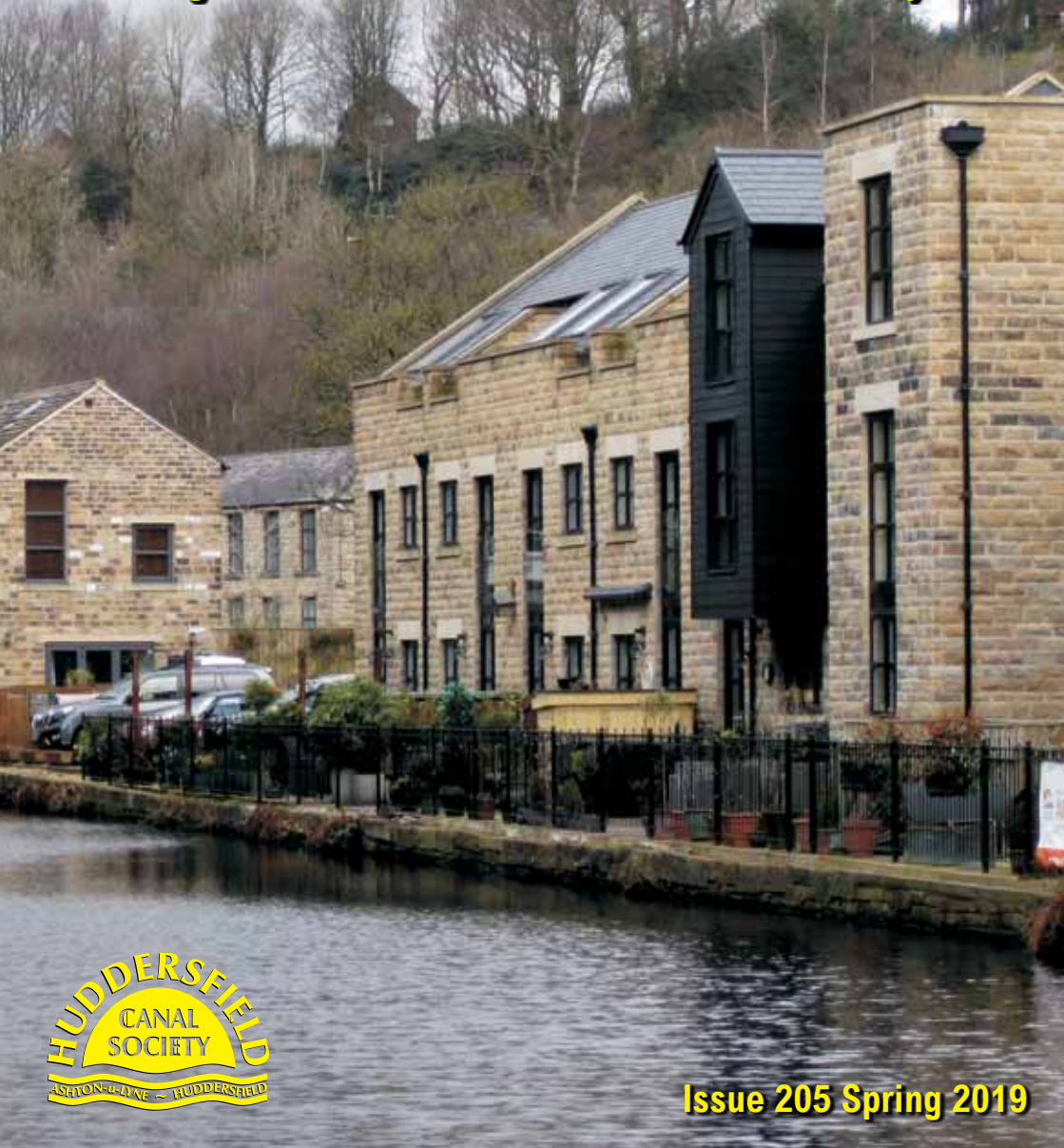


Pennine Link

Magazine of the Huddersfield Canal Society



Huddersfield Canal Society Ltd

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NON-COUNCIL POST

Bob Gough Administrator



Pennine Link

Issue 205

Alan Stopher



Kirklees College – The dramatic main block of Kirklees College was completed in 2012 beside the newly repositioned Lock 2E.

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Editorial

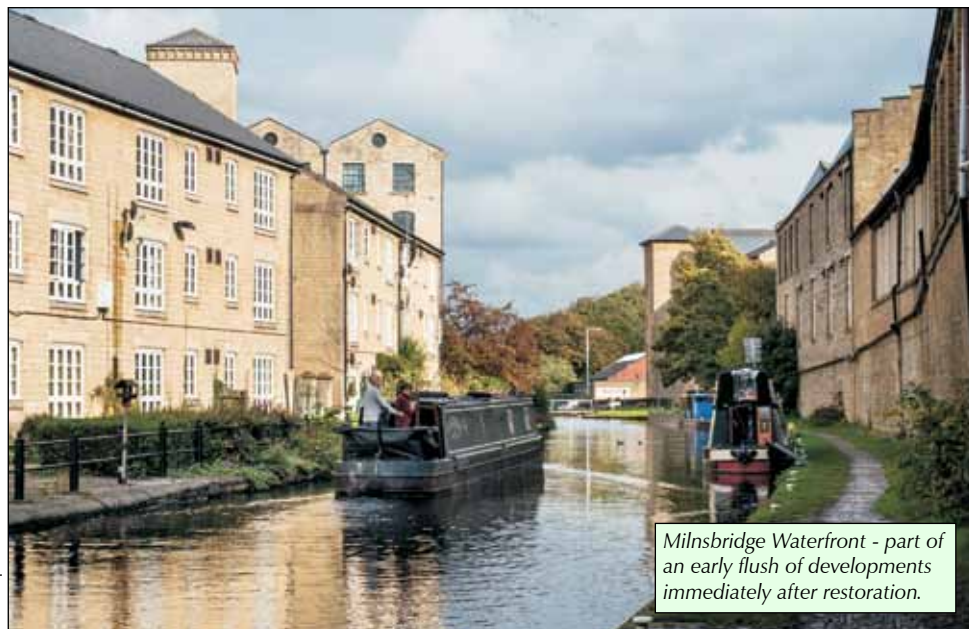
My stint as guest Editor has given me the chance to reflect on my earlier involvement in the Restoration of the

Huddersfield Narrow and in particular the final tranche of schemes which involved securing significant funding from the Millennium Commission and English Partnerships. Needless to say, the benefits to be accrued through this major investment had to be set out in great detail and specialist consultants were engaged to assist with this process.

The rôle of the restored canal in the regeneration of the towns and communities which line the Tame and Colne Valleys was a key factor in securing the funding and in 2021 it will be 20 years since the canal reopened.

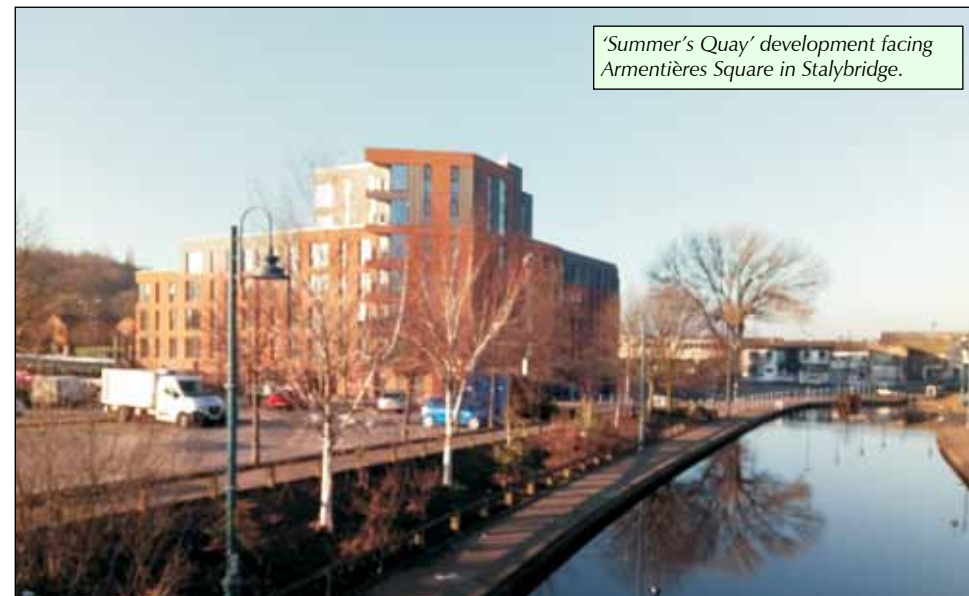
It is now perhaps a good point to have a look at some of the developments that have taken place to date and to consider what is still in store. The period immediately following restoration saw a number of canal side developments taking place during a period of expansion in construction and investment in the private sector housing market. Unfortunately, the period of 'recession' following the banking crisis in 2008 put an untimely stop to this investment and many proposed schemes were mothballed.

Recovery has taken some time but there are signs of renewed interest which is very encouraging. In Huddersfield, the education sector has invested heavily and there are some significant and striking new buildings alongside the canal. Redevelopment of the former Sellers Engineering site has allowed the canal to



Milnsbridge Waterfront - part of an early flush of developments immediately after restoration.

Alan Stopher



'Summer's Quay' development facing Armentières Square in Stalybridge.

Peter Rawson

be opened up providing a much more pleasant experience for all canal users.

I don't want to get too parochial here but we have two recently completed developments where I live, here in Stalybridge. A modern development facing the canal in Armentières Square which houses sixty-nine apartments is now fully occupied by tenants paying commercial rents. The Stalybridge Town Centre Challenge, formed through an initiative by Greater Manchester Metro Mayor, Andy Burnham and supported by Tameside Council is putting together a strategy for the regeneration of the whole town. The Canal and the River Tame, which both run through the heart of the town are major assets and improved access and facilities for all visitors will be key to the success of this initiative.

Many of the sites will benefit from river or canal frontages which bodes well for improvements and accessibility to both of these existing assets. These developments which bring new residents

and visitors into the town centres all contribute to footfall for the town centre businesses and help create a vibrant and secure town centre environment.

Investment in our major cities is currently booming and from where I'm writing this, I can see Manchester City Centre and the number of cranes working away is quite bewildering. It's not quite the same in the smaller towns and villages along the canal line but with high city centre land values and costs and the benefit of good road and rail connections to Manchester and Leeds, not to mention the beautiful countryside on our doorsteps, they are all starting to look more attractive to developers. A well-used and well-maintained canal is a vital component in attracting continued investment along the two valley corridors.

In Greater Manchester the recently revised Spatial Framework has focussed more on the regeneration of under-used and derelict sites within our town centres and protecting our greenbelt. This augers

well for the many such sites which front onto the canal in our town centres which are ripe for development. It is essential for us to campaign with colleagues at the Canal and River Trust (the Trust) for all canal side developments to fully embrace the environment and for additional service facilities and secure moorings to be provided by working with the Local Authorities and developers at the earliest possible stage in the development of their proposals. The safety and security of all canal users is crucial and understanding and addressing their concerns will help attract more visitors including boaters to spend more time in our communities in a safe and pleasant environment.

We are blessed on the Huddersfield canals with a wide range of volunteer groups who selflessly give their time to improve the standard of maintenance of the waterway. Litter is a serious problem particularly in our town centres where inevitably it gets blown alongside and into the canal. Unlike the streets there is no publicly funded service to remove litter from the canal and its surroundings although I appreciate that colleagues from the Trust are removing litter and debris from bywash and overflow grillages on a daily basis. The Society's own volunteer team, led by our Vice-Chair Trevor Ellis, concentrates on areas not currently covered by other groups and brings a great deal of experience which is well-respected by the Trust. These groups are well-supported by the Trust and are increasingly essential if the standard of the canal is to be maintained to the level needed to attract more visitors and investors. Indeed, it is clear that volunteer group and numbers will need to expand even further and

also to be trained by the Trust to carry out more tasks. HCS is a voluntary (and Charitable) organisation in itself and campaigns with colleagues at the Trust for the best possible service for all canal users and in particular to see that the long-term standards agreed by the Trust (British Waterways at the time the agreement was signed) with the funders, local authorities and the canal society are adhered to. You'll have seen that volunteering always features very heavily in Pennine Link and this issue is no exception with pieces from several of the working groups and a substantial article from my colleague Eric Woulds on the Marsden Shuttle operation. The commitment from all the volunteers is amazing and we are all very grateful for the work they are doing to help make the canal attractive and accessible for all users.

