



STANDEGE TUNNEL HUDDERSFIELD NARROW CANAL.

This is the longest, deepest, and highest through tunnel ever built. It is 3 miles 3 furlongs in length. There are four passing points in the form of broad caverns, one of which still retains its original mooring rings.

Benjamin Outram estimated in 1793 that the tunnel could be cut in 5 years. It proved a more complicated task than that, however, with the final section being overseen by renowned engineer Thomas Telford in 1811. Standedge was finally opened to traffic in March of that year, 17 years after work had begun, at a total cost of about £160 000, and a considerable loss of life.

The Tunnel is 196 metres (645 feet) above sea level, and burrows 194 metres (638 feet) underneath the Pennines. For much of its length, it is of unlined rock, rough-blasted and displaying a rainbow assortment of subtle colours. Adits connect with the railway and, when the line was worked by steam locomotives, smoke and exhaust belched into the canal tunnel.

In 1948, Tom Rolt and Robert Aickman - founders of the Inland Waterways Association - took a boat along the abandoned Huddersfield Narrow Canal. They were the last people to boat through Standedge Tunnel for more than 50 years

The campaign to restore the Canal took off in 1974 with the formation of the Huddersfield Canal Society. Initially there was little support for the scheme, which was dubbed the 'impossible restoration'. Over the years, however, the Society won over the sceptics and the impossible was achieved with the canal's reopening on 1 May 2001. Regular passages through the tunnel are organised, and there is usually space for hikers in the passenger boat which forms part of the convoy.