring and to the IWA National Festival at Burton-on-Trent. The eagerly awaited opening of Bugsworth never happened so we hope perhaps it might be next year! The greatest journey of *Maria* was in 2000 when she went horsedrawn from Manchester via Birmingham, through London to the IWA National Festival at Waltham Abbey, raising over £7,000 for charities. From this effort The Horseboating Society was formed. What will *Maria* achieve in her next 150 years?

We are always in need of crew for these horsedrawn trips so please volunteer yourself if you would like to support *Maria* and your local heritage.

Contact: Sue Day
The Horseboating Society,
01457 834863 or 07711 121056

Return trips were used to bring any required cargoes into the locality e.g. coal, timber, agricultural produce etc. After 1900 *Maria* was used as a bank or maintenance boat, carrying materials and tools for repair work on the canals. Our current research has found a record of *Maria* at Waterhouses on the Hollinwood Canal in 1911.

Our next journey for *Maria* was along the Huddersfield Canal to join in the 1st Mossley Canal Festival below Roaches Lock, 15W. *Maria* has undertaken a full return passage of this canal each year from 2001-3. She was the first boat to traverse the canal since the re-opening after restoration in 2001. We had a pleasant journey to and from the Festival, but the four boats in attendance received unwelcome attention from some of the youths present who boarded without permission or threw stones at the boats.

A couple of weeks later I fell off when riding Queenie over jumps, and sadly I dislocated and broke my shoulder. The implications of this were that I was unable to drive my boathorses Bonny and Queenie for the remainder of the season.

A 'deconverted' Maria at the Mossley Festival



A Knott

Photographic Competition Results

With exceptional cash prizes and free entry we thought this year's competition would be a winner. WRONG! At 82 photographs it was exactly the same number as last year and at 13 the number of entrants was also the same. And again, only a single entry in the Junior section and that lucky boy gets £50 and the JUDGE'S PRIZE - a pair of zoom binoculars.

Judge Geoff Hope says:- "I would like to compliment all the entrants that helped support this year's Photographic Competition.

Sadly the number of entrants was small but in no way should this fact diminish the value of the prizewinners' efforts. The quality of the entries has grown annually since the competition's inception. Many of this year's submissions would do well in open competitions against more established photographers.

The prize money offered this year is exceptional and would bring a huge entry if offered to photographers outside of your organisation. Now that virtually all families own at least one camera what is the cause of the reluctance to use it, enjoy it and let us all share in your efforts?

The photographs we did receive were of such a high standard that a lot of reconsidering and soul searching went into the final selection. Sometimes it was the pictorial content that won the day, other times it was the canal atmosphere, or maybe it was the recording of a highlight in our waterways history. All of these things were considered over and over again before a final decision was made.

I have, as always, made a comment on all the entries and where possible I have made suggestions that could be used in future photographs. Remember, although you could adopt a set of basic rules for photography it is sometimes the picture that ignores these rules that comes out tops.

In closing may I take the opportunity not only to congratulate the winners but also to couple this with a big thank you to all of you who

supported the competition."

RESULTS

CATEGORY 'A' - HNC SENIOR

WINNER

David Chadderton - Saddleworth
"Steam launch 'Rimmon' underway"

RUNNER-UP

Anita Crosby - Ashton-u-Lyne
"Life gets tedious, don't it?"

Highly Commended - Denis Broadbent
Commended - Paul Leeman

CATEGORY 'B' - HNC JUNIOR

WINNER

Richard Jones (11) - Huddersfield AGAIN!

CATEGORY 'C' - Other Waterways - Senior

WINNER, OVERALL WINNER, CHALLENGE SHIELD WINNER

Alan Crosby - Ashton-u-Lyne
"Going Down - Falkirk Wheel"

RUNNER-UP

R. Meakin - Honley
"Ellesmere Port"

Highly Commended
Anita Crosby - Ashton-u-Lyne
Joan Ogborn - Mossley

Commended
Mike Carhill - Beccles, Suffolk

Overall winner Alan Crosby has been runner-up in categories A & C in earlier years and his wife, Anita, was overall winner in 2000. Their work is consistently good and their persistence isn't bad, either! Alan will receive the Challenge Shield for one year, a replica to keep and a cash prize of £150.

11 year old Richard Jones will get £50 as the winner in the Junior section AND a magnificent pair of zoom binoculars, **donated by Judge Geoff Hope.**

Other winners receive £50 and the runners-up £25.

Ken Wright



Alan Crosby - Winner - Category C and Overall Winner

A superb shot by any standard! Lots of visual impact, the patterns created by this superb piece of engineering and the contrast with the small human figures help emphasise the scale. Very well done.



David Chadderton - Winner - Category A

This is an excellent archival picture of a highlight in the canal's future history.



Anita Crosby - Runner-up -Category A

Lovely location with plenty of human interest. Well seen and taken.



Richard Jones - Winner - Category B

A good view of a very popular subject on the Saddleworth section.



R Meakin - Runner-up -Category C

An excellent 'night shot' very dramatic with the lights situated in just the right places for effect..



*Denis Broadbent
Highly Commended
Category A*

Nearing Lock 1E from
the top of
Huddersfield
University



*Joan Ogborn
Highly Commended
Category C
Top of Foxton Locks.
Hooray!!*



*Paul Leeman
Commended
Category A
Canal boats at
Slaithwaite*

Mike Carhill
Commended
Category C
 Shire Cruisers'
 Gloucester &
 Northumberland at
 Sowerby Bridge



Anita Crosby
Highly Commended
Category C
 Fylde Water Board
 Bridge, Lancaster Canal,
 Garstang



Footnote: In an effort to increase the interest in the competition we will be publicising it in each issue of Pennine Link - **so this is your first warning of next year's competition.** Whenever you take a photograph of a waterway related scene, think of the competition and remember what Judge Geoff Hope says "*sometimes it was the pictorial*

content that won the day, other times it was the canal atmosphere, or maybe it was the recording of a highlight in our waterways history". The photographs do not necessarily have to be of highly professional quality to come out tops.

Ken Wright

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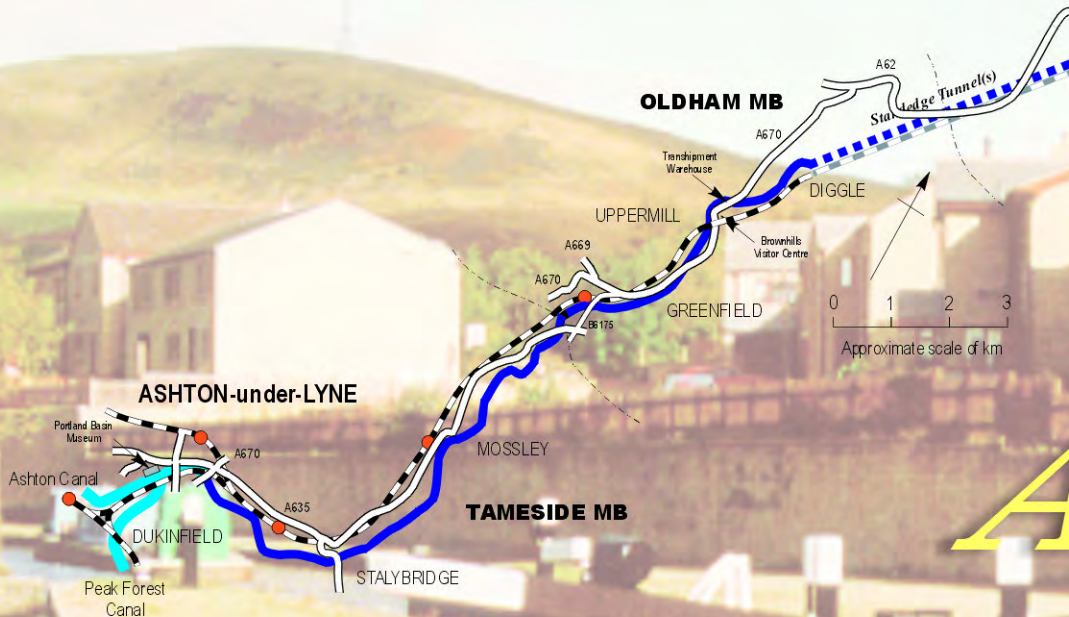
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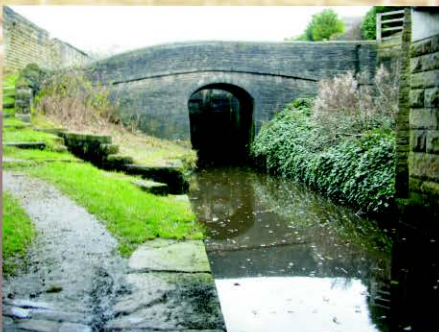
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The Huddersfield Narrow & Broad Canals





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Health & Hygiene Certificate and Heartbeat Award

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



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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The Hollinwood Branch

The first working party is held. More houses are proposed on the line of the canal. All part of the action for the Hollinwood Canal Society. Ed Mortimer now reports on the latest news.

