

# Pennine Link

Magazine of the Huddersfield Canal Society





# Huddersfield Canal Society Ltd

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## NON-COUNCIL POST

**Bob Gough** Administrator



# Pennine Link

Issue 197

DC



More the merrier: Volunteers from the Diggle Community Association.

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## Editorial

Happy New Year and welcome to 2017.

As I write this in the early weeks of the year, with a new resident

of the White House across the Atlantic and the unknown quantity that is Brexit dominating the agenda at home, I am reminded of the immortal words of Bob Dylan in one of the anthems of my youth, *"The times they are a'changin'"*. However, it is not just on the world stage where change is in the air but also much closer to home.

Since early 2016, Council has been examining and discussing the options for the future of the Society. This has been done because in recent years the Society's expenditure has exceeded income with the resulting deficits funded by the sale of investments. This clearly cannot continue indefinitely if the Society is to be able to continue to operate as an active campaigning organisation. Council therefore came to the decision at its January meeting that the Society needs to change to become a wholly *Volunteer run* organisation.

No timescale has yet been fixed for the change to take place because two interrelated questions will need to be answered in the coming months i.e.

- What changes will need to be made to the way we operate to achieve a successful transition?
- Will the people necessary to operate as a wholly Volunteer run Society be available?

The latter is, I believe, of particular importance in view of the prevailing climate of competing demands for the pool of potential volunteers.

Volunteering is of course nothing new. Down the years, charitable organisations have relied for their existence and effectiveness on the availability and goodwill of volunteers. Our own Society was formed by volunteers and it was through the commitment and persistence of those volunteers that the "Impossible Restoration" became possible and brought us to where we are today.

However, in recent years, the goalposts in the world of volunteering have moved as a result of a phenomenon which can be traced back to the year 2010.

As you will no doubt recall, during the run-up to and in the months following that year's General Election much was written and spoken about the "Big Society" and in the early days of the Coalition Government it was promoted as one of its flagship policies.

Its stated aim was to create a climate that empowered local people and communities, building a 'big society' that would take power away from politicians and give it to people. Central to its delivery was to be the role of Volunteers. People were to be encouraged, as volunteers, to take an active role in their communities. To come together in their neighbourhoods to do "good things".

However, as is so often the way with shiny new Government policies, the "Big Society" rapidly sank without trace with little if anything being heard of it as early as a year after its launch. Ironically,

however, much of what it envisaged as happening did come about, not through a positive initiative, but by force of circumstance in the form of the drastic cuts in public spending which were integral to the Government's pursuit of austerity.

When faced with year on year cuts in income, public sector bodies looked, in the first instance, at what amounted to "soft targets" such as parks and gardens, libraries, museums and galleries, community centres and not forgetting canals. These were identified as services and budgets which could be cut with arguably less impact than for example social care for the young and old.

This led to the inevitable outcry of "Save our ....." (fill in the blank). In response, up and down the land, local action and "friends of" groups set themselves up. As a result, it has become increasingly commonplace to find services and work formerly undertaken by the local council now being carried out entirely by volunteers. Therefore, almost by default, the vision of the promoters of the Big Society has come to be realised and volunteering has become, for many of us, part of our way of life.

Part of this same movement, the drive to cut costs by shrinking the public sector, saw the transfer of British Waterways (BW) to the charitable sector and the creation of the Canal and River Trust (CRT).

As many of you will recall, BW had at best a rather ambivalent approach to volunteering with little encouragement being offered. With the advent of CRT this has changed with an explicit policy of encouraging and promoting

volunteering. Moreover, despite the need to make its presence felt in an already crowded charity sector, the Trust has proved to be something of a big hitter. With staff and volunteers dedicated to fund raising, it has been much better placed than smaller, local societies such as ours to secure major project funds.

Evidence of this success is seen in the increasing number of CRT-supported adoption groups in canal-side communities. As a Society we can only welcome this because it is the canal which benefits from their work and I am happy to publicise it through the pages of Pennine Link. Indeed, continuing this theme, I am pleased to include the first reports from the Stalybridge Volunteer Group and the recently formed Diggle Community Association Group to add to the now regular reports from the Greenfield and Uppermill groups.

I have to say, however, that while recognising that CRT have moved a long way in a relatively short period of time, it is the case that they are in some respects still feeling their way. As a result, instances are still occurring of lack of communication giving rise to duplication of effort. As a Society, we must of course continue to collaborate with all canal-side groups, whoever manages the volunteers. However, if the canal is to receive full value from the work of the volunteers there is a need for mechanisms to be devised so that we can identify where and with which activities HCS's own volunteer teams should apply their efforts.

It is into this competitive and evolving climate for volunteering that we will be taking the step to revert back to

*continued over ...*





Bob Cough

The Marsden Shuttle would not run without our dedicated volunteers.

our origins as a wholly *volunteer run* organisation. We do, of course, already have many volunteers, the Shuttle Crew, the Towpath Maintenance team, the Observers and not forgetting Council.

However, as we move forward we will need to expand our volunteer base and identify people who are prepared to undertake some of the more mundane but no less essential tasks necessary for us to continue operating effectively as a Society. For example, such tasks as organising and recording meetings, managing membership and subscriptions, dealing with correspondence and enquiries and compiling and organising printing and distribution of Pennine Link.

I feel sure we will succeed in this but I am in no doubt that the next couple of years will be as important as any comparable period in the past 43 years

as we move to secure the Society's future as an organisation dedicated to our Vision of *"ensuring the viability and promotion of the Huddersfield Broad and Narrow Canals as navigable waterways within the overall network in perpetuity."*

In conclusion, I would like to thank all the contributors to this Edition and to give a gentle reminder that as a Society member this is your magazine and that its pages are open all our members. So if you have a tale to tell, boating experiences to relate or thoughts that you wish to share just send your contributions, preferably in electronic format, to Bob at the office.

Finally may I wish you all many pleasant days enjoying the waterways in the coming Spring and Summer months.

**Graham Birch**



## Chairman's Report

With the thought of Spring just around the corner I'm writing these notes as a flurry of sleet is bringing February to a close a few

days after the passing of Storm Doris. Frequent canal stoppage notices arrive in my 'inbox' as the task of clearing fallen trees is underway in the Midlands.

On the Huddersfield Narrow, CRT's planned Winter works have been completed and the canal has been open for around a month but a number of unplanned jobs have since arisen to hamper those venturing out by boat before the main cruising season.

In Stalybridge the navigation has recently been closed at Lock 6W due to a problem with the cill at the head gate. Washwall damage created above 21W in Uppermill during the November 2016 floods is proving to be a longer job than originally envisaged and is now unlikely to be complete until the end of March. Repair works are being undertaken on the bywash apron at Lock 30W on the Diggle flight and should be finished before the end of March. A section of retaining wall between Lock 29E and 28E at West Slaithwaite has failed leaving unsupported stone work above the navigational channel. This is in a section that has proved troublesome for a while and could take some time to resolve. The long standing problem with the mechanical gear at Lock 24E will be tackled between 10th and 17th March 2017 which should allow the guillotine gate to be returned to a customer

operated arrangement. With all these works being done now it keeps the cruising season free for the larger number of boats using the canal in Summer.

