

Pennine Link

Magazine of the Huddersfield Canal Society



HUDDERSFIELD
CANAL
SOCIETY
ASHTON-U-LYNE ~ HUDDERSFIELD

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NON-COUNCIL POST

Bob Gough Administrator



Pennine Link

Issue 203



View down Lock 30E ramp in September 2012 showing severe erosion; see page 29 for details of CRT's high quality repair. Photo: Alan Stopher

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

Cover: The Marsden Shuttle, posed for the next free trip at the Stalybridge Festival. Photo: Alan Stopher



Editorial

A FUNNY THING happened to me on the way to the office to take up the guest editor's baton for this edition. I was driving along

when suddenly I got stung on the face by something, and to this day I have no idea what it was. What a bizarre thing to happen!

All I know is that I was driving at the time and just picked it off my face and flung it across the car. I have seen similar things happen to skippers and crew perched on the back of canal boats but I suppose this was my turn. I have looked in my car since but cannot find anything like a wasp or a mosquito or a small bat!!!

The pain was no joke and excruciating as I pulled over to gather my thoughts at the side of the road. I looked in the mirror; not even a mark ... nothing. There was no swelling or spot that I could see. I wondered how Bob might greet me when I eventually arrived at the Society office, hissing and slobbering and sporting the face of the Elephant Man!

But no ... I just sat there and waited ... and waited ... and waited until the throbbing finally subsided enough to allow me to take to the road again but it did make me late and made me recall the saying, "Worse things happen at sea!"

I don't know why, but I suddenly thought of the pain suffered by those brave souls who built our canals in some of the cruellest and harshest of environments all those years ago. From out of the mud and water and crumbling rocks they blasted their way through. Sometimes losing fingers,

toes, sometimes a whole hand or a foot or even as the explosives went off in their face ... their lives! All in an effort to blast through underground rocks such as those in Standedge tunnel. Just think, because of some miscalculation, it was them who paid the ultimate price just so we can go and have fun on the canal.

It was those workers who I owe my boating pleasure to today. I can play and mess about on the canal because they did the hard bit all those years ago. It made my pain at that moment seem completely insignificant compared with theirs.

Why am I telling you this? It is because occasionally we all need reminders about things we take for granted. Most of the time we have to take a lot for granted but it does no harm to take a step back and look at what we have inherited and offer our thanks by way of using it and showing support for it; I suppose, 'use it or lose it'.

If you have ever watched the video/DVD that the Society commissioned to cover the restoration of the 'Narrow' entitled, "The Impossible Dream", you will be amazed by how much effort has gone into the restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow to get it back to the state it was in before the Second World War. After all that human effort was put into its construction, it is incredible to think that afterwards it was just let to go to ruin.

A few weeks ago we had an event at Tunnel End and in all my time there, I have never seen it so crowded in all my life. Those of you who came along to support the Yoga event, will agree that we now have the proof that with the right type of publicity we can generate enough people and interest in an event which is based in and around the Standedge Visitor Centre.

The parking problem raised its ugly head that afternoon. My special thanks go to Bev and Gary, ex-Tunnel End Inn proprietors, who helped me park my car nearby; my prayers were answered ... otherwise?

It astounds me at times, the amount of people who live near or in Marsden and Slaithwaite who have never been for a ride on our boat, the Marsden Shuttle. I am really pleased to say that due to a huge effort from members of our boat crew and its co-ordinator, Mike McHugh, we are in a very healthy position as takings are up considerably from this time last year. We have a lot of bookings for the Shuttle to be hired out for weddings as well as our usual weekly public trips.

I have it in mind for one year, sometime in the future, to aim for nearly everyone in Marsden to have had a ride on the Shuttle and to aim for some sort of a record of the amount of souls carried in a single season. With special tickets printed, people could then hand their numbered tickets into a special draw with a special canal related prize at the end of the year. The winner perhaps being announced at the Annual General Meeting. What do you think? Talking about the Shuttle, did you know that there is a way in which you and your family could have unlimited free rides up and down the canal all year round?

To qualify, you must join the Huddersfield Canal Society (HCS) and each time you travel on the Marsden Shuttle, you just need to produce your HCS membership card and claim a free ride up the canal ... and back if you so please; space permitting of course. If you have a family membership the same applies to all your family.

Please note though that at busy times, paying passengers have priority after you've had your first trip. Incidentally, if you have

a family membership, it should pay for itself over one or two visits.

Let's look at say, a family of five. Think it through. Where can you go, pay less than £1 per month, and receive four local canal magazines per year, free trips each weekend on our boat and if you volunteer, a Social once per year including food and drink laid on for free! If you want to crew our boat or want to qualify as a skipper, the training is FREE, including the First Aid training. All paid for. One thing you definitely get for free is the comradeship!

