



Photograph © Tony Clayton

Long Lane bridge No.16, north of Wellington on the Shrewsbury canal



Photograph © Andrew Tidy

Shucks Lock bridge No. 3 on the Trench Arm

## Work Parties



### NEWPORT

**Every first\* Saturday of the month  
10am - 4pm**

*\*some work party dates have changed see website for details*

Contact: Steve Heise

Email: [sheise@sncanal.org.uk](mailto:sheise@sncanal.org.uk)

Telephone: 01952 273820

### WAPPENSHALL

**Every third Saturday of the month  
10am - 4pm**

Contact: Alan Harding

Email: [aharding@sncanal.org.uk](mailto:aharding@sncanal.org.uk)

Telephone: 07944 753009

### SHREWSBURY

**Every last Saturday of the month  
10am - 4pm**

Contact: Andrew Dady

Email: [andrewdady@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:andrewdady@hotmail.co.uk)

Telephone: 07967 135223

*If you are planning to come along please confirm the date, time and location with the relevant contact*

### **COPY FOR S&N NEWS**

**S&N News is published four times each year in February, May, August and November. The copy deadline is first of the previous month i.e.**

**first January, first April,**

**first July and first October.**

**COPY WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED**

**AFTER THESE DATES**

**send your copy to the editor**

**email: [editor@sncanal.org.uk](mailto:editor@sncanal.org.uk)**

**Telephone: 07711 858986**

***The Editor reserves the right to edit copy supplied to the newsletter***