Canal restoration starts in Oldham

The first working party has been held on the canal. So canal restoration has started! Thirteen members of the society got to work in Daisy Nook on a sunny weekend in October.

The task was to make a start on clearing the existing trees that are growing in amongst the stonework. This is causing considerable damage to the original structures and canal edges, and will only get worse. It could eventually lead to the complete collapse of some of the larger structures, such as the aqueducts.

One society member, Dave Johnson, had arranged to come along with his chain saw (complete with all his certificates). So a lot of trees were cleared!

The Country Park Warden was, I think, quite pleased with our efforts. Although when I had said we would be clearing trees that are damaging the existing structures,

I don't think she quite realised that it meant we *would* be clearing trees.

I have a feeling that she was not expecting quite so many trees to be taken down!

More houses to be built on the canal line

Meanwhile in Tameside things are a little different. There is a new threat to the existing route. This is a proposed housing development by Barratts, and



Bob Cough

Extensive tree growth on the offside bank, near Boodle car park, Daisy Nook. 14/02/03



Martin Clark

this would mean that thirteen plots would partly be on the line of the canal. The Hollinwood Canal Society has written with its views.

I would love to be a fly on the wall at the planning committee meeting....

"This new Barratts idea, nicely sorts out the last run down area in Droylsden"

"But what about the canal?"

"What canal, there's no more canals left in Tameside to restore"

"The Hollinwood Branch Canal "

"Not canals again, I thought we'd got rid of that lot when we finished the Huddersfield Narrow Canal"

"Ah, but this is a new lot, we gave them some money to get a report done. The report says it's feasible and will cost cost £31 million. It's the only canal left in Tameside to restore"

"But we need houses, we cannot upset Barratts, and anyway this, err, canal society don't even own the land"

"But they do have a load of members, and David Heyes MP thinks it's a good idea as well"

What will Tameside actually do? To approve the housing without any layout changes will, in effect, be making a statement that they do not support the Hollinwood proposals. A brave Council indeed to oppose canal restoration today.

And if they take an uncommitted approach they could be approving some houses that (no matter how likely or unlikely the restoration proposal may currently seem) might be knocked down in the future. Not an easy one.

And what about Barratts.

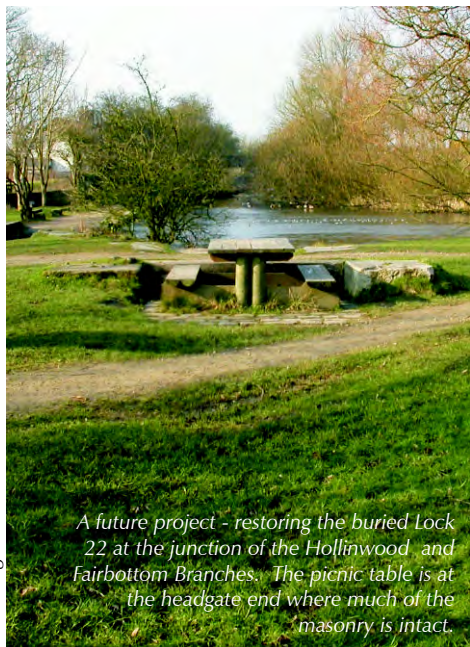
"Yes, they are lovely houses, but I have to just tell you that there is some little



Volunteers at their first working party weekend.



Offside canal bank now clear of damaging tree growth. 27/11/04



A future project - restoring the buried Lock 22 at the junction of the Hollinwood and Fairbottom Branches. The picnic table is at the headgate end where much of the masonry is intact.

extremist charity that wants to knock them down"

Not the best selling line for Barratts.
The story continues in the next Plink...

Canal restoration to cost £31 million

Roy Sutton, the Honorary Consultant Engineer for the Inland Waterways Association, has prepared a report that says the restoration is technically feasible. It will cost £31m, which has always sounded a lot for a six miles canal route.

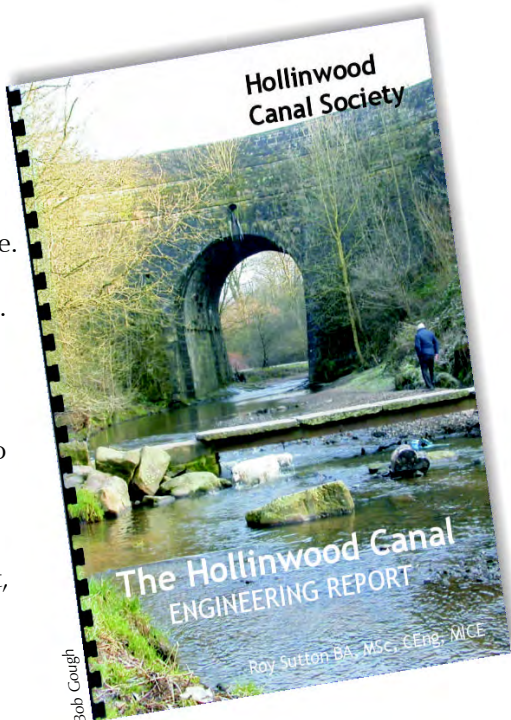
Then I got to think about it a bit more. Those canal restoration schemes of twenty or thirty years ago (like the Huddersfield Narrow) just didn't have to come up with the same type of initial business plans and costs. At least not at the start, they just did it. Without any real idea how much it would finally cost, or how they would get the money anyway.

So what would the figure (at today's price) have been for restoring the Huddersfield? Well trying to work this out produces quite a surprise. At today's price, restoring the Huddersfield Narrow from scratch would be about £92m. So, surprisingly, not that much different per mile to the Hollinwood Canal estimate, i.e. roughly three times the cost for three times the length.

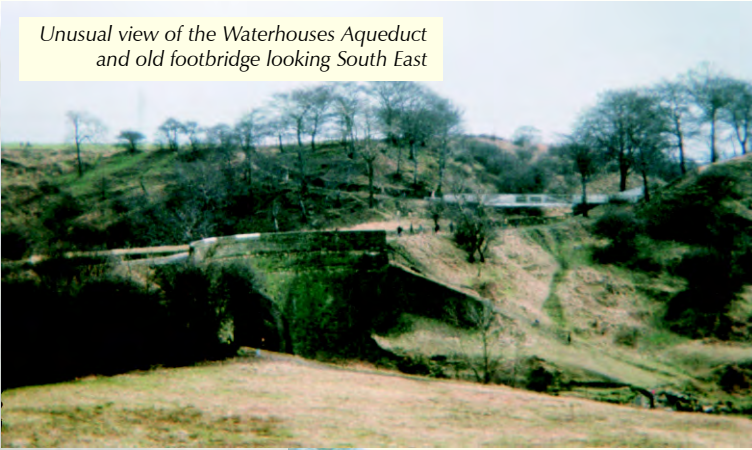
Suddenly the cost of £31m does not seem so bad after all. The big difference is that all those early stalwarts in the Huddersfield Canal Society didn't know their final figure. Perhaps it is best that they didn't!

