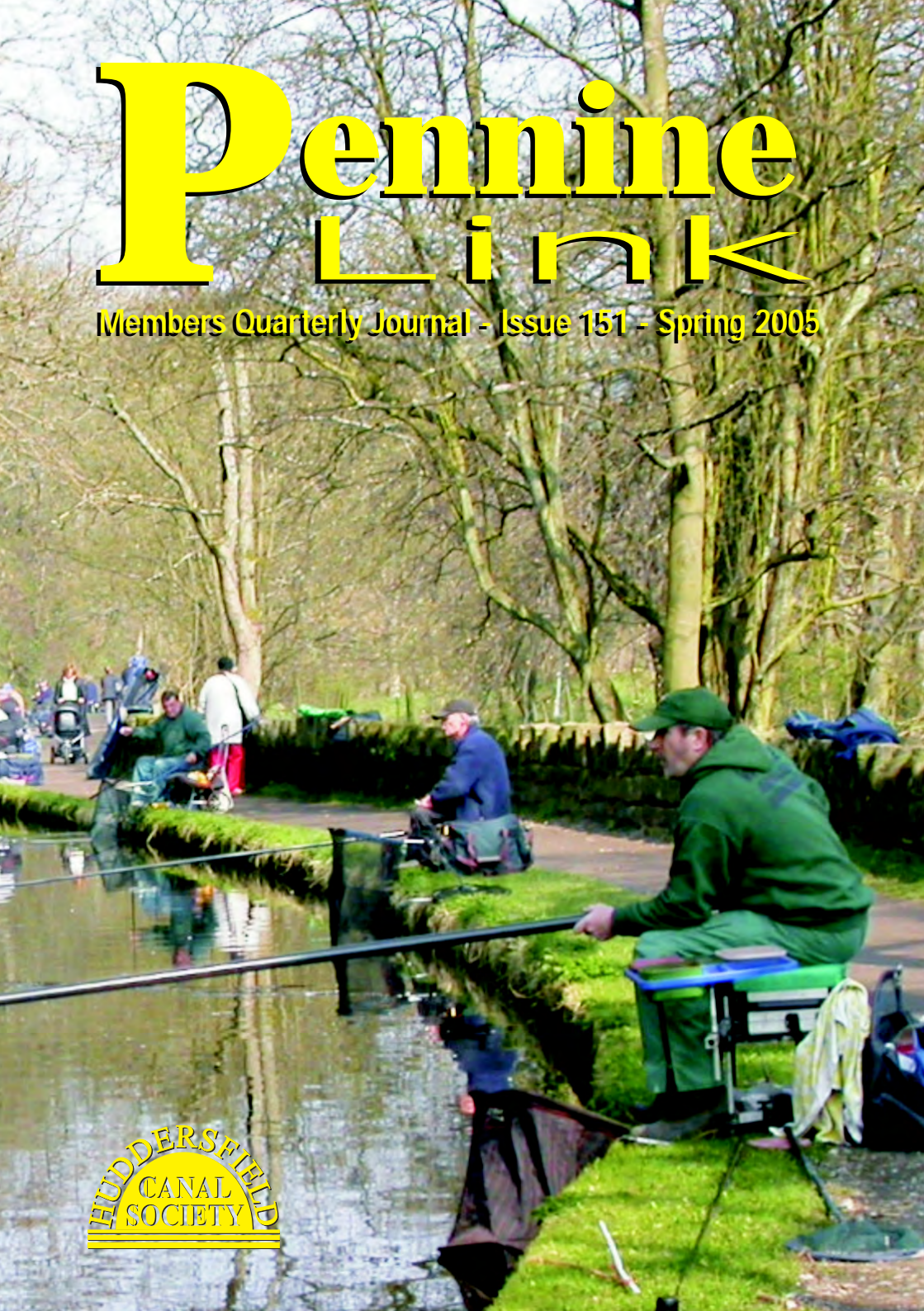


Pennine Link

Members Quarterly Journal - Issue 151 - Spring 2005



HUDDERSFIELD
CANAL
SOCIETY

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

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

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
Council Member Tel: 01257 265786

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

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

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

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

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

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Pennine *Link*

Spring 2005 Issue 151

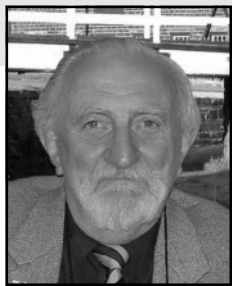
An impressive gathering at Bugsworth Basin



Pam Romanski

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Cover: A fishing match and walkers along 'Saddleworth Promenade' - the Narrow Canal towpath, Uppermill. Photo: R Gough



Editorial

I was rather disturbed to see in the 2005 Waterways World Annual ("frank and fearless" gazetteer section)

a criticism of the Canal that made the comment that from Standedge to Ashton was downhill both literally and metaphorically.

We know that we do not live in a picture postcard environment. This was the area where the British Empire produced the goods that went to every part of the civilised world. The effect of man on the local ecology is sometimes harsh, but it is always interesting and indeed inspiring.

The Canal was built to supply industry and further industry came because of the easy transport brought by the canal and later on the railway. It runs through a landscape settled since prehistoric times and shows the scars and relics of all these occupations.

For anyone with half an eye, the history of this country and the lives of its inhabitants can be seen and understood from observing the environs of the canal. It has architecture from 17th Century Weavers cottages in Saddleworth to 21st Century redevelopment in the centre of Stalybridge. It has some of the most desirable housing in the North West and has the Tourist attractions of Uppermill. There are decent eating places and even a pub that brews its own beer.

Frankly for anyone to dismiss the Tame valley as not worthy of notice shows that

this is a person without soul or sense of place and time. The fact that the picture illustrating the article was of the Broad Canal is indicative of the attitude!

Please note as an Editor I know that the Editors of Waterways World do not necessarily agree with the opinions of their contributors, so I absolve them of any blame! But I would like the writer of this article to come and spend a longer look at the area and let us change his/her mind.

Nice to be at the reopening of Bugsworth Basin. Let's hope that this time it is for good. A tremendous amount of work has gone into the restoration of the Basin and all its Arms and the result is well worth the trip. (The fact that the Navigation Inn also sells decent beer and good food is purely coincidental!) Almost 100 boats made the effort to get there and although the weather was unkind, it seems to have been a fun weekend for all concerned.

The Council have invited a representative from BW in the North West to be the speaker at the AGM. This will be a chance for all members to hear what are the plans for our Canal by the owners and to put questions about matters that are troubling you. This has not been confirmed at the time of writing - press dates are always at the wrong time - but hopefully it will be a very informative evening. The meeting will finish with the traditional Beef Butty that the Band Club specialise in and I for one, am looking forward to getting my teeth into one!

Brian Minor



Chairman's Annual Report

Your Society has enjoyed a successful year with membership levels maintained and a healthy balance sheet allowing us scope

for continuing development.

Council has met on a bi-monthly basis throughout the year. We were sorry to lose Alan Knott, West Side Boats Organiser, who resigned as a director in September and we record our thanks to him for his significant contribution. Eric Crossland, volunteer co-ordinator and David Stubbs, East Side Boats Organiser, were elected on to Council at the Society's AGM in June.

The sale of our offices in Ashton under Lyne was finalised in October and we retain the use of the ground floor offices on a nominal rental basis for up to three years.

Our full time Administrator, Dr Bob Gough, maintains a good communications network with members and associated organisations. Council has agreed to supplement our professional staff with the addition of a part-time Marketing Officer during 2005. This appointment is intended to increase our investment in promotional schemes including web site maintenance, trading opportunities and commercial links with canal-related retail outlets.

Our search for suitable canal-side office accommodation continues and we are currently investigating two potential sites in liaison with British Waterways' local management.

Your Society has been represented at canal festivals throughout the region and

beyond. Council member Keith Gibson continues as Chairman of Northern Canals, which organises excellent meetings at diverse canal-related venues.

Local Society members lend support to the fledgling Hollinwood Canal Society which is also receiving positive input from Oldham MBC.

There has been increased contact with Tameside MBC who are considering sponsoring our photographic competition and extending it by creating a non-members' category. In addition, Tameside's initiative has led to cooperation in jointly promoting the canal by Oldham and Kirklees publicity managers and we look forward to formalising these relationships during 2005.

Your Council recognises the importance of promoting the Huddersfield canals by every possible means and the addition of our Marketing Officer plus renewed enthusiasm by key personnel within the three relevant local authorities, will make a major contribution to maximising our exposure to present and potential waterways enthusiasts.

Members of the boating community regularly inform us of conditions along the Huddersfield and we are in regular touch with British Waterways regarding issues that we are jointly capable of resolving.

I wish to thank all our members for continuing to support us and to your directors and staff who have assiduously carried out the company's policies and complied with its increasingly onerous legal responsibilities.

Neville Kenyon
February 2005



HCS Council News

There have been two meetings of Council since the last edition of Pennine Link. Society reps. also attend quite a few other meetings, for

British Waterways User Groups (East and West), Oldham Council's Canal Regeneration Group, Colne Valley Regeneration Group, Inland Waterways Restoration Committee, Standedge Visitor Centre Advisory Group - and so on! We try to keep in touch.

19th January, 2005

We are still trying to raise interest in a back-pumping scheme at Marsden.

A trial cycle route is being introduced in the lower Colne Valley - Colne Valley Greenway. Some concern about this and monitoring conflicts effectively.

The post of marketing officer had been advertised and several enquiries have been made.

The future of Standedge Visitor Centre was discussed (yet again!) following some suggestion of converting the warehouse into a bunkhouse! More later.

Chairman of BW (Robin Evans) had gone to press on the value of volunteers. Trevor Ellis intended to take him up on the lack of such feeling on OUR canal.

Proposals for upgrading Diggle tunnel portal were progressing well. Request for shelter for waiting boaters/passengers and surfacing towpath to prevent grit transferring to boats from protective rubber sheets. (If you don't understand

that note you need to see a tunnel 'convoy' draped in black rubber!)

David Sumner MBE, our President, has offered to donate a President's Cup, as an incentive to young members. A first job for the new marketing officer!

