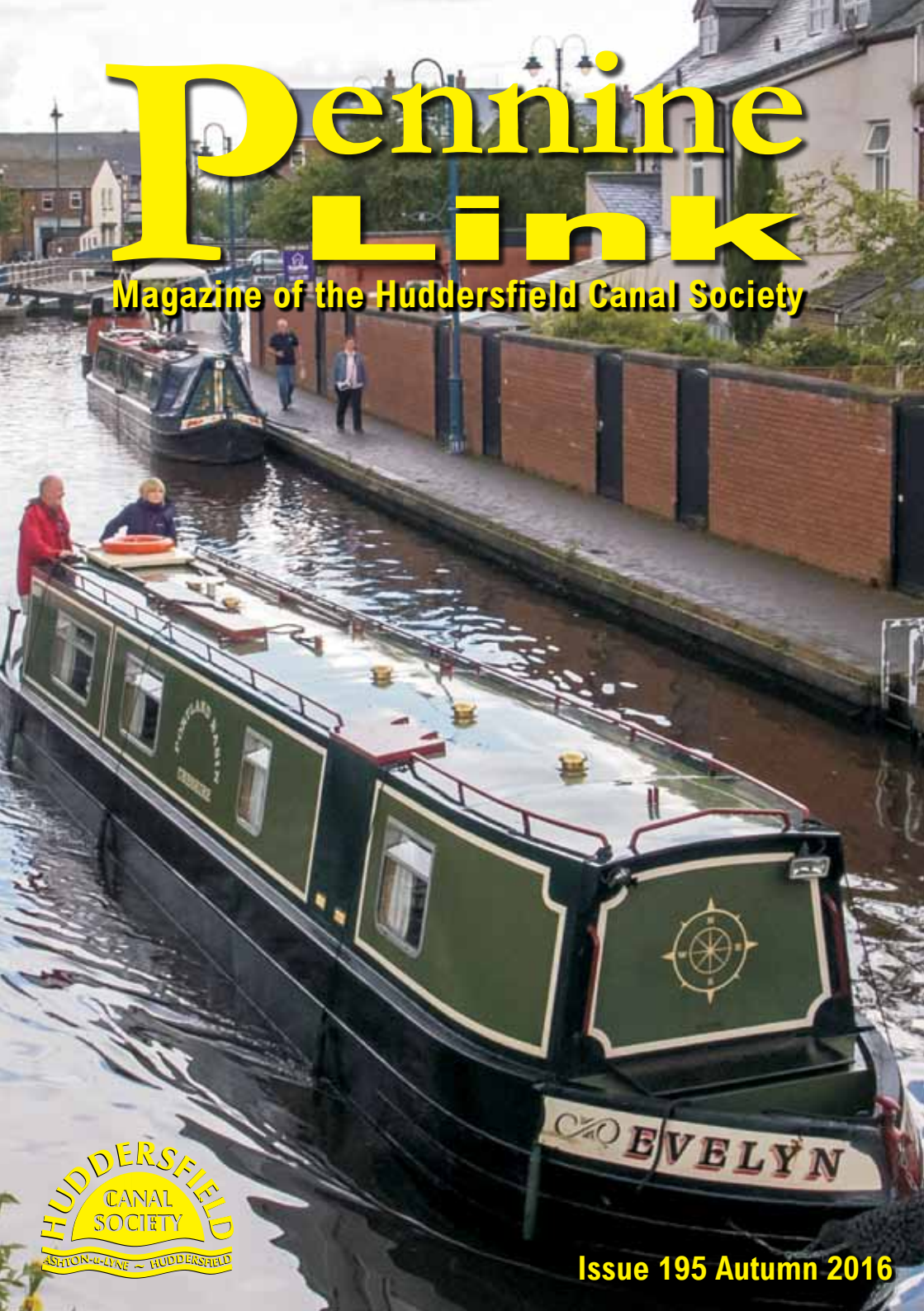


# Pennine Link

Magazine of the Huddersfield Canal Society



HUDDERSFIELD  
CANAL  
SOCIETY  
ASHTON-U-LYNE ~ HUDDERSFIELD

Issue 195 Autumn 2016

# Huddersfield Canal Society Ltd

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

# Pennine Link

Issue 195



Alan Stopher

Director and Marsden Shuttle volunteer, Tony Zajac, poses with Barry McQueen and Mrs McQueen. Barry takes his Town Crier duties very seriously and was a colourful addition to the Festival proceedings, not to mention many an exclamation on the bell and blast on the Post Horn; Tony, an ex-cornet player, even had a go, summoning the public to the Shuttle for their free trips.

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## Editorial

In previous editions of Pennine Link I have made reference to my involvement in the contribution which the Canal

and River Trust (CRT) is making to the preparation of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, the document which will set out a strategy for managing the supply of land for jobs and new homes across Greater Manchester for the next 20 years.

In response, I have been asked the question 'what has this to do with our Canals and why is the CRT putting time and resources into this?' My answer is: if we are successful in making the case for embedding the conurbation's canals and waterways at the heart of the new policy framework, we will go a long way towards ensuring the future sustainability and prosperity of the network.

How have I come to this conclusion? Let me explain.

You will recall that I have, in these pages on numerous occasions, bemoaned the fact that the once close and constructive relationship that our Society and CRT/BW had with the Local Authorities has, sadly, waned over the past decade. This is in part due to the fact that the officers and Members who supported and serviced the partnership during the restoration years have now retired and been replaced by a new generation.

It is also a result of the drastic cuts in staff and budgets imposed as a result of the ongoing austerity programme.

In consequence, the canals have slipped down and some cases off their agendas.

With no change in the financial climate on the horizon, it is not a realistic option to believe that we will ever be able to put the clock back and pick up where we left off ten or fifteen years ago. Instead, we must look for different ways forward; ways which are relevant to the 21<sup>st</sup> century world.

Perhaps, perversely, the starting point for this is to turn the clock back even further to the late 1970s/early 80s. To the days of the late, and for some of us at least, lamented Metropolitan Counties. As many of our older members will recall, the two Counties of West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester (GMC) were major players getting restoration of the ground and onto the political agenda. They both offered huge amounts of support (including financial) to the work on restoration and as a Society, we still have much to thank them for.

