

# Pennine Link

Magazine of the Huddersfield Canal Society

that England

# Huddersfield Canal Society Ltd

Registered in England No. 1498800 Registered Charity No. 510201

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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*

## Reflections of the Past

Reflections of the Past

### Our Bicentenary Drama

by  
Oldham Theatre Workshop

*See and hear it now at:*

<http://www.huddersfieldcanal.com>

*... and follow the links ...*

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## Editorial

From time to time, the Society receives requests from other organisations to give presentations to their members on topics related

to our canal. It was in response to one such request that, on a snowy evening in early February of this year, I attended, on behalf of the Society, the regular monthly open meeting of the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal Society (MBBCS).

The MBBCS is, of course, in the position we were around 40 years ago; the Society's objective being to restore and reopen their canal for navigation. Their reason for issuing the invitation to HCS, however, was to learn something about the role of a canal society after restoration has been achieved.

As an introduction, I spoke briefly about our formation in 1974 and what was achieved by the founding members. I then moved on to talk about the work of HCS Restoration and explained our participation as Board Members of the Huddersfield Canal Company, which delivered the final restoration to navigation in 2001.

The core of my talk, however, centred on the Society today and I described and illustrated the range of activities in which we are involved. It was in preparation for the presentation, that I came to recognise just how active we really are. As if to confirm this, an MBBCS member, who had been in the audience, approached me at the end of the meeting and said that he hadn't really been able to see the point of having a

Society devoted to a working canal – but my talk had changed his mind!

So, having set this out for the MBBCS, I thought that it might also be of interest to provide something similar for own members through Pennine Link. What follows is not an exhaustive list, but it gives an indication of the sort of things we are involved in day to day, week to week. And the time devoted to the canal by a significant number of our members.

### Operation and Maintenance (O&M)

Due to the cutbacks in local government, regrettably, our Council partners have been unable to resource the attendance at meetings with Canal & River Trust (CRT). The role of meeting with CRT and agreeing the annual O&M programme therefore falls to the Society. The most recent O&M meeting with the CRT took place in mid-February, when we met with Manchester and Pennine staff to go through the proposed programme. Also on the agenda were ideas for the better operation of the Standedge Tunnel and how we could assist in communication between boaters and the CRT through the medium of our new web site (Alan's Chairman's Report goes into greater detail about the outcome of what was a most productive meeting).

In addition, we send representatives to the regular **Waterway User Group** meetings organised by CRT to provide a forum for the exchange of information about problems and issues between CRT and boaters.

**Volunteering** – This has been central to the Society's operation since it was formed back in 1974 and it remains an important part of what we do. Both our

Maintenance Group and the Marsden Shuttle Crew will again be operating this year and we are looking to co-ordinate our work with the volunteer activities of the CRT. In particular, following the visit to Council last November of Standedge Visitor Centre manager James Dean, we have decided set up a Visitor Centre Working group to liaise with James, once the new CRT Amenities and Attractions Partnership moves into operation.

We have also invited my Manchester and Pennine Partnership Colleague Jon Stopp to attend our May Council meeting. Jon is involved in developing volunteering and community engagement initiatives on behalf of the CRT and we will be discussing with him how we can best work together to secure the maximum benefit from the work of volunteers.

**Canal and Rivers Trust** – I am, of course, a member of the M and P Partnership and my role is an informed individual rather than a delegate of HCS. However, in my role, I do strive to bring to the table the point of view of the voluntary sector and my membership provides a ready channel of communication with CRT. It also enables me to provide a first hand account of the work of the Partnership to Society members through Pennine Link. Accordingly the latest CRT update appears elsewhere in this issue.

**Events** – We have, over the years, held our own events; most recently, our bi-centenary celebration. We have also accepted invitations to attend events organised by other societies, including the Rochdale Canal Festival, which has been amongst the most high profile annual waterway events held in the south Pennine area over recent years.

Hitherto, the Festival has been led by The Waterways Trust (TWT) which operated the Rochdale Canal independently of BW. However, when the CRT was set up last year, BW and TWT merged, with TWT staff being transferred to CRT.

This being the case, now that we are all under the same roof, the idea has emerged of extending the scope of the Rochdale Canal Festival and to market it as a **South Pennine Waterways Festival**. HCS Council have welcomed this idea and we are now attending a working group to develop ideas for the current year. Given the scarcity of financial resources and the short timescale, it is likely to be on a fairly modest scale in 2013. However, the group is already exploring possibilities for future years in anticipation of its developing to become a major vehicle for promoting and celebrating the region's waterways.

**The Society On Line** – In all walks of life, digital media are increasingly becoming the "go to" means of disseminating knowledge and information and we are anxious that HCS should not be left behind. Hence, we have our Facebook page, we have launched Pennine Link Extra and we have developed and launched our new look web site. Also, at an EGM on January 17<sup>th</sup> this year, it was agreed that we could publish our annual accounts on our web site; although paper copies will be available for those who require them.

As part of this initiative, we are also seeking to create a database of e-mail addresses for as many of our members as possible. This will enable members to receive Pennine Link Extra and will allow a greater immediacy in communication. If you have an e-mail address and we



do not already have it, just e-mail [claire@huddersfieldcanal.com](mailto:claire@huddersfieldcanal.com) and ask to be added to the list.

Finally, if you go to our website, you will be able to see/hear the online version of our bi-centenary production "Reflections of the Past". I mention this particularly because I was delighted, some weeks ago, to be contacted by the Heritage Lottery Fund and asked to attend the launch of their new funding programme "Sharing Heritage". This programme will award grants from £3-10k and help people explore, conserve and share their local community heritage.

The event was attended by television historian Michael Wood (*pictured opposite addressing the audience*) and received national publicity. The reason we were invited was because our Audio Trail was selected as one of just ten projects, from across the whole country, which were exemplars of effective and innovative means of bringing history and heritage to a wide audience. Projects which other groups should use as a model for sharing local history and heritage.

At the event I was able to meet a variety of people and promote our canal to them. The success of the Audio Trail serves only to reinforce, in my mind, the importance of using the digital media to pursue our Business Plan objectives.

**And finally** – As we have been putting this Issue together, despite the snow and frost, I, and I am sure we all, have been conscious of the days lengthening and the very first signs of Spring emerging. Many of you will therefore be looking forward to taking to the waterways and I wish you good sailing during what we can only hope will be better Summer weather than we had last year.