The architects who did such a terrific job on the transshipment warehouse have offered to do a check on its suitability as an office for us.

Tameside Council would like to share our photo competition with us, making it wider ranging and more attractive - watch this space.

Election to the Council was discussed at length. Decided to give election process more prominence to encourage nominations from members.

Attendance at several rallies was approved as was the offer from a member to revamp the Society's display boards.

Volunteer work was largely confined to painting bridge plates, all of which are to be fixed by BW. There are "listed bridge" problems on the East side.

Volunteers also continuing with lock painting and scrub clearance, although Canada Geese were doing some of the clearance work for them!

A press release has been issued for the '74 Club' plaque to canal and local press.

A Society calendar incorporating "before" and "after" views is proposed.

We are hiring a trip boat (Astra) to take to the Bugsworth Basin re-opening at Easter (and possibly the IWA National Festival at

Preston Brook) as our own trip boat is needed at Marsden.

We are negotiating with Oldham Council to assist with training on their Rochdale Canal boat. In exchange we get to train our crews on their boat.

BW improvements to the East side, East Side User Group and progress on Colne Valley Regeneration were reported and the Marsden back-pumping is to be raised at the next User Group.

Keith Noble is to prepare a paper on the future of boating through Standedge Tunnel - self powered that is.

16th March, 2005

Alwyn Ogborn has organised a display at Bugsworth to go with the boat at Easter. Trevor Ellis has had a reply from BW about the value of volunteers. Not very forthcoming. Still concerned about the Colne Valley cycle route (Greenway experiment).

A marketing officer has been appointed, Society member Patricia Bayley, who has already helped by volunteering to upgrade our display boards.

New premises were discussed. Proposals for Standedge were not very promising. Decided preference was the Transhipment Warehouse at Wool Road, Dobcross. Architects should complete a feasibility study soon after Easter.

It was agreed that Keith Sykes should be co-opted onto Council, subject to his willingness to stand, in view of all the work he was putting in for the Society, on the East side.

The Annual Accounts were presented and approved. Moved Keith Noble, seconded Alwyn Ogborn. Our successful

year was due to sale of premises, Millennium Commission payback and tax refunds.

Reports on balance beam graffiti on East side, photo competition prizes, Greenway meeting, proposed Huddersfield boat gathering.

The AGM will be held at Delph Band Club again Thursday 9th June.

Volunteers were painting railings at Diggle (Shaw's Pallets). West Side bridge plates gone to BW for erection. No progress on East side.

Boat and stall still on for Bugsworth re-opening. New display boards will be ready. Volunteers required for manning stall. Booked in for IWA National at Preston Brook. More volunteers needed! General progress on promotions, merchandise, '74 Club', banners, etc.

The 'Oldham Group' has been busy. Everything now in place to proceed with new gates and landscaping at Diggle tunnel portal, waymarking to be renewed on full Oldham length (Diggle to Division Bridge), street signs where canal crosses. HCS logo would be incorporated into timber waymarkers.

We are to investigate the Queen's Award for Voluntary effort.

A proposal to have Society "lengthsmen" checking and reporting on the canal is to be co-ordinated over the full length of the canal.

Keith Noble's paper on self-powered access to Standedge Tunnel was presented for consideration.

Ken Wright



Disconnected Jottings

The regular round-up of restoration news from the rest of the waterway network was interrupted by last issue's item on the ECTOEC report of

the early benefits from restoring the Huddersfield Narrow and Rochdale Canals, but there is no huge backlog of news items. Not only has the pace of finding the money for projects slowed dramatically since the completion of the Millennium Commission funded schemes but there are not many schemes out there that are in a position where huge sums of money would be of immediate benefit. There are plenty of people promoting restoration schemes almost across the country, some supported by restoration trusts or societies with far more members than HCS ever had, and some that have made giant steps towards completion of restoration but, almost without fail, they all have key bridges to cross before the next stages of large-scale work can begin.

Consultants' reports were crucial in the restoration of our canal and important reports are expected soon for three nearby waterways. By the time you read this, the Chesterfield Canal Partnership may have received the final report on the options and the best route for re-creating the canal through Killamarsh where the original line is blocked by thirty houses. The success or failure of the restoration of the canal between the recently restored section and Chesterfield is very dependant on a successful outcome to this report and its acceptance by the people of Killamarsh. Then the local authorities along the line of the Barnsley and Dearne & Dove Canals have joined with the Royston & Carlton Community Partnership, the Barnsley, Dearne & Dove Canals Trust and the IWA to commission an initial feasibility study of the restoration of the canals. At last, this study could lead to progress on this long-awaited

restoration. Finally, the Friends of the Cromford Canal have appointed consultants Black & Veitch to look at the ecology of the canal between Ironville and Langley Mill to follow earlier initial engineering studies carried out on the canal. Even relatively new schemes like this now seem to believe that the consultant route is the one to follow instead of beginning with volunteer restoration schemes as was the way earlier schemes such as ours began. This particular report is very important if the Cromford Canal is to be restored along, or close to, its original alignment, however, because a significant part of the route is owned by a wildlife trust that will have to be persuaded of the benefits before allowing work on the canal.

After successful feasibility studies, the next step for some projects, where a great deal of new construction is required, or to obtain approval for navigation, is to make an application for an order authorising that under the Transport & Works Act. This procedure was introduced in order to simplify the means of obtaining approval; you may remember that when we were at the stage of seeking authority for navigation on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal we had to go through the immensely complex business of promoting an Act of Parliament. The first scheme to go through the Transport & Works Act procedure is the restoration of the Ashby Canal between Snarestone and Measham where an order is being promoted by Leicestershire County Council. The public inquiry into this was held towards the end of last year and, with hardly any objections after the extensive consultations and negotiations carried out prior to the submission of the order, I expect to see the order being approved in due course.

Consultants' reports and the Transport & Works Act business are but steps on the way to restoration. A couple of major projects have made significant progress in what you may see as the next step on the way, that is

gaining the money to carry out the work. The Heritage Lottery Fund has granted Stage I approval for £11.3m towards restoration of the Cotswold Canals between Stonehouse and Brimscombe Port. No doubt, British Waterways and their partners, the local authorities and the Cotswold Canals Trust are busy putting together the vast amount of information required before the Lottery Fund gives the crucial Stage II approval. That second stage has been successfully passed further north where the Heritage Lottery Fund has announced Stage II approval of £4.6m towards restoration of the Droitwich and the Droitwich Junction Canals. With a further £2m having been committed by the District and County Councils all that is needed before work commences on site is the final approval of the grant from the regional development agency, Advantage West Midlands.

A piece of immensely good news for the waterways movement is the decision of the Government that the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council (IWAAC) will continue in a modified form. The new Council will lose the word Amenity from its title to reflect a wider remit extending to offering advice to government on all waterways rather than just those under the jurisdiction of British Waterways. The new Council will also report directly to government rather than be financed and administered through British Waterways. The present IWAAC is consulting restoration projects nationally on the second review of its influential review of restoration priorities.

Perhaps the saddest news was that, after months of study and consultation, Warwickshire County Council has decided not to support the restoration of the upper reaches of the river Avon as a navigable waterway between Stratford and Warwick. There is no doubt that, despite the lower parts of the river Avon being pioneer waterway restorations, river navigation schemes are considerably harder to get under way than the restoration of man-made waterways. The strength of the opposition to the introduction of boating amongst those

interested in the natural environment, from riparian owners and from fishing interests is immensely difficult to overcome. There may be a glimmer of hope here in that, after the failure of the attempt to persuade the County Council to support navigation, a Stratford & Warwick Waterways Trust is being formed to bring together those seeking to promote navigation. From our viewpoint, having achieved a navigable canal, this may strike you as rather like closing the stable door after the horse has bolted but it is very easy to criticise without the benefit of local knowledge.

Finally, I was pleased to see the success of two local projects in this year's Waterways Renaissance Awards, promoted by BURA (the British Urban Regeneration Association) and The Waterways Trust.

The Education & Learning Award was won by The Canals Then & Now project based at Portland Basin Museum. This involves senior primary school pupils undertaking a day of activities in the museum and on the canal. The judging panel said that 'the feedback from children and teachers illustrates the value of the experience and the lessons learnt which were almost subliminal.'

The Historic Environment Award was won by the repair and refurbishment of the two long-underused and semi-derelict listed warehouses at Sowerby Bridge Basin. The warehouses now feature office, retail and restraints space plus workshops and this was done whilst allowing Shire Cruisers to continue their use of the wet dock within one of the warehouses. The judging panel commented on the 'evidence of innovation in the design solution in order to present the buildings in their best historical light and also evidence of a lot of care and thought' in the scheme. The architects were Architecture & Design Partnership from Holmfirth who you may remember acted for us when we converted the Transshipment Warehouse to a meeting facility and for British Waterways at Tunnel End.

Keith Gibson



HCS at Bugsworth Basin

What a busy Easter! The Society was asked to attend the reopening of Bugsworth Basin for the four days of

the Rally and we also had to continue our commitments at Marsden.

I decided that with all the changes at Marsden we could not afford to be absent from there and it was therefore necessary to hire Astra, which you may recall had, in past years, done duty at Tunnel End.

The Astra was made ready for us at Portland Basin by its owner Ed Mortimer and a crew arrived at the boatyard for moving the boat up the Peak Forest Canal and Marple Locks to Bugsworth. It was then that the fun and games started. The starter motor had stuck!

After several attempts to sort the problem, Geoff Lane and I, with the rest of the crew, drove up to Bugsworth to report to the organisers. It was then that we discovered that they were relying heavily on the boat to carry VIP's and that this therefore caused a serious problem. Andy Beck who with his son had already cycled from Bugsworth to Portland Basin, offered to have a another go at sorting the problem. We waited.

Nearly two hours later my mobile rang 'We have sorted it' said Andy 'Listen ...' and sure enough Astra's engine was running!

In view of the situation at Bugsworth we decided to 'go for it' and Andy and son set sail. Apparently a lump hammer on the starter motor had sorted it out and with the help of a battery and jump leads from the boat next door they were on their way.

We were now some three hours behind schedule and as it was vital that we helped them up the 16 Marple locks Geoff drove us all over the place to get us to the bottom lock, including reversing for about half a mile up a very narrow lane.

While waiting at the locks, Geoff, Ronnie Rose and I took the opportunity to help other boats up the flight and eventually Astra arrived. Andy and son by now were a bit tired so we took over and let them cycle back to Ashton again! The transit up the locks was uneventful but as it was getting late we left the boat by the Junction at the top. Andy and his wife finished the journey on Good Friday and also did some trips as planned.

The event was a success and we had our new display boards on site for all to view. Thanks to Alwyn Ogborn for organising this and to Trish Bayley for doing the new display.

A grand turn-out of 96 boats



Back to her roots; the horseboat 'Maria'



Dear Editor,

Having just attended the re-opening festival at Bugsworth Basin over the Easter weekend, I would like to express my appreciation to the HCS volunteers who made a valuable contribution to the outstanding success of the event after many painstaking years of restoration and hole-plugging to prevent constant leakage.

Special thanks must go to Alwyn Ogborn and team who endured very chilly High Peak winds as they loyally manned the HCS display tent located centrally amongst this classified Ancient Monument. Credit must also be given to David Stubbs for organising so many volunteers to crew the Astra trip boat bearing in mind the Marsden Shuttle was also manned over the same weekend at Tunnel End.

The HCS Boat Crew members really flew the flag by proudly wearing their HCS sweatshirts; it was just so good to see their distinctive presence, bearing in mind that many of them had trekked all the way from over Huddersfield way! Above all, the trips couldn't have taken place without the commitment of some crew to take the boat all the way from Ashton to Bugsworth via Marple locks and likewise return it afterwards.

Whilst I appreciate that much good work is done by HCS behind the scenes, it was great to see such enthusiastic commitment to the cause of helping the wider public enjoy the tranquility of yet another re-opened stretch of beautiful canal.

Allan Knott
Dukinfield

A bit of sunshine would have helped but we did the Society proud and they certainly knew we were there!

The boat was returned more or less uneventfully on the Tuesday of Easter week.

What about the crews at Marsden? Well the whole system has changed following the closure of the Standedge Visitors Centre. Activity is now based on the cottages by the Tunnel entrance and BW are still running short tunnel trips into the Tunnel. We now take the boat right through to the trip boat landing stage rather than

dropping passengers by the Centre. It does seem to be working! Thanks to all the crew for their hard work and especially to Andy Beck and Geoff Lane for the extra devotion to duty. Andy and his son should now be very fit after all that cycling!

We are always keen to hear from members who would like to crew the boats, either at Marsden or Portland Basin in Ashton. Full training will be given. Please contact me on 01484 667135 or leave your details with the Society Office, 0161 339 1332

David Stubbs

Tom Levitt, MP official opening amid press frenzy

'Astra' crewed by HCS's Moira Wilson & Andy Beck



Photos: Pam Romanski



East Side Improvements - 2004/5

In the Autumn 2001 issue of Pennine Link, I wrote *"The Race for Slaithwaite"* reporting on John Sully's Shire Cruiser "Leicester"

and Sue Day's horse boat "Maria" as they travelled towards each other in opposite directions along the 'East side' of the Huddersfield Narrow to meet in Slaithwaite three days after the grand re-opening in May 2001.

Both were held up by lock gates refusing to open, pounds running dry or simply low water levels revealing obstructions on the canal bed. Such water shortages were being caused not so much by a lack of water but by it running away through ill fitting lock gates leaving too much water in some areas and not enough in other places where it mattered.

As the year wore on, the joy of seeing boats crossing the Pennines through my own village of Slaithwaite, was tempered by the frustration of boaters who thought 7 miles and 42 locks should take them two days where in fact at least three or four was the norm.

British Waterways, from their base on the 'West side', near Stalybridge did what they could, but it did not help John on his second day when at Linthwaite, to get the lock in front of him cleared, all they had to do was bring a workboat down two locks, but first they had to go back to Stalybridge for the boat key!

And so it went on through into 2002 with what could be described as 'fire brigade' maintenance, sorting out problems as they arose; but not the root causes. Although it

must be said they did get over 300 boats through that year, many to and from the IWA National Festival site on the Huddersfield Broad.

In October 2003 my hopes were raised when BW changed their boundaries and the whole of the East side of the Huddersfield Narrow, plus the Tunnel and top pound to its crossing Diggle Brook, was transferred to BW's Yorkshire Region.

I had seen the improvements already carried out by that Region to the Huddersfield Broad especially in the approach to the IWA National Festival in 2002. The prospect seemed good.

As 2004 progressed subtle changes were taking place, improvements appeared in previous trouble spots - Lock 12E became a pleasure to use - no more regular complaints of low water in the Milnsbridge pounds. The four days from Aspley to Marsden was becoming a regular three and towards the end of the year some were even doing it in two!

I also noticed a BW engineer taking careful notes at the locks and being noseey I found he was conducting a 'Ten Year' inspection. In July 2004 BW Yorkshire Region's inspection narrow boat *Ward Audlem* made the journey from Aspley to Tunnel End manned by numerous BW staff taking note, from a boater's perspective, of the state of the canal.

Then in November 2004 came the Winter closure, scheduled to last until mid December.

Major improvements were being made, heavy lifting gear was arriving with new locks gates. Locks 18E (between Linthwaite and Slaithwaite), 25E (west of Slaithwaite) and 41E (next to the top in

Marsden) have all now received new sets of both top and bottom gates each fitted with traditional, yes traditional, paddle gear.

What else had been going on in 2004?

The collapsed by-wash at Lock 5E, on the aqueduct over the River Colne west of Longroyd Bridge, has been repaired. Because of its location this became a major engineering problem due to there being limited access for plant and equipment. The lack of water going around the lock had been causing water levels in the pound above to rise, flooding the towpath under Birkhouse Bridge. It was then overflowing to be lost forever into the River Colne below, instead of flowing round the lock to serve Locks 4E to 1E.

The offside Batoyle Embankment, Milnsbridge, where there had been a massive ongoing leak, has been repaired with the area hard topped and mooring rings for short term visitors installed.

The supply of water to the tap and Elsan disposal point at Lock 21E (Platt Lane, Slaithwaite) has been restored. It having been found in July 2004 that the supply, by Yorkshire Water from what turned out to be a nearby mills' sprinkler system, was discoloured.

Lock 22E (Globe Mills, Slaithwaite) has been pressure pointed to stop leakage through its side wall and from its sluices into Globe Mills. Previously there had simply been a notice that the lock had to be left empty after each use, thus adding to the overall loss of water.

Leaks through the embankment between Locks 23 and 24, opposite the Moonraker Floating Tearoom, Slaithwaite, have been repaired.

Grass cutting and nearside and offside trimming of vegetation and trees has taken place all along the length. Three dead elms have been identified offside at Lock 14E, as well as one in Marsden, and these are to be removed before they cause a blockage problem.

What else is happening and hoping to happen in 2005?

To ease the opening of gates, handles are being placed on every balance beam, both top and bottom at each lock.

All the bottom tail gate vandal proof locking mechanisms are being removed as serving no real useful purpose after requests for their removal by users.

The whole length is on the priority list for dredging.

Pressure pointing is to take place at Lock 14E (Golcar) to stop similar flooding problems to Globe Mills, again the lock having had a sign to be left empty after each use.

More visitor moorings. A site with a deep draughted towpath side has been identified between Locks 17E and 18E (by the now dry mill dam just west of Lowestwood Lane, Linthwaite) and is awaiting the bank wall being repaired and mooring rings installed.

The sign proclaiming 'Long Term Moorings Only' behind Slaithwaite Fire Station above Lock 21E, put in by the Manchester South Pennine Ring office, is to be replaced and the area redesignated as short term visitor moorings, as first envisaged in the restoration plan.

Lock 23E (Moonraker, Slaithwaite) - the bottom tail gate paddles on the new lock gates installed in 2001 have been notorious for the difficulty in raising them. These are to be replaced.

Lock 24E - the Guillotine Gate, Slaithwaite - a funding bid has been submitted for it to be electronically powered in a similar style to the one at Salterhebble on the Calder and Hebble.

On-going culvert and footpath repairs.

... and so the work goes on to improve the East side.

Opening the Huddersfield Narrow was a great achievement, especially the work carried out by our own Society in the 1970's, 80's and 90's which laid the foundations for what was to follow.

British Waterways replacing lock gates on the East side



Huddersfield Daily Examiner

It is those 'bits in between' the great works of 2000/1 that are now receiving the maintenance they deserve after lying in wait all those years.

My thanks for that go to BW's Yorkshire Region and, in particular, to Graham Shuttleworth and his team based at Tunnel End, Marsden for the work done and being done to bring the Huddersfield Narrow Canal's East side up to standard.

Keith W Sykes

Huddersfield Boat Gathering Aspley Basin, Huddersfield

Saturday 4th & Sunday 5th June 2005

- * Trips
- * Attractions
- * Displays
- * Stalls

Details: Ian France 01484 422415

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plus other interesting and unique benefits.

This is a new boat now under construction.
It will join with the existing day hire boat
Astra already operating successfully.

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information : 0161 303 7635

Manchester & Stockport Canal Society

David Sumner, MBE, writes:

Bill Bates, the Press and Publicity officer and one of the founder members of the Manchester and Stockport Canal Society in February 2004 introduces below the Lanky Cut. As a Stockport resident I was pleased to accept the challenge by Councillor Peter Scott in December 2003 to support his aim to reopen the Stockport branch of the Ashton Canal. After all as Chairman of the Planning Committee of the Greater Manchester Council it was he who recommended that HCS should receive £1,200,000 almost 19 years to the day! The rest is history.

Bill's article is a 'taster' to those who wish to learn more about the Lanky Cut. Already we have the support of Stockport and Manchester City Councils, British Waterways and New East Manchester - who are regenerating the area around the canal in Clayton. Our excellent website has details of the canal its history and restoration challenges. I urge you to log on prior to joining the Society.

By restoring this branch canal and by regenerating the communities along its short length we will make the main waterway network more sustainable. More boats on the Ashton means more boats on the Huddersfield Narrow.