In recent months the Society's Council has spent some time determining our future priorities and preparing a new 5 year Business Plan. Editor Graham Birch gives, in his Editorial, an insight into the context and what we are planning. If we are to achieve all that we want, there will be many more opportunities for volunteering for the Society. If you have some spare time, would like to help, but prefer the indoor life then there are a number of office-based tasks which can be identified. We're also looking at how best to distribute the Society's publicity materials in future. Please get in touch with me if you can help.

Plans are underway for a number of Summer events all of which will take place in June. Our AGM will take place at Standedge Visitor Centre on Friday 16th June at 6pm and this year we hope to continue the same evening with our Volunteers' Social.

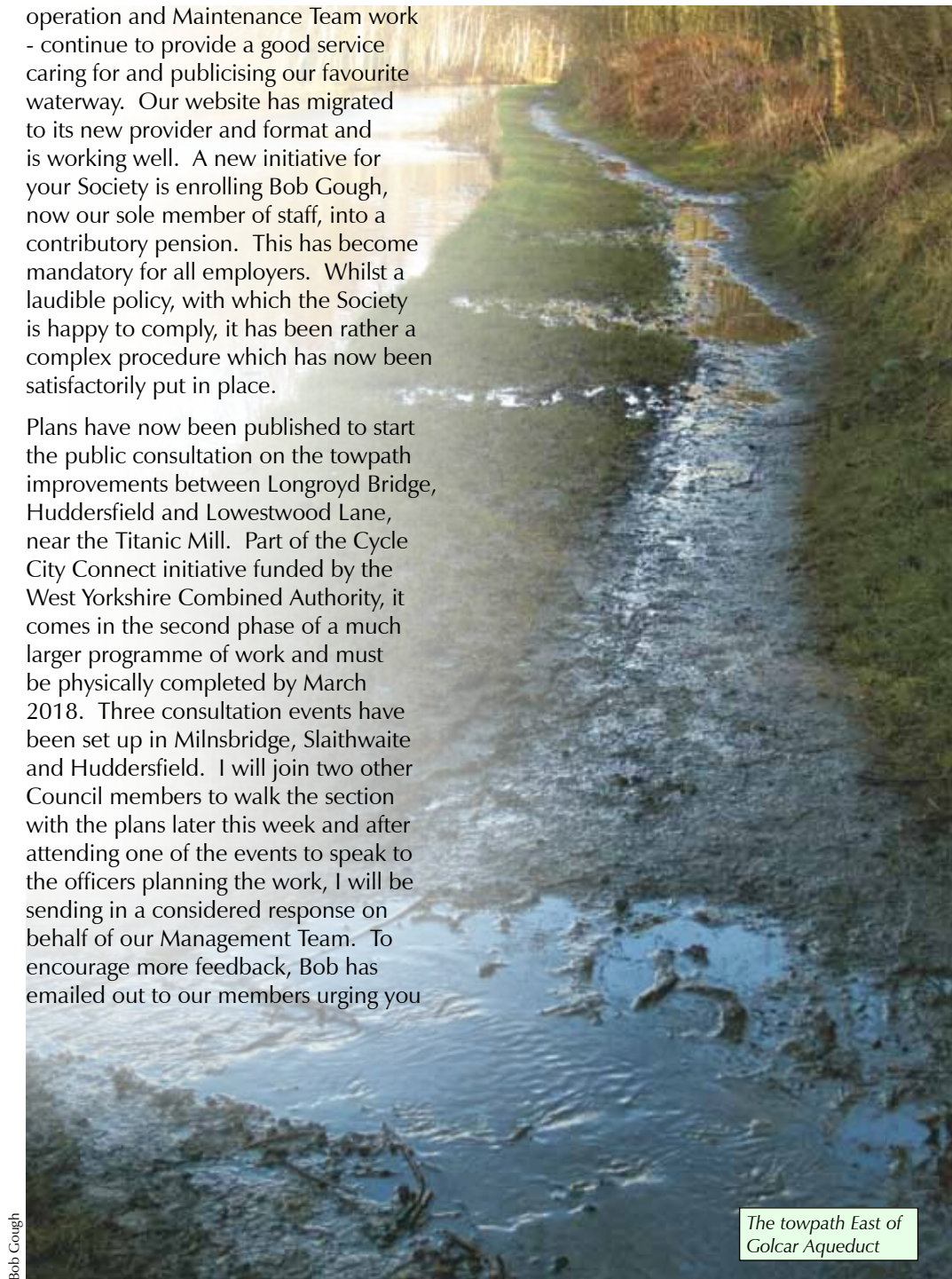
The Pennine Explorer cruise is taking shape. Up to 12 visiting boats will gather at Portland Basin on Friday 23rd June in preparation for a week long eastbound cruise along the Huddersfield Narrow and Broad canals. My article elsewhere in this issue provides more information. We have purposely chosen to tie this in with our customary boat gathering and free boat trips for the Stalybridge Festival weekend on 24th/25th June.

In the meantime, our usual volunteer activities - Observers, Marsden Shuttle



operation and Maintenance Team work - continue to provide a good service caring for and publicising our favourite waterway. Our website has migrated to its new provider and format and is working well. A new initiative for your Society is enrolling Bob Gough, now our sole member of staff, into a contributory pension. This has become mandatory for all employers. Whilst a laudible policy, with which the Society is happy to comply, it has been rather a complex procedure which has now been satisfactorily put in place.

Plans have now been published to start the public consultation on the towpath improvements between Longroyd Bridge, Huddersfield and Lowestwood Lane, near the Titanic Mill. Part of the Cycle City Connect initiative funded by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, it comes in the second phase of a much larger programme of work and must be physically completed by March 2018. Three consultation events have been set up in Milnsbridge, Slaithwaite and Huddersfield. I will join two other Council members to walk the section with the plans later this week and after attending one of the events to speak to the officers planning the work, I will be sending in a considered response on behalf of our Management Team. To encourage more feedback, Bob has emailed out to our members urging you



Bob Gough

The towpath East of  
Golcar Aqueduct

and others to visit the planned events, look at the plans and send in comments.

From the Huddersfield Canal Society's standpoint, the Society is supportive of the principle of towpath improvements. Much of the section from Manchester Road to Golcar is in poor condition and it would be good to see more use made of the towpath along the lesser used section from Longroyd to Milnsbridge. The devil, of course, is in the detail, and the Society's formal response will depend on how heritage features are to be tackled and how narrow sections and sharp bends are to be negotiated to ensure the safety of users. In most areas we would wish to see a soft strip maintained between canal wash-wall and solid surfacing so that boaters can use mooring pins. We would also like to ensure that the new surfacing is robust, maintainable, has an environmentally satisfactory appearance and does not create a 'racetrack'. How the improved towpath will be managed to reduce conflict between users particularly to inhibit speeding cyclists in proximity to walkers, boaters and anglers will also be a key issue.

Elsewhere on the UK's inland waterways there are a tremendous number of canal restoration projects, some making good progress and others being relatively dormant. Many of the restoration groups will look enviously on the success of the Huddersfield Narrow restoration which was completed at a time when Regional and Lottery funding was at its height.