To keep our canal fresh and looked after, it relies on the work of some of our 'work-party' members. It is these groups along with members of the Canal and River Trust who work together to perhaps adopt a section of canal including its footpath for regular maintenance. It has been noticed by organisations right across the country, that finding and keeping a mixture of age groups is the way to go.

The attitude within the lower age groups towards volunteering is changing slightly these days, compared with that of the older generation, but we have plenty of room for volunteers within the HCS and it is a must that we welcome and cultivate that interest whether it's within the younger generation or us 'dyed in the wool' canal enthusiasts. Every one of us counts.

... And finally, I would like to welcome back our Administrator, Dr Bob Gough, who has been off for several weeks after being diagnosed with cancer which required prompt surgery. I know he won't mind me mentioning it, but we are all extremely grateful for all the work he puts into the Society. Bob is a fighter and is making wonderful progress. He is back in work and because of his guidance this edition has blended together seamlessly.

Tony Zajac



Chairman's Report

Well it has been quite a summer. Long periods of dry hot weather have been enjoyed by many of us but such spells cannot

be experienced without some adverse effects.

We have had water shortages in years gone by. I recall the summer of 1976 being long and hot but it followed a dry Spring. A group of us hiring a narrowboat in the Midlands was restricted in our choice of destinations. As early as May that year the Leicester summit of the Grand Union was closed through lack of water and several other routes were restricted.

Two dry winters in 1995 and 1996 resulted in drinking water being tankered to the Pennines from sources in the north east. In contrast, this year started with a wet early Spring and late heavy snowfalls and most canal reservoirs were full to the brim at Easter ready for the coming season, but the ensuing drought meant the impact on Pennine canals has been severe with all three closed as through routes since the beginning of August. Although some rain has fallen since then it has done little to top up reservoirs.

Writing this piece in mid-September, news has just come through of a second week of 'experimental opening' at Lock 1E for Monday morning only to permit boats to head westwards to use their booked passage at Standedge on the Wednesday and a similar arrangement on Wednesday morning from Lock 24W for those heading eastwards through the

tunnel that afternoon. This will help those who have been hindered in their summer cruise who wish to head back to their bases but limited opening will not help those planning more leisurely trips. Earlier this week I saw Shire Cruisers boats starting up the Rochdale from Sowerby Bridge but this may not last as there are warnings that the second half of September is forecast to be dry.

Climate change appears to give us longer more extreme weather patterns to the extent that this summer soon exhausted plentiful reservoir supplies. Unsurprisingly thoughts are turning to how navigation authorities can improve their resilience to drought in future years.

In the North West continuing closure of Marple flight owing to a moving wall at Lock 11, lengthy repairs to the major breach near Middlewich and a collapsed culvert at Melling on the approach to Liverpool have disrupted many plans and made a large hole in Canal & River Trust's contingency fund.

All in all 2018 has not been a vintage year for the canals of the North. Back on the Huddersfield Narrow, two of the issues which I mentioned in my Summer article have affected the canal in July.

The silting problem at Lock 26E, west of Slaithwaite, returned and clearance involved closure for 4 days in July. Also in early July work started on the large void in the quadrant at Lock 9E in Milnsbridge. Initially it was hoped that closure would be brief but voids were found on both sides and the Lock was deemed unsafe to work until repairs were completed. This effectively closed the canal until 27th July, most

disappointing in mid cruising season, particularly just before water restrictions were imposed throughout the whole East side.

The East side HNC towpath is receiving much needed attention this year. Progress on the towpath work between Longroyd Bridge and Milnsbridge has been slow. The finished work between Locks 4E and 6E looks good from a distance but continued closure of the path has precluded a closer inspection. *(See picture below taken from Stoney Battery bridge)*

Elsewhere in this edition there is a report on the excellent work being done by the Canal & River Trust to remedy the erosion of Lock ramps above Slaithwaite.

Also in this area Community Payback personnel have patched some stretches of the towpath between West Slaithwaite and Sparth.

Plans for a Colne Valley Greenway are being revived and cycle charity Sustrans has prepared a scoping proposal for consultation with interested groups such as ours.

Information on the Canal & River Trust's new regional management arrangements is still slow to emerge. I was recently pleased to meet the new Regional Director for the North East, Sean McGinley, and join him for a walk down the towpath from Marsden to Slaithwaite. He explained that he does not take on the management of the eastern part



Alan Soper

of the Huddersfield Narrow until 1st October but valued the opportunity to be introduced to the canal and HCS's involvement. He thought that the western boundary of his domain will be the western end of the summit pound, responsibility of Lock 32W westwards being with the North West Region.

Sean is a chartered civil engineer and has been with the waterways for 15 years. In his last role as Waterways Manager in the East Midlands he managed waterways as diverse as the Chesterfield Canal (which has similarities to the HNC) and the River Trent (which has similarities to Aire & Calder Navigation).

