

Pennine Link

Magazine of the Huddersfield Canal Society



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NON-COUNCIL POSTS

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Bob Gough *Administrator*



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

Standedge Tunnel

Exciting announcements by CRT

Winter Passages

Passages through the Tunnel will be available, in both directions, on one day each week from 6 January to Easter 2014. The Huddersfield Narrow and Broad Canals will be the only trans-Pennine waterway fully open through the period from New Year to Easter.

Change to Passage days

Discussions with hire boat operators and weekend boaters has led to the proposal to operate, after Easter 2014, transits on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. Please note: this change has yet to be confirmed.

Volunteers Required

One constraint on the number of boats passing through the Tunnel is the staff required to operate the transits. Currently, with three boats, it takes 5 members of staff: one in the Tunnel Operations room at Tunnel End, one in the "shadow" vehicle in the old railway tunnel, and one 'chaperone' on each of the three boats. Passages could be increased with more chaperones and CRT are asking for volunteers to supplement their present staff. Full training will be given.

Keith Sykes

If you have any comments to add to the consultation on the proposed tunnel passage changes, or would like to notify your interest in becoming a volunteer Tunnel Chaperone, please contact CRT's Manchester and Pennine office.

enquiries.manchesterpennine@canalrivertrust.org.uk Tel. 0303 040 4040

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Editorial

It's that time of year again. Christmas is fast approaching and in the shops it already seems to have been with us for an eternity.

When Christmas arrives New Year is, of course, just around the corner. Soon 2013 will be consigned to the annals of history and the blank page, which is 2014, will be stretching out in front of us.

At this time it is customary to reflect on the year which is about to end and to look forward to the hopes and expectations for the new one. In line with this tradition, I will use the following paragraphs to give my take on the year past and the one to come in relation to our Society and our Canals.

Overall, I think that 2013 has been a good year for HCS and our Canals. To start with, we had a good Summer, with more than the average ration of warm sunny days. Dedicated boaters will, of course, take to the waterways whatever the weather, but there can be no doubt that cruising the network is so much more pleasant when the sun is shining.

The good weather and long, fine evenings also brings out in much greater numbers those who simply enjoy a walk along the towpath with family and friends to enjoy the picturesque tranquillity of the waterside environment. As we all know, the Narrow offers opportunities for this in abundance. Moreover, it is memories of doing this which helps to cement the recognition of our canals, and waterways in general, as a valued asset for the whole community.

The past year has also seen us consolidating our relationship in a variety of areas with the Canal and River Trust (CRT). I have continued my involvement in the Manchester and Pennine Partnership (of which more elsewhere in this Issue). Also we were delighted that Patricia Bayley was appointed to membership of the CRT's Museums and Attractions Partnership where she will be taking a particular interest in the operation and development of the Standedge Visitor Centre (SVC).

We have long recognised that Standedge is a key asset. It is the shop window not only for the Canal but potentially also for our Society. It is therefore in our own interests and those of CRT/SVC for us to help in whatever way we are able to increase the visitor numbers, enhance the Centre's reputation and give visitors a positive and rewarding experience.

HCS Council has therefore agreed that for the 2014 season:

- We will operate the Marsden Shuttle to an agreed timetable which will be publicised on the boat, at each terminus and on our website.
- Our existing maintenance volunteers' team will include in its programme agreed tasks for SVC.
- We will help to develop interpretation materials and in turn will have a higher profile and more visible display counter/cabinet within the Centre.
- We will we provide volunteers on Family Fun Days (and more frequently if possible) to talk to visitors.

- We will assist with distribution of SVC promotional material.

I believe that this is a really positive step for the future of the Canal, the Centre and the Society and I will be asking Patricia to keep us up to date with developments through the pages of Pennine Link.

Liaison and joint working with CRT has also progressed on other fronts, notably in the Area of Operation and Maintenance on which subject we have continued our regular liaison meetings with David Baldacchino and his team. These meetings give us the opportunity to exchange views on the priorities for the O and M programme and to better understand the decisions which David ultimately reaches in the allocation of his annual budget.

Two other items arising from these meetings are well worthy of note. First, it was agreed that it would be useful to invite boaters who transit the Standedge Tunnel to give some feedback on various aspects of their experience. The Society has therefore undertaken to draft a questionnaire and to receive and tabulate the responses which will then be shared with the CRT. Work on drafting the questionnaire has been undertaken by Vince Willey.

Second, in discussions with British Waterways and subsequently CRT we have long been pressing the case for an increase in the number of days when Tunnel transits are able to take place. It appears that this pressure has now borne fruit. Thanks to an early completion of the Winter stoppage programme, extra, out of season, transits are planned; the Chairman makes reference to this in his Report.

Also consultations are currently taking place about modifying passages during the Spring and Summer with the likelihood being that from Easter 2014, passages will be able to happen on Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The Sunday passage will help weekend boaters and give added interest to the Visitor Centre when boats emerge from the Tunnel during the afternoons.

The other major initiative which has been developed in the second half of 2013 has been the move to recruit and set up a team of Canal Observers who will report on any issues affecting the canal or the towpath. It will be recalled that we included a leaflet in the Autumn Issue inviting anyone interested in taking on this role to contact the Office.

I am happy to say the response has been excellent and it looks as if we will, from the outset, have Observers in place to monitor the full length of both the Narrow and Broad canals.

The steering group, and in particular Bob Gough and Eric Woulds, have been busy drafting the report forms and other paperwork which will be presented to, and hopefully agreed with, the CRT early in December. CRT will also arrange some training sessions for CO's which will cover Health and Safety as well as what to look out for and we are hoping that we will be given the green light to get started shortly after the December meeting.

I was pleased to be able to have preview of what can be achieved when I recently met with Steph Pelmore, Gill McCulley and their colleagues from the Greenfield and Grasscroft Residents Association. This group are not only already acting Observers but have enhanced their



Chairman's Report

During the later stages of the cruising season, the Canal and River Trust (CRT) has introduced stoppages on

short sections of canal for odd days to deal with leakage in an effort to retain as much water as possible in the Huddersfield Narrow Canal. This has been particularly important whilst the work at Hill Top reservoir, Slaithwaite has been in progress. Towards the end of the season, lengthy stoppages on the other

two trans-Pennine waterways meant that the Huddersfield Narrow had an increase in visits by boaters.

The Winter stoppage schedule is now upon us and it involves replacing gates on 5 locks. Locks 5E (Paddock Foot), 6E (Mark Bottoms), 16E (Westwood), 35E (Marsden flight) and 20W (Hall) are all programmed to have new gates by Christmas. This will mean the end of the long sequence of 1980s-built gate replacement and should mean more funds being available for other tasks in future years. This will enable the Canal

commitment entering into an Adoption Agreement with CRT. They now meet regularly, under the guidance of the CRT, to work on their length of the Canal from Division Bridge to Lock 20W.

This Observer project, I believe, is a really excellent initiative which is an important part of making sure that Huddersfield Canal Society continues to achieve its objective of making sure that our Canals carry on being an important asset to both boaters and the communities they pass through.

In addition to establishing and progressing the Observer project, HCS Council has also decided to support three promotional events during 2014, all of which will be part of the programme for the 2014 Pennine Ring Festival. The events chosen are:

- An event in the Spring at the Standedge Visitor Centre which we will help to develop alongside the Centre's management team.

- A boat gathering at Stalybridge as part of the town's annual Carnival scheduled in 2014 for the weekend of 23/24th June.
- An event in Huddersfield on July 6th when the *Tour de France* will be passing through the town. There will undoubtedly be large crowds there to witness the Tour and its associated entertainments and there will also be a worldwide television audience. There is, therefore, potentially a great opportunity to promote and publicise our canals.