Following the credit crunch, continuing austerity and drastic reductions in public spending, worthwhile projects are chasing reduced pots of possible funds and the Inland Waterways Association

(IWA) is now looking into how best to support such projects. IWA Trustees have decided to set up a new Restoration Hub in place of its erstwhile Restoration Committee. The aim of the Hub will be to support, enable and champion restoration projects. To assist with the third of these, a High Level Panel is being formed from a small group of experienced senior restoration managers, to guide restoration policy and provide written direction and authoritative reports. I was pleased to be invited to a recent exploratory meeting to determine the remit of the High Level Panel. Chaired by John Edmonds, and involving a number of many of the well-known figures in the canal restoration world, the meeting came up with a number of recommendations to be put to the IWA Trustees. Although these are challenging times, in many ways I felt that there was a successful 'meeting of minds' which will help promote the development of an even larger waterways network in the future.

You might ask what is the relevance for the Huddersfield Narrow? Our Society still considers itself to be part of the restoration movement even though the main job is done. Promotion of our own waterway is our main priority, but if the restoration projects around us: the Manchester Bolton & Bury; the Stockport; the Hollinwood Branch; and further development of the Derwent and Pocklington succeed, the greater will be the critical mass of connected Northern waterways. This will be sure to benefit the Huddersfield Narrow as the shortest trans-Pennine crossing.

Enjoy the emerging Spring.

**Alan Stopher**



## Pennine Explorer Cruise

The last week of June 2017 will be a busy one on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal and for the Huddersfield Canal Society. Timed to coincide with the annual Stalybridge Festival, the Society is promoting the first ever Pennine Explorer Cruise along our canals from west to east.

The new initiative stemmed from a suggestion by Manchester & Pennine Partnership member Ray Butler aimed at increasing the number of visiting boats. For many years the Birmingham Canal Navigation Society has organised cruises to the nether regions of the Black Country system to show visiting boaters around the network and ensure that all sections of the canal are used. Although the Huddersfield Narrow Canal is not in the category of 'little used branch' the sheer number of locks and distance from the busy Midlands waterways may be daunting for some.

Your Society is keen to introduce crews from further afield to the delights of the Huddersfield Canals but give them a helping hand on the heavily locked Huddersfield Canals. The Canal & River Trust has given full backing to the cruise of up to 12 visiting narrowboats and supported the venture by setting aside a special budget to fund any additional staff duties necessary to ensure all the craft get through. An example of the additional cost is that we aim to have a west to east passage of the Standedge Tunnel for the cruise on a Tuesday; not normally an operational day.

Each evening of the cruise will involve an organised activity such as a meal, guided walk or presentation. The plan is for boats to gather at Portland Basin on

the evening of 23rd June 2017. This will ensure a greater than normal number of boats passing through Stalybridge on the first day of the Festival, thus adding to the spectacle for local people and visitors alike. The cruise will travel eastwards to Huddersfield by 30th June and for those boats less than 58ft long there will be the option of carrying on down the Broad Canal and Calder & Hebble for a final evening in Mirfield hosted by our friends, the Calder Navigation Society. Others will be able to return from Huddersfield in their own time.

### Booking a place

Council member Keith Sykes is keen to bring his Midlands-based narrowboat up for the passage and is taking bookings from other boat crews. So far 4 boats are booked in and that is before any publicity has gone out to the waterways Press. If you know of anyone who is interested in bringing their boat from elsewhere on the system please contact Keith on [sykes.follingworth@gmail.com](mailto:sykes.follingworth@gmail.com). A modest entry fee will be made to cover the cost of a plaque and a year's subscription to Huddersfield Canal Society.

### Offers of help welcome

If any of our members or local associates would like to offer help with lock-wheeling for the visiting crews please contact Bob at the office and tell him what date(s) you can help. If you've got your own windlass please bring it but I'm sure spare ones will be available from the boat crews. It would be great to have a good turnout of local people to show our visitors the delights of the Huddersfield Canals.

So that volunteers can mark up their diaries, here's the itinerary:

### Friday, 23 June 2017

- Meet for evening briefing at Portland Basin. Volunteers on hand during the day (by arrangement) to help boats up the Ashton / Down Marple to reach the rendezvous point. Boats gauged for Standedge Tunnel.

### Saturday, 24 June 2017

- Portland Basin to Stalybridge. 2 ½ miles, 6 locks, 3 hours. Afternoon - Stalybridge Festival
- Evening - Pie supper at the legendary Stalybridge Buffet Bar

### Sunday, 25 June 2017

- Stalybridge to Roaches Lock. 5 ½ miles, 8 locks 5 hours.
- Evening - Talk by Huddersfield Canal Society at a nearby pub.

### Monday, 26 June 2017

- Roaches Lock 15W to Diggle 5 miles, 18 locks, 6 hours.

We're still working on the evening events but suffice to say there will be something offered each evening. The durations in hours are for a single boat passage. The actual cruising days will take much longer to allow up to 12 boats to pass along each section of canal.

### Tuesday, 27 June 2017

- Through Standedge Tunnel to Marsden. 4 miles, 0 locks, 2 hours (but spanning the whole day). Evening - Social at Standedge Visitor Centre.

### Wednesday, 28 June 2017

- Marsden to Slaithwaite (above Guillotine Lock 24E) 3 miles, 18 locks, 6 hours.

### Thursday, 29 June 2017

- Slaithwaite to Milnsbridge (Lock 9E Winding Hole) 3 miles, 16 locks, 5 hours.

### Friday, 30 June 2017

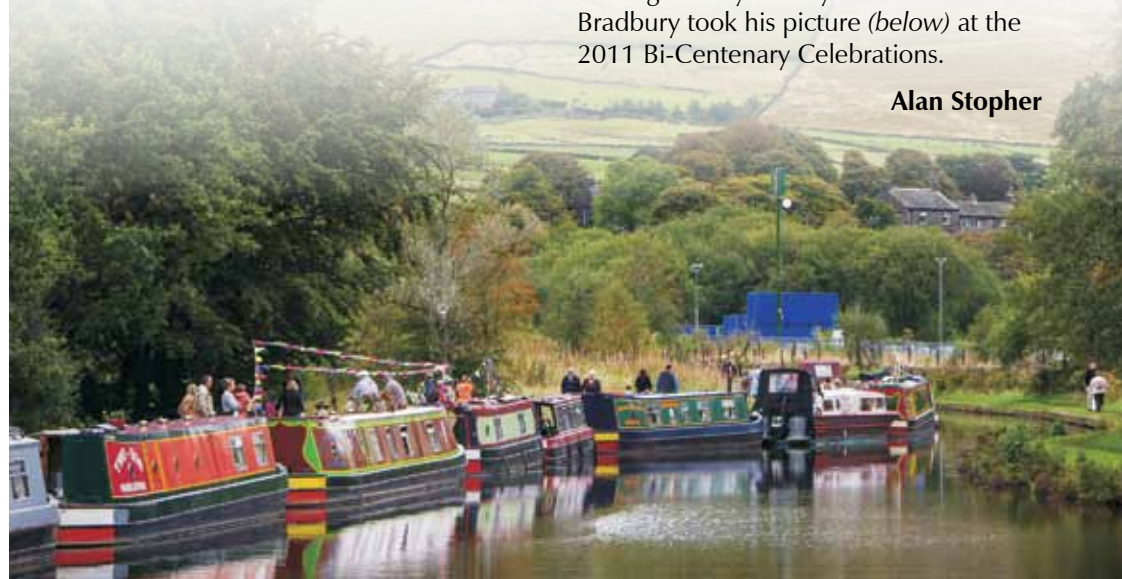
- Golcar to Aspley Basin, Huddersfield. 2½ miles, 8 locks, 4 hours. Evening gathering, presentation of plaques, followed by cultural tour around Huddersfield.