I like to think that their support and enthusiasm arose, in part at least, because their remit was to see the bigger picture and understand that life goes on across, rather than within, boundaries. They produced, for example, a number of valuable and robust strategies for the region's river valleys (e.g. The Medlock Valley Plan) and it was this same approach that enabled them to see the potential value of a restored waterway network.

Working at a District level, the temptation (certainly in the case of the Local Councillors) is to look only at your own bit of the world.



In my case, working in Oldham, as far as the HNC was concerned, the focus was on our own section, from Royal George to Diggle.

By contrast, the Counties were able to 'pull the focus out'. To recognise and understand that there is a bigger world out there and that the canals are nothing if they are not a network. A network whose whole is far greater than the sum of its parts. Thinking in these terms brings us back to the present and to the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework.

In many areas of life it is said that "what goes around, comes around" and that there is "nothing new under the sun". This is just what we are seeing here. Thirty years after the demise of GMC, we are seeing the resurrection of a new strategic body: the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. The governance arrangements are different, notably that it will be led by an Elected Mayor, and the range of responsibilities will be different. These will, however, include development, regeneration, transport and environmental sustainability.

Once completed and approved, the Spatial Framework will apply to all ten GM Authorities and any local planning guidance will need to be consistent with the Framework policies. Similarly, the framework will be a key consideration in the determination of major planning applications across the region.

This brings us back to my starting point for this piece, that the Trust's task now is to make the case for the conurbation's canals and waterways being embedded at the heart of the new policy framework.

Liaison between the Trust and the team charged with producing the Framework is continuing and the potential exists to

make a compelling case. Some examples of the benefits that waterways can deliver being highlighted are:

- The capacity to generate economic benefits particularly in terms of tourism and leisure activity and growing the visitor economy.
- Acting as a catalyst for the development of canalside property with evidence suggesting that waterside locations command a premium value of between 15-25%.
- Reducing flood risk to development, potentially allowing development of sites that would otherwise not be viable due to flood risk concerns.
- Capacity to promote the increased use of sustainable transport modes (safe walking and cycle routes) thereby improving air quality, lowering carbon dioxide levels and reducing congestion on roads.
- Opportunities for new developments to incorporate innovative technologies to make use of its water such as the abstraction of canal water for cooling and/or for heating purposes.
- The capacity to provide digital connectivity by laying cabling along established corridors through busy urban areas with minimal disturbance.
- Providing "blue lungs" for residents of urban area with resulting physical and mental health benefits.
- Forming the centrepiece of area-based regeneration schemes in run down areas where the waterway can exert a positive impact on its surroundings and be a catalyst for wider redevelopment.

*contd. over ...*

If policies requiring local councils and developers to take on board these and other key considerations as part of the planning and development process can be embedded in the emerging Framework, then our waterways will be back on, and climbing up, the agenda.

One final point before I move on. I realise that I have concentrated here on Greater Manchester and that half of the HNC and the whole of the Broad lie in West Yorkshire. However, the indications are that other major city regions, including West Yorkshire, may be encouraged to follow the combined Authority route. If so, and if we have been successful in GM, then precedent will have been set for the same approach elsewhere.

Now moving on briefly and in conclusion to other matters. First, my sincere thanks go to all those who have contributed to this Edition, including new contributors Belinda Watson, who has taken on responsibility for publicity and communication on behalf of UCAN, Mark Blackstone and Chris Howes who have written about their experiences navigating the Narrow past and present.

In the same vein, I would like offer good wishes to Rhys Wynne and Roger Hanbury, both of CRT. Rhys has, of late, been a contributor to Pennine Link in his role as leader of the Community Roots project. He has, however, moved on to a new post with the Groundwork Trust and we wish him well in this new venture. Roger is someone I worked closely with in his role as Chief Executive of the Waterways Trust during my years at Oldham MBC. With the advent of CRT, Roger moved to work for the new Trust and has taken a major role in helping its governance to take shape over the past four years. Roger has recently announced that he will be retiring in September and I would like to take this opportunity to wish him a long and happy retirement.

Finally, elsewhere in this Issue you will find the invitation to submit entries for our 2016 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**

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## Chairman's Report

I'm writing this piece on a very wet day in the first week of September. It's feeling autumnal after a warm August most of which I've

been lucky enough to spend enjoying the waterways of the Midlands in our narrowboat.

With the Rochdale Canal closed for the time being between Todmorden and Hebden Bridge we've seen a good turn-out of boats making the passage of our own Huddersfield Narrow Canal. As many as eight narrowboats were moored in Slaithwaite on a recent visit. There have been a few short stoppages but these will have done little to hinder passages through our canal. For the record they were the replacement of failed paddle gear at Lock 13E in June, two tree falls between 20W and 22W in July, a tailgate problem at 13W, a dislodged coping stone at 1E requiring careful passage and inspection of Lock 23W to establish the cause of excessive leakage to the head-gate cill, all in August. The continuing mechanical problems with the unique Lock 24E guillotine gate have meant the institution of a booking system for passage on the hour from 9am to 2pm until resolved.

The Huddersfield Broad Canal has had one Summer stoppage to repair the failed control pedestal at Turn Bridge. Staffed passage was soon arranged and parts obtained and fitted within 4 days in mid-August.

When one considers the age and nature of the canal infrastructure and the large number of Locks this is a pretty small list. I consider that the limited number of unplanned stoppages and the swiftness of response reflect well on the Canal & River Trust's improved management regime which has focussed on reducing leakage and keeping on top of priority repairs. There is of course heavy reliance on observations from users as the small number of staff cannot be everywhere at once. Our own Observers, Maintenance Team and members have a role to play in alerting CRT of any problems. We do have local names and contact numbers but not all canal users have this information. If I have a concern about this way of gathering information it is that the national call centre cannot always handle all the calls speedily enough through its 0303 0404040 number.

The simplicity of having one single number to use has a down side in that there can be a log-jam in high season. On my travels this year I personally have failed to get through twice after periods of more than 5 minutes hanging on my mobile phone. When you do get through to the call centre the staff have no local knowledge of the area you are referring to and it can take some time to explain the location and circumstances.