We can look forward to a full and active year in 2014 which is fitting as, in April, our Society will celebrate the 40th anniversary of its formation.

Finally, I offer my thanks to those who entered our annual photographic competition and congratulate the winning entrants and in signing off, may I wish you all a happy Christmas and good New Year enjoying the waterways.

Graham Birch

to be available for cruising from the New Year 2014. This is a significant departure from previous years and to facilitate this, CRT have announced that from 6th January passage through the Standedge Tunnel will be available in both directions, on one day each week to Easter 2014.

Boater facilities have been an issue this season with problems at Slaithwaite regarding Elsan disposal and the absence of the correct fittings on the water taps. After protracted delays both are now available but the future of the Kirklees/CRT toilet block is in doubt as the Council wants to close all public toilet facilities to save money.

Our October 2013 Operation and Maintenance meeting with CRT was an important one as two of the three local authorities were represented after a period of absence. It is hoped that Oldham Council may once again be able to join with the other partners to assist with the prioritisation of canal works. As well as the canal maintenance work, discussions focussed on increasing the number of moorings, making towpath improvements and the provision of boater facilities. In discussion, I was struck by how closely HCS's aims were to those of CRT when it came to increasing use of the Canal and its towpath.

Since the last issue of Pennine Link good progress has been made on assembling a team of Canal Observers to monitor lengths of the Huddersfield Broad and Narrow Canals. I'm grateful for the HCS Council Members and our own Administrator for leading on this and for the members of HCS who have volunteered their time for this new initiative.

An initial draft questionnaire has been developed by the Society for boaters with the aim of issuing it next season to all who make the passage through Standedge Tunnel.

The Marsden Shuttle has finished its season's work and arrangements are being made for a new floor to be installed and other work to be undertaken on the engine and the boat's interior during the Winter. Thanks go to all who have kept the 'Shuttle' running during the Summer.

Changes are afoot at Standedge Visitor Centre and we await the outcome of management changes following James Dean's promotion to a role managing three of the CRT attractions including Standedge.

The Society continues to be valued for its contributions to conferences in our area and user group meetings relating to our Canals. In October alone we were involved in 6 events.

I represented HCS at the Pennine Prospects Conference at Rochdale. It was good to share with others our enthusiasm for the South Pennines, the canals being such an important feature in the environment of an area under-valued in tourism terms.

I've had positive feedback from visitors to the Northern Canals Association meeting which we hosted at the new Kirklees College building at the Waterfront. The event was well-attended, mainly by representatives of canal restoration societies as far south as the Midlands. CRT Trustee, John Dodwell gave a presentation entitled 'Canal & River Trust one year on, what next?' which demonstrated just how far



Canal & River Trust Update

I have written previously about the importance of spreading the word about our canals and their many virtues and not

just accepting that it is already common knowledge. This is certainly something that the CRT has recognised in the 18 months since it came into existence and in the first part of this update, I am going to report on a few of the things that are being done in the area of marketing and publicity.

The starting point for such things, nowadays, tends to be the Internet and the CRT has put considerable resource and effort into developing its website. However, use of the Internet as a means of disseminating information requires a positive desire on the part of the enquirer to 'Google' the topic and then visit and search the website. In a sense, this amounts to preaching to the converted. The trick is to reach those who are not actively looking for information but

who might be tempted to do so when exposed to positive publicity.

This has clearly been recognised by those responsible at CRT and they are acquiring an impressive record in securing mentions in both the printed and broadcast media.

A good example of this is the recent launch of the new programme of Winter Works Open Days. A number of these were held last year and they proved to be popular and successful. A programme of events covering the length of the country has been planned for 2013/14 and details of the locations of the events can be found on the CRT website.

This year's programme was launched on the weekend of November 16th/17th in London at Camden Lock on the Regents Canal and it received widespread coverage in the media. I personally happened upon a report on it carrying interviews with CRT staff on the BBC News 24 Channel and it featured prominently on the home page of the BBC News website.

the new organisation had progressed in a short time. I presented the Society's standpoint, 'Working with Canal and River Trust on a restored waterway, a developing role' which covered HCS's work from restoration through to today. Both talks resulted in healthy discussion. Following the afternoon society round up, my colleagues showed visitors around the Waterfront site.

Looking forward, your Society is starting to plan events for 2014. A significant date in the diary is 6th July when the

Tour de France crosses the Huddersfield Narrow at Chapel Hill. Watch this space and particularly Pennine Link Extra for more information.

Writing in late November, the Autumn colours are still visible from my house and the weather has turned noticeably colder. It's just the time to get out for a bracing walk along the canal! I wish you and your families a restful and enjoyable Christmas and a good 2014.

Alan Stopher

Reports also appeared on ITV News, on regional television news and local radio as well as in the Press.

Nearer to home, the BBC regional news programme North West Tonight featured the start of work at Bugsworth Basin with a story about rescuing fish from the section that is to be drained and relocating them to a length of the Rochdale Canal for the duration of the works. There was also, of course, a huge amount of media interest earlier this year in the breach and subsequent repair work at Dutton on the Trent and Mersey Canal.

These are just a few examples, but it is evident from the regular media updates that I receive as an M and P Partnership member, that the CRT is working hard at getting the message out and that the news hungry media are happy to use the material which it provides.

This is illustrated and quantified in the monthly media monitor which the Trust produces and circulates. The most recent one which I have to hand is that for October and this sets out the following results for the country as a whole. During the month there were 220 "Episodes of Media Coverage" of which 90.4% were positive. Of these 70% were the result of proactive work by the Trust and 23% of the coverage appeared in national or regional media.

Meanwhile the work of the Manchester and Pennine Partnership has been continuing apace with two meetings having taken place both in the second half of October. The first was at Manchester Town Hall on October 17th. This was a special meeting called to progress the work on the Strategic Waterways Plan for the region.

As explained in my last update this is to be a working document to complement the Manifesto which was launched in September.

The purpose of the meeting was to review and refine the three year programme of actions set out in the first draft of the document. Whilst accepting that it needs to be more detailed and technical than the Manifesto, the Partnership is anxious for it to be as concise and reader friendly as possible. Discussion of the Strategy was therefore focussed on this outcome.

The Strategy was also an agenda item for the plenary meeting of the group a week later at Bugsworth Basin. However, this meeting also saw the Partnership moving its role forward to what might be seen as the next stage in its work.

The group has now been operating for 18 months and the early meetings were concerned to a large extent with defining our role and direction. The outcome and expression of this are set out in the Manifesto, and the more detailed actions and priorities for work are in the Strategic Waterways Plan.

However, each of the Members brings to the table an area of professional knowledge and expertise which is relevant to the work of the Trust and we are now starting to work with the Trust staff to share opinions and provide input derived from our background and skills.

At the October meeting, therefore, the other main item was to receive and discuss a report on a number of key heritage issues. Three matters were presented for discussion and all concerned protected structures beset with difficult problems.

Briefly the three are:

Whaley Bridge Transhipment Warehouse, a Grade 2* listed building which is on the English Heritage National Buildings at Risk Register. To lift the At Risk status a viable sustainable use is needed and the support of the Partnership is being sought with the process of moving ideas forward.

Shaw Wood Bridge on the Rochdale Canal near Hebden Bridge is Grade 2 listed but it is unsuited to the modern vehicular traffic. The problem is that the position of modern commercial vehicles as they approach the bridge from either side make the parapets very vulnerable and over many years it has sustained damage to both parapets. The solution seems to lie in traffic management scheme and the support of the partnership to give weight to this proposal was sought.

Marple Aqueduct is a Scheduled Ancient Monument on the Peak Forest Canal which does not have a handrail or edge protection to its off-side. There has been a recent fatality at the site and other near misses. From a safety point of view there is a need for a rail but this has been held to have an adverse effect upon the character and aesthetic of the Aqueduct and only warning signs have been allowed. The question remains however,

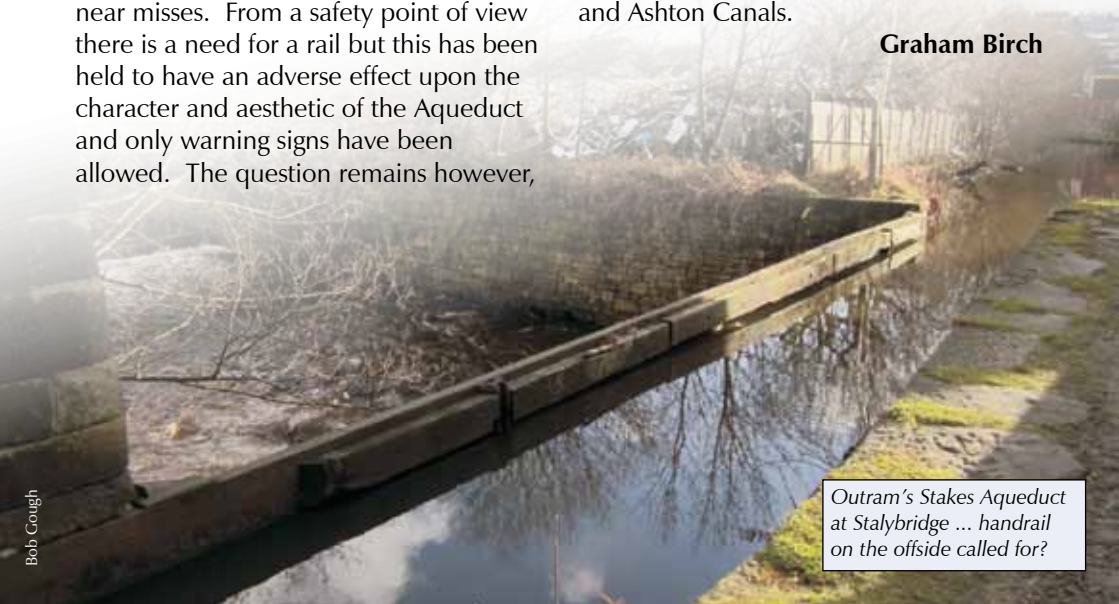
do the Health and Safety risks outweigh the preservation of heritage?

These issues were brought to the whole group but we have recognised that there will be many issues on which a view is sought and that it is not practical to have a full group discussion or to await the provision of a partnership view at a bi-monthly meeting.

Partnership members have therefore been asked to take on a liaison role with CRT staff within their particular areas of expertise. In my case I have been asked to link up with the Trust's Planning officers to provide a Partnership view on development proposals within the M and P area.

In this role I have already met and established a working arrangement with the Trust's planning officer for the region. Further, I have just this week provided my first response which was to the development plan for HS2 Terminal in the Piccadilly area of Manchester. Its relevance to the CRT is that it includes the Dale Street and Ducie Street areas and hence the routes of the Rochdale and Ashton Canals.

Graham Birch



*Outram's Stakes Aqueduct
at Salybridge ... handrail
on the offside called for?*



CRT Museums & Attractions

Standedge Visitor Centre has closed for the Winter after a very successful season.

Due to reorganisation

in the CRT Museums and Attractions (M&A) Group, James Dean, the Manager of Standedge Visitor Centre and Tim Turner, Manager of Anderton Lift, have been seconded to the roles of Museums & Attractions Managers responsible for three museums each and reporting directly to Debbie Lumb, Head of M&A.

James will have overall responsibility for Standedge, Stoke Bruerne and Gloucester Museums and Tim will handle Anderton Lift, Ellesmere Port and Pontcysyllte.

New Duty Managers will be appointed in the New Year at Standedge and the current Duty Managers at Anderton will take over Tim's day to day responsibilities.

The roles of Ellen Richards and Claire Atkinson, who used to be Summer

season Team Leaders in the café, have been extended through this Winter, while Standedge is closed, to cover James' role and develop next year's Events Calendar.

In future HCS will liaise with the Duty Managers for day to day decisions, such as running the Shuttle trip boat, while James will still handle the strategic decisions.

Congratulations to James, Tim, Claire and Ellen and we look forward to working with them in the future.

In October Standedge featured on BBC TV Inside Out programme which asked why Standedge and the South Pennines, with their rich industrial heritage, are not in a National Park.

Approaches have been made to ten schools to encourage them to visit Standedge next year.

I hope everyone has a Happy Christmas and we look forward to seeing Standedge open again in Spring 2014.

Patricia Bayley

Trustee

Museums & Attractions Partnership



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Profile - Tony Zajac

We continue our series of Profiles of Council Members with Tony Zajac.

It never ceases to amaze me the way people in all walks of life and professions start off in their chosen vocation. Some choose their own pathways others choose to answer a calling and some just end up ending up!

I feel privileged to have been co-opted and asked to serve on the Council. I suppose I still regard myself as the new boy as I am the youngest and still working – which means juggling my time between the demands of being a school teacher and the rest of what life throws at you, including the family, friends, a caravan, skippering a couple of boats, coordinating the crews for the ‘Marsden Shuttle’ and assisting the East Lancs. Railway’s Education Group where they re-enact the WW2 evacuation of children to the countryside.

Since my early teens, I was lucky enough to have been involved in a number of “things” related to my many interests, but it did get to the point where I was burning the candle at both ends AND in the middle! I had a love of the theatre and performed with the Manchester Youth Theatre, after which I took up Ballroom and Latin American dancing, which I eventually taught for many years.

This still wasn’t enough for me, so I ended up in higher education training to teach in primary education. At the same time (in the mid seventies) I was preparing to go ‘on the road’ as a mobile DJ running dinner dances around a strict tempo theme with a little ‘disco’ thrown in. This little undertaking kept us going for many years, through thick and thin, until I eventually told the revenue that enough was enough and I was packing it in.

In the meantime, after qualifying as a school teacher, we all came out facing the Thatcher education cuts and no jobs. Isn’t it funny that years later at one of my children’s parents’ evenings, a Nun who taught there said, “*Hang on, you’re a Catholic, you’re male and a*

primary teacher.... YOU START TOMORROW” It had gone from feast to famine over a few years and schools were desperate for teaching staff. In the meantime I had retrained as a Financial Advisor and couldn’t afford to drop back to a teacher’s salary.

Then along came the “Big Bang” which radically changed the Life and Pensions” industry. After 14 years in “Life and Pensions” I decided to leave. Shortly afterwards our daughter was born and I received a phone call from a friend of mine who I’d know since my days broadcasting on Manchester Hospital Radio. He offered me a job heading up a “new project” which eventually led to a lot of travel up and down the country, Channel Isles and the States. I really enjoyed my time there, eventually becoming Sales Manager. I made many friends within the industry and remember one morning giving one of the Dr Whos a lift to the metrolink station.

Anyway, I must point out that I had spent a few years ‘Firing’ various steam locomotives on preserved railways and also at the Manchester Museum of Science and Industry. However, I was finding it harder and harder to get up at 4am, drive, then spend the day cleaning, firing and disposing of a large loco, sometimes until 7 or 8pm in the evening so was looking to change.

Working on the ‘Shuttle’ came about following a chance comment made by Sylvia, the manageress of Stalybridge Station Buffet bar who told me Marsden had a place known as Tunnel End which had a working canal tunnel, a boat taking passengers along the canal to the tunnel and another boat taking passengers *into* the tunnel. I love anything like this, so I drove over to have a look.

I arrived at Tunnel End, spotted the Water Taxi (which wasn’t running) and purchased a ticket to travel into the Tunnel on the then BW boat. Having been in the Tunnel, bought a gift, had an ice-cream and a coffee, I went home a few quid lighter but ‘Happy as Larry’.