### Saturday, 1 July 2017

- Huddersfield to Mirfield. 6 miles, 11 broad locks, 3-4 hours. Evening hosted by Calder Navigation Society.

If successful we hope that the Pennine Explorer Cruise can extend around the whole South Pennine Ring in future years. As far as 2017 is concerned I'll be happy to see Diggle Summit mooring looking as busy as they were when Ian Bradbury took his picture (below) at the 2011 Bi-Centenary Celebrations.

Alan Stopher





## Manchester & Pennine Update

In Issue 195 of Pennine Link (Autumn 2016) I described, in my Editorial, the contribution which the Canal

and River Trust was making to the first stages of work on the emerging **Greater Manchester Spatial Framework**. This work continued through into the early weeks of 2017 when the Trust's response to the formal consultation on the first draft of the Spatial Framework was submitted ahead of the closing date of 16<sup>th</sup> January.

The response dealt both with the set of thematic policy proposals which formed the first part of the consultation draft and with the subsequent set of site allocation proposals, where there were implications for CRT assets. There are a number of such allocated sites distributed across the region, one of the most significant of which from the Trust's point of view is the proposal to develop a large expanse of mainly green belt land to the south of Bury town centre and centered upon Elton Reservoir.

The reservoir and adjoining operational land is owned by the Trust and it was to allow Partnership members to view the site and assess the issues that the first plenary meeting of the Partnership was held at Elton Sailing Club on Feb. 16<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting was attended by Debbie Fifer, the Trust's planning lead for our region, who summarised for us the key points of the Trust's response. She said that the inclusion of a specific policy heading (Policy GM12) dealing with

River Valleys and Canals had been welcomed. However it had been felt that the linking of policies under a single heading covering both "engineered" and "natural" waterways failed to give sufficient emphasis to the unique opportunities offered to the region by canal network. The case had therefore been made to separate out the two policy areas and have a stand-alone policy heading for canals.

Under the combined policy the inclusion of provisions designed to "retain and enhance the distinctive industrial heritage of the river valleys and canals" and "to maximise the benefits of locating close to waterways" had again been welcomed. However, it was felt that opportunities had been missed to cross reference Policy GM12 to other relevant policy areas such as economic development, flood risk remediation, health, recreation and urban cooling. The central thrust of the response was therefore to argue for wider cross referencing linked to a separation of Canals from River Valleys, treating them as separate policy areas.

With regard to the site allocations, she advised that the Trust was aware of the high levels of public concern and interest surrounding many of the sites. The Trust's response had therefore focused on the technical and engineering issues that would arise in the event of development taking place at sites such as Elton Reservoir and had avoided indicating either support or opposition.

The venue for the meeting was also relevant to another of the main agenda items. This was because when Elton reservoir was constructed and opened in

1842 its purpose was to serve as a feeder for the **Manchester Bolton & Bury Canal** (MBB). In the event that the proposed development were to go ahead, part of it would adjoin a section of the canal and might provide opportunities to restore that section.

This possibility in turn links to the work which is being initiated by CRT to develop a restoration strategy for the MBB. Jason Leach the Trust's Enterprise and Restoration team manager attended the meeting and gave an introduction to his team's work on the MBB, which he stressed is in its very early stages.

His starting point was the fact that amongst the Trust's charitable objectives is that of seeking "to restore our derelict waterways". He explained that it was recognised that full restoration would be a long and difficult process (as we at HCS know only too well) with major challenges to be addressed including the need for land acquisition and the fact that some 40% of the Salford Arm has been infilled.

However, he took the positive view that none of the required works are insurmountable and that restoration to full navigation will ultimately be possible. The approach to this will be to develop a thirty year vision incorporating short, medium and long term goals together with a short term action plan of restoration works to be undertaken in partnership with the MBB Canal Society.

The third major item at the Elton meeting was a presentation by Cheryl Blount-Powell and Ian Sprott of the Trust's **Property and Development** team on the work of that team explaining that they have two principal strands to its work.

One is to manage a portfolio of "investment properties". These are not necessarily canalside sites but properties whose financial returns are able to provide a major contribution to the annual income of the Trust so enabling it to fund its stewardship of the waterways.

The other strand of its work is as a partner in the delivery of new development. This role is confined to involvement in canalside sites where the aim is to achieve schemes of a quality and scale appropriate the waterside environment. An example quoted here was the proposal for development of the listed warehouse and adjoining land at Marple Wharf where the scheme will include a new boater facility and an improved facility for a disabled trip boat.

We also received a welcome report on a topic which I have covered in previous updates, this being the efforts to establish a base for the Trust in central Manchester. It appears now that these efforts are shortly about to come to fruition with agreement having been reached with the owners of land fronting onto the Rochdale Canal at the corner of Canal Street and Princess Street,. This new **"Manchester Hub"**, which it is hoped will be in place before the end of Spring 2017, will in the first instance be in the form of a customised container which will be able to remain on the site and in use for about 12 months. Meanwhile negotiations will continue to establish a permanent base in the same vicinity. It is anticipated that this interim hub will provide accommodation for a welcome station, exhibition space and facilities for CRT staff. At the end of this period of use in Manchester it will be able to be moved for use by CRT elsewhere on the network.



## News in Brief

**Marple Lock Open Day** took place on January 21<sup>st</sup> and was a hugely successful event. During the day there were 1,869 visitors who had the opportunity to enter the Lock and to visit the "Revealing Oldknow" archives and the Tollhouse.

Also at Marple design work is in progress on a scheme to erect railings on the top of the **Marple Aqueduct**. It is anticipated that a final design will be available by Spring 2017 following which planning consent will be sought.