The Manchester and Stockport Canal

A Local Canal
A Time to Rebuild

The problem with writing about canal restoration in a publication like the Pennine Link is one of trying to make a convincing case to those that have been there, bought the T-shirt etc.

Of course the restoration of any stretch of canal that adds to the network in a meaningful way is in my mind worthwhile and a desirable thing to do.

In canal terms the Manchester and Stockport is not as exciting a prospect or as challenging as the Huddersfield or other more exotic, picturesque historical cuts.

So why bother.

Well for one thing I used to go fishing for goldfish with my dad when I was a kid, as I am sure a lot of kids did, in the canal by the Albion Flour Mill, Stockport.

To me that says it all. It is a local canal known locally when it was in water as the '**Lanky Cut**' and I am sure by many other names as it passed through other communities on its route back to Clayton. This short length of contour canal (one pound from its junction with the Ashton) has affected the lives of most people along its length of less than five miles for over 200 years.

The local landscape of 1797 when the canal was built was agricultural with little or no industry or settlement along its length.

Albion Flour Mill



Originally the canal would have been a more economical way of moving energy in the form of coal from the local coalfields to the developing industry in the Stockport area. The coal wharfs in Stockport located behind the Albion Mill off Wharf Street would have provided a suitable storage and distribution network for local industry and domestic users. Other goods such as grain (for milling at the Albion Flour Mill) and cotton for the spinning industry would also have been major cargoes.

But the canal did more than this. As is typical even today with the construction of new roads it presented opportunities to develop the local economy by encouraging a transition from an agrarian economy to an industrial one. The new industry of mass produced cotton goods embraced the combination of a reliable water supply, economical coal supplies and reliable transport.

The development of the cotton industry created a demand for a large local labour pool together with engineering and other support services. This influx of mill workers required local housing which was satisfied with the construction of new housing estates.

This is a long way round for saying that the canal was originally largely responsible for the growth and sustenance of the communities we see today.

In my opinion the cycle is now complete and it is now time for the canal once again to act as a catalyst for regeneration of communities along its length. This time around it is not industry that is needed but to breathe new life into the canal corridor between Clayton and Stockport by improving the local natural environment and infrastructure.



Greg's Mill, Reddish

So what size of task is the restoration of this canal? Well compared with those that have gone before this one could be described as being as easy as it gets.

For over half of its length from Clayton through to the Stockport/Manchester border the line has been preserved as a bridle way with very little disturbance to the canal. All road bridges and the aqueduct over Gorton railway station are intact and subject to engineering inspection look in relatively good condition.

From the Stockport/Manchester boundary to the original terminus at Lancashire Hill the line has not been protected and all structures with the exception of the Broadstone Road bridge have been lost and would need replacing, the most significant of which would be a new aqueduct over the North Reddish railway line.

Although there has been a small amount of building over the original canal line this is not as significant as first impressions might give and it should certainly be possible to reach the impressive old cotton mills that straddle Broadstone Road without too much difficulty. These mills have themselves been subject to refurbishment and if current proposals by the mill owners and other commercial interests come to pass, in which the restoration of the canal plays a significant part, then the centre of Reddish will be transformed.

Beyond the mills and on towards Stockport will need some additional research especially regarding the site for a suitable terminus since the original site at Lancashire Hill may not be cost effective to re-establish due to industrial and retail development.

With new plans currently being discussed to re-develop Stockport town center using the River Mersey as a focal point, the restoration of the Manchester and Stockport canal could be a timely one which could link in to the current vogue of development and regeneration based around water.

The restoration of this canal is possible and if we can achieve it then it would indeed be a canal of the 21st century.

For more information about this project visit our web sit at:
www.homepage.ntlworld.com/nb.jemsabi

W Bates



Broadstone and Houldsworth Mills

Gorton Aqueduct



2005 National - 27-29 August - Preston Brook



The Society will be 'flying the flag' at the National and would greatly appreciate some help in manning their new display. If any members who will be attending could spare an hour or so to give our Council regulars a break, please contact Alwyn Ogborn (01457 833329) or Brian Minor (0161 288 5324). Thank you.

Julian & Sally Morgan helping out at the 2003 National, Beale Park

The Hollinwood Branch

The first AGM is held. Barratts withdraw their application to build houses on the line of the canal. All part of the action for the Hollinwood Canal Society. Ed Mortimer gives Plink readers the up-to-the-minute news of this new and exciting restoration project.

MP speaks at AGM

David Heyes MP, and a Hollinwood Canal Society member, was prompted into saying a few words at the society's AGM. He is the MP covering the length of the canal. He said that the aims of reopening the canal and creating a new through route were excellent. He felt it could be a great benefit to the local area, and would bring new life to the Park. He fully supports the idea, and is willing to do all he can to turn the proposal into reality.

The meeting was held in the Visitor Centre at Daisy Nook Country Park, a building built in the bed of the canal

(how many other canal societies have held their meetings in their canal?). The country park staff watched the proceedings of the AGM with some caution, as not all the staff want to actually see boats back in the park and on Crime Lake. Shouldn't it be a nature reserve instead?

Barratts withdraw application

Reported in Plink 150 was the huge development proposal by Barratts, which included building houses on the line of the canal. There were many letters (including those from the Hollinwood Canal Society) not supporting the development. Based on this, and also Tameside Council's concern about loss of employment areas, the application was withdrawn.

A close call for the Society. At a later meeting with Councillor Quinn and Tameside Council officers, the idea of formally protecting the canal line was



AGM venue on the bed of the canal

extensively discussed. The outcome of this meeting was that until other agreements are in place (including an agreement that Oldham Council will also protect their part of the canal line) nothing formal could be done.

So the canal and the canal route still remain threatened by whatever development is next thrown at it either in Tameside or in Oldham.

Canal to be reopened in Droylsden

But not is all bad news. Tameside Council listened to the Hollinwood Canal Society and have changed their development proposals at Droylsden to include restoring the canal. This is part of a housing and marina development. British Waterways have been given the task of the canal design work and construction is likely to commence some time in 2006. When completed there will also be permanent moorings for up to thirty boats.

Trees should be allowed to grow at Stonehenge

At a recent meeting the future for the Site of Special Scientific Interest near Littlemoss and the prospect of dredging it were being discussed.

"Well I think that nature should come first and no clearing should be done" came a response.

"Well" I said "if we are to adopt that approach then we should also be allowing trees to grow at Stonehenge"

My comment was met by a silence in the room. Like Stonehenge, the canal is a man made structure, and so we have to make a *decision* to retain and protect it, or not. That decision has been made for Stonehenge, who is making that decision for the Hollinwood Branch Canal?

Council policies and joined-up thinking

Clearly all these issues show what is needed is joined-up thinking for the



route. The position would be easier if the canal route was within one authority, instead of being split between two councils. The total length (to join the Rochdale Canal to the Ashton Canal) is just over five miles.

Both the Councils are now aware of the route and the restoration proposals, but as yet no joined-up thinking exists between the two councils (and even within each council). The situation can be summarised into four sections:

1. Tameside Council section, Droylsden to Lumb Lane (1.2 miles)

The Hollinwood Canal Society has success at Droylsden

The canal route is to be redeveloped at Droylsden and is going to include reopening the first bit of the canal and building a small marina. The majority of the rest of this section to Lumb Lane is infilled and owned by the Council, who see no reason not to support reinstating these sections back to a navigable canal.

2. Tameside Council Section, Lumb Lane to Daisy Nook Country Park (1.0 miles)

The Hollinwood Canal Society has caused many questions to be asked

Tameside Countryside Service look after this section of canal. This section includes the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) site. English Nature has told the Hollinwood Canal Society that they currently consider this SSSI to be in an unfavourable condition. This raises the complex question within Tameside Council of just what to do, as even doing nothing is not an option.

3. Oldham Council Section, Daisy Nook Country Park (1.4 miles)

Oldham Council takes the lead

In Daisy Nook Country Park much of the canal is intact but very derelict. Managers within Oldham Council are enthusiastic about restoring the canal, however not all the park staff are so keen. Some would like the canal to be



allowed to go even more back to nature. Hard choices, because without some intervention the canal structure will continue to deteriorate and one day will not exist at all.

4. Oldham Council Section, Crime Lake to the Rochdale Canal (1.7 miles)

No forward thinking by OMBC so far

Within Oldham Council the creation of the canal as a through route to the Rochdale Canal is not yet seen as a realistic proposition. There is no vision within Oldham Council that Hollinwood could have the same type of canalside development as Merry Hill, or Broad Street, Birmingham. Instead what is promoted are industrial units (bringing jobs but no environmental improvement to Hollinwood and no route for a new canal link), not what many of the local Hollinwood people actually want.

Full details of the Hollinwood Canal Society, including many rediscovered old photographs, can be found on the website: www.hollinwoodcanal.co.uk

By email;

I was born and bred in Oldham and lived there for all my childhood and teenage years, 1939/1960. I remember with great nostalgia walking the canal during school holidays. We used to start from what we called the "Roxy Basin" on to Crime Lake, where we would go on the rowing boats and then walk to Bardsley and then catch the bus home. It is a great pity that there do not appear to be any photographs available of the Roxy Basin or the stretch from Hollinwood, past the Mersey Mill to Crime Lake around the 1950/55 time. Although overgrown with reeds the canal was still in relatively good condition and was used a lot by anglers. I also remember well the Werneth Canal where we used to play on the lock gates. It is a great pity what we do in the name of progress, we seem to destroy all that was good in our industrial heritage and then when it is too late regret it.

*Regards
Ernie Jones*

Ed Mortimer



The Stamford Group



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



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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 Story of DB1

August 1990. Trawling through my memory banks, I'm fairly sure this is the time I first became aware of the Dutch barge style of boat. We'd been to the IWA National Rally at Gloucester and I'd picked up a leaflet from Evesham Marine with some very seductive pictures of both the outside and 'ballroom'-sized inside of the boat advertised. I was hooked, and that must have been the moment that particular love affair started. Having been canalling for more than 40 years and a

narrowboat owner for five years at that time, I was still on a learning curve.