During our discussion I briefed him on the Canal Society's involvement and some of the current issues which we consider important, not least the one relating to coordination between adjacent regions to successfully manage the three trans-Pennine waterways. I was interested to learn of his experience and evident understanding of managing volunteers. It will certainly help if this aspect is strengthened when the new arrangements become operable.

As far as personnel are concerned it will take some time to settle down. I made the point that a period of stability would be most welcome as personnel changes in CRT over the last 6 years had limited efforts to work together. Much will depend on agreeing a workable protocol for future meetings with both Regional Directors.

I've yet to meet the North West Regional Director, Daniel Greenhalgh, but I'm sure his hands have been full with the emergency works resulting from the breaches and collapses mentioned earlier.

Despite water problems the summit pound has been kept full so as to ensure that the tunnel trip boat can run. This also means that the Society's own Marsden Shuttle has been able to continue to run at weekends and for the pre-booked weddings. I also understand that the through boat trips run by CRT resumed after a solution had been found to allowing access for the 'shadow' vehicle to reach the disused tunnels at Diggle. HCS Boat Coordinator, Mike McHugh tells me that he is establishing a good relationship with the new Standedge Visitor Centre team who now have a member of staff dedicated to wedding arrangements.

For the second year running we held our AGM followed by the Volunteers' evening in the Thomas Bourne room at Standedge. Both were well attended. The feedback on the Volunteers' evening suggested it was the best yet. I was able to thank all those present who contribute their time and effort to improving the environment of and promoting our favourite canal. Tony Zajac entertained us with his canal-themed quiz and there was a good opportunity to meet old friends and new including representatives of the adoption groups. Rachals Kitchen's cold buffet was just the job for a summer's evening and our CRT colleagues staffed the bar to good effect. It's a great time of the year to hold these two events so I think they will be repeated in June in future. A separate gathering of boat crews earlier in the season is also being considered.

A fortnight later saw our regular attendance at the Stalybridge Festival. My thanks go to the crew members of Marsden Shuttle, (pictured right), for bringing the boat down from and back

to Marsden and running the free boats over the weekend. Between our boat and Still Waters we gave several hundred people a taste of canal cruising and collected donations to cover costs. HCS Council member Peter Rawson efficiently coordinated our activities with those of the Stalybridge Town Team and I enjoyed meeting several of the Tameside Councillors, many of whom I had worked with before I retired 9 years ago.

An important person missing from the weekend was our own Administrator, Bob Gough, who underwent surgery the day before the event. I'm pleased to record that the operation was successful and he has made a steady recovery during the summer. Indeed Bob has now returned to work just in time to put this edition of Pennine Link together. During Bob's absence only the minimum administration work has been possible so members who have renewed will have had to wait a little while for their new membership cards.

Bob has not been the only one under the surgeon's knife this summer. Peter Rawson was taken ill a few days after the Stalybridge Festival which resulted

in him having a major heart by-pass operation. I'm pleased to hear that Peter is now on the mend after a lengthy period of recuperation. He continues to coordinate the Stalybridge town clean-ups and we all hope that he will soon feel fit enough to join in once more with the physical work.

On a personal note my wife Ali and I have found time this summer to cruise the waterways of Yorkshire. Given the drought, we were very lucky to have chosen to head eastwards from Sowerby Bridge to visit some waterways which had eluded us so far. The cruise included a visit to the Pocklington Canal which was timed to coincide with the restoration of two further miles and two Locks of this lovely rural waterway and their celebration of the canal's 200 years. We spent around two weeks in York in all and visited Ripon, the most northerly point of the English canal network. Three trips on the tidal River Ouse provided some excitement before we cruised the Selby Canal back to Knottingley and the familiar Aire & Calder Navigation. In all we travelled 264 miles, completed 94 Lock passages and did not leave the county of Yorkshire. On reaching Knottingley, we completed the challenge which we had set ourselves in 2011 to cruise the completed connected inland waterway system of England and Wales.

This year's 6 week cruise has illustrated the wide diversity of waterways which can be visited within a short distance of Huddersfield. As autumn gets underway I hope many of our members will enjoy getting out and about during the season of mist and mellow fruitfulness as it reaches the Huddersfield canals.

Alan Stopher



Alan Stopher



Manchester & Pennine Review

A little over six years ago the Canal and River Trust (CRT) came into being, taking over the responsibilities and

assets formerly held by British Waterways (BW). BW had been a public sector organisation but its successor was set up as a third sector, charitable organisation albeit underpinned by government funding for a fixed transitional period.

In line with its new constitution and ethos CRT made it clear from the outset that it was its intention to do things very differently from its predecessor. A key element of this would be to engage with volunteers who wish to support and become involved with the nation's waterways.