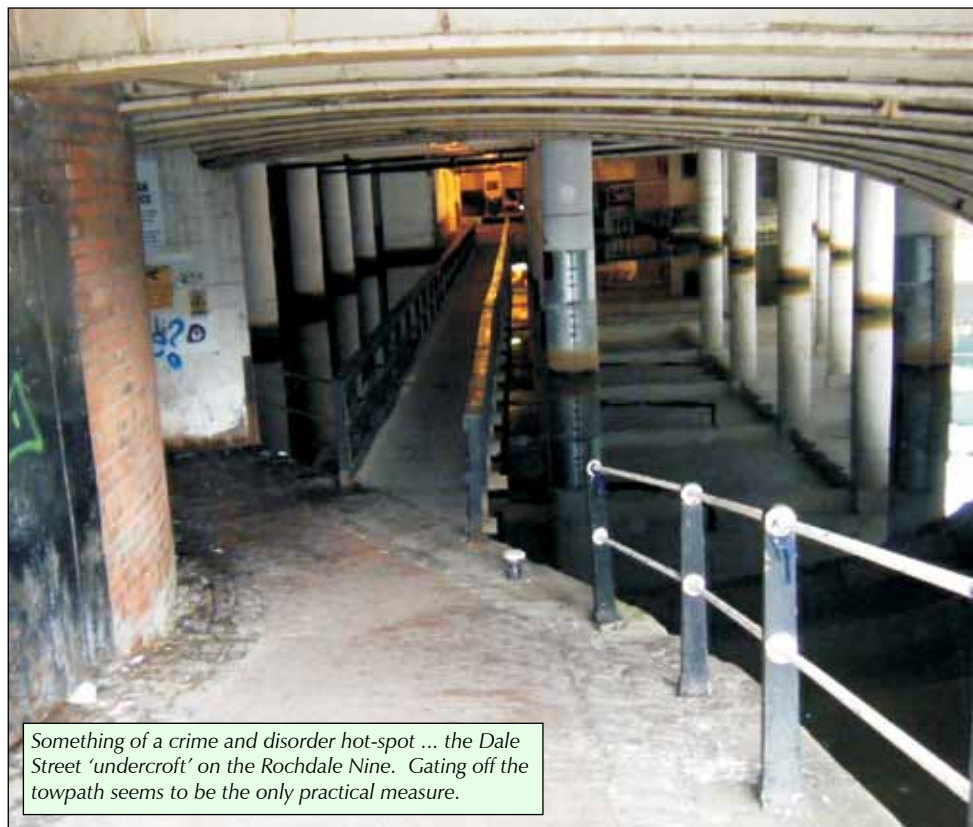
The long running saga of securing the **Manchester Undercroft** (below) is reaching a conclusion with work on the gate expected to commence shortly.

Progress is being made with promotion of **Standedge Visitor Centre** for weddings and other events. To this end the purchase of new chairs, tables, crockery and linen will be undertaken before the end of the financial year.

An updated management plan has been submitted for the **Macclesfield Canal Green Flag** and an inspection is awaited to assess the application for **special Heritage Status at Marple**.

The **2017 Annual Outburst** will take place on Thursday July 13<sup>th</sup> in Manchester.

Graham Birch



Graham Birch

Something of a crime and disorder hot-spot ... the Dale Street 'undercroft' on the Rochdale Nine. Gating off the towpath seems to be the only practical measure.

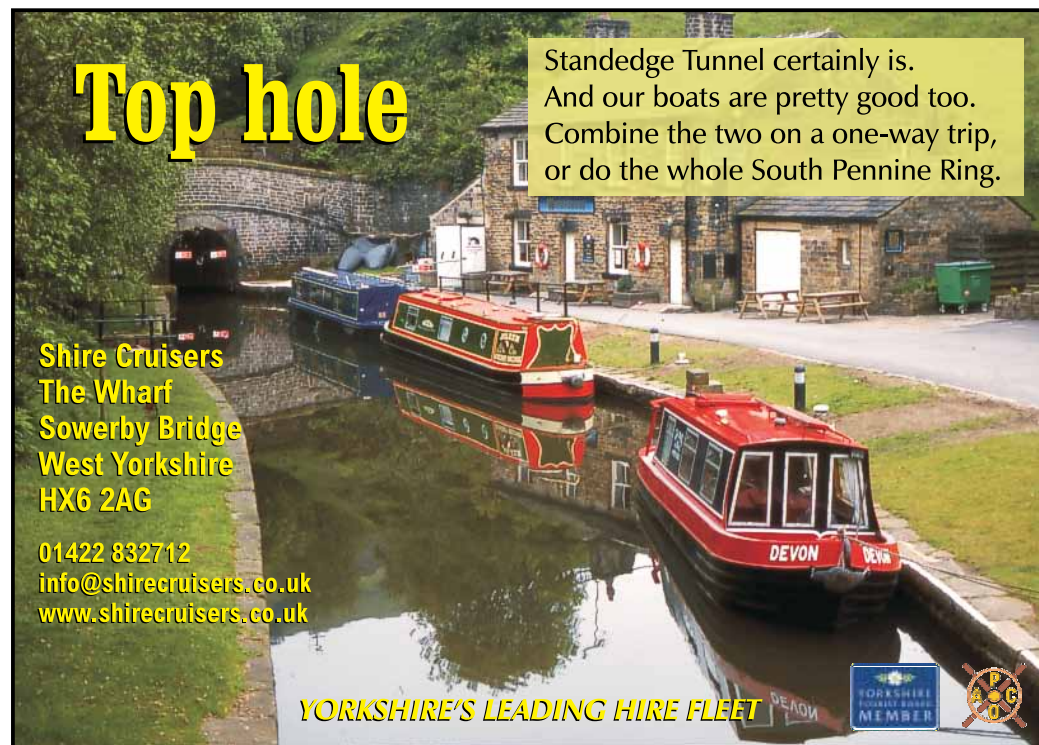
# Top hole

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or do the whole South Pennine Ring.

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## Stalybridge Volunteer Group

The group has been meeting regularly for the last few years and currently we have main clear up sessions along the canal and in the immediate Town Centre on a monthly basis.

Tesco have very kindly allowed Stalybridge Town Team (STT) to locate a container in the corner of their car park which houses all our tools and health and safety equipment.

We are very fortunate to have great support from Holy Trinity Church and normally meet there before our main volunteer sessions, have a cup of tea, a chat and have the Health and Safety briefing. Thanks are due again to Tesco who regularly supply refreshments for the group.

Our main clear up dates for the rest of 2017 are Saturday mornings:-

25 <sup>th</sup> March	29 <sup>th</sup> April	27 <sup>th</sup> May
17 <sup>th</sup> June	22 <sup>nd</sup> July	16 <sup>th</sup> September
14 <sup>th</sup> October	25 <sup>th</sup> November	

We will meet at 9.30am at Holy Trinity on each occasion except 17<sup>th</sup> June when we will gather at the blue container in Tesco's car park.

Our main tasks are the removal of debris and weed growth from along the canal towpath and the surrounding areas and floating debris from the canal channel, where it can be safely netted.

Currently we are also working on a large and prominent landscaped bed alongside the canal close to Armentières Square. The canal here is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and we are working closely with James Wynn of the Canal and River Trust (CRT). CRT have kindly agreed to supply an approved wildflower seed mix which, subject to weather conditions, will have been spread over this area by the

volunteers at our February session. This will provide a much-needed colourful display for both canal users and the Town Centre over the coming months.

There are other canal side landscaped areas in/close to the Town Centre that need some 'love and attention' and we hope to start to tackle some of these this year. We would also like to improve the four lock surrounds in the Town Centre by painting the lock gates and gearing and by removing the weed growth in the block paving and generally cleaning up these areas. Some of these mini projects may

well need additional, but smaller, sessions to be arranged and I'm aware that some of our volunteers are prepared, and keen, to give some of their spare time on weekdays as well.