The practicality and cost, particularly the cost, of such a vessel was totally out of the question, but the dream remained. I suppose it was like window shopping: it popped up in my mind from time to time as a 'ONE DAY' daydream. It remained a daydream until early 2003.

It was always on the cards that my wife, Joan, and I would retire to the

waterways. Fine details hadn't been worked out, but our narrowboat, although great for four- to five-week holidays, wasn't ideally suited to anything more permanent. A new vessel would have to be obtained. We had no cohesive plans for this, just a notion that that was the way to go. Dutch barges were still well out of reach financially, the price of a flat in central London being on a par with a fully fitted boat.

It was in the July 2002 issue of *Waterways World* that I stumbled across an article about a company producing profile-cut kits of steel sections for self-assembly. If your eyes can prick up like your ears, my eyes pricked up.

Bearing in mind the long-term ambition to own a Dutch barge and the



Steel as delivered

desire to retire to the waterways, the seed was planted. I made enquiries and obtained a brochure and price list. It was only flat steel, but profile-cut to a claimed fine accuracy. I had the yard space, I knew good welders, and the price was a small fraction of the finished product. All in all, taking into consideration the engine, extra steel and woodwork, and the entire fitting out costs, I estimated it would be about a quarter of the price of 'off the shelf'. This, of course, is with me doing most of the work myself. Not the welding, though. Welding is not my skill and obviously far too important to be a learner on. But, as the Yanks would say, 'We have a GO situation.'

It was several months in the melting pot. Obviously the decision was to go ahead, otherwise you wouldn't be reading this now! The steel kit was ordered and delivered July 2004. A giant steel jigsaw with myriad numbered pieces varying from little more



than credit card size up to massive 12mm-thick base plates weighing a ton each. Nothing was in any kind of order, so many hours were spent studying drawings, identifying each piece and checking off on a home-made list. Unfortunately, several pieces were either wrong or missing, including having two identical base plates which should have had different profiles, and the third (small triangular) piece of base missing.

All the bits and pieces successfully identified were sorted into groups of where they would finish up on the boat, so starboard plates were stacked in one place, port plates opposite, bits for the bow and stern on pallets at the appropriate ends, and cabin and roof sections out of the way. These would not be needed for some time. This left the sections for fabricating the ribs, which is where the actual construction work started. A total of 24 ever-changing rib sections had to be welded up, most of them from six pieces. These would be tacked onto the assembled base plates every 2ft in line with pre-marked notches.

I've called this the story of DB1, but so far we haven't decided on a name. Prototype cars, aeroplanes etc.



Sections for making up ribs

have a code number. DB1 is ours – for the time being.

Don't miss the next exciting instalment, where I'll relate the story of finding and restoring my super-duper classic engine, putting the base plates together, and seeing a boat shape start to emerge.

Alwyn Ogborn

Incidentally, if anyone is interested in the old VW 911 seen in some of the pictures, please contact my son, Simon (07976 850313). He's had it for more than 15 years with the intention of 'doing it up', but soon it will just have to go. One way or another...



Fabrication of ribs

2005 Photographic Competition

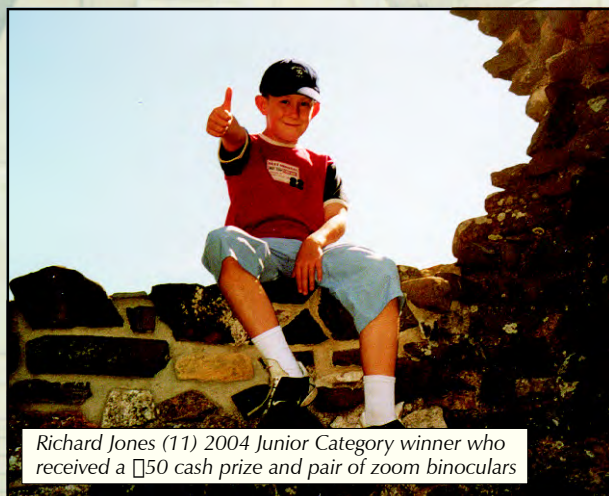


Ken says:

“Now is the time to start taking those pictures of canals, rivers and any other inland waterways where boats operate!

Look out for new ideas in our revamped competition with bigger and better prizes.

Full details will be published in the next edition of Pennine Link.”



Richard Jones (11) 2004 Junior Category winner who received a £50 cash prize and pair of zoom binoculars

Encourage the young folk to enter!

74 Club - An Alternative

Shirley & Bob Maycock



ME - First day of April, ready to go



A quacking good yarn and entitlement proved



Two of the crew - A bright one and a bigger one who hits shopping trolleys



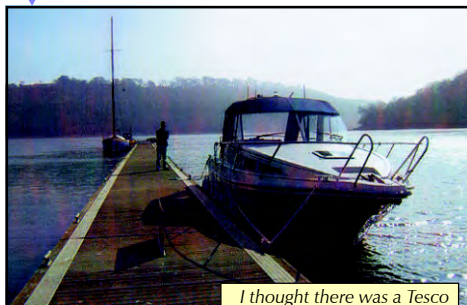
Proof positive - Marsden Merry Men and prop clearing ceremony



Better take over - He might think they are shipping trolleys



GM Broad rhubarb



I thought there was a Tesco at the end of the wide bit



Waiting for a lock

Notice of the 2005 A.G.M.

HUDDERSFIELD CANAL SOCIETY LIMITED

Notice is hereby given that the Twenty Fifth Annual General Meeting of the above named Company will held at Delph Band Club, Lawton Square, Delph on Thursday the 9th day of June, 2005 at 7.30p.m. to transact the following business:

1. To approve the Minutes of the 2004 Annual General Meeting.
2. To receive and adopt the Accounts for the Company for the year ending 31st December, 2004 together with the Report of the Council of Management and of the Auditors thereon.
3. To re-elect Mazars of Huddersfield as Auditors and to authorise the Council of Management to fix their remuneration.
4. To re-elect Mr. T. Ellis as a member of The Council of Management retiring by rotation.
5. To re-elect Mr. D. L. Finnis as a member of The Council of Management retiring by rotation.
6. To re-elect Mr. V. Willey as a member of The Council of Management retiring by rotation.
7. To consider any other nominations.
8. Any other business.

DATED the 17th day of March, 2005
By Order of the Council

J. M. Fryer, Company Secretary

N.B.

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

Emmaus & Mossley Industrial Museum

As you gently meander up the Canal from Stalybridge, between Lock 12 and 13W there is a wide area known as Mossley Basin. Behind the fence on the right you can see Alwyn Ogborn's Dutch barge kit making steady progress in his yard.

It is worth taking a break here and mooring up. Just across the road is a pub, so its not far to stagger back to the boat, taking care of the lively traffic. Up the slope beyond Alwyn's yard is a small Asian-owned supermarket that sells most of lifes essentials.

Go the other way, past a very good sandwich shop and up a steep hill into the centre of Mossley itself, with take-aways, restaurants, pubs and shops.

Opposite Mossley station is a cobbled street leading down to one of the most interesting places on the Canal line. Here is an old cotton mill that houses the charity Emmaus. *(Those of you who know your Bible well will know Emmaus was the place to which Paul was heading when he was converted to Christianity).*

Emmaus is a charity that takes homeless people, gives them a home, a job and a purpose in life. They have no State help, and are entirely self financing. Taking old donated furniture, bric a brac, etc., the residents refurbish the items and sell them from the warehouse - the more bulky items can be delivered for a small extra charge.

Local TV companies use their items to furnish sets for 30's and 40's period dramas. Most local people use Emmaus as a 'lending library', buying books from them and returning them for resale once read. There are two floors of furniture, all for sale, and a coffee shop selling light snacks.

Outside, in the yard at the back of the building is the entrance to the Mossley Industrial Museum. A small, free exhibition, this is a history of the Mill and the family that owned it. Inside, in a glass case, is one of the biggest pairs of clogs ever made. Terry Waite, who opened the facility wanted a pair to join the morris dancers who were performing that day. A special pair was made for him **SIZE 14** and brought down from Hebden Bridge by boat. (The size of them, the boat could have been brought down in them!).



The famous clogs

Brian Minor

The history of Mossley and the effect of the canal and the railway on its development can be seen from some of the maps on display.

The whole experience is worth taking a break from your boating before the hard work of ascending to Wool Road begins. It is edifying to see how the area was changed by industry and how a charity can flourish from its own endeavours. Of course, check on Alwyn's Dutch barge progress at the same time!

Brian Minor



Mossley Industrial Museum

Brian Minor

BBC Aboard 'Still Waters'

Our West-side boat crew recently had the pleasure of transporting a BBC Television crew along the Ashton Canal for the filming of the series 'The Battle for Britain's Souls'. The programme, to be screened in May/June this year, is about the development of Christianity and life throughout the Industrial Revolution in particular.

The film crew were especially interested in filming local churches and mills, focusing on Cavendish Mill from the deck of trip boat Still Waters cruising immediately below. They also filmed St Michael's church, Ashton, as we turned the boat at Donkey Stone Wharf, and the Oxford Mills past Portland Basin towards Guide Bridge.

Allan Knott

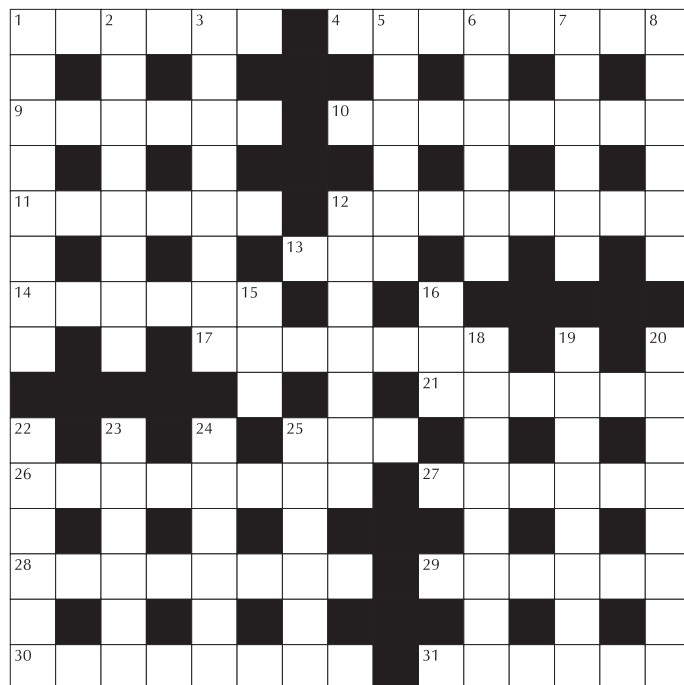
Below: Returning to Portland Basin, the camera crew struck lucky as a group of school children in Victorian costume happened to cross the footbridge. At least they'll get a look in - crew ... unsung heroes!



