



PRESS RELEASE

18 July 2011

'RED WHEEL' HONOUR TO BE GIVEN TO BRITAIN'S LONGEST CANAL TUNNEL

***** PHOTO OPPORTUNITY *****

- What:** Standedge Tunnel receiving a 'Red Wheel' plaque from the Transport Trust for its status as the 'longest canal tunnel in the country'. Jason McCartney MP to unveil the plaque.
- When:** Saturday 23 July:
- Guests boat trip at 12pm
 - Plaque unveiling approx. 12:45pm.
- Where:** Standedge Tunnel, Waters Road, Marsden, Huddersfield, HD7 6NQ

Standedge Tunnel, one of the Seven Wonders of the Waterways, is getting a welcomed gift this July thanks to the Transport Trust choosing it as one of the most 'significant sites of transport heritage'.

Members of the public are welcome to join in the celebrations at one of Yorkshire's most renowned historic monuments, which is being awarded a 'Red Wheel' plaque in recognition of its status as the 'longest, highest and deepest canal tunnel in Britain'.

The new plaque will be presented by the Transport Trust and unveiled by Jason McCartney MP for Colne Valley in a ceremony during Standedge's July Bicentenary Family Fun Day. The plaque will appear on the Grade II Listed tunnel cottages providing a fitting tribute for this 200 year old engineering masterpiece.

The Red Wheel programme commemorates Britain's rich and globally important legacy in the development of transport and supplies explanatory markers for sites of significance - locations ranging from Roman roads and early tramways to seaplane and hovercraft bases.

Judy Jones, Heritage Advisor for British Waterways, explains: "Standedge Tunnel is one of the finest examples of civil engineering on the waterways and an iconic site even after all these years. It's important that we acknowledge our working heritage so we're really pleased that it's been



recognised by the Transport Trust. It's amazing to think that visitors from all around the country are still able to take a trip deep into Standedge Tunnel after the first boats went through over 200 years ago!"

At 5,029 metres (3.25 miles) Standedge Tunnel runs under the Pennines from Marsden through to Diggle. It was originally expected to take six years but ended up taking 16 years to complete. The canal company went bankrupt three times and almost gave up until Thomas Telford was brought in and convinced the canal company to complete the project.

On December 10th, 1810 the first boat passed through the tunnel and the official opening of the canal was on April 4, 1811. The estimated cost of the tunnel was around £55,000 but actually cost more than double that at £123,804.

Rob Shorland-Ball, vice chairman of the Transport Trust, commented: "Britain has an outstanding transport heritage but it is too little known and appreciated. With our new website www.transportheritage.com and 'Red Wheel' plaques, the Transport Trust is enabling many more people to enjoy their ancestors' achievements. Standedge Tunnel is a great example and we're delighted to be presenting this award to the tunnel."

In other news at Standedge, it's tunnel vision all the way during July with a range of exciting events planned including:

- **23 & 24 July: Standedge Bicentenary Family Fun Day**
A weekend of enjoyment for all the family. Boat rides, craft fair, nature walks, habitat box making, stalls by the RSPB and National Trust, special appearance from the Denby Dale Amateur Radio Society. Other outdoor fun games for kids as well as our new children's playground.
- **30 July – 29 August: Artsfest 2011**
Standedge's annual celebration of local art. An exhibition of over 30 local artists work available to buy. Artwork for every taste and pocket!
FREE ENTRY; 11am – 4pm Daily
- **31 July: Falconry Day**
Join Falconry UK for an outside display of birds of prey.
Static display 11am – 4pm; Flying Displays at 12.30pm and 3pm
FREE ENTRY

Full details of all boat trips and special events can be found on www.standedge.co.uk.

Ends

For media enquiries please contact

Simon Henry, Marketing & Communications Executive, British Waterways
Tel: 07789 178506 or email simon.henry@britishwaterways.co.uk

Notes to editors

Standedge Tunnel is the highest (196 metres above sea level), longest (5,029 metres) and deepest canal (194 metres) in the UK.

The Transport Trust – a national charity which, for more than 40 years, has been successfully promoting the preservation of Britain’s heritage in all modes of transport – on land, by water and in the air. The Trust’s supportive Patron is HRH Prince Michael of Kent. The Transport Heritage Programme links with, and takes advice from, national and local historians, industrial archaeologists and other experts, and historical societies.

The final wording of the plaque reads:

