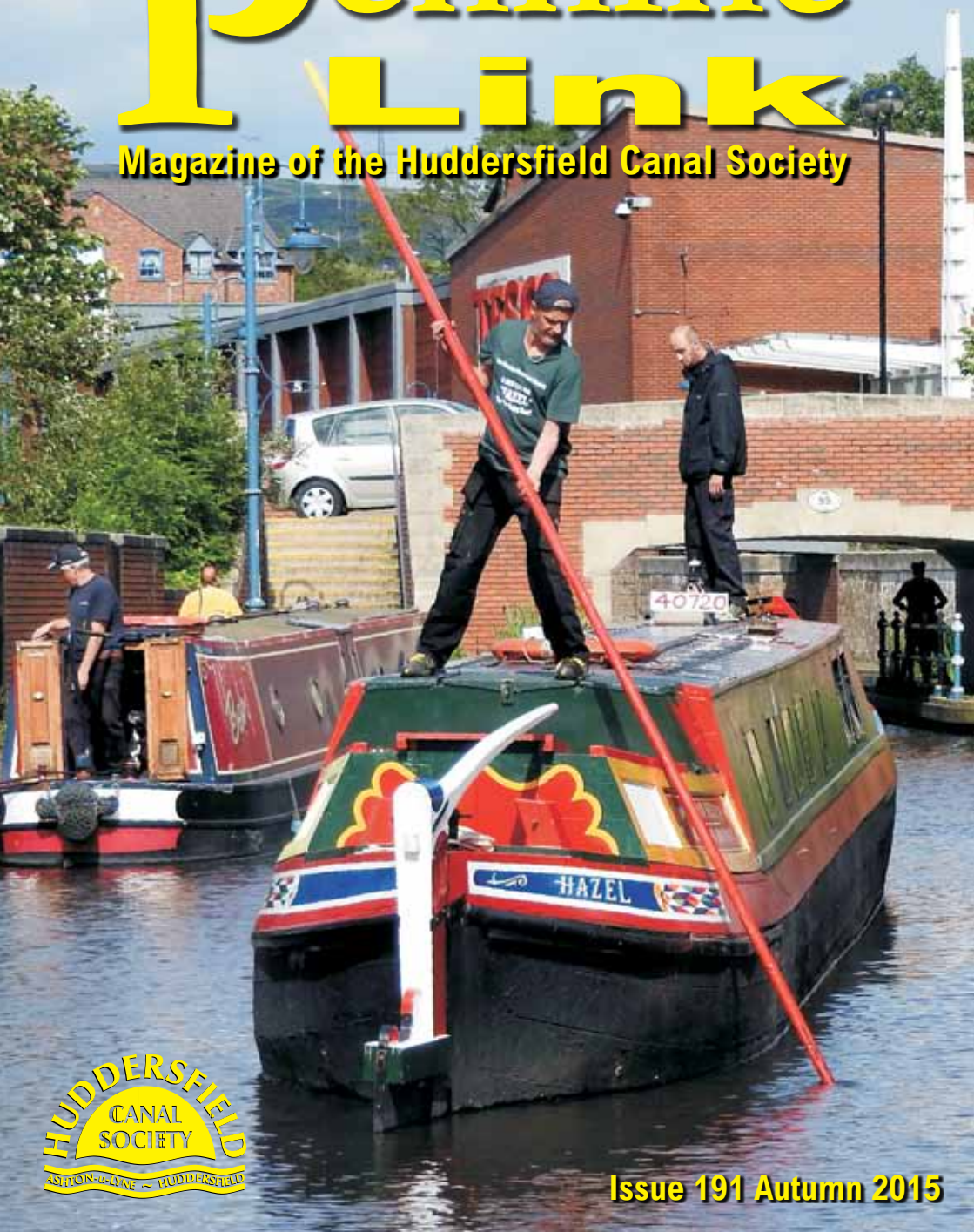


Pennine Link

Magazine of the Huddersfield Canal Society



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

Pennine Link

Issue 191



Mark Bratt

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Cover: Wooden Canal Boat Trust's 'Hazel' at the 2015 Stalybridge Festival and Boat Gathering. Photo: Bob Gough



Editorial

I wonder if, like me, you have noticed that canals and stories about canals seem to be featuring with some regularity in

the television schedules.

For example, in dramas such as the BBC's recent "Happy Valley", set in the Calder Valley, scenes were set on and around the Rochdale Canal. Similarly popular, factual programmes, such as Countryfile, regularly include items on canals and their value to the economy and the environment. Regional news programmes seem keen to include canal-related stories and then, of course, there has been the feature on the HNC on the National Institution that is Blue Peter.

However, it is not just through these passing references that we have seen canals on the 'box'. Also, and more significantly, canals have been the focus of two major series which have been transmitted in the past 12 months. We have had the eight-part ITV series "**Barging Around Britain**" which saw John Sergeant touring the waterways via narrowboat. We have also enjoyed two series of "**Great Canal Journeys**", starring Timothy West and Prunella Scales, a series for which the Society can perhaps claim a tiny amount of reflected glory since we are proud to have Tim and Pru as the Society's Patrons.

The two programmes differ in character. The first saw the former political journalist navigating waterways in England, Scotland and Wales and in doing so, as the programmes publicity

describes it: "*immersing himself in living history, bringing the past to life by rolling up his sleeves, getting stuck in, and having a go at canal practices past and present.*"

For my taste the "getting stuck in" element of the series was something of a distraction (for example we saw Mr Sargeant being measured for a suit in Leeds) and I would have preferred a greater focus on the history and character of the canals themselves.

For this reason I preferred Tim and Pru's "**Great Canal Journeys**". We know through their association with HCS that Tim and Pru are true canal enthusiasts and this comes across very clearly as they reminisce about past adventures on the waterways and the people they have met over the years.