I heard that they were looking for volunteers to crew the Water Taxi, so I returned a week later to find out more.

How quickly things can happen! After a quick conversation with one of the crew, I found myself steering it towards the station under the watchful eye of the skipper, whom I suspect must have had a modicum of trust in my potential. The Shuttle crew appeared to be somewhat clean, relaxed and able to “put-put-put” along the ‘cut’ without a crippling time-table to work to. This, then, was the life for me. With an 11am start and 4:30pm finish; a stark contrast to the railway and for my broken and battered body, the way to go.

My boating enthusiasm developed and I ended up working on another boat too, moored over at Portland Basin in Ashton; the Tameside Canal Boat Trust’s ‘Still Waters’. The comradery was good and all hands, figuratively, came out on deck if ever we got into a ‘fix’.

I remember on one particular ‘training day’, three of us took the Shuttle along the Canal and we experienced the infamous four seasons in one day, with increasing winds and ‘sleet balls’ rolling down the boat’s steps. A poor trainee on the helm was trying his best to execute a 180 degree turn (after reversing away from Lock 42E) only to find the boat being blown down the canal sideways and under the railway bridge. As passengers, we were braced up against the hull and diverted ourselves eating our sandwiches, pretending not to notice and trying not to laugh as the trainee’s curses went from bad to worse; getting more and more obscene. Finally we heard an apologetic, *“Please excuse my French lads!”*

In amongst all the fun we knew that we were training to become skippers, so we started to study in earnest. Some of our training was done on board the EMCBP boat, ‘Community Spirit’, where I learned

how to turn a boat around properly. We even took ‘Still Waters’ out in thick ice so we could feel what ‘ice-breaking’ was like, which believe me, is tough on the arms and does the paintwork no good! Years ago, ice breaking on the canals used to be a full time job.

Eventually, I had to aim for my Skipper’s licence and take the Boatmaster’s exam if I wanted to drive the ‘Shuttle’ and ‘Still Waters’, as the latter is a Class V vessel and classed as a ship! Three of us found ourselves at Top Lock Training in Marple, where, after a week of concentrated studying, we passed all the modules before returning to ‘Still Waters’ for the practical exam under the watchful eye of the MCA Examiner.

Thankfully, we all passed and it dawned upon me that the role of skipper carries with it sole responsibility for, potentially, a boat full of passengers.

The rest, as they say, is history. Hope you’ll give me a wave next time you see me on the Canal.

TonyZajac





Marsden Shuttle's Year - 2013

I have never known a year like this for the Marsden Shuttle. At the beginning of the year, as Geoffrey Ali became our replacement boat co-ordinator, Andrea

Fisher was slowly preparing to handover and step down. However, we were saddened and shocked to learn of his untimely death; he will be greatly missed. Andrea carried on and was replaced by someone who had very little spare time, turned down the position previously and was prepared to do the job only on a very temporary basis until a replacement could be found; ie: ME!

And 9 months later, here I am! This gives me a sense of *déjà vu* in that one of our previous coordinators who had stepped in and agreed to take on the role temporarily but was still found to be doing the job eight years later: Andrea Fisher! We owe her a great debt of gratitude for the time and hard work that she has contributed to the Council of Management and of course the Shuttle.

It falls to me to say a big thank you to all those crew members in the HCS who have been exceedingly generous with their time and who turn out in all weathers to crew the boat; sometimes at very short notice.

We had some unusual private bookings during the Summer months, including taking wedding parties from Lock 42E down to the Visitor Centre to attend their receptions. The Bride and Groom always looked resplendent, standing proudly at the bow of our boat, as we burst out from under the railway bridge into the sunshine and did a slow but graceful circular *Grande Promenade* to the clicking and flashing of cameras and the 'oohs' and 'ahhs' of the assembled crowd, before disembarking onto the quayside. There wasn't a dry eye in sight; the crew were so moved!

It hasn't been all plain sailing though. Just as our busiest period commenced, the starter motor gave up the ghost and consequent electrical problems meant takings were significantly down over the Summer period.

Your Council has approved the formation of a Boat Sub-Group, consisting of Patricia Bayley, Mike McHugh and myself, to manage all aspects of running the Shuttle. We have new recruits and will be training on the top pound during the Winter months; weather permitting.

During the Summer repairs, we assessed the state of the Shuttle and decided that it needed a radical facelift, including new flooring. The work will be done at Portand Basin Marina, so at some stage soon we will be sailing down to Ashton. A group of us will paint it on its return to Marsden and have it ready for Easter.

We are looking for volunteers to help crew the boat on its way down to Ashton and back again. The journey is over two days:

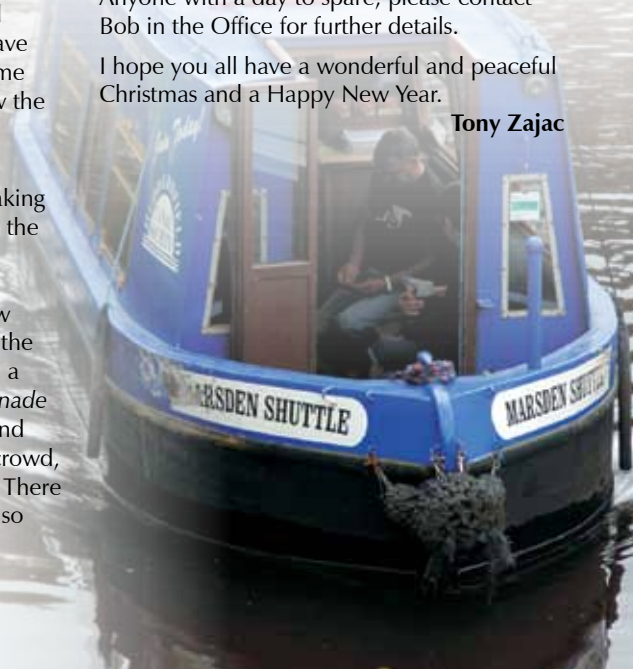
Day 1 - Through Standedge to Wool Road.

Day 2 - Wool Road to Ashton.

Anyone with a day to spare, please contact Bob in the Office for further details.

I hope you all have a wonderful and peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Tony Zajac



Top hole

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J. & J. Sykes, Coal Merchants, Slaithwaite

A Work in Progress

One reason why I have been publishing this series of articles on carriers and boat owners is in the hope that someone out there might have that vital piece of information that confirms or changes the story. A few issues ago (176 - Winter 2011), I published what we knew, or thought we knew, about this firm. As my own research progresses, though, new evidence emerges. I have been looking through the *Huddersfield Chronicle*, starting in 1850 and working forwards.

The problem came when I reached the *Huddersfield Chronicle*, Saturday July 27th. 1867:-

"DEATH OF AN OLD BOATMAN – On Wednesday afternoon, the remains of James Sykes, or as he was more familiarly called, "Jim o' Bens", 75 years of age, were interred in Slaithwaite churchyard. The deceased was the oldest boatman on the canal, having been employed by the firm of Messrs. Varley to ply between Slaithwaite and Wakefield for more than forty-two years. His character during the whole of that lengthened period had been that of a faithful and trustworthy servant. The deceased, amongst his compeers, had obtained the appellation of the "Slaithwaite Mail" from his determination to proceed in his boat, fearless of all obstacles. Some few weeks since the deceased had the misfortune to be thrown into the canal by the sudden starting of the hauling horse. Although rescued, the old man never recovered the shock and expired on Sunday."

Based on the age, this is certainly the James Sykes that I had marked down as

one of the two "J's" in "J. & J. Sykes". A report in the *Huddersfield Chronicle*, Saturday September 21st 1850, where what seems to be the two Sykes's were charged with wasting water and escaped a second charge of assault on police, would suggest that James and John worked together, in which case both my two "J's" have gone by the board.

Certainly there is no partnership to point to, though the account of the alleged assault on police certainly illustrates James Sykes's *"determination to proceed in his boat!"* I think the qualities of a *"faithful and trustworthy servant"* may have been somewhat different in those days as the alleged assault on police seemed to be alcohol-fuelled and there is a later account of a drunken John Sykes holding off the police from the sanctuary of his boat! He later met his end falling into the canal whilst "in drink" and was buried in the family grave.

The net result of all this is that the first mention of something that could be "J. & J. Sykes" is now "John & Joshua Sykes", who appear under "Coal Merchants" in White's Directories of Leeds, Bradford, Huddersfield etc., 1854 and 1866, but it is difficult to know whether these are our J. & J. Sykes or just a co-incidence, though they would fit the theory of "Sykes's" taking over from Midgeleys, who are mentioned in the 1840's.

On the 1861 Census, which is in the middle of this period, two boats Trial and Sarah are at Thornhill Forge. They are employed in the Coal trade and on the front of the form, the Master (owner?) is given as "J. & J. Sykes, Slaithwaite" in the case of Trial and "Joseph Sykes"



The Sykes' family grave in Slaithwaite cemetery.

IN Memory OF

SARAH ANN

DAUGHTER OF JAMES & SARAH SYKES
OF SLAITHWAITE WHO DIED APRIL 16TH

1849 Aged 17 Years

ALSO OF THE ABOVE SARAH SYKES WHO
DIED MAY 6TH 1865 AGED 68 YEARS

ALSO OF THE ABOVE JAMES SYKES WHO
DIED JUN 20TH 1867 AGED 75 YEARS

ALSO OF JOHN SYKES their son who
died May 25th 1885 aged 64 years

ALSO of NANNY Wife of the above JOHN SYKES
who died Oct^r 25th 1885 aged 77 Years

for Sarah. There are then a number of Directories which do not mention any partnership of two Sykes's with names beginning "J", but it is hard to say whether the firm does not exist at this period or is simply not listed.

Finally, in the Colne Valley Guardian for 08/01/1909 under "Slaithwaite Teamer Summoned", James William Cock is in court for not having a weighing machine and not having metal labels of weight on his sacks. He is employed by "Joe Dyson, trading as "J. & J. Sykes, Coal Merchant", so by this date the company is definitely a trade name only.

The name must therefore have gained some status and value to be continued as a trading name.

The bugbear in all of this is the frequency of the "Sykes" name in Slaithwaite. In one Directory I looked at there are no less than five "Sykes's" involved in the coal trade in the village. Without some new source of information, I think we may struggle to get much further.

Trevor Ellis

J & J Sykes' 'Melville' unloading coals at Cellars Clough Mill. Courtesy of Saddleworth Museum Archives



Word Challenge

This year's Seasonal entertainment tests out your word-power. Based on a popular competition theme (before today's tendency for a three way multiple choice such as 'Which canal runs from Ashton to Huddersfield? a: A pot of jam, b: The Huddersfield Narrow or c: A flock of seagulls) where you have to make as many 'x' lettered words you can from the letters

in a keyword or phrase; our 'Huddersfield Narrow Canal' seems an interesting choice for a key phrase! So, using each letter only once, fill in the squares with, in alphabetical order, just the first and last 'x' lettered words you can make. The usual provisions apply, i.e. no proper names, foreign words, obscure dialects, plurals, hyphenation! The 3 letter word category

is given as an example and 'aah' to 'aush' illustrates the point of exclusions. I think there is only one, qualifying, 13 letter word that can be made from the letters.

A suggested solution, not OED definitive, will be published in the Spring Edition.

A respectable dictionary will help check your words and the Internet spoil the fun!

Bob Gough

WORDS

H	U	D	D	E	R	S	F	I	E	L	D
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

N	A	R	R	O	W
---	---	---	---	---	---

C	A	N	A	L
---	---	---	---	---

3 letter
4 letter
5 letter
6 letter
7 letter
8 letter
9 letter
10 letter
11 letter
12 letter
13 letter

to	to	to	to	to	to	to	to	to
A	C	E						

EXAMPLE

N								
O								
W								

EXAMPLE

Street Scene Greenfield Group

Work on the Greenfield Section of Towpath continues ...

Our volunteer project to repair the Greenfield section of the canal towpath has progressed throughout the Summer and Autumn. To date, almost 30 tons of stone has been laid and other work carried out alongside: vegetation has been cut back, lofty Himalayan Balsam (*pictured*) has been 'bashed', bulbs have been planted and wild flower seeds scattered, litter collected and removed.

The work has continued under the guidance of the Canal & River Trust and the Group is now officially appointed as a Canal Observer for the Greenfield section by HCS. We were very pleased to meet Graham Birch on one of our project days in November and were pleased to learn that as we already have an efficient working group, there won't be any plans to make changes for us.

CRT has suggested training for volunteers to repair wash walls including treating unwanted foliage growing in the walls. Hopefully, this will be put in place next Spring.

If you would like to be involved in the project, in the first instance please contact the Street Scene Co-ordinator Peter Lowe on 01457 870524

plowe@peter-lowe-consultancy.co.uk

or Gill McCulley on 01457 870364

gillmcculley@yahoo.com.

Steph Pelmore



Windows on the Waterways in 2030

In my Manchester and Pennine Update in the Summer 2013 edition of Pennine Link, I reported on the Partnership's first Annual Conference. In my article, I explained that as a prelude to the conference proper we received a series of presentations by post graduate students from the University of Liverpool, Department of Civic Design.

This was the culmination of a project which we had undertaken in partnership with the university. It involved the students, as part of their degree course, being tasked with "contributing to the development of the M and P Waterways Plan by preparing a series of action plans providing 'Windows on the Waterways' in 2030 which illustrate their potential to contribute to the sustainable development in the region". Eight locations across the region had been selected for this purpose of which two were on our own canal i.e. Ashton/Stalybridge and Marsden.

On the day, I approached the groups who had worked on these two studies and invited them to submit a summary of their projects for publication in a future edition of Pennine Link. Regrettably time ran out for the students (many of whom were from overseas)

at the end of their academic year and the summaries were not submitted. However, I feel that some of the ideas and conclusions presented were of sufficient interest to bring them to you through Pennine Link.

I have therefore obtained the full submissions from the university and I have distilled what I think are the points of greatest interest in relation to the Huddersfield Narrow (and in part the Ashton) canals. Before proceeding, I should clarify that the students came to these locations with no prior knowledge of their history or geography. Their conclusions and proposals are based upon their findings on visiting the sites and talking to local stakeholders in Spring 2013. Moreover, they are their own views and do not necessarily reflect the views of the CRT, the Manchester and Pennine Partnership or this Society.

Marsden-Standedge: 2030

"Connecting Marsden Together"

The study initially sets out what it sees as its Vision for Marsden in 2030. It is as follows:

"By 2030, Marsden will be a vivid attractive location for commuters, making best use of its improved transport infrastructure in



the wider spatial context. It will maintain its individual character, making best use of its environmental assets such as Marsden Moor and the canal and will become a focus for tourism.”

A number of objectives are then listed which are envisaged as the means of delivering this Vision. Amongst the objectives are:

1. Better use of the canal through its integration into the overall visitor experience. The aim will be that through increased development and better connectivity to the village centre, the canal will become an integral part of Marsden and its tourist economy.
2. Create an enhanced tourist offer connecting all Marsden's assets together through a new visitor hub, which will become a central point for tourist activity.
3. Improve the village's transport infrastructure to make Marsden a more accessible place to live and visit, involving improved parking and connectivity between the railway station and the village centre.