To this end, ahead of the official launch of the Trust in July 2012, it was decided to set up a series of Waterway Partnerships, one for each region. Accordingly advertisements were placed inviting applications from people interested in becoming Partnership members. Having recently retired and having an interest in canals, particularly those in our own region, I submitted

an application. I was interviewed and appointed for an initial three year term as a member of the Manchester and Pennine Waterway Partnership (M&P).

Our first meeting took place on April 4th 2012 at the M&P office at Red Bull Wharf. The group comprised eleven members drawn from a variety of professions and backgrounds covering a wide range of public, private and third sector areas, with Professor Walter Menzies as its Chair.

As a new body which was part of a new organisation, and bearing in mind that we had no budget and no executive authority, our first task was to decide what was expected of us and what we were there to do.

What we decided was that we should spend some time thinking about and debating how best we could contribute to and support the work of M&P with the aim of drawing up a Prospectus which would act as a blueprint for our involvement as individuals and as a group. The document was drawn up during the winter of 2012/13 and presented in draft at our first Conference (Outburst!) in May 2013. It was then finalised and published in summer 2013.

The Prospectus recognised that our waterways are multi-dimensional. That whilst boats and boating are their heart they impact upon, and are in turn are impacted upon by, many other facets of life. Facets such as the local economy, the built and natural environment, local heritage, arts and culture and community engagement.



'Bursting Out' all over. Photo: CRT

Based on these conclusions we decided that the way forward would be to seek to:

- Use our knowledge and experience to either lead the development of projects or advise, support and assist CRT staff in project development and delivery.
- Use our access to and understanding of a wide range of networks to seek and procure information, advice and assistance to pass on to the Trust.
- Through our networks, spread the message about waterways, their issues and attributes to decision makers across all three sectors.

And this is what we did with, I believe, considerable success for the next five years.

M&P is however no more, it having been absorbed into CRT's new six region structure which came into being in July

this year. This, therefore, seems an appropriate time for me to reflect back on the Partnership's successes and its few disappointments.

The Successes

Green Flag – This national scheme, since being set up in 1996, has sought to recognise and reward well managed parks and green spaces by the award of a Green Flag. In 2013 colleague Keith Sexton suggested to the Partnership that the Green Flag concept could equally apply to the linear green/blue spaces formed by our canal corridors.

The idea was taken up with enthusiasm by both the Partnership and the Trust staff and in 2015 the Macclesfield became the first canal to be awarded a Green Flag (*below*). A second Green Flag was subsequently awarded to a section of the Peak Forest Canal and a programme of Green Flag applications is now being rolled out across the national network.



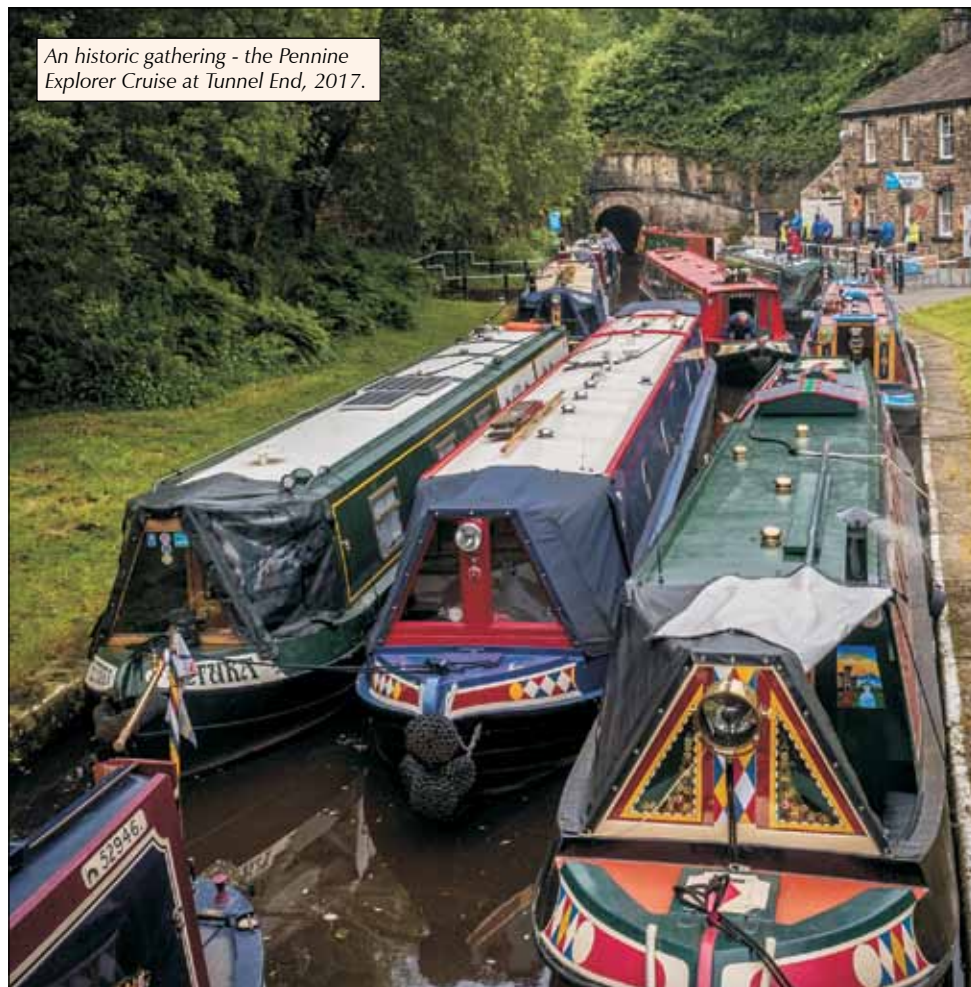
CRT

Public Safety and Security – at our Partnership meetings we spent many hours debating and seeking solutions to the public safety issues surrounding our canals - not least, the Dale Street Undercroft (right) and more recently, Canal Street. The almost impossible task was to try to somehow balance the need for access and safety for boaters with the need for security and safety for the general public in areas with an active, and at times difficult to manage and police, night time economy.

Graham Birch



An historic gathering - the Pennine Explorer Cruise at Tunnel End, 2017.



Alan Stopher

I would not go so far as to say that the problems were solved, indeed the issues of Canal Street are very much a live issue. However, I do believe that the partnership played an important role in advising and supporting the Trust's staff in dealing with the difficult issues involved.

The Pennine Explorer Cruise – this idea was brought to the Partnership by colleague Ray Butler in the autumn of 2016 and was enthusiastically received. I, in turn, brought it to HCS Council where again it was welcomed with enthusiasm. Planning went ahead and the rest is history. The germ of an idea that started with the Partnership was rolled out to be one of the highlights in the post restoration history of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal (HNC).

Annual Resource Planning - a key part of our annual programme was working with M&P managers to make decisions on resource planning and management. This involved the development of ideas and priorities for new projects, working alongside M&P staff to assist with the delivery of projects and, over the course of the year, monitoring progress and reviewing the allocation of resources in response to events (e.g. the responses to the floods of Boxing Day 2015).

Outbursts – from the outset we recognised the need to communicate with the wider waterway community to publicise what we were doing and what we were about. The first step was the preparation of the Prospectus. This was followed up by the holding of an annual conference or "Outburst". The first took place at the Lowry Centre in May 2013 and in each of the following years up to 2017 it was held at the Manchester Mechanics Institute. Over the five years

we attracted some high profile speakers and on each occasion the event attracted an attendance of well over a hundred people representing a wide range of interests covering the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Greater Manchester Spatial Framework – this is the key long term planning and development strategy for GM. On this we have worked alongside and supported the CRT Planning Team to ensure that benefits and opportunities afforded by the canal network for future development are embedded in the Framework.

In addition to these mention can also be made of initiatives around the **Tour de France Grand Depart** in 2014, research into the effects of canals on **Urban Cooling**, promoting a vision for greater diversity including participation in **Manchester Pride** and promoting the health and well-being agenda through supporting work to ensure the canals play their part in the mental and physical health of the communities they connect.

Taken together there can be no argument that this amounts to a hugely valuable and worthwhile body of work achieved by and through the Partnership during its six years of operation. However, there were some disappointments of course.

The Disappointments

Central Manchester Hub – the M&P main office was at Red Bull Wharf on the Trent and Mersey just outside Kidsgrove. This is on the extreme southern edge of the M&P area and it was never going to be the ideal location. In response, the Partnership pressed, with the support of M&P staff, to establish a Hub in central Manchester which would be easily

accessible to all parts of the region and close to the region's key decision makers. Strenuous efforts were made but sadly the quest for a Hub did not succeed.

Whether under the new structure the quest will continue remains to be seen, but I would argue that even within the larger region, Manchester remains a key hub of the waterway network and CRT's presence there is still a priority.

Standedge Visitor Centre – with the demise of the Museums and Attractions Partnership, responsibility for Visitor Centre fell to M&P in 2015. The challenge presented by the Centre, with its chequered history since restoration, was recognised and consultants were commissioned to produce a Development Plan. What emerged was an ambitious set of proposals requiring substantial investment.



The Standedge Visitor Centre, Tunnel End, Marsden - a chequered history, but ambitious plans for the future ... pending.
Photo: Bob Gough

Some of the ideas, achievable at a moderate cost, have been taken up. Sadly, however, CRT's national head office chose not to give priority to seeking to secure the necessary funding to bring about the delivery of the more ambitious and costly proposals. As far as I am aware, the Plan remains in a pending tray somewhere in CRT.