**Graham Birch**



Graham Birch



## Chairman's Report

This Winter has felt like a 'proper one' with quite a few snow falls and periods of cold weather. There has been plenty going

on though. As I write in early March, the Canal & River Trust is completing work on its Winter stoppage programme of lock gate renewals in order to reopen the canal on 18th March.

Unfortunately, a badly split bottom gate at Lock 32W at the top of the Diggle Flight has only just been noticed and this has conspired to delay the Spring re-opening. Your Society is anxiously awaiting news on whether this will impact on Easter activities.

Planned work has continued on replacing gates in the Colne Valley most of which were installed during the 1980s and have therefore reached the end of their useful lives. Complete new sets of single top

gates and mitred bottom gates have been installed at Locks 4E, 9E, 19E, 20E and 30E and there have been bottom gate repairs to Lock 34E. In many cases new Trent and Mersey type gate paddles have been installed, some replacing worn out hydraulic gear. Lock 9E at Milnsbridge has some lines of verse carved into the balance beams, part of a national project called Locklines by poet and long time residential boater Jo Bell and artist Peter Coates to bring poetry to Britain's historic waterways. (See Cover and pages 24-25)

Progress report on these works is a feature of our e-mailed Pennine Link Extra so if you would like to be kept bang up to date please contact Claire Bebbington in the office to give her your e-mail address.

Trevor Ellis's efforts to secure Listed Building Consent for bridge plates on the Huddersfield Broad Canal have paid off so let's hope the cast plates provided to CRT's predecessors some while ago can now be fitted.

The Society has had a useful meeting with the Waterways Manager for the Manchester & Pennine area, David Baldacchino, reviewing the last year's maintenance work and related spending and discussing plans and priorities for the future. We learned that attention to the paddle seating at Lock 1E at Huddersfield University should bring an end to the frequent draining of the first pound encountered by boaters and walkers arriving at the Huddersfield Narrow Canal from the East.

It is pleasing to see that next Winter's stoppage programme involves another 5 sets of top and bottom gate replacements. A concerted effort will

also be made to resolve the leak in the embankment between Lock 29E and Lock 30E at West Slaithwaite. Plans to purchase grouting equipment is also welcomed as many of the Lock structures on our 200-year old canal are fairly porous.

The Society is keen to see certain stretches dredged and we understand that nationally, the Canal & River Trust intends to 'up' the spending on such tasks. External funding has been obtained to help re-invigorate the Floating Water Plantain in the Site of Special Scientific Interest between Grove Road and Stalybridge. This rare plant prefers a mixture of deep and shallow water and dredging will start shortly to improve the navigable channel and place the excavated material in a protected zone on the 'off' side to create a shallow zone.

Another priority for your Society is to see improvements to towpaths for all users and some more moorings to enable boaters to spend more time (and money) on the Narrow Canal. We have been tasked by CRT to come up with a list of priority areas.

Standedge Tunnel operations were also under scrutiny at our meeting with the Waterways Manager. The current arrangements limit passage to three boats each way on 3 days per week from March to October. Time and again local people have told me that they would like to see more boats using the Canal. I'm grateful to Keith Noble for producing a paper which examines the current arrangements, puts the case for an increase in the number of passages and a reduction in some of the factors

which inhibit boaters seeking a passage through the Tunnel. The current booking system cannot capture information on how many people are put off cruising the Huddersfield Narrow by the prevailing restrictions. David Baldacchino agreed to give careful consideration to our proposals and in the meantime the Society undertook to help establish a boater's questionnaire and to evaluate the results.

It's good to see CRT taking on issues that its predecessor found too challenging. A case in point is the recent staff ballot which gave unanimous support to the proposal to introduce annualised hours contracts. This is bound to have a beneficial impact on the ability of staff to cover very different seasonal workloads.

On the personnel side, I would like to welcome two new members to the Huddersfield Canal Society's Council of Management. Eric Woulds was formerly a senior manager in Kirklees Council's Planning and Regeneration Service and Peter Rawson, former Senior Engineer and Project Manager at Tameside Council. Both have previous involvement with the Huddersfield Narrow, Eric as the Council's Project Officer for the Canal from 1985 to 2000, and Peter as the Engineer managing Tameside Council's work to reopen the Canal through Stalybridge. I am sure both will have much to contribute to the running of the Society with their expertise and local knowledge, and together with Graham Birch, will strengthen our links with the three local authorities at a time when our Council partners have difficulty resourcing the attendance of Operation and Maintenance meetings.

I would like to thank Geoffrey Ali who is taking on the boat crew coordinating role from Andrea Fisher. We have a strong group of loyal volunteers and I'm sure that they will give Geoff every support as he gets to grips with the needs of the role.

The final restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, at huge public expense, would not have been possible without the prospect of it helping to regenerate the communities in the Colne and Tame Valleys. Most of the changes that have occurred since the reopening of the canal in 2001 have centred around residential development. The most striking have involved apartments in refurbished historic mill buildings and no doubt an influx of new residents has helped sustain the villages along the canal. There has been much less development involving the provision of employment and so I am particularly encouraged by the proposed re-use of Slaithwaite's iconic Globe Mill to bring high quality jobs to the area. The University of Huddersfield, *3M (an innovation based multinational)* and Hartley Group (*Building owners and developers from a textile background*) have already found £10m to get the project underway and will soon submit a planning application. In January, I attended a packed meeting of mainly Slaithwaite residents and business people to hear about the plans. There are clearly many issues which need to be resolved, but the community appears to be broadly behind the project. The plans show a new footbridge over the canal linking the first floor of the mill with the main shopping street. The access ramp will be placed in the triangular area just upstream of Lock 22E and the bridge will have plenty of air draught clearance for



boats. The Society will be watching with interest as the project progresses.

Elsewhere in this Issue Graham Birch refers in his Canal & River Trust update to a new study to promote and invigorate the local economy in Marsden. Along with colleagues from the Standedge Visitor Centre, Pennine Prospects and the Marsden community, I met the students and we had a wide ranging discussion on the potential for increased tourism and business opportunities and explored some of the issues currently inhibiting regeneration. I very much look forward to seeing what ideas emerge.

With Spring just around the corner what else is coming up on our waterways?

By the time you read this our water taxi, Marsden Shuttle will have had its own Spring clean (bottom blacking and engine service) at Guy Holding's Portland Basin Marina, to get it ready for the busy Easter weekend at the Standedge Visitor Centre although this is now dependent on the Lock 32W repair.

