

# Pennine Link

Magazine of the Huddersfield Canal Society



# Huddersfield Canal Society Ltd

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## NON-COUNCIL POSTS

**Claire Bebbington** Marketing Officer

**Bob Gough** Administrator



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

*10am on Saturday the 6th August 2011 - lightning, thunder and heavy rain would be about right! Nonetheless, the Society trip aboard 'Still Waters' from Portland Basin to Droylsden Marina and return was fully booked and very successful. Not a hint of rubbish on the prop and even the weather broke fair.*



Bob Cough

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*Cover: Pupils from Diggle Primary at a Summer School run by the Oldham Theatre Workshop making props for a play about the Canal and Tunnel to be premiered at the 200th Anniversary Celebration at Diggle Tunnel Tip, Sunday, September 18th.*



## Editorial

There is, I believe, a Chinese blessing, or perhaps it's a curse, which says "may you live in interesting times".

For those of us

who have our inland waterways, and in particular the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, close to our hearts we certainly do live in the most interesting of times.

This year is of course the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of our Canal to through navigation. In the course of celebrating this we are also watching with interest, and not a little trepidation, the metamorphosis which will see British Waterways re-born as a National Waterways Charity (NWC) in April 2012.

For us, the high point of the bi-centenary year will be the Birthday Celebration Event which will take place at Sam Road, Diggle, close to the mouth of the Standedge Tunnel, on the weekend of September 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup>.

The weekend will start with a boat gathering on the Saturday and this will be followed by our Festival Day on the Sunday. The main focus of the Festival Day will be the performance of a specially commissioned outdoor theatre production. The drama, of which this will be the premier, will aim to bring to life some of the characters who have influenced, and been influenced by, the Canal during its 200 year history.

We have been able to commission this work thanks to the financial support of the Heritage Lottery Fund, Pennine Prospects and Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council.

The theatre production has been written and produced by the highly regarded Oldham Theatre Workshop and it will be performed by a mixture of professional actors, students of the Theatre Workshop and local school children.

The children will have been auditioned at a "summer school" held in Diggle Village and led by the Theatre Workshop. The children will have helped with the making of props and costumes whilst learning about the history of the Canal

The purpose of the play is to be entertaining and educational. However, it is also intended as tribute. A tribute not only to those whose skills and sacrifices brought about the construction of the Canal two hundred years ago but also those in the Society whose dedication, perseverance and faith brought about the realisation of the "impossible dream" of restoration, giving us the gem that we have and enjoy today.

The celebration weekend should be a great occasion and a great showcase for the Canal and what it has to offer, particularly if we are blessed with good weather. However, whatever the weather, there will still be cloud on the horizon in the form of the imminent winding up of British Waterways and the transfer of its assets and responsibilities to the NWC.

As a Society we have examined the proposals for the new body and we have submitted our views to the Government as part of its formal consultation procedure. For leading us in this process we have to thank Alan Stopher who explained the proposals in the previous edition of Pennine Link.

To follow this up we are, in this edition, publishing the text of the consultation response submitted by Alan on our behalf (see pp 8-12).

In our response we recognise the reasons for the transfer and accept its inevitability. However we have identified a number of issues of concern arising from the proposals centring on questions of **Status, Volunteering and Governance**; the most critical issue is that of **Funding**.

We, along with many other interested organisations across the country, believe that the level of funding being made available to the new charity will be insufficient to enable it to fulfil its obligations in respect of managing and maintaining the waterway system. This is compounded by the concern that the levels of income and charitable donations anticipated are overly optimistic.

The figures are set out in Alan Stopher's article but the prospect of a shortfall by 2023 of at least £200 million in the funding available to operate and maintain the system is to say the least alarming. We are therefore urging the Government to increase its annual funding commitment and to undertake to provide sufficient funding to ensure the protection and management of all inland waterways in perpetuity.

Should this not happen, our fear is that the new Charity will be forced to look for savings and economies and that in seeking opportunities to make cuts they will take account of the ratio of maintenance costs relative to usage. Based upon this sole criterion, realistically, the Huddersfield Narrow would emerge as one of the lesser used and more financially demanding remainder waterways. This being so,

with tough choices to be made, we may not be looked upon favourably.

I am not saying that this will happen but it is an eventuality of which we must be mindful. Moreover it is one for which we should be starting to prepare the case for the defence now, rather than waiting until the axe is about to fall.

First of all, as a Society, I believe we should be aiming to grow our membership. There is after all strength in numbers. For example if every member recruited one or two more members the impact would be significant.

Second, as individual members, we should be taking every opportunity to promote and publicise the Canal and to disseminate good news stories through our networks.

This should not be difficult because it is undoubtedly a beautiful stretch of waterway and a much loved local amenity. It is visited by many thousands of people every year who enjoy its tranquil environment, its heritage features and its wildlife. Moreover, no-one who visits it by boat or on foot can fail to be impressed by the amazing feats of engineering needed for its construction or by its stunning Pennine setting.

So let's tell the world about our pride and joy using the springboard offered by our 200th Birthday. Let us not let the efforts and achievements of those who dreamed the dream and made "the impossible dream" come true become lost and forgotten, but ensure that they can be celebrated by generations to come.