Full details of the Hollinwood Canal Society can be found on the website: www.hollinwoodcanal.co.uk

Ed Mortimer



Unusual view of the Waterhouses Aqueduct and old footbridge looking South East



Our thanks to Steve Desmond for his permission to reproduce these views of the Hollinwood Branch from his personal slide collection. Taken on Good Friday, 1971, Daisy Nook was a popular recreational spot despite the sad state of a derelict canal.



View from Lock 19 looking South to the Waterhouses Aqueduct and old footbridge spanning the canal.



Staircase pair, locks 20 & 21, looking North West toward Crime Lake.

55 HOURS to HUDDERSFIELD (and 21 minutes to return)



Our President, David Sumner MBE, on the day after his investiture (inset), recounts his cruise of the Narrow with BW's Northern Waterways MD, Derek Cochrane (above)



It was not a race, nor a competition, but the comparison in journey times is made to show the difference in travel times by canal and by rail. Okay, we did stop at night and for lunch and we had to wait for the tunnel tug, but it does show how crossing the Pennines was altered by the coming of the railways. It was only thirty-four years after the opening of the Canal that the Huddersfield and Manchester Railway Company took over the Canal company.

My journey began at 7.00am on 8th July at Eli Whalley's Donkey Stone Wharf by Lock 1W. The boat was John Lund's well appointed 4/6 berth 55 foot Dizzy and I was a guest of Derek Cochrane and Stewart Sim OBE of British Waterways. It was to be my first through passage of the Huddersfield Narrow and we had to arrive in Huddersfield by Saturday afternoon as I was treating my son Richard (and myself) to a Chuck Berry and Jerry Lee Lewis concert in Manchester that evening. Furthermore, Derek had to be in Edinburgh by tea time Saturday!

Derek and I were prepared for inclement Pennine weather and we entered Lock 1W in the rain and it barely abated during the morning until we reached Roaches Lock at 1.00ish where we danced around in the pound below in almost gale force winds. We should have listened to the shipping forecast at 5.35am that morning- Fastnet, Lundy, Irish Sea, Huddersfield Canal, Malin, Hebrides etc. We eventually moored and took refreshments at the Roaches Pub. Well I would, wouldn't you? Derek liked the Robinsons. I was

brought up on it being Stockport born and bred. Beer and canals go together like bread and jam, and neither Derek nor I were going to pass up a pint of real ale during our trip. Oh, I have missed out the in-between bit! I had cruised the Canal to Mossley before. Derek had not and he commented on the superb new urban landscape in Stalybridge and the rural beauty up to and beyond Scout Tunnel. He had plenty of time to see it. He was at the tiller, a relaxed captain, whilst I worked the locks.

My reward for working the locks was to wear a totally waterproof BW jacket. This proved very useful to Derek when we approached three narrowboats also moored below Roaches. Before we could tie up, I was "attacked" by all three boat owners bemoaning the lack of facilities on the Canal, such as mooring rings and easy landing areas by the locks. Derek's amusement at my taking the flak wore a little thin as we had not yet lunched. After a polite explanation by myself about how it was difficult enough to restore the Canal to any standard at all, I think I managed to take the wind out of their sails despite the force eight gale. We never saw them again and they



Into the 'Lion's Den'. Boaters moored at Roaches, Mossley have a chance to express their views to BW's newest recruit.

were going our way! After lunch, the third member of our crew arrived - Stewart Sim. I had known Stewart since his days as Area Engineer based in Wigan and we had reconnoitered the Canal before restoration had begun. I entertained Stewart and his wife and family at early Tameside Canals Festivals. He won't mind me relating the comments he made back in the early seventies. *"Restore the Huddersfield? I admire you, but you are potty".*

We reached Wool Road by early evening. Thursday night was Jennings in the Swan, Dobcross accompanied by an excellent meal. As I stated above, Stewart and I hit it off over twenty years ago. To help us reminisce, he produced a bottle of Glenmorangie as a nightcap as we rocked gently under the canopy of the Transshipment Shed. I think it was the noise of the boat banging against the shed that kept us awake until well after midnight, or was it?

Friday morning 7am start. Both Stewart and Derek are Scotsmen. I have a Scots wife. They all like whisky. Well you guessed it. Derek's demeanor gave me the message that Stewart and I should work the Diggle flight - but this time with assistance from the real BW workers! We arrived at the tunnel mouth at 10.00ish and awaited the arrival of the southbound tug, module and three boats. We were scheduled for a 1.00pm departure. The BW tunnel crew plus Fred Carter connected the flotilla, duly protected with rubber mats, and we entered the

Diggle portal bang on time; ETA perhaps 3.30 pm. At 3.30pm, as forecast, we emerged into the Colne valley - Virgin trains please note. Our "train" comprised four narrowboats, the tug and the passenger module - nearly one hundred yards of snaking vessels which emerged unscathed as expected into the Marsden sunshine. Derek and Stewart were lost for words. As engineers, they could imagine the original construction methods and of course oversaw the reconstruction of the Tunnel on budget and on time.



*Emerging
unscathed into
the Marsden sunshine*

Now, can we make Huddersfield for lunch on Saturday? This was my target. Stewart had to bale out at Slaithwaite, which we made by 7.00pm. We moored above the guillotine gate and enjoyed a superb meal at a Chinese restaurant in Slaithwaite followed by a beer in the Shoulder of Mutton. The Colne Valley by canal is quite superb. The A62 road is not so pleasant, but down in the valley one feels quite separated from this dreary road especially with the canopy of trees in summer shielding the Canal from the

urban sprawl above. However the locks are in need of much attention. Very few bottom gates hold water so that we (that is I) had to fill and empty all 42 locks. I have read about water shortages since the reopening in May 2001. No problem for us though I believe the crew of Dizzy had problems on the return journey. The weather was now kind and we arrived into Huddersfield by Sellars at around 1.00pm and down through the new tunnels to arrive at Lock42E to see the balance beams being painted.

At exactly 2.00pm we cruised into Aspley Basin to be met by Roland Dotchin, Chairman of the Manchester and Stockport Canal Society of which I am a founder member and Vice Chairman - but don't tell my wife! Derek was met by his wife - oh the marvels of mobile phones - and I hitched a lift to the architecturally magnificent Huddersfield Railway Station. Apart from the Canal, is this the only other structure of note in the town centre? I had 30 minutes to spare before the 14.57 to Stalybridge. So, to the Head of Steam for a pint of Black Sheep.

This brings me back to the start of our journey - well almost. The Trans-Pennine

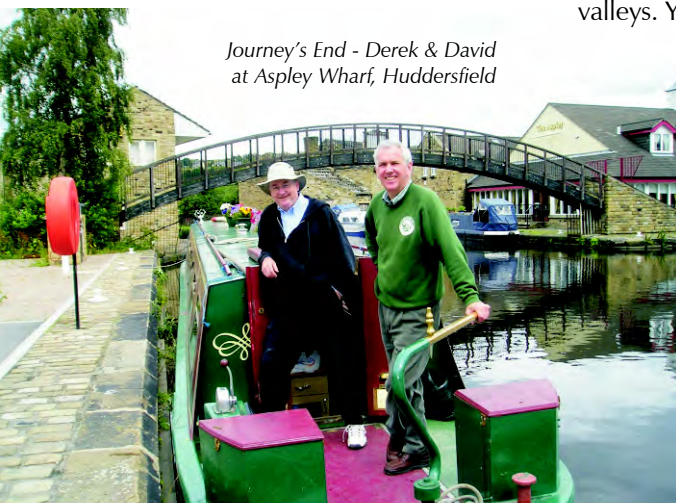
Arriva train took just 21 minutes to Stalybridge and apart from a short section - three miles or so - I saw our magnificent Canal all the way. What impressed Derek and Stewart most was the amount of regeneration that followed the restoration of the Canal. Stalybridge is the 'Jewel' and new housing and flats have since appeared canalside in Mossley. Slaithwaite and Milnsbridge have been transformed. We were passed by long distance walkers, locals out with their dogs and children, office workers using the towpath, cyclists - one couple were traveling by canal towpaths from Lancaster and returning via Leeds and Skipton. We met anglers. Everyone praised the Canal for helping transform the two valleys. *"The Colne and Tame Valleys have benefited from our project in all respects"* said Derek Cochrane. He continued *"The economic well being of the community, the increasing social cohesion and the improvement to the natural environment has all stemmed from a scheme no one believed would be possible - except the Canal Society"*

Both Derek and Stewart marveled at the Canal - its engineering, its history, its setting and its contribution to the general well-being now experienced in the two valleys. Yes, there are improvements to

be made (they took note) and perhaps one day it will support 70 foot long 7 foot wide narrowboats, but to have traveled this canal at all is a wonder and a marvelous example of enthusiasm, teamwork and genuine partnership to fulfill the dreams of our Society.