We are very well supported by our committed volunteers and their efforts are much appreciated by the community and whilst inevitably there is a build up of debris between sessions, it is noticeably reduced through the regular clear ups. The Group's commitment was proven in January when some 15 members turned out in atrocious weather conditions and managed to collect a large amount of debris as well as prepare a large section of

the landscaped bed mentioned earlier for sowing with wildflower seeds. This was beyond the call of duty and 'hats off' to all of them. Grateful thanks are also due to CRT who support us with advice, dedicated staff, disposable supplies and by removing large amounts of debris following our sessions.

If you would like to get involved please provide your e-mail contact details to [hcs@huddersfieldcanal.com](mailto:hcs@huddersfieldcanal.com) or contact the Society's Administrator, Dr Bob Gough on 01457 871800. I will then add you name to our distribution list and keep you up to date with what's happening.

**Peter Rawson**

Council Member HCS  
Chair, Stalybridge Town Team





## Notice of the 2017 AGM

### HUDDERSFIELD CANAL SOCIETY LIMITED

Notice is hereby given that the Thirty Seventh Annual General Meeting of the above named Company will be held at the Standedge Visitor Centre, Waters Road, Marsden, Huddersfield, HD7 6NQ on Friday 16th June, 2017 at 6.00pm to transact the following business:

1. To approve the Minutes of the 2016 Annual General Meeting.
2. To receive and adopt the Accounts for the Company for the year ending 31st December 2016 together with the Report of the Council of Management and of the Accountants thereon.
3. To elect Accountants and authorise the Council of Management to fix their remuneration.
4. To re-elect Mrs. Patricia Bayley as a member of the Council of Management retiring by rotation.
5. To re-elect Mr. Graham Birch as a member of the Council of Management retiring by rotation.
6. To re-elect Mr. Peter Rawson as a member of the Council of Management retiring by rotation.
7. To re-elect Mr. Eric Woulds as a member of the Council of Management retiring by rotation.
7. To consider any other nominations\*.
8. Any other business.

DATED the 21st Day of March 2017  
By Order of the Council

M. H. McHugh, Company Secretary

\* Any member must give notice, in writing, of their intention to propose any other member for election and that member give notice in writing, signed, indicating his/her willingness to be elected. Such notices must be submitted to the Secretary, Mike McHugh, Huddersfield Canal Society, Transshipment Warehouse, Wool Road, Dobcross, Oldham, OL3 5QR not less than four nor more than twenty-eight intervening days. Such proposals shall be voted upon at the Meeting, either by a show of hands or ballot according to the wish of the member being proposed.

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

## JIDOKU 39

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

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 30



## Community Roots Project

The cold bite of Winter is slowly leaving us and Spring is calling. The Community Roots project is shaking off the Winter chill and diving into its Spring preparation, whether it is preparing the ground ready for seeding with wildflower seed (three sites have been chosen Moston Brook, Stalybridge and Littleborough) or working with volunteer groups to prepare the canal for the Summer season. The project is working harder than ever to make sure the Rochdale and Huddersfield Narrow canals are ready for the everyday stresses of a canal life and making sure both canals continue to provide a healthy diverse environment for our local flora and fauna.

The last few months have seen the Community Roots project working with local groups and volunteers with many different tasks undertaken. One such has been working with Falinge High School on their digital art sculpture project. Year 8 pupils from Falinge came out on the Rochdale Canal to dredge the canal with grappling hooks to clear the canal of litter and in turn take pictures of all material taken from the canal to highlight the issue of litter in the canal. They will now turn those pictures into digital art sculptures. Once these have been completed, digital beacons will be installed along the Canal and the sculptures will be able to be viewed by all via your mobile phone whilst walking on the Rochdale Canal.

Other projects include preparing ground for sowing seed, cleaning the canals of litter, cutting back brash and low hanging branches, pathway repair and many other tasks. All these tasks have improved the canals both visually and ecology-wise. However, without the continued support and help of our volunteers, these worthy projects would not have been able to take place. So it is with pride in the

achievements of all the groups involved in the Community Roots Project that I would like to give a big thank you to all those volunteers who contributed to this work.

Looking forward to the Spring and Summer we are continuing to support Hopwood Hall College working on a Graffiti Art Project and Bury College who are undertaking ecology and water surveys along the length of the Rochdale and Huddersfield Narrow canals.

The heart of the Community Roots Project is by its very nature dependant on community involvement. We are therefore most grateful that local groups are always helpful and willing to come on board whether it be for a one-day community canal clean up or a regular weekly task with a focus on maintaining our locks, towpaths and the general canal environment.

All Community Roots Projects on the Rochdale and Huddersfield Narrow canals are working to improve the involvement of the community, improve the quality of the canals and provide a sustainable environment that will allow the Floating Water Plantain (*Luronium natans*) to thrive in our sites of special scientific interest on both canals.

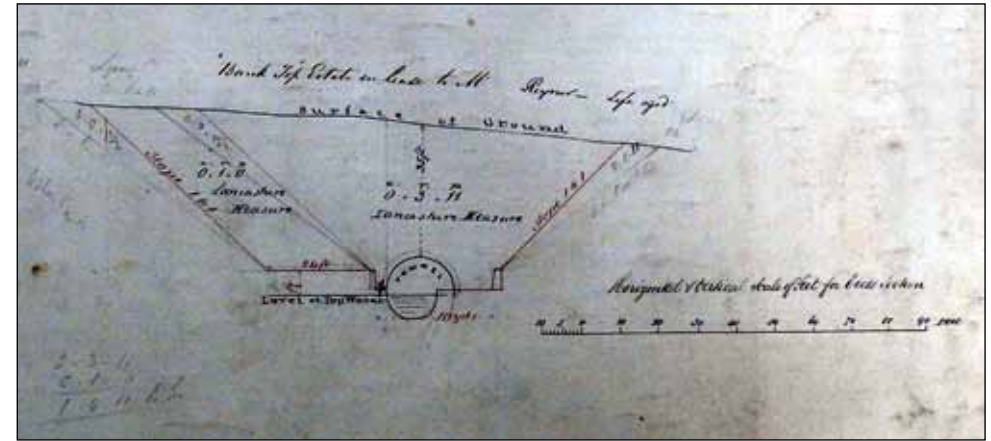
So if you feel like a day out on the canals with a group of like-minded people you will always find a warm welcome from our volunteers on the Rochdale and Huddersfield Narrow canals.