The well-organised Greenfield and Grasscroft Residents Association have set up a project to renew the towpath from

Chew Valley Road bridge in the direction of Well'i'hole. They have obtained materials from CRT and their efforts to obtain funding from local supporters so impressed the Society's Council that we agreed to chip in £500 as well.

A number of work parties are planned during the Spring and Summer, so if you live nearby and would like to help with the physical work, please contact Bob or Claire in the office and we'll put you in contact with the organisers.

It's time to dust down our gazebo to attend local festivals and we're already booked in to have a presence at the South Pennine Boat Club rally at Battysford on 4th May with Tricia Bailey leading the team. The renamed 'South Pennine Waterways Canal Ring' festival week will be from 27th July to 4th August 2013 and will also offer other promotional opportunities.

Kirklees College will be opening their new Waterfront campus next to the Canal in September 2013 giving opportunities for Canal Society involvement.

HCS has agreed to host a Northern Canals Association October 2013

meeting in Huddersfield which will give us a chance to show off our Canal to representatives of other societies.

I think that's enough to give members a flavour of Society activities.

Best wishes for Spring and early Summer from me.

**Alan Stopher**



Marsden Shuttle moors up outside the Society's offices on its way to Portland Basin Marina. Paul Leeman, decidedly chilled, on the tiller with lockwheelers Andrea Fisher and Mike McCann on the towpath. 11th March 2013



## Canal & River Trust Update

The first quarter of 2013 has been a busy period for the Manchester and Pennine Waterway Partnership (M&P).

On January 17th we had our first full membership meeting of the year. It was hosted by Peel Holdings and took place in the offices at the impressive Media City complex, on the bank of the Manchester Ship Canal in Salford. Media City, of course, now provides a substantial element of the BBC's broadcasting output and prior to the meeting we had the opportunity to visit the studio complex.

Our next full meeting will be on March 14th; hosted by our friends at Shire Cruisers at their Sowerby Bridge headquarters.

In addition there have been two informal meetings, both held in central Manchester, focusing specifically on the M&P Strategic Waterway Plan. These single item meetings have helped us to move forward the work which took place at the Chester "summit" which I reported on in the previous issue of Pennine Link. These meetings have, in turn, been supplemented by a continuing e-mail dialogue amongst members.

As a result, the Plan is now starting to take shape. As a starting point, we have agreed that the national CRT Vision for the future of the waterways, applies equally to our region and we have accepted this as our own high level vision. It is that we should aim to provide:

*"A sustainable and evolving canal and river network that is a national treasure – accessible to and cherished by all."*

However, within the region, we have recognised that a 'one size fits all' approach is not appropriate and that there are three distinct geographical 'character areas', each of which requires a tailored, strategic approach.

These are:

Greater Manchester, focusing on the Manchester City Centre and its urban hinterland

Cheshire, focusing on the county's rural waterway network.

Pennines – focusing on the canals, including the Huddersfield, as a key part of the area's landscape and heritage.

Having come to this view much discussion has gone on themes and ideas for content but perhaps the most significant one is that we now have clear picture of what the Plan will look like.

What we envisage is the production of a high-impact prospectus. A document which will catch the readers' eye the moment they come across it and make them feel that this is the one thing they have to read today. It will aim to:

- Tell the story of the canals from a historical, current and future perspective
- Help raise the profile of the Partnership and the Trust
- Promote the delivery of Trust Projects
- Engage more people in the delivery of the Trust's priorities

Backing this up will be a more detailed document, in the public domain, but largely for internal consumption.

The first key date we are working to in progressing this work is May 13th 2013 when it is proposed to hold the first Manchester and Pennine Waterways Conference at the Lowry Centre in Salford. On this day, the Partnership will report to a wider, invited audience on the achievements of its first year.

The May 13th event will also mark the climax of a project which the Partnership is working on in conjunction with the University of Liverpool Department of Civic Design.

As part of their degree course, the students are being tasked with contributing to the development of the M&P Waterways Plan by preparing a series of action plans providing 'Windows on the Waterways' in 2030 and illustrating their potential to contribute to the sustainable development in the region.

A total of eight towns within the region have been selected for this purpose, of which two are on our own Canal. These are Stalybridge and Marsden.

In Stalybridge, following a growth in activity in the immediate aftermath of the restoration of the canal, the town centre, in common with many others, has suffered from shop closures and a downturn in the retail economy. The students will be asked to identify how the canal could be better used and promoted to reinvigorate the local economy.

At Marsden the students will be asked to suggest ways in which the canal might be promoted as a catalyst to grow the visitor economy of the town, so making it more

of a focal point for the town. It would not be unfair to say that, aside from our own contribution through the operation of the Marsden Shuttle, there is no real sense of proximity of the iconic location, half a mile away at Tunnel End.

On both of these studies, the Society will be amongst the consultees and we will view with interest the conclusion that the students come to when they present them in May.

Preparation of the Strategy is one of the key tasks for CRT, but of at least equal importance is the need to move towards a financially stable and sustainable position in the coming years. In the short/medium term financial security is substantially guaranteed under the terms of the transfer agreement with the Government, which includes funding for 15 years.

However, it would be irresponsible to assume that there is a further guarantee that funding will be carried forward into the future.

This was the message of Stuart Mills, the CRT's Property Director, when he attended the Partnership's full meeting at Media City. Stuart gave an interesting and informative presentation of his department's role in managing the Trust's property portfolio and the decisions that need to be taken in respect of sale and acquisition of land.

He explained that the Trust's portfolio is primarily an endowment portfolio acquired by the Trust when it succeeded British Waterways last year. The Trust, moreover, has a legal obligation to the Government to ensure that the property endowment is being well managed. In evidence of this, we were told that the

land holding generates a profit of £70m per annum.

Of the current portfolio, 70% is in the London area but in response to questions, Stuart was clear that he is both willing and keen to broaden and diversify the Trust's property holding. In particular, M&P members were anxious to emphasise the potential role of the CRT to influence the development of sites which they bring to the market. We recognised that income generation was vital, but we wished to see the Trust seeking to influence future waterside environments by encouraging the creation of high quality, sustainable development. This, in turn, we argued would add to the long term attraction to, and sustainability of, the waterways.

