

HUDDERSFIELD CANAL SOCIETY

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BULLETIN No. 3.

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SECRETARY'S REPORT

Well, things are progressing!

Membership is increasing by leaps and bounds and I am pleased to welcome Kirklees Metropolitan Council as corporate members. This is certainly very good news and we look forward to similar far-sighted support from the councils in Greater Manchester.

Our next step forward is the publication of the feasibility study which it is hoped will be ready for Christmas. We hope that it will be a document which will enable us to set out in 1975 with renewed hope and detailed plans to back us up. If anyone feels that they could produce some artists impressions to show what the restored canal will look like, please let us know. It's areas such as Slaithwaite which will be particularly suitable - the council thought it had made a pleasant area by filling in the canal - let's show people how much better it would be with a few boats.

Now for an apology - we're sorry that many people didn't get the last newsletter in time for the towpath walk - still it was a wet day! We'll organise a repeat when the weather improves in the spring. In the meantime, we're arranging indoor meetings during the winter. Then there's the working party ... well, I think there's a working party! I'm afraid British Waterways (Castleford) have done an abrupt turn-about and have now refused to drain the canal for us. We are approaching BW (Wigan) who control the entire length of the Narrow Canal to see if we can clear out part of the canal in Huddersfield. More details later.

I'll keep the usual appeals short - we still need more members and space for exhibiting our stand - the more people we reach the better. Keep up the good work.

ROBERT DEWEY

"SAVE THE NARROW PENNINE LINK"

So says the slogan on our new lapel badges. Link between what? Why Pennine Link? To the uninitiated, a number of points need to be clarified. Our Canal links by a linear parkway:-

Yorkshire - with the Pennine Parkland;
Cheshire and Lancashire - with the Pennine Parkland;
and so, Yorkshire with Cheshire and Lancashire
- East with West.

It links the environmental improvement schemes of the Tame Valley and the Colne Valley.

It links the territories of the Calder Navigation Society and the Peak Forest Canal Society. Both these Societies have a vested interest in the Huddersfield Narrow Canal. Its restoration will increase the traffic and thus the prosperity of "their" waterways. So, supporting the Huddersfield Canal Society is an investment for the secure future of the neighbouring waterways.

I can speak about the support from the PFCS; it is largely a question of labour resources (or in a four-letter word - bods!). PFCS has a considerable body of members and supporters who realise how the restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal will be to the advantage of the Cheshire Ring Canals, and who are therefore prepared to help in the Huddersfield campaign. Areas where this help is forthcoming include volunteer restoration work, manning exhibitions and general jobs requiring bods.

What is the nature of the work ahead of us on the Western side of the Pennines? (Living this side of Stanedge, I shall concentrate on my own patch!) The ways of overcoming the physical obstacles are becoming clearer, as the feasibility study into the restoration prospects progresses. In addition to the revitalisation of 32 locks (variously filled in, but mostly structurally intact), the following obstacles need surmounting.

Oldham section: four piped bridges and 120 yards of infilling.

Tameside section: Entrances of Scout Tunnel blocked; infilling at Power Station and extensive infilling in Stalybridge town centre with new buildings constructed in canal bed.

Apart from money, the only serious problem west of the Pennines is Stalybridge. The alternative solutions for Stalybridge are a revised line through the town centre, or diversion along the river bed. Both alternatives have their advantages and disadvantages, but neither is impossible in engineering terms.

The next steps are to complete the feasibility study, and then to discuss it with Local Authorities, BWB, River Authorities, Civic Trust, and other interested bodies.

BRIAN BEAGLEY

If you visit Stalybridge to conjecture on a new route for the canal, take time off to look at the unique aqueduct below the town centre. It has a cast iron trough, which is perhaps common enough, but the towing path is made of masonry, and is entirely separated from the trough. Don't fall through the gap between! The aqueduct is all the more interesting because a milestone is situated exactly in the middle!

We are indebted to one of our members, Mr. M. B. Wain of Leicester for the following poem.

THE HUDDERSFIELD NARROW CANAL

From the Ashton Canal -
-to the Huddersfield Broad,
Over the Pennines the "Narrow"
-once soared.

Carrying longboats,
And all kinds of trade,
Along the still channel,
That Outram had made.

Through the great Standedge tunnel,
And seventy four locks,
The water was carried-
-Over the rocks.

Rising high amongst the hills,
Across the backbone of the land,
Climbing over gated steps,
And towering over vistas grand.

Quiet now your shallow pounds,
Your locks and bridges in decay,
Nothing stirs your peaceful calm,
As you dream of yesterday.

We, your friends are dreaming too,
Though the futures on our minds,
What wrongs been done, we shall undo,
And you a bright new life shall find.

No longer now, need you despair,
Lying in your silted rut,
The Navigation we'll repair,
Restore, refurbish and re-cut.

Abandoned and neglected "Narrow",
Long forgotten, deep in sorrow,
We'll plan and work for you today,
For all to navigate tomorrow.

The following quote is from a recent letter from IWAAC to John Maynard with reference to current "works" on the narrow canal and is certainly good news.

"Thank you for forwarding a copy of your detailed survey of the present state of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal.

After receiving the document and our conversations at the Rally at Shipley, the Chairman asked me to contact the Board to inquire the possibility of a moratorium on works that would adversely affect the re-opening of any part of the canal; and I have pleasure in enclosing the reply of the Secretary to the Board, from which you will see that such a re-assessment is in fact already taking place, and that any such re-assessment will inevitably affect future works connected with the canal.

This certainly seems to be hopeful news for all those interested in the canal's future, and I shall be informing full Council of the Board's reply on the subject, as it falls within the Council's Terms of Reference".

OUR BADGE

Many members will have noticed that the description of our badge in the last Newsletter does not tie up with the wording on the badge. There were in fact, quite a few "link" men on the "way" to publication and this appears to be where the confusion arose.

ED.

WORKING PARTY

The BWB about-turn has caused a few headaches but don't despair, the working party will still go ahead on November 16th and 17th as arranged. Please report to Aspley Marina where a notice or committee member will supply final details.

Will any member who knows where we can beg, borrow or hire a dumper truck or bucket hoist for use on this or future working parties, please contact any Committee member.

ED.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

November 16th and 17th - Working Party on the Narrow Canal.

June 27th, 28th and 29th, 1975 - Ashton Rally of Boats at
Duckinfield Junction - organised
by the Peak Forest Canal Society.

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It is planned to hold a meeting on the western side of the Pennines in
late January and in Huddersfield in early February - more details later.

FAMOUS LAST WORDS No. 2

"Of course I know which is the diesel tank and which
is the water!"

HUDDERSFIELD CANAL SOCIETY COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN: John Maynard, 29 Thick Hollins Drive, Meltham, Huddersfield.
(Meltham 850575).

VICE-CHAIRMAN: Brian Beagley, 19 Marsden Road, Romiley, Cheshire SK6 4PJ.

SECRETARY: Robert Dewey, 3 Pump Row, High Flatts, Huddersfield.
(High Flatts 546)

TREASURER: Robert Wilkinson, 76 New North Road, Huddersfield. HD15ND

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Margaret Bradnum, 4 Rutland Road, Batley, Yorks.

Gerry Greenwood, 25, Greenacre Drive, Upper Denby, Huddersfield.

Robert Keaveney, 35, Councillor Lane, Cheadle, Cheshire.

Robert Lear, 5, Chatsworth Road, Droylsden, Manchester.

Tim Noakes, 7, Hartford Avenue, Wilmslow, Cheshire.

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