Notwithstanding my preferences, both series have proved to be popular and my understanding is that there are plans, in both cases, for further series. Moreover, as I write, "**Great Canal Journeys**" is having a repeat run on Channel 4. This success is no real surprise because they are fronted by engaging and popular personalities (dare I say "National Treasures"). As the shows' publicity material states: "*programmes about canals always tend to do well, canals are somehow incredibly British and important to our history and landscape.*"

Despite this, the success of another recent canal programme is both surprising and intriguing. I am referring here to the experimental "Slow TV" programmes broadcast by BBC 4. There were several programmes in the sequence but the one that caught my

attention was entitled:
“All Aboard! The Canal Trip”.

The programme took viewers on a two-hour, uninterrupted journey down the Kennet & Avon Canal, filmed almost entirely from a camera fixed on the front of the boat. There was no superimposed soundtrack, no hyperactive host or breathless voiceover, no fancy camerawork and no dizzying edits. Instead, the only sounds were birdsong, dogs barking, rippling water and the chugging of the engine.

Interviewed on the day after the broadcast, the Producer said that she was a bit worried people would just fall asleep, that it would be slightly soporific. However, in the event, the programme received rave reviews in the national and regional press. The Times called it ‘beautiful, rich and hypnotic, like a moving painting’. This success is underlined by the published viewing figures which show that it attracted 506,000 viewers and a peak of 599,000

which is almost double the BBC 4 ‘slot average’ of 340,000.

So, just what is it that makes these programmes so popular and encourages huge numbers of people to choose to watch them in preference to the myriad offerings available through the “wonders” of digital, satellite television? There are, no doubt, many factors influencing peoples’ choice of viewing, but I believe that there are perhaps three overriding reasons.

The first is the simple fact that canals make for “nice pictures” which are easy on the eye and therefore attractive to viewers. Indeed, talking about the **“Barging About Britain”** programme, ITV’s Commissioning Editor is quoted as saying: *“There’s nothing half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats and what better way to do it than on a narrowboat. Shooting in the Summer months is a real treat, the end result looks amazing and showcases the best of the British Isles”.*

Filming Prunella for ‘Great Canal Journeys’ as she takes in the sights of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal.



The second, is the fact that, as it is often pointed out, the canals were the motorways of the age and economic activity was of course attracted to canal side locations. The network therefore lends itself ideally to the format of the John Sergeant programme. The presenter may be seen travelling through attractive scenery, admiring heritage features (locks, bridges, aqueducts) and stopping off to explore the history of the settlements located along the route. When doing so he 'happens to meet a variety of *interesting* individuals' and through them learn (on our behalf) about the origin of a variety of social and economic activities; activities which can trace their origins back to the birth of the canal and continue through into the present day.

However are these two reasons sufficient to persuade more the half a million people to invest two hours to simply watch the real time progress of a boat sailing along a canal? There has to be another reason and it is one that I believe that boaters and canal enthusiasts already instinctively recognise and understand. It is simply the fact that canals offer a wonderful antidote to the hustle and bustle of modern life.

We live in a world where there is a compulsion for everything to be faster, bigger, higher, etc. Where huge sums of money will be spent to shave around 20 or 30 minutes off a train journey from Manchester to London, where we become irritated and impatient if our super-fast broadband takes more than a few seconds to link us to the Internet, where we find ourselves racing through our lives instead of living them, where the 'virus of hurry' has infected everything".

By contrast, on our canals you can't rush. In the words of Timothy West:
" ... that's the joy of life at 4mph. You don't have to remember things on the canal. You can just keep your mind absolutely vacant and enjoy things as they happen."

As time goes on, the 'virus of hurry' seems certain to become more virulent, so it will be all the more important that the antidote provided by our canals remains available. Our Society is doing its bit by working to secure the future viability of our Canals and to do this we must secure the future of the Society. A gentle reminder, therefore, that members can help with this by signing up to our 220 Club and/or leaving a Legacy to the Society. Details of how to do both of these can be found elsewhere in this edition and on the Society's website.

Finally, as the days get shorter, thoughts are turning to the 2015 Photographic Competition. We are looking forward to seeing this year's entries and the results will, as usual, appear in our Winter edition. Until then, in whatever way you choose – afloat or on foot - enjoy the waterways this Autumn.

Graham Birch

Post Script: In my Editorial in Issue 190, I referred to the role played by the three MBC's (Tameside, Oldham and Kirklees) in bringing about the restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal. I have been reminded, by long-time member David Finnis, that prior to their demise in 1986, the two Metropolitan County Council's, Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire, offered huge amounts of support (including financial) to the work on restoration. I am pleased to acknowledge their role and correct any impression that their contribution had been overlooked or forgotten. Ed



Chairman's Report

Although it is the last week of August as I write this and the sun is still warm, we've already had a few days which are more akin to Autumn!

Like many canal enthusiasts, I receive stoppage updates for a range of waterways. This year these have included the Kennet & Avon, Oxford, Stratford canals and the River Severn, as witnesses by my own travels by narrowboat which have covered around 400 miles.

Our own Huddersfield Narrow has had its fair share of Notices since I wrote my piece for the Summer edition of Pennine Link. It is difficult to put a finger on a trend as interruptions to navigation have stemmed from a wide range of causes.

The latest has been somewhat unusual as the Standedge Tunnel passages have been suspended for a day following a report that timber from one of the railway cross passages had partially collapsed and was hanging dangerously above the canal. A swift inspection and follow up work by Network Rail kept the interruption to a minimum, but I'm sure CRT will be keen to explore, with the railway company, how such incidents can be avoided, at the height of the cruising season, in future.