Proposals to increase footfall at Standedge Visitor Centre are with the CRT Board at present. This is understandable as the organisation will evidently need to determine which competing investment opportunities and bids for funding are best made first.

In the meantime your Society continues to support the busiest days such as the Craft Weekend by having a stall advertising HCS's activities and explaining about the canal. I'm indebted to Tricia Bayley and Peter Smart for doing almost all the work on this. If anyone else would like to join in helping promoting HCS and the canal at such events please contact Bob and Claire at the office.

It has been a good year for the Marsden Shuttle which has run more days than usual. Thanks go to all our boat crews for their efforts. If you fancy joining in please contact Mike McHugh who organises the crewing. If you're a novice don't worry as training is provided.

The AGM turnout at the Head of Steam in Huddersfield was low this year despite the enticement of food and drink. Those that did come along though had a good catch up over refreshments and it was good to renew acquaintance with some of our members. Your Council is considering the best way to combine the evening of the AGM with another event to increase attendance.

Also in June was the Stalybridge Festival. Huddersfield Canal Society has helped to raise the profile of this event which is now firmly in our calendar. By organising a small boat gathering and free boat trips, we help the Tameside Town Team's efforts to bring life to the centre of the town and its waterfront.

It was a real pleasure to give local people including many young children a trip on their local canal, something many will never be able to afford to do otherwise. It even gave me a chance to steer our own Marsden Shuttle which had been brought from Tunnel End for the event.

My thanks go to Peter Rawson and our staff Bob and Claire for making the weekend so successful and for all our volunteers who turned out to add support, crew our boat and rattle the donations box. Elsewhere in this Pennine Link there is a full report and pictures.

Trevor has continued to lead our maintenance team on their fortnightly operations. I gather that, of late, not all Fridays have been as wet as earlier in the year. Eric, Peter and Trevor have been in discussions with our CRT colleagues to ensure that our Observers reports are relevant timely and acted upon. If you'd like to join either team please contact us.

The numbers of adoption groups are steadily rising. Groups at Diggle and Slaithwaite are the latest to take on sections of their neighbouring towpaths. I'm really keen to see this approach work and to ensure that our own Observers and Maintenance Team dovetail with the efforts of adoption groups so that the environment of the whole canal and its residents can benefit.

I enjoyed reading the September 2016 Waterways World guide to the Huddersfield Canals. It was a well written by James Francis Fox, enthusiastic in extolling the virtues of our canals, particularly the HNC and gave sound practical information on navigation, places to visit and walks to make. The photography also helped bring to life some of the many highlights. It made me reflect on how far our waterway has improved over the years since reopening.

It is definitely much easier to navigate than in the early days of 2001 and I'm sure positive articles in the national press will help to further increase the number of visitors whether on boat or on foot.



In our own Summer wanderings my wife Ali and I have cruised some rarely travelled sections of Black Country waterways passing few if any boats in a day and, in contrast, had to wait an hour and a quarter to start locking through the Atherstone flight on the popular Coventry Canal at the end of a queue of 7 boats!

There is a continuing need to spread boats more evenly throughout our wonderful inland waterways and your Society continues to be a key player in encouraging use of the Huddersfield

Canals. I'm not suggesting that such traffic jams should be welcomed on the Huddersfield as its peaceful qualities are a part of its attraction but local residents and those running businesses would all like to see an increase in boating visitors to add interest and colour and bring spending power to the Tame and Colne Valleys. For many, these were the motives behind the investment in restoring the canal and the same is still true today.

**Alan Stopher**



*Getting in on the act! A 'selfie' from Alan, doing his bit on the Shuttle's tiller.*

Alan Stopher



## Manchester & Pennine Update

The main event in Manchester and Pennine's Summer calendar was the fourth annual conference or "Outburst" which

took place on June 9<sup>th</sup>. For the third year running it was held at the Mechanics Institute in Princess Street, Manchester and it attracted an attendance of well over one hundred people representing a wide variety of canal related interests.

After a welcome from Frances Done, Luke Kennard the new Canal Laureate was introduced. Luke, who took over the role from Jo Bell earlier this year explained that unlike his predecessor he is not a boater but that he much enjoys walking the towpaths and absorbing the tranquil atmosphere of the waterway environment. He concluded his introduction by undertaking the now traditional challenge of producing, by the close of the event, a poem based on words and phrases submitted by the audience.

We then heard from the first of the guest speakers, the Trust's Chief Executive, Richard Parry whose presentation focussed on the Trust's achievements over the past 12 months. He told us that the picture was a very positive one which shows continuing growth against many measures of progress. These include:

- An increase in income to a total of £190 million enabling a substantial programme of planned asset repairs and improvements to be undertaken while at the same time supporting

urgent unplanned works, notably the response to the Calder Valley floods.

- A rise of 10% in volunteer days, up to a total of 480,000.
- Expenditure of £128 million on the waterways, an increase of 8%, which funded work on culverts and embankments, channel relining and 135 winter lock repairs.
- A drop of almost 300 days in unplanned closures compared with 2014/15
- A 50% increase in the number of community canal adoptions in the year to nearly 150
- An 88% approval rating from a growing band of volunteers who gave nearly half a million hours of their time (up 17% on the previous year)
- 15,800 Friends regularly donating to the Trust – an increase of 60% on the same point the previous year
- Substantial increases in participation in education, youth and volunteer programmes with 64,000 children having experienced the Trust's Explorers programme.

Added to this positive picture were:

- The growth in engagement in partnerships with organisations such as the Arts Council, the Scout Association, Help for Heroes and Rolls Royce as well as numerous local authorities, charitable trusts and local canal societies
- The growing popularity of the programme of Open Days.

- The trust's role in the development of the proposals for HS2 with the purpose of safeguarding the waterways along the route.
- Contributing to the government's Devolution agenda, in particular the Northern Powerhouse initiative and the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework.

In conclusion he said that "as the Trust passes its fourth anniversary we have good reason to be optimistic that we have put in place strong foundations to rise to the challenges ahead."

Next on the agenda were short presentations M and P Chair Walter Menzies and Waterway Manager David Baldacchino.

Walter reminded us of the aims and objectives set out in the M and P Manifesto which had been launched at the first Outburst in 2013 and he went on to highlight some of the key achievements. In particular he referred

to the establishment of eighteen Adoption Groups in the region and the Green Flag Award for the Macclesfield Canal. He also made special reference to work being undertaken by volunteers there having been 5,675 volunteer days recorded in the year 2015/6 including 3,500 hours in response to the Calder Valley floods.

David also focussed on the importance of the contribution being made by volunteers. He described the extent of the damage resulting from the Boxing Day floods and the "phenomenal response of the volunteers" who worked to alleviate the devastation inflicted on the canal side communities. He further pointed out that the time given by the volunteers over the course of the past year had amounted to "25 full time people equivalents". This meant that he had in effect 25 additional staff who were available to assist with the upkeep of the region's waterways.



CRT's Fourth Annual Conference

Graham Birch

The final two speakers were Andy Howard from Transport for Greater Manchester and David Hodcroft from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. Andy told us about the Greater Manchester Cycling Vision which includes programmes to create safe, traffic free routes for cyclists and the development of interchanges where cycles can be stored securely while the cyclist completes their journey using a different form of transport. The first phase of this project included upgrading the Ashton Canal towpath and it is likely that the next phase will see an extension along the HNC from Ashton to Stalybridge.

David described the background to and progress to date with the GM Strategic Framework. He explained the importance of this work in setting out a blueprint for the new combined authority, in particular in respect of ensuring a sustainable energy efficient future. In this context he welcomed the involvement of the CRT in the process given the potential of the region's waterways to contribute to a high quality, sustainable environment.

We then had three short "Soapbox" presentations on "the River Irwell Clean Up Project", Problems facing CRT from a user's perspective" and Manchester Business School's "Urban Cooling Project".

The final part of the morning was devoted to a workshop session when participants could choose from a list of topics and take part in a facilitated discussion on topics of particular interest to them. Amongst the topics available were The Future of the Standedge Visitor Centre and How to encourage more boaters onto the Pennine Ring.

## News in Brief

**CRT Waterways Alive Award** – On July 7<sup>th</sup> the Macclesfield Canal Green Flag Award was announced as being the winner in the small project category of the Trust's own Waterways Alive Award. Selected from a short list of ten it was seen as demonstrating successful partnership working and a commitment to the Trust's vision that *living waterways transform places and enrich lives*.

**Green Flag** – two week later on July 22<sup>nd</sup> this was followed up by the announcement that an application by the Trust for a Green Flag Award for a seven mile length of the Peak Forest Canal had been successful. At the same time it was confirmed that the 26 miles of The Macclesfield Canal that had been awarded a Green Flag for the second year running.

**Red Wheels** – In a similar vein Red Wheel plaques have been awarded to the Marple Aqueduct (Britain's tallest masonry-arched aqueduct) and the nearby Marple Lock flight. The Red Wheel plaque scheme commemorates Britain's rich legacy in the development of transport and marks these two feats of engineering as among Britain's finest. The plaques were unveiled at a ceremony on June 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Cycle City** - a new phase of towpath upgrading work as part of the Cycle City project has been announced. This is planned to include the section of the HNC from Golcar to Huddersfield with design work commencing in August and consultation taking place later in the year.

**Graham Birch**

# Stalybridge Festival Weekend

This is the third year that the Huddersfield Canal Society (HCS) has worked closely with the Stalybridge Festival Committee and Stalybridge Town Team (STT) to provide a full weekend of activities in the heart of the town. The Stalybridge Carnival is very well known regionally and this year was the 40<sup>th</sup> running of the Carnival parade which traditionally takes place on the afternoon of the fourth Sunday in June. The decision was taken in 2014 to extend the festivities over two days by adding other attractions including a Boat Gathering on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal which runs through the centre of the town.

This year's event was a great success and was well attended on both days. On the Saturday this year there was a display of classic cars and live music alongside the canal in Armentieres Square and we also worked with the NSPCC who organised a Family Fun Day Event in the nearby Victoria Market Hall. Sunday's activities included a craft market and more live music in the square led by one of our HCS Board members! Local roads were closed to accommodate the iconic carnival parade which took place on Sunday afternoon. There were a large number of floats and



Mike McHugh makes an expert turn with the Marsden Shuttle

Bob Cough

the parade was led by the impressive Greater Manchester Police Band. The parade attracts huge crowds and there are further attractions including more live music by local bands, a funfair and a range of stalls in the nearby Cheetham Park.

On the water on both days there were a number of private boats present this year and the trophy for the best boat was presented to 'Crafty-Narrowboat' (opposite) by the Carnival Queen and Princess. The Borders Cheese Carrying Company Trade boat was also with us for the weekend (flag in photo above) which added further interest for the public and we are hoping that Sue and Adrian will



Stalybridge Festival Committee





*Do Your Thing Choir accompany the Stalybridge Strummers while the NSPCC event keeps families happy including the Bouncy Castle!*

join us again for next year's event which will take place on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> June 2017. If any other trade boats would like to join us for next year's event, please get in touch. HCS's details are given at the end of the article.

HCS members brought our own trip boat, Marsden Shuttle, over from its usual mooring in the summit pound at Standedge Visitor Centre to provide free boat trips for the public. We also commissioned Still Waters, a trip boat normally based at Portland Basin in Ashton-under-Lyne,

to provide free boat trips as well. These are very popular with children and parents alike and both crews were kept very busy and worked tirelessly throughout the weekend to cater for the enthusiastic demand. People are amazed at the totally different perspective they get from a boater's eye level. They are also impressed by the amazing skills of the original canal pioneers when they hear that this section of canal was originally constructed before the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Whilst many chose to take a shorter trip

on the Marsden Shuttle, which is able to turn around within the width of the canal here, many others were keen to take a longer trip including experiencing a Lock. Stalybridge was one of the final blockages to navigation on the Huddersfield Narrow so this section of canal is relatively new having been completed in 2001. There are still examples of where some of the older infrastructure has been retained at Locks 5W and 7W. The longer trip involved negotiating Lock 7W where some of the older features have been retained. Here the main road above the canal had been widened after the original canal was filled in, so old meets new here as the position

*cont'd on page 17*



*Enoch's Hammer and Nonsuch Dulcimer entertain. Director, Eric Woulds, (yellow shirt) wrestles with the Hurdy-Gurdy - he wins!*

# Top hole

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# Stalybridge Festival Weekend 2016





of the Lock needed to be moved upstream to accommodate the realigned highway and newer concrete finishes can be viewed against the original stonework.

We are collectively working hard with Tameside Council, STT and CRT to raise the profile of the canal, and the town, both for locals and all visitors including those who come by boat. By engaging with the whole community we are striving to encourage more boaters to visit and for locals to understand what a fantastic asset they have in the very centre of town. There is already an enthusiastic volunteer group in town, organised by STT, which has regular clear up events both along the canal and in the adjacent town centre. The group is now starting to carry out additional tasks on the canal such as improvements to lock surrounds and painting of lock gate balance beams and gearing to ensure that the canal is maintained in the best condition possible.

There are many people and organisations to be thanked for their contribution to the success of this year's event so please forgive me if I've missed anyone from the following list which is in no particular order of importance: -

- The volunteers who helped clean up the canal and town centre before the event and CRT who facilitated this.
- The crew of the Marsden Shuttle – great effort to bring over and return the boat to Marsden and provide free boat trips over the weekend.
- The crew of Still Waters in providing free boat trips over the full weekend.

- Voluntary live entertainment by Stalybridge Strummers, Do Your Thing Choir, Enoch's Hammer and Nonsuch Dulcimer Club.
- Tame Valley Vintage and Classic Car Club.
- Deborah Sefton and NSPCC.
- Crafters Festival.
- HCS Council Members and our colleagues Claire Bebbington and Bob Gough.
- Stalybridge Festival Committee (in particular the Hobson Family), Stalybridge Town Team and Tameside Markets



Alan Stophier

Finally, next year's event is expected to coincide with a planned Pennine Explore Cruise involving about 12 boats. These are likely to be with us in Stalybridge Town Centre for at least part of the weekend so please make a note in your diary and come along and enjoy this special event. If you would like to join us at next year's Festival on 24th & 25th June 2017 or join in with the volunteer group working in Stalybridge, or indeed elsewhere on the canal, please contact HCS :-

Phone: 01457871800

Email: [hcs@huddersfieldcanal.com](mailto:hcs@huddersfieldcanal.com)

Website: [www.huddersfieldcanal.com](http://www.huddersfieldcanal.com)

**Peter Rawson**



# JIDOKU 38

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

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

## Street Scene Greenfield Group

The Summer months have been a busy time for the Group with their various activities.

Trial repair work to a small section of washwall was started by Phil Smith of CRT (*in the canal!*) in **June** and successfully

completed by Volunteers later. It's hoped that this has been the start of much needed work along larger sections.

**July 21<sup>st</sup>** saw some of the Group join Volunteers from Uppermill on a boat trip from Diggle portal through the Standedge Tunnel. This was courtesy of CRT and was a very enjoyable and interesting experience, complete with butties at the



other end. Many thanks to all concerned at CRT.

**July** also saw the completion of a good section of fencing on the Halls Lock to Wade Lock stretch. Unfortunately, in early **August** a heavy branch collapsed on a further section (*below*) so more repairs were needed.

Photos: SSCG



Later in **August**, the Group supervised the installation of two new waymarkers on the tow path – one at Well-i-Hole and the other close to the Kingfisher pub. These were designed by Mossley-based Artist and Designer Jacqui Symons, and fabricated by her partner Richard (*opposite*). They are similar to those the gifted team made and installed at Dove Stone Reservoir for the RSPB and are decorated with beautiful mosaics. Thanks to Marstons Brewery and local Councillors have been extended for their generous donations towards the cost.

If you would like to be included in the mailing list for further details of the Group's project dates, the meeting place on the day and the intended work involved,



please contact the Project Leader,  
**Gill McCulley:** 07963 521195/01457  
 870364 or [gillmcculley@yahoo.com](mailto:gillmcculley@yahoo.com)



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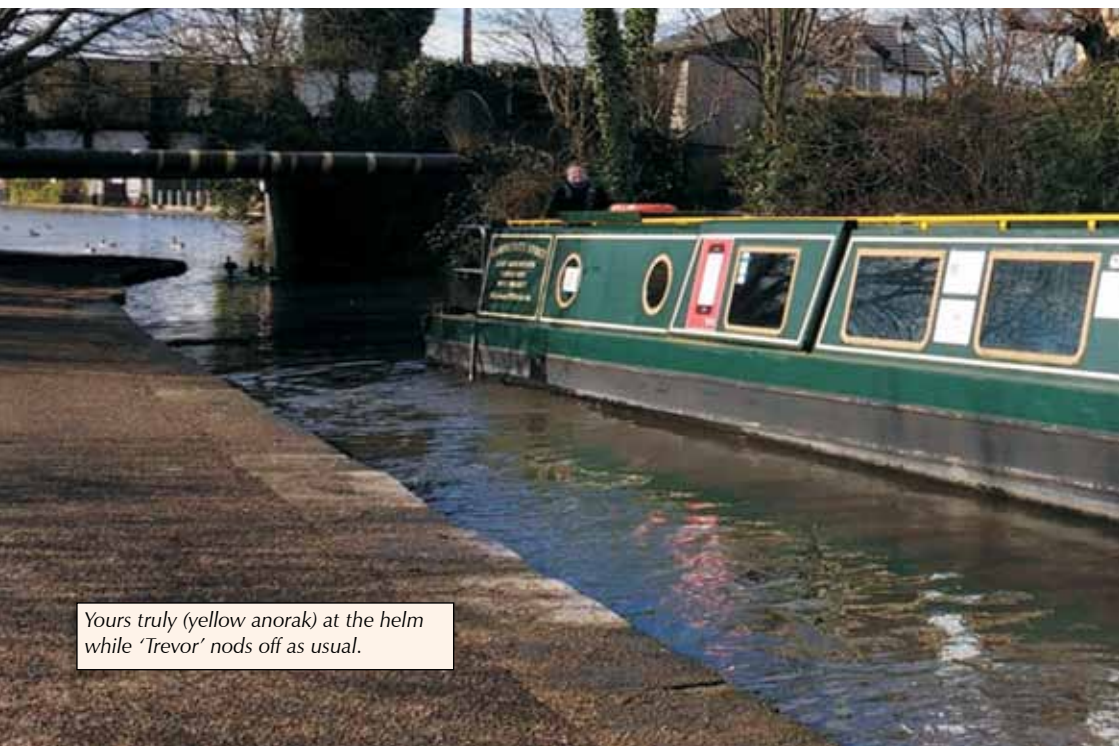
# Tales of an Ancient Mariner

## Part the Second....

I'm still not ancient, or a mariner, but best to carry on as I started.

