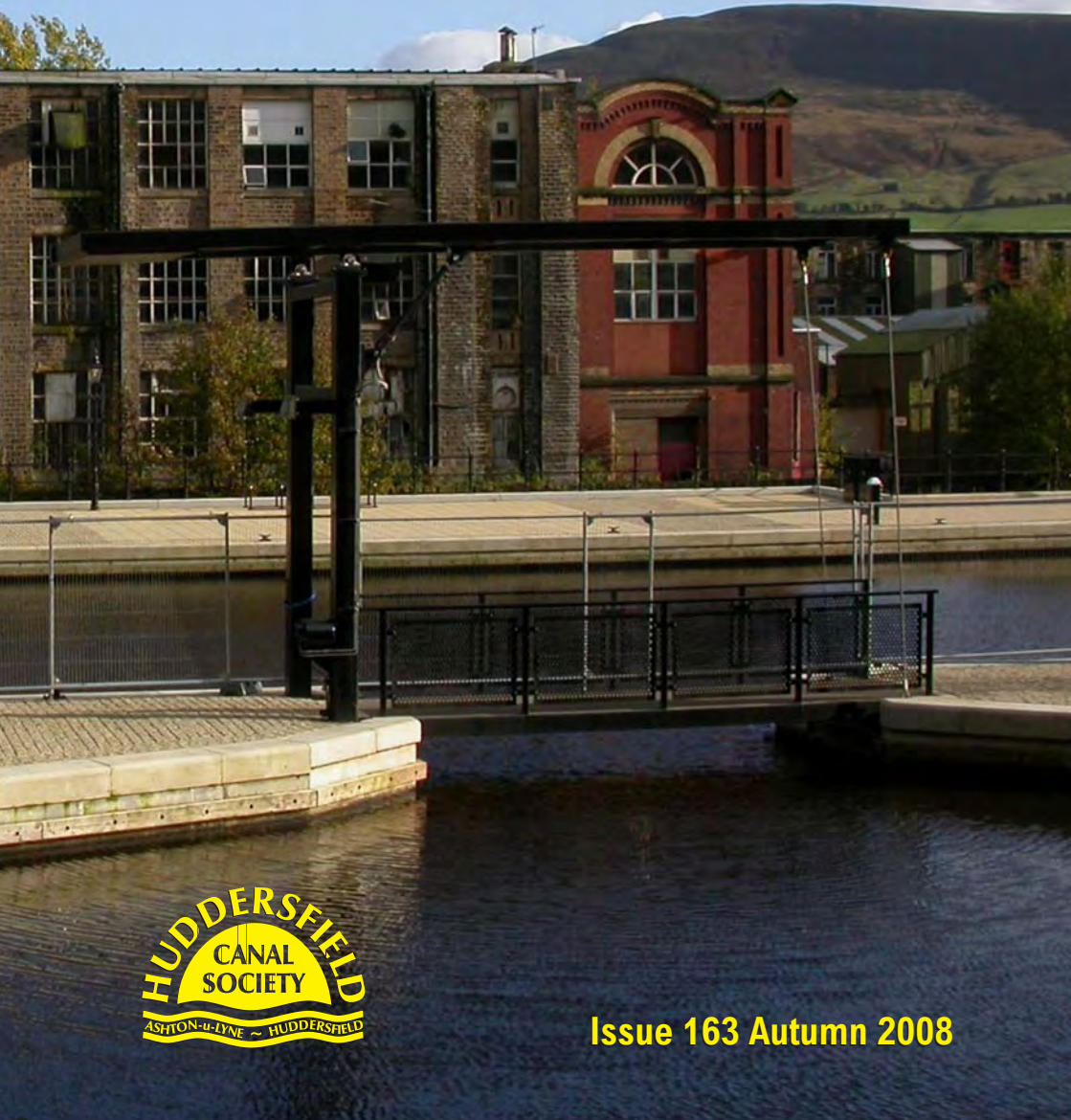


Pennine Link

Magazine of the Huddersfield Canal Society



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Huddersfield Canal Society Ltd

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Pennine Link

Issue 163

Lock 24W, Dobcross - October 2008



Bob Gough

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Cover: Frenches/Knoll Mill marina, Greenfield, with completed lift bridge reinstating towpath access. The marina is fenced off as construction work is currently on-going. Photo: Bob Gough



Editorial

Richly deserved.

This is the reaction I had to the news that Keith Gibson had been awarded a Medal from the

IWA for services to the inland waterways. A major prime mover in the HCS restoration programme, Keith has gone on to head up the Northern Canals Association and impart his considerable skills to other restoration efforts. Congratulations from myself and all HCS.

The purchase from BW of our office premises at Wool Rd. is another milestone in the history of HCS. It all happened quite quickly, a little bit out of the blue. Nevertheless, a good acquisition that should see the Society settled into a canal-side address for years to come.

I have some apologies to make relating to the last issue. Firstly, I must go cap in hand to my daughter Joanne. The article on Iron-bridge was her contribution, with preamble and a few additions by myself. Unfortunately, the whole article was credited to me. Sorry Joanne!

Secondly, I have been taken to task by one of our regular contributors for using the term 'less boats' in my reply to a letter. Quite rightly, this should have been 'fewer boats'. I am suitably chastened.

It is a fact of life generally that mud sticks and praise slips out of the consciousness. This seems just as true regarding our canal. We have received

another particularly vitriolic tome, nay, 'A REPORT', from a Mr. Chamberlain, a non-member, who obviously comes from the Planet Perfect. As one who has been involved for over 20 years on the Council of Management to restore this canal, giving my time freely, I come to wonder what I did it for when I read reactions such as these. Many of my colleagues on the HCS Council have put in far more time, effort and know-how than I have, against all odds, the canal is open. Across the waterway network hundreds, if not thousands, of volunteers have achieved a fantastic transformation to the benefit of all. I am sure that the vast majority of canal users appreciate this and are grateful.

There was another rather downbeat article in one of our local newspapers, the Oldham Evening Chronicle. Half correct, half wrong, this article seems to be a spin-off from some of the stories of doom and gloom that get perpetuated. Usually very supportive of HCS, it was a surprise to see such an article in my local evening paper. (I get it for the crossword you know). It is the tiny minority who complain and I know of no other as bitter as Mr. Chamberlain. As I say, mud sticks and spreads discontent. Don't let it! Just take notice of the many snippets of praise expressed in maybe one line or two, but which make it all worthwhile.

Congratulations to the Manchester Bolton & Bury Canal Society for their success in getting the restoration on the way through from the Irwell into Salford. Full story on page 12.

The long standing campaigner, John



Chairman's Report

The British Waterways Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of British Waterways was held in

Birmingham on 8th October. Tony Hales, Chairman, introduced a video presentation by the new Waterways Minister, Huw Irranca-Davies MP. As Mr Davies had been in post for only four days prior to the meeting, his statement of fifteen minutes' duration was delivered with enthusiasm and conviction. He had certainly been well briefed. Why Jonathan Shaw MP was replaced as Minister we will probably never know but it seems strange that just when someone has become proficient and knowledgeable about our waterways, he or

she is replaced and the learning curve starts all over again.

The Whitehall video was followed by speeches from the Chairman and Robin Evans, Chief Executive. As usual, these were upbeat affairs reflecting the commitment that both men have to improving both the image and the usability of the inland waterway network.

Most of the ensuing questions referred to bollards – and in particular why BW was installing square ones instead of the traditional round ones. No satisfactory answer was forthcoming but we were assured that if the square ones were causing the ropes to snag, one should complain and the edges would be chamfered by BW personnel!

(cont'd over)

Fletcher, (whose wife, Margaret, was chairman but sadly died), has recently re-married and is to become a dad for the first time. Enjoy! Us dads know the ups and downs of such.

I am sure our Chairman, Neville Kenyon, who has been to the BW AGM, will be reporting on that topic. As I write I have not seen the Chairman's Report. Due to waiting until after the AGM and close to press date it will just sneak in, so I will leave it at that.

There is news breaking about the proposed alterations to the Standedge tunnel transit. It has already been announced that the convoy system is to be abandoned next year. It was the intention of BW to pilot private boats through, but now it looks as though it will be self steer with a BW person in attendance. That sounds much better to

me. I, like any other boat owner, feel that I know my boat far better than someone just introduced to it, no matter how experienced he/she may be. Deep inside a 3.25 mile long tunnel is not the place to be on a learning curve about an unfamiliar boat.

We have Claire and Bob to thank for organising social events. Whilst I have enjoyed the ones I have been able to attend, it is very much a thankless task. The number of people participating does not reflect the work and planning that goes into them. Often requiring time and effort beyond the call of duty, it would be most gratifying to see more members turning out. Watch out for the next series of events in future Pennine Link.

Alwyn Ogborn
Editor

Later we were entertained by four presentations. The first was from John Edmonds, Chair of the Inland Waterways Amenity Council, and erstwhile trades union leader. His challenge was for all groups involved in the canals to form partnerships in order to offer a more coherent message to the wider world. As we at HCS already have regular dialogue with partners within the local authorities, British Waterways and other relevant bodies, I felt that we are at least doing some things right! There are other potential partners with whom we should probably have closer links such as ramblers, RSPB and anglers.

The second presentation was by Rt.Hon John Gummer MP who was very entertaining and gave the impression that he was very knowledgeable about waterways. He challenged us all to move away from the old fashioned "transportation mentality" and go for the tourist market. We needed to move into the 21st century. He suggested that this was a good time for lobbying local MPs as they were getting ready to contest a general election within eighteen months. They would be concentrating on getting votes. We should find a good story and lobby hard! Mr Gummer also stated that BW should take responsibility for the Thames and other rivers currently under the management of the Environment Agency – intimating that BW was better managed than the EA. This was greeted with general approval.

John Gummer was followed by Richard Fairhurst, Editor of Waterways World who praised volunteer groups but suggested that BW should have a better protocol for engaging volunteers. It was not easy for individual groups to embark on a volunteer strategy even when they had ticked all the right BW boxes. BW alone recognised the

work that was required and they should be allocating suitable work to volunteer groups.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of the Heritage Lottery Fund, was a very competent speaker who argued the case for finding new audiences for the waterways to attract. She had produced a paper on the subject which the HLF would be pleased to supply to those interested.

All in all, there was much food for thought and HCS was mentioned twice as a good example of continuing to make an excellent post restoration contribution.

It was a pity that some of the questions from the floor were pretty stale and had been well rehearsed for the best effect. Robin Evans in particular must be thoroughly fed up by users – particularly those with commercial interests – lobbying continually in support of very narrow causes.

One questioner was interested in BW facilitating bridleways along tow paths. This was said to be a non-starter. We all could imagine the competition on the tow paths between anglers, cyclists, walkers, twitchers and horses. HCS member and Horse Boating champion, Sue Day was asked for her comments and gently laid the idea to rest pointing out that there were a lot of bridges as well as tunnels that would be impossible obstacles for navigation on horseback. And Sue should know!

Purchase of Transhipment Warehouse

Your Society has leased our offices from British Waterways since moving from Ashton under Lyne in February 2007. We are situated alongside the canal between Saddleworth and Diggle with a lovely view over the water. There is no footpath along the front of the building as it butts right on to the canal. We have wide

sliding glass doors that give the impression of actually being on the water apart from any feeling of movement! Our visitors always comment that it is an idyllic spot and how lovely it must be to work here.

This image was potentially shattered when we were told by British Waterways that they had a policy for selling all their “redundant” property and we either had to buy the Transshipment Warehouse or move out within two years. Having been suddenly given this ultimatum at a meeting on a totally separate issue with two BW managers there was a degree of panic – particularly for Bob and Claire who work here every day.

Fortunately, shortly afterwards, I attended a meeting convened by Phil Woolas the MP for Oldham East and Saddleworth and was able to meet a senior BW manager who confirmed that what we had been told was true. However, he was empathetic and we arranged a meeting with him for a week or so later. The conclusion was that, having taken a valuation from an independent firm of estate agents, we negotiated and finally made an offer to buy the premises which was accepted. So we are shortly to be the proud owners of a “desirable canal-side property” on a 250 year leasehold agreement. Thus begins a new chapter in our objective of promoting “our” waterway to the benefit of all users. It is almost two years since we sold our Ashton offices and it is very satisfying to actually have ownership of our premises once again. We are indeed fortunate to have the resources to do this and we owe a great debt of gratitude to our members who continue, through their loyalty, to give us the support to enable us to continue and extend our work.

Keith Gibson Honoured

It was with delight that we received the news of the special presentation made to

Keith Gibson at the recent meeting of the Northern Canals Association – see page 17.

When I first became involved with the Society as a director of HCS Restoration Limited in the early 1980s, Keith was our chairman. I remember being impressed by his grasp of the whole restoration process and his ability to spot funding opportunities. I learned from him a great deal about the history of the network and was full of admiration for his commitment to our cause. His two books – on the Huddersfield Narrow and the Rochdale canals – are beautifully written and members will have appreciated his regular contributions to Pennine Link.

Well done Keith and many congratulations on being awarded the highest accolade, by your peers, for a brilliant contribution to the chronicles of the British waterways network.

An Invitation

You may have noticed that the same by-lines appear on many of our Pennine Link magazine articles. I would like to make an appeal to all members for contributions to what is universally accepted as the best canal society regular publication. We try to publish every quarter and our editor, Alwyn and Administrator, Bob would be greatly encouraged by additional articles from a wider spectrum of our nationwide membership. The circulation is not restricted to members – copies are sent to local authorities, parliamentarians and other people with influence who can affect our successful operation. Anyway, please consider sending something in!

And finally, thanks again to all our supporters, partners, staff and members for your continued support and enthusiasm.

Neville Kenyon
Chairman



Disconnected Jottings

Notes about the national waterway restoration scene

The Hereford & Gloucester Canal

The Hereford & Gloucester Canal Trust has broken

new ground in waterway restoration circles by acquiring part of a major river.

The Trust already owned the point where the canal entered the river Severn at Over, Gloucester. That is on the unnavigable West Parting section of the river, however, which is divided by Alney Island from the navigable East Parting channel leading to Gloucester Docks.

Navigable access to the West Parting was once available from the docks via the disused Llanthony Lock. As a non-operational asset, British Waterways wished to dispose of this lock and offered it to the Trust.

On its own that was a liability, but the Trust has been able to negotiate a much more comprehensive deal to ensure that the Trust has sufficient land, assets and agreements in place to make future navigable access to the lock possible and safe and to provide an income stream to make the lock self-financing in the long term.

For £150,000 the Trust has acquired the lock, a section of the river and surrounding land. The land includes a pair of substantial tenanted cottages which generate an income.

Weirs on the river at Maisemore and Llanthony remain in BW's ownership but the Trust has negotiated sufficient control

over these structures to allow for navigation at a later date.

Not only does the deal provide the opportunity of eventually gaining access to the restored basin at Over (and the canal beyond when that is restored) directly from the river and the national waterway network, it will also become an important shop window for the Trust near to the Gloucester Quays redevelopment scheme and the city centre. It could also be an asset the Trust could borrow against if funding is required for other developments on the canal.

The Ashby Canal

The recent Autumn Northern Canals meeting was held at Moira on the Ashby Canal. It was a very good meeting as you might expect there where Leicestershire County Council has really got the bit between its teeth and is looking to make serious progress with the canal in the next few years.

Now that they have gone through the 6-year marathon of obtaining the Transport & Works Act Order for the part new route/ part rebuilding on the old route section to extend from the existing terminus at Snarestone to Measham, they are hoping to start work as early as next year on what will be the third big scheme by the County Council on this canal half of which was closed because of mining subsidence.

The Cotswold Canals

The Heritage Lottery Fund has confirmed that the £12m grant previously offered

towards the phase 1a restoration scheme between Stonehouse on the Stroudwater Navigation and Brimscombe Port on the Thames & Severn Canal still stands now that Stroud District Council has taken over as lead partner in the restoration of the Cotswold Canals from British Waterways.

Other BW backed schemes

Meanwhile, although British Waterways will now have no part in the restoration of the Cotswold Canals, work is continuing on other major British Waterways backed restoration schemes.

These include the Droitwich Canal, the Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal, the new Prescott Lock on the Bow Back Rivers in east London and the building of the new Liverpool Link Canal.

The only major landmark to note is the opening of the Middlewood section of the MB&B and the naming of the Margaret Fletcher Tunnel.

Your President and I hoped to see the works in Liverpool on our recent visit to the city but high fences screened the work across the Pier Head and we could see very little.

Keith Gibson

Celebrations on the Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal



News from the East

Well Summer! Been and gone, and I think that's enough time dedicated to the climate.

The Shuttle has been working three days during the week in the school holidays, as well as weekends.

You've all been generous with your time, so many thanks to everyone. Most of the days have been worth doing, just a couple where the weather has stopped people coming out.

This last week ending 8th September, we had a group from Nepal. They were guests of the Safe Anchor Trust who usually operate on the Calder Navigation, but, because of the torrential rain, the water was too high for them to operate safely. Hence, they brought the group to Marsden to experience the Tunnel and, of course, the Shuttle. They were very interested and a most friendly group, taking lots of photos of our little backwater.

For those who didn't join in Bob Gough's Treasure Hunt, you missed an interesting day. I went along with a mate and had a good laugh with much puzzlement, looking into all the nooks and crannies of Uppermill. We were stumped at one point and came across Alwyn Ogborn, almost on all fours, scratching mould from a milestone, while Joan watched from above; very amusing, and of course we also got the clue, but in the end, they got the upper hand, and won.

Thanks to Bob for his painstaking and well-researched clues; just wish a few more had joined in. Ah well.

I'm moving on to Autumn now and hope to see some of you on our walks when the season finishes. I'm suggesting Sunday November 9th for our first walk – meeting at 10.30 at the Marsden Station car park – when Ronnie Rose will take us on a local route. Also, I thought an end of season get together would be a good

Organisers from the Safe Anchor Trust at Lock 42E Marsden



idea, meeting at the Tunnel End pub, as we have done before; about the middle of November, say Tuesday 18th. I'll be in touch to let everyone know the details, and you can always ring me on 01484 686136.

I've been talking to Peter Ruffley and he has a walk he'd like to do on the West side and has also suggested an after Christmas meal at E-dit, the restaurant at Portland Basin. We've eaten there before and it was very good, so watch out for details, when I'm a little more organised!

Anyone else with suggestions for walks would be much appreciated and transport should not be a problem as you

will be able to share with the rest of us.

We've got certificates for First Aid courses and six of us have just received our certificates in Community Boat Management from the National Community Boats Association – a qualification allowing us to skipper the 12 seater Shuttle under the new MCA regulations. We already have three volunteers with Boatmaster qualifications and with more training planned for next year, there will be a good pool of skippers to call upon.

I hope to see a good turnout for our walks and the end of season gathering.

Andrea Fisher



All photos: Andrea Fisher

Above: BW stalwart Fred Carter (yellow overalls) has seen it all before when it comes to celebrity leggers! This time it was Griff Rhys Jones trying his feet at the historic occupation.

Inset: Griff taking it easy, or perhaps trying to straighten up after legging Standedge Tunnel.



The Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal

Our 'Other Canals' restoration this issue features the Manchester Bolton & Bury canal. We are indebted to Paul Hindle of the MB&B Canal Society for the following contribution. I must confess to not knowing much about this waterway, but, scratching the surface of the information available, I am sure I will follow it's restoration progress with interest. All power to your elbow MB&B, go for it! Ed.

History

The MB&BC received its Act of Parliament in 1791. It was originally conceived as a narrow canal; but during construction there was a scheme to link it to the Leeds & Liverpool Canal at Red Moss (for Wigan), and it was changed to a broad canal. It was opened from Bolton and Bury to Salford in 1797, and later connected to the River Irwell in 1808. Its layout was Y-shaped, basically following the River Irwell from Salford to Bury and the Croal to Bolton; the three arms met at Nob End, Little Lever. The summit level ran from Bolton to Bury without locks, and all 17 locks were on the Salford arm. The main flight of locks was at Nob End (often called Prestolee Locks) which consisted of two sets of three-rise staircases. There were two more staircase locks in Salford, each a 2-rise. The total length was 15 miles 1 furlong. Fletcher's Canal (to Wet Earth Colliery) was built in 1791, and was connected to the MB&BC at Clifton by 1800. Other branches to Haslingden and Sladen (near Rochdale) were planned but not implemented. Had the various proposed

branches been built the Leigh Branch of the Bridgewater Canal and the Rochdale Canal from Manchester to Rochdale would probably not have been built, and the Haslingden Canal would have been the highest canal in the country. Instead the MB&BC remained rather isolated from the rest of the canal system, finally connected across the Irwell to the Bridgewater Canal via Hulme Locks in 1838, and to the Rochdale Canal via the largely underground Manchester & Salford Junction Canal in 1839.

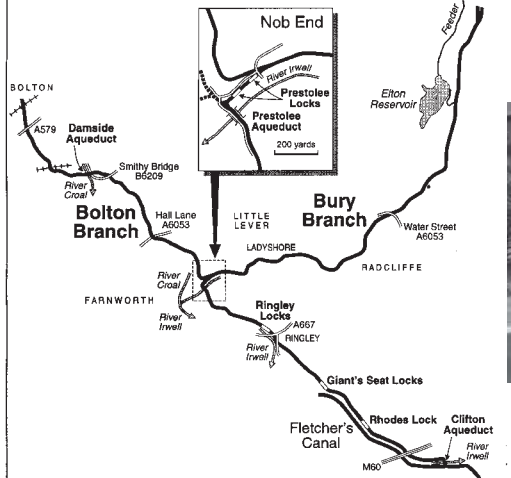
It was essentially a coal-carrying waterway, with numerous collieries nearby. Many collieries built their own tramways to the canal – over the years there were 20 tram lines totalling over 60 miles.

In the 1830s the canal company proposed to turn itself into a railway, but eventually decided to keep the canal, and build the Manchester to Bolton railway, which was opened in 1838. The joint canal and railway company passed to the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway in 1847, and eventually to the LMS. The canal had a long period of success, continuing to carry coal and other goods into the twentieth century, but the coal mines started to close after 1900, the last being at Ladyshore in 1947.



Bolton Evening News

Manchester Bolton & Bury Canal

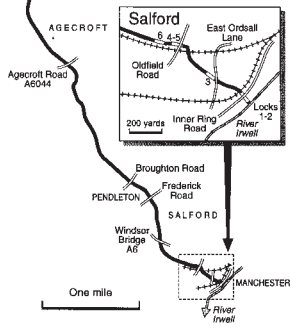


Nob End or Prestolee Locks



J & M Fletcher Archive

Damside Aqueduct from the air



The canal was closed in stages; the Bolton branch was disused by 1924, and a major breach at Nob End in 1936 (left) severed the Bury arm, though it continued to see traffic until 1951. Traffic continued between Salford and Clifton until 1950; the whole canal was officially closed by 1961, though a short length carried coal to Elton paper mill in Bury until 1966. The Bolton arm, closed first, has suffered the most damage; the A666 (St Peter's Way) was built along the line of the canal near the centre of Bolton, and three aqueducts

(Farnworth, Fogg's and Damside) were demolished. The Bury arm is still mostly in water, though cut in two by the lowered Water Street Bridge in Radcliffe, and the last mile into Bury is dry; the 1936 breach remains at the start of the arm. The Salford arm is still in water from Nob End to Ringley (it supplied Stoneclough paper mill with water until the 1990s), but the rest is largely dry. Prestolee and Clifton Aqueducts still stand, the former still in water, though the small Clifton Hall (Lumm's Lane) Aqueduct has been demolished.

Restoration

The canal society was formed in 1987 and began to clean up the derelict canal. It dredged the canal from Ladyshore to Bury, ran a trip boat from Radcliffe, and ensured that two bridges were rebuilt to full navigable standards. It continues to have working parties, and has recently cleared the towpath from Ringley to Hall Lane, including the locks at Nob End. For most of its first 20 years the Society was led by the formidable Margaret Fletcher, along with a strong Council; five of the original Council members are still in post today.

The Inner Relief Road in Salford threatened to sever the canal close to its connection with the River Irwell, but a tunnel was created to preserve the route in 2001-2. British Waterways announced the restoration of the canal in 2002, surveyed the route in 2003, and announced funding for Stage 1 in Salford in 2004 with the canal as the focal line of a major redevelopment scheme. Work finally

began on this Middlewood site in 2007, and the first length was re-opened on 19th September 2008. Staircase locks 1 & 2 which had been buried beneath the Inner Relief Road, have been restored into the Margaret Fletcher Tunnel; the new deep lock which replaces them is the third deepest in the country at 17' 8" (variable, depending on river level). After two new basins, the restored canal rejoins its original line at the rebuilt East Ordsall Lane bridge, with the original Lock 3 immediately beyond; it has survived in excellent condition. The canal continues to a narrow section which was originally Lock 4, but was later disused and covered as Tunnel No. 1. The restored canal ends just before Tunnel No. 2 (under the Manchester to Bolton railway), and the next staircase locks (4 & 5).

The next stage of restoration is likely to continue through the Crescent area of Salford, as far as Frederick Road. Salford

Boats in the new basins



MBBCS

Council is looking to redevelop this whole area with the canal at its centre; however many development schemes are on hold at the moment, and this may affect progress at the Crescent – 2012 might be the earliest date. Other parties are looking to fund restoring the summit level from Hall Lane (Little Lever) through to Bury. Putting dates on when these restoration schemes might come to fruition has become rather difficult!

Website: www.mbbcs.org.uk

Paul Hindle
Company Secretary MBBCS



*Right: Boat entering the
Margaret Fletcher Tunnel
Below: John Fletcher and the Mayors*



Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

Reflections on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, Bad Press and Gossip

On recent training and delivery trips we have picked up a lot of bad news and untrue gossip about the Huddersfield Narrow. The blue sweatshirts probably attract it.

Most of the complaints are based on:

1. Silted up and shallow
2. Rough, shallow margins or ledges
3. Not enough water
4. Too much water
5. Vegetation intruding into the channel
6. Timing of Tunnel passages combined with mooring limitations
7. Locks difficult to operate

My replies, in summary, are:

1. If more boats used the Canal, the silt would tend to disperse and move downstream.
2. The margins and ledges are no worse than many other canals. Try travelling from Chester to Wolverhampton.
3. On our last trip the bywashes were gurgling away quite merrily, so there must be water somewhere. Unless boats are travelling too close together, it should be possible to adjust levels. If low water levels occur in the evening, there may be a time problem, perhaps it would be advisable to avoid late evening navigation on this Canal, but other canals also present time related difficulties. Vandalised and abused paddles are not unique to the Huddersfield Narrow.

4. I have only experienced over-supply twice on this Canal, so I am not qualified to comment, neither occasion was particularly hazardous. The surges from the bywashes are negligible compared to other very popular canals.

5. Accelerated vegetation growth is common throughout the system, particularly this year.

6. Tunnel transit policy is being reviewed. A few more prepared moorings would be useful.

7. Lock gear lubrication policy is being reviewed. Even so, the locks are no more difficult than many others of the same size and depth. Indeed, if you can get onto the Huddersfield Narrow, then you should be able to navigate it without difficulty unless abusive users have preceded you or your boat, like mine, is over-size.

A few positive ideas have been picked up between the criticisms. The favourites in my book are:

- a. Allowing mooring for 2 or 3 days at Diggle.
- b. Extending permitted mooring times during special events in the villages and so encouraging visits by canal.

Yours faithfully

Robert Maycock

HCS Crew Training Coordinator

IWA Honour for Keith Gibson

The IWA has awarded Keith Gibson their prestigious Richard Bird Medal for 2008. John Fletcher, National Chairman IWA, made the presentation at the last Northern Canals Association meeting and read out the following Citation:

As Chairman of Northern Canals Association from its inception eighteen years ago to his retirement in 2007, Keith Gibson has been the driving force behind a forum for the exchange of ideas and the encouragement and celebration of waterway restoration. Through NCA, newcomers to the restoration scene have had the opportunity to learn from best practice whilst sharing the experience and support of others.

A pioneer member of Huddersfield Canal Society, Keith has been able to reflect that

the seemingly impossible can be achieved. It was his position and standing within HCS which led him initially to the chairmanship of Northern Canals. His knowledge and expertise have been of great benefit to the restoration movement and his specific advice regarding planning issues invaluable.

Keith has now taken on the role of President of Northern Canals Association and remains on the advisory panel for IWA Restoration Committee.

I feel that Keith Gibson's "efforts and support" within Huddersfield Canal Society and as the long term Chairman of Northern Canals Association have amply satisfied the requirements of the award and would like to propose him for the Richard Bird Medal.

Keith Gibson (right) receives the Richard Bird Medal from IWA National Chairman, John Fletcher.



Richard Bird was an extremely active member in the London Region of the Association in the 1980s particularly involved in supporting the National Waterways Festivals and Rallies until his untimely death.

The award ensures that Richard and his valuable work will always be remembered and the contribution of others like him will be recognised.

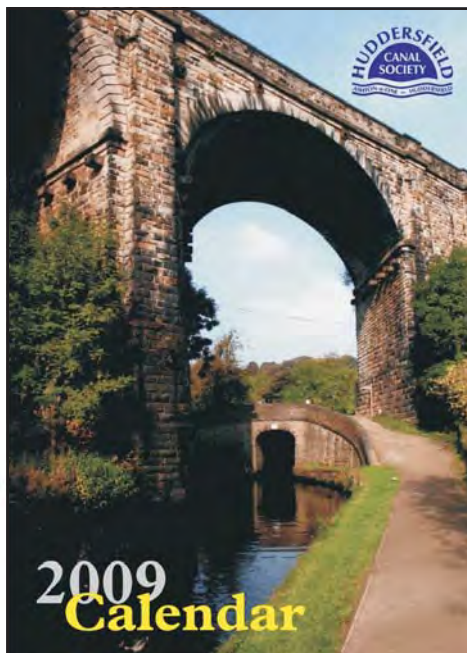
Congratulations and very well deserved Keith!

HCS

Ideal Christmas Gift(s)

With Autumn upon us, can Christmas be far away? And with the Season comes the perennial problem of the reasonably priced gift. Well, look no further; the Society's Towpath Guide makes an excellent present and at £4.99, a real bargain.

Please use the enclosed Order Form and make sure we receive it in good time, preferably before the end of November, to ensure delivery for Christmas.



Following the experience of selling our 2008 Calendar and the very competitive nature of the market, Council has decided to distribute a complimentary copy to each member as a 'thank you' for supporting the Society in its work.

The new Pricing in Proportion postage rates mean the Calendar can be included with the Winter Edition of Pennine Link without affecting the usual postage charge.

We are mindful that members may want an extra copy or even copies for friends and relatives, and a limited surplus will be available for purchase. An Order Form has been enclosed and again, please submit your order in good time for Christmas delivery.

Huddersfield Canal Society

Photographic Competition

*** CASH PRIZES ***

Extended Closing Date ...

Open to everyone, with free entry for HCS members, the top prize is £50 with other cash prizes for the various categories.

From the entries, we will select 12, suitably seasonal, prints of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal for publication as a 2010 calendar.

Please encourage all junior members of your family and friends to take an interest in our waterways and submit entries; and remember, the Narrow can look great whatever the time of year!

Don't forget the new closing date!

THE JUDGE

Mr Vincent Brown
Chief Photographer,
Oldham Chronicle

THE CASH PRIZES

Overall Winner - £50
Category Winners - £30
Category Runners-up - £15

THE NEW CLOSING DATE

Friday 7th November 2008

THE RULES

The competition is open to everyone - members and non-members alike. There is no entry fee for members, but a flat fee of £5 is payable for non-members, irrespective of the number of prints entered. (*Cheques made payable to 'Huddersfield Canal Society'*) Enter prints only, B&W or colour, sized between 6x4" to 8x6" maximum.

Entrants agree their pictures may be used by the Society for promotional purposes.

THE CATEGORIES

A - Huddersfield Narrow - Senior
B - Huddersfield Narrow - Junior
C - Other UK Waterways - Senior
D - Other UK Waterways - Junior
(*Junior is 16 or under*)

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO:

(*max. 5 prints per category*)
Photographic Competition
Huddersfield Canal Society
Transshipment Warehouse
Wool Road, Dobcross,
Oldham, OL3 5QR

Please put your name and address on the back of each photo AND the category for which it is being entered.
Enclose a stamped SAE if you wish the return of your entry.

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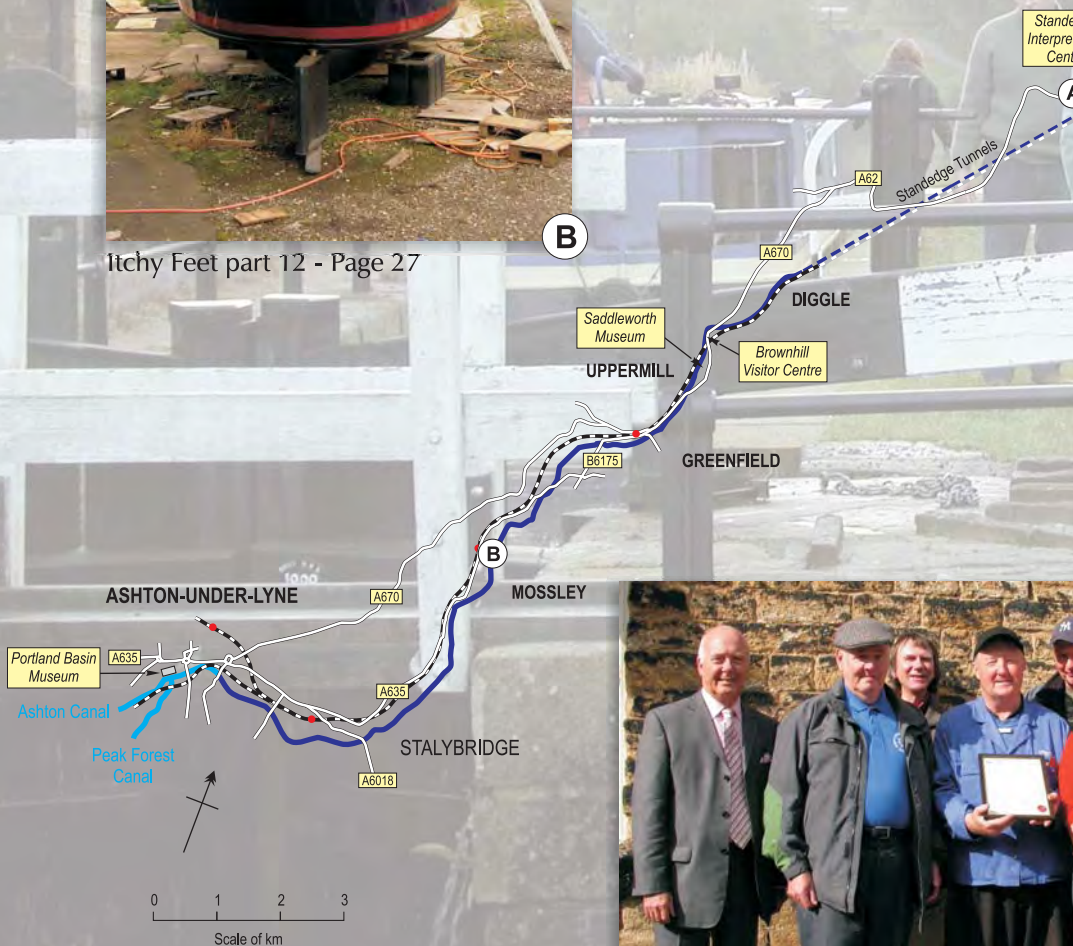
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The Huddersfield Narrow & Broad Canals



Itchy Feet part 12 - Page 27

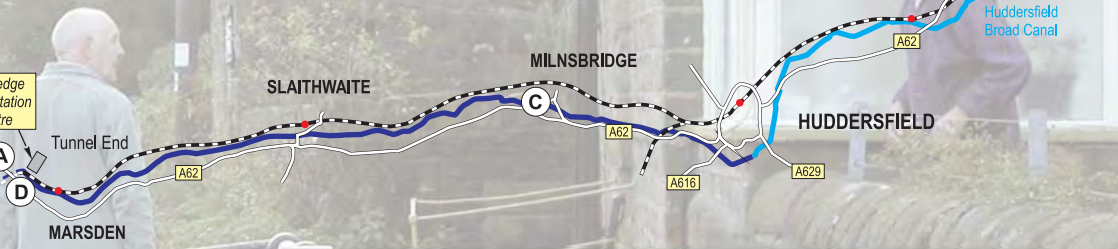


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A



C

Then & Now at Milnsbridge - Page 30



D



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The original 1992 video commissioned by the Canal Society. A few copies are still available from the Society offices.

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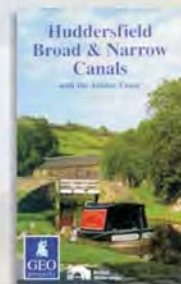
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Boaters Have a Field Day

Following the demise of the Ashton Canals Festival, the last one being 2007, a substitute event was organised by the Horse Boating Society and local allied groups. Ed

On Sunday July 6, anybody visiting Portland Basin, Ashton-u-Lyne would have seen a very busy scene amongst the many canal societies which operate locally. It was a chance to see "Life on the Cut".

The Inland Waterways Association was well represented by the Manchester Branch bringing its stall and the National Chairman attending with his fiancée. The stall had much information about local canals with free leaflets and maps available, waterway books for sale, and an activity for children to colour in scenes of the waterways from boats to ducks.

Souvenirs were available for sale on another stall. Of particular interest is the DVD "Life on the Cut", about the history and heritage of the canals. This was filmed in the autumn of 2007 by Mikron Theatre Company with the Horse Boating Society, Wooden Canal Boat

Society, and the Tudor Cruising Club, all taking place on the Peak Forest and Ashton Canals.

Wild over Waterways (WoW) activities were set up for families. They were able to have a go at labelling the boat harness on Toy Bonny, the model boat horse. There were questions to answer about Maria, a jigsaw of a mare and foal, and a game of quoits to resemble the boatman's skills needed to throw a line over a mooring bollard when a boat is tied up.

The Horse Boating Society which organised the event on the field was very pleased with how the day went. The field is ideal for a small event such as this, drawing people's attention to local waterway society activities. It is hoped to repeat the event again. Thanks go to British Waterways North-West and the Tameside Countryside Service as both organisations were very supportive of the event. See the website for further info at www.horseboating.org.uk

The Wooden Canal Boat Society strives to obtain funds to restore these historic craft and was prominent at the event.

The last Tameside Canals Festival, July 2007

Sue Day



Bob Gough

Hollinwood Canal Society



Martin Clark

Above: New mooring pontoons in Droylsden Marina, currently surrounded by a building site, but which will eventually be overlooked by good quality residential and commercial buildings.

Below: Still Waters takes a party of VIP guests along the re-opened stretch of the Hollinwood Branch to the new Droylsden Marina on a very wet September day following the official opening of the first of the apartments on the site.



Martin Clark

The Story of DB1 (or Itchy Feet) Part 12

I'm afraid that, once again, the progress of Itchy Feet has been delayed. This time by almost 2 months. The promise of rich rewards coupled with flattery about why they wanted me to do a particular job, saw Joan & I going to Fife doing some work for Shell. Two trips. First one, 3 weeks, second one, 1 week. This, plus a 10 day holiday in France early September took out the slice of boat building time mentioned.

Progress has still been made. The name is now painted on, expertly done by Howard Jones, an associate who used to sponsor us at the Ashton Festival by doing entry signs etc. The galley base units (*right*) are being fitted as I write and by the time you read this we will be living on board, albeit, still on land, but saving about 2 hours a day travelling time and the associated fuel costs.

Over 95% done, we're almost there!

Alwyn Ogborn



All photos Alwyn Ogborn

Operation Standedge

BW's Laurence Morgan writes:

A lot of work has gone on this season to assess the potential of introducing a better way of taking boats through the tunnel. The main focus of this work has been for us to carry out trial passages with diesel operated boats. These began with a number of Shire Cruises boats (thanks to Nigel and Sue Stevens for their help and support with this), and then we moved on to taking other boats through under their own power.

In addition to this we've also been assessing how improvements can be made to communication in the tunnel, and to some of the hazardous pinch points that can damage boats. We've also worked with colleagues in the emergency services to look at how we can improve tunnel security.

The feedback we've had from this is that this new system is a much more effective and flexible way of taking boats through than the current convoy system. Part of the trial has been to test the level of gas emissions in the tunnel, and the evidence to date is well within HSE limits for safe working. This gives us the confidence to move forward to the next step, and we propose to introduce a 'Chaperoned Diesel Operation' for the 2009 season. This will involve:

- All boats undergoing a safety assessment before transit;
- Critical points of the boats will be fendered;
- The boat owner and our chaperone will receive authorized PPE, lighting and two radios;

- A returnable deposit of £50 along with a small at-cost charge will be taken either in cash or by credit card, to ensure that guidelines are abided by and equipment returned in good order. This (returnable) deposit will be asked for at the point of booking to ensure boats turn up;

- Competent BW staff accompanying boat owners through the tunnel on their craft. BW staff will act as 'chaperones' and advise boaters on navigating the tunnel. At certain times, under the consent of the boat owner, BW staff may take the helm to steer through a difficult point.

A further element of this development is to trial a tunnel long trip-boat during 2009. Currently, there is a 'hikers ticket' available which enables tourists to join convoy trips. The intention is to trial a Saturday through trip on the first Saturday of each month for six months. This will give the non-boating community the opportunity to see the entire tunnel. We will obviously need to closely monitor and review the success of these initiatives, and gauge the feedback from our customers on how to develop it further.

We will be providing further information about operating days and safety issues at our user group meeting next week.

Once again many thanks for your help with this project which we hope is now reaching some positive outcomes.

Laurence Morgan
BW General Manager (Yorkshire)

Caption 'Competition'



Here are some suggestions following last Issue's appeal:

"That's what I like about low pounds – no need for mooring ropes."

R Carden

"There ah wuz, arse uppards, draggin' no end o' stuff up t' weed 'atch, an' along comes this prat wantin' ter see me fishin' licence."

"Ow wuz I ter know she were goin' ter step back just at t' very moment -

Anyroad, t' case comes up next week."

G Officer

*"Another b****y mattress."*

F Ockerby

"I let her do all the hard graft, after all, how else do you think I keep my hands so clean?"

Woman in white coat: "Of course he's disappointed. When they said he'd get an escort up the Diggle Flight, he was expecting someone far prettier."

J Pond

"I caught a fisherman this big, but threw him back."

Anon

"Look, I know we all had chimneys when we started."

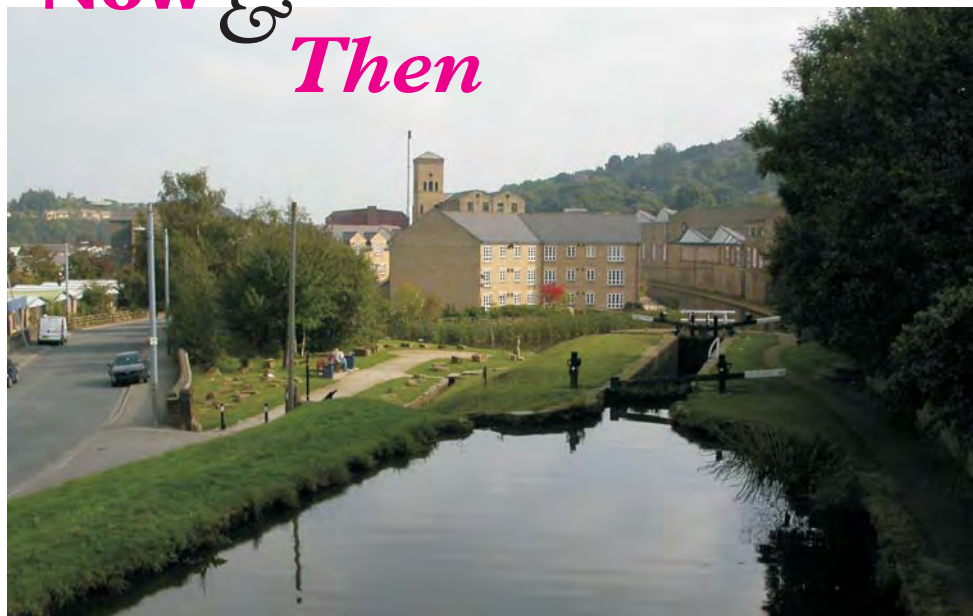
R Maycock

Lending a helping hand pays off!

The Society recently received a donation of £75 from The Whaley Water Weekend Association in gratitude of the invaluable aid given by four of our members, including Allan Knott, who fronted the challenge of delivering and

returning two hired day-boats for the Weekend. Allan and friends came to their rescue, at short notice, when they were in big trouble with the delivery of the boats enabling 'normal service' to proceed at their community event.

Now & Then



Bob Gough

*Lock 9E from Whiteley Street, Milnsbridge - September 2008.
Note the canal-side development and demolition of the mill chimney.*



Neil Fraser Archive

A similar view from February 1990 during restoration works by Kirklees MC.

Fred's Fortieth with BW



Martin Clark

Fred Carter (centre) with, left to right, Neville Kenyon, Ronnie Rose, Bob Gough, Paul Leeman, Andrea Fisher and Keith Sykes.

On 23 September, Mr Fred Carter celebrated 40 years working with BW on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal.

Huddersfield Canal Society presented Fred with a handwritten citation along with honorary life membership of the Society to mark his 40th Anniversary of working on the Huddersfield Narrow. It was presented to him by Ronnie Rose, a long standing member of the Society who has come to know Fred very well over the years.

Fred, a former textile worker and keen motorcyclist found his mode of transport ideally suited him for a job at BW. 40 years ago they were looking for someone to keep an eye on the Canal and the company 'car' happened to be a motorcycle! After several years on the Canal, Fred moved on to monitoring the Standedge reservoirs.

Fred is now often found steering the passenger boat or acting as Tunnel guide. His genial manner combines with his extensive knowledge off the tunnel to guarantee an interesting journey!



Bob Gough

Recently, Fred played part in the trials at Standedge Tunnel that have been carried out to test whether boats can pass through the Tunnel under their own power. He has made over a thousand passages through the tunnel and knows every bit of it. "I'm used to the dark, they won't let me drive boats in the daylight now!" he laughed.

Martin Clark

Wordsearch 6



This Issue's Theme:

Towns and Districts alongside the Macclesfield Canal - 19 to find.

Jidoku 10

L		W	M					
	T			R	L			
	C		J			B		
C							R	
	M	R				C	T	
	J							S
		S			B		W	
			W	L			B	
					C	T		L

The grid represents nine adjoining 'canals' and the letters are features on those canals: **L**ock, **J**unction, **T**ap, **R**ubbish point, **B**ridge, **M**arina, **W**aterways office, **S**anitary station and **C**rossover bridge.

Fill in the missing blanks using these initial letters, bearing in mind that each 'canal' (3x3 block) can only have one of each feature and there must be no duplication in horizontal rows or vertical columns.

Jidoku Apology - We are jinxed! In last Issue's puzzle, the letter S was swapped with the letter D (they are next to each other on the keyboard, so a simple typing error on the part of our Jidoku setter), but at least it was consistent for the solution. We'll try harder this time!

Solutions on page 42

Ups & Downs of Society Events

The Society's Events year started off in May with a most successful Open Day at the Transhipment Warehouse. A steady flow of visitors showed genuine interest in our display and the rolling canal presentation detailing the history of restoration. The free refreshments were gratefully appreciated and generated over 30 of donations!

In association with the South Pennine Community Rail Partnership, two walks were planned in May, using the Canal towpath and train services. Leader Bob Gough had compiled extracts from the LNWR Company Minute Book adding historical highlights to the walk from Salybridge to Greenfield. The first walk on Saturday was well attended, but regrettably the Sunday walk was cancelled having received no bookings.

The tug Still Waters at Portland Basin Marina with fouling mattress being removed.

It was a similar story for the June walk with Andrea Fisher, across the moors from Diggle to Marsden. The weather on the day was rather wild and with only two takers, it was felt best to abandon the event.

Of the boat trip in July aboard 'Still Waters', crew member Donald Taylor writes:

The HCS canal trip was well supported and the weather was fine. We set off in high spirits. Unfortunately, after ten minutes there was a loud bang from the back of the tug and the engine cut out. We got to the bank and the helmsman, Barry Edwards, saw there was a mattress snared on the propeller. The passengers disembarked and we were given a tow to Portland Basin Marina. However, by the time the tug had been craned out of the water and the mattress removed, it was too late to proceed with the trip.



Don Taylor



In the shadow of their Dutch Barge 'Itchy Feet', Alwyn & Joan with the Treasure Hunt prize.

Last year's Treasure Hunt in Marsden was modestly supported, but hopes were high for this year's Hunt in Uppermill; especially as Marketing Officer, Claire, had been actively promoting the event in the media and around Uppermill.

On the day, seven 'teams' took part and the Adjudicator and Hunt compiler, Bob Gough, had to be very strict in his marking to determine an overall winner. Three teams shared joint second place with eighteen and a half points out of twenty, and there was a tie in first place with two entrants on nineteen and a half points! It was planned to make a random draw for the winner, but one of the 'winners' felt his winning

inappropriate and wished the Rambler's Food Pack to go to the other winner. So, Alwyn & Joan Ogborn were declared winners and presented with the Treasure Hunt prize.

Society member, Martin Clark, gave an updated presentation on the work of the Hollinwood Canal Society to an audience at the Masonic Hall, Uppermill, in September. Many people who enjoyed his presentation last year attended and were impressed to see the amount of progress being made by this fledgling Society and the dramatic changes at the Droylsden Marina development.

A View of the Narrow

Although not a member of HCS, we have received an oddly entitled report from a Mr D J Chamberlain regarding the transit of the HNC. I can only assume that Mr Chamberlain is a relative newcomer to the inland waterways (the spelling of 'Duckingfield' is an indication of this). Anyone with a few years experience knows that waterways that have been rescued from dereliction and decay take many years to be improved to the standards he obviously expects. A classic example is the Macclesfield Canal. Twenty years ago it was in a similar state to the HNC, a narrow channel through banks of reeds, constantly scraping the bottom and with very few places to stop overnight. That canal is now a delight, but we, and most of the people who are associated or have cruised our canal, know that we have a long way to go to reach that standard. It is a very desirable goal and HCS Council is working towards it. But, it is that age old problem MONEY.

Mr. Chamberlain mentions several times '30 million pounds', not sure where that figure comes from but it is probably the cost of the final phase. Often it is forgotten a great deal was spent in earlier days with piecemeal restoration projects.

Having gone to the trouble of producing this lengthy 'Report' I would like to invite Mr. Chamberlain to join our Council of Management with the specific role of fund raising to pay for the improvements he (and the rest of us) would like to see. I am afraid that we are again talking of millions. Now there's a challenge.

On the plus side, we do get an awful lot of feedback to say that, despite the challenge of cruising, what a delight it had been to traverse the waterway and congratulations to the Society for making it possible. Ed.

Mr Chamberlain's report is now reproduced in full and as received.

An Independent Report on the Poor Condition of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal

We boaters are a pretty resilient bunch, especially live aboards such as me and my wife Sheila, who have lived aboard our narrowboat Shiralee since 2006. So, it will probably come as something of a surprise to receive a letter such as this, from people who are only 18 months into the retirement experience. However, working on the assumption, that if you are unaware of a problem you have no way of fixing it, I pulled out my trusty laptop in the hopes of something being done to attract more boaters to The Huddersfield Narrow Canal, which, as you know, is chock full of beautiful scenery and history.

This year we are exploring several waterways and, from our winter moorings, will cruise as far north as The Leeds and Liverpool Canal.

We entered The Huddersfield Narrows canal on Thursday 3rd of July, at Duckingfield Junction and, almost immediately, had to find somewhere to pull in so as to clear the mass of plastic bags and weeds fouling our prop. This did not endear us to the canal, but we continued on our way still in good spirits.

It should be noted here, that we were well aware of this canals failings regarding shallow waters. We put this down to lack of foresight on the part of the people responsible, for failing to ensure adequate water supplies

when they spent £30M on having the canal restored and re-opened. But, that's another story.

Now, since adequate moorings are few and far between; another fact we were also aware of; our first port of call was to the Tesco moorings at Staleybridge. This mooring has a seven day limit on it, though why anybody would wish to stay that long beggars belief. We saw one other boat there, and they departed later that day. And, no wonder, the noise emanating from their car park was horrendous, and kept us tossing and turning in fitful sleep until 4 am. We've never been so happy to leave any moorings.

We are a retired couple, as you have no doubt gathered, and so we have plenty of time on our hands. Normally we would cruise for no more than three hours then pull in and explore the area before settling in for the night.

Our next port of call was 15 locks and five and a half hours away at Uppermill. There, despite there being proper moorings with bollards, we still had trouble finding a spot where we could pull our boat close to the canal bank. Our original intention was to moor up at Mossley, where there are also proper moorings, which was only 3½ miles and only eight locks from Staleybridge, which would have taken only about three hours. But, as with Uppermill, we could not get our boat close enough to the towpath.

Just in case you're wondering, we're not alone in this. We met another couple at Uppermill who had the same problem. Our boat is a standard 56 foot craft, built by Liverpool Boats in 2005, and has just a 26 inch draught.

Of course, one of the things we absolutely had to do was have our boat taken through Standedge Tunnel. However, since that service is only available on Wednesdays and Fridays, we had to sit at Uppermill for much longer than the designated 48 hours, though why there are any restrictions at all on a canal that is sadly devoid of boats, strikes us a pretty ridiculous.

After Uppermill we went on to Lock 24W, to await instructions to proceed to the tunnel at Diggle Portal. There were four boats in this convoy, and all went well until Lock 30W, where we found we were unable to fully open the bottom gates. Eventually, having advised BW of our predicament, and after much effort by the engineers, it was decided to bring all four boats into the pound. This was in order to be able to reduce the water level in the lock, so that the engineers could get down and dirty and solve the problem.

The result of this, which was ultimately successful, took about three hours, with the discovery that a piece of paddle assembly had broken off and was restricting the gate travel. And on we went to Diggle, much later than expected.

The journey through Standedge Tunnel was a most pleasant experience, for which we have the staff and their intimate knowledge of the tunnel and its history, to thank.

Having spent the night outside the tunnel, we were off again at around 8 am, accompanied by BW personnel, who assisted with the locks right down to lock 32E. But, all was not well, because our boat became firmly wedged in the first lock. Whether this was due to insufficient water, or because the gates did not open properly, we're not sure. The BW staff were, in their usual manner, most efficient and managed to free us, with the judicious application of bodyweight and a release of additional water into the lock.

We had a similar but less serious problem in another lock, the number of which escapes me.

We would have been most happy to have moored up at this point. But, again, no such moorings were available, and so we were obliged to carry on through to Slaitwhait, or Slawit, as it's known to the locals. This journey entailed a total of 21 locks, and took us six hours to cover just three miles, and was fraught with problems.

This canal is well known for its shallow spots, which is probably why it's so lacking in

boaters. Knowing it to be shallow, one has to wonder why the overspill channels gush forth in such torrents. With a 56 foot boat, exiting a lock that has such heavy waters hitting the bow is a recipe for disaster. It would probably be manageable if it were not for the shelves and sandbanks that litter the towpath side. On two separate occasions I found myself grounded, which required all my strength, using a pole, to free the boat and continue on my way. Surely, having spent £30M restoring this waterway, it is not beyond the wit of man to ensure such groundings are avoided.

Not only did I suffer those groundings, but the boat also suffered some severe abrasions to the starboard side as a result of scraping against brickwork at lock exits. By this time I was becoming pretty peeved and damned angry at the inefficiency of those who are, supposedly, employed to maintain our waterways in a fit state for safe and secure navigation.

And so, on to Slaithwait and lock 24E, the guillotine lock. We simply cannot believe that such an antiquated piece of equipment is still being used on Britain's Inland Waterways, at least not a manually operated one. Only somebody without experience at opening and closing this monstrosity could possibly have the authority to keep it going. An ordinary lock paddle takes, perhaps, 20 turns of the windlass. This blot on the landscape, as my wife will attest, must take four times that, with the resultant deterioration in strength. She's not one to complain, but I could tell she was pretty exhausted after that one.

Thus far it's not been a fun cruise, what with the grounding and becoming stuck in locks. But, believe it or not, even worse was to come, in the shape of the last but one lock, lock 23E. I pulled our boat into the side by the roadway, whilst my wife struggled manfully with closing the guillotine lock. Eventually, after what seemed an age, she finally arrived at my side, when I volunteered to give her a break and open lock 23E. She insisted she was OK, and so I stood holding the centre line, while she went off to fill the lock.

I should perhaps mention here, that my 66 year old and arthritic knees are not up to much walking or climbing, hence Sheila carries out the necessary chores at locks.

Guess what? And this will come as no surprise. As she filled the lock, so the boat sank down and came to rest on a shelf. Wonderful, I thought, even here, where you would expect it to be safe, it's anything but. Even the restaurant boat moored nearby leans over at its moorings. Ye gods and little fishes! I eventually pushed the boat off the ledge and proceeded into the lock, and we closed the gates behind it. Which is when the next of our string of disasters reared its ugly head.

Off my dear, belaboured wife went, along with my help of course, to open the paddles. No such luck! Seized solid they were. So, on the phone to BW and along came our friend Terry; that's the guy who towed our boats through Standedge Tunnel the day before. I am no weakling I can assure you, but Terry must be somewhat stronger, because he managed, using all his strength and his leg against a railing or some such, to open them. But, he did so with the help of a much longer windlass loaned to him by boaters following behind.

Eventually we passed through this lock and, to our relief, faced just one more before we could moor up. Surely nothing else could go wrong, we thought. Think again.

Now, we had been warned by our escort from the tunnel, that the bridges following this lock are pretty low. So, we removed our top box and life ring from the roof. How were we to know, that the last morons to pass through the next lock had disobeyed the instructions to leave it empty?

Approaching the first of these bridges, which have pretty red and white warning tapes along their leading edges, I suddenly realised I was not going to pass under it. Not only that, my cratch was in serious danger of being wiped out. I immediately threw the engine into reverse, but it was too late, under the bridge went the cratch.

Luckily, only superficial damage was rendered, but, even though our Terry went on to the next lock to lower the water level, I still had to remove the entire cratch assembly. Equally luckily, we only had the one lock to go through before mooring up for the night. Knowing full well that we still have a way to go before we leave this very pretty, but useless canal, we left the cratch and Top Box off until Aspley Basin, which was another 21 locks away and, most probably, another six hour cruise.

Like I said earlier, why bother placing 48 hour limits on such few moorings as are actually available, when nobody in their right minds would bother cruising The Huddersfield Narrow Canal. Apart from the scenery and history, if you could stop off to admire them, the canal has absolutely nothing to recommend it to boaters. No wonder it's empty of boats, who can blame them for staying away?

On Saturday 12th July 2008 we departed the moorings at Slawit and proceeded on towards Aspley Basin, hoping against hope that we might be able to make an overnight stop on the way. Again, no such luck, wherever and whenever we attempted to do so, we simply could not get close enough to the canal bank. So we soldiered on and finally, after 6 □ hours of hard slog through another 21 locks, we arrived and moored up at Aspley, thoroughly worn out.

This was not, as you might expect, an easier journey than that to Slawit, far from it. In many ways it was far worse because, I still had the problem of overflow channels pushing the boat towards the canal bank, and there was nowhere I could safely pick my wife up after exiting locks. The unhappy result of that problem was that she walked all the five miles to Aspley. Fortunately my wife is a pretty fit 60 year old, so she managed this feat quite well.

The problem with gushing overflow channels was effectively negated in the following manner. On exiting a lock I would give heavy thrust from the engine, thus outrunning the force of water. I would then cruise slowly to

the next lock and position the bow of the boat against the upper gate, keeping the boat in gear whilst my wife filled the lock, backing up a little when she was ready to open the gate.

Approaching the second half of the 21 locks between Slawit and Aspley, we discovered further problems with paddles. Again, it was almost impossible to open them, even with our longer windlass. Obviously these paddle assemblies, from about Lock 9E to Lock 4E inclusive, have not been greased in several years. Lock 14E in particular, certainly hasn't, because, having read an article in a canal magazine, about a chap who cruised the system single handed a couple of years ago, and who complained about that particular lock, it is still in the same condition as he found it.

At about Lock 3E just as my wife opened the top gate, I found I could get no forward movement out of the boat. We therefore pulled it into the lock by ropes, where I shut down the engine and checked the weed hatch. Lo and behold, not surprisingly, I found a waterlogged canvas haversack wrapped around the prop. This object was pretty heavy in its waterlogged state, so I had to assume it had been lying on the bottom of the canal. That being the case my propeller must have been virtually scraping the bottom in order to be able to pick it up. It took me a full 10 minutes to unwrap it and get on our way.

The pound below this lock was flooded, but that did not present too much of a problem because, with judicious releasing of water from the next lock, we dropped the level somewhat. However, if proper monitoring of water levels were in place that pound need not flood. This is assuming there's enough water available for the canal as a whole.

Which brings me to my next point. It is patently obvious to anyone brave enough to accept the challenge of cruising the HNC, that having spent □30M restoring this beautiful waterway, it has then been left to deteriorate without so much as a maintenance plan being instituted. Why else would this canal be so

devoid of water? And why else would so many locks be so difficult to operate?

Finally, on my way through Standedge Tunnel, I overheard a conversation between a young female passenger and the, for want of a better word, female courier, in which the passenger said she was employed by BW in the capacity of Promoter for the canal. We do not envy her the task.

In truth much has to be done to improve this waterway if more use is to be made of it. We are aware that, from next year it is proposed that boaters take their own boats through Standedge Tunnel, with a BW staff member accompanying each boat. That is a start, but we would respectfully the following actions be taken forthwith, assuming of course, that anyone is the least bit interested in a lowly boaters suggestions.

First, and foremost, dredge the canal from end to end because, if it is left as it is, within a year or two it will be completely unnavigable.

Secondly, widen the canal to the extent that two boats can safely pass each other. This will entail clearing all weeds and clutter and trimming overhanging tree branches. If this is not done and two boats cannot pass safely, no amount of promotion will attract boaters to this beautiful canal.

Third, install adequate metal mooring strips at sensible distances apart. Whilst this is, in itself, not essential, it will at least give an indication to boaters of safe and secure moorings. In all honesty, nobody wants to walk five or six miles from one mooring point to another, that's not why we buy a boat.

Finally, set in motion a maintenance plan for all locks along the canal. Obviously, if lock paddles are unmanageable, boaters will simply not use the canal. Bearing in mind that the woman on the boat is, in the main, the one who operates the locks, the operation of lock paddles should not require the musculature of a lumberjack. Cruising is, after all, supposed to be a pleasurable and relaxing experience.

Of course, should the above be actioned, which I very much doubt will be any time soon, you'll also have to consider putting traffic lights at both ends of the tunnels leading into and out of Huddersfield.

A rather long report for sure, for which I make no apology. However, whilst I doubt it will be totally ignored, it would be a great pity if this very pretty canal were to simply be left to rot. Such inaction would simply return it to its pre □30M restoration days.

Yours Respectively
David Chamberlain
nb Shiralee

Locks 31 & 32W, Diggle Flight



Humour

Our amusing snippets for this issue are taken from the second book of short verse by Bernard Wrigley. Affectionately known as The Bolton Bullfrog, Joan and I go to see him on stage whenever we can, a very funny and entertaining performer.

The second book is titled 'The Longs and the Shorts Of It. We bought the book at the last show we went to at the Oldham Coliseum on the 2nd October and received his permission there and then to reproduce extracts. Thank you Bernard. Ed.

iEach time I look in the mirror
Thereís a knackered old man where Iím stoodî
iLook at it this way î the doctor replied
iAt least your eyesightís still goodî

îThe patient you just pronounced fit has dropped dead
On the doormat outside near the binî
i Well pick up the body and turn him around
So it looks like he was just coming inî

We call my brother iThe Exorcistî
Though his proper name is Ron
Itís ěcause every time he visits us
We find all the spirits have gone

îI darenít send him shoppingî she said
îI live in mortal fear ñ
Last week he bought some HP sauce
At 6p per month for a yearî

The wifeís now a most careful driver
With never a hint of road rage
For I told her if sheís in an accident
The newspaper prints her real age

îIíve got the doctors baffledî
The hospital patient said
iTheyíve gone and put a suggestions box
At the bottom of my bedî

The 74 Club

The Society has commissioned a plaque to acknowledge boaters who have 'done' the Narrow. 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.

Transit of the Standedge Tunnel is accepted as proof of navigation. Simply contact the Society on 01457 871800 or Email hcs@huddersfieldcanal.com to request an application form or download the form from the website:
www.huddersfieldcanal.com

The form includes space for boaters to comment on their experiences and all observations are forwarded to British Waterways. Here are some more of their recent comments:

We found the canal in good condition - helped by excellent information on the HCS website and from Shire Cruisers in advance about possible issues (eg stiff paddle gear). BW staff at the Marsden Flight / Tunnel were also extremely helpful.



Had a great trip, first time for a few of us. On the down side, the stretch into Ashton was pretty grim and on the Huddersfield side we found many locks with defective gear. Just made us work a bit harder! Keep up the great work.

We are pleased to welcome the following boaters to the '74 Club'.

M A Rushbrooke	PHOENIX
R Brown	MARCASSIN
D Cleaver	CAIR VIE
I Charity	SOMERSET

Solution to Wordsearch 6



Solution to Jidoku puzzle 10

L	S	W	M	B	T	J	C	R
B	T	J	C	R	L	M	S	W
R	C	M	J	W	S	B	L	T
C	B	L	S	T	M	W	R	J
S	M	R	L	J	W	C	T	B
W	J	T	B	C	R	L	M	S
J	L	S	T	M	B	R	W	C
T	R	C	W	L	J	S	B	M
M	W	B	R	S	C	T	J	L

The Back Page

HUDDERSFIELD CANAL SOCIETY

welcomes the following new members

- 2770 Miss Jayne Pellatt, [REDACTED]
2771 Ms Helen Morton, [REDACTED]
2772 Mr & Mrs Michael & Margaret Platt, [REDACTED]
2773 Mr Richard Worsnip, [REDACTED]
2774 Mr Fred Carter, [REDACTED]
2775 Mr Thomas W Mason, [REDACTED]

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Dr Bob Gough



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