In conclusion I think that, whilst there is a lot more to come, the restoration of the canal has significantly helped regenerate many areas of land alongside/close by its route and brought many people to live and work in the area. I'm sure that the main funders of the canal restoration will be pleased with what has happened to date but also sure that they would like to see much more! The need to maintain the canal to the highest possible standard will not diminish but will accelerate as investors make their long-term plans. I trust that I have made my thoughts on the need to supplement the volunteer workforce on the canal clear so, if you are interested in getting involved, please contact Dr Bob Gough on 01457 871800 and he'll give you more information and point you in the right direction.

Peter Rawson

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 Woulds

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 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

Tel: 01457 871800 hcs@huddersfieldcanal.com www.huddersfieldcanal.com





Chairman's Report

After a week's sunny and unseasonably warm weather during the last week of February there are signs that Spring is

arriving very early this year. Greater weather unpredictability is a feature of climate change and its effect on the canal system will make planning more difficult for the navigation authority.

Although reservoirs have mainly returned to winter levels in the Pennines, the last fortnight's dry weather in the east has resulted in a major fire on the tinder-dry moor at Standedge. The picture (below) indicates that it started from the layby in Standedge cutting and spread northwards over Close Moss. Such fire is unprecedented this early in the year.



Alan Shepherd

Even full reservoirs in Spring are no guarantee of sufficient water for Pennine cruising as last year demonstrated. The Huddersfield Narrow is dependent on compensation water from Scammonden reservoir, which provides drinking water to residents of West Yorkshire. If prolonged dry spells become more frequent it will not be surprising if water companies favour domestic supply over water for the canal. Building in resilience to the canal supply could become an increasing challenge.

The programme of winter maintenance work on the HNC was completed by January 2019. With the Rochdale now experiencing its winter works, the Narrow is providing an alternative Trans-Pennine route for narrow-beamed craft. Some of the completed work included wall repairs, the largest task being rebuilding of two sections of wall at Tunnel end Marsden.

One of these is pictured below in mid-December as the new concrete footing was reaching the stage that allowed this section of pound to be re-watered. This essential work hampered the ability of our Marsden Shuttle crews to deliver passengers to the usual Tunnel End drop off point but undeterred, some trips were still made before Christmas.

Our December 2018 Operation and Maintenance meeting with Canal & River Trust colleagues gave us an opportunity to catch up with plans for the new management arrangements now that two Regions have responsibility of the Huddersfield Narrow. We were advised that a single manager was being appointed to manage all engineering work on the Huddersfield and Rochdale on both sides of the Pennines. Also adverts were out for two Area Operations Managers to manage all aspects of customer relations.

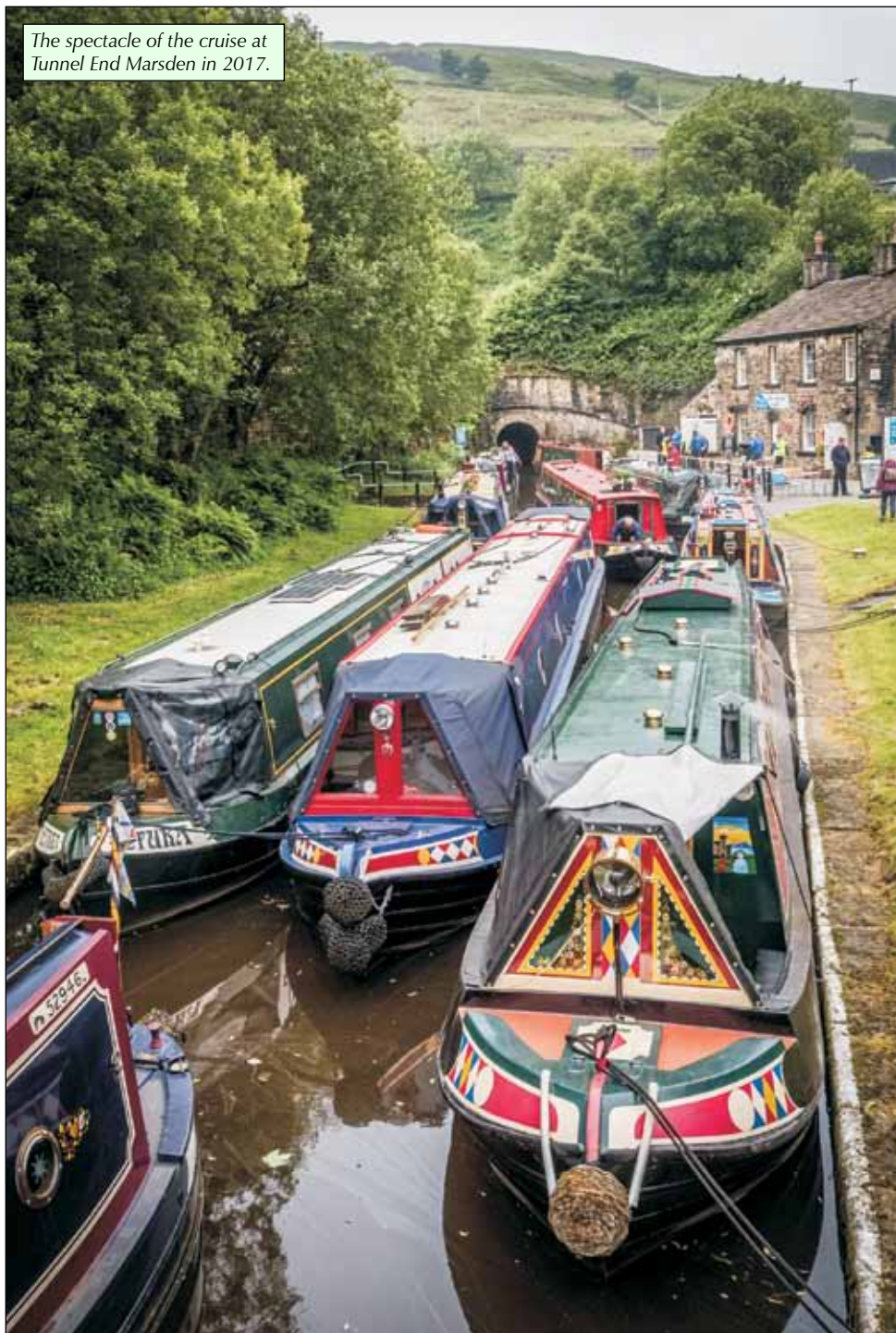
I'm pleased to say that our proposal to run a second Pennine Explorer cruise was approved by CRT and planning is now underway. Starting at Portland Basin, Ashton-under-Lyne on 22nd June 2019 the cruise will visit Stalybridge, Mossley, Uppermill, Diggle, Marsden, Slaithwaite, Milnsbridge and Huddersfield with an optional final day on the Broad Canal on 1st July for those with suitable sized boats. As with the event in Summer 2017, the cruise is aimed at those that have not navigated the Huddersfield Narrow Canal before. The picture, overleaf, is a reminder of the spectacle of the cruise at Tunnel End Marsden in 2017. This "Roving Rally" will allow boaters to enjoy the magnificent scenery of our Pennine canal, and jointly with the Trust, we will bring together a team of volunteer lock-keepers to help the boats through many of the 74 Locks.

cont'd on page 11



Alan Shepherd

The spectacle of the cruise at Tunnel End Marsden in 2017.