I left you last time getting on with my Winter and awaiting the summons to undertake my skipper training. This arrived in my inbox on February 10<sup>th</sup> with an outline of what the Certificate in Community Boat Management (aka Skipper Training) entailed and some suggested dates. The email had been sent to me, Tony Zajac and Adam Moolna, being those on Mike's list of prospective Skippers. In addition to the Certificate in Community Boat Management (CCBM) we were also invited to do a basic First Aid course. The theory behind this is that you need a First Aider on board the Shuttle, so if the Skipper has first aid training you don't need to match a Skipper and a First Aider to make up a crew.

The CCBM is a nationally accredited qualification, provided by the National Community Boats Association (NCBA). It shows you've successfully completed a course of instruction including practical boat knowledge and handling, managing groups of people including related welfare and safety issues and a bit of theory. Assessment is by means of discussions, questions, and observation by the assessors. Anyone over 18 can obtain a Certificate but candidates are expected to have some prior experience of boat handling. The Certificate qualifies you to operate a boat with up to 12 passengers on non-tidal waters in the UK. It's fully endorsed by the CRT and is a requirement by HCS for anyone to skipper the Marsden Shuttle. All passengers are therefore assured that the person responsible for operating the boat actually knows what they're doing. A number of organisations provide the



*Yours truly (yellow anorak) at the helm  
while 'Trevor' nods off as usual.*

training and accreditation. Our nearest location is the East Manchester Community Boat Project (EMCBP), based at Portland Basin.

The training is compressed into 2 intensive days with 2 trainers and ours took place on the weekend of March 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. It was also suggested we spend a day on the training boat, Community Spirit, before the weekend to familiarise ourselves with it. Community Spirit is a little larger than the Shuttle at 52 ft although of course it's the same width (6ft 10in).

Our familiarisation day took place on February 22<sup>nd</sup> when we met up with Keith Glover and Mike McCann from EMCBP who showed us around the boat before we headed off East towards Lock 1W of the Narrow Canal. This was essentially a day out boating on the HNC with a stop just after 5W for lunch where we turned around and came back. We got to know the boat and Keith and Mike who chatted with us about the CCBM and what it

entailed. The heat was, however, turned up a little just before we departed – we were presented with the 17 page syllabus and assessment plan that we'd be put through next time we met! We were also advised to have a good look at the Inland Waterways Handbook, published by the Royal Yachting Association, before the assessment.

I did this a couple of days before the assessment but as the day approached there was a sudden distraction due to changing weather conditions. On March 4<sup>th</sup> it started to snow. Around 6 inches fell overnight but just as suddenly it started to thaw. Following a rapid exchange of emails we all agreed it was best to go ahead, even though it might be a bit chilly.

**Day 1** – After a stunning drive in bright sunshine over Greenfield Moor I met up with the others on Community Spirit. Keith and Mike started by explaining what would happen and what was expected of us. We were to head up towards Stalybridge and





they'd ask us in turn to take charge of the boat. Essentially we would be directing the crew (which included Mike and Keith) in operations. They, of course, would be observing how we did this so the key word was 'focus'.

It was off to Lock 1W and the first Skipper had to decide how we'd pass through and who did what, assuming your crew had little or no knowledge of what they were doing. I'm not going to describe everything in detail but suffice to say when you have to start thinking about what you need to do to safely manage a lock passage whilst calling out detailed instructions it can be a real brain draining experience! The Skipper also has to delegate the boat handling – you can't simultaneously hold the tiller and be boss – so you also have to do a bit of barking at the person on the back end too.

You never really knew when you were chatting to Keith/Mike the bloke or Keith/Mike the trainer/assessor. One thing they were extremely adept at was role-play, although they kindly gave us a bit of notice about this so weren't completely wrong footed. Over the weekend we would have difficult passengers, people with disabilities including severe visual impairment, 'carers' who weren't up to the job, and passengers who were really keen to help but were the sort that really needed to be kept inside the boat, preferably tied down. Then there were the gas leaks, fire alarms, engine failures etc. Just about anything that could have happened on the worst day out ever, did.

We were put through it all, and without us having time or inclination to notice, we were observed. We did however learn valuable lessons about how to handle some of the worst, although eminently possible, situations you might get on a passenger boat, and the safest way to get everyone off quickly if the worst comes to the worst

I should now introduce Trevor. He sat quietly on board, taking no part in the days' proceedings until he was required. Of average height and weight, he wore a lifejacket and was usually seen slumped somewhere around the bows. He's not much of a type for a conversation, but his role was brought sharply to our attention by the random shout of 'Man overboard!' He was a dummy specifically brought along for the purpose, and gained the epithet from the last person on Community Spirit who'd fallen into the canal.

The 'Man overboard' was the shout we all feared most. The sight of a life sized, possibly lifeless figure, in a Lock with the paddles open isn't something you ever want to see in real life. However having to deal with it is a necessity if you want to feel confident in being in charge of a passenger boat. Poor old Trevor was 'ditched' a number of times in different locations, accompanied by the 'man overboard' shout when we were least expecting it.

We did, however discover the best ways to safely handle a boat whilst extracting people from the canal in various states of consciousness thanks to him. Best scenario is that they're just a bit wet – if they're in the canal, stop the prop, and then ask them if they can stand up! Throw them a lifebelt, and with any luck they'll be able to get themselves to the towpath to be helped out. You have to plan for the worst, and that was covered too, so if it happens we'd know what to do. Trevor even obligingly lost a limb at one point, just to complicate matters. If that really happened, I think you could count that as fairly exceptional.