**Graham Birch**





## Chairman's Report

Since the retirement of Pennine Link editor Alwyn Ogborn, the Council of the Huddersfield Canal Society has agreed to spread the

load and invite guest editors to fulfil the role; at least for the time being. Thanks to Alan Stopher for the last issue and welcome to Graham Birch as editor this time.

In his editorial, Graham promotes our major bicentenary celebration at Diggle on 18<sup>th</sup> September and remarks on the response the Society has made to the Defra plans for the new charitable status of the present British Waterways.

The Annual Report and Accounts for BW 2010/2011 has been published recently – available online at:

<http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk>

Chairman Tony Hales tells us in his Statement that that nearly thirteen million people visited our waterways in 2010 'despite the poor summer weather'. There is no doubt that BW have done a good job in promoting our canal system and there is much public support and sympathy with the objectives of maintaining such a valuable leisure facility which can be universally enjoyed at little or no cost to the individual.

We are also told that BW has achieved significant growth in volunteering over the year to the extent of 67%. This is an impressive statistic because with the advent of the charitable status, volunteering will become a major priority.

In June, I represented the Society at a meeting at the National Waterways Museum at Ellesmere Port to discuss 'volunteering' with representatives of Defra,

BW and other canal trusts and societies. It was evident as the meeting progressed that unless a volunteering protocol could be established and expanded, the success of the waterways charity would be less than brilliant. With the paucity of projected government funding it will be essential that expenditure on employees, currently running at almost £64m (excluding Board Members) which is barely covered by last year's government grant, will need to be closely examined. There are currently 1,700 BW employees.

The problem with volunteers, of course, is that they cannot exist in a vacuum. There needs to be an infrastructure which needs expert management, bearing in mind that at any time a volunteer may pack up the job and go home!

There is also another aspect of this transformation into a charity which may affect our Society. At present we are a registered charity working with a nationalised industry, British Waterways, with all its infrastructure and professional resources. Other of our partners are local authorities which again provide professional input into our joint projects.

From next Spring, we will be a charity working with another charity towards common goals. Will we be driven closer to the waterways charity in our quest for volunteers? Or will we be perceived by them as competitors? Certainly the relationship will change. We await the metamorphosis with increasing interest as the date draws closer!

In the meantime, come and enjoy 18<sup>th</sup> September at Diggle.

**Neville Kenyon**

# An Expression of Thanks

The holding of our 200<sup>th</sup> Birthday event on September 18<sup>th</sup> would not be possible without the generous support and funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Pennine Prospects and Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council. We wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank them for their support.

The largest funding contribution has come from the **Heritage Lottery Fund** (HLF) which is of course the largest dedicated funder of the UK's heritage, investing around £255million a year in new projects. Since its inception in 1994 HLF has been responsible for distributing a share of money raised through the National Lottery for Good Causes to heritage across the UK. During that time it has supported more than 30,000 projects and allocated £4.5billion.

To receive our HLF award we have had to demonstrate that our event will meet the three key HLF objectives: **Learning, Conservation and Participation**. Having done so the award has been given on the basis that we will:

- (1) "Promote, raise awareness of and increase knowledge of the Canal and its heritage" and
- (2) Involve local people in the celebration event. To learn more about HLF go to:

[www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk)

**Pennine Prospects** (PP) was established in April 2005 to support the regeneration of the South Pennines. The company is owned by the key local authorities, water companies, Natural England and voluntary/community sector bodies. Its focus is upon protecting the built, natural and cultural heritage for the benefit of the area's residents while at the same time linking urban and rural regeneration processes across the adjacent city regions. Working

with its partners across the area, PP has successfully secured over £4.5 million for a range of heritage, landscape and community projects in the past six years.

The PP support we are receiving is from its South Pennines **LEADER** programme which is a community-led approach to rural development, focusing on basic services for communities, culture/ heritage, village development and renewal. It brings together those people who have an interest in encouraging and supporting rural development. Amongst its beneficiaries have been a range of 'cultural heritage' projects including a community radio station, oral history projects and canal-side access and interpretation. To learn more about PP go to:

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

**Oldham Council** has provided funding through its Saddleworth and Lees District Partnership and Tourism Budgets. Its Officers have played a major part in helping to organise our Bi-centenary event alongside Oldham Theatre Workshop which is itself a branch of the Council. This support and close involvement is a continuation of the valued relationship that has developed between the Society and Oldham Council over many years, dating back into the pre-restoration era.

Since 2001 the Council has worked in partnership with the Society and others to secure funding for a range of improvements to the Canal corridor and, alongside Kirklees and Tameside, it contributes to Operation and Maintenance budget.

While thanking all at Oldham Council it is appropriate to mention in particular Jenna Simpson, Simon Papprell and Eleanor Sykes to whom particular thanks should go for their help and support.

**Graham Birch**



## A New Era - HCS Response

*Alan Stopher responds to the DEFRA consultation on behalf of the Society:*

### **Introduction to the HCS response**

With the complete restoration of the canal seen by most as an 'impossible dream', the Huddersfield Canal Society (HCS) proved to be one of the most successful organisations of its type by lobbying for a change in attitude, engaging with local communities, working with job creation agencies to restore sections and demonstrating how the canal could help regenerate the former textile villages of the Colne and Tame Valleys.

Its success culminated in the reopening of the complete 20 mile long trans-Pennine canal in 2001 at a cost of £50 million of public funds and a significant amount of volunteer time.

Having achieved its goal the Society continues to promote interest in this historic waterway. Our chief concern is its sustainability in perpetuity, a term used in paragraph 2.5.1 of the New Era document.

HCS therefore considers itself well placed to comment on the consultation document and trusts that its views are taken into account as the new charity approaches its inception.

HCS supports the principle of the proposal to move inland waterways into a new charity and welcomes the opportunity presented by the consultation to comment on specific areas of the proposals.

The main areas which HCS wishes to raise are those relating to Funding, Re-classification to cruising waterway status, Governance and Volunteering.

### **Funding**

Having studied Chapter 4 on creating a sustainable future for our waterways, HCS has the greatest concerns about the reduced level of Government funding starting from the current year and its impact on our local waterway. In 2008 KPMG identified a £30m per annum shortfall in funds available to maintain waterway structures when the Grant-in-Aid to British Waterways was still £50m/annum. This theme is not developed further in the consultation document and the absence of a range of scenarios suggests that the figures presented have been made to fit the underfunded position of the nationalised business.

It is acknowledged that the status of NWC would permit fund-raising in areas unavailable to a nationalised industry but HCS considers that estimates provided in the consultation document are over-optimistic.

Charitable donations at a time of national austerity are likely to fall short of the levels projected and in any case could take many years to reach reasonable levels because of the need for the new organisation to build up credibility. 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.



Most of the assets to be held by the Community Interest Company are inextricably linked to the waterways and if their character is to be maintained in the way that most waterway users would wish, there will be little significant additional income to be derived and few opportunities to bring in borrowing which itself would need to be serviced.

We have seen various estimates of the shortfall to maintain waterways assets depending on assumptions made but at the very least a cumulative funding gap of at least £200m by 2023 is in prospect unless further funds are committed by vesting day. This level of additional funding can only come from the government and we would be surprised if the interim trustees would be able to take on the commitments in the proposed contract with Government and accept the charitable purposes set out without a substantial increase in the funding package on offer.

Although the consultation document refers to the consequences of asset deterioration it fails to describe the catastrophic and costly nature of breaches which occur in the best maintained canals. Despite the acknowledgement of asset deterioration it makes no evaluation of the proper level of investment needed to maintain the canals in decent condition or relate this figure to the government grant and potential for new funding. This has been a long standing issue with successive years of Grant-in-Aid to British Waterways and will be exacerbated by the reduction in Government funding proposed.

Our particular concern is how an underfunded NWC would view our own waterway. This canal was restored with £50m of public funds and significant public support over twenty years. This is widely considered to have been value for money and the August 2010 report by Jacobs on the Economic Evaluation of the Rochdale and Huddersfield Narrow Canals Restoration supports this view.

At the time of reopening to through navigation many of the lock gates installed during the 1980s were coming up for renewal and most of the structure was almost 200 years old. BW operate and maintain the canal under a 125 year agreement with our Society, the three riparian local authorities and the Millennium Commission. It is a heavily locked canal and suffers from a number of leaks in locks and pounds and in places insufficient dredging to meet ideal cruising standards. Despite the efforts of BW who have prioritised the most urgent work to maintain through navigation over the last ten years using an annual budget allocation from BW and the funding from the three local authorities, it has not been possible to provide the level of dredging and lock and pound repairs necessary to reach a steady state and make it an easy canal to navigate.

Whilst it is a beautiful stretch of waterway, inexperienced boaters find it challenging and therefore numbers of craft traversing the full length are in their hundreds annually. This level of navigation is nevertheless sufficient to ensure that the canal is a much loved local amenity visited by around 3,000,000 people every year who enjoy the tranquil environment, the heritage features and the wildlife which lives in and on the restored canal.

From a purely numerical point of view if only boater numbers are taken into account it may appear to be one of the lesser used waterways and is in danger of attracting even less maintenance funding from an under-funded NWC than intensively used canals such as the Llangollen and Grand Union. No one who visits the canal on foot or by boat can fail to be amazed by the feat of engineering involved in its construction and the stunning Pennine scenery through which it runs.

HCS has great concerns that, despite the 125 year legal agreement with the Millennium Commission and their successors, future underfunding could impact severely on lesser used and financially demanding remainder waterways such as the Huddersfield Narrow Canal. A charity with tough choices to make on where to direct its limited budget may not look favourably on our pride and joy.

HCS therefore urges the Government to substantially increase the annual funding commitment over the next 10 years and, subject to the continued viability of the NWC, to give an undertaking to provide sufficient funding to ensure the protection and management of all navigable waterways in perpetuity.

### **Reclassification to cruising waterway status**

The Huddersfield Narrow Canal is a remainder waterway under the terms of the 1968 Act. Whilst the 125 year legal agreement 'ensures' maintenance and operation to cruising standard for its full duration, the Society would like to see a clear programme for re-classification to cruising standard set out as a commitment in the contract between

Defra and NWC. This would give an assurance to future generations of canal users that the legal agreement will be enforced. Ideally such a reclassification should occur by vesting day. It is however recognised that the terms of the legal agreement could result in annual local authority contributions being withdrawn from the date of re-classification in the years up to 2021 when the contributions are set to cease. An alternative approach would be to include in the legislation covering the obligations of the NWC, a commitment that the Huddersfield Narrow Canal be reclassified to cruising status on 1st April 2021 and that up until that time the provisions of the legal agreement (to maintain the remainder waterway as a cruiseway) are a strict obligation of the NWC.

### **Volunteering**

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 for the new trust.

When our canal was reopened to through navigation in 2001 the Society sought an involvement in its day to day running but BW preferred to limit our involvement to a small number of physical tasks which were not part of the mainstream operation and maintenance task. The Society therefore scaled down its ambitions.

With the NWC in prospect, new overtures from BW have indicated that tunnel guiding and lock assistance by volunteers could now be encouraged but the Society cannot just switch on new resources to meet demand. Nor do we think we should provide like for like

volunteers to replace paid staff purely to save the new charity money. We do want to be involved as we are an existing organisation with the well-being of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal as its central aim. It will take some years for the change to take place and the new culture to embed. We recognise that NWC will wish to recruit its own volunteers in our locality but consider that there are benefits in developing collaboration with our own membership.

Volunteers have a variety of skills which should be used to the full. They should not be confined to menial tasks as sometimes happened in the past. The Society's own full-time workforce in the 1980's demonstrated that voluntary organisations, properly managed, can undertake major items of work.

It is essential that the new charity implements a root and branch change in culture to foster a successful relationship with potential and current inland waterway volunteers, those in the local community who value the waterway environment.

*To attract volunteers the NWC should:*

- seek views of organisations such as HCS as to how best to achieve this;
- offer a wide range of opportunities with flexibility about timing and length of commitment;
- provide opportunities for under 18's to attract waterway enthusiasts of the future;
- use one-day activities to give volunteers a good introductory taster of volunteering

- give accreditation to volunteers seeking employment and wanting to strengthen their CVs.

*To integrate volunteers the NWC should:*

- reassure staff that volunteers are not replacing existing jobs;
- structure its volunteer policy to including clear lines of accountability and disciplinary guidelines in the same way that it would for its staff;
- dedicate sufficient time to train, manage and supervise volunteers;
- ensure local volunteer coordinators (whether paid or volunteers themselves) must be attuned to local priorities and volunteer needs and not just promote perceived national or regional volunteer requirements;
- ensure paid staff are given explicit roles and responsibilities for supporting volunteers to enrich their jobs;
- match volunteers to opportunities to make sure both volunteer and organisations' needs are met;
- ensure senior management communicate support for volunteering to all staff;
- recognise that volunteers can become managers or leaders of other volunteers, including young people.

*To retain volunteers the NWC should:*

- regularly evaluate how the organisation can improve the relationship with volunteers
- communicate with volunteers through e-newsletters;
- provide reasonable travel expenses to volunteers

- invite volunteers to get involved in consultations and meetings to ensure their views have equal weight to those of paid staff;
- communicate with volunteers even when they only assist for short or infrequent periods of time
- offer the opportunity for volunteers to help with fundraising to keep them actively engaged.

*Examples of barriers to encouraging volunteers to the inland waterways are:*

- a lack of flexibility in terms of when volunteers can give their time
- being too prescriptive about how long they might be expected to volunteer
- overly demanding management
- no acknowledgment of the worth of their contribution or their potential
- lack of training

A successful volunteer programme would add value to the local waterways and involve any activities for which the volunteers are suitably skilled and qualified. Canal Societies such as ours have much to offer NWC and we urge the new body to fully engage with HCS to mutual benefit. The programme could involve engagement with local employers with scope for such firms to 'adopt' a stretch of waterway or sponsor volunteers.

Health and Safety and management procedures should not represent a barrier to the use of volunteer groups or individuals who can demonstrate the necessary self-management and skills. This should result in no day to day waterway task being considered beyond

the scope of volunteers provided that they can show the required organisation, skills, and qualifications to undertake the work.

## **Governance**

The Local Partnerships described in the consultation document cover large areas and are more regional than local. Some form of local committee and local accountability needs to be introduced if the NWC is to fully relate to and engage with local communities and interest groups such as HCS and encourage volunteer involvement. Our own Manchester and Pennine business unit includes a number of waterways and almost reaches Stoke-on-Trent, a distance of around 70 miles from Huddersfield.

We consider it essential that locally raised funds will be able to be used on local priorities. To enable added value projects to take place it is likely that locally raised funds will need to be matched by an allocation from NWC's regional budget. Such an allocation must be in addition to the proper allocation of funds by NWC to maintain the waterway structures to an acceptable standard for cruising and linkage with the rest of the network. This is because the inland waterways network must be maintained to national standards to meet the charitable objectives. The more correctly termed Regional Partnerships need to work closely with local committees and have local waterway representation at the regional level.

**Alan Stopher**  
**HCS Council**



## Volunteers

*Co-ordinator  
Trevor Ellis gives  
his periodic update  
on HCS Volunteer  
activities on the  
Canal.*

Having spent much of the Winter working taking out any saplings that we found along the towpath edge and removing overhanging vegetation along the full length of the canal, we got an early start on the Summer's activities with the good weather in April.

This year BW opted to do the gear lubrication themselves. They used a white grease, which anyone walking the canal may have seen. This seems reasonably effective and lasts better than the biodegradable oil that we were

supposed to use, but they don't seem to have done the backs of the racks or to have lubricated the spindle oil holes.

Our task for this year is to continue the painting of the locks from Lock 35E, having completed 42E to 36E last year, with the aim of reaching Slaithwaite. At the time of writing (early July), we are working on 28E, so that looks a possibility, unless we hit a wet spell. We have a good team of 6 to 8 volunteers who can turn out alternate Fridays, which makes it possible to work on two locks at once if needed.

We would still welcome anyone who wishes to get involved as we may lose some people to other groups and in order to give more flexibility. Simply give me a call on the number in "Pennine Link".

**Trevor Ellis**



Volunteers working at Lock 24E, Slaithwaite

# Events in the Bicentenary Year

## Sunday 18th September

HCS Bicentenary Festival & Boat Gathering  
The Canal Society's main event with a host of attractions including Diggle Brass Band, craft marquee, children's marquee (activities by Oldham Play Action Group), climbing wall, bouncy castle and community displays plus narrowboats on the Canal.

British Waterways will be re-locating their Marsden operation to Diggle for the day, running guided trips in and out of the Tunnel on the hour from 11am to 4pm inclusive.

Tickets for the trip will be available from the Canal Society's Stand on site and cost:

Adult £4.50      Child (5 - 15yrs) £3.50  
Senior (60+) £4.00      Student £4.00  
Family (2 Adults 2 Children) £14.00  
Infant (under 5) Free

The Oldham Theatre Workshop will be performing their specially commissioned production about the Narrow Canal four times during the day. Each performance will involve various locations around the Canal and you should listen for announcements about the start of each performance.

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

**Time:** 11am - 3pm

## Thursday 6th October

Bicentenary Quiz Night

A more-or-less 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; well that's the idea anyway! Free entry, Prizes

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

**Time:** 7 - 9pm

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# Top hole

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# Buckley & Newton Ltd

*Trevor Ellis considers the history of some of the Canal's early carriers, starting with the firm of Buckley & Newton.*

As mentioned in the recent articles on pleasure cruising on the Narrow Canal, we have been doing some research prior to the publication of the new book and "Narrowboat" article. Research is hampered by the limited number of sources, the gaps between them in date and the fact that these are in different formats and produced for different purposes. We hope that publishing what we have found may produce some additional information, perhaps from local historians or those engaged in researching family history. This is intended to be the first of several.

## *Traffics*

Buckley and Newton were a firm of millers and corn merchants, based in Stalybridge, just below Lock 7W, on the offside of the canal adjacent to the Canal Company's Stalybridge warehouse. We know of them from as early as 1838 in local Directories and the families were prosperous enough to employ servants by the 1841 Census.

A document relating to grain traffic on the Calder & Hebble Navigation, held in the WY Archives in Wakefield, lists quantities and destinations for 1864, including three known mills on the Yorkshire side as well as Stalybridge and Ashton on the west, so it would seem that they were possibly receiving supplies via the Canal at that date, though we don't know if they were carrying themselves.

It seems likely that when they were carrying Buckley & Newton collected their grain from sites on the east side of the Narrow Canal as they used narrowboats, though we don't know whether they collected from the mills or other sites, such as canal warehouses. We do have the well-known photograph of their "Reliance" in Lock 20E below Slaithwaite, which suggests that they

travelled as far as Huddersfield, given that there is neither a corn mill nor a canal warehouse between there and 20E.

This may not always have been the case, however, as some of the timings in the Standedge Tunnel Book would not have permitted a trip to Huddersfield between the time out at Marsden and the time back. Indeed, a couple of the timings would not have permitted a trip much beyond the top pound.

They were certainly carrying from the eastern side prior to 1893, when closure of Standedge Tunnel for the completion of the third railway tunnel led the L.& N.W.R. to offer rail carriage for their grain from Huddersfield to Stalybridge. When the Tunnel reopened on 6<sup>th</sup>.September 1894, one of their boats was the first to enter on the stroke of midnight, emerging at Marsden at 2.0am (though the Tunnel Book actually shows the wrong direction of travel, entries on the first double page being made in the wrong columns, probably due to the clerk instinctively making the first entry at the top left!) Thereafter, a regular traffic developed, peaking in 1896 with 60 trips and generally averaging around 2 per month until 1907. The Tunnel traffic gradually peters out and stops altogether in 1910, resuming in 1912. No passages by Buckley & Newton are recorded after a burst of activity in March and April 1913. We do, however, have a record of "Reliance" still using the canal in 1917, when a passage is recorded to Buckley & Newton's wharf "from G.C. Canal". It may be that the decline in Standedge Tunnel traffic represents a move to the use of imported American grain from Manchester, Liverpool or Runcorn, as these were all destinations mentioned in an article in Pennine Link 107 many years ago about the late Arthur Cooke, who worked for them in the 20's.

It appears from the timings given in the Tunnel Books that most of the trips were

empty eastbound and loaded west bound, and the photo of “Reliance” seems to support this. The average eastbound time is around two-and-a-half hours, with the westbound average being around the four-hour mark. Both these averages include a small number of very long times indeed, which are difficult to explain, but could be due to grounding in the tunnel. (Some may again be due to clerical error, as the compilers of the record had a great fondness for “ditto” marks, which could explain some of the timings in the 12 – 16 hour bracket, where they have used this under “am” or “pm” without care!) There are a small number of eastbound trips which are about the timing for a loaded trip, which does leave open the possibility that occasional loads were carried east, possibly flour, if the various mills had specialisms and traded products?

There is a record of their wharf being repaired as late as 1929, though we do not know whether they still had their own boats at this time, or indeed whether the wharf was being used. If there was traffic, it may have been just coal. Boats recorded at Lock 1W seem to have returned the same day. Whatever traffic there was would have ended by 1930. The site of the mill is now flats.

## Boats & People

Arthur Cooke’s parents, Harold and Matilda, lived in Stalybridge, working for Buckley & Newton in the 1920’s. We know that Harold was working for the Hardy Fertiliser Company in 1917 and may have continued with them until they ceased trading, probably shortly after 1920. In his recollections, Arthur did name two Buckley and Newton boats as “Ceres” and “Newton”. These names seem very likely, given the nature and name of the business, but we have no other record of them. It would seem, from the reports of the Huddersfield Medical Officer of Health, which record regular inspections of boats registered at Marple between 1895 and 1913, that their boats must have been registered there as no other carrier from the west appears in the Tunnel Book in every one of those years. Unfortunately, the Marple Canal Boat Register does not appear to have survived. We do have the photograph of their “Reliance” in Lock 20E below Slaithwaite, probably in the early 1900’s and there is also a record of “Reliance” still using the canal in 1917. That the firm must have had more than the “Reliance” is confirmed by the records in the Tunnel Book, as there is at least one occasion when two eastbound passages occur before a boat returns west.

**Trevor Ellis**



“Reliance” in Lock 20E below Slaithwaite





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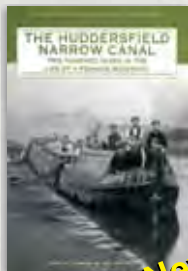
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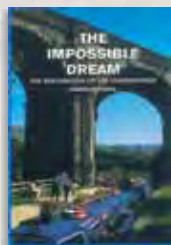
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## Jidoku 21

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

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*

## Double Honour



Bob Gough

**Anne & Ken at home in Dobcross**

We are delighted to hear that Society stalwart and past director Ken Wright has been awarded an MBE in the Queen's birthday honours list and, not to be outdone, so has his wife Anne, achieving a most unusual double honour.

The honours were given in recognition of their services to the community.

The Office was approached early in 2008 to give an endorsement of Ken's proposal from the Canal Society's perspective and it was clear his range of voluntary activities, from editorship of this magazine (uniquely achieving three consecutive 'Tom Rolt' Awards) to 'hands-on' dredging of the canal, made him worthy of an honour.

Incidentally, Anne's long-running contributions to Pennine Link in the form of 'The Wife's Tale' should not be overlooked.

Of course their contributions to the work of the Society were only one aspect of their wide ranging voluntary activities which have included key roles with Oldham Coliseum, Crompton Stage Society, Saddleworth Players and Oldham Talking Newspaper for the Blind, to mention but a few from a long list of community service.

Congratulations Ken and Anne, you deserve the recognition!

**Bob Gough**



# Book Review

## **The South Pennine Ring Part 2 of 2:**

*Richlow Guide, publ. John Lower, 2011  
ISBN 978-0-9552609-8-8 44pp £7.50*

John Lower has republished his Guide to the South Pennine Ring, this time under the "Richlow" imprint. The former Guide was a single volume, published in 1998, before the canals were re-opened fully. One effect of the change is that anyone wanting the full Ring will pay around double, but times have moved on and this is a very comprehensive updating. Free updates are available online and there is the promise that the Guides will be kept continuously up to date.

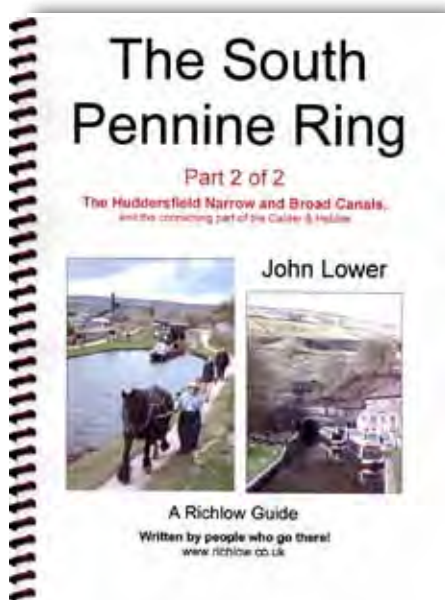
John does state in his personal information that his aim is to bring other boaters and walkers to these canals, but as a member of HCS, I wish that it provided a better marketing tool. I suppose it is only fair to advise boaters that "this is an area for the adventurous waterways visitor", but to tell walkers that this "is not for those who relish a comfort zone" appears a little unjustified, barring the Pennine crossing from Diggle to Marsden and return. There can be few canals which provide the walker with such adjacent public transport and the walking can be broken down into very easy stages. Only the Brighthouse to Cooper Bridge section of the CHN strays far from road and rail access and, to be fair, after his introduction, John does go on to make this point. The difficulty is that there is a lot of stuff to get through before you hit the guide proper and, after cheering up the intro, I would be inclined to consign a lot of the Navigational Information, Pubs Listing and Transport info to annexes at the back, probably starting with just the Historical Background.

For those still reading after the initial "health warnings" and other information,

this is a very comprehensive guide, with good maps and a wealth of useful facts for all kinds of users. Bridge and lock names and numbers are included (when are BW - North East Waterways, going to get their fingers out and install the bridge number plates on the Broad?), with milestones, pubs, boating facilities and railways, all managed without over-complicating the maps. On the page opposite each map is a general description of the area and the towpath and important features such as bridges, tunnels etc. This is a totally different book to Bob Gough's Towpath Guide and certainly not for the armchair user, having few pictures and concentrating on the essentials for boaters and walkers. – but why not buy both?

As a bonus, the guide covers the Hebble Trail, the remains of the old Halifax Branch of the Calder & Hebble Navigation, which is well worth walking for anyone with an interest in derelict canals.

**Trevor Ellis**



# Canal Scrapbook



Sykes Family



Bob Cough



Bob Cough

Top Left: Nina and Tim Sykes travel in a suitably decorated Marsden Shuttle to a reception at the Standedge Visitor Centre after their May wedding.

Bottom Left: Horseboat 'Maria', during one of her many navigations of the Narrow, moored up at the Wool Road 'Transshipment Warehouse'. The association of her historic limestone cargo and the possible use of the building as a 'Lime Shed' adds a certain intrigue to the picture.

Top Right: A Transport Trust 'Red Plaque' is unveiled at Tunnel End by Colne Valley MP, Joson McCarthy, commemorating the engineering achievement of Standedge Tunnel. Left to right: Judy Jones, BW, Rob Shorland-Ball, Transport Trust, Jason McCarthy MP, James Dean, BW and Peter Stone, Transport Trust.

Right: New-build 'Kingfisher No 1' is craned in at Wool Road in a very smooth operation.



Bob Cough



# 'Greetings' from Further East - Conclusion

## THE LAST LEG OF THE JOURNEY

June 4<sup>th</sup> 2010, the day dawned clear and bright, and we had the magic papers to get us beyond Bridge 9! As all you well-versed canal buffs will know, it's easy when you're organised.



*Away to Liverpool*

We were away to Liverpool with a mixed group of crafts, a few wide beams, narrowboats like ourselves and some smaller craft. A little tedious in convoy, but it soon changed as first one, then another, had to stop for various reasons; mainly fouled props, as the floating reed beds and vast amounts of our 'throw away' world made the going slow.

As we got closer to Liverpool we were astounded by the sheer scale of the warehouses and docks, where the goods of the world had been stored and distributed around our small island. There was a real sense of being transported back in time and I couldn't stop taking photos! Nature had taken advantage of the abandonment and flowers, herbs and birds were colonising the land once again.



*Derelict Tobacco Warehouse*

All on board were amazed by the trip to the centre and our mooring was on the doorstep of Liverpool One; everything at our fingertips and a real sense of being at the hub of all the area has to offer.

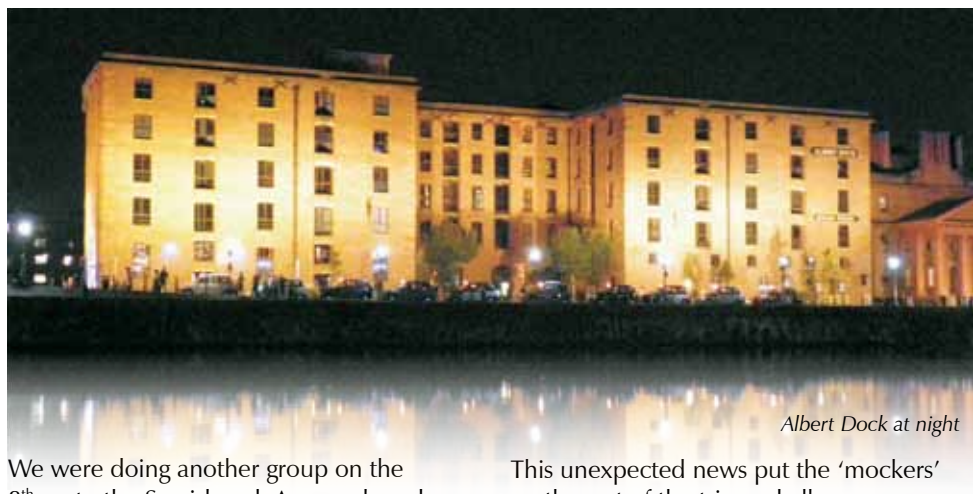
We took full advantage of the next three days, visiting as much as possible. So many people are catered for, but the things I liked the most were the swimmers, who ploughed around the Dock on Sunday morning, and the Dragon Boats being put through their paces.

Monday morning saw us leaving all behind, marvelling once more at the deserted docks and the stunning Tobacco Warehouse.

We had replenished our food stores, pumped out, watered up and arrived in Maghull to a pleasant surprise: Tony Zajac, a canal mate from our home waters, met us for an evening of swapping stories, our adventures and his every day goings on with the Society's Marsden Shuttle. Tony had been a staunch supporter of our trip and kept turning up with news and goodies! Good on yer, Tony!



*Architectural detail*



*Albert Dock at night*

We were doing another group on the 8<sup>th</sup> up to the Scarisbrook Arms pub and then planned to just potter back. Picking up returning crew Jim Strudwick, Gwen Walker, Captain Keef Glover, we got a call from Joan & Alwyn Ogborn (Itchy Feet); they were just a few miles away at Burscough Bridge and would we like to join them at a real ale pub which also had a good menu. You can guess the rest and a brilliant evening was had by all.

The following day we picked up our extra crew, said our goodbyes to Itchy Feet shipmates and amid all kinds of dire warning about lack of water, waited to double-up through certain locks before making our way towards base.

The warnings appeared unfounded and we just pushed on ever homeward. The scenery was very varied, the weather warm and the birdlife and insects plentiful; we were a party of six simply making the most of a good trip. On reaching Boothstown we had a shock: posted on a shop door was a Notice from Peel Holdings (owners of much thereof) saying boats could only have passage through Castlefield but not moor. This was due to celebrating THE football on large screens over the next two weeks! We had pre-arranged fund-raising trips in the area which would have needed a mooring.

This unexpected news put the 'mockers' on the rest of the trip and all were really sickened; we tried to work out an alternative, but to no avail. In the event, we were instructed to bring Community Spirit back to her home mooring. We spent a very subdued night together. We made plans to drop off crew and meet up with some lock wheelers at Castlefield for the trip back to base. We duly delivered our trusty vessel back to Portland Basin and to cap it all, it poured down!

I can't leave our voyage on such a note. The ten who set out five weeks earlier will always remember the trip. Working hard together, we enjoyed sharing the boat with groups for whom this was a completely new experience. We lived, laughed and made lasting friendships. Thanks everybody. When can we do another?

Andrea Fisher  
All photos: A Fisher

### **NEWS FROM HOME**

*The Marsden Shuttle has had a mixed start to the season as she hasn't been well! The gear box packed in and it wasn't a straightforward job compounded by a subsequent diesel leak during the Engineer's holiday. However, I am now pleased to say she's fine and back in harness, so, as ever, if you're keen to give her a spin, please do give me a call (01484 686136).*

# Photographic Competition 2011

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:

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*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.*



# The Oldham Theatre Workshop

Founded in 1968, Oldham Theatre Workshop (OTW) provides all-year-round drama training to young people ranging in age from six to twenty five years. It aims to make theatre accessible and enjoyable for young people from all backgrounds and to be a creative and inclusive theatre resource contributing to the personal and social development of the young participants.

During the course of each year a wide range of drama and theatre related workshops are provided covering the fields of acting, singing, dancing and design. The culmination of this is the opportunity to perform in the Workshop's two large-scale productions which are staged each year, in June and December, usually at the historic Oldham Coliseum Theatre.

OTW is renowned for producing some of the best young acting talent in Britain and its graduates form an illustrious roll call that rivals the main London stage schools. Amongst the many famous names to have started their stage careers at OTW are Sarah Lancashire, Anna Friel, Anthony Cotton and Nicola Stephenson.

As well as working on its own training and production projects OTW works extensively with the wider community involving both schools and community organisations. In schools, it offers teacher training and drama activities both in and out of school time while for community groups it works in partnership to develop projects which use drama as a means of learning.



Oldham Theatre Workshop

The Diggle Summer School (above) and the bi-centenary celebration drama production, which will be performed at our 200<sup>th</sup> birthday event, are an example of such partnership working and we wish to thank OTW for their expertise in helping bring to life the history of our canal.

**Graham Birch**

# HUDDERSFIELD CANAL

## 200th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

@ Diggle Tip, Sam Rd, Diggle 18th Sep 11am - 3pm

Colourful  
Narrowboats  
on the Canal

COME JOIN US FOR A FREE FUN DAY  
& OUTDOOR THEATRE PRODUCTION





The celebration includes a Free Fun Day at Diggle Tip, with craft stalls, refreshments, children's activities, bouncy castle, climbing wall and performance from Diggle Band (activities free of charge). To mark the 200th Anniversary, Oldham Theatre Workshop will perform an outdoor theatre production: join the performance and learn the story of the Huddersfield Canal as you walk along its towpath, meeting characters from the Canal's past, present and future! (suitable for all ages and free of charge - report to Huddersfield Canal Society stall at Diggle Tip). British Waterways will also be running boat trips into the Standedge Tunnel from 11am - 4pm on the hour. Adult £4.50, Concession £4, Under 16s £3.50, under 5 free, Family (2 adults + 2 children) £14. Please report to Huddersfield Canal Society stand on the day.

For further information visit: [www.huddersfieldcanal.com](http://www.huddersfieldcanal.com) or call the Huddersfield Canal Society on: 01457 871800



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Application form can be downloaded from:  
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Wool Road, Dobcross  
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## And why not add a Bicentenary Plaque to your collection?



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Cheques made payable to:  
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# The Back Page

## HUDDERSFIELD CANAL SOCIETY

welcomes the following new members

2812 Mr & Mrs Hughes,  
2813 Mr R Standrin,  
2814 Mr David Crabtree,  
2815 Ms Linda Donnell,  
2816 Mr Andrew Wright,  
2817 Mr Eamonn Colley,

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Dr Bob Gough



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