Alan Stopher

Our friends at Calder Navigation Society had offered their support for the downhill sections. A programme of evening events is being planned to add to the fun. If any of our members is interested in lending a hand during the last week of June please contact Bob at the office.

Your Society has continued its involvement in the scoping of the Colne Valley Greenway from Slaithwaite to Marsden, attending regular planning meetings and a well-attended public meeting at Slaithwaite Civic Hall in February. We're also hoping the current bid for funds to continue the towpath relaying from Milnsbridge to Slaithwaite will be successful.

This edition includes notice of our AGM. Your Council of management believes that the Thomas Bourne room at the Standedge Visitor Centre is the best central location for this meeting and a 7pm start on a Thursday evening allows sufficient time to stage our Volunteer Social immediately afterwards.

We get some unusual approaches from time to time. One was from Huddersfield University asking us to give talks to arts students (*a separate piece elsewhere in Pennine Link relates to this*). We've now been asked for archive photos to contribute to a garden being designed for the Chelsea Flower Show! As always I'm sure we'll rise to the occasion.

Over the years the Society has been involved in a number of publications. Trevor Ellis's book on the Standedge Tunnels continues to sell well and we have almost reached the break-even point on the 1,000 copies originally ordered. If you haven't got your copy yet, don't forget there is a £1 discount on the cover price for HCS members.

I've penned a shorter report than usual but with the bonus of these pictures to take the place of words. After all there's plenty to read in this edition about what is happening on our favourite canal. Happy Easter!

Alan Stopher

How does your garden grow?



Alan Stopher

Stalybridge Town Centre

Stalybridge Volunteer Group

We held our second main Clear Up day of the year so far on Saturday 23rd February. The warm unseasonal weather held out for us and we managed again to remove a large amount of debris from the towpaths and landscaped areas alongside the canal.

The unusually mild weather has encouraged the plants to spring into life and of course this includes weeds and unwanted growth of buddleia plants and ivy. Our volunteers cleared heavy undergrowth that regularly spreads onto an access path down to the towpath from the Aldi Car park. It also needed several spritely volunteers to remove a huge mass of ivy covering the canal side wall and offside towpath opposite the Tesco store. This path and the retaining

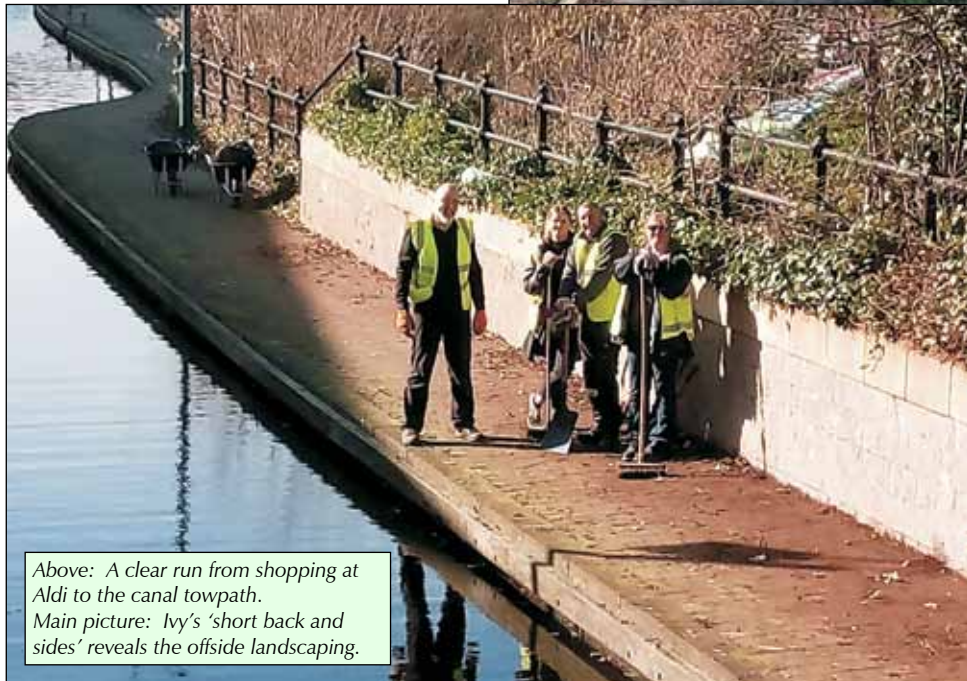
wall are now proudly exposed not having seen the light of day for a long time.

The rest of our main Clear Up Sessions 2019 are the fourth Saturday of each month meeting at Holy Trinity Church alongside Armentières Square at 9.30am on each occasion. More specifically the dates are: -

27th April, 25th May, 22nd June, 27th July, 24th August, 28th September, 26th October and 23rd November.



Peter Rawson



Peter Rawson

Above: A clear run from shopping at Aldi to the canal towpath.
Main picture: Ivy's 'short back and sides' reveals the offside landscaping.

Day of Action

Wednesday 27th February 2019

A comprehensive Day of Action was organised by officers from Tameside MBC in conjunction with the River and Canal Sub Group which is part of the Stalybridge Town Centre Challenge initiative (see *Editorial for a little more detail*).

A number of the Council's services including Street Cleansing, Grounds Maintenance, Neighbourhood Services and Single Regulatory Services came together to tackle a range of Street Scene issues across the town. Once again a number of our own volunteers came along to do some work on the canal and we were ably supported by James Wynne of the Canal and River Trust. We chose to do some work on Lock 6W which is a prominent feature of the town centre in Armentières Square. The mild weather was still with us and we were able to make good progress in painting the lock gates and gearing and the boater's bridge at the tail of the lock.