Mike and Keith had emphasised throughout that the assessment was mostly about how you coped with situations and handled passengers of all capabilities in what could be challenging circumstances and by the end of the first day I was pretty well drained but I felt that I'd learnt a lot.

Back at Portland Basin and ready to head home we were brought back to earth when we were told we all had to present a fully documented risk assessment for a boat trip the following morning.

**Day 2** - My Risk Assessment was safely completed, although something that in a previous life would have taken me a couple of days to research, draft, re-draft, think about, re-re-draft, consult with colleagues, discuss in at least one management meeting, and have signed off by the Chief H&S Officer had probably been knocked out in 40 minutes.

The weather forecast was good but rain or even snow were possible later so we were all keen to get cracking. Today we headed west down the Ashton Canal, so no locks to worry about, and the snow had all but disappeared. Day two was similar in content to day one, although we were all a bit more confident and perhaps a bit more relaxed. We still had some emergency situations to deal with, and Trevor got another dunking, but there was more boat handling today, and we all took it in turns to show we could turn a 52 footer 360 degrees and then reverse it into a bridge hole without making too much of a mess of it. Luckily, it wasn't too windy!

We returned up the Ashton to moor at Portland Basin, then had a Q&A around

general rules and regulations, followed by a bit of rope work. Our Assessments were then examined and discussed. We'd all done it slightly differently, but seemed to have covered all the relevant points, so job done. At the end of this, to our surprise, Keith and Mike told us that we'd all achieved the required standard, so three happy bunnies hopped off home.

*Not quite the end of the story.....*

I mentioned earlier the basic First Aid course. This is run by Denise Beck for HCS, and covers the requirements of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. It's not at a level that'd qualify anyone to do open heart surgery, but it provides enough information to deal with most common emergencies and hopefully help someone with a medical problem to survive until proper medical care is available. There was some 'stop the bleeding' training, and much emphasis on ensuring anyone who collapses is placed safely the 'recovery position' given the restricted space afforded by a boat.

CPR instruction was comprehensive and whilst I hope not to have try it for real, if I needed to I'm fairly confident I can do it properly. I suppose I shouldn't say it, but the equipment provided for teaching the Heimlich manoeuvre was good fun. Called 'the choking vest' one person puts it on and another person gets behind and pulls up sharply. If you get it right you're rewarded with a plastic plug that shoots out of the vent in the front of the vest.

I managed to reach the level of competence required for the Elementary First Aid Certificate, so all systems were go to be placed on the list of available Shuttle Skippers. I didn't have to wait too long – next time I'll recount the adventures of a first time Skipper flying the flag for HCS on our very own boat, the Marsden Shuttle!

**Eric Woulds**



Adam Moolna

# Uppermill Community Action Network

Since our Group's inception we are proud to announce all our activity days have culminated in more than 600 hours of volunteering - carrying out clean-up initiatives that have improved our adopted section of the canal. Our activities have included canal side vegetation clearance for safer boat passage, re-painting & maintenance of Dungebooth Lock Gate, extensive litter-picking days and planting of wild flower beds to improve the outlook of the canal for all Uppermill residents and visitors.

Our efforts have had a clear and positive impact on the local canal environment, and through the summer period we have focused on kick-starting new ecological initiatives and collaboration efforts with other Volunteer Groups. These have enabled us to extend our community reach and make our contributions to the canal area more effective.

The first collaboration day with other volunteers was on Saturday 4th June when we were joined by 5 volunteers from the Special Police Constabulary as part of National Volunteers week, to showcase the work the Special Constables do in the local community. Activities focused mainly on re-building a short section of the canal wall and the event proved a real break-through on how collaboration between various volunteer groups can be successfully achieved. None of our volunteers got wet feet - except for the intrepid wader Phil Smith of Canal & River Trust!

In early June we also commenced our first Himalayan Balsam Bash as part of our on-going initiative of clearing this highly invasive species that reduces biological diversity by out-competing native plants for space, light and resources. A considerable contribution to our efforts was made on our Project Day of the 11th July, when



*'Bashed' but not bashful, pupils from Year 9, Saddleworth School*



*CRT's Phil Smith gets the wet job preparing for washwall repairs!*

UCAN volunteers were joined by 24 Year 9 pupils from Saddleworth School for a combined Balsam Bash event. The day proved to be highly productive despite the heavy rain for most of the day and very wet conditions underfoot. All the pupils remained cheerful and worked extremely hard to clear large areas of Himalayan Balsam from around the canal and Den Lane, as well as planting flowers in the raised beds near Wade Lock.

We would like to send a massive thank you out to all the Pupils and Staff that joined us for the day - many hands certainly make light work, and with the day proving to be such a success we hope to make collaborations with the School an annual event.

July 21<sup>st</sup> marked a special treat for the group, when UCAN members enjoyed a free one-way boat trip through Standedge Tunnel (opposite). The trip was generously offered by the Canal and River Trust to thank all the volunteer groups in the Saddleworth district. It was a great

opportunity to learn about and appreciate the history of the 200 year old tunnel. Courtesy of UCAN Chair Nick Watts we have a time lapse video of the Tunnel trip for viewing entertainment on our website: <http://ucanuppermill.com/>

Our 30th July & 13th August Project Days marked the end of Himalayan Balsam bashing before its 'seeding period' begins as well as overhead vegetation clearance along sections of the towpath, and further repairs to a short section of the canal wash wall near Limekiln Lock..

We warmly welcome new-comers to join us on future group activities. Dates for upcoming Project Days are:

Saturday 1st October  
Regular UCAN activities.

Saturday 15th October  
Regular UCAN activities.

Saturday 27th October  
Regular UCAN activities.

The usual meeting point is 10am at Limekiln Lock, but this is sometimes changed. New volunteers are advised to check a few days in advance, with this year's full Project Day calendar viewable on our website. You may also contact UCAN's Group Leader on 01457 878361, or by e-mail at [peterkillan@hotmail.com](mailto:peterkillan@hotmail.com)

*Photos: UCAN*





# The Last Bit

Isn't it frustrating if you only do 80% of a task or a journey. I recently managed to "complete" a trip along the length of the HNC, a trip that started on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1975.

