

# Pennine Link

Magazine of the Huddersfield Canal Society



Issue 174 Summer 2011

# Huddersfield Canal Society Ltd

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**Bob Gough** Administrator



*The views expressed in Pennine Link are not necessarily those of Huddersfield Canal Society Ltd*

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## Issue 174

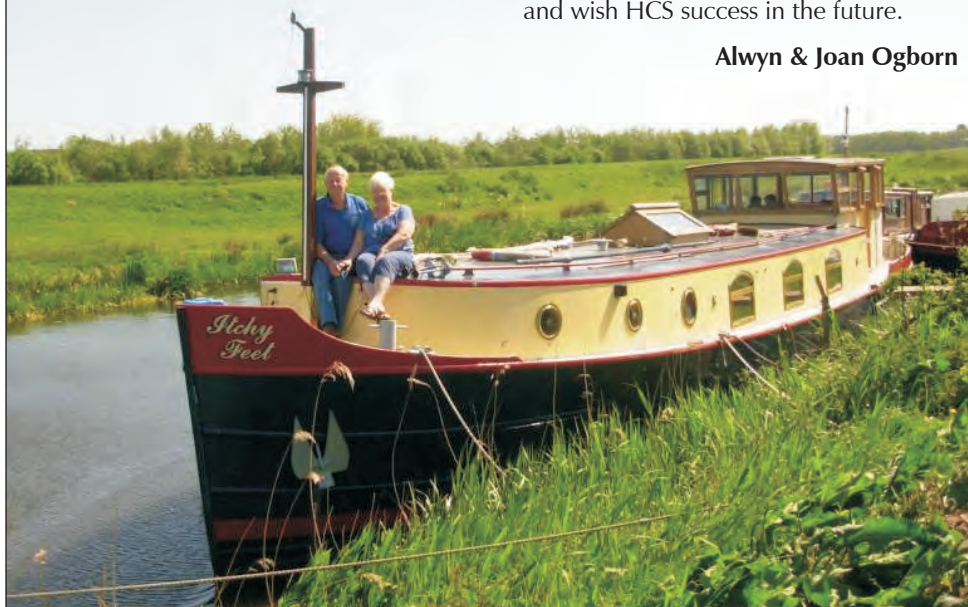


*Alwyn Ogborn announces his retirement from Council and Editorship:*

Home is where the boat is and this suits us both down to the waterline, we are pleased to have chosen this lifestyle.

It does mean that neither of us can pursue our volunteer activities, Joan with Ashton Operatic Society and myself HCS Council etc. I feel proud and privileged to have been associated with the Society all these years, but I shall keep in touch and wish HCS success in the future.

**Alwyn & Joan Ogborn**



Ogborn Collection

Editorial	4	Jidoku 20	19
Chairman's Annual Report	5	Letters to the Editor	20
A New Era	6	Ramsden & Huddersfield Canals	22
Obituary - John McLouglin	10	Horseboating Society	24
Bicentenary Events	11	Hollinwood Canal Society	26
Greetings from Further East - III	12	Festival Day & Boat Gathering	28
The Waterways Festival	14	Photographic Competition	29
Pleasure Cruising on the HNC	16	74 Club Members	30

Cover: The horseboat 'Vixen' emerges from Marsden Portal after participating in a re-enactment of the official 1811 opening of Standedge Tunnel, complete with brass band, organised by the Horseboating Society. Photo: Alan Stopher





## Editorial

Your Council decided to fill Alwyn's shoes with a series of guest editors and this time it is my turn. I've enjoyed getting

involved again in the Huddersfield Narrow Canal after a number of years away from the local canal scene and, through my membership of your Society's Council hope to contribute in other ways.

In this edition we are looking both forward and back. Our canal is a working historical gem and it is fitting that we should have contributions reflecting on the Bi-Centenary as well as chronicles from times past in the guise of Trevor Ellis's article on early canal cruising and the late Neil Fraser's article on date stones and plates. Some items, regular ones as well as Andrea Fisher's continuing story of an epic Pennine cruise, have been held over for longer than usual as the last edition quite rightly concentrated on commemorating the canal's Bi-Centenary.

More up to date news comes in the form of an article from Martin Clark on the new tram route over the Hollinwood branch and Sue Day's piece about the Bi-Centenary celebrations from a horse-boating perspective.

You will see from my article on the New Era for Britain's Waterways that our waterways are at a major crossroads. The biggest change in management for over 60 years involves a much greater commitment to local and volunteer involvement and a challenging financial position. The introduction of the New Waterways Charity from next year will have a big influence on the way the Huddersfield Canal Society develops. Your Council is planning to send

in its own response and I urge all members to get to grips with what is happening and if possible have your say on the consultation by the end of June 2011.

I'm looking forward to the Society's celebration at Diggle on 18th September. Do get involved in this event either by offering to help or by being there. For those who would like to inspect the Standedge Tunnel from the western end on the planned short trip, a treat is in store as there is much more variety in the lined and unlined tunnel than is visible from the short trip into the Marsden portal.

As always Pennine Link welcomes letters and emails from members and friends so keep them coming in. To illustrate this, and the fact that our canal has wide appeal, it was good to have an email just before deadline date from Neal Toy who said:

*'I finished the last section of the Narrow Canal today. From Marsden Moor, down to Diggle and along to Ashton. Fabulous walk. Been doing it in a number of short sections (including up and over Marsden Moor in deep snow) and have really enjoyed every part. A very interesting cut from end to end. So much variety and the surrounding hills form a much more dramatic backdrop than my local example; the Sheffield to Keadby. I'm more of a walker than a canal enthusiast and as such I've been struck by the excellent work carried out by your organisation in restoring, promoting and informing. The latter has been really noteworthy and the sign boards add so much, particularly to the layman such as myself.*

*This is basically to thank you for your efforts and wish you all well for the future.'*

Let's follow Neal onto the towpath and enjoy the rest of the summer!

**Alan Stopher**



## Chairman's Annual Report

Your company has experienced a busy and productive year. Board meetings have been held bimonthly with consistently good attendances.

Alwyn Ogborn retired from Council after many years of service to the Society including the editorship of Pennine Link, our quarterly magazine. Eric Crossland retired having been involved in the restoration and maintenance for many years. We thank both these members for all their work on our behalf.

Three new members were co-opted during the year: Alan Stopher, an expert on canal construction who led the Huddersfield Canal Company Limited during the final stages of our restoration; Patricia Bayley, a volunteer on our Marsden water ferry who was for a time our Marketing Officer and Graham Birch who has been involved professionally with our canal for many years as a senior officer within Oldham MBC. His retirement has allowed him to use his expertise to the benefit of the Society on a voluntary basis.

There have been no staff changes and Dr Bob Gough, our Administrator and Ms Clare Bebbington, our Marketing Officer have continued to work conscientiously on your behalf.

Membership continues to hover around the 600 mark and we have continued to recruit new members throughout the year.

A successful Family Fun Day was held on Easter Sunday at the Brownhill Centre in Saddleworth. Our thanks are due for the support we received from our partners in Oldham MBC and British Waterways.

The year 2011 marks the bicentenary of the opening of the canal to boats from Ashton under Lyne to Huddersfield and during 2010 plans began to be made to mark this special anniversary. We are grateful once again to councillors and officers of Oldham MBC who have been towers of strength to us in so many ways during the year.

During the year, British Waterways announced their plans to convert to charitable status and we await with interest the changes which will take place in this connection which is due to take place in 2012. Our relationship with British Waterways remains good.

Our magazine, Pennine Link has continued to be distributed on a quarterly basis. Thanks are due to Bob Gough for his desk top publishing work. Since the retirement of the Editor its future issues are to be edited by volunteer Council members who will each have the opportunity to put their own points of view.

The Marsden Shuttle, our boat taxi service from Marsden railway station to the visitors' centre at Tunnel End on the Yorkshire side has continued to operate during weekends and bank holidays throughout the season. Our thanks go to organiser, Andrea Fisher and her team of trained volunteers.

I offer my personal thanks for the unstinting support of our partners, volunteers, members and staff for their contribution to the continuing success of the Huddersfield Canal Society.

**Neville Kenyon**, Chairman

Our thanks to all those members who have signed Gift Aid forms. Membership income for 2010 was boosted by £1,065 courtesy of a rebate from the Inland Revenue! If appropriate, please consider signing the form on renewing your membership.

# A New Era

## **“A New Era for the Waterways”**

This is the title given to the consultation on the Government’s proposals for moving inland waterways into a new charity in England and Wales.

It would not be overstating it to say that the launch of this document is a historic moment in the life of our canal and all those other waterways we know and love. The proposals contained within the document herald the greatest change in Inland Waterway policy since nationalisation in 1948.

In this article I intend to summarise the proposed changes, set out how people can respond to the consultation, indicate what happens next and draw attention to the key issues of concern being raised by observers of the waterway scene.

## **The Background**

Those Society members who have been following the emerging intentions of our current government and its predecessor will be aware of all-party support to move British Waterways into the third sector or what is now known as Civil Society. During the earlier consultations on the principle, there has been broad agreement that some form of charitable trust would be the best way forward to free the waterways from the tight control of Treasury purse-strings, enable the raising of funds from other sources and improve engagement with local communities. As we enter a period of austerity in the wake of the credit crunch and banking crisis, British Waterways was faced with reductions in public funding, in particular the annual Grant-in-Aid, and no certainty as to the availability of future

annual grants. The move to a charitable organisation was clearly the only viable option.

## **What do the new proposals involve?**

These proposals take the idea a step forward by setting out in some detail how it is to be achieved. The new body, which comes into effect in April 2012, is being called the New Waterways Charity (NWC) until a permanent name is chosen. The new body will be mainly based on the waterways run by British Waterways (BW) but the scope has been amended to include the prospect of the navigations currently run by the Environment Agency joining the NWC three years later subject to acceptance by the new Board of Trustees. Excluded from the proposals are BW’s waterways in Scotland so NWC will cover England and Wales only. There is also scope for some of the smaller non-Government run waterways to merge with NWC in due course if they so wish.

NWC would be a charitable company limited by guarantee with a Board of Trustees. It would have a separate trading subsidiary (a Community Interest Company) with its own Board to manage the commercial interests which are primarily the property portfolio. All surpluses raised by this trading arm will be gifted to the charity.

The Waterways Trust, which was set up in 1999 to manage BW’s museums and which also holds the freehold of the Rochdale Canal, is to remain a separate charity for the time being.

The key charitable purposes of the NWC are proposed to be:

- the stewardship of inland waterways for the public benefit including:

- their efficient operation and management;

- preserving and enhancing their availability for navigation;

- facilitating a broad range of other recreational and leisure uses for public health and well-being, including safeguarding free public access to towpaths;

- conserving and enhancing their built and natural heritage, including wildlife habitats;

- sustainable use and management of natural resources, which take account of climate change;

- use of the waterways as an educational resource (including museums);

- the restoration of waterways; and

- regeneration of waterways and the adjoining land corridors through which they pass.

Most of the statutory powers of British Waterways will be transferred to the NWC by legislative order and other powers will be derived from its charitable constitution.

Besides the unpaid Board of Trustees which will govern the NWC, there will be a Council which will be the guardian of the long term values of the charity. It will be able to appoint and dismiss trustees. The proposals suggest that the Council is made up of 35-50 representatives of stakeholders including the chairs of Local Partnerships. The latter will be based on the 11 waterway management units which in our case is the Manchester &

Pennine unit. Each Local Partnership would determine its programme of activity for any one year, working with the Waterway Manager to meet local needs and to exploit local opportunities. Membership of the Local Partnership would be between 8 and 12 people and the consultation document seeks views on how this should be made up. Case studies indicate how local action could occur and volunteers could be engaged. The intention is to broaden the roles for volunteer involvement in the operation of the waterways and the National Trust is often cited as an exemplar organisation with local roots.

The document considers management of the ageing assets and raises concerns about the sustainability of the existing funding arrangements. It sets out the proposal for £41.5m of government grant for 2011/2 and £39m per annum for the subsequent 11 years in return for a contract to deliver the charitable purposes described above. In order to achieve a sustainable business model, additional income would derive from commercial income via the trading subsidiary such as licences and rent, grants from other organisations, charitable income such as legacies, regular donors, borrowing against property assets and volunteers support. A decision on whether to have a membership scheme would be left to the charity.

There is a strong indication that statutory commitments to maintain certain commercial waterways for freight traffic may need to be reduced.

A number of projections are shown which suggest how sufficient funding could be raised. These are based on the

most favourable figures contained in a separate Impact Assessment document

There is a chapter on the transition to civil society which lists the main steps to be taken including the appointment of Transition Trustees, setting up the company and its trading subsidiary, obtaining charitable status, agreeing the funding contract, legal transfers and transfers of existing staff and property.

### **So what do other organisations think about the proposals?**

The Inland Waterways Association (IWA) has at last seen an opportunity to realise its dream of an Inland Waterways Conservancy to run all navigations. This has been their policy since Robert Aickman, Tom Rolt and others set out to revitalise the canals in 1948. Ideally IWA preferred to see BW and the Environment Agency combined from the outset of the new charity.

The Commercial Boat Operators Association is understandably critical of the suggestion that commercial waterways may be downgraded. This organisation campaigns to retain wharves where there is prospect of new water-based freight operations taking traffic off the roads. They are working with Leeds City Council to retain facilities in Leeds for bring in aggregates from the Humber up the Aire & Calder Navigation.

Most commentators on the waterways scene have the greatest concerns about the reduced Grant-in-Aid starting from the current year. In 2008 KPMG identified a £30m per annum shortfall in funds available to maintain waterways structures when the Grant-in-Aid to British Waterways was still £50m per annum. This theme is not developed

further and the absence of a range of scenarios in the document suggests that the figures have been made to fit the underfunded position of the nationalised business. Charitable donations at a time of national austerity may well fall short of the levels projected and in any case could take many years to reach reasonable levels. Unlike the National Trust, which has a mass membership willing to pay for free access to historic properties, the NWC will be committed to free access to towpaths and will not have the same ability to generate substantial levels of membership or supporters income in return for benefits. There are varying estimates of the shortfall to maintain waterways assets depending on assumptions made but a cumulative funding gap of around £200m by 2023 may not be wide of the mark. Despite the legal agreement with the Millennium Commission and their successors, what will this mean to lesser used and financially demanding remainder waterways such as the Huddersfield Narrow Canal? A charity with tough choices to make on where to invest its limited budget may not look favourably on our pride and joy.

The transition from a nationalised industry giving limited (albeit improving) opportunities to volunteers to a fully fledged volunteer-friendly charitable organisation is a challenging one. The Governance structure at a local level is sure to have an impact on the levels of local involvement and the commitment of individuals. Will locally raised funds be able to be used on local priorities? Will the Local Partnerships be able to react to local needs and sufficiently engage individuals and interest groups such as Huddersfield Canal Society so



that there is a feeling of ownership of our waterway? The sheer size of each of the 11 waterway areas may work against that. For instance South East Waterways runs from Birmingham to Watford, Market Harborough to Oxford and our own Manchester and Pennine unit almost reaches Stoke-on-Trent.

These are just some of the points which are being raised.

### **Your chance to have a say**

Response to the public consultation is not just for organisations. Individuals are urged to give their views. The document is available for downloading from the internet at the following link:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/consult/2011/03/30/waterways-1103/>

The document includes 29 questions including one seeking suggestions for the name of the new charity. Respondents do not need to confine their comments to answering the questions.

The last date for replying to the consultation is **30th June 2011**.

Replies can be sent to:

[NWCresponses@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:NWCresponses@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

or by post to:

NWC Consultation Responses  
Inland Waterways Team, Defra  
Area 2D  
Ergon House  
Horseferry Road  
SW1P 4AL

I urge as many members as possible to respond to this once in a life time opportunity to shape the new waterway charity. Remember that the last major change happened 60 years ago so we owe it to our children to take part now. I'm sure we all want to ensure the continued glory of our waterways and that the view below is not consigned to an archival curiosity.

**Alan Stopher**

*Footnote: Alan Stopher is guest editor for this edition of Pennine Link. Besides being a member of HCS Council he is a member of the Inland Waterways Advisory Council (IWAC) and currently involved in a sub-group preparing a response to the 'New Era' document'. The comments made in this article do not necessarily reflect the views of HCS or IWAC.*



## Obituary - John McLoughlin

John McLoughlin, 79, died on 23rd April 2011 after a long illness. Having kept in touch with John and his wife Pauline, every year at Christmas, I know that he enjoyed spending time during his retirement with his family and expressed extreme pride in their achievements. He was also a keen supporter of Manchester United and got involved with local amateur league football. He also never failed to tell me how much he loved his time working on the canals.

Following over 30 years experience of tool-making and precision engineering, John started work on the local waterways in 1983, working for the Community Task Force on the Ashton Canal.

In 1984 he was employed as a Supervisor, on a 12 month contract, with the Tameside Canals Development Association, chaired by Frank Ruffley. He had the unique qualification of being our only employee that had any firsthand knowledge of Canals or Government Employment Schemes. Within a few weeks of the project starting, we needed to appoint a replacement right-hand man for me. At the interview, John produced a large file with his diaries and all the paperwork associated with supervising a dozen participants for a full year. He could trace every bag of cement used and each pair of gloves issued! David Sumner and I were suitably impressed and John was appointed Senior Supervisor. The scheme proved popular and grew to 170 full & part-time participants and the

association evolved into Tameside Canals Limited and eventually H.C.S. (Restoration) Ltd. John interviewed and appointed over 2500 participants over the years. He was a manager with a no-nonsense approach, but he was always fair and held the respect of all who worked with him. He had a 'glass half full' approach to life and liked to work with a smile. The change in emphasis from job-creation to training required that all the staff undertake appropriate training courses. John successfully completed both the NEBSS Certificate and Diploma in Supervisory Management.

It is fair to say that we got very good at 'scheming' and our 12 month contracts lasted over 15 years. When John reached his 65th Birthday he was worried that he may be forced to retire, but we were also getting quite good at canal restoration by then and had our eyes on a few more years work with the help of Derelict Land Grants and Lottery cash.

The Canal Society's achievements and success during the 'Employment Scheme era' was founded on the ability of all the team to adapt and exploit every opportunity and consistently deliver good work. We needed a good team and every team manager needs a good right hand man – loyal, hard-working, conscientious, trustworthy and honest. I think I got the best.

**Stephen J. Whitby**



# Events in the Bicentenary Year

## Saturday 23rd & Sunday 24th July

Standedge Tunnel and Canal Party

Join British Waterways as they host a garden party to celebrate the Tunnel's 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Visit [www.standedge.co.uk](http://www.standedge.co.uk) for further details

**Venue:** Standedge Visitor Centre, Tunnel End

**Time:** 11am - 4pm each day A FREE event

## Saturday 6th August

Boat Trip aboard 'Still Waters'

A trip on the Tameside Canal Boat Trust's boat 'Still Waters' along the Manchester & Ashton Canal to Droylsden Marina and back.

There will be no refreshments on board, so don't forget your packed lunch!

**Cost:** £2.50 per person, advance booking and payment required - call 01457 871800 to book your place(s).

**Venue:** Portland Basin Museum Wharf, Ashton-u-Lyne, OL7 0QA

**Time:** 10am - 2pm

## Sunday 18th September

HCS Bicentenary Festival & Boat Gathering

The Canal Society's main event with a host of attractions including Diggle Brass Band, craft stalls, children's activities (provided by OPAG), climbing wall, bouncy castle and community displays plus narrowboats on the

Canal. British Waterways will be running short trips into the Tunnel and the Oldham Theatre Workshop will be performing 'al fresco' throughout the day.

**Venue:** Diggle Tip, off Sam Road, Diggle

**Time:** 11am - 3pm

## Thursday 6th October

Bicentenary Quiz Night

A Narrow Canal themed quiz night hosted by Society Administrator, Bob Gough; known for his devious Treasure Hunts, he assures us things won't be too difficult. Free entry, Prizes

**Venue:** Masonic Hall, Uppermill, OL3 6BT

**Time:** 7 - 9pm



What a Duck! It was exciting to think Andrea Fisher had spotted a real rarity on the canal (Issue 172). Though the identification of Ringed Teal was correct, it transpired the species is extremely popular with wildfowl breeders and is certainly an 'escape' from captivity. Just have to wait for a Roseate Tern ... **BG**



## CLOGGER'S COTTAGE

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OL3 6DF

Contact: Peter or Judith  
01457 878361

[www.uppermillcottage.co.uk](http://www.uppermillcottage.co.uk)

\* A superb location beside the Huddersfield Narrow Canal

\* Convenient for all village amenities \* Owned by canal enthusiast & HCS member

## 'Greetings' from Further East - Part III

*Andrea Fisher continues her account of Community Spirit's big adventure ...*

When last we met, I was having a girly night in ..... The morning after was a rude awakening; it appeared that 3 dishevelled gents were trying, with the aid of a piece of wood (paddle), to punt a rather weather beaten old cruiser into the lock! In the process, one of them tumbled backwards and just before entry, managed to gain his feet and resume his task.

As we were now awake and alert we gathered ourselves together, Simon, Jim, Keef and myself, and proceeded through the next two locks towards Adlington. Except Simon had miscounted the locks, strode off to set up the next one, and after 4-5 miles realised things were not as they should be and sat in the sun to wait for us. On being re-united, he found he was not flavour of the month, as we had got quite agitated as to his whereabouts, especially as he had one of the windlasses with him. Never a good thing to lose!

Reaching our destination, we were able to tidy the boat. Jim collected his gear, as he was leaving us, and we found a convenient hostelry to say 'hello' to Susan (Mrs Jim) and 'adios' to the pair of them after a leisurely bevvie.

Next morning we were picking up Mike McCann, Skipper for the rest of the trip, Ron who was along to relieve his boredom and

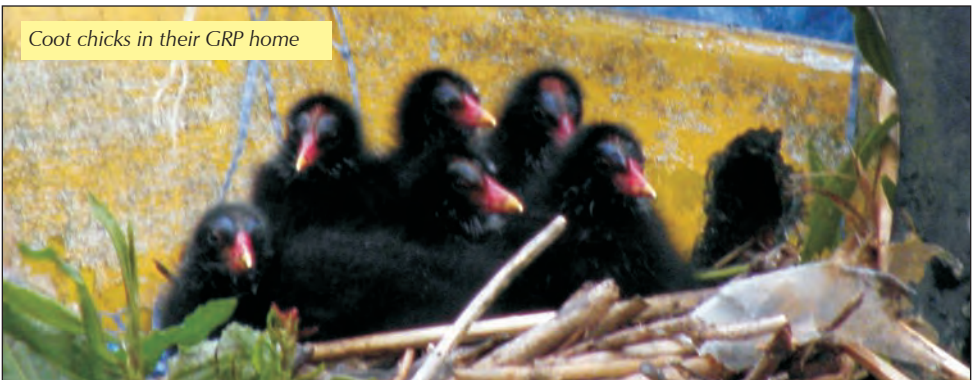
Nigel, Organiser of groups and successful chaser of funding for Community Spirit. They were with us to get us through the 21 locks to Wigan before the 4.30pm deadline that BW set each day, before securing the gates for the night.

Needless to say with a busy day in front of us, it started to rain; dense soft clouds, which I refer to as mizzle, but it's very penetrating, soggy stuff. However, we got stuck in, and with the help of Graham Searby, who just appeared out of the mist unexpectedly, but very welcome, we were half way down the flight before we knew it. Lots of good crack surely makes time pass well.

At the bottom of the flight we said our goodbyes, just leaving Mike, Simon and yours truly to negotiate towards Burscough Bridge and then on to Maghull where we were to collect a group of youngsters for a day trip on the boat. At this point we struggled for a pump out, but were helped by a local boat club who also had water (well they wouldn't they!) Showers were another matter. They were not to be found, until we reached Maghull where a really nice lady on a liveaboard took pity on (just) me and let me have the use of her shower; what utter bliss!

The following morning our group of youngsters arrived along with Nigel who had organised their trip from Breckfields Community Centre. This was where the

*Coot chicks in their GRP home*





change over of crews and arrangers met its downfall. But, I have to say it was the only one of our making on the whole six week trip.

The plan was to take the group to Eldonian Village and back, which, as you seasoned boaters out there know, is beyond bridge No. 9. That is the bridge for which only BW has a key and only on your pre-booked, designated day, will they produce the magic key for you to gain entry!

Young teenage lads and lasses full of beans, lots of energy, settled on the boat and started asking lots of questions: 'Why can't we get through the bridge?' 'What are you going to do now?' (it slowly dawned on us we had dropped a clanger!) Well, we were just going to have to turn the boat round and take them in the other direction. The trouble was our 55 and a bit footer wouldn't go round, so we hauled her back until we finally found a place where she would, having made five attempts at different, yet promising, places! During this time, the kids had so much fun as they were actively involved in this unplanned exercise.

Of course, we eventually got ourselves sorted out, and got them back safely to their rendezvous point. They were all boat manoeuvring experts by the time they left us and as they wandered back to their transport shouted "If you want some help, can we do it again tomorrow?"

Needless to say the group we had on the following day were taken the opposite way.

*A World away from the Community Centre*



They were Mums, Grandmas and very young children and they had a restful cruise in very pretty weather. The expression 'Horses for Courses' comes to mind. *To be continued ...*

**Andrea Fisher**

*ps. The Marsden Shuttle has been up and running since the middle of March, so if anyone wants to volunteer to crew don't be shy! Give me a ring (01484 686136). Just one more thing, thanks to all those who came to the dinner at the Great Western in February and helped make it such a good evening.*

*All photos: Andrea Fisher*



*Breckfields Community Centre bowhauling Community Spirit*

# The Waterways Festival 2011

## Festival Extravaganza Floats into Staffordshire

There will be so much to see and do on the banks of the Trent and Mersey Canal when Burton upon Trent hosts The Waterways Festival, previously known as the National Festival and Boat Show, from **Friday 29<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2011**.

This new date is a change from recent years when it was held over the August Bank Holiday, and has come after significant consultation with exhibitors, attending public and IWA volunteers who are all vital to the staging of the event.

Nestled to the East of Staffordshire, the historic brewing town has been chosen for the second time to host the annual celebration, with up to 30,000 people expected to attend.

The three day festival is an exciting and colourful extravaganza packed with a host of attractions all providing an educational and fun day out for all the family.

Around 350 boats, many decorated, will line up along the water's edge. Heritage crafts will also feature strongly, with historic working boats on display at the festival.

The event is renowned for its high quality entertainment and history lovers will be drawn to the major Viking battle re-enactment and living camp being staged by the world famous Regia Anglorum.

With a reputation for vivid and dramatic entertainment, the Mikron Theatre Company will debut a new waterways show called 'Hell and High Water'. There is much more to see,

including live music, water activities and fairground rides.

The festival will also host up to 250 exhibitors so whether you're interested in boats and chandlery or just wish to browse the many speciality stalls, including clothing, arts and crafts, jewellery and speciality food and drink, the choice is extensive.

The event itself is organised entirely by a small army of volunteers gathered from canal enthusiasts and many from the local community of the host area. If you'd like to get involved and become a volunteer please contact:  
Ann Mayall on 01488 682504.

Make sure you put the date of this National IWA event in your diary!

Advance tickets can be purchased online at [www.thewaterwaysfestival.co.uk](http://www.thewaterwaysfestival.co.uk).

Ticket prices:

Single Day Adults £8 (on gate £10),

Single Day Concessions £7 (on gate £8)

Three Day (day time only) Ticket £15 (on gate £19). Children under 16 go FREE when accompanied by an adult.



IWA National  
Burton - 2004



# Top hole

Standedge Tunnel certainly is.  
And our boats are pretty good too.  
Combine the two on a one-way trip,  
or do the whole South Pennine Ring.

Shire Cruisers  
The Wharf  
Sowerby Bridge  
West Yorkshire  
HX6 2AG

01422 832712  
[info@shirecruisers.co.uk](mailto:info@shirecruisers.co.uk)  
[www.shirecruisers.co.uk](http://www.shirecruisers.co.uk)

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## Pleasure Cruising on the Narrow - Part 2

*Trevor Ellis considers the history of cruising the canal simply for pleasure:*

In the Winter Issue (172), I gave a brief history of the early pleasure cruisers that we know of on this Canal and promised more detail on Dr. or Mr. Greene. The interesting difference between Greene and the earlier people to cruise the Huddersfield Narrow Canal is that, while they left few traces, he seems to have generated publicity, even in advance. Thus, the Colne Valley Guardian for Friday 20 August 1937 states "Coming northwards from Gloucester and expected to reach Diggle during this week is the "Success", a long boat converted for cruising purposes, on which a Gloucester doctor and his family are spending a novel holiday." Whether Greene sent out press-releases or the paper picked up the news from other newspapers is hard to tell.

The boat had left Gloucester about a fortnight previously and had travelled via the Severn to Stourport, up the Staffs and Worcester Canal and the Shropshire Union Canal. A diversion to Chester was necessary because of a bent propeller blade, then they retraced their route as far back as the Middlewich arm, on the Trent and Mersey Canal, up the Macclesfield and along the Peak Forest Canal to Ashton, where they came to the notice of the Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter, Ashton Reporter, Stalybridge Reporter and even the Glossop Chronicle. All of these papers were a part of the same group and it was the discovery of an article and photograph in the latter paper which prompted the article in "Narrowboat" in Spring 2006 mentioned last time.

The voyage to Ashton was described as "fairly uneventful", but at Poynton they had found that one of the bridges over the Macclesfield Canal had sunk by over a foot, and the boat was about nine inches too high. The difficulty was overcome by ballasting the boat with ten tons of bricks, which were then stacked by the canal to await their return. Woodley tunnel only gave them 1½ inches clearance.

The photograph in the various papers on the west side appears to have been taken while scaffolding under the railway arch on the top part of the Ashton Canal held up the "Success". The scaffolding did not allow the boat sufficient clearance and they had to spend the night in Ashton. On the Thursday morning, some of the scaffolding was removed and "Success" continued its voyage.

Greene and seven other people, family and friends, were travelling in the "Success", an early narrowboat conversion, distinctive in having two separate cabin sections with an open section between. "Narrowboat" managed to trace the earlier history of the boat, which Greene had bought from a carrier in Gloucester in 1935. In the newspaper interviews, he claimed to have "cruised over 1,000 miles during the past four or five years and last year voyaged as far as Boston, Lincs.", so it would appear that he may have had an earlier craft, though his trip to Boston was certainly in the "Success". It would certainly be interesting to know if he has left any trace in the newspapers of Lincolnshire for August 1936 and whether he crops up elsewhere in the Summer months of the 1930's – it would seem likely that a man drawn



to Standedge would be attracted by Pontcysyllte or Anderton, for example, and a trip towards London may have been another possibility. Attempts by Bob Gough to contact the press in the Gloucester area have not been successful, but if our readership have any contacts in that area, a medical man like Greene should surely be traceable.

The journey towards the Tunnel seems to have been slowed by the narrowness of some of the locks and, according to the Colne Valley Guardian, "when about a mile on the other side of the tunnel they came across one so narrow that it took them two and three-quarter hours to negotiate it." This lock was named in some of the accounts as Wade Lock in Uppermill., a familiar problem to some boaters even today. They also seem to have had some problems at Woolroad. Fortunately, they were being followed by a large crowd of people and with their assistance pulling on ropes and with the help of a horse, the boat was able to get through. They "got away with a few minor scratches on the side of the boat. No serious damage was done."

"The tunnel is a filthy place," said the doctor when interviewed by the Colne Valley Guardian, "but it is very interesting. We came through in one hour and forty minutes. The engine had all the work to do and we proceeded very slowly." In fact their time equals a good time for a commercial boat legging the Tunnel and is only twenty minutes shy of the "record" legging time claimed by David Whitehead. Greene described the tunnel as "pitch dark and extremely smoky" and said that they could hear trains passing through the adjacent tunnel. They had only about two inches to spare between the top of the boat and the roof of the tunnel. The Colne Valley Guardian photographed the boat, which

appears to have been moored on the offside of the Summit pound between Marsden Station and Tunnel End, though the picture leaves much to be desired.

Owing to the various delays the party decided not to proceed on to Huddersfield as they had originally intended, but "to spend the night in Marsden and set out on their return journey on Saturday morning." The Tunnel Book does give a time of 10.00am for the entry to the Tunnel, though some of the newspaper accounts suggest evening.

Returning from Standedge the boat left Uppermill at 7.00 p.m. on the Saturday, which would tend to confirm the Tunnel Book timing. When it reached a point near the Lock House at Millbrook, at a time unstated, there was another delay while repairs to the rudder were carried out and the journey then resumed at 10.30 on Monday morning. "During Sunday and Monday large numbers of people visited the vicinity of the Lock House to inspect the boat, and when the journey was resumed quite a large number of people walked alongside the unusual craft on its way to Stalybridge, keeping pace with the boat as far as the Guide Post Tavern, Stalybridge."

They stated to one of the papers that they were planning to return via Stoke-on-Trent, but whether they managed to do this, given the fact that it would have necessitated passing through the restricted bore of Harecastle Tunnel must be open to question. All-in-all, a massive undertaking, which must have taken them at least a month, covering close on 400 miles and nearly as many locks.

*Dr Greene in the Standedge Tunnel Book  
Courtesy of BW Archives, Gloucester*

**Trevor Ellis**





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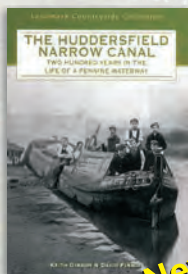
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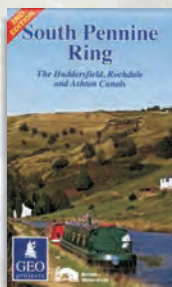
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## Jidoku 20

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The grid represents British Waterways; and the nine letters are all canals within British Waterways. The initial letters featured being: Trent & Mersey, Birmingham & Fazeley, Huddersfield Narrow, Leeds & Liverpool, Grand Union, Stratford, Coventry, Kennet & Avon, Ashton.

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

*Solution on page 30*

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

My late husband and I, as members of the Huddersfield Canal Society, followed the restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow canal by car over many years. Unfortunately we sold our boat several years before the canal was re-opened. I never expected that I would have the opportunity to cruise this waterway at some future date.

Imagine my delight at finding a hotel boat company (Bywater Hotelboat Cruises) were doing the whole length as well as the Anderton Lift on an 8 night cruise at the end of July this year (2010). I was one of the first to book. I knew that part of the Leeds Liverpool canal had been closed due to lack of water, but BW had assured the Hotelboat operators (Hanna and John) that there was no water shortage on the Huddersfield.

Unfortunately this was not the case.

There may have been no shortage of water to supply the canal, but due to a lack of dredging and leaking lock gates etc our journey proved to be exceptionally difficult – so much so that Hanna and John had to abandon our trip through Standedge and were not able to complete the rest of the cruise down to Huddersfield – or start the next cruise at Huddersfield as planned.

We left Portland Basin on the morning of 1 August. The going was pretty slow.

We ran into trouble at Lock 3W.

Something was wrong with a top paddle and this had caused the level of the pound above to drop dramatically. We managed to limp along, both the motor and the butty requiring poling off on many occasions.

The pound above Lock 4W was so low we knew that we couldn't go any further. British Waterways had been informed of the problems we were having by phone.



A Scott



We were told that the paddle would be dealt with that day, which it was – but we were then told we should stay put for 24 hours to allow them to get the levels sorted out. Stalybridge on a Sunday is a bit of a dead loss! At least the crew had something to do – they fished over 20 Tesco trolleys out of the cut – some of a type that hadn't been used for 6 years!

We were all disappointed that we were not able to complete the cruise we had booked on. It would have been great to have cruised through Slaithwaite etc into Aspley Basin. At the end of the cruise Hanna and John had to pay for us passengers to have taxis from Stalybridge to Huddersfield to get our trains back home. They also had to inform the guests for the next cruise that it would be starting at Stalybridge and arrange for taxis to bring them from Huddersfield station to the boats. Extra expense for them again.

In spite of all the difficulties we encountered, all our meals were served on time and were of the very high standard this hotelboat company maintains.

I do hope that BW will find some money to do dredging and replace lock gates etc. If not, other boaters will be put off and the canal will fall into dereliction again. The scenery is absolutely wonderful.

Yours sincerely

**Mrs A M Scott, ROTHERHAM**

*It's always good to hear from users of our canal. However space limitations and the fact that the article in the Autumn 2010 edition covered similar ground has meant that this letter had been substantially curtailed. I hope that publication of the photo softens the blow. Ed.*

Left: Bywater Hotelboat 'Karna Taka' in Stalybridge Town Centre.

Right: Moorings at Sainsbury's rather occupied!

Dear Sirs,

I was pleased to skipper the Shire Cruisers Nb "Somerset" round the South Pennine Ring with my daughter's family during the last August Bank Holiday period. It was my sixth passage of the Huddersfield Narrow since its restoration and I must say the enjoyment has never diminished.

I cannot praise too highly the cooperation received from the British Waterways staff and the trip went entirely according to plan with only a few minor difficulties in shallow pounds above Slaithwaite. The highlight for me was being able to steer 'Somerset' through Standedge Tunnel. I was surprised how few other boats we encountered. I have only one gripe. It was difficulty finding an overnight mooring in Huddersfield because the moorings at Sainsbury's seemed entirely taken up with live-ons (*below*).

I can't understand these people who complain about the Huddersfield Narrow being a tough passage. With patience and a good crew, I can recommend the trip to any serious boater.

I praise the contribution the Huddersfield Canal Society made towards restoration and their ongoing volunteer work. I am proud to be a member.

I enclose a cheque for £10 which please accept as a donation.

Yours faithfully,

**Harold Wainwright, DERBY**



Bob Cough

# The Ramsden & Huddersfield Canals

*Keith Noble writes: Neil Fraser wrote this article some time before he died in 2001 and some of the date stones and plates may since have been lost. Furthermore, subsequent research has revealed additional information added as footnotes to Neil's text. I'm sure he would have approved the Roman 'MM' commemorating the millennium on the new structures built on the Huddersfield Canal in the course of restoration.*

## Delights of the Ramsden & Huddersfield Canals

by Neil Fraser

One of the delightful aspects of canals is of having dates carved into their infrastructure – in heads of reservoir spillways, entrances to valve houses, lock chambers and bridges. The earliest\* appears at Swellands dated '1821'. At March Haigh the earliest of three dates is a doorway inscribed '1832'. The coming of railways accelerated this when major works were undertaken.

Many bridges have their dates in a conspicuous place. That at Commercial Street, once known as Clegg Lane, bears '1871'. A striking feature of the figures is uniformity, notably a very ornate '6'. Exceptions include Shawfoot Mill tail goit where three semi-circular cast iron pieces bear '1878' in small figures. By the Great Western public house at Standedge overlooking Red Brook Clough lay a solitary stone dated 1879. An iron girder bridge at Mossley bears '1880'.

*\* A date of 1797 was recorded on Royal George Aqueduct, Mossley, by the Saddleworth Historical Society in 1976, though difficult to see today. Ed.*

Lock 14E is the first\* to bear a date stone inside the chamber, '1887'. Some locks bear two dates, opposite each other and some bear a date at the side. Fieldhouse Lock, No.7, on the Sir John Ramsden (Broad) Canal bears the most recent date, '1939'.

The newer entrance to Standedge Tunnel at Diggle bears '1893'. Milepost No.1 on the Narrow is uniquely dated 1848 as is the row of waterside cottages known as 'Teapot Row' at Tunnel End. Whitelands Tunnel, Stalybridge, displays '1856' and the lock cottage at Booth, '1858'.

Strangely for something then owned by the most powerful joint stock company in the world, the L&NWR, I cannot often recall seeing the company's initials on their canals except for a plentiful supply of iron boundary posts. At Standedge polished ashlar boundary posts bear the initials 'LNWR', with an iron 'H' let into the top.

*\* Lock 12E has an 1870 date stone in the towpath side chamber wall and appears to be the earliest. Ed.*



The old Huddersfield Canal reservoir at Swinshaw Mill was built in the late 1790s and burst in 1893. Here there is a square sectioned post about 4ft. high with the letters 'L', 'N'; 'W' & 'R' respectively, each on one of the four sides. It stands near the present reservoir built by Ashton & Stalybridge corporations (*below left*).

Even when the canal offices were rebuilt, only the date '1879' was inscribed without any other information. Stalybridge aqueduct with its masonry pediment of two heights and iron trough bears '1875'.

A subtle difference in style may be seen at Locomotive Bridge (Turnbridge Road/Quay Street) in Huddersfield. The gate '1865' (*below*) appears twice on the counterweight covers (*inset*). The digits are in the same font as John Ramsbottom applied to his LNWR locomotives.

It was a thoughtful gesture of Kirklees Council to incorporate '1988' on the widened side of Colne Bridge Road bridge over the Ramsden Canal.

At the behest of the Calder Navigation Society the '1775' date stone, which would otherwise have been lost or covered up, was moved to its present position on the other face.

Bridge widening was the responsibility of the local highway authority and two such in the Colne Valley bear dates. Armitage Bridge, Milnsbridge, '1861' is one.

The other at Low Westwood Lane is the same but dated 1884. A long disused footbridge at Bradley still carries 1864.

This same date appears on Miners Street bridge, Stalybridge.

A 'one-off' on a building with a half circular doorway by Lock 26W, Saddleworth, bore '1884' too but was lost to roadworks.

**Neil Fraser**



# Horseboating Society

## THE BI-CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS TO RE-ENACT APRIL 4, 1811 by Sue Day

What a revolution of transport efficiency the canal and tunnel made when it opened in 1811. A packhorse could carry only one tenth of a ton on its back over the Pennines, whereas a boathorse pulled 20 tons in a narrowboat, doing the work of 200 packhorses, legged through the tunnel by human power alone.

To re-create April 4, 1811 took several years of preparation, but on April 4, 2011 the Horseboating Society made a good attempt with help from members of the local community and here is how it came about.

I moved to Slaithwaite near Huddersfield in 1979, became aware of the canal and joined Huddersfield Canal Society to campaign for its restoration. On visiting the Ashton Canal Festival where the Ashton Packet Boat Co. were offering horse-drawn boat trips for passengers I met Sonny pulling the 1854 wooden horseboat Maria. Used to working with harness horses I decided to develop skills in horseboating, ready for the day when the canal could take horse-drawn boats. This came sooner than expected, as in the 1980s, Sonny pulled Benjamin Outram in Uppermill, and Tanner pulled the same boat from Marsden to West Slaithwaite – due to engine failure of the boat! When the APBCo ceased passenger carrying, I took Maria horse-drawn from Ashton to London in 2000 with Bonny.

In 2001, I founded the Horseboating Society, and the HBS has operated horseboat Maria

since then. Most years she has done a return trip along the Narrow, as being 70 feet long, she cannot continue along the Broad where locks are shorter. In 2002, we borrowed Elland, a fascinating Yorkshire boat, built with a 60 foot iron hull in circa 1850s, and we took her around the South Pennine Ring. On learning she was for sale in 2009, I rushed to buy her and to bring her home as she had been taken south. BW had sold her in poor condition in the 1970s at Standedge, after using her as a mud boat. Like the wooden Maria, she underwent much private restoration. Elland returned to Standedge in full glory in November 2010, ready for the bi-centenary celebrations. The third horseboat to be used in the event was Vixen, built in steel in 1980 as a horse-drawn passenger boat. It had taken 30 years for me to get a horseboat for passengers to the canal! In 2010 Elland was horsedrawn from Castlefield, Manchester via the Rochdale to Standedge and Vixen was horse-drawn from Hebden Bridge to Standedge. Maria came from Ashton, climbing the Diggle locks and being legged thro the tunnel on April 2, 2011. The fleet of 3 horseboats was now ready in place.

I knew that the Horseboating Society alone could not provide sufficient leggers for the 3 days of the “legging fiesta” as our website manager, Martin Clark, called it. An invitation and call for help to the Diggle Community Association had brought unexpected results. Several leggers duly came forward, very keen to experience legging their local tunnel on this momentous occasion of its bi-centenary on April 4, 2011. The tunnel is one of the Seven Wonders of the Waterways, and at over 3 miles, the HBS needed many



Bilbo the Boathorse



An attentive audience at Marsden

Ken Catford



leggers to take turns at the work. Many who volunteered as leggers had become friends as mountaineers which was highly appropriate as they were accustomed to wet, cold, dirty conditions and yet appreciated rock! The Chairman of the Diggle Community Association came as a legger. Now we just needed the brass of the Diggle Band.

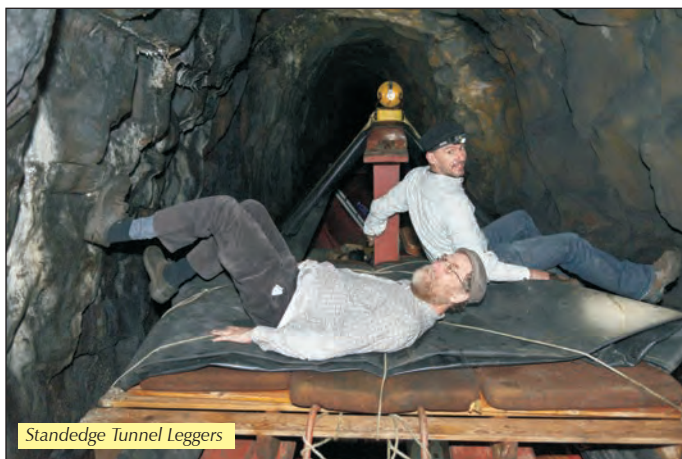
We legged the 3 boats from Marsden to Diggle on the Sunday to create a public event and to get the boats at Diggle for Monday, April 4. On the day itself, an octet of the Diggle Band joined us. They played "Rule Britannia" and other patriotic songs as the boats entered at Diggle, just as in 1811. They travelled through the tunnel in Vixen to provide dry protection for them and their instruments. Elland led the way to ensure that the Yorkshire boat should arrive first on the bi-centenary date. On arrival at Standedge,



Alan Stopher

we were greeted by a welcoming crowd for which we were grateful. For each of the 3 days of the "legging fiesta", a guided walk had been provided over the tunnel top following both the route of the boathorses and the progress of the legged boats below in the tunnel. Bilbo the Boathorse stepped out in front of these walks on each day. All arrived in time to greet the boats.

It was an emotional moment as Ronnie Barnes, the oldest member of the Horseboating Society at age 92, cut the red ribbon to the new Wildlife and Sensory Garden, the Leggers Rest Garden, behind the Standedge Visitor Centre. A fitting Opening for 2011! Ronnie is believed



Stuart Coleman Photography

to be the last surviving legger of Standedge Tunnel from when he worked as a full-time canal maintenance worker in 1946/7. The Horseboating Society has followed in his footsteps since.

Then to much needed sustenance, kindly provided by BW. There were 2 special cakes for the day: one made for BW; one made for HBS. Champagne came from BW and a barrel of Canal 200 beer from HBS.

Our thanks go to the Riverhead Brewery, Marsden who donated the beer; to Alan Schofield and Keith Whiteley who led and backed up the guided walks in all weathers; to BW for much support and organisation; to HCS for welcoming our arrival at Standedge and to the Diggle Band and Diggle Community Association for joining in to help celebrate this momentous occasion. Thanks to anyone who helped in any way and to Bilbo for bringing all 3 boats horse-drawn to Standedge so it could all happen. It was perhaps the largest gathering of horse-drawn boats anywhere in 40 years or more.

See more of the Bi-centenary Celebrations, at [www.horseboating.org.uk](http://www.horseboating.org.uk) for News and Gallery, and via the blog at <http://stuartcolemanphotography.com/Blogsite/> for a great "collage" of people. Also articles in Towpath Talk newspaper and Canalboat and Waterways World magazines (June issues).

**Sue Day**

# Hollinwood Canal Society

*Photos: M Clark*

Work continues on Manchester Road Bridge, in Droylsden, where the Metrolink tram route will cross the line of the Hollinwood Canal. The photo opposite shows the footbridge over the canal line alongside the road bridge, with the new ramp down to towpath level.

The second photo, below, shows tram lines being laid along the line of the original footway over the bridge. The building in the photos is Droylsden Library which looks a little isolated at the moment with delays in constructing the planned, surrounding developments.







Droylsden Marina, on the Hollinwood Canal's southern section, is proving a success, with all of the 16 pontoon moorings now occupied. Meanwhile building work on the surrounding Droylsden Wharf development is on hold waiting until the economic climate improves.

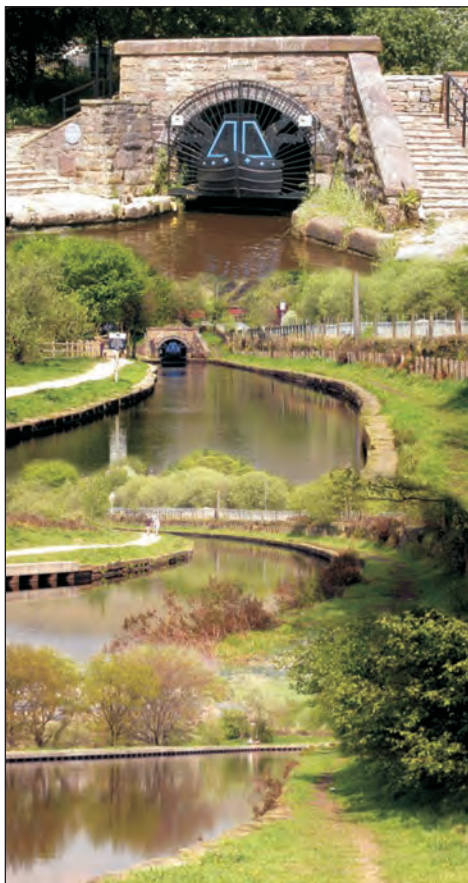
had ground to a halt, the remaining phases have been delayed. The waterside location, along with the nearby Ashton to Manchester Metrolink tramway, should ensure that the site will prove popular once the housing market recovers.

**Martin Clark**

The first phase, seen in the photo below, was completed as planned but, as sales



# Festival Day & Boat Gathering



**Huddersfield Canal Society have organised a number of events during 2011 to celebrate the Narrow Canal's bi-centenary.**

The events will culminate with a spectacular Festival Day at 'Diggle Tip' on Sunday 18th September, featuring, over that weekend, a Boat Gathering on the adjacent summit pound.

To get the 'Gathering' started, there will be a Boaters' Quiz on the Saturday evening, to be held at the Diggle Hotel, followed by live music from Brian Badminton (*nb Invicta*).

A number of boats have already booked in for the event and any other boaters who are interested in attending can either download an entry form from [www.huddersfieldcanal.com](http://www.huddersfieldcanal.com) or call the Society Office on 01457 871800 and request a copy by post.

British Waterways will be at the Festival with their public trip boat offering trips on the Sunday, in and out of the Standedge Tunnel from the Diggle end. This will be a different experience to their usual public trips at the Marsden end as far more natural rock can be seen.

See the Events list on page 11 for more details.

The Society will need volunteers to help on the Festival Day and would be grateful to hear from anyone who could spare some time to assist. Please contact Claire at the Office either by EMail: [claire@huddersfieldcanal.com](mailto:claire@huddersfieldcanal.com) or give her a call and let's make it a day to remember!

**Sunday 18th of September is a date for your diary and do come along and enjoy the festivities.**



*Celebrating 200 years*

since the Huddersfield Narrow Canal opened to through navigation from Ashton-u-Lyne to Huddersfield





# Photographic Competition

Huddersfield Canal Society is once again running its annual Photographic Competition and in this special Bicentenary year you will have the chance to capture the spirit of the celebrations!

Open to all ages, the competition has two categories for entries, with an overall winner, and a panel of judges will decide the winners. There are generous cash prizes to be won!

***Don't forget the closing date!***

## THE CATEGORIES

A - Huddersfield Narrow Canal  
B - Other UK Waterways  
plus an Overall Winning Photograph

## THE CASH PRIZES

Overall Winner - £50  
Category Winners - £30  
Category Runners-up - £20

## THE CLOSING DATE

***Friday 18th November 2011***

## THE RULES

The competition is open to everyone - members and non-members alike.

There is no entry fee!

Enter prints only, Black & White or Colour, sized between 6x4" to a maximum of 8x6". You may enter up to 5 prints per category.

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

## SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO:

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.*



## 74 Club Members

We welcome the following intrepid boaters who have successfully navigated the Narrow and joined our Club.

Judy North

MERLIN

Sue Day

MARIA, ELLAND



### Jidoku 20 Solution

C	L	T	H	A	S	B	K	G
S	G	A	B	K	L	C	H	T
H	K	B	T	C	G	S	A	L
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T	B	K	G	S	C	A	L	H
A	H	S	L	T	B	G	C	K

## Navigated the Narrow and don't have a plaque?

It is available at £5.00 for Society 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.

Application form can be downloaded from:

<http://www.huddersfieldcanal.com/society/74club.htm>

Or simply send a cheque payable to 'Huddersfield Canal Society' with a covering note to:

74 Club Plaque  
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## And why not add a Bicentenary Plaque to your collection?



£10 each with FREE postage & packing.

Cheques made payable to:

'Huddersfield Canal Society'

Available from the Society Office.

# The Back Page

## HUDDERSFIELD CANAL SOCIETY

welcomes the following new members

2808 Mr Anthony Wardle, [REDACTED]  
2809 Mr Carl Watson & Family, [REDACTED]  
2810 Mr John Brierley, [REDACTED]  
2811 Mr John Atkins, [REDACTED]

### MEMBERSHIP RATES

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

### COPY DATE

Articles, letters and comments  
for Issue 175 of Pennine Link  
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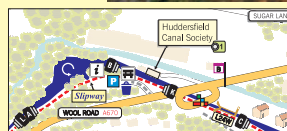
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