This was a fantastic coming together of the Council's services and other partners and stakeholders together with committed volunteers. Many 'grot

spots' across town were cleared up by the Council and all their services and the volunteers involved did a great job leaving the town centre well-tended and spick and span by the end of the day. The Council and all officers and operatives involved should take great credit for organizing and implementing this Day of Action to such great effect. The Stalybridge Community must be very pleased with the outcome.

Mersey Rivers Trust

The Mersey Rivers Trust have expressed a keen interest in clearing up the River Tame through the town centre and have ambitions to see Salmon return to the river. The latter ambition is a longer-term goal but there are already Salmon in the River Goyt in Stockport at the confluence with the Tame. However, a lot of work is needed to allow the Salmon to bypass a large number of man-made weirs on the Tame for them to progress upstream. Mersey Rivers Team Leader Warren Andrew was present at the Day of Action with a team of experienced volunteers who worked hard to remove a large amount of debris from the River on the day, they did a great job.

Peter Rawson



Tameside MBC

Getting to the Art of it

An unusual opportunity arose when University of Huddersfield art lecturer Simon Woolham asked Huddersfield Canal Society for a series of presentations on the HNC. Simon is a canal enthusiast himself and enjoys long-distance walking along canal towpaths to gain inspiration for his own artistic endeavours. The aim was to introduce students to a 'residency' on a canal theme which involved using brass-rubbing techniques (*frottage*) to gather textures along the canal which runs through the campus.

Alan Stopher made an initial visit to the University in October 2018 to brief second year Fine Art students and a second visit in mid-January 2019 this time to meet first year undergraduates on the Contemporary Art and Illustration course. His initial presentation set the scene and this was followed by a walk from the main campus past Lock 1E as far as Queen Street Bridge. The students stopped along the way to capture a wide variety of textures using paper and crayon. A large montage is in prospect as the ideas develop.

Alan Stopher



The picture, from the top of the steps to Queen Street South, shows a group of the students with Simon himself in the centre. Photo: Alan Stopher

Top hole

Standedge Tunnel certainly is.
And our boats are pretty good too.
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or do the whole South Pennine Ring.

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200 Years of the Pocklington Canal

The County of Yorkshire has a great diversity of canals and navigable rivers. One of the lesser-known navigations, the Pocklington Canal celebrated its 200th anniversary in 2018. In contrast to the industrial origins of the Huddersfield Narrow, the Pocklington was promoted by rural businesses seeking an outlet for their products. Situated in a sparsely populated part of East Yorkshire between the Derwent Valley and the Yorkshire Wolds it is accessed via the tidal River Ouse downstream of Selby and a 9 mile stretch of the River Derwent. This too was tidal but is now maintained at more steady levels by a barrage at Barmby where the two rivers meet.

The full extent of the canal is shown on the map (below) which is courtesy of the Pocklington Canal and Amenity Society.

The Pocklington Canal was a late addition to the waterways network of England and

Wales. Work did not start until 1815, despite proposals half a century before. The canal was completed in 1818 at a cost of £32,695. Canal Head was established on the Hull-York turnpike a mile or so short of the town itself but in a convenient place for local farms to bring their produce by horse-drawn carts. It would have been significantly more expensive to continue the canal into Pocklington, a market town which is at the foot of the slope on to the Yorkshire Wolds, and a proposed extension did not materialise.

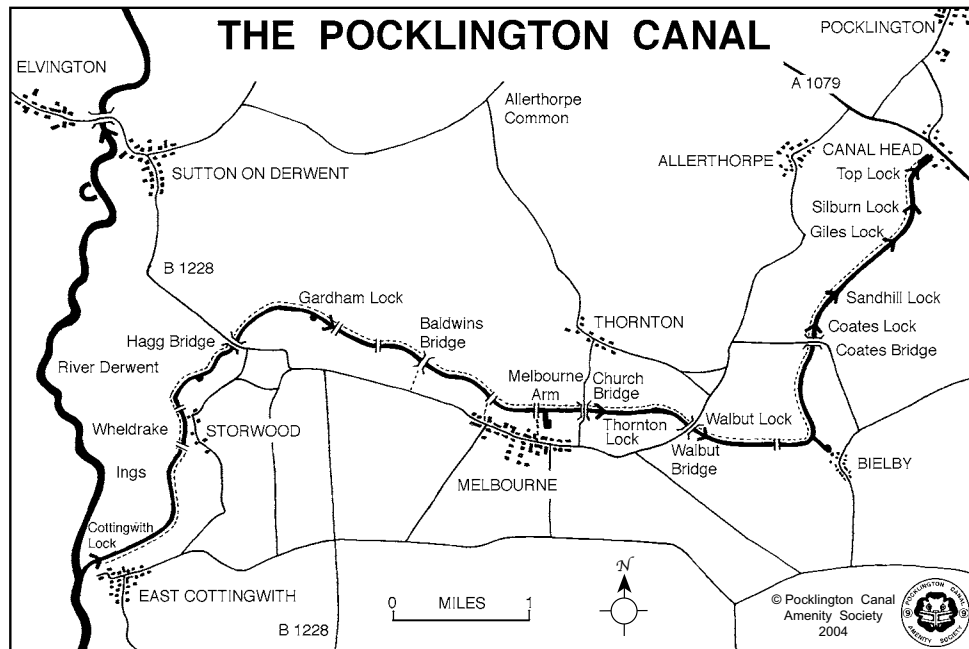
The canal was mainly used to carry coal and agricultural produce. It was never a great financial success. Like the Huddersfield Narrow the canal was sold to a railway company, in this case the York and North Midland Railway in 1848 and, like many English canals in railway ownership, deteriorated through lack of dredging and other maintenance.

Subsequently, in the hands of the North Eastern Railway, the canal gradually fell into disuse early in the 20th century and the last commercial craft to use the canal was the keel Ebenezer, in 1932. The railway company purchased a lorry for the owner of this keel to avoid maintenance obligations. Pleasure craft stopped using the canal soon after, because of deterioration of the lock gates.

The canal was never formally abandoned and with nationalisation of the railways in 1948, ownership passed to British Transport Commission and then, in 1963 to the British Waterways Board, subsequently renamed as British Waterways. In 1959, a proposal, to infill the canal with "inoffensive sludge" from a water treatment plant angered many people, including landowners, local residents, and members of the Inland Waterways Association. With support from the Inland Waterway

Protection Society, MPs were lobbied, there was extensive publicity in the press and even the House of Commons learned of the Pocklington Canal and its plight. The canal was saved. These unhappy events encouraged waterways enthusiasts to explore the possibility of restoring the canal and, in 1969, the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society (PCAS) was formed. Volunteers soon began their work with the long-overdue task of clearing obstructions from the towpath, which is now open throughout the length of the canal.