Failure of the guillotine gate gear box at Lock 24E meant a stoppage for a week in mid-August. Coming only a year after refurbishment work to the troublesome mechanism this seems surprising, so I will be interested to hear whether all issues have now been resolved.

Other emergency works have been undertaken to the head paddles of

Lock 19E, fallen trees have been removed at Locks 13E and 18E, loss of water at Lock 12W has been caused by a problem with the 'clapperboard', which I assume relates to a paddle, although other suggestions are welcome! A further leak, this time in the bed at Lock 29E, has been dealt with, though this seems to be a recurring problem.

On the positive side, advanced notice has been given of dredging to take place on the East side between Lock 6E and Lock 20E in September and October. Many other waterways have had short term stoppages this year; whether it be to deal with problems with mechanised swing bridges, failures to Lock components or, of more concern, holes appearing in the canal lining.

Maintaining a 200 year old infrastructure is certainly a challenge. CRT's response to problems is usually commendably speedy, given that issues can occur anywhere on 2,000 miles of waterway. Additional funds have been identified and applied to maintain the network, but the frequency of reactive events does beg the question as to whether resources are sufficient to keep up with planned maintenance on what is an aging liability.

This Summer, Marsden Shuttle has been operating every Sunday and Bank Holiday and, with a few more crew members, has even ventured out on some weekday operations during the school holidays. The maintenance team have kept on top of vegetation clearance and done a fair amount of Lock gate beam painting. As always, new volunteers are always welcome.

Four members of Council attended the Manchester & Pennine Partnership's Annual Outburst in Manchester's Mechanics

Institute. It was a good opportunity to find out what is happening in the region and catch up with our network of friends and colleagues in other organisations. I was pleased to see Walter Menzies being given a second three year spell as Chairman of the Partnership. His enthusiasm and leadership are very much valued by the wider waterways community.

For the second year running your Society had a stall and provided free boat trips at the Stalybridge Carnival. A report in this Pennine Link tells the story of the event. It was an enjoyable weekend and I was struck by how important the boat trips are in giving local people a rare opportunity to travel on their nearest section of canal and experience a Lock transit for the first time. My thanks go to the crews of Still Waters and Community Spirit for allowing their boats to be used and to the Wooden Canal Boat Trust for bringing along their historic vessel Hazel. I'm also grateful for all the effort put in by our members and staff to ensure that the Society was well represented over the two days.

A lot of effort is going into tidy up sessions in Stalybridge and I join others in hoping that the increased engagement with local people on their canal will yield results in terms of keeping the waterfront at Stalybridge in good order.

This year's AGM, held in the back room of Stalybridge Station Buffet Bar on 25th June 2015, was the best attended for some time vindicating the decision to include the availability of food which, with the other refreshments on offer, made for a convivial evening once the formalities had been covered. Your Council has agreed to follow the same format at a venue on the East side next year.

An issue raised at the AGM was the way in which some recipients had not had their emailed Pennine Link Extras. Investigations have centred around service provider

limits on email distribution list numbers and it is hoped that the matter will soon be resolved. *(It has transpired that the limiting factor appears to be the cumulative text length of the addresses themselves, rather than the simple number of emails. Limiting our 'groups' to 66 seems to be the best compromise. HCS Office)*

In case you wondered, we're not becoming the Stalybridge Canal Society. It is just that this part of the HNC has been somewhat neglected since the euphoria of reopening the Canal and at last it is getting some much needed attention.

Peter Rawson, Eric Woulds and I spent a pleasant day introducing CRT's two new Community Development Managers, Gillian Renshaw and Tom Wright to the Huddersfield Narrow Canal. We were able to show them the highlights as well as the challenging areas and get them up to speed on what is happening to involve adoption groups and our own Canal Observers. It was a full day so we did not have time to include the Broad Canal in our visit.

Other Society activities have involved a Treasure Hunt in Armentières Square Stalybridge, production of presentation boards in Stalybridge Library, design and acquisition of stickers to give to children and a trip through the Standedge Tunnel for members with a guided walk led by Bob Gough.

By the time you read this plans will have been made to celebrate 150 years of Turnbridge on the Huddersfield Broad Canal. As a minimum, a photocall, press release and some appropriate bunting will be involved on Tuesday 6th October. Watch out for Pennine Link Extra for more details.

That's all for now. Have a pleasant Autumn.

Alan Stopher



Manchester & Pennine Update

Summer 2015 has been a busy and eventful period for the Canal & River Trust (CRT) both at national and local level. Nationally, in

July, it was announced that Tony Hales, Chair of the CRT since its establishment in 2012, is to retire from the charity. This will take effect after the Trust's Annual Public Meeting in London on 23rd September.

The work which Tony Hales has done during his tenure has been widely praised, not least in overseeing the transfer of the waterways to the CRT in what was the largest ever transfer of state infrastructure to a charitable organisation.

He will be replaced Allan Leighton, Chair of the Co-operative Group and formerly CEO of Asda plc and Chair of

the Royal Mail. Mr Leighton, who joined the Board in September 2014, is quoted as describing himself *"as a keen canal walker and towpath runner"* who has *"been passionate about these special blue places for years."*

Turning to our own Manchester & Pennine (M&P) region, if you have followed these updates for the past year you will recall that I have reported on M&P's application for Green Flag status for the Macclesfield Canal and on the ongoing saga of the major problems of public safety surrounding the Dale Street Undercroft on the Rochdale Nine.

I can report now that there have been major developments on both of these fronts during the Summer, as follows:

Starting with the Green Flag application, I can report the excellent news that the bid has been successful, the announcement being made on July 23rd



CRT celebrate on the Macclesfield Canal

at a ceremony in Oldham. The 26 mile Macclesfield Canal has therefore become the first canal ever to be awarded Keep Britain Tidy's coveted Green Flag Award - the mark of a quality green space.

The Green Flag Awards are judged against eight strict criteria, including environmental standards, cleanliness, sustainability and community involvement. In their feedback report the judges state that: *"There are perceptible changes in culture within the Canal & River Trust compared with the British Waterways of a few years ago. There is a developing sense of a genuine joint effort between the Trust and the community in looking after the Macclesfield Canal. The importance of both the built and natural heritage of the waterways are now high on the Trust's agenda".*

Commenting on the Award, the Trust's Chief Executive Richard Parry said: *"This is a fantastic achievement for the Trust and the Manchester & Pennine Waterway Partnership. Our aim is to encourage other canals to take up the challenge now and to seek Green Flag status via the same rigorous assessment process."*

Less positive, but also important, is the news about the Undercroft. In late June, an announcement was made that plans had been submitted to install overnight barriers in the form of gates, blocking off a stretch of the Rochdale Canal between Dale Street and Minshull Street. This is seen as a last resort after other measures to make the area safer, such as installing CCTV and brighter lighting, have all been introduced without success.

Following consultation, it has been decided that the gates will be closed between 10pm-7am. Also it is only the towpath which will be gated meaning that boaters will still be able to use the canal if they wish.

More information about the proposals can be found on the Manchester City Council web site at:

www.manchester.gov.uk/planning

In a press release David Baldacchino, M&P's Regional Manager, said: *"We have been striving to make this section of the canal safer for many years. Sadly none of the extra security measures have had a major impact so far. We never like to close access to the canal towpaths but in this case we believe it is the best way to keep people safe overnight."*

The main event of the M&P Partnership's Summer Programme was the third Annual Conference or "Outburst" which again took place at the Manchester Mechanic's Institute on June 11th.

The overall attendance exceeded one hundred and our Society Council was well represented. After the Welcome and Introduction, which included a showing of the recent Blue Peter report featuring the new gates at Lock 37E on the HNC, the event opened with two keynote presentations. These were given by Richard Parry (CRT) and by Jessica Bowles of Manchester City Council.

Richard started by reminding us of the scope of the Trust's responsibilities – including 2,000 miles of waterway, 2,700 listed structures and 63 SSSI's – and the fact that we are now three years into the fifteen year 'contract' under which funding is guaranteed. He then

explained that with a view to securing the Trust's long term future, beyond 2027, a ten year strategy was being put in place which aimed to position the Trust not only as a navigation authority but also as an organisation delivering widespread public benefits.

In illustration of the progress being made, he announced a series of encouraging statistics. In the financial year ended March 2015 income exceeded the planned target by over 9%, volunteer days increased from 50,000 to 60,000 and Community Adoptions rose from 50 to 150. Also over the three years since it was set up, public awareness of the Trust has increased by 75%.

He concluded by emphasising the importance of the work of the Regional Partnerships and their key role in ensuring the alignment of the National strategic objectives with Regional and Local priorities.

The second speaker, Jessica Bowles, explained the role that canals and waterways were playing in the emerging strategies for the City of Manchester. She referred, in particular, to the Green-Blue Infrastructure Strategy under which Canals, Waterways and other water bodies were seen as integral to the City's approach to Open Space and Recreation provision. The aim, she said, was to inspire people of all ages to engage with, use and come to value the City's Green and Blue spaces. In doing this, she welcomed the opportunity to work in partnership with the Trust.

Following these presentations a short question and answer session took place during which our Chairman, Alan Sopher, took the opportunity to ask

Richard Parry for his views on the future of Standedge Visitor Centre following the transfer of its management to M&P. Richard replied that the Trust continued to view the Centre as a valued facility forming part of its Local and National visitor offer.

The final part of the 'Outburst' comprised a series of short presentations given by partnership members in the form of updates on what has been achieved under each of the headings set out in the Prospectus launched at the inaugural 'Outburst' in May 2013. For better or worse, this included ten minutes from me on 'Waterways and the Built Environment'.

Feedback from the 'Outburst' was discussed at the subsequent Partnership meeting which took place in Northwich on July 16th. Overall it was felt that the event had been successful but that there were some lessons to be learnt including the allocation of more time for discussion and feedback and the need for an identifiable theme for the event.

After the Summer break, the Partnership's first meeting will be in the form of a two day 'away-day' which will take place in Chester in early September. This will be used to start the Business Planning process for 2016/17.

Also, towards the end of the year, there is another significant date for the Partnership when we will be hosting a visit to our Region by the National Trustees. The visit will take place on November 18th/19th. During the visit, the Trustees will undertake site visits and attend an evening reception in central Manchester.

Graham Birch



Volunteer Activities

As I suggested in the last Pennine Link, over the Summer we have turned to painting of balance beams and paddle gearing, starting at Longroyd Bridge and working up to Milnsbridge to complete the Locks up to where we reached working 'down the hill' last year.

When the College holidays started, we went back and tackled the two Locks (1E and 3E) by the University and Kirklees College, which we had left due to access problems.

In August, we celebrated National Volunteer Week with a visit from Jason McCartney MP, for which we tackled two

Locks in the heart of his constituency – 28E and 30E at West Slaithwaite.

To be honest, National Volunteer Week had passed me by, but apparently the Colne Valley MP makes a point of visiting as many volunteer groups as he can that week – and he spent the morning painting, as did his personal assistant.

By August, we had tackled most of the Locks on the East side over something like a five-year period.

So far, despite the very variable weather over the Summer, we have been extremely lucky on days when we have been working; even at our latest site, Lock 2W in Ashton, and we plan to finish this year by tackling some more Locks on the West side.