Links with Local Councils – We at HCS are well aware of the role of the partnership with our local councils in the delivery of restoration of the HNC, amongst the outcomes of which was the setting up of the soon to expire twenty year Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Agreement.

It is clear, given the year on year cuts to Council budgets, a new O&M Agreement is out of the question. However, over the six years, I regularly urged CRT to seek to establish a relationship with the new generation of councillors and senior officers with a view to ensuring that canals are on the local political agenda and that perhaps a new, mutually beneficial, maintenance arrangement could be agreed. This never happened and I fear that such local one-to-one links are, more than ever, unlikely under the new structure.

Split of Trans-Pennine Canals – perhaps the greatest disappointment of all in my opinion, as I step away from my involvement with CRT, is that it is taking a backward step in how it operates and manages the HNC and the other trans-Pennine waterways.

In my piece in the spring edition of Pennine Link, I set out the case for retaining all three, or at the very least the HNC and the Rochdale, in the same region under a single management regime.

However, it has now been confirmed that this will not be the case and that they will be split at the current administrative county boundary. I can only hope that common sense will prevail and that some sort of joint operational arrangement will emerge, allowing for the flexible use of staff and resources in the best interests of all three canals, and in particular, for us, the HNC. Whether this will happen we must wait and see, but a key role for HCS, as the new structure 'kicks in', will be to ensure that the operation of the HNC does not suffer as a result of the new split of responsibility.

Graham Birch

Huddersfield Central Lodge 3 Star Metro Hotel

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Award Winning Hotel in the Heart of Huddersfield Town Centre



Our Chairman continues to monitor progress at the Standedge Aqueduct bridge deck and writes:

The first picture (*top left*) was taken during the closure of the line on the weekend of 16th/17th June during which the original bridge deck was removed. The second (*bottom left*) taken on the following Monday and shows the concrete beams which have been placed to take the new bridge bearings. The picture above was taken early September and shows the new bridge deck in place and work ongoing to rebuild the masonry walls which will direct the flow round

the corner and down the ramp. According to the Network Rail website, the new bridge has in fact got two fibre reinforced polymer decks which were put in place in July and August. This suggest that any rivets on the face of the girders are in fact fake, but made to look like the original (*detailed below*).

A further possession of the track will be required to remove the temporary structure once the new channel is complete and taking water. The project is set to be completed in December 2018. *Photos: Alan Stopher*



DO YOU LIKE BOATING?

Huddersfield Canal Society Needs You!

We need crew to help run the Marsden Shuttle. No previous experience required, just an interest in boats, canals and people! Full training if you'd like to join us. Hop aboard and have a chat with our friendly crew, or contact the HCS office for more information.



Eric Wouds

THE MARSDEN SHUTTLE AT TUNNEL END

Huddersfield Canal Society volunteers crew the Society's own boat, the Marsden Shuttle, operating a 'water taxi' service between Marsden Station and Tunnel End for visitors to Standedge Visitor Centre. We try to do this every weekend between Easter and the end of October but we need the crew. Commitment is as much or as little as you like - every day we have a Skipper and Crew is a day the Shuttle can operate. Crew just need one day's training, but there's the opportunity to train for the 'Skippers' Certificate' too. It's not too difficult, and learning to steer and control a boat is great fun. We also meet lots of people who come to admire the scenery, and want to know more about our part of the world. It's a chance to spend days out on the most scenic stretches of canal in the country, and we have occasional trips further afield when we visit canal-side festivals, often travelling through the longest, highest and deepest tunnel on the canal network.

Looking forward to having you on board!

HUDDERSFIELD CANAL SOCIETY

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The initial letters featured being:

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

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

Solution on Page 31

Stalybridge Festival - 23rd & 24th June 2018

This is the fifth year that the Huddersfield Canal Society (HCS) has supported the Stalybridge Festival Weekend. We have worked with the Festival Committee and Stalybridge Town Team to provide a full weekend of activities centred around the regionally famous Stalybridge Carnival which has been running for over 40 years. On a really sad note the organiser of the Carnival, Nigel Hobson, who we have worked closely with over previous years passed away at the end of last year. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him. Nigel was committed, enthusiastic and meticulous in the planning of this event. He was well known and respected in the local community and it was a privilege to have worked with him on this.

We were blessed with good weather on both days this year with Sunday being the warmer of the two days and just before the really hot spell which lasted several weeks and almost resulted in drought orders being implemented by United Utilities. Moreover, we were also lucky in that the vast moorland fires that devastated the hills above Stalybridge and beyond didn't take hold until Monday 25th June.