Top: Reversing out of moorings, Portland Basin.
Above: Spinning the boat in Portland Basin whilst the cameraman focuses on St Mark's Church, Dukinfield, with Cavendish Mill ahead. Photos: A Knott



Canalish Crossword - 46



27 Navvies dig gleefully to reach a village on the HNC (6)

28 Gave lard out at an HBC lock (8)

29 Dusk came rather quickly for the photographer (6)

30 Former Lanarkshire canal which boasted an inclined plane at Blackhill (8)

31 New sum solved on a Norfolk river (6)

Down

1 Bryn ales brewed here? (8)

2 K & A flight of locks in Bath (8)

3 Area bounded by The extreme southern end of the GU and the River Thames (8)

5 Former, and now

restored boatyard in Banbury (sing) (6)

6 A group of locks (6)

7 Arm out to salute a canal pioneer (6)

8 Small rowing boat (6)

12 Iron works whose name is seen on many bridges in the Midlands (7)

15 Essential to starting the engine! (3)

16 Small one on a big wheel? (3)

18 Steer the boat at a given time (8)

19 Those who plod on regardless? (8)

20 Mary knew of a branch of the Oxford canal used by the Coventry boat club (8)

22 Lay sum aside for rebuilding a bridge on the Soho loop (BCN) (6)

23 Can old canal into Staffordshire moorlands survive? Of course (6)

24 Fuel rarely found on inland craft nowadays (6)

25 A famous Scottish aqueduct and a vintage engine! (6)

Across

1 In which water passes a lock (6)

4 Darts off, now it no longer has a navigation (8)

9 Upper Thames side village below Grafton lock (6)

10 No tonics in this Lake District water (8)

11 Goalposts lose a tag and give clue to boats (6)

12 T & M side district near Trentham (8)

13 Some might say that boats are a rich mans ... ! (3)

14 Set out on a voyage (6)

17 Avon lock below Bath in the town of Saltford (7)

21 Should one act happily whilst passing this Staffs & Worcs location? (6)

25 Get in line to see the greenery south of the Thames we hear (3)

26 Vales yet not reached in the restoration of the Chesterfield canal (8)

Solution on Page 46



Falling

I wonder how many readers of Pennine Link watched the telly one Sunday in March and spent the next hour or so thinking about

canals instead of what was going on on the screen?

I refer to FALLING, an adaptation from the novel of the same name by ELIZABETH JANE HOWARD, starring Michael Kitchen and Penelope Wilton. This was a compelling story of a fairly wealthy lady novelist, in her 60s or early 70s, who decided to retire to a country cottage only to be seduced there by an incredibly devious conman who gave her dogged devotion and mindblowing sex!

And this was largely autobiographical. The novel, written in 1999, covered events in Ms. Howard's life in 1996 when, after appearing on Desert Island Discs, she was stalked and eventually seduced in a very similar way.

All quite remarkable, and beautifully told in the adaptation, but where do canals come in? Well, for starters, the country cottage our heroine chose was canalside, near a lock and bridge No.156. No credits on the film but the white painted arch, the broad canal and the Northern accents led me to Greenberfield Lock on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, near Barnoldswick.

And why choose a canalside location? Well, the conman was living, on the cheap, in a clapped out old boat that he claimed was borrowed from a friend.

He later scuttled the boat, saying the owner had taken it back, in reality to be able to move into the lady's house full time. Goodness knows where the scuttling scene actually took place because the boat disappeared below the water. Probably the Ship Canal! And wouldn't the next boat along have found something rather large tangled in its propellor? Artistic licence, I suppose.

Possibly another reason for the location is that Elizabeth Jane Howard, although having been married to famous people like Peter Scott, the naturalist, and Kingsley Amis, the novelist, and having "liaised" with author Laurie Lee and poet laureate Cecil Day Lewis was, in her young days, more than just friendly with a certain Robert Aickman.

You will recall that Robert Aickman was not only a founder member of the Inland Waterways Association, he was also one of the crew of "Ailsa Craig", the last boat to cover the full length of Huddersfield Narrow Canal before its closure. And another member of the crew was his current girlfriend - none other than Elizabeth Jane Howard.

Fifty years after her trip she writes a novel with a canal setting. Did OUR canal impress her so much or was it necessary to have a watery grave for the conman's boat to help the story along? I haven't time to find out!

Ken Wright

An Irish Saga Concluded

Society member Andrew Shortridge, his Mum and Aunt Betty conclude their Irish waterway travels ...

At Carlow we stopped to get a stock of supplies and a new can of oil. The weir at Carlow is the only one with any attempt at a barrage protecting it. Leaving Carlow upstream, you need to cross sharply to the right hand bank to go under the right hand arch of the low Carlow Bridge (the lowest headroom on the navigation and prone to a submerged towpath). The guide book gives a very clear note "Never use the second arch from the east bank. The third arch may be used". If you knew no better, this would have appeared to be the one to use.

We moored for the night at Maganey Bridge. This was an advertised mooring spot and was in easy reach of a pub/diner and a garage. We took the opportunity to refuel, but ate on board.

Wednesday morning we were up early and ready to go by nine, but had to wait while 10.30 for the fog to clear. On this navigation it is only safe to sail with good visibility.



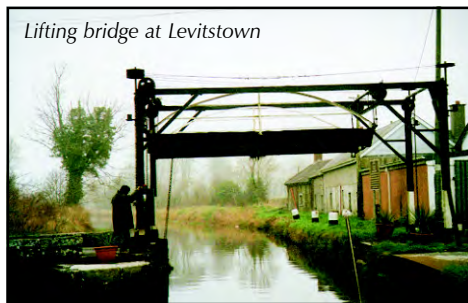
Ruined castle at Carlow

Heading upstream it was not long before we reached Levittstown lock. This lock was the entrance to a long canalised section.

Beside the lock were the fine remains of a ruined mill and soon after the lock, an interesting lift bridge. The head of the Levittstown cut is flanked by another long unguarded weir and it was highlighted in the guide that upstream traffic had to be careful. The navigation swings to the right at the head of the cut and the weir ahead only becomes apparent when close to.

As we neared the head of the Navigation we telephoned the lock-keeper. He was ready to help us here: we needed his special anti-vandal windlass to open the paddles on the locks at Athy. He was surprised that we hadn't been asked for payment as yet; we should have been asked to pay at either





Lifting bridge at Levittstown

Graiguenamanagh or at Carlow. However, although he was not allowed to take money from us, he was keen to give us a full list of 'keepers' who were! We headed on.

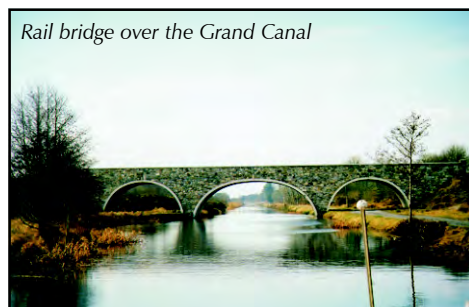
The Barrow Line of the Grand Canal is not unpleasant, but really quite a drab and featureless waterway, and in contrast to the splendour of the Barrow Navigation. Around 3pm, we arrived at the boatyard at Vicarstown to get our outboard fixed; only to find that the 'O'-ring being mailed from the UK had not yet arrived. In the event, looking at the engine, the problem was soon sorted and we were ready to move on.

The other issue that was starting to concern us was that we needed a sanitary station to empty our portaloos. The one at Athy was not open and we were in need. Asking at the boatyard we had no joy. There weren't any on the canal. The one at Athy wasn't even completed anyway. So what do we do we asked ... indeed what does the boatyards with hire-boats do. The answer given to us was to find a nearby field, or hedgerow, and empty there... not very nice.

Wednesday night was spent at Monasterevin, at the moorings beneath the lock. After we arrived the lock-keeper asked us if we wanted to go through, even though it was past his shutting time. We decided against as we had already moored up and we had an ideal mooring place and location to have a BBQ. That night was the second night we were woken up, not by teenagers this time but by the narrowboat moored opposite us. Sometime between 12 and 1am he started his engine and moved off!

The following morning we set off and worked the first lock under our own steam. The lock-keeper arrived just as we were nearly through the lock. Anyway, we needed him for the nearby lift bridge so we headed off steadily. We passed the entrance to the now derelict Mountmellick Branch, turning sharp right, we crossed the River Barrow by an impressive three span aqueduct and then waited for the lock-keeper to arrive for the lift-bridge. After clearing the lift bridge, the lock-keeper told us that he would phone through to the next lock-keeper to be at the next lock (at Rathangan) for us. We arrived there earlier than expected, and started to do these double (staircase) locks on our own.

Staircase locks are operated in a different way in Ireland from the UK. We were surprised to find the middle gates were open and the top lock being totally empty but had thought nothing of it. I had just shut the middle gates and then proceeded to fill the top lock and operate the lock in the usual way. The lock-keeper, on his arrival, told us how we should have done the lock. We should have entered the lock and stayed at the back; opened the paddles on the top gates and waited until the lock was half full. Then we should have moved forward into the second lock in the staircase and shut the middle gates and continue to fill the top lock. (Similarly, going down, the method is to empty the top lock into the bottom lock in the same way as in the UK but once you go into the bottom lock you do not shut the middle gates behind you). The reason for this method is that the wash in the bottom lock when filled from the middle gates can get quite violent and that



Rail bridge over the Grand Canal

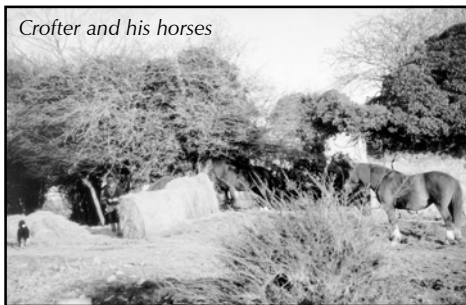
their way of operating the locks causes less turbulence for boats going up. It makes sense really.