And finally - it would be remiss of me to conclude this update without reference to the news, already well publicised, that after ten years as Chief Executive of British Waterways and (since July 2012) CRT, Robin Evans has decided

to step down at the end of May 2013. In resigning he was quoted as saying *"I want to pursue other interests and opportunities and now the Trust is firmly established I feel it's the right time for me to move on and a perfect time for the Trust to have a new leader."*

The Trust is now therefore seeking a new Chief Executive. The recruitment process will be lead by Tony Hales, who has been asked by Trustees to stay on as Chair to help ensure a smooth transition.

**Graham Birch**

Trustee, Manchester & Pennine  
Waterways Partnership

The 2012 Accounts for Huddersfield Canal Society Limited are now ready to view online. Go to our website: [www.huddersfieldcanal.com](http://www.huddersfieldcanal.com) and see the Members' Area at the foot of the page.

## Back Issues: Virtual & Real

Members visiting our website may have noticed we are in the process of digitising the back issues of Pennine Link from the first 'Bulletin No 1' in June 1974 and making them available online. This will be an incremental process over the coming months and we hope to publish a year's volumes at least each fortnight.

By coincidence, before this task was undertaken, we received the following e-mail from Paul Kenyon of the Friends of Leyburn Station:

*I am a volunteer with the Wensleydale Railway and we have received a donation*

*of a substantial number of back issues of Pennine Link. They are Nos. 72, 73, 106 – 179 and the Souvenir Programme for the 1994 Huddersfield Canals Festival.*

*Could these be of any interest either individually or as a set to you or any of your members against a donation to the Railway? I look forward to hearing from you.*

The office already has a full set, so if any member is interested in these back issues, could we suggest they contact Paul directly at: [pkenyon@dsl.pipex.com](mailto:pkenyon@dsl.pipex.com) and make their own arrangements.

# Notice of the 2013 AGM

## HUDDERSFIELD CANAL SOCIETY LIMITED

Notice is hereby given that the Thirty Third Annual General Meeting of the above named Company will be held at: The Masonic Hall, High Street, Uppermill, OL3 6BT on the 20th June 2013 at 7.00p.m. to transact the following business:

1. To approve the Minutes of the 2012 Annual General Meeting.
2. To receive and adopt the Accounts for the Company for the year ending 31st December 2012 together with the Report of the Council of Management and of the Auditors thereon.
3. To elect Auditors and authorise the Council of Management to fix their remuneration.
4. To re-elect Mr. Trevor Ellis as a member of the Council of Management retiring by rotation.
5. To re-elect Mr. Keith Sykes as a member of the Council of Management retiring by rotation.
6. To re-elect Mr. Vincent Willey as a member of the Council of Management retiring by rotation.
7. To re-elect Ms. Andrea Fisher as a member of the Council of Management retiring by rotation.
8. To consider any other nominations\*.
9. Any other business.

DATED the 14th Day of March 2013  
By Order of the Council

J. M. Fryer, Company Secretary

\* Any member must give notice, in writing, of their intention to propose any other member for election and that member give notice in writing, signed, indicating his/her willingness to be elected. Such notices must be submitted to the Secretary, John M Fryer, Ramsdens, Freeman & Co., 18 Lewisham Road, Slaithwaite, HD7 5AL not less than four nor more than twenty-eight intervening days. Such proposals shall be voted upon at the Meeting, either by a show of hands or ballot according to the wish of the member being proposed.

N.B. A member entitled to attend and vote at the Meeting is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and vote on his/her behalf. The Form of Proxy enclosed must be completed and returned to the Administrator, Huddersfield Canal Society, Transhipment Warehouse, Wool Road, Dobcross, Oldham, OL3 5QR before the date of the Meeting.  
A proxy must be a Member of the Company.

*Parking is available at the rear of the building*



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# Top hole

Standedge Tunnel certainly is.  
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***“Jon and Gareth at  
Aspley Wharf Marina  
were brilliant...2 big  
thumbs up from me!”***

Google review Feb 2013



## Aspley Services Ltd

**Aspley Wharf Marina at Aspley Basin changed hands one year ago and is now run by two marine engineers.** Their combined knowledge and experience of marine systems, electronics and plumbing means that they are able to offer a very high standard of service for boat repairs and servicing. They are now also preferred partners with River Canal Rescue, so you may meet them the next time you are in need!

There is a diesel cleaning service on offer at Aspley, the ‘sludge bunny’ removes the sludge and dirt from your diesel tank by putting it through Racor filters. This prevents breakdowns that are caused by fuel contamination. We also fit access hatches and clean the inside of your tank.

The marina shop is still stocked up with all the spares and parts that one could need. From filters, rope and paint to canal guides and fenders.

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





***“It’s nice to meet a couple of marine engineers who know what they are talking about”***

Website review October 2012

A new venture at the marina shop is a display of paintings by local artist Andrew Jenkins. On offer for sale are postcards, greetings cards, ready-to-hang and framed prints. Andrew is famed for his water colour paintings of the canals, villages and countryside all around Huddersfield.



Turnbridge Mill

The team at Aspley Wharf work closely with Mirfield Boat Company, canal boat building and restoration experts. Its most recent work is the restoration of the well-known *Rochdale*, due to launch in Spring. Aspley Services has provided the engineering support.

**01484 514123**

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HD1 6SD



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



## JIDOKU 26

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

The grid represents our waterways; and the nine letters are all canals within the Canal & River Trust. 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.

# J. Potts & Son, Dukinfield

*Trevor Ellis continues the history of some of the Canals' early carriers.*

## **The Potts Family**

There are quite a number of boatmen in the Potts family, all descended from a John Potts. He is possibly recorded as early as the 1841 Census as a Labourer in Bowden, aged 50, and definitely appears as a Labourer (though as "Pott") at Canal Buildings, Marple in 1851, born Disley, aged 58, wife Ann (54), two daughters Ann (19) and Sarah (16), sons James (18, born Stockport), Matthew (15, born Marple), both Factory Hands, and George (13, born Marple), a Scholar. By 1861 John is a Canal Boatman, aged 70 at the same address and has a daughter, Sarah (25) and two sons; Matthew (24) and George (21), both Canal Boatmen.

