

# Pennine Link

Huddersfield Canal Society Newsletter



## Waterways and the drought

The Huddersfield Narrow Canal was closed throughout to traffic from 23rd May 2025 owing to low water levels and little prospect of early recovery

Since then all of the Trans-Pennine canals have been similarly affected. The lack of spring and early summer rain in the north of England, coupled with work on reservoirs and the need to supply drinking water as a priority meant that CRT had no choice but to limit boating activities. The only boat operations continuing on the HNC have been those which have not required passage through locks; mainly ours at Uppermill and Marsden and CRT's tunnel boat.

A look at CRT's published stoppages and advice on low water in early August showed the impact on canals was mainly in the north but three weeks later the drought was also affecting waterways further south. This is graphically shown by the plan above copied from CRT's website. Red refers to closure, light red is restriction, and yellow is advice.

## A note from our chairman

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2025. Why so late you may well ask? Well it has taken till now to recruit someone with the skills to help me convert text and images into a useable publication. For this I'm indebted to our latest recruit to the Board of Trustees, Nik Lever. Nik, a resident of Dobcross, is already a boat crew member (skipper) and will bring some much needed IT and publicity skills to our management team.

In this edition we report on:

- Waterways and the drought
- Repairs at Lock 11W
- Towpath work between Slaithwaite and Marsden
- Our boats operations
- Pirate Day at Standedge
- Sale of our office
- In memoriam – Dr Bob Gough

I hope you enjoy the read.

Thank you,

*Alan Stepher*



## Welcome new volunteers

We're always on the lookout for new volunteers. If you live in the area and would like to join the boat crew team then please email Mike McHugh at: [secretary@huddersfieldcanal.org.uk](mailto:secretary@huddersfieldcanal.org.uk) or Anne Goggin at: [membership@huddersfieldcanal.org.uk](mailto:membership@huddersfieldcanal.org.uk)



## Repairs to Lock 11W

Even if the lack of water had not affected our canal it would have been closed since January 1st below Mossley where damage to the supporting embankment of Lock 11W resulted from the heavy rain on New Year's Day.

The problem originated with the culvert near Wagon Road Bridge, which erupted into the

canal, sending a surge of water downstream, bypassing Lock 12w before overtopping Lock 11w. The bank failure may have been compounded by the River Tame eroding the base of the embankment, causing it to slip away from the lock.

Since then we have reported updates on our website on the lengthy and complex work to reinstate the embankment and lock. We were pleased to see that 1st August 2025 had been the target date for reopening the lock but from a recent visit it

looks like work has slowed as the navigation is closed in any case because of the shortage of water.

Two photographs taken on 21st August illustrate that the off side of the lock is now restored (as viewed from the towpath) and a fabric membrane has spread over the embankment slope as part of the protection works (as viewed from Manchester Rd – the river Tame is out of sight at the bottom, beyond the two people standing in the middle of the photo).

## Towpath work between Slaithwaite and Marsden

Over the summer months towpath reconstruction has taken place over this busy stretch.

The tarmac finish has an urban feel which is not in keeping with the rural surroundings but given the high cost of alternatives and the need to provide longevity it is probably the best compromise. A bonus is the ease with which those with limited mobility can now use the path.

Our photo shows the two stages of work surface laying on the Marsden flight.





## Our boat operations

The diesel boat now know as 'The Little Blue Boat' has become an established weekend attraction at Uppermill.

The e-Shuttle continues to run

between lock 42E Marsden and Tunnel End at weekends and as many days in the school holidays as our volunteer crew availability permits. Over last winter the batteries were updated to Lithium-iron ones as the lead

ones had reduced in capability over the two years or so in operation. Both boats have benefited from recent crew recruitment but we could always do with more volunteers to maintain both services.