The Narrow Canal was still of course derelict at that time and my boat, **SUPERPENGE**, (I lived in Penge,

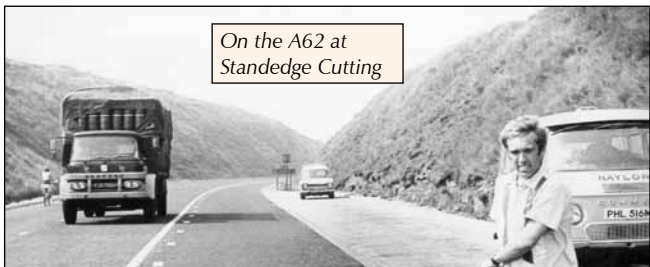
SE London) was a 12 foot inflatable. The whole trip was to the annual IWA rally in York via the HNC and other navigations. Much of the HNC still had water but I had to portage around all the locks and various infilled sections using a small trolley. I did go through Scout Tunnel as it was

blocked at towpath level and I managed to squeeze under the blockage. Standedge tunnel was, of course, a 'no-go' area and I had to drag SuperPenge over Standedge on the trolley.

The trip on the HNC took 8 days out of a 3 week trip and I had tows on the Aire and Calder Canal and the tidal Ouse from Selby to Naburn. I had much valued support during the trip from the HCS in the form of the late John Maynard (Chairman) and Bob Dewey and I hope the trip provided some useful PR for the Society because having reached Huddersfield, I was on TV that evening in the Calendar programme.

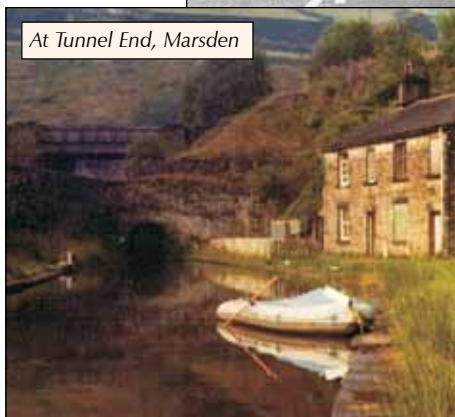
I subsequently moved to Bristol and SuperPenge was scrapped in 1989. This Summer I booked a trip through Standedge tunnel with CRT and so on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2016 (almost 41 years later) I actually did the last bit. The trip did not disappoint. Two hours of seeing the heart of the Pennines, different

Huddersfield Examiner



On the A62 at Standedge Cutting

Mark Blackstone



At Tunnel End, Marsden

bedding layers, stonework, brickwork, lovely unlined bits, widened areas and a distinct S-bend made for a visual feast. A more or less continual commentary from the three man crew made

the trip come to life.

Back in 1975 Fred Carter had kept a watchful eye on me and kindly showed me round the Depot building at Marsden. I remember seeing wooden patterns for ironwork and lots of items with railway initials on from previous ownerships. It was a real living museum. Fred was on the 2016 trip and I mentioned to him that I had met him before. He explained that he gets hundreds of such statements from visitors. He actually remembered the boat name and the trip but obviously didn't know my name. I was able to give him a picture of me on the A62 with the boat.

Meeting Fred again just made the day for me and I felt really pleased to have navigated every section of the canal. It was raining when the boat emerged at Diggle but who cared. I had finished the journey. I was 29 in 1975 and am still young at 69.

**Mark Blackstone**  
(Member No. 144)



# Reflections on a Trip on the Narrow

*Chris Howes recently completed an East- West trip on the Narrow and here are his thoughts on completion of the journey:*

I think it is the quintessential canal, encompassing the complete gamut of 'canalness'. We crept out of Huddersfield's industrial back door, and steadily and inexorably climbed through our industrial heritage into breathtakingly beautiful scenery.

I've never been terribly comfortable in tunnels, but I'm confident Standedge has cured me of that phobia. Its combination of excellent ventilation (aided by the neighbouring railway tunnel), and occasional safety check points, along with the quiet reassurance of our 'chaperone' made the passage quite pleasant.

Descending on the Western side, Stalybridge was one of the best examples of canal inspired town centre regeneration I've ever come across. Everybody was interested in our boat as we locked through. I don't think we have ever been photographed by teenage girls on their phones, the images immediately shared with their friends!

Had the Rochdale been open we would have used it rather than the Huddersfield Narrow to avoid the tunnel and quite intense density of locks. But we'd have missed something quite remarkable.

Contrary to popular belief there was quite enough water. Although the frequency of locks made it quite hard for our two person team, boats that had brought extra crew (either the kids, or friends) worked them well, with one person setting the lock ahead. Everyone I spoke to loved the canal!

One wonders how much the Huddersfield Narrow is a 'do it once and get the plaque' canal, but when we return one day to 'bag' the Rochdale, I'll certainly be revisiting the Huddersfield!

**Chris Howes**



*Top: The idyllic Narrow, Marsden Flight*

*Above: Picture perfect approaching Slaithwaite*

Chris Howes

A narrowboat is moored on a canal. In the background, there is a stone building with several windows and two street lamps. The scene is slightly hazy.

2016

# Photographic Competition

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,  
Transhipment 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 18th November 2016**

## 220 Club - 10th Draw

Pleased to say that we're back up to 50 subscribers giving a quarterly Prize Fund of £119, with a first prize of £79 and second prize of £40. The more who subscribe, the higher the prize fund offered!

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 download it from our website: [www.huddersfieldcanal.com](http://www.huddersfieldcanal.com)

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 tenth quarterly draw:**

**Total Subscribers:** 50  
**Total Prize Fund:** £119

**1st Prize:**  
Mr G Birch £79

**2nd Prize:**  
Mr A Shepherd £40

*Congratulations to the prize winners!*



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### MEMBERSHIP RATES

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### COPY DATE

Articles, letters and comments for Issue 196 of Pennine Link should reach the Editor at Transhipment Warehouse, Wool Rd, Dobcross, OL3 5QR by **14th November 2016**

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