The centrepiece of the Strategy to deliver these objectives is the creation of new Visitor Hub. This will include a new visitor centre

combining the activities of the CRT and the National Trust (whose existing premises it will replace) together with coach and car parking and a marina development. The site for this would be the currently underused former goods yard. Located to the immediate East of the rail station, the site is currently home to the local National Trust centre with the balance of the substantial area being used as a visitor car park. It is also the designated parking area for visitors to the Standedge Visitor Centre, but it is described as being far from ideal because it is some distance away. This site, the study concludes, holds a huge potential for tourist related development

The proposal is for development to include:

A New Visitor Centre replacing the existing CRT centre at Tunnel End. The Centre will be shared with the National Trust whose existing premises will be demolished. This would have the advantage of proximity to Marsden Railway Station, plentiful parking capacity and the potential to accommodate events, exhibitions and conferences. The location will also enable it to link the tourism offer of the Canal and the village.



Great development potential at the old Goods Yard, Marsden.
Photo: Bob Gough

A new marina/mooring development serving as a mooring point for canal boats and also the start/end position of short (and full transit) trips into the Standedge Tunnel.

Improved Transport Infrastructure would complement the development including:

- Coach parking and more secure car parking facilities together with refreshment and toilet facilities within the visitor centre.
- An increased train service with more trains calling at Marsden Station (with the agreement of the operators) so making arrival by rail a more attractive option for potential visitors.
- Better pedestrian links to the village increasing footfall in the village and providing an incentive to increase and diversify the retail offer in the village.

What then of the existing CRT Tunnel End Visitor Centre? It is recognised that Marsden is currently lacking tourist accommodation and it is argued that new overnight stay accommodation would be best located along the canal and on the outskirts of the village rather than in the village centre.

It is accepted that the Tunnel End Centre is highly valued by the Canal & River Trust, but its potential is limited by access and parking issues, despite its location in a pleasant setting and proximity to Standedge Tunnel.

With the limitations of the site, especially with its parking facilities, it is suggested that the building would be more appropriate for another use. The suggested answer is conversion to a hotel, which would be both a long-term solution for the building and meet the need of those wishing to stay within Marsden. The canal could continue to serve as a transport link to connect the two nodes in a novel and sustainable way.

The Rebirth of the Tameside Canal Corridor

This looks at the towns of Stalybridge, Ashton under Lyne and Droylsden. The sections of canal here are very much urban in character and the three towns have a recent history of economic decline and been subject to a

number of regeneration initiatives in recent decades. The Study examines the potential of Huddersfield Narrow and Ashton Canals to be a catalyst for the further regeneration of the three towns.

The stated purpose of the study is to identify measures to “Improve the living, cultural and economic environment surrounding the canal corridor.”

And its Vision is that:

By 2030, the area will become a diverse residential, cultural and business community which respects its heritage. As part of this, the Tameside Canal Corridor will be a sustainable, liveable and attractive area with good accessibility.

Amongst the objectives achieving this are:

1. To improve environment quality - in relation to the canals this would involve improving water quality and improvement of the canal side environment, in particular combating littering and fly-tipping.
2. To create a “corridor of culture” along the canals linking the three townships
3. To attract investment - promoting the waterside locations as desirable and attractive to prospective investors
4. Target re-use of vacant industrial sites for good quality alternative uses appropriate to a waterside setting.
5. Improve accessibility to, from and along the canals for pedestrians and cyclists
6. Promote the canals as a means of transport for tourist and perhaps even commuters.

The Study then examines in turn the potential of each of the three townships and identifies a central regeneration theme for each of them:

Droylsden is the **Housing Zone**,

Ashton-under-Lyne is the **Culture Zone**,

Stalybridge is the **Economic Zone**

In **Droylsden** a number of canal side sites are identified with potential for attractive housing developments. Particular interest is



Volunteers' Year - 2013

This year has been difficult for me as, for various reasons, I struggled to be involved for the first half of the year, but I

will try to give a brief picture of what we have been doing.

After 2012, which was dominated by the poor and wet weather, which reduced our painting activities to an *eighth* of what they had been the year before, 2013 could only be an improvement. However, due to the severe Winter, it was into February before any work started, and our normal Winter activities of cutting back vegetation and picking up litter continued

until June, along with some oiling and greasing of paddle gearing. Finally, from July, we started to tackle some of the backlog of painting, starting with the locks in Milnsbridge, where the footbridges in particular had needed doing for some time. By September we had managed to do the whole of that Flight.

We are now back to our Winter activities, working West from Huddersfield and, at the time of writing, we have reached the edge of Greenfield. With some other groups starting to take an interest in stretches of the canal, particularly on the West side, we may need to look at different areas in the future.

Trevor Ellis

shown in the potential of Droylsden Marina. It is suggested that the development of a new social/recreation area would complement the existing library and attract more young people. By bringing life to this facility, making it a focal point for the township and encouraging ownership by young people, it would help combat current vandalism.

In **Ashton** the importance of the Portland Basin facilities are recognised and highlighted as a potential catalyst for a larger and higher profile cultural complex. This resides in the existence of vacant or underused land in the surrounding area which could be redeveloped to extend the facility and create a genuine focal point at the heart of local community.

Amongst the facilities proposed are:

An improved and extended marina, new family leisure facilities including a café, a new exhibition/performance space, some new "water view" housing and improved access to, and seating alongside, the canal.

All of this would be linked to a general environmental improvement of the canal corridor as a whole.

In **Stalybridge**, the key issue identified is the need to capitalise more successfully on the opportunities which the restoration of the canal has created. It sets out three case studies of areas where such opportunities exist. These are:

The Knowl Street area, where the quality of environment is relatively low. Here suggested measures include the provision of seating, more litter bins and tree planting to improve the area and perhaps encourage business owners to give a facelift to their premises.

On vacant land at Castle Street, new leisure facilities are proposed to enhance the area and be a focal point for the local community. Improved canal side seating will allow people to enjoy the attractive, safe and comfortable surroundings at the water's edge making better use of the canal as a recreational asset.

In the area around Bridge Street and Caroline Street, an attractive new mixed-use development is proposed which would enhance the viability of existing commercial businesses and improve the local economy.

Graham Birch

2013 Photographic Competition Results

Lead judge, Alan Stopher, comments:

This year there was a good range of entries to judge, the strongest category being Category A: Huddersfield Narrow Canal. Category B is described as 'Other UK Waterways' so we had to discount the ones which were clearly taken abroad. In common with previous years print quality was variable and some of the larger format prints lacked the sharpness which one would expect from competition entries. This may have been down to a faulty lens, camera shake or inaccurate focussing.

The overall winner this year again came from the 'Huddersfield Narrow Canal' category. John Brierley's Winter view of the canal on the Diggle Flight with the former Shaw's Pallets buildings captured the essence of the HNC with its mills and hills. Beautifully lit and composed, the precise exposure ensured that the snow was crisp and white and the scene was sharp from foreground to the hills.

The winner of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal category was another by John Brierley taken close by but this time against the light with the mill chimney placed over the strongest rays of the low sun. The resulting image from the dramatic sky to the contrasting foreground and the colourful reflection exhibited a fine print from a capture in challenging conditions.

Still on the Huddersfield, the Category A runner up was a fine record of a derelict engine house at Milnsbridge by Anne Fairhall. I was attracted by the interesting variety in the windows and the superb detail in the sunlit part of the image. The main subject was framed by the walls to the right and left. There was just enough detail visible in the canal reflection. A minor point but I would have liked to have seen some tone in the sky.

Commended in Category A was Anne Fairhall's atmospheric study of a canal bridge with sun coming through the trees. The composition was pleasing and the author has done a good job in maintaining detail throughout given the contrast.