If you wish to get involved or have any suggestions for a project in your area, why not contact me at:  
[James.Wynn@canalrivertrust.org.uk](mailto:James.Wynn@canalrivertrust.org.uk)

I look forward to hearing from you soon

**James Wynn**  
Community Roots Project Officer

## Whitelands Tunnel, Ashton-u-Lyne - Part 2



Detail of the Stamford Estate Plan Ref. DDS/41 dated Dec 1852

*Bob Gough concludes a study of Whitelands Tunnel in Ashton-u-Lyne:*

The Huddersfield Canal Company was acquired by the Manchester and Huddersfield Railway Company in 1843 and themselves merged with the London and North Western Railway Company (LNWR) a year later. A Canal Sub-committee took care of the affairs of the Huddersfield Canals (Narrow & Broad) and in the early 1850's plans were in place for opening out the Tunnel completely. A Stamford Estate plan (*above*), dated December 1852, shows a particularly generous scheme for the excavation; the sketch of the Tunnel profile is certainly not to scale! In the event, the canal and towpath were revealed without much change to their original widths. The contracts were awarded to George Hawker in 1855<sup>(1)</sup> on the basis he could sell the excavated material, which he advertised in the Ashton Weekly Reporter of February 1856 (*right*). While the

overburden was being removed, the Tunnel still operated though, as Thomas Fisher, Clerk to the Aire & Calder Navigation Company, noted, in a particularly dangerous state<sup>(1)</sup>. It is assumed the Tunnel was completely opened out by the end of 1856 and the adjacent Whitelands Road laid out.

At this time, two accommodation bridges were built at either end of the opened tunnel. At the western (Ashton) end, road access to sand pit workings; this road would become the present day

**TO BE SOLD, at the CANAL TUNNEL, ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE, a large quantity of Excellent GRAVEL, suitable for coach-roads, garden-walks, paving, and other purposes. Also a quantity of GRIT BOULDERS; Excellent WATER SAND, suitable for filtering, stone rubbing, building; a quantity of good, sharp RED SAND, for building and other purposes; a quantity of LOAM, suitable for brass moulding.—The whole will be sold cheap, as it must be cleared off by the middle of April next. It is well situated for boating away on the Huddersfield, Ashton, and Manchester Canal; there is also a good cart-road to it.—For further particulars, apply on the works, at the tunnel; or to GEO. HAWKER, the Contractor. Ashton, 16th February, 1856.**





Minerva Road. Incidentally, the LNWR took the opportunity to extend the portal stonework as a boundary wall northerly along Whitelands Road, signifying their responsibility with an impressive tablet set in the wall (*above*); now hidden behind the poly-tunnels of the garden centre. At the eastern (Stalybridge) end, access to the newly constructed Waterside Mill, which would become Texas Street. Many years later, the LNWR significantly extended the arching under this eastern bridge for their Stalybridge Junction Railway which opened in 1893. A well preserved 1856 datestone has been re-located in the western parapet wall. By contrast, at the Ashton end, a



heavily weathered 1804 datestone has been retained with each phase of parapet re-construction. It is likely the stone commemorated a significant masonry structure at the original Tunnel portal.

The Stalybridge Junction Railway closed in 1903 and subsequently removed from the landscape, though the arching over the opened tunnel still exists. A major access bridge to Tameside Council's depot (now the site of Olympia Furnishings warehouse) was constructed in the early 1970s.

Walking Whitelands tunnel today, the road bridges, narrow channel and overhanging vegetation certainly maintain a tunnel feel.



There are substantial sandstone blocks, with the remains of iron bollards at regular intervals, defining the towpath washwall and the towpath has a sett surface. It is probable the towpath and feeder were reconstructed when the Tunnel was opened out; it would be remarkable if the original wooden specification, even with ongoing repairs, had lasted that long.

The work of the Railway Company is evident at the Ashton end with a high retaining wall of blue engineering brick on the offside, whereas, at the eastern end before the arching, the offside wall shows a fascinating sequence of construction and repair (*above*). The lowermost portion matches the towpath boundary wall and shows attractive courses of pink and yellow sandstone capped by substantial sandstone blocks; no doubt representing the retaining walls proposed in the 1852 Stamford Estate section. It is tempting to conclude the materials came from the original tunnel

lining. A traditional rubble wall, with inclined capping stones, has been built above and was probably constructed in the early 1860s as the first boundary wall to the newly laid out Whitelands Road. This wall has been repaired, most professionally, with sandstone blocks, before being extended in common brick. This first brick wall has also suffered damage and been repaired with a better quality brick.

Built over 200 years ago, the Huddersfield Narrow still retains a wealth of heritage features to be appreciated; Whitelands tunnel is no exception, though the ravages of time take their toll. This is particularly true of the 1804 datestone and perhaps its renewal would be a worthwhile project?

**Bob Gough**

*Additional Reference:*

1. *Minutes of the London & North Western Railway Company, Canal Sub-Committee (1855-1868), Canal & River Trust, Leeds Archive.*

*Photos: The author except where credited*



## Street Scene Greenfield Group

### Firstly, to recap on Winter events:

Canal & River Trust (CRT) hosted another Christmas gathering on 15 December as a 'thank you' to Volunteers. Once again it took place at the Anderton Boat Lift, Northwich and four members of the Greenfield Group were pleased to

attend. It's a fascinating place and it was good to have an opportunity to look at the inner workings of the Lift itself and enjoy a river cruise. There was an excellent lunch and it was a most enjoyable afternoon. Thank you CRT.

Valuable work has continued on the canal towpath through Greenfield and the replacement fencing on the stretch to Uppermill is almost complete. The photos shows our dedicated volunteers digging holes for the fencing posts – it's hard work but they keep smiling!

The Group has also arranged for the kerb to be dropped at Hall's Lock to give access to the towpath for buggies and scooters for the disabled: a turning area is to be created, just short of the Uppermill end, so that these can be easily turned around for the return trip to Greenfield.

*A cheerful bunch - Peter Lowe, in suitable pose to take over from HRH Prince Edward in the Company of Gardeners, and Tesco's Greg Barratt making no deal of man-handling the woodwork. Other keen volunteers have the inclination to help out.*



Photos: SSGC



A recent session in February was supported by the Green Heart Initiative, which, in turn, is being supported by Canal & River Trust.

*Some familiar faces from the Street Scene Greenfield Group with participants in the Green Heart Initiative supported by CRT.*



The next 12 months' project working days have been firmed up with CRT and a list posted on the GGRA/SSGC notice board in Tesco's, Greenfield.

The Group meet twice a month for about 2 hours. If you would like to be involved, please contact the Project Leader Gill on 01457 870364 or email: [gillmcculley@yahoo.com](mailto:gillmcculley@yahoo.com).



**SSGC 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](mailto:info@ggra.co.uk) or ring: 01457 597666**



## Uppermill Community Action Network

Following the Christmas break we resumed our work in January and on our first project day of 2017 we focused on the cutting back of dead vegetation in the wooded area under Limekiln lock. As a result of our efforts this previously unused and overgrown area is beginning to come to life with patches of wild flowers starting to come into bud.

In addition to our vegetation clearance work in and around this area we are also aiming to include some tree management in our work programme. We will however hold back on this until late Summer and through into the Winter to avoid the bird-nesting season.

Moving on into February our project days on the 2nd and 18th concentrated on clearing a large area of overgrown vegetation at Wool Road car park (*below*).

Our efforts here revealed the little known bench area nestled in the corner of the car park. Our extensive clearing work also involved removing ivy from the walled area which had, over the decades, become very densely over-grown enabling us to bring some much needed space and light to the trees.