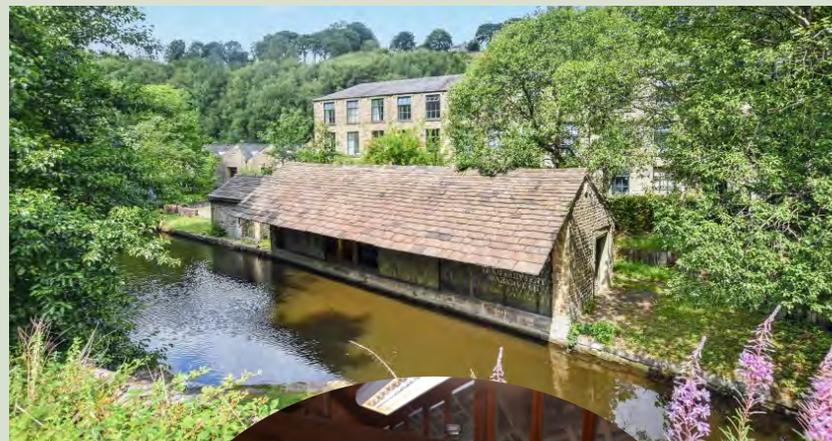
## Sale of our office

After much deliberation and a considerable amount of work to archive records and remove items of value, the Transshipment Warehouse is on the market

We had had a few informal approaches and concluded that as a Charity we were duty-bound to seek the best price for our asset. This steered us towards an auction through specialist auctioneers Auction House of Manchester. The peaceful waterside setting is sure to attract a range of potential purchasers. The date of the auction is 21st October 2025. A legal pack is being put together and will be provided to all who register for the documentation. If you know anyone who might be interested the notice is here:

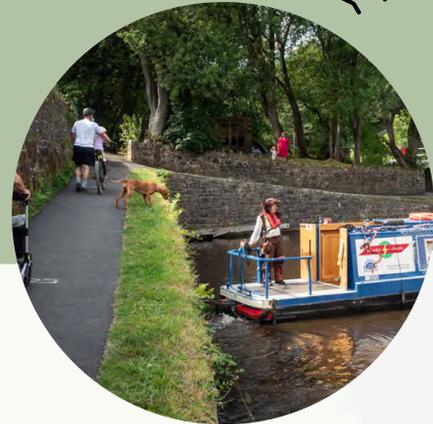
<https://www.auctionhouse.co.uk/manchester/auction/lot/141296>

The early indications are positive as number of people have already requested the pack.



## Pirate Day at Standedge

HCS crew transformed the boat and location.



HCS boat crew volunteers were instrumental in promoting and creating the Pirate Day over the August Bank Holiday weekend.

Working with Friends of Standedge, CRT volunteers and Hanson's Music a wide range of activities were available to an eager public during the mainly fine weather.

Pictured here is a queue of land lubbers being welcomed onto the e-Shuttle at lock 42E by Pirates Syd and John. You can see that a lot of work had been put in to dress the crew and boat. The idea had originated amongst the boat crews at Uppermill at Easter and the opportunity was taken to expand the activities offered. Mention must be made of the work of Mike Bull who produced a fantastic range of pirate props and flags

The final photo shows the e-Shuttle being turned for its return to Lock 42E. Also illustrated is the towpath improvement which has benefited folk who need a smooth surface.

## In memoriam – Dr Bob Gough

Readers of our website will be aware of the untimely passing last July of our friend and colleague, Bob Gough.

Over the 33 or so years he was employed by the Huddersfield Canal Society and its subsidiaries, Bob became the public face of the Society. Working from the office in Mossley Road, Ashton-under-Lyne and later the Transshipment Warehouse, Dobcross, he was the ever willing and knowledgeable representative of Huddersfield Canal Society.

He wrote his own story in our final printed Pennine Link no. 212, the last before his retirement in February 2022. It can be found at the link here.  
<https://archive.huddersfieldcanal.com/plink/docs/pl212.pdf>

After his well-earned break from paid employment he continued to help the Society in a voluntary capacity whenever publishing tasks arose. No longer can we 'just ask Bob' if we need to know anything about the Society, Narrow Canal and their histories.

Relatives and friends joined together at Chadderton Crematorium on 24th July 2024 to celebrate Bob's life and considerable achievements. We continue to wish his widow, Lyubimka and her family well as they come to terms with their loss.