Also Commended in Category A was a moody monochrome image of a hooded youth in a canal-side doorway by 17 year old Luther Greenwood. The author has broken away from the usual attractive views and portrayed a rather uncomfortable scene well. An even more broody print would have resulted from the darkening of the white sky.

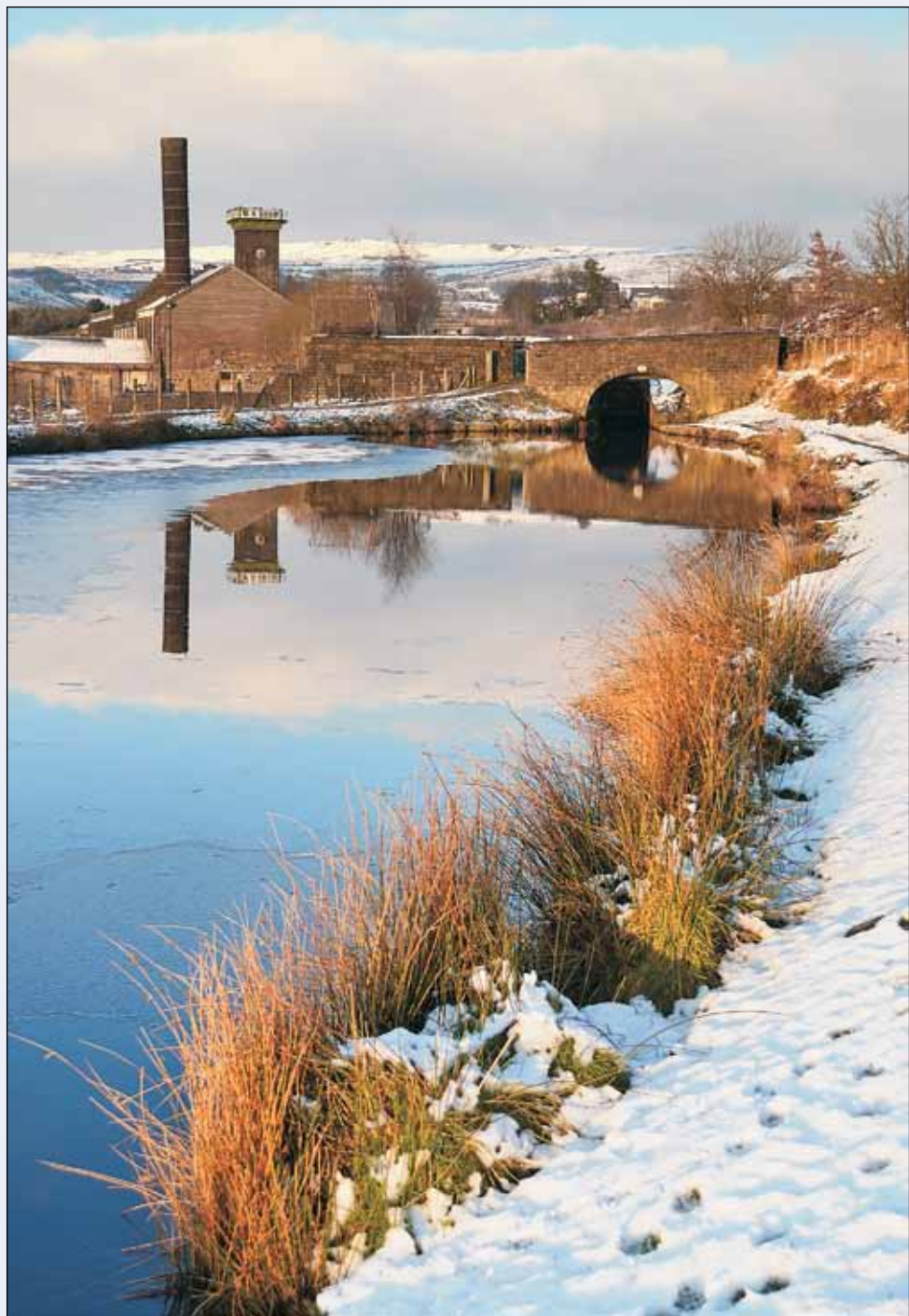
The Category B winner was a study of a canal under-bridge and lock approach raised from the mundane through the placing of a figure in silhouette on the third point and the excellent water reflections on the underside of the bridge deck. Well done to the photographer, John Brierley, for coming up with something different.

The runner up, by Terry Gregory, shows a different but commonplace part of the waterways scene. The angling competition has been captured well by using a lens which foreshortens the distance between competitors. The fact that the nearest angler has turned towards the camera to reach a section of his pole breaks up the pattern and adds interest. The cropping of the sky makes a more dynamic image and concentrates the viewer on the action..

Commended in Category B was a pleasant autumn portrayal of a moored boat on the Lower Peak Forest Canal by David Mounsey. The towpath, canal and direction of the boat all lead the eye to the central distance and make for a strong composition. A minor point, but I would have liked to have seen the sky darkened somewhat.

Specially Commended was a well observed study of a bridge hole and floating Autumn leaves by a young Scott Needham who has special needs.

Well done to the winners, runners-up and those whose work has been commended and thanks to all for entering. Thank you also to Claire Bebbington and Bob Gough for ably assisting me in choosing the successful prints. We enjoyed looking at your work.



Overall Winner

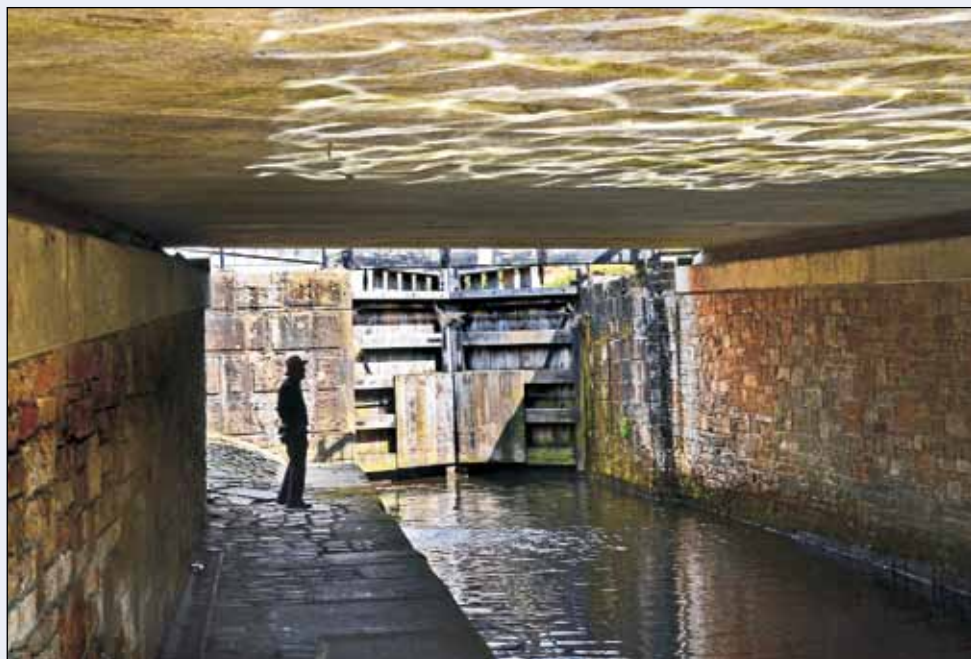
*Evening Light at the Diggle Flight
John Brierley, Uppermill*