Considerable restoration has been carried out over the years and two-thirds of the canal is open to navigation, the latest section of two miles and two locks to the Bielby Arm being opened in July 2018 to coincide with the bi-centenary celebrations. Thanks to its rural location, the canal has remained essentially as it was built. The upper part of the canal is in



The Pocklington Canal Amenity Society's trip boat New Horizons brings its invited guests up the newly restored Thornton Lock in preparation for the cutting of the tape on 25th July 2018.



An early user of the restored section has just been through Swingbridge No.8 between Bielby and Walbut Lock on 26th July 2018.



Back down the Pocklington after the festival. Merdeka and Beresford share Gardham Lock with its integral swingbridge on 30th July 2018. Note the unusual wheels to lift the paddle gear on this picture and the picture on the previous page.

water throughout its length and there are no problems with buildings or other obstructions to hinder restoration. The canal lies within three Sites of Special Scientific Interest, which means that all operations must have the consent of Natural England.

With the momentum gained from the recent reopening PCAS is keen to press on with the final sections of restoration. Of the five locks two, Coates Lock and Top Lock, are substantially complete having had significant restoration. Of the other three chambers, Sandhill Lock is in worst condition and will need to be substantially rebuilt. This is currently the focus of a £150,000 appeal for funds as understandably the Society felt that it was best to tackle the worst remaining obstacle first. If a reader is interested in joining this worthwhile restoration project, details of membership and the current appeal can be found in pages on this link:

<http://pocklingtoncanalsociety.org/>

This article draws heavily from the website of PCAS, an organisation I was pleased to join during our visit in 2018.

The line map is produced courtesy of PCAS and the images are all mine, taken during July 2018, when my wife and I cruised the restored lengths of canal and attended the 200th anniversary festival.

Alan Stopher
February 2019

JIDOKU 43

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

Huddersfield Waterfront Quarter



Alan Stopher

Readers might be interested in a 'Before and After' of the latest development at Huddersfield Waterfront Quarter. Above is a photo of the new student apartments which are in the final stages of internal completion.

In the foreground is the second Lock 3E site. This Lock was opened in May 2001 at the start of the newly built 300 metre long Sellers Tunnel. The working Lock is pictured right, in a photo from April 2006, and the grey building in the background is the Tin Shop, new at the time to replace the facility demolished for the canal restoration.

The subsequent rebuilding of the whole site to accommodate Kirklees College brought about the opening out (and filling in) of the tunnel which meant construction of a second new



Bob Cough

Lock 3E at the east end of the newly completed channel. The timber balk inserted in the former headgate recess can be seen covered in a dusting of snow in the top picture taken in February this year.

Alan Stopher

Dates for your Diary

Saddleworth Historical Society

presents:

The Standedge Tunnels

An Illustrated talk by Trevor Ellis

Saddleworth Museum,
High Street, Uppermill, OL3 6HS

Wednesday 22nd May at 7.30pm

The talk has been organised as a joint event with the Canal Society in the SHS 2019 events calendar.

Very kindly, they are offering free admission to our Society members, so remember to bring your membership card as proof of entitlement.



Stalybridge Festival 22-23rd June 2019

Huddersfield Canal Society is once again proud to support the 2019 Festival which is taking place on the weekend of the 22nd and 23rd June.

We are working with the Festival Committee and Stalybridge Town Team to make it a memorable event, so please come along and show your support, whether on foot or by water!

This year, this will coincide with the Pennine Explorer Cruise which is guaranteed to bring added colour to the event.



We will be joined by the East Manchester Community Boat Project's craft, Community Spirit II, which will be providing boat trips on the canal.



Uppermill Community Action Network

December

UCAN volunteers were joined by Kate from the RSPB for a tree felling session at the viaduct woodland. A number of storm damaged trees needed to be removed and the team used the felled wood to produce wildlife friendly areas (*pictured right*). With the ground prepared the team met one very wet Saturday to plant around 90 native trees and bushes, including holly, elder and hawthorn. The purchase of the trees had been made possible following the receipt of a grant from the Saddleworth Hydro and UCAN would like to thank them for their generous funding. UCAN would also like to thank Kate from the RSPB for her continued support.

Other tasks included leaf clearance from the canal towpath and litter picking.

January

For the first meeting of the year volunteers concentrated their efforts on completing the task of clearing compacted fallen leaves from the towpath near Wade Lock. Other work undertaken during the month included vegetation clearance, litter picking and wildflower seeding around recently cleared areas of the viaduct woodland.

February

Volunteers tackled the job of clearing mud and rotting leaves along the canal towpath from Limekiln Lock to Wool Road car park (*pictured opposite*). Work has also continued in the Viaduct Woodland where vegetation continues to be cleared and, as part of the long term plan for the area, bat and bird boxes, built for UCAN by Men in Sheds, have now been sited in the wood, where hopefully they will be in time for the breeding season.



There is still more to do and we are always pleased to welcome new members. Our forthcoming programme is as follows:-

March – Thursday 7th, Saturday 30th

April – Thursday 11th, Saturday 27th

Volunteering in the local environment is a great way of meeting others, 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.

Sheila Chapman

If you would like to get involved in our project days for this year, please contact UCAN's Group Leader Peter Killan on:

01457 878361, or e-mail at:
peterkillan@hotmail.com

Of course, you can keep updated on our Groups activities by visiting our Facebook page, listed under:

[groups/1899154207069001](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1899154207069001)



Street Scene Greenfield Group

Towpath project in Greenfield

The Greenfield Group have adopted the stretch from Division Bridge to Manchester Road, heading in the Mossley direction.

Two tonnes of gravel were laid in February, in addition to the two laid earlier in the year. Much more will follow shortly.

Vegetation has been cut back and general tidying up started, ready for Spring.

As usual, Volunteers always enjoy a well-deserved brew (pictured below with Project Leader, Gill, far right).