To deal with all the collected debris, we had the much appreciated help of a wood chipper machine kindly provided by Phil from CRT.

We are very pleased with the result of our efforts at Wool Road. The view from the towpath now much clearer and there is also better access to the nearby fishing spots, while walkers who wish to take a rest and enjoy the view, the benches are available for them to use.

For anyone interested in joining us on future project days, our programme is as follows:

March	Saturday 25th
April	Tuesday 4th Thursday 20th
May	Saturday 6th Thursday 18th
June	Saturday 3rd Thursday 15th

The usual meeting point is 10am at Limekiln Lock (23W), but this is sometimes changed. New volunteers are advised to check a few days in advance. The Project Day Calendar can be seen on our website: <http://ucanuppermill.com>

You may also contact UCAN's Group Leader by phone on: 01457 878361, or by e-mail at: [peterkillan@hotmail.com](mailto:peterkillan@hotmail.com)

**Belinda Watson**



*All is revealed! Benches overlooking the Wool Road Basin, Dobcross.*





## Diggle Community Association

The Diggle stretch of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal brings delight to many locals and visitors who marvel at its surroundings, Flight of Locks and entrance to the longest, highest and deepest canal tunnel in the UK. But with its increasing popularity the canal required extra attention – The Diggle Community Association (DCA) works hard to make Diggle Village a great place to live and visit, so DCA volunteers wanted to help and make a difference.

Having made contact with the Canal and River Trust (CRT) we got the news out to the community and arranged a series of work parties, initially to understand what difference we could make, but then to plan activities which would enhance the Diggle stretch for locals and visitors alike.

With the fantastic support of Phil Smith from the CRT we identified improvement opportunities along the stretch and set about making that difference.

The group first came together in March 2016 and has steadily increased in numbers. It now consists of fifteen 'regulars' with another ten who join the work parties when time allows - young and old are part of the group and it really is a great way to have a laugh and make new friends.

Over the past 12 months we have, but not exhaustively: picked and removed over 100 bags of rubbish, repaired a collapsed stone wall, created a potted and flower bed garden to welcome visitors and boaters who use the tunnel and we have also repainted the CRT storage facility next to the Tunnel.

The work has not been without its setbacks. A wilful act of vandalism saw the Tunnel entrance parapet walls and the recently painted storage unit sprayed with graffiti (*inset right*) - but this is where the Diggle community spirit kicked in and after a rallying call was put out to help repaint the cabin and remove graffiti from the listed canal parapet, volunteers dedicated their time to make a difference. It was great to see such a positive turn out and especially rewarding to see younger members of the Diggle community give their time so freely.

What's in store for the coming months? Lots more 'making a difference' for sure but specifically we are excited to be planting out an edible garden near the tunnel entrance, involving the local primary school to plant and look after sunflowers next to the CRT cabin and Tunnel entrance, we're making the Grade II listed Horse Tunnel (Diggle Subway Aqueduct) between Locks 30 & 31W safer and more user friendly and importantly we are preparing the towpath and surroundings for the many visitors and boaters that will start to arrive at the Diggle Portal when passages start on 20th March 2017.

So don't forget: if you are ever in Diggle make sure you pick or plant some edibles in our Portal garden ... and at the same time smile, take in the views and enjoy 'our' beautiful canal.

**Mark Brooks**  
DCA Chairman



DCA

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# Frank Carter & The Pennine Ring

Society member Frank Carter has written to us to tell us that in June of this year he is planning to undertake a 70 mile sponsored walk around the entire Pennine Ring.

Frank will be commencing his walk on Monday 19th June during which he will be raising funds for the Alzheimer’s Society.

At my request Frank has kindly agreed to put his thoughts and reflections on the walk on paper and to share them with us in a future issue of Pennine Link.

Frank tells us also that he is an experienced landscape photographer who during the last four years has compiled an extensive photographic record of the entire length of the Rochdale Canal.

As well as supporting the Alzheimer’s Society he is also a dedicated supporter of the Jo Cox Foundation. Therefore, since he will be in West Yorkshire on the first anniversary of her death he has also

arranged to do a day of fundraising for that cause on Saturday 17th June.

This will be in the form of an event to be held in the Community Room at Christ Church, Wharf Street, Sowerby Bridge from 11.00 a.m to 4.00 pm.

On sale will be framed and unframed photographic prints, presentation sets of postcards, canal pictorial DVD’s and collages illustrating the many facets of the Rochdale Canal. All profits raised from the sale of this work will be donated directly to the Jo Cox Foundation.

Graham Birch

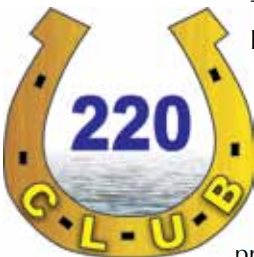


Bob Gough

## Solution to Jidoku 39

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

# 220 Club - 12th Draw



The Club has held good and we now have 61 subscriptions, giving a quarterly Prize Fund of £146 with a first prize of £97 and second prize of £49! The more who subscribe, the higher the prize fund offered for a £2 a month stake.

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 twelfth quarterly draw:

<b>Total Subscribers:</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Total Prize Fund:</b>	<b>£146</b>
<b>1st Prize:</b>	
Mr D Sumner winning	£97
<b>2nd Prize:</b>	
Mr P Fairhead winning	£49

Congratulations to the prize winners!

# Solution to the Puzzle for Christmas

The Puzzle for Christmas in the last Issue was intended as a standard substitution cipher and the ‘key’ is the four numbers on the image of the key. These are the ordinal numbers of the alphabet, viz: 16=P, 03=C, 12=L and 23=W where the letters represent **P**age, **C**olumn, **L**ine, **W**ord for the subsequent ten groups of four numbers. Applying the four numbers to that edition, should have given a ten word question. I say ‘should’ as of the seven possibilities to get the first word “where”, I would pick Page 12, Column 2, Line 23, Word 7 before the proof-reader correctly changed ‘web site’

to ‘website’ and consequently made 12 02 23 07 into ‘the’ instead! Abject apologies. Here is the proper solution:

<b>12 02 23 07</b>	where (the)
<b>10 02 22 05</b>	is
<b>26 01 13 04</b>	the
<b>11 02 09 09</b>	vessel
<b>28 01 06 03</b>	in
<b>05 01 26 05</b>	the
<b>28 02 23 06</b>	picture
<b>17 02 02 04</b>	on
<b>14 02 44 03</b>	page
<b>17 01 10 01</b>	three
<i>Answer: Moored on the Calder &amp; Hebble at Wakefield near The Grubby Ducks</i>	

MEMBERSHIP RATES		COPY DATE		ADVERTISING RATES		
Individual	£9.00	Articles, letters and comments for Issue 198 of Pennine Link should reach the Editor at Transhipment Warehouse, Wool Rd, Dobcross, OL3 5QR by 15th May 2017		<b>Page</b>	<b>Per Issue</b>	<b>Per Year</b>
Family	£11.00			<b>Qtr</b>	£12.50	£50.00
Life	£90.00			<b>Half</b>	£25.00	£100.00
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