James Potts, the eldest son, appears in the 1861 Census at Bulls Head Row, Marple, as a Boatman (27), married to Esther (31, born A-u-L). By 1871 they are living at 1 Springside, Dukinfield, - he is "Boatman on Canal" (38) and they have sons Edward (9) and George (7). They are at the same address in the 1881 Census, James now 52 and George, 17, an Auctioneer's Clerk (Edward does not appear - see below). By the 1891 Census (same address), James, now 55 (?), is described as a Canal Boat Owner at 2 Springside and is now married to Eliza (45), born Bristol. George remains an Auctioneer's Clerk (28), now married to Mary and living at 1 Springside. Springside was situated in what is now a field used for many years for canal festivals on the towpath side of the Peak Forest Canal, just across the aqueduct from Portland Basin.

In the 1901 Census James, now 64(?) is living at 3 Springside as a Canal Boatman and is described as "Worker" rather than "Employer". George Potts (37), now occupies 1 and 2 Springside with wife, Mary (36, born Dukinfield) and is described as "Canal Carrier" and "Employer". He has 4 daughters (Nellie, Esther, Gertrude and Doris) and a son, Sydney (7).

In the 1911 Census, Springside is occupied by George Potts, who describes himself as "Carrier" with the Enumerator (presumably) adding "by Canal" and "Employer" in red. Sidney Potts (16), Eric Potts (5) and James Potts (3) and 2 females are present.

According to some accounts, James Potts had died in 1902, and George Potts was run down by a train just outside Guide Bridge Station in 1910 (possibly while trying to take a short cut to Springside?), though as he appears on the Census conducted on 2 April 1911, there must be a problem with the latter date. (*A check on "Ancestry" gives his death as in the quarter Oct - Dec 1911.*) At this time, according to the *Ashton Reporter*, the company owned over 60 boats and was reputed to be the largest canal boat operator in the country. He was apparently very well respected, being a Dukinfield Councillor and also had a very great interest in working horses - buying and selling throughout the UK. The newspaper report talks of his treat to the poor children of Ashton and Dukinfield when, annually, he took over 600 of them on an outing to Marple via the Peak Forest Canal.

Edward Potts appears in the 1881 Census as a Canal Boat Man (20) living with in-laws at 15 Pleasant Street, Dukinfield, then in the 1891 Census as Canal Boatman (29) at 13 Pleasant Street, Dukinfield. By the 1901 Census he is a Canal Boatman/Owner and Employer (39) at same address. It is impossible to tell for certain whether he was independent of J. Potts & Son, but the “& Son”, presumably refers to James’ son George and would suggest he was not a partner. By the 1911 Census, Edward is described as “Boatman” (49) but now “Worker”, still at 13 Pleasant Street. None of his three sons are boatmen.

Sydney Potts appears in a number of boat registrations in the Manchester Canal Boat Register after the death of George, e.g. “Harriet” (537), “Ernest” (687), “Red Rock” (734), “Esther” (1012), “James” (1073), “Eric” (1014), and “William” (1015), which are registered to “Charles Burton and Sydney Potts, trading as James Potts & Son, Springside,

Dukinfield”, though Sydney Potts’ name is later deleted in all cases, presumably at a date prior to their cancellation on 12th November 1925. He also appears as “Master” of the first three and “Eric” and appears frequently in the toll records for 1917 (see below).

### **Traffics**

David Kitching states, with reference to the only known photograph of a Potts boat (*below*): “The James Potts Boat seen loaded with stone at Bollington on the Macclesfield Canal, is, I believe, named “Dukinfield” rather than that being the base for the business. The boat is clearly not meant for living on and reflects the ‘day boat’ nature of much of the local traffic on the Macclesfield Canal at this time. The photo shows the boat well loaded with gritstone which I believe must have been loaded at the nearby Endon Wharf which was operated by quarrymasters J Williamson and Sons.



Basil Jeuda Collection



*This wharf was linked to the Kerridge quarries by a tramroad and inclined plane."*

As stated above, according to the *Ashton Reporter*, at the time of George Potts' death, the company owned over 60 boats and was reputed to be the largest canal boat operator in the country. The number of boats and the claim to being the largest canal boat operator in the country must be problematic, though it is interesting to note, both from the *Standedge Tunnel Book\**, where Potts are recorded occasionally operating boats owned by the Great Central Railway and the 1917 records, where there is a strong link to the Manchester and Sheffield Canal Company (MSCCo.), that they may have operated more boats than they actually owned. The day boat nature of the operation might tend to increase the number, with boats possibly being delivered to places and used as floating storage.

However, the Manchester Canal Boat Register reveals that Potts did have a number of cabin boats and L.J. Boughey in an article in *Waterways World* of July 1988, (*from the Standedge Tunnel register*) described J. Potts & Son as being one of the "main carriers" through the tunnel in that period. In fact, although the *Standedge Tunnel Book* starts from 4th September 1894, they did not become regular carriers until 1905, then until 29th April 1913 they made 85 return passages. Prior to 1905 they appeared less than 10 times and a block of six of these are all westbound passages in a single day – possibly a purchase of boats? (It is possible that boats used on the railway tunnel works would have been sold around this time). It is clear that traffic through *Standedge* was never

their main business and it seems likely that they obtained only a single traffic. This was almost certainly westbound as times through the tunnel average around three and a quarter hours eastbound and around five and a half westbound. There are a few interruptions, in particular from October 1910 to February 1911, when no traffic at all passed through the tunnel. It is hard to resist the conclusion that the end of the traffic in 1913 may be tunnel-related as westbound times increase dramatically, averaging around 7 hours in the final three months.

One month's toll records survive for May 1917, at which time their activities on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal are restricted eastward to traffic as far as Stalybridge. During this period they deliver thirteen loads of acid, five of cotton, mainly for the MSCCo., plus one of grain and two of flour, all for the MSCCo. and to their wharf.

All of the boats on the Manchester Canal Boat Register have their registrations cancelled on 12th November 1925. The annotations are variations on a theme, the most informative stating "Sold to a friend in London. No longer plying on Manchester Canals."

**Trevor Ellis**

*\* The Standedge Tunnel Book is a record of the passages through Standedge Tunnel for the period 4th September 1894 to 21st August 1937, in both directions. Originally held at the British Waterways Archives, Gloucester, it has been moved to the new archives at Ellesmere Port Boat Museum. It has made occasional appearances for special events at the Standedge Visitor Centre. The Canal Society holds a facsimile at the Wool Road Office.*

## Obituary - Brian Badminton

When the Canal Society was formed in 1974, the founder members were from the East side and it was decided, quite early on, to have two ad hoc committees to serve both sides of the 'hill'. In 1980, after members had partially cleared Lock 1E, Brian succeeded David Milsom as East side Chairman.