The forthcoming project dates are:

March: Saturday 30th

April: Tuesday 9th & Saturday 27th

May: Thursday 9th, Saturday 18th

June: Tuesday 4th & Saturday 22nd

If you haven't volunteered beforehand and would like to be included on the mailing list for future dates and details of our work, please contact the Project Leader, Gill McCulley on 07963 521195 or email: gillmcculley@yahoo.com

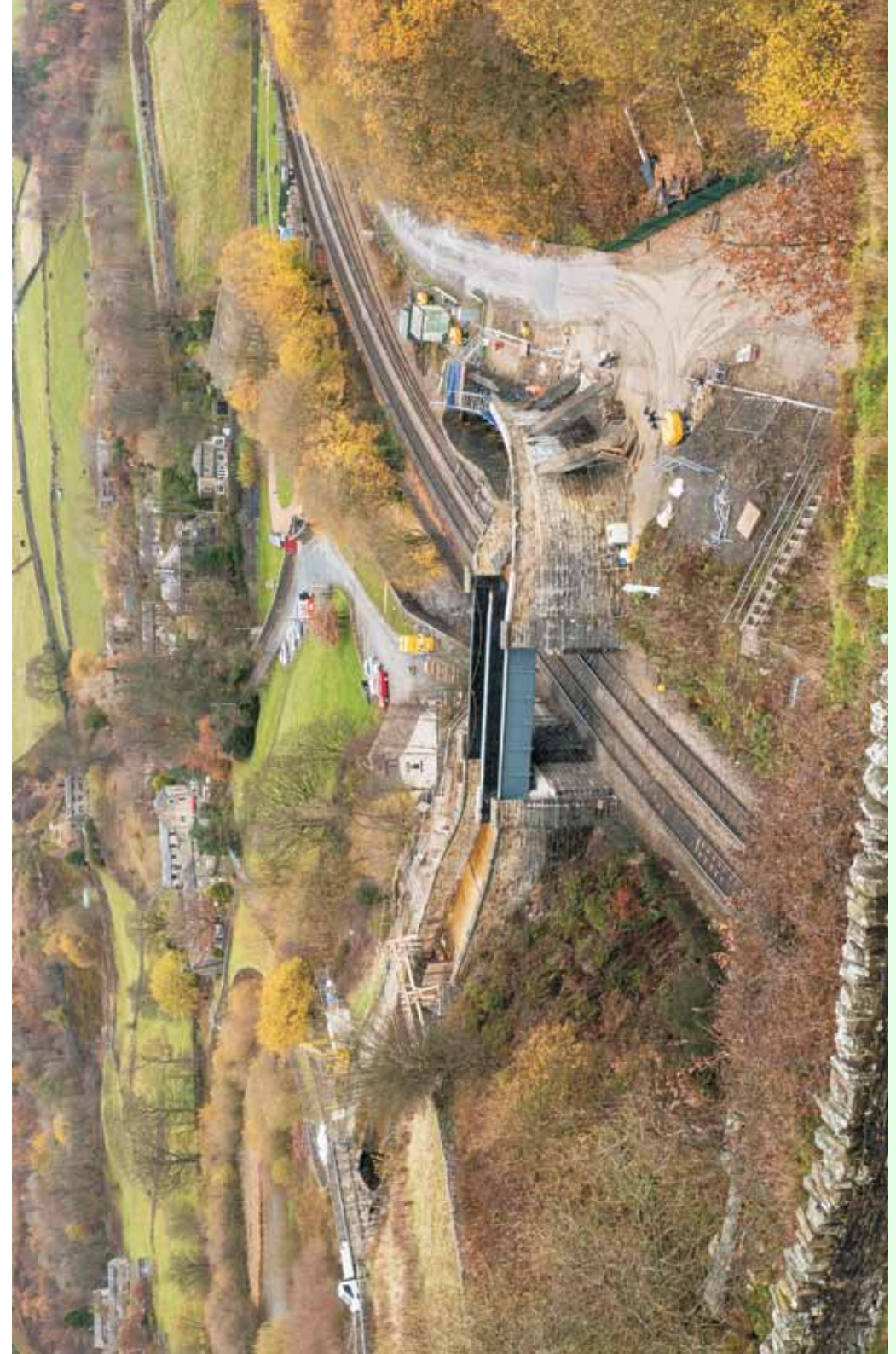
Everyone is always warmly welcomed!



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



Masonry work was being completed at the Standedge Aqueduct bridge when our Chairman took this picture in November last year. Pointing of the stonework was underway the following month and the project completed on schedule by Network Rail. Photo: Alan Stopher

Marsden Shuttle - here we go again ...!

Writing this mid February, it'd usually be a while before the next Shuttle season is on us.

The HCS Volunteer Crews normally operate weekend services between Tunnel End and Lock 42E between Easter and the end of October. The now (almost) traditional end of season jolly that's the Scary Shuttle, when we run Halloween trips, is usually the last operating weekend for around 5 months and that's the last we see of each other until the start of the next season, although last year Boat Crew were invited to the annual CRT Christmas party at the Visitor Centre. I think there were more boat crew there than CRT staff, and it was great to meet up with HCS and CRT colleagues over a few complimentary pints and a superb buffet!

However, the winter break hasn't been complete between the 2018 and 2019 seasons - we had a weekend of Christmas trips at the end of December (suitably trimmed up with tinsel and fairy lights),



Christmas Shuttle - smiles frozen in place ...

on the 9 February we provided transport to the Visitor Centre for a happy Bride and Groom, and as the weather was so good over the weekend of 23/24 February, we decided to take her out for a weekend to catch the back end of the half term holidays.

Normal service will, in fact, start before Easter this year - as it's quite late, we're starting to run weekend trips from the end of March. No problem getting crew either - our enthusiastic volunteers turn out in all weathers to make sure we have a boat running from Tunnel End. Not only does this save a bit of leg work for visitors to Standedge Centre and the Waters Edge Café if they've started in Marsden (especially if it's raining) it gives people an opportunity to see a boat running on the canal at weekends which would otherwise be devoid of traffic due to the CRT policy of only allowing Tunnel passages Monday, Wednesday and Friday. It also, importantly, publicises the fact that HCS is looking after the canal's interests and that we're still very active.

The Shuttle operation is, however, undergoing some subtle, but important changes. CRT management are investing heavily in promoting Standedge Visitor Centre as a wedding venue. They have regular 'Wedding Fayres' where the venue is promoted by suppliers who 'sell'

their goods and services to prospective hirers. HCS has been present at all the Fayres, and we've been quite successful historically in obtaining charters for the 'Wedding Taxi' service from Lock 42E to the Visitor Centre.

However, recognising the 'added value' of arriving at the wedding venue in a boat, CRT have taken on the bookings for the Shuttle so they're now booked in conjunction with the venue. This has resulted in an increase in uptake for the service - we already have 18 weddings booked for 2019. Apart from this being a valuable source of income for the Society, it makes sure that large numbers of people see what we do, and we're guaranteed a showing in the wedding photos! Great publicity, and we like to think we help to make the happy couple's day. The down side is that if we're looking after the Bride and Groom (and as many guests who'd like a trip) we can't run the public service.