Volunteers put the finishing touches to Lock 1E, Huddersfield

What happens next year depends on what develops on the West side with some of the groups that have adopted stretches.

We may start the East side again, though most Locks will not need as much work

as they did the first time, due to the far better condition of the gates and the fact that they have been treated with woodstain, rather than gloss paint which traps water inside and causes them to rot under the paint.

Trevor Ellis



Jason McCarthy, MP showing he's a dab-hand at balance beam painting whilst helping our volunteers, under Trevor's watchful eye, at Lock 28E, West Slaithwaite

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Pruning Pixels



1000dpi



300, 400, 500, 600, 800dpi

This may appear to be a rather elaborate 'spot the difference' puzzle, but in anticipation of a new edition of the Towpath Guide (*to include the Broad Canal*), it is important to establish the optimum quality of the printed

pictures without an excessive file size; particularly so with the relatively small pictures used for the Guide. In the days of film photography, the Printer would decide the best 'screen' to use, but digital photography has now put control

with the designer. The pictures in the right hand column increase in resolution (and file size) and are compared to those in the left - duplicates of an impractically high resolution.

Bob Gough

Top hole

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Stalybridge Carnival & Boat Gathering

27th & 28th June 2015





Graham Birch, Bob Gough,
Peter Rawson, Alan Stopher

2015 Photographic Competition

A background image of a canal scene. In the foreground, a narrowboat with a green hull and a grey cover is visible. The boat has a diamond-patterned barge pole and a small sign. In the background, a brick bridge spans the canal, and a large red building with the 'TESCO' logo is visible. The sky is overcast.

The Huddersfield Canal Society is once again running its annual Photographic Competition.

Open to all ages, the competition has two categories for entries, with an overall winner, and a panel of judges will decide the winners. The winning entries will be published in the Winter edition of our prestigious magazine.

Don't forget the closing date!

THE CATEGORIES

A - Huddersfield Canals (*Narrow & Broad*)

B - Other UK Waterways

plus an Overall Winning Photograph

THE RULES

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

There is no entry fee!

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

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

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO:

Photographic Competition
Huddersfield Canal Society,
Transshipment Warehouse, Wool Road,
Dobcross, Oldham, OL3 5QR

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

THE CLOSING DATE

Friday 13th November 2015

JIDOKU 35

K	I				M		L	
								I
S							R	
P	K				C			L
L					G	R		P
				K			G	
		M	P					S
R								
	L			M	K		C	

The initial letters featured being:

Panama, Kiel, Suez, Grand canal of China, St Lawrence Seaway, The Intracoastal Waterway of the USA, Manchester Ship Canal, Rhine waterway, Caledonian Canal.

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

Solution on Page 31

Stalybridge Festival & Boat Gathering 2015

What a great weekend we had at the Stalybridge Festival on the 27th and 28th June. Following on from last year's successful event, the Stalybridge Festival Committee, Huddersfield Canal Society (HCS) and Stalybridge Town Team again have worked together to provide a full weekend of activities for all to enjoy.

On the water we had two boats, Still Waters and Community Spirit operated by the Tameside Canal Boat Trust and East Manchester Canal Boat Project respectively, providing free boat trips over both days. The volunteer boat crews worked tirelessly throughout as these trips were very popular and it was great to see so many children, and their parents, enjoying the experience. People were amazed to appreciate what our predecessors had achieved over 200 years ago and to see how a lock works first hand. Many were also surprised at the different perspective of things from



Bob Cough

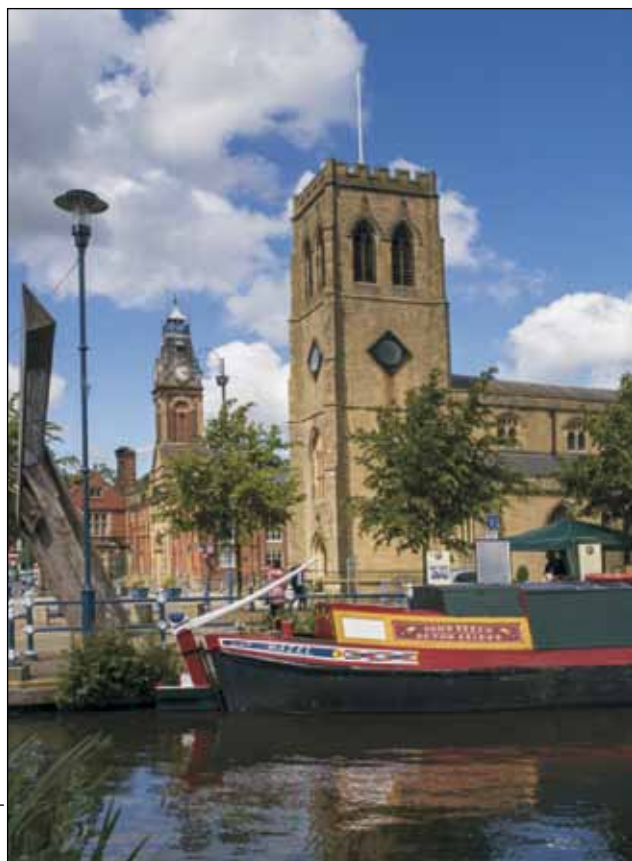
the water and remarked that the trips helped them appreciate the great asset they have through the centre of town. These two boats normally operate out of Portland Basin, Ashton-under-Lyne throughout the year.

Also on the water was Wooden Canal Boat 'Hazel', she was restored locally by the Wooden Canal Boat Society Boat (WCBS) at their yard on Knowl Street, Stalybridge. Nick-named the 'Well-Being Boat', this historic craft has been beautifully kitted out by WCBS and she will be providing short respite

Moored left, winning boat 'Kind of Blue' and right, Tameside Canal Boat Trust's 'Still Waters'.