Additional attractions over the weekend included the NSPCC Family Fun Day in the nearby Victoria Market Hall and a Children's Fun Fair in Armentières Square. The Wooden Canal Boat Society had a stall next to our own gazebo in the square for the whole weekend. contd...



On the Sunday there was again a large Craft Market which did very good trade particularly following on from the Carnival Parade. In the nearby Cheetham Park there was a further range of stalls, a full sized fun fair and live music for the public to enjoy. The parade itself was watched by a reported 4000 people, despite the clash with the England vs Panama world cup match. This traditional event shows no sign of losing its appeal to the wider public and long may this continue.

On the water we had several boats visit over the weekend and a trade boat with a range of craft items for sale was with us for the whole event. Indeed Craft Narrow Boat 'Time Out 10' owned by Tracey Dodd (*Tracey's Wooden Creations*)

was judged best dressed boat by the Carnival Queen.

The Marsden Shuttle crew had again brought the boat down from the Standedge Visitor Centre to provide free boat trips for the public. On Saturday, which is the quieter of the two days the shuttle was working on its own to cater for the demand which was steady all day. On the Sunday she was joined by Tameside Canal Boat Trust's boat Still Waters and both boats were kept busy all day.

Colleagues on the Town Team and The Festival Committee hope to expand the event in future particularly on the Saturday. There are opportunities for the business community to benefit from the

increased footfall and hopefully we will see more attractions and engagement with Town Centre traders next year.

Thanks are due to both boat crews for their tireless efforts in providing the free boat trips for the public. I'm very aware that it takes tremendous effort and organisation to bring the Marsden Shuttle down for the weekend and I'm very grateful to Society Council colleagues and the whole crew for giving up their time to do this. It is however fantastic to see HCS's boat in town and being seen by so many people it is a great promotional tool for the Society.

I've not reported on the activities of the Stalybridge Volunteer Group this time but there have been several main clear up

sessions since my last article. In fact one was held on the Saturday of the Festival weekend to ensure the site was neat and tidy for the event. We continue to meet at Holy Trinity Church in Stalybridge at 9.30am on the fourth Saturday of each month (no session in December). I will be updating you on our efforts in the Winter Edition of Pennine Link together with some news on The Stalybridge Town Centre Challenge initiative which is now gathering some momentum.

If you are interested in joining us to help improve the maintenance of this stretch of canal or indeed anywhere else on the waterway please contact Dr Bob Gough at the office.

Peter Rawson

(All photos: Alan Stopher)



Tracey with her award for the Best Dressed Boat at the Festival.



Free trips on the Marsden Shuttle! Trevor Ellis at the helm, at the Stalybridge Festival Weekend.

Street Scene Greenfield Group

Tow path volunteers continue their valuable work

The Summer months have continued to be a busy time for the Group with their various activities.

On several occasions, they were able to help their neighbours UCAN with the huge task of removing Himalayan Balsam from a large area near the viaduct (*pictured below, Peter Lowe, SSGG Co-ordinator, in action!*) Thank you to yet more Volunteers from Tesco who joined to help.

With the glorious summer sunshine, Volunteers were able to repaint three lock gates and continue weeding, cutting back, repairing fences and litter picking.

In June the Group were joined by Gabriel Taylor and Sam Mayor who were volunteering as part of their Duke of Edinburgh award (*pictured right with spades at the ready*).

Dates for the rest of 2018 are as follows:

November: Thu 8th and Sat 24th

December: Sat 8th

If you haven't volunteered beforehand and would like to be included on the mailing list for full details, please contact Project Leader, Gill McCulley on 07963 521195 or

email: gillmcculley@yahoo.com

Everyone is always warmly welcomed.



SSGG IS GREENFIELD-BASED COMMUNITY ACTION WORKING FOR YOU TO BUILD CONFIDENCE AND PRIDE IN OUR COMMUNITY
(A sub-group of Greenfield & Grasscroft Residents Association)
- YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE -
New Members welcome info@ggra.co.uk or ring: 01457 597666



Uppermill Community Action Network

Himalayan Balsam

Over the summer UCAN concentrated on the mammoth task of removing Himalayan Balsam from areas surrounding the canal and thanks to a fantastic effort by all the volunteers involved, including two evening sessions with the Scouts and Cubs from Uppermill, the viaduct woodland, the canal offside, the area next to the stepping stones and Den Lane have now been cleared. The team has also continued with general maintenance, tidying raised beds, and litter picking.

The UCAN team met during the summer to say farewell to Phil Smith from CRT. Phil has helped and supported the team from it's inception and we want to thank him for his efforts over the last 3 years.

Autumn Tasks

UCAN had identified the painting of lock gates and moorings along the Uppermill

stretch of canal as being a necessary task this year. Work commenced last month and the team are now well on the way to finishing the task by the end of autumn. Undeterred by heavy rain the group also tackled low overhanging trees, branches and overgrown shrubs to help to keep the towpath clear.

Saddleworth Hydro Grant

UCAN were extremely pleased to hear that they have been awarded a grant from Saddleworth Hydro for the development of the viaduct woodland. Thanks to this grant work will now be able to commence over the winter months and will run alongside our usual tasks.

For anyone interested in helping, our next projects days are as follows:-

Oct. - Thursday 25th

Nov. - Saturday 3rd, Thursday 22nd

Sheila Chapman



Promising to do their best, Scouts and Cubs from Uppermill keen to give the volunteers a helping hand.



Getting involved in volunteering in the local environment is a great way of meeting other locals, enjoying some healthy exercise & fresh air, with a well-earned hot drink and biscuit at the end!

All equipment is provided by CRT and you are recommended to wear stout footwear and suitable clothing for the weather conditions on the day.

The usual meeting point is 10am at the canal bridge on Moorgate Street; please contact UCAN's Group Leader Peter Killan on 01457 878361, or e-mail at peterkillan@hotmail.com.

For anyone interested in keeping updated on our Groups activities please visit our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1899154207069001/>

Above: Declaring war on the Himalayan Balsam; volunteers from UCAN make a start on the mammoth task of clearing the woodland site. Below: Volunteers hard at it with wire brushes preparing a balance beam for a much needed coat of paint. All Photos courtesy of UCAN



Lock Ramps relaid between Slaithwaite & Marsden

Alan Stopher writes:

The Huddersfield Narrow Canal towpath between Slaithwaite and Marsden is well-known as a pleasant walking and cycling route. Not surprisingly, heavy use over the years has caused erosion and in winter and after periods of heavy rain users encounter puddles and muddy sections. In some cases gaps in the canal washwall and restricted lock by-wash weirs have meant overtopping of the towpath and heavy flows down lock slopes.



View of standing water above Lock 27E after heavy rain in October 2017.

The worst sections of erosion have been where the towpath down locks' slopes were repaired using compacted crushed stone. Large gullies have resulted.



View down Lock 30E ramp in September 2012 showing severe erosion. A temporary repair was subsequently made using crushed stone.

Traditionally lock slopes on the Huddersfield Narrow have been protected by the placing of stone setts. The picture (top right) shows an example at Lock 29E which shows no sign of erosion and only a minor silt build up after many years of use. Besides being demonstrably fit for purpose it is part of the heritage of the canal.

The state of the lock ramps has often been the subject of discussion between CRT and HCS so we were pleased to hear at our May 2018 Operation & Maintenance meeting that the Trust was considering reinstating setts in the places where erosion was most severe.

The Trust has acted quickly as the pictures (bottom right) show. As I write, work is nearing completion at Lock 26E and the ramps have been finished at 27E, 28E and 30E. The workmanship is of a high quality and should prove resilient over a number of years.

If there is one minor caveat, it is that I think it would have been better to take the setts down to the point at which the ramps level out rather than finishing them somewhat above the foot of the slope. I realise that the cost of laying setts is high, but the bottom of the slope is where surface water will be at its most erosive. It is appreciated that any attempt to build up washwall height upstream of locks on the towpath side will reduced flows emanating from the canal and it is good to see that steps have been taken at 28E to do this. We'll watch with interest how the restored ramps behave during the winter rains to come, and in particular what happens just below each of the setted sections.

Alan Stopher
(All photos: Alan Stopher)



A rare surviving lock ramp retaining sandstone setts is under the bridge at Lock 29E, (September 2018).



Recovered stone setts laid on the ramp at Lock 27E by the CRT construction team.



The completed restored ramp at Lock 30E contrasts with the picture bottom left.



Lock 28E has the added complication of a farm accommodation bridge over the lock tail. This has meant the setts have been laid to a fall towards the field with a channel then taking any water across the ramp to the canal at the bottom. Sensibly a new gate has been fitted to allow direct access to the field without traversing a length of towpath. CRT staff admire their handy work.



Top hole

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220 Club - 18th 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 eighteenth quarterly draw:

Total Subscribers: 60
Total Prize Fund: £144

1st Prize:
Mr P Fairhead winning £96
2nd Prize:
Mr R Vaughan winning £48

Congratulations to the prize winners!

Solution to Jidoku 42

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This quarter, the Club benefits from 60 subscriptions, so we can offer a Prize Fund of £144 which means the first prize is £96 and the second prize, £48. The more who subscribe, the higher the prize fund offered for your £2 a month stake.

To join, you need to complete the form which can be downloaded from our website by following the Members' Area link, or if you prefer, call the office and we'll send you a paper copy by post. Do consider completing a Standing Order and then you'll never miss a draw.

MEMBERSHIP RATES

Individual	£9.00
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