Setting Sun & Reflections at Diggle
John Brierley, Uppermill

Category Winners

Rochdale Canal, Littleborough
John Brierley, Uppermill





*Derelict Engine House, Milnsbridge
Anne Fairhall, Marsden*

Runners-Up

*Fishing Match, Bridgewater Canal
Terry Gregory, Golcar*

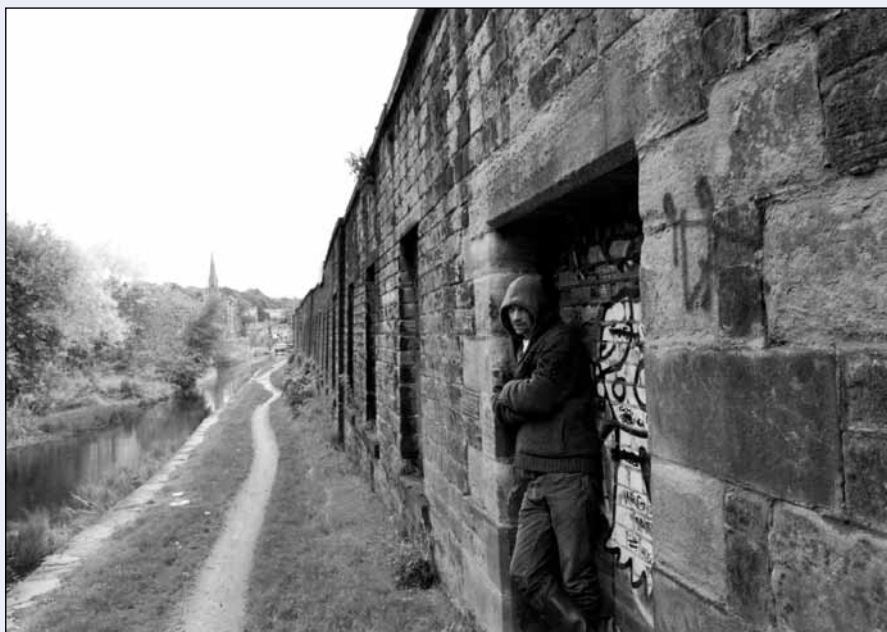




*Canal Life, Lower Peak Forest Canal
David Mounsey, Mossley*

Commendeds

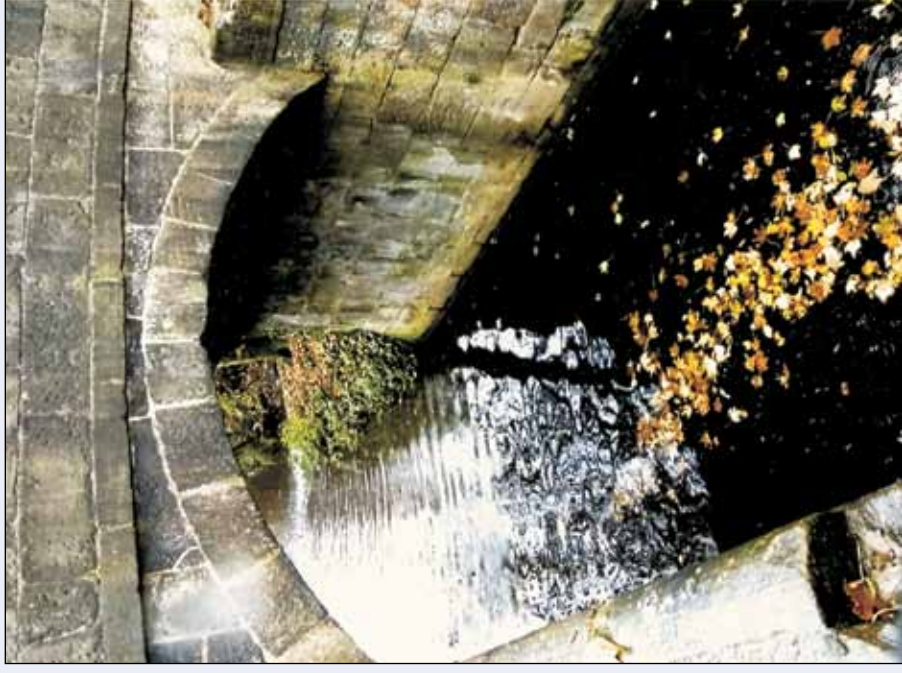
*Milnsbridge to Huddersfield
Luther Greenwood, Huddersfield*



and Specially Commended



Bridge 48, West Slaithwaite
Anne Fairhall, Marsden



Hopwood, Rochdale Canal
Scott Needham, Oldham

74 Club Members

We welcome the following intrepid boaters who have successfully navigated the Narrow this year.

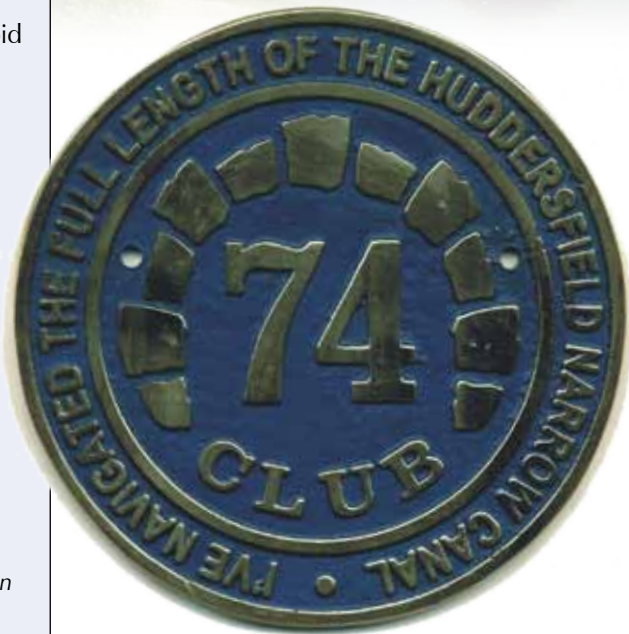
J Snook	CWM ISCA
B West	HEREFORD
B Scott	THE LADY MAE
P Buck	LARGO
M Lovegrove	BRIMBLE
A Jenkinson	ONDINE
F Andrews	RIVENDALL
A Walker	RIVENDALL
D Armitage	CORNWALL
J Boyce	CORNWALL
H Wainwright	WORCESTER

Make your voice heard!

Comments, entered on the application form, are duly forwarded to both the Canal & River Trust and Manchester & Pennine Waterways Partnership.

Navigated the Narrow and don't have a plaque?

It is available at £5.00 for Society members, £8.00 for non-members and £4.00 for non-members who join the Canal Society at the time of applying. Postage & packing is £1.00 per plaque.



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 'Huddersfield Canal Society' with a covering note to:

74 Club Plaque
Transhipment Warehouse, Wool Road
Dobcross, OLDHAM OL3 5QR

The Back Page

HUDDERSFIELD CANAL SOCIETY welcomes the following new members in 2013

2836	[REDACTED]	, Lindley, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire.
2837	[REDACTED]	, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire.
2838	[REDACTED]	, Stalybridge, Cheshire.
2839	[REDACTED]	, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire.
2840	[REDACTED]	, Golcar, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire.
2841	[REDACTED]	, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire.
2842	[REDACTED]	Oldham, Lancashire.
2843	[REDACTED]	, Sowerby Bridge, West Yorkshire.
2844	[REDACTED]	, Marsden, West Yorkshire.
2845	[REDACTED]	, Grasscroft, Saddleworth.
2846	[REDACTED]	, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire.
2847	[REDACTED]	, Marsden, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire.
2848	[REDACTED]	T Nelson, Droylsden, Manchester.
2849	[REDACTED]	, Mossley, Lancashire.
2850	[REDACTED]	, Slaithwaite, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire.
2851	[REDACTED]	, Holmfirth, West Yorkshire.
2852	[REDACTED]	, Mirfield, West Yorkshire.

MEMBERSHIP RATES

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Life	£90.00
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