Alan Stropher



A newly restored 'Hazel' complements the event.

breaks for people recovering from stress, depression and other illnesses. You can find out more by visiting the WCBS web site. Colleagues from the Canal and River Trust and HCS were also on hand providing general information on the canal network and opportunities for volunteering.

Despite the event being advertised widely, the turnout of privately owned boats was disappointing. Special thanks are however due to John and Karen, owners of narrowboat 'Kind of Blue', who put in a very special effort with their boat. They were duly awarded first prize in the Best Dressed Boat competition

presented by the Carnival Queen and Princesses. They really enjoyed their time in Salybridge which included getting dressed up for a forties night at the famous Salybridge Buffet Bar. The canalside activities are very popular with the Community and help raise the profile of our canal and, whilst the trip boats bring plenty of activity to the water, the weekend would benefit greatly from the additional colour and interest that a few more private boats would bring.

There were many highlights throughout the weekend but on Saturday the Tameside Sea Cadets performances on their 'window ladder' were amazing. The skill, discipline and pure bravery of the young cadets was

truly inspiring and testament to the dedication of the officers and civilian instructors of the organisation. TS Quantock is a fantastic organisation and a great asset in the community. A very colourful Samba Band also entertained the crowd in Armentières Square.

On Sunday the Crafters' Festival organised a brilliant craft market housed in a marquee in the Square. They had a wide range of interesting products on offer to the large numbers of people present throughout the day. The Festival Committee had also organised many more attractions in the nearby Cheetham Park including a fun fair, live music and a variety of stalls.



The daring of TS Quantock.

Peter Rawson

small 'marquee' in Armentières Square on Saturday and everyone was amazed by the number of trophies and cups on display. Such a huge amount of work organising the various competitions and once again the Carnival Queen and Princesses were stunning.

Next year sees the 40th Anniversary of the Carnival so please make a provisional note of this in your diaries (25th & 26th June 2016). As I mentioned last year, if we are able to secure early bookings/ interest from boaters then we will be in a position to organise some specific events and perhaps a social event on the Saturday

The iconic Carnival parade was absolutely fantastic and once again drew huge crowds. I was so pleased that we were blessed with fine weather despite the forecast. Having worked closely with the Festival Committee, in particular the Hobson family, I can see how dedicated, enthusiastic and professional they are. They literally put months and months of work into each Carnival event to ensure that everything runs smoothly and safely. This year they had a



The Carnival Royalty admire the silverware on display.

Graham Birch



Bob Gough

The skirl of the City of Liverpool Pipes and Drums playing its part in the Parade.

evening for example. Please consider coming whether or not you are on a boat; the Carnival Parade on Sunday is a spectacular sight attended by several thousand people every year and there are also other attractions for visitors in the nearby Cheetham Park.

I would like to thank the following for their assistance and input, in no particular order:-

- Tameside Sea Cadets
- Claire Bebbington & Bob Gough at HCS
- Crafters Festival
- Fellow Council Members at HCS
- Stalybridge Festival Committee
- Canal and River Trust
- Stalybridge Town Team
- Tameside MBC/Tameside Markets Team
- Tameside Canal Boat Trust
- East Manchester Canal Boat Project
- Wooden Canal Boat Society
- Mulhearns Fun Fair

Finally, and apologies for anyone I've missed out, thanks to our volunteer group who helped clear up the canal and town centre the weekend before the Festival Weekend and also those who helped with a final litter pick on Friday morning. Everything was clean and tidy for the start of the festivities and it made such a difference. If you want to get involved in our town centre/canal volunteering activities please contact the HCS Office on 01457 871800, email hcs@huddersfieldcanal.com or visit the Stalybridge Town Team Facebook page for more information.

Peter Rawson

Council Member HCS
Chair Stalybridge Town Team



Street Scene Greenfield Group

The Street Scene Greenfield Group (SSGG) and other volunteers have continued their valuable work on the Greenfield to Uppermill section of the canal towpath

Work has continued on a twice monthly basis and dates for the next six months, from October onwards, are soon to be agreed with Canl & River Trust.

During the Summer, enthusiastic volunteers have been involved in a variety of tasks – laying more stone, together with vegetation clearing and litter picking.

Tuesday 4th August saw the group 'Balsam Bashing' in an on-going effort to contain the spread of this pretty, yet invasive weed. There actually appeared to be less Balsam along the towpath itself, but more on adjacent private land.

The Group has also been instructed on the important workings of the Canal itself which has included Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) on the lock gates. A number of the gate mechanisms have



CCRA

Tesco Community Champion, Greg Barratt (right) and staff member, Andrew Kershaw lending a barrowing hand with the on-going towpath work.

been cleaned and repainted, which proved very rewarding.

If you would like to be involved, please contact the Project Leader Gill on:

01457 870364 or email:
gillmcculley@yahoo.com.

It's fun, inspiring and you won't be disappointed.

**SSGG IS GREENFIELD-BASED COMMUNITY ACTION WORKING FOR YOU TO BUILD
CONFIDENCE AND PRIDE IN OUR COMMUNITY**

(A sub-group of Greenfield & Grasscroft Residents Association)

- YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE -

New Members welcome info@ggra.co.uk or ring: 01457 597666



Volunteer Peter Killan
'bashing' the Balsam.



Bob Cough

Pretty, showy flowers of the Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) which, as the name suggests, is native to the Himalayas, but was introduced into the UK in 1839 by Victorian plant hunters and has become highly invasive ever since. Despite being a great source of nectar for bees, its vigorous growth, even in shady situations, overwhelms our native flora. Non-chemical control by 'Balsam Bashes' can be effective if repeated each year and done before the flowers set their seeds; contained in explosive pods.