We continued on, taking the New Barrow Line to Lowtown (rather than the Old Barrow Line with its two extra locks). Lowtown is the summit pound of the Grand Canal. The water is supplied from the Milltown Feeder and is perfectly clear for a few miles from here. Heading westwards the scenery starts to pick up again. We moored at a small quay at Rhone Bridge, and walked the mile into the village to the local pub for the night.

Friday morning was, at 8.30, one of those mornings where the morning calm, combined with the morning haze, the still on the water, put you totally at peace with the world. Upon arriving at the lift bridge for the Bord na Mona (light railway), the bridge had been left in the closed position and the promised man on duty had not arrived. It was 9.15 and the Offices of Waterways Ireland were not yet open and the lock-keeper at the next lock did not answer his phone, we moored up and I took a look around. Whilst waiting, a light engine appeared in the distance and as it approached on the rickety, uneven tracks at no more than 10 mph, I flagged it down. The engine turned out to be built in the 1950's by the Hunslet Engine Co in Leeds, a manufacturer I know of from my interest in steam engines. Anyway, the driver opened the lift bridge and we moved on.

It was around here that we came across what could have been a time warp. Some small 'crofters' cottages were occupied, smoke coming from the chimneys. It looked like a

Crofter and his horses



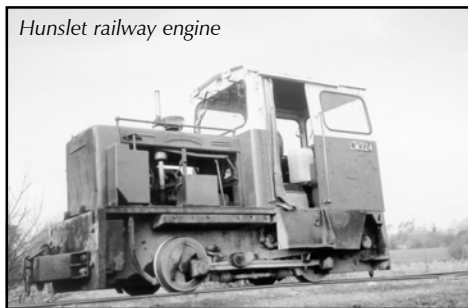
small holding from a previous century with horses tied nearby and hens running around. As I went to take a photo, a 'crofter' with his horses turned his head to avoid being seen in the photograph.

Soon after we began our descent through the more heavily locked section to Tullamore and beyond. At Tullamore was another office where we could pay for our transit of the canals. I asked to pay, but again the relevant person was not in and it was suggested that we carry on and pay the lock keeper at the entrance to the Shannon... the 'laid back' attitude of the Irish. Anyway, stores replenished and some water supply problems sorted, we continued.

Again, nothing much more happened that day and at about 18.30 we moored up before lock 30 at Ballinacoughin Bridge for the night. Saturday was the last day before we entered the Shannon and we still had 12 miles and 7 locks to do. A lock keeper took us from lock 32 down to lock 34. Lock 33 being a double (staircase) lock gave us the opportunity to witness first hand being descended through an Irish staircase lock.

At lock 35 we had to knock on the lock keepers cottage, but we did manage to pay our passage for both the Barrow Navigation and the Grand Canal. Proceeding through locks 35 and 36 we were on to the Shannon. At first we headed south to Meelick lock at the head of Lough Derg and then to Banagher for much needed showers. Afterwards, we saw the most marvellous sunset over the Shannon behind Banagher road bridge with its ornamental gas (now electric) lamps.

Hunslet railway engine



Double lock on the Grand Canal



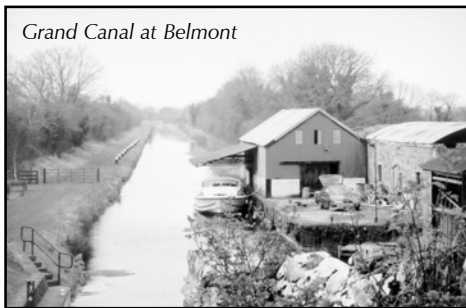
Going up the Shannon is an experience. The navigational chart outlines the course of the river and marker buoys indicate the channel; red discs on a pole on the left bank going upstream and black rectangles on the right. Shallow draught stretches were clearly marked on the map but sometimes it was less than clear exactly where you were. The guides also tell you which arch to pass under at each bridge, more often than not it is one of the side arches.

There was an abundance of wildlife on the Shannon, swans, herons and cormorants. The latter two would invariably perch on the marker buoys scanning the river for their prey.

Above Shannonbridge, we moored at Clonmacnois where there are the ruins of a Norman castle and seven churches (some in a better state of repair than others).

At Athlone we registered for the Shannon; filling in the appropriate forms and making the appropriate payments.

Grand Canal at Belmont



Leaving Athlone it was just after 1600. Too late to make an attempt at going up Lough Ree, whose passage is meant to be about 3 to 4 hours. However, we decided to enter the South Lake of the Lough and then head east into Killinure Lough. The chart not only marks the buoys but dotted lines mark the recommended routes and shallow waters (or danger areas). With Betty reading the chart and issuing instructions to me, we followed the route between Carberry Island and Little Yellow Island and gradually turned more due East and into Killinure Lough. A number of the buoys were hard to pick out and for an observer it would have been hard to see how this was meant to be a relaxing pastime! Into Killinure Lough we came across a small boat being rowed. Its engine had broken down so we gave them a tow to where our respective paths were to divide and we headed our separate ways. We moored at the quay by the marina for the night. It was a peaceful evening and after eating on the boat, we walked to the marina's club-house, both to pay for our mooring and to have a drink (just one at Irish prices!)

Monday. Cruising Lough Ree is an experience. I'm sure I will enjoy it more if I do it again. The maps clearly mark the route to take but it is not as easy to follow the map as you would expect. However, with binoculars, guide and compass, we made our way up the Lough. The navigation notes say that "*Lough Ree is a large lake and may be dangerous in strong winds. Try to cross the lake in the company of another boat. Be sure when following another boat that it is on the correct navigation course*". It is large.

There were sections near the southern end where the shoreline seemed very far off.

Above the lough, we moored at Lanesborough to get water and to get some provisions. Whilst Betty was getting the provisions, a hire boat coming downstream with German tourists tried to moor up above us and got into serious difficulty. So much so that I feared for my boat. The guide warns of the current here and advises that boats should continue downstream of

Lanesborough bridge, turn and then head back upstream to moor. Their first attempt was downstream and, tied at the bow, they had lost control, their stern swinging around downstream and very nearly crashing into my boat. The rest of the day was spent pushing on and we reached Carrick-on-Shannon just before dusk. This was the longest day's cruising of the trip and the navigation lights were on when we arrived at Carrick.

We then considered the remaining four days of the holiday. Friday had to be spent retrieving the boat from the water and driving to Dublin for the 2100 ferry. Thursday would be presumably spent retrieving the car and trailer from Graiguenamanagh so we had two days cruising left. Enniskillen at 17 hours cruising per the charts was too far (too long and no slack for problems), so the destination was Ballyconnell for the bus to Dublin.

After refuelling we set off to Leitrim and forgoing cruising Loughs Key, Drumharlow and Allen we headed onto the Shannon-Erne waterway. This, formerly the Ballinamore and Ballyconnell waterway, had been derelict for a number of years, restoration being funded by the EEC as one of the projects under the Northern Ireland peace accord (It being a cross border waterway). It is a very scenic canal, with the canalised sections being interspersed with various loughs, the largest being Gardice Lough.

A lot of money was obviously lavished on the restoration, it having 16 fully automated locks and 6 fully serviced moorings in its 40 kms. Each of these moorings has parking, refuse, water, slipway and a service block with

showers, loos, laundry, pump-out, chemical toilet, these later facilities being payable by the same token that is used for the locks. The facilities are really second to none, my only complaint is that it would have been better if these facilities had been interspersed over the whole of the Irish waterway network, the showers would have been very nice indeed. Over the two days we were on the waterway we saw numerous herons and kingfishers, the latter being an extremely welcome sight.

The climb to the summit on the Shannon side is very quick and the first lough, Lough Scur, sees us pass over from the Shannon waterway markers to those of the Erne. Those on the Erne are red and white with the white always marking the side on which you should pass. Both are semi-circular with the circle being to the top side on the port-side and to the bottom on the starboard side when travelling downstream. These never appeared as easy to follow as the Shannon style markers which made much more sense to us (and are more in style with the markers elsewhere in Europe). By the evening we had reached Ballinamore where we moored, used the facilities and had another BBQ.

Wednesday should have been spent cruising but instead we decided to retrieve the car and trailer. This proved a worthwhile exercise. It was a 12+ hour day. The following morning we found that we had a puncture; no spare tyre! Luckily there was a nearby garage that repaired the tyre and also there was no rush to get the problem sorted. The day was spent cruising the rest of the waterway before returning to Ballyconnell.



Hire boats - Shannon & Erne, Ballinamore

What the Papers Said

Huddersfield Daily Examiner

A very distressed fox was rescued from the rungs of a lock ladder at Milnsbridge on the Huddersfield Narrow. Firefighters, who drained the lock so the fox could free itself, succeeded in catching it and took it to an RSPCA centre for treatment of a suspected broken leg. (3/11/04)

British Waterway's program of lock gate replacement on the Easet side of the Narrow is reported with a dramatic picture of a headgate being lowered into position at Lock 38E, Marsden. The oak gates were made at BW's workshop in Birmingham and are expected to have a working life of 25 years. Further replacements are scheduled for locks in Linthwaite and Slaithwaite. (14/12/04)

ECOTEC's recently published report on the Economic Impact of Restoring the Huddersfield and Rochdale Canals (discussed by Keith Gibson in our last edition of Pennine Link) is featured, balancing the report's estimate of a £2.5m boost to the local economy with critics in Slaithwaite who

attack the project as 'a lot of money for nothing'. The article also cites the less than successful Standedge Visitor Centre as contradictory to the report's claim of booming visitor numbers. (30/12/04)

Under the headline 'Test track planned for Colne Valley pathway', the Examiner reported plans to trial a section of canal towpath from Titanic (Lowestwood) Mill, Linthwaite to Shaw Lane, Milnsbridge to reveal possible conflicts between its users; specifically cyclists, walkers and fishermen. The Colne Valley Greenway is planned as an eight mile traffic free-link between Huddersfield and Marsden utilising much of the canal towpath. Groups, including the Canal Society, have raised concern over its suitability. (4/1/05)

A follow-up article (12/1/05) confirmed that the plans for the 12 month trial had been approved by Kirklees Council and that the £140k improvement works were due to start in May. However, the proposal would need approval from British Waterways to partially rescind their current 'no cycling' policy on the Narrow.