He soon made his mark on the Society and his practical bent proved useful in the renovation of a tiny steel narrow boat, which we acquired from the Grantham Canal Society. The boat was named 'Stan' and ran trips on the East side from the Tunnel End cottages to Lock 42E, captained by Brian, amongst others. I even piloted this electrically powered craft and sometimes we raised £10-£15 per return trip! 'Stan' took part in the 1980 Marsden Festival.

John Maynard was the electrical guru who installed the electric motor and batteries, but Brian soon became the booking agent for trips and he helped launch the boat at Aspley Basin in March 1981 to get maximum publicity for our restoration plans. At various carnivals and festivals, particularly on the East side, Brian would whip up support from locals and our restoration ambitions were made known by his public address skills from the floats up and down the Colne valley. With Brian in charge we won the first prize at the 1982 Slaithwaite Carnival.

Fund raising was another of Brian's talents when in 1982 he organised a "Toepath" (sic) walk and raised £1,450. He successfully repeated the walk in the following year. After many years Brian's presence was felt again when lately his



HCS Archive

boating experience and exploits on the system, but particularly the HNC, provided much needed practical advice for BWB. Their new waterway manager had begun to seriously look at problems on the restored canal which was in parts now 20 years old and east side locks and structures were requiring major repairs. Brian's cruising logs were helpful.

We shall miss his critical eye and enthusiasm. A true canal enthusiast and one of our longest serving friends.

**David M Sumner**  
President HCS



HCS Archive

*Above: Brian, (front left) with an impressive cheque for £1,450; the proceeds from 'Toepath 82' sponsored walk.*

*Opposite Below: The naming ceremony of trip boat 'Stan' in March 1980 with Brian at far right.*

*Below: The Society's float at the June 1983 Huddersfield Mayor's Parade with Brian on the tiller and wife, Susan, far left.*



E & A Croshaw

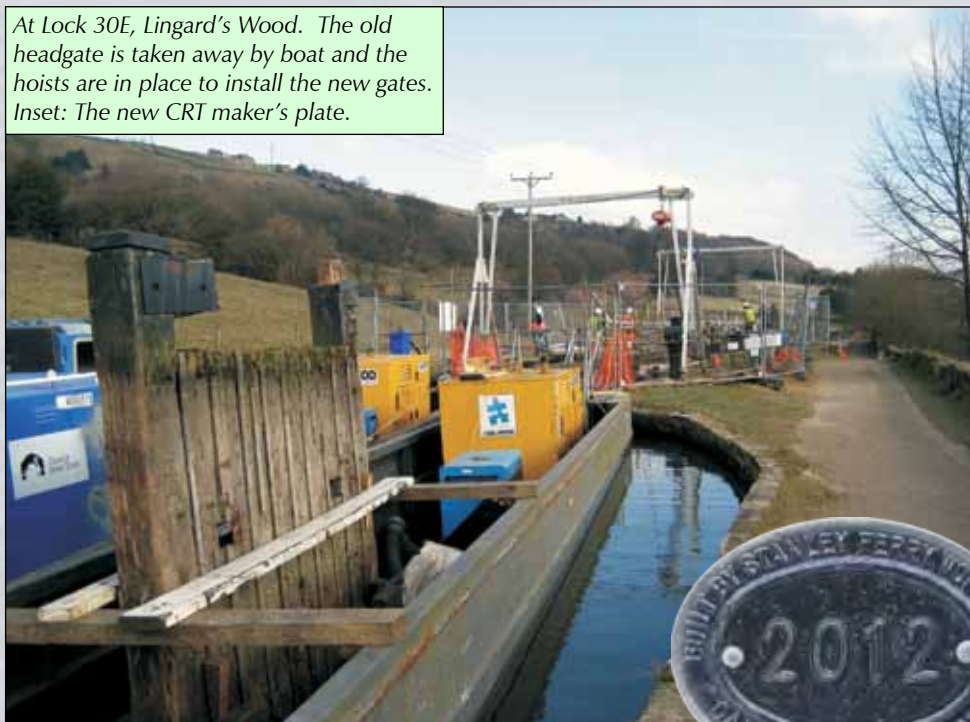
# Winter Work Programme

*Canal & River Trust have continued their investment in the Huddersfield Narrow by replacing and repairing lock gates on the East side; gates which had been fitted by Kirklees Council some 25 years ago.*



*New gates installed at Lock 4E, Longroyd Bridge, Huddersfield.*

*At Lock 30E, Lingard's Wood. The old headgate is taken away by boat and the hoists are in place to install the new gates. Inset: The new CRT maker's plate.*





At Lock 9E, Milnsbridge. The new gates feature a balance beam engraved with a line of poetry (inset) - part of a National project between Arts Council England and Canal & River Trust to celebrate CRT's inauguration.



At Lock 20E, East Slaithwaite. Installing new tailgates.

# 1970 Tunnel Transit

Graham Birch gives a digest of an article which first appeared IWA's Bulletin No.96 December 1970 by Robert Aickman.

Council member Keith Noble recently forwarded to me a copy of an article which first appeared in the IWA Journal in 1970. The article was written by Robert Aickman and it described a transit through the Standedge Tunnel on September 18th 1970.

With the canal and the tunnel now restored and up and running for more than ten years, it is interesting to look back at the situation as Aickman found it 43 years ago.

The format in which we have the article does not lend itself to full replication but I felt that it would be of interest to provide a flavour of the piece by reproducing a number of extracts.