Volunteer Jo Holt giving the
gearing a fresh coat of paint.

'Wandering Duck' & the Pennine Challenge

In case you think this is about an itinerant member of the water fowl community, let me explain.....

'Wandering Duck Holidays' is a unique venture invented by Ruth Seneviratne-Bratt and Mark Bratt. After spending 2009 managing a backpacker hostel in Kaikura, New Zealand, they came home to England looking for a new challenge. Developing the hostel theme and transferring it to canals was the result and that's how they came to run a business whose star is a 69ft narrow boat named Rakiraki (Maori for 'Duck'). They run hosted short break holidays on the Peak Forest and Macclesfield canals, often visiting Castlefield Basin in Manchester. Rakiraki sleeps up to 8 guests, who can do as much or as little as they like - working locks, steering the boat, or just sitting in the bows with a good book or the on board guitar! Judging by the amount of food and drink available, walking it off on the towpath might be a popular pastime too. Have a look at their excellent website for more information - www.wanderingduck.co.uk

A new venture is the Big Trip. This is a week long special adventure which takes them beyond their normal operating area. Last year was the Llangollen Canal, but this

year it was the Huddersfield Narrow. On Monday the 10th August, they set off with a full crew from Castlefield Basin, heading East along the Rochdale to Ashton-under-Lyne, Dukinfield Junction and Lock 1W. By Friday August 14th they'd made it to Slaithwaite, but a fault with the guillotine gate gearbox at Lock 24E put paid to their plans to make Aspley Basin by Sunday. The trip effectively ended just above 24E, within sight of the gate that had foiled the passage.

I caught up with Mark, Ruth, and some of the crew in Marsden on Saturday afternoon. It was a lovely day, so they'd walked back to the Riverhead for a spot of afternoon beer. Despite the unexpected stoppage they were all in good spirits (the Yorkshire Blonde was on form as usual) and were heaping praise on the Narrow Canal for the unique experience it offers boaters, and the quality of the scenery.

Some of the crew were planning to finish the trip to Huddersfield on foot, although it seems they found the delights of Slaithwaite sufficient to occupy themselves for the rest of the day. Personally, any boat that has a hand pump in the galley connected to it's own on-board cask beer would probably have been enough for me....





Mark kindly agreed to do a Q&A, so when they'd arrived safely back at base I sent some questions that I thought Pennine Link readers might have asked if they'd have been at the Riverhead. Here's what he said:

• **Why did you decide to make the HNC this year's Big Trip?**

The "Big Trip" is a relatively new idea. Generally our trips are only 2 or 3 nights - they're a taster experience. But a few guests had fed back that they would like to try a longer trip. Starting in 2014, we now run one "Big Trip" each year, around a week in duration.

We consider ourselves an adventure tour business. We're not into pootling along pretty canals with few locks. We want to encourage a younger generation on to the canals. We're not interested in schools and youth groups; rather people in their 20's, 30's or 40's who like to try new things and have a spirit of adventure. Don't get me wrong, we don't have an upper age limit, but don't come expecting to be sat on the front of the boat reading for the whole trip. You're going to get your hands dirty!

With this in mind, when planning a longer trip, we're looking for something that can start around our home territory (Peak Forest/ Macclesfield/ Ashton Canals). We're also looking for something adventurous and

the route has to include a 'wow' factor. Last year we were forced to re-route one of our shorter trips in to Manchester due to a broken lock gate on the Ashton Canal. From Portland Basin your only option is to travel up the HNC, so that's what we did. We travelled as far as Diggle and having experienced how beautiful it was up there we decided we had to come back. The Standedge Tunnel is an obvious draw so that made the route easy to sell. But really what appealed to us was the huge number of locks and the beautiful scenery.

• **How did you plan it out?**

We don't tend to do too much planning for our Big Trips. Part of the adventure is in chartering into unknown territory together. We've never been a fan of doing something too polished, as we feel this dilutes the adventure - it becomes all too organised. However, we did check out logistics such as where we could get diesel, water and a pumpout. We checked public transport options from Huddersfield, looked for supermarkets, good pubs, Standedge Tunnel regulations and opening times. We also spoke to other boaters to check that there were no obvious reasons why we shouldn't do the route. Water levels and number of locks were the only negative feedback we found; negative to them, but exciting to us. We wanted a genuine challenge.

- **Were there any problems en route that you didn't expect, and how did you get around them?**

The Tunnel is open for passage on Mon/ Wed/ Fri. Since we wanted to run the trip Monday to Sunday this meant booking the Tunnel for Friday which only gave us Friday afternoon to Sunday to get down to Huddersfield from Marsden. In the end, this didn't really matter (more on that later!) We did experience a couple of very low pounds on the West side of the Tunnel, but the top pound was healthy enough that we could sort this by taking water from further up. We're used to this on the Marple Lock Flight and whilst we wouldn't recommend taking water from other pounds if you don't know what you're doing, we were able to fix the problem without too much delay.

Unfortunately, after travelling from Diggle to Slaithwaite via the Tunnel on the Friday, we found ourselves unable to go any further. The guillotine Lock was padlocked. There was a problem with the runners and a couple of people had been injured operating it, so deemed unsafe in its current state. This put a swift end to our journey. It was Friday afternoon and the engineers wouldn't be out again until Monday morning. We stayed moored in Slaithwaite until our guests departed on the Sunday. Fortunately between the pubs, coffee shops and handmade bakery, we had more than enough to keep ourselves occupied. There are far worse places to be left stranded and we had a good stock of music, booze and games onboard as well as two guitars!