Speaking to the taxi driver we realised how lucky we had been. Fog, we were told, regularly caused problems on the Loughs and it was not unknown the previous summer for weekend boaters to spend their time waiting at the entrance to a Lough for the fog to clear.

Friday went well, loading the car, putting the boat onto the trailer and then driving to Dublin. It was fairly uneventful except that it rained. It was only the second day that it had rained. We were very lucky.

In conclusion, Ireland was well worth visiting. Both The Barrow and The Shannon-Erne waterway are really scenic and worth cruising. Both of which I would like to revisit and we will undoubtedly visit Ireland again, possibly linked with the planned reopening of the Royal Canal in 2006. The Barrow is not for the faint hearted and I would certainly recommend travelling upstream first, and the

official guide is a must [they are all available on the internet on the IWAI website in downloadable format if you do not want to buy them]. Further, if you intend to cross Lough Ree (or perhaps one of the other large Loughs), I would certainly recommend binoculars and compass and be sure of very good visibility, you are meant to follow a channel and the markers for it are not always clear. Facilities on the Barrow and the Grand are unfortunately sparse, especially if you require showers and Elsan disposal points. Be prepared. I would like to thank the head engineer of each of the waterways who were all very helpful and prompt in replying to my requests for information and the lock-keepers who are helpful and friendly. Most of all, it is a totally different approach to boating in the UK and certainly enjoyable; enjoy it!

Andrew Shortridge

Colne Valley Chronicle

The Chronicle takes a much more upbeat assessment of the ECOTEC report, researched on behalf of British Waterways, highlighting the substantial increases in visitor spend, job creation and residential development as a result of canal restoration. The article also makes the significant point that future developments would tend to be more canal-focussed and that the report is an important 'baseline' from which to measure future economic benefits. (3/12/04)

In the same edition was a piece about consultants GVA Grimley who have been engaged under the Colne Valley Renaissance Market Town Initiative to formulate plans to improve Marsden and Slaithwaite. They are exploring options for developing youth facilities, station car parking, housing and small business use for the Old Goods Yard in Marsden. Much of the site is currently British Waterways' parking for the Standedge Visitor Centre and GVA Grimley's consultant, Dale Robinson, admits they must liaise with BW to see if they will give up the land.

The Colne Valley Society will use profits from the sale of its booklets and videos to provide four seats on the canal towpath between Marsden and Milnsbridge. (3/12/04)

The Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP) has opened a new information centre in the basement of Slaithwaite Civic Hall - formerly occupied by the Colne Valley Trust. The shop manager, Paul Stevenson, said *'The centre is a community effort, run by volunteers like myself. As well as selling books, bird boxes, maps and prints, we will have a wide range of free publicity.'* (4/3/05)

Oldham Evening Chronicle

"Reporting the bicentenary of the Rochdale canal. Various groups and councils have hosted events through the year." The canal has generated a change for the better in urban areas like Failsworth but some people have complained of canalside graffiti, rubbish and vandalism. (21/12/04)

Brian Minor's editorial in Pennine Link no 150, on the future of the canal and the need for vigilance to ensure its preservation is reported. (18/3/05)

A public enquiry has been held about the proposed new Tesco at the Knoll Mill site at Greenfield. Local traders fear the impact on their businesses and the loss of village identity. The council sees it as an opportunity for regeneration of an eyesore industrial unit with new homes and canalside development including a pub, chandlery and new canal basin with moorings. The office of the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott will make the final decision. (21 & 22/3/05)

Engineering work has been underway in the Standedge Railway Tunnel to halt the slow collapse inwards of the walls. Phase 1 in 2001 proved insufficient to halt the movement. New foundation beams and fifty steel piles were installed to act as a restraint. In Phase two concrete piles were installed between the piles to act as a prop. If this work proves insufficient, an entire new tunnel lining with a steel lattice arch will be installed. (22/3/05)

Oldham Advertiser

Proving the desirability of canalside properties, the Advertiser features a 'des res' with significant historical cache. Number six Frenches Wharf, formerly the Mechanics Arms and locally known as T'Seaside Inn, is now a highly desirable three storey Saddleworth stone residence alongside the restored Huddersfield Narrow. The article included a 'then and now' pair of photographs; the historic circa 1900 shot featuring a canalside crane, now sadly long gone. (03/02/05)

Tameside Advertiser

Horseboating Society Chairman, Sue Day was pictured aboard Maria prior to her historic trip to Bugsworth Basin for the official re-opening at Easter.

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

Narrow Locks

In 2002 British Waterways, in response to boats getting stuck in the locks and also in Standedge Tunnel, carried out a survey of all of the 74 Locks and the three additional abandoned chambers. This was an excellent step to sort out 'scientifically' just what the problems were, as by now the situation had become very confused: It was not at all clear just which locks presented problems, and just how serious the problems were.

The report, *Huddersfield Narrow Canal, Report on implementing 7ft standard*, was published in November 2002 and the picture appeared to be far worse than had been expected. A staggering total of 58 locks and 2 disused chambers failed to meet a minimum lock width of 7'2". If this standard was reduced to 7'0" then the number of narrow locks "too narrow" was reduced to 28.

The report had also "failed" some locks that had not presented a problem to any boat. Looking more closely into this apparent inconsistency it seems that the report has three fundamental flaws, and they are:

(1) *It is based on calculating if a 7ft by 70ft box shape will pass through the lock, whereas most boats are pointed at the front, and usually not completely square ended at the back.* This has picked out and 'failed' locks that are narrowing very close to the head (the end of the lock nearest to the top gate) at the low level. On some other canals ALL the locks would fail on this criteria. On these canals where the chamber was built narrower and rounded towards the head of the lock a completely rectangular box shaped boat, 70ft long, would not be able to pass through the lock without jamming.

(2) *Measurements could not and were not taken below the normal water level of the empty chamber (as this would have necessitated draining each lock completely).* This lack of measurements below the water was a simple practical restriction of the method of measurement used. It would

therefore not show if the lock were substantially narrower below water.

(3) *Measurements did not include the head or tail of the lock beyond the chamber.*

Measuring outside the chamber would have increased the time taken (and hence cost) to do the survey.

Taking the above into account, the total now becomes 30 locks, reducing to 7 locks if the 7'0" standard is used. Quite a different picture to the one first presented. The 7 locks are:

Lock 21W Bulges and uneven stonework towards headgate end.

Lock 22W Narrow chamber (clear opening more than 6'11").

Lock 42E Narrow chamber and bulge outside bottom gates.

Lock 41E Narrow chamber (clear opening possibly less than 6'11").

Lock 32E Narrow chamber and bulge outside bottom gates.

Lock 31E Narrow chamber and bulge outside bottom gates.

Lock 22E Narrow chamber and narrow beyond top gates.

So when is a narrow lock narrow? The answer was never going to be simple, and the BW report was an excellent attempt to answer it. But it mostly did not fully take into account that the locks were built for boat shapes, not rectangular boxes. Lock 33E has given problems for full-length (70') boats that are very rectangular shaped, but a shorter boat will have no difficulties. Every boat is different. 'Big Northwich' boats such as *Tyseley* are generally wide towards the front (where she was stuck in Wade Lock), so had she been bought back to the lock facing backwards she probably would have got through. The process would have been fruitless, as the boat would have probably stuck in the next narrower lock (22W).

Ed Mortimer

The 74 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.

Since our last edition, the following intrepid boaters have 'joined up':

I Thompson	TEMERAIRE
L Hanham	GEMINI DREAM
A Wilkinson	ACACIA
J Smith	JENNY WREN
I Penn	SOMERSET
P Bolton	JOAMELA
J McAdam	MERLIN
B Futter	PATIENCE
R Ellis	RAGGED BOY
Mr & Mrs Wild	ICHTHUS
B Hinsley	IBIS



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.

Bob Gough

Rail and River Centre Slaithwaite

The Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP), in association with the River Colne Project, has opened a shop in its new offices next to the Canal in Slaithwaite.

It offers community information and sells a range of rail, river and canal items, and needs volunteers to help staff it.

If you are interested in helping - for as little as a few hours a week - please contact the shop co-ordinator, Paul Stevenson on 010484 847790 or paul@acorp.uk.com

Solution to Crossword 46

1	B	Y	W	A	3	S	H		4	S	T	A	5	F	6	F	7	O	R	8	D
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The Back Page

HUDDERSFIELD CANAL SOCIETY welcomes the following new members

2707 Mr J Eric Wood, [REDACTED]

2708 Mr & Mrs David & Angela Emanuel, [REDACTED]

2709 Dr Sarah Hale, [REDACTED]

MEMBERSHIP RATES

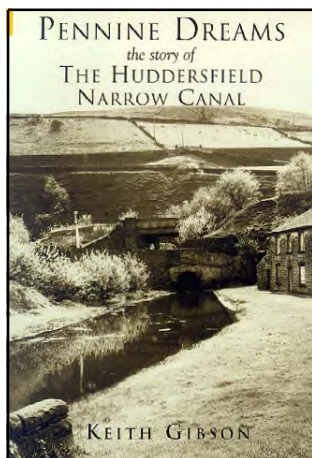
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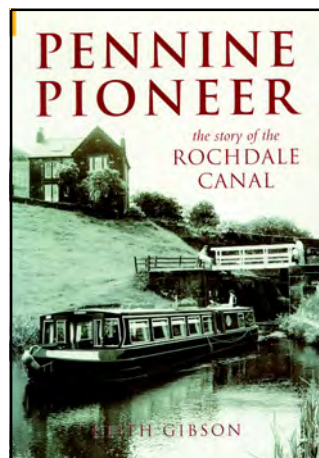
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by Keith Gibson



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