However, as the weddings are usually on Saturday, which is often a quieter day, we think the trade-off is worth it. We also have a 'ring fence' arrangement with CRT so that days when we want to run public trips or have some other event lined up, are kept free.

There's a lot of affection for our little blue boat, and she's given the Society great service in the 28 years since David Essex cracked the sugar-bottle of champagne on the hull to launch her at Marsden (October 1991) when she was newly built and red in colour. She has been re-named Oldham Otter, re-fitted, painted blue and back again as Marsden Shuttle since then. Nearly 30 isn't necessarily old for a canal boat, but if we want to carry on operating for the next 30+ years then we need to start thinking about what we do next. In particular, she's showing her age both inside and out, and needs more repairs and maintenance than she used to. Comes to us all ...



Happy Bride and Groom arriving at Standedge Visitor Centre.

Myself, Mike McHugh (Boat Manager) and Terry Lomas (Skipper and Trainer) have been looking at what's possible. At first we were thinking about a full re-fit, but it was pointed out to us by a respected local boat builder that, no matter how much we spend on internal fittings or the engine, it's still a 28 year old hull. Fair point, so we've been discussing what we'd like to see in a replacement, and have visited a couple of other Society boats to get some ideas. We're just about ready to finalise a specification and start talking to boat builders about a 'next generation' Shuttle (working title Shuttle 2) which will truly be a boat for the 21st century.

We identified three key areas that our current boat hasn't got which we want to incorporate in a replacement. First, diesel engines are no longer the only option – the Tunnel Boats at Standedge are all electric so that's what we should be specifying. The current range of electric options, especially battery types, is pretty bewildering so there's still a lot of work to do in this area. We also want to make sure we can still get to Ashton or maybe even to Huddersfield without charging issues so that has to be taken into account, either by making sure the batteries will last that long or by sourcing a charging point at an appropriate location.

Second, our Shuttle is notoriously difficult for passengers to get on and off. Those of you who are familiar with the boat will know that the only way on and off is via a movable step at the bows which alternates between being on shore at Tunnel End, and on the boat at Lock 42E due to differing loading levels. Luckily, thanks to the skill and attentiveness of crew we've never dropped anyone

in the canal, but it's quite a challenge for some people to get on and off, and we don't know how many people haven't used the boat due to the poor access. Accessibility is now a key design requirement, particularly for the less mobile and for wheelchair users. There may have to be a compromise about how much of the boat is accessible, but we want to make sure getting on and off isn't a barrier in the new design. This will be achieved by means of a fold down ramp – quite a difficult design problem due to the differing levels at Lock 42E and Tunnel End, but we think we've got there!

Thirdly, we know sitting outside as opposed to in the cabin is a popular option, especially for children and in summer. The new design will have some outside seating on the forward deck, which incidentally assists access issues, as there'll be flexible (fold up) seating so that a wheelchair space can be created if we need one. It's also handy of course to accommodate prams and pushchairs instead of on the roof, which is where they often have to go at present.

This all costs money of course and the Society has limited resources. The Society Management Council have discussed the proposals in principle, and so far we're still going ahead as it's accepted that running a boat is a vital part of the Society's objectives, and we have to plan for the long term future of the operation. We also have a new income stream from weddings that's providing a steady annual income – no certainty that this will be forever but as things are going it looks quite likely. On the basis that a replacement boat will last as long as the current one, income will start to exceed total expenditure well



Venturing abroad: Trips at Stalybridge Carnival - slight evidence of Tunnel Rash visible...



Where it all began with David Essex launching at Tunnel End - October 1991.

Bob Cough

before the half way point in it's likely life span. Lower maintenance costs of running an electric boat also helps.

Anyway, 2019 is looking to be a great year already. Just before the start of the operating season we'll be having a Boat Crew get-together to bring everyone up to speed with operational news, and to enable everyone to have a chat with, and

get to know, future crew mates. We'll be trying out 'free' trips at the Standedge Wedding Fayre (30/31 March) too – no set fare but donations welcomed. Experience from previous operations where we've done this has shown we collect at least as much as when we take fares, often more. There's the added advantage of being able to claim gift aid too which increases the value. As mentioned earlier we already have 18 weddings booked this year, and thanks to an effective recruitment operation last year we now have more crew, and after training, qualified Skippers, than we've had for a long time.

There's still room for more. If you're interested, get in touch with the HCS office and you'll be pointed in the right direction, or come and have a chat with any Boat Crew member when we're running. No doubt you'll be on the stern deck with a tiller in your hand before you know it! A word of warning though – boating can be addictive ...

Eric Woulds
Volunteer Skipper

Notice of the 2019 AGM

HUDDERSFIELD CANAL SOCIETY LIMITED

Notice is hereby given that the Thirty Ninth Annual General Meeting of the above named Company will be held at the Standedge Visitor Centre, Waters Road, Marsden, Huddersfield, HD7 6NQ on 6th June, 2019 at 7.00pm to transact the following business:

1. To approve the Minutes of the 2018 Annual General Meeting.
2. To receive and adopt the Accounts for the Company for the year ending 31st December 2018 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 Mr. Trevor Ellis as a member of the Council of Management retiring by rotation.
5. To re-elect Mr. Alan Stopher as a member of the Council of Management retiring by rotation.
6. To re-elect Mr. Keith Sykes as a member of the Council of Management retiring by rotation.
7. To consider any other nominations*.
8. Any other business.

DATED the 18th Day of March 2019
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.

220 Club - 20th Draw

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.

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 twentieth quarterly draw:

Total Subscribers: 60
Total Prize Fund: £144

1st Prize:
Mr B Diggle winning £96
2nd Prize:
Mr A Daniel winning £48

Congratulations to the prize winners!



Solution to Jidoku 43

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MEMBERSHIP RATES

Individual	£9.00
Family	£11.00
Life	£90.00
Associate	£15.00
Corporate	£150.00

COPY DATE

Articles, letters and comments for Issue 206 of Pennine Link should reach the Editor at Transshipment Warehouse, Wool Rd, Dobcross, OL3 5QR by 20th May 2019

ADVERTISING RATES

Page	Per Issue	Per Year
Qtr	£12.50	£50.00
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Full	£50.00	£200.00