Fortunately, we were able to persuade the engineers to let Ruth and I, minus guests, through the Lock the following Monday. The only option for a 69ft boat from here is back along the HNC - this meant winding two Locks down from the guillotine Lock, or reversing up seven Locks to wind further up.

- **What were the highlights of the trip?**

The Tunnel exceeded everyone's expectations. From a skippers perspective (Ruth steered on the way out) it was really exciting. We've been doing this job for nearly 4 years and rarely are our boating skills challenged like they were through here. Constantly changing tunnel wall lining, bends and twists and incredibly low sections. At 69ft we're longer than most boats who go through the Tunnel and this does increase our chances of scrapes. Fortunately we managed to get through with only one scuff to the handrails. Everyone agreed that sat on the front of the boat to experience the Tunnel was mesmerising.



- **... and the low ones!**

Not getting to Huddersfield. This also meant doing our first self-pumpout at a CRT service point (about time I guess!). However, as I say, being stuck in Slaithwaite was actually quite a pleasure. We really miss that bakery!

- **Best pub?**

The Church Inn, Saddleworth. It was a bit of an uphill trek from our mooring, but absolutely worth it for the views, the brewery's own ale, and great food!

- **Funniest thing that happened?**

Guest Chris and I sat on the front of the boat having a jam on our guitars as we travelled through Standege Tunnel. My guitar playing is not great, but we managed an impromptu "Standedge Tunnel Blues" which kept everyone, guide Kevin included, entertained. The acoustics through the Tunnel are incredible. I'm not sure how many others have enjoyed live music as they've travelled through!

- **Any navigation tips you can pass on?**

We had 8 of us on the boat, 6 of whom were very fit. I'd suggest getting some help if it's just 1 or 2 of you. You wouldn't want the workload to get in the way of how pleasurable this canal can be.

When it comes to the Tunnel just listen to your chaperone - their assistance and information was invaluable. Mooring spots are pretty limited so we moored on bollards. This was unusual for us as normally bollards mean temporary, but on the HNC the only deep and practical mooring spots are where there are bollards in place. With 2ft 6in draft we were on the bottom through some of the pounds, even when water was flowing over the overflows, so this is certainly something to be aware of.

- **Will you be back?**

I'm pretty sure we will. It's an absolutely beautiful canal and it's incredibly quiet. We felt like we had it to ourselves. Sure, it's challenging but only in terms of number of locks and that incredible tunnel. Everything is fairly well maintained and the CRT staff are really helpful and friendly if you do ever need assistance. I'd say this is now my favourite canal - but don't tell everybody!

- **Where's next years Big Trip?**

You'll have to wait and see!

Big thanks to Mark and Ruth for the interview, and providing the photos. We really hope to see them back on our canal again soon, and next time we ought to lay on a HCS welcome at Aspley!

Eric Woulds

Leaving a Legacy to the Society

The Society's Council undertakes an annual review of its Five Year Rolling Business Plan. The purpose of the Plan is to prioritise our activities in the context of the Vision for the future of the Society. This is ***“to ensure the viability and promotion of the Huddersfield Broad and Narrow Canals as navigable waterways within the overall network in perpetuity.”***

Currently the Society relies on its reserves to fund its operations on a deficit basis. Clearly this cannot continue indefinitely. We therefore plan to move onto a sustainable footing within the next five years so that we can achieve our vision. To this end, amongst the goals set out in our Business Plan is the need to increase income from donations and legacies which have the potential to make a very important contribution to our fundraising

New legislation has increased the tax benefits of leaving money to charities. As a result, any gifts you make to a 'qualifying' charity such as the Huddersfield Canal Society Ltd - during your lifetime or in your Will - will be exempt from Inheritance Tax. A donation to charity in your Will may also reduce the rate that tax is paid at. *(To qualify for the reduced rate you must leave at least 10 per cent of the net value of your estate to a qualifying charity.)*

If you have already made a Will but would now like to add the Huddersfield Canal Society Ltd as a beneficiary, a simple Codicil can be used to include us. A sample Codicil form together with instructions can be downloaded from our web site or a paper copy can be obtained by contacting the Society office.

If you do not have a Will, the MoneySavingExpert website gives good advice on how to obtain one: www.moneysavingexpert.com and follow the *family/free-cheap-wills* links.

The Huddersfield Canal Society and its employees are not qualified to give legal advice. If you are worried about how best to draft a Will or Codicil, we do recommend you obtain professional advice from a solicitor with experience in Wills and Probate.

You can find a solicitor by contacting The Law Society at: www.lawsociety.org.uk and follow the *choosingandusing/findasolicitor.law* links or by phoning their Helpline on: 020 7242 1222

Huddersfield Canal Society Ltd

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220 Club

We're pleased to say that the number of subscribers continues to rise and we now have 46 paying subscribers giving, as you can see, a quarterly first prize of £73 and second prize of £36! The more who subscribe, the higher the prize fund offered for your £2 a month stake.

Of course, the **220 Club** also:

- Gives the Society useful additional income allowing it to continue its work and have an influence on your canals.
- Contributes to the varied work of the Society and helps it have a healthy future.
- Is run by Huddersfield Canal Society for its members and your support is needed.

To join you need to complete the enclosed application form or it can be downloaded

from our website. Do consider completing a Standing Order and then you'll never miss a draw.

For legal reasons, only Huddersfield Canal Society members are eligible to subscribe to HCS 220 Club, so if you are reading this and not a Society member, join us and then sign up to the 220 Club.

AND here are the results of our sixth quarterly draw:

Total Subscribers: 46
Total Prize Fund: £110.40

1st Prize:
 Mr P J Rice winning £73.60

2nd Prize:
 Mrs S Womersley winning £36.80

Congratulations to the prize winners!



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