In 1970, of course, the canal was closed to through navigation, but the journey was able to take place because

*"the canal continues to serve as a water supply channel of some importance, and every second year an inspection boat goes through the Tunnel from the British Waterways depot at Marsden to Diggle at the other end, and back to Marsden a few days later."*

The transit took place in "a short, steel vessel named Ashton propelled by an outboard motor" but we are told that until recently it had been undertaken by a wooden narrow boat which "had to be shafted through in the ancient style"

Aickman was clearly more than impressed by the tunnel and he gives

the following vivid and almost poetic description of the interior:

*"Much of the tunnel is unlined and unregularised rock. The many-planed surfaces are of the greatest beauty: yellow, grey, green, red, purple; and yet none of those colours, but always something far more subtle. The reflections in the still water would be hard to match this side of Granada; and not least where lining by belts of brickwork produces an effect of flattened circles, as in an engraving by Piranesi."*

In other respects, however, conditions were uncomfortable and deterioration was taking place. We are told that:



On Friday, 18th September 1970, I navigated through Standedge Tunnel, both the longest and the highest in the British inland waterways system, twenty-two years after the epic journey described in the Association's publication, *Voyage of our Officers through the Waterways of the North*. In 1948, we were able to navigate right through the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, on the highest level of which the tunnel stands, but in 1970 many of the lock-gates were taken out by the Ousea and Inland Waterways Executive, predecessors of the British Waterways Board, since when the waterway has been progressively put out of action by other devices also. It continues to serve as a water supply channel of some importance, and every second year an inspection boat goes through the tunnel from the British Waterways depot at Marsden to Diggle at the other end, and back to Marsden a few days later. The boat is nowadays a short steel vessel, happily named *Ashton*, and propelled by an outboard motor. Until fairly recently it was a wooden narrowboat, which had to be shafted through in the ancient style. It was informed that the trip took only about half as long again as it now does under power.

There were nine of us on the boat, including our former Council Member, Mr. David Cooper, to whose very great kindness I owed my invitation. The entire excursion was under the direction of the Section Inspector, Mr. A. Whitson, whom I had met on the canal in 1948, and whose courteous helpfulness and power of quietly efficient organisation typify the ancient waterway traditions, and made the present trip a great pleasure from first to last. It transpired that Mr. Wilfred Donkersley, who in 1948 came with our party right through from Ashton to Huddersfield, and who proved a tower of strength and a virtuoso of versatility, had retired in March of this year. He is now living in Collier, which is (naturally) on the line of the canal.

Much of Standedge Tunnel is, indeed, unregularised rock: a rock, seventeen years to blast, largely by the light of candles. The many-planed surfaces are of the greatest beauty: yellow, grey, green, red, purple, and yet none of these colours, but always something far more subtle. The reflections in the still water (six or eight feet deep, and Mr. Whitson) would be hard to equal for mystery and poetry this side of Granada; and not least where lining by belts of brickwork produces an effect of flattened circles, as in an engraving by Piranesi. Aesthetically, the effect is often immensely beautiful, especially in the four passing places, all with remote and romantic names, where the tunnel

make across the look of some future David Piranesi or perhaps even more. A local society is needed: initially to watch continuously and a staff against each proposed act of further destruction. A further, in 1948, the night was very still, rising through, and the night in the canal tunnel would look like volcanic, as did even the two partial, we then emerged at Marsden, we took the train to Huddersfield, myself. I found three consecutive butts, necessary, as it is a D.H. 14, I suppose. We are most of us saddened by the passing of time, therefore also down the Colne valley into Huddersfield, where the river now looks like an overlying Christmas; but the boat, Standedge Tunnel is one who is distinctly the galley.



"The tunnel, although still mainly dry, as canal tunnels go, was wetter than in 1948 owing to the recent heavy rainfall percolating through the rock. At one point, an inconvenient stream of water from a hole in the tunnel side, pouring out as from the overflow of a vast domestic bath, flooded the bottom of our boat as we passed."

He also remarks that "the bottoms of the tunnel ventilator shafts were long ago boarded against objects dropped by hooligans and natural falls of rock".

Nonetheless Aickman summarises the one and three quarter hour voyage in lyrical terms, saying:

"The tunnel, more than three miles long, strange and beautiful almost all the way,

offers one of the most remarkable journeys anywhere"



rough Sandridge Tunnel. The solid rock walls of the tunnel, vividly in Mr. Aickman's article, can be clearly seen in this picture. (Harry Arisaka)

nd, in at least one place, mooring rings are provided). Almost all the tunnel seems to wind a little, and that it truly does is confirmed by the orientation of the two distant ends, as one sights them from air in the tunnel is exceptionally pure and clear, without being southerly, and the temperature remarkably even as in the lanterns of the Peak District, which the tunnel distinctly resembles. The tunnel still mainly 'dry' as canal tunnels go, was wetter than in 1948, the recent heavy rainfall percolating through the rock and seeping reservoirs. At one point, an inconvenient stream of water from a hole in the tunnel side, pouring out as from the overflow of a vast domestic bath, flooded the bottom of our boat as we passed. The bottoms of the tunnel vents, were long ago boarded against objects dropped from the top by and natural falls of rock; and there is a complex system of passages

21



Marsden period of Sandridge Lock of the Pennine Ridge.

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IWA Bulletin No.96

25

With admirable foresight he goes on to reflect that:

"Though not perhaps suited to the more popular type of coach trip, a tourist service would, I am sure, attract discerning travellers from all over the world; and if charged for at, say, the Snowdon Mountain Railway rate, would bring in a useful income." (Ian Bradbury notes that the Snowdon Mountain Railway have, by virtue of their spectacular attraction, always charged a premium compared to an equivalent mileage on other heritage railways)

Away from the tunnel Aickman notes with regret that:

"Down towards Huddersfield, the process slowly advances of converting the locks into "cascades"; plainly at considerable public cost. We inspected one of these "beautifications" at the Marsden Summit Lock."

While; "On the Lancashire descent, cruder forms of closure prevail"

He continues more positively, however, saying that:

"Looking at those cascades I reflected that they probably helped to conserve the fundamental stonework of the locks; and to make easier the task of some future David Hutchings."

He concludes by saying (and remember this was in 1970):

"A local society is needed; initially to watch continuously and to raise a yell against each proposed act of further destruction."

Well, as we all know, the Huddersfield Canal Society was formed in 1974 and the rest, as they say, is history.

**Graham Birch**

## Standedge Tunnel - 2013 Season

It was planned that Standedge Tunnel would re-open for boaters on Monday 18th March. However, the unforeseen damage at Lock 32W has meant a four week delay has had to be implemented. Once repairs at 32W are completed, the Tunnel will re-open for the season until Friday 8th November 2013.

Passage through the Tunnel remains the same as in previous years; on Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays. Boats will set off from Marsden to Diggle between 8.30am and 10.00am, and will set off from Diggle to Marsden between 12.30pm and 2.00pm.

At least 3 working days notice is required and can be booked by contacting the Red Bull office on 0303 0404040 Monday to Friday during office hours. A week's notice is required for passage on a Bank Holiday.