David Sumner

*Journey's End - Derek & David
at Aspley Wharf, Huddersfield*



What the Papers Said

Predictably, the Yorkshire press have concentrated their news items on the Canal around the current problems with the Standedge Visitor Centre.

Huddersfield Daily Examiner

In May **(28/05/04)**, the Examiner announced the reopening of the Standedge Visitor Centre, albeit on a reduced scale, with the relaunching of trips into the Tunnel, detailing costs and a diary of trip dates.

By August **(14/08/04)** the lack of success at the Centre prompted the front page banner headline **"Tunnel End Tourist Flop"** with a major article charting the decline in popularity of the Visitor Centre. Comments from BW spokesmen explained the problems the Centre had experienced and Society Director Ken Wright highlighted our financial input to the scheme which, initially, had support from all the parties involved.

An angler believed he saw a Snapper turtle in the Narrow Canal at Golcar, though animal care technician at Huddersfield Technical College, Maggie Davies, felt it more likely the 12" x 6" chelonian was a large terrapin - the red-eared variety are frequently spotted in the Canal having been unwanted pets 'released' into the waterway.

To avoid confusion, the article was illustrated with a view of the Canal at Golcar inset with Maggie holding a Snapper turtle, which is not in the Canal, with the caption 'Turtle Alert'. **(20/08/04)**

A fascinating insight into the working life of the Tunnel End was given by retired Features Editor Ron Massey, recalling the days when the site had more to consider than its inability to attract tourists.

His father was a railway man working for almost 20 years in the Standedge Tunnel and two uncles were employed by the then British Waterways Board in the Standedge warehouse workshop. He recalled a breach in the overflow channel carrying water over the railway tracks and into the Canal causing spectacular damage to the rail line.

As well as a story about a local character's zinc bath exploits on the canal, he explained the origin of 'Teapot Row', the local name for Waterfall Cottages, whose residents shared a communal pot through purpose built holes in the dividing kitchen walls. **(08/09/04)**

Colne Valley Chronicle

A front page **"Centre Shock - Cash Crisis at Standedge Tourist Venture"** article echoes the Examiner's major article including the quotes from the intested parties. **(20/08/04)**

The following week, Colne Valley MP Kali Mountford, welcomed BW's decision to review the attraction at the Centre and offered her suggestions for improvements including a Park and Ride minibus service, cafe and promotion of all four tunnels at Tunnel End. **(27/08/04)**

Oldham Chronicle

A centre page colour spread features Chadderton boat builder, Ian Gregory, having to relocate his narrowboat business 'Dual Duel' to larger premises. The restored Rochdale and Huddersfield Narrow canals have caused such an upsurge in waterway interest that his order book is decidedly healthy and beyond the capacity of his old premises. **(24/08/04)**

'Sun, sea and sex', well, Sand, Canal and bikini clad models, as brewers J W Lees entered into the Olympic spirit by laying down an improvised Beach Volleyball strip behind its Rain Bar, Great Bridgewater Street, city centre Manchester, next to the Rochdale Canal. **(26/08/04)**

The economic benefits of the restored Pennine Ring of canals were reported highlighting Failsworth Town Shopping Centre, Hollinwood developments and Oldham Broadway Business Park by the Rochdale and the proposed mixed development on the Huddersfield Narrow at Greenfield. **(04/10/04)**

Marsden-based Mikron Theatre Company, traditionally touring the waterways by their narrowboat 'Tyesley', have taken to the road by van for their Autumn tour, visiting nearly 50 land-locked venues with their productions 'Pedal Power' and 'On the Line'. **(06/10/04)**

Though Oldham Council support the development plans for the former Knoll Spinning site and Frenches Wharf area next to the Narrow, there will be an enquiry by the Secretary of State in June next year. The developer is keen to get an assurance from the Council that it will use its Compulsory Purchase Order powers, if necessary, to allow the development to go ahead, though the Council is reluctant, hoping discussions with the landowners would be as persuasive. **(29/10/04)**

A major initiative in the Wards of Failsworth West and St Mary's between Oldham police, enforcement officers, councillors, Groundwork and many of the 18,000 residents, has seen a dramatic improvement in litter and graffiti removal. On the Rochdale, the canal bridge at Failsworth has been singled out as the next target area. **(10/11/04)**

Oldham Advertiser

Highlighting the economic and regenerative benefits of a restored waterway - especially for canalside accommodation and facilities - the Advertiser prints a lengthy article including an artist's impression of the Knoll Spinning site at Greenfield.

Citing the success stories of Castlefield in Manchester and Stalybridge, there can only be a rosy future for the □300m urban village around the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal in Salford and the rather curious "Droylsden Basin of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal ... where Tameside Council has plans for a □100m new town centre focused on the basin" (!). Fairfield Junction on the Ashton Canal is probably nearer the mark. Nonetheless, the benefits of canal restoration go far beyond a navigable waterway. **(12/08/04)**

The uncertain future of the Stanedge (sic) Visitor Centre made an article (largely duplicating the Huddersfield Examiner) citing the falling visitor numbers as the main cause of a 'rethink' by BW. Society director Ken Wright was mis-quoted saying "... The designers got it wrong." BW's Leon Shouksmith was suitably upbeat, not accepting the project was a flop and that their review of the facilities at Marsden was continuing. **(23/08/04)** A subsequent correspondent to the Advertiser reckoned the Visitor Centre should have been located at Diggle, with canal trips down to Uppermill or even through to Stalybridge and Ashton. **(26/08/04)**

Keith Gibson's new book 'Pennine Pioneer' had a couple of column inches by way of a precis and price tag. **(21/10/04)**

Cuttings collected by Keith Sykes and Ken Wright. Compiled by Bob Gough

The Steam Launch Rimmon

It's a while since there was anything new happening on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, but in July a singular event took place. It was the "launching" of a brand-new, locally built steam launch named "Rimmon" from the slipway at Wool Road, Dobcross.

Steam Launch "Rimmon"

John Buckley, Des O'Brien and myself (David Chadderton) had been friends for a number of years, and as long time members of the Saddleworth Historical Society and the Huddersfield Canal Society we had been deeply involved for some years in the restoration of the Wool Road Transhipment Warehouse at Dobcross during the 1970s.

Two of us wrote part of the original proposal for reopening the canal between Wool Road and the Brownhill Centre. It

This article tells the story of Rimmon's genesis and the hard work, dedication (and, I suspect, sheer total enjoyment) that have gone into it! Note! A longer and more technically detailed version of this article is available, free of charge, from the Society offices in Ashton.

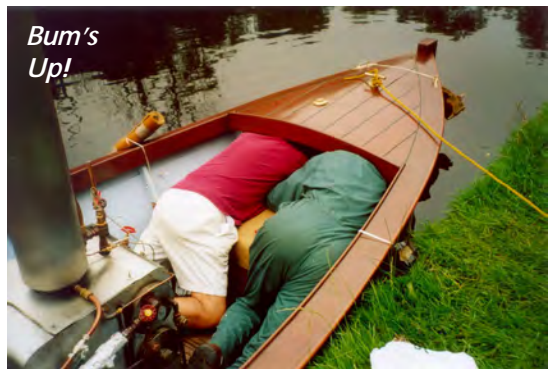
Ken Wright

was very much in our minds to have a boat operating on the reopened canal.

John was a founder member of the Northern Mill Engine Society, I had built a steam operated garden railway, we both had professional engineering backgrounds and we were nearing retirement. Des had done a little "pond" sailing up at Dovestones and had offshore sailing experience.

In 1989, plans of a 20 foot "Diana" class steam launch were purchased and copies of articles on how to build "Diana" obtained. Over the next 10 years, the three of us working together one day a week, built the lapstrake (clinker built) hull from 3/8th inch thick plywood planks. Epoxy resin was used to glue the overlapping planks with wooden dowels inserted every six inches.

1993 saw the purchase of castings etc. for the steam engine, and John made a start on machining them.



The 15" bronze propeller, stern tube and stainless steel propeller shaft were purchased. We intended to make our own 3 drum copper Blackstaffe boiler, but because of the new Pressure Equipment Regulations we decided in 2000 to purchase a ready made twin-drum Lune Valley boiler pressure vessel.

We made the rudder and fitted tiller steering, and the stainless steel boiler casing and fire grate were largely made by ourselves. The stainless steel double funnel was rolled and seamed for us.

Eric Baker had now joined us. Eric was one of the original band of Wool Road Warehouse enthusiasts, and he brought extra knowledge to the drilling of the pressure vessel ends, piping up boiler to engine and winding steel tube to make the feed water preheater coils.

It was becoming apparent that John's progressive illness would not allow us to complete the engine ourselves within a reasonable time span. John decided to send it away to have it completed by the Great Northern Steam Co.

John was able to run the completed engine, with its brasswork gleaming, on compressed air on a couple of occasions, but sadly, with the boat's hull now finished, the boiler in place and the pipework almost all installed, John died in November 2002 before "Rimmon" had been completed.

October 2003 saw the steam equipment and engine gaining the essential "Boiler Certificate".

During this and subsequent testing, the engine was found to have a damaged big end bearing. The engine was returned for the crankshaft to be reground and replacement of the bearing bronzes. Unfortunately it wasn't finished until late April 2004.

In May 2004, a separate inspection led to the award of "Rimmons" Boat Safety Scheme Certificate.

On July 4th 2004, with a lot of effort and in torrential rain, relatives and friends manhandled "Rimmon" (now about 600 kgs) onto her trailer and she was towed to the ramp at Wool Road. The launch into the canal was accomplished, though not without some laughter when the skeg drain hole had to be plugged with the cork from the champagne bottle!

Mrs. Nell Buckley then kindly carried out the honours. Shortly before the main steam valve was opened for the maiden voyage, Nell said, *"I never thought this day would ever happen! I think you have made a lovely job of it, and I am only sorry that John isn't here. The name of this boat is "Rimmon": God bless "Rimmon" and all who sail in her."*

Then, to cheers, Nell poured champagne over the launch's foredeck and "Rimmon" steamed out onto the "Impossible Dream", our restored Huddersfield Narrow Canal.

David Chadderton



Full Steam into Saddleworth Murk

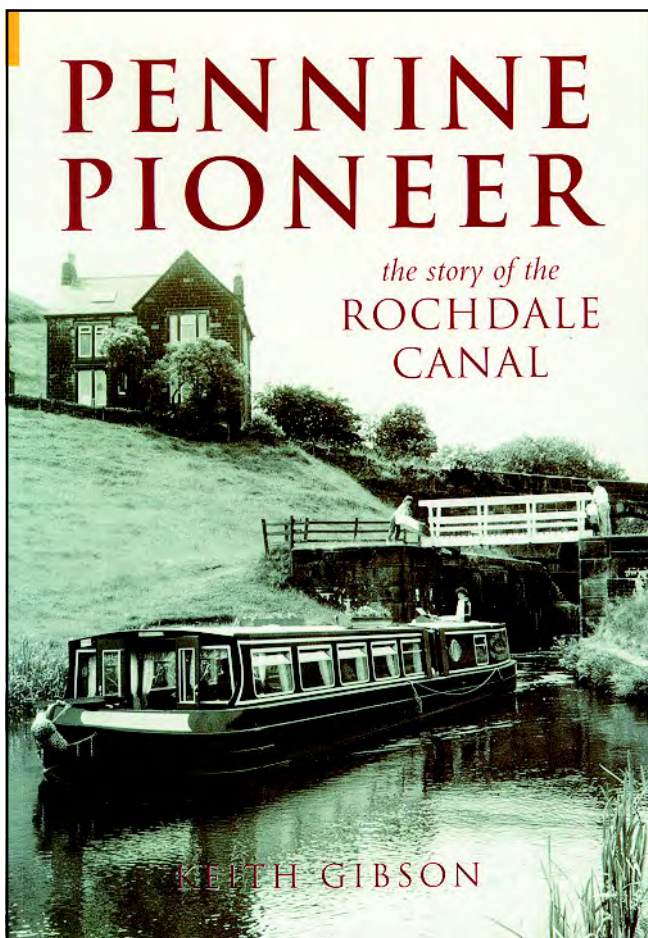
Photos: K Wright

Pennine Pioneer by Keith Gibson

Rochdale Canal - the third of the trans-Pennine canals - was built two hundred years ago and traded successfully until the beginning of the twentieth century. However, the arrival of motor transport had a dramatic effect on the canal and its importance as a trade route, and by the Second World War it was scarcely used and formally abandoned in 1952, quickly becoming impassable.

But in 1974, the Rochdale Canal Society was formed to promote restoration of the canal across the Pennines. After a long search for funding and support from the local authorities, restoration finally commenced, resulting in the canal's complete reopening in 2002.

Pennine Pioneer: the story of the Rochdale Canal follows the life of the Rochdale Canal, from its success to its abandonment, and tells of the more recent battle for its preservation. This is Keith's second book on the Pennine canals and relates the tale of Rochdale Canal's past while also looking to its future.



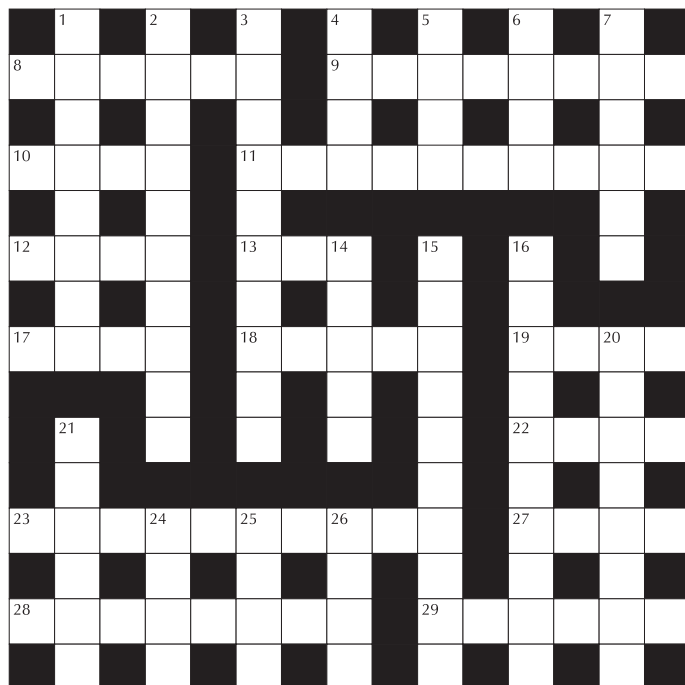
'Pennine Pioneer' is published by Tempus Publishing Ltd and is available from the Society office at £16.99 (p&p free to members, £2.00 to non-members) or from your local bookseller.

ISBN 0 7524 3266 4 Paperback, 192 pages, illustrated throughout.

*Please make cheques payable to:
'Loxvend Ltd'*

** Ken Wright reviews 'Pennine Pioneer' on Page 49*

Canalish Crossword - 45



- 27** Thatcher's raw material (4)
28 Greet sea voyage for those in the cheapest accommodation (8)
29 Baker counts two short of a dozen? (6)

Down

- 1** State of some boaters after a long night in the pub? (8)
2 Singular board game - or a naval asset (10)
3 Prom habits include watching seafood gatherer (6,4)
4 Two masted sailing boat (4)

Across

- 8** The pathos involved in carrying a cargo of potassium carbonate (6)
9 Corrosive precipitation (4,4)
10 Loud rodent on unpowered makeshift boat (4)
11 In Rutland Eli became bad tempered (3-7)
12 Rambo regarded the Severn in flood (4)
13 Average (3)
17 James held the net (4)
18 Bargees favourite ingredient? (5)
19 O and three points on your face (4)
22 Children's game or refuse receptacle? (4)
23 Warn a robot that steering traditional canal craft is not as easy as it looks (10)

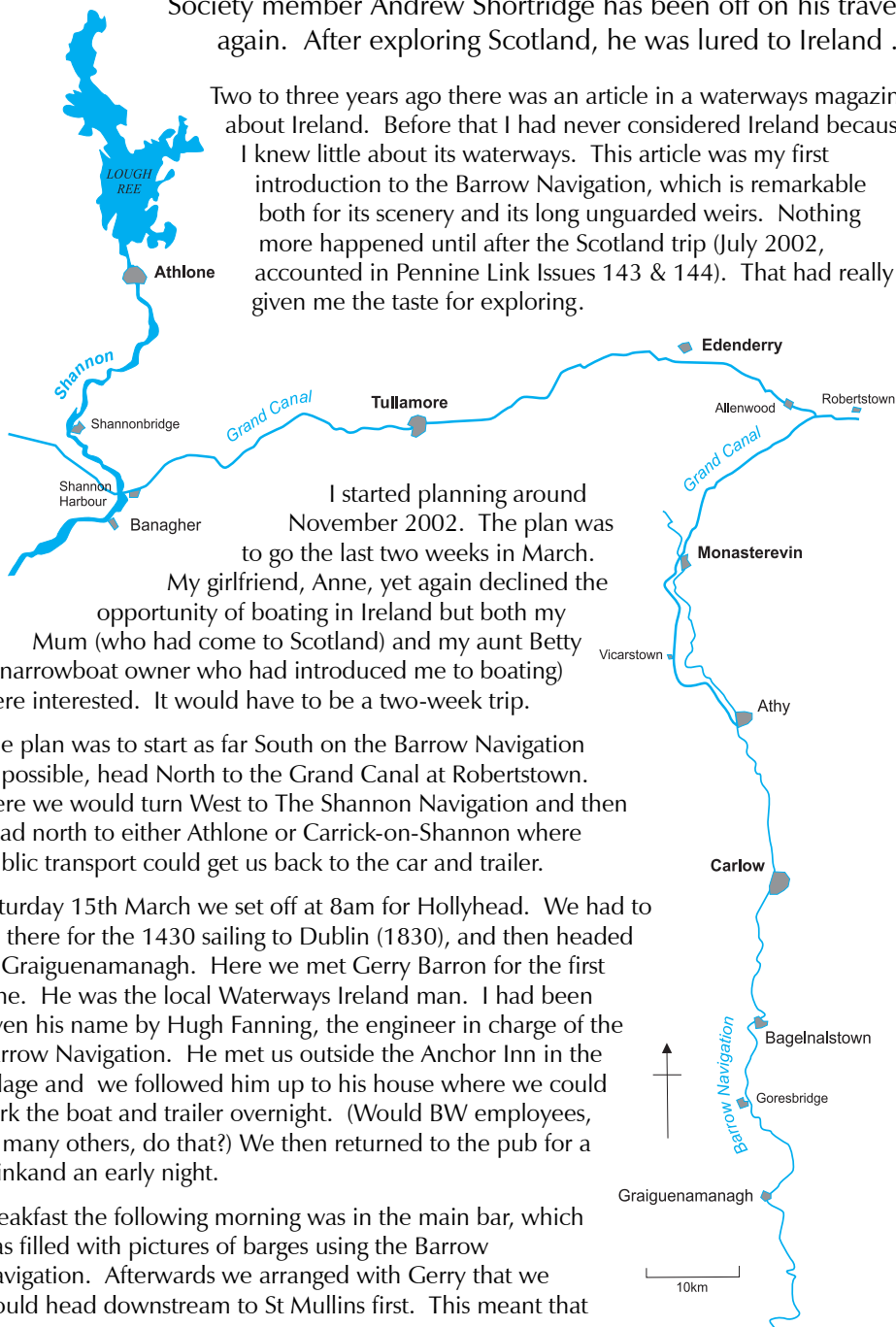
- 5** Rail at the loss of a currency to the Euro (4)
6 Official language of Pakistan (4)
7 Ember I extinguished in a galley with two banks of oars (6)
14 Greet ex-President Reagan familiarly as he rides a perissodactyl (5)
15 Break a leg and you'll need one (10)
16 Fur winders found on windy beaches (10)
20 Iver trembled in the shed (8)
21 Reality show I missed whilst studying estate agency in the US (6)
24 Severe effort made to avoid rocks (4)
25 Lacking strength (4)
26 In which to roast the Sunday joint (4)

Solution on Page 51

An Irish Saga

Society member Andrew Shortridge has been off on his travels again. After exploring Scotland, he was lured to Ireland ...

Two to three years ago there was an article in a waterways magazine about Ireland. Before that I had never considered Ireland because I knew little about its waterways. This article was my first introduction to the Barrow Navigation, which is remarkable both for its scenery and its long unguarded weirs. Nothing more happened until after the Scotland trip (July 2002, accounted in Pennine Link Issues 143 & 144). That had really given me the taste for exploring.



I started planning around November 2002. The plan was to go the last two weeks in March.

My girlfriend, Anne, yet again declined the opportunity of boating in Ireland but both my Mum (who had come to Scotland) and my aunt Betty (a narrowboat owner who had introduced me to boating) were interested. It would have to be a two-week trip.

The plan was to start as far South on the Barrow Navigation as possible, head North to the Grand Canal at Robertstown. Here we would turn West to The Shannon Navigation and then head north to either Athlone or Carrick-on-Shannon where public transport could get us back to the car and trailer.

Saturday 15th March we set off at 8am for Hollyhead. We had to be there for the 1430 sailing to Dublin (1830), and then headed to Graigueamanagh. Here we met Gerry Barron for the first time. He was the local Waterways Ireland man. I had been given his name by Hugh Fanning, the engineer in charge of the Barrow Navigation. He met us outside the Anchor Inn in the village and we followed him up to his house where we could park the boat and trailer overnight. (Would BW employees, or many others, do that?) We then returned to the pub for a drink and an early night.

Breakfast the following morning was in the main bar, which was filled with pictures of barges using the Barrow Navigation. Afterwards we arranged with Gerry that we would head downstream to St Mullins first. This meant that

we would meet the lockkeeper at Graiguemanagh lock at 2pm. That should be plenty of time to launch the boat, load the boat and fit the heater. There is a good hard-core slip at Graiguemanagh that runs parallel to the quayside bank of the river.

Starting off, we edged slowly towards the arched bridge in the centre of Graiguemanagh. We moved towards the left of the bridge as we knew to aim between the arches painted black on the right and red on the left. (Throughout the Barrow Navigation the bridges are all marked black and red to outline which arch to sail through. Black is on the left going downstream and red is on the left going upstream). The Barrow is full of long unguarded weirs that run along the side of the navigation. The one at Graiguemanagh must have been about 150 yards long and yet the width of the cut no more than 50 feet. There was a steady current but it was by no means fast, and indeed regular cruisers told me that the flow was fairly low for that time of year.

In Ireland there is a different approach to locks. When you leave a lock you leave the lock gates open and the paddles up. This makes it a lot easier for boaters,

especially single-handed boaters. The downside is that none of the chambers have ladders. This made things more difficult, as you cannot fulfil both the role of steerer and lock operator.

When doing a river navigation I generally prefer going upstream, at least the first time that I traverse a navigation. The logic of this is that you cannot go up weirs, and with the Barrow being renowned for its unguarded weirs I was especially nervous. Keeping close to the towpath side, we sailed slowly downstream, we came to the first issue, there was a small inlet to the left. Did we take that or did we take the wider course and go straight on. Unlike England there are no signs to give directions. The map implied we should take the narrow inlet and looking down it we thought we could just make out the lock in the distance. The guide book is an absolute must for the Barrow Navigation (and The Shannon for its Loughs).

At St Mullins we moored up for about half an hour. Below the lock here the river is tidal and the scenery truly stunning.

Returning to Graiguemanagh by 6pm we finished our preparations and the following morning headed off upstream.



We were blessed with good weather, as we were for the whole of the two weeks, and the scenery at the southern end of the Barrow is absolutely stunning.

The first lock is Ballykennan, a double lock (staircase lock). Betty was steering so I got off to work the lock. Betty was having more difficulty than expected in controlling the boat at slow speed. There wasn't much wind but what there was made steering difficult and the current did not help either. Betty approached the lock too quickly. I had only opened the one gate and in trying to get in she hit the side of the lock very hard. After this she decided that she was not going to steer into the locks. This meant that for the next two days I steered into every lock and Betty operated the locks; not a mean feat as the lock gates were difficult to operate.

So, at the next lock, I was steering the boat. I stayed on the boat whilst Betty went to get the lock ready. Looking out at the back I realised that we had a serious problem. The engine was leaking oil very badly. Having navigated the lock and tied up, the source was located and a phone call was made to the Marina that had serviced the engine. Speaking to the engineer, the problem was diagnosed as a faulty 'O' - ring on the fuel pump. That was the easy bit. The hard bit was to get it fixed. It was agreed we would proceed to a boat yard upstream, who would have an 'O' - ring mailed to them. Luckily we had a litre can of engine oil on the boat and plenty of kitchen towel and toilet roll to wrap around the source of the leak to stem the flow of oil into the river. And so we kept going, more slowly, and

checking the oil level regularly. Also going through our supply of toilet roll etc. like there was no tomorrow.

We continued upstream for the rest of the day, stopping to fill up with water at Goresbridge.

Anyone cruising Ireland should be prepared that very few of the water-points have the screw-tap fitting. Have with you one of what I regard as the old style fitting secured by jubilee clip. Up to now we had kept to the right hand bank of the river but to get to the facilities we had to cross to the left to go around a small island to get to the landing stage. Having filled up with water, it is essential that you do not just cruise across the river to get back to the right hand bank. You must go back downstream and around this island.

As 6pm approached, we decided to moor above Fenniscourt lock as the next lock was in Baginbstown and we had been advised against mooring there. However, having



All secure for the night



Lock-keeper's cottage restoration



gone through the lock it was clear that the moorings were hardly suitable. We would be moored up alongside two barges, very near to a long open weir (just above us) and by a derelict building. Moving

upstream, we choose a spot, pointing upstream and using a convenient tree and mooring stake to securely tie up, were confident of not coming adrift. We noticed that the temperature really drops with the last half hour of daylight and the heater was to prove its worth.

We set off the following morning soon after 9am. Through the bleak Muine Bheag Lock. This was in a fairly derelict area and we were fairly happy that we had taken the advice and not moored there. As we moved away from the town centre the scenery soon perked up. The Barrow Navigation proved to be a very scenic waterway tempered by being distracted by

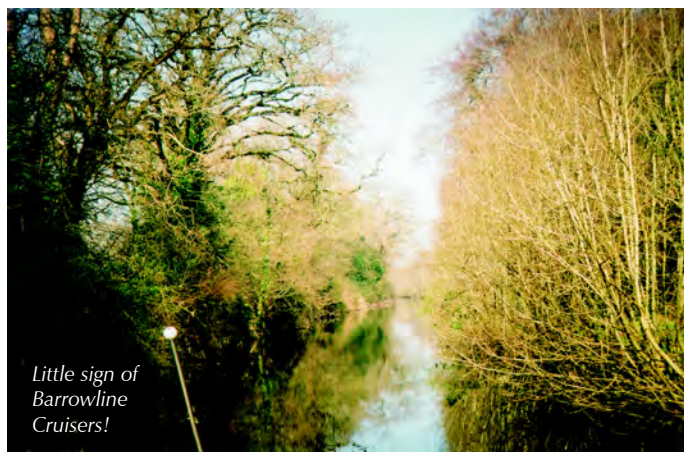
concerns over the engine. Above Leighlinridge, we had to cross to the other side of the navigation and were slowed when we reached a "strong current" area. When we got to Rathvindon Lock we came across some builders restoring a lock-keepers cottage that was to be rented out to tourists.

Milford lock was the next. This was quite large and was followed after about fifty yards by a foot swing-bridge. The footbridge took walkers into the public gardens on Milford House. For us it was memorable for it being nearly impossible to shift. It took three of us to get it moving, myself and two unsuspecting members of the public who were passing. Once moving there was no problems, either opening or closing. The joys of being one of the first boaters of the year.

The next lock was Clogreggan. This was the lock before Barrowline Cruisers where we were to get the engine repaired. The young children who lived in the lock-keeper's cottage helped us through and we moved forward keeping an eye out for the boatyard. We edged through the navigable cut and saw nothing and by the time we re-emerged onto the river we had not seen anything. A quick phone call to England to get details of the boatyard confirmed that they had moved. They were no longer on the Barrow Navigation but a good day's cruise away at Vicarstown on the Barrowline of the Grand Canal.

We had to go on further with a very sickly engine and the oil in the 1 litre can was running short, as was the loo roll and kitchen roll!

TO BE CONTINUED ...



*Little sign of
Barrowline
Cruisers!*

What Made Trimble Tremble?

An article in the Mail on Sunday in October told the story of Northern Ireland's former first minister, David Trimble MP, finding his way onto the Huddersfield Narrow Canal - although the canal is only described as *"another route to the waterways of Rochdale"*!

Briefly, according to the article, Mr. Trimble, his wife and four children took to the waters in a hire boat, intending to sail down the Rochdale Canal to Manchester. However, they were seriously put off by reports that *"a 6.5 mile stretch of canal through inner city Manchester is a byword for mayhem among narrowboat enthusiasts"*. A marina operator in Salford, who should have known better, confirmed that anyone taking narrowboats on the Ashton Canal is advised to travel in convoy, avoiding stopping and setting off early to be through the 18 locks and away before nightfall. She added, *"Children try to board boats to steal or drop bricks from bridges. In the canal world this stretch is notorious"*. Talk about rotten P.R!

British Waterways tried to calm the somewhat troubled waters by saying *"I wouldn't want to overemphasise the problem and major improvements have been made, including spending £15,000 a year on a CCTV system. We certainly don't want to see the Ashton Canal become a no-go area"*.

The article was so full of mistakes I thought of compiling a Christmas "Spot the Errors" quiz for the amusement of members but to summarise:-

1. The Ashton Canal does not *"link the city centre to the start of the Rochdale Canal"* rather the other way round.
2. None of the canals goes anywhere near Moss Side.
3. We don't have *"barges"* on our canal.
4. There aren't *"alternative routes without going through the middle of Manchester"*. There are alternative routes to going through the Miles Platting suburb.

5. Most of the Commonwealth Games improvements were done on the Ashton Canal, not the Rochdale.

It appears that Mr. Trimble had intended to do the South Pennine Ring but was unable to get beyond the Rochdale summit because of a fully booked convoy system. He opted for the *"safer"* trip of doing the Huddersfield Narrow in both directions, retracing his steps to the Huddersfield Broad Canal.

Mr. Trimble and party never got near the Ashton Canal, turning round in Mossley, having come down the Narrow Canal from Huddersfield. They were spotted on the way down by my eagle-eyed friend Norman, near Mann's Wharf in Greenfield, and told him they were going back the same way, the two boys intending to walk over the moor to Marsden, hoping to beat the boat coming through the tunnel.

They made the return trip through the tunnel with another friend of mine, Herbert, and chatted about their lovely holiday. And the boys did beat the boat and, to quote Mr. Trimble in an explanatory letter *"greeted us well refreshed from their lunch at the excellent tunnel end hostelry"*.

Some boaters insist that they lost a day's cruising, being held up by British Waterways because *"Mr. Trimble is coming through"*. The delay was, in fact, due to the tunnel tug breaking down, boaters in both directions losing a day, and causing some hectic sailing to get the Trimble party back to Shepley Bridge Marina in time for their handover.

Perhaps we should make Mr. Trimble an honorary member of the *"74 Club"*; though how well 125g of Jiffy bag would be received at the House is debatable. Or doesn't covering not quite the full length twice count?

Ken Wright

Review - Pennine Pioneer *by Keith Gibson*

Ken Wright reviews yet another book by our very own Keith Gibson, published in soft back by Tempus Publishing Ltd.

It is two years ago since I reviewed "Pennine Dreams", Keith's book about the history and restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal. This time his subject is the Rochdale Canal and, whilst I waxed pretty lyrical on the earlier volume, I couldn't tackle this one with quite the same enthusiasm - or interest (*I wasn't mentioned in it, for starters!*)

How wrong I was. The Rochdale's tale is equally as fascinating as the Huddersfield's. Alright, they haven't a tunnel of any calibre to boast about nor is the top pound the longest, highest, deepest etc., but they do have the privilege of being the first and most successful of the trans-Pennine canals. And they do have a fascinating history of events, which Keith Gibson has drawn together in this thoroughly readable book.

The layout is very similar to the earlier work: history, problems and solutions all clearly laid out, meticulously researched and notated and accompanied by no less than 111 photographs and illustrations. And at 192 pages there is a lot to go at.

The book is not laid out in such a structured form as the earlier one but in ten chapters which, crazy though it may sound, are all titled from songs or films sung or made by the Rochdale skylark, Gracie Fields. As Keith says *"they do have a relevance to the themes of the chapters"*, but I think he was stretching it a little to title one chapter "The Biggest Aspidistra in the World"! But being Rochdale-born myself, I thought it was a fitting tribute.

The importance of the Rochdale Canal Society in the whole restoration process (formed in June 1974 the Rochdale Society is like the younger of twins with our own Society - formed in April 1974) is adequately

covered and, in a lot of respects, the whole story is similar to the Huddersfield Narrow's. During the Millennium bid period there was almost a race to keep in front and we made it first, largely because we didn't have the complication of a private owner. The place of the Rochdale Canal Company in their equation was at times thought to present an insurmountable problem, but one which was eventually solved by the intervention of British Waterways and the Waterways Trust. The financial complications were enormous but were overcome in time.

All this sounds pretty uninteresting but, in Keith's hands, it becomes a fascinating journey through a bureaucratic nightmare!

There is only one appendix in this volume, entitled "Restoring the Canal" which lists obstructions and notes on who carried out construction work, and when. This is a very useful archive and the result of exhaustive research. Keith acknowledges assistance from a whole pageful of people - writing the acknowledgement itself must have been a daunting task!

And once again, this book is about people. Dozens of them come to life in the pages - generally with a common aim, to open the canal to through traffic. Surprisingly, though, only about half the number similarly recorded in the Huddersfield Narrow book. But who's counting?

As I did before, I will end with a short quotation from the book, which illustrates Keith Gibson's easy, readable style.

"It truly is astounding that so much change can come from one simple idea - that the canal could be brought back to life - and that all of this should have developed from the ideas of a few people who the rest of the world thought were well-meaning, but misguided cranks".

Ken Wright

Join The Club

The Society has commissioned a plaque to acknowledge boaters who have 'done' the Narrow. Cast in brass with a Royal Blue infill, the plaques are available by application from the Society office.

Transit of the Standedge Tunnel is accepted as proof of navigation. Simply contact the Society on 0161 339 1332 or Email (hcs@hcanals.demon.co.uk) to request an application form.

The plaque is available at £5.00 for members, £8.00 for non-members and £4.00 for non-members who join the Canal Society at the time of applying. Postage & packing is £1.00 per plaque.

Initially, the plaque offer was promoted in the November edition of Waterways World and so far, the following intrepid navigators have 'joined the club':

Patrick & Pat Stow*	SCHERZO
Barry & Ann Parkes	LORD NELSON
Nigel Paton	FREE SPIRIT
Ian & Sue West*	ON REFLECTION
Rodney Evans	SCYTHIA
Sandra Silvester*	BLISS
J Eric Wood*	CREDAL WOOD
M Adlington	BOLT HOLE
Harold Wainwright	PRIMROSE
Peter Robinson	GRAFTON
Mrs P Gaskill	SWALLOW
John Lower	MADELEY WOOD
John Webb	CORNWALL
Peter & Karen Freack	CEASEFIRING
R Cooper	SNOW GOOSE
D & M James	CALMORE CHERVIL II

* also joined the Canal Society

The application form also has provision for boaters to comment on their experiences navigating the Narrow, both good and bad. The information will be



considered by the Society and passed on to British Waterways, so that together we can work to maintain the Narrow to a high cruising standard.

To date, praise for the helpfulness of BW staff and the sheer spectacular scenery of the Narrow have out-weighed the problems. Predictably, for such an 'impossible' restoration, heavy going paddle gear, low pounds and significant blind spots at Bates and Sellers have all featured in the 'could do better' reports. A number of trips have inspired articles published in other journals.

Bob Gough

BEQUEST

The Society is very grateful to the Estate of the late Keith St John Lamb for a generous bequest of A\$1000. Our sympathy goes out to his family with our appreciation for his support over the years as a long-standing Society member.

The Back Page

HUDDERSFIELD CANAL SOCIETY welcomes the following new members

- 2699 Mr & Mrs Stephen & Grace Taylor, [REDACTED]
 2700 Mrs Agathe Pettit, [REDACTED]
 2701 Mr Robin Bissell, [REDACTED]
 2702 Mr Patrick Stow, [REDACTED]
 2703 Mrs Sandra Silvester, [REDACTED]
 2704 Mr & Mrs Ian & Sue West, [REDACTED]
 2705 Mr J Eric Wood, [REDACTED]
 2706 Mr Nigel R R Paton, [REDACTED]

MEMBERSHIP RATES

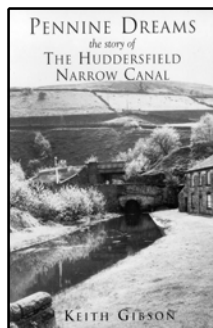
Individual	£9.00
Family	£11.00
Life	£90.00
Associate	£15.00
Corporate	£150.00

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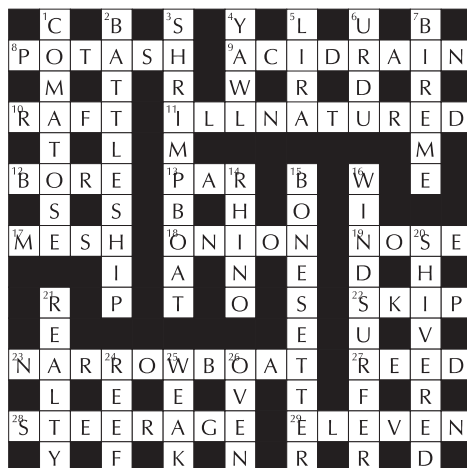
PENNINE DREAMS THE STORY OF THE HUDDERSFIELD NARROW CANAL

with Gibson

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