*Please note: the Visitor Centre, café and public boat trips into the Tunnel were unaffected by the problems at Lock 32W and re-opened on Saturday 23rd March.*

*For the more information please see: <http://www.standedge.co.uk/> or call the Centre on 01418 844298.*



An application form can be downloaded from our website:  
*<http://www.huddersfieldcanal.com/#74-club>*

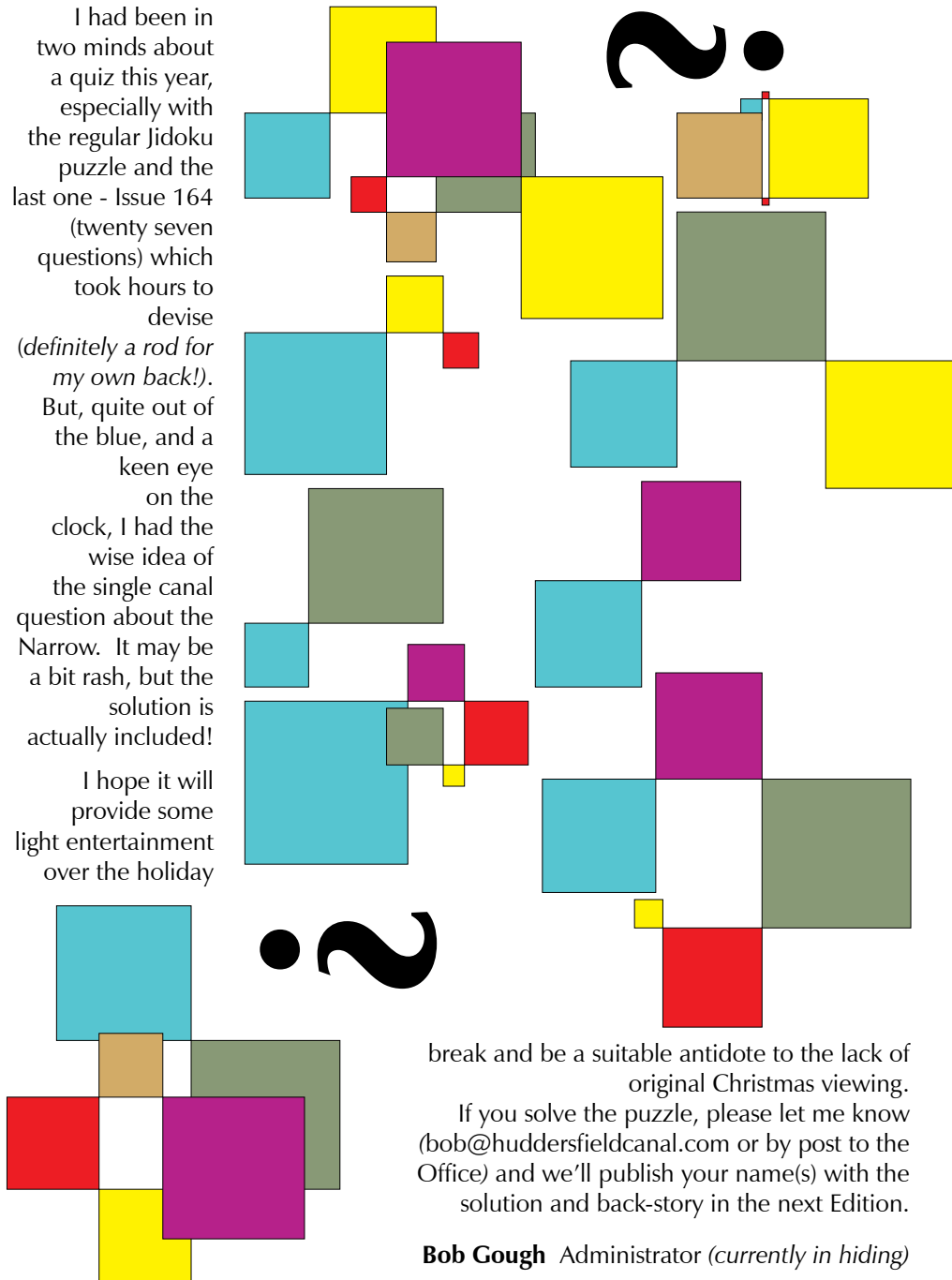
or collected from the Tunnel End Café,  
or simply send a cheque payable to  
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# Canal Puzzle as set Last Issue and ...

I had been in two minds about a quiz this year, especially with the regular Jidoku puzzle and the last one - Issue 164 (twenty seven questions) which took hours to devise (*definitely a rod for my own back!*). But, quite out of the blue, and a keen eye on the clock, I had the wise idea of the single canal question about the Narrow. It may be a bit rash, but the solution is actually included!

I hope it will provide some light entertainment over the holiday



break and be a suitable antidote to the lack of original Christmas viewing.

If you solve the puzzle, please let me know (bob@huddersfieldcanal.com or by post to the Office) and we'll publish your name(s) with the solution and back-story in the next Edition.

**Bob Gough** Administrator (*currently in hiding*)



## ... the Solution

I'm afraid I can't publish any names of members who came up with the solution to this puzzle as we didn't receive any correspondence or calls - that's not to say there are no modest sluths out there!

I came up with a variant on this code at school, some 40 years ago, as a simple way of encoding the alphabet and constructing words.

There are a number of supporting clues to help you decode the question (and the answer!)

There is a sequence of 36 numbers at the foot of the page and 36 lines of text accompanying the pattern. The numbers relate to a particular character (including spaces) on the corresponding line, hence the 12th character of "I had been in" is 'i' and the 1st character of the second line is 't'. Applying the numbers to all the lines in order, reads "It is easy when you know how to apply the rule". This also explains the rather odd justification and line breaks, so I could get the correct characters on the right lines.

The text itself seems straightforward apart from the rather odd section "But, quite out of the blue, and a keen eye on the clock, I had the wise idea ..." It will come as no surprise that 'out of the blue' and 'clock .. wise' is significant, especially as a blue square alone is common to all nine groups of corner connected squares.

The nine groups represent an eight word question and a one word answer and if you " ... apply the rule" i.e. measure each square and substitute its dimension into the alphabet (1mm for A, 2mm for B, 13mm for M etc) and start from the blue square and work clockwise to the next connected square, you will get: "What is the longest pound on our canal" and the answer "Summit".

The grouping for the word 'canal' is rather interesting, but does show the potential for confusion in my original schoolboy version which used lines, hence the judicious use of overlapping coloured squares in this version.

**Bob Gough**

### Solution to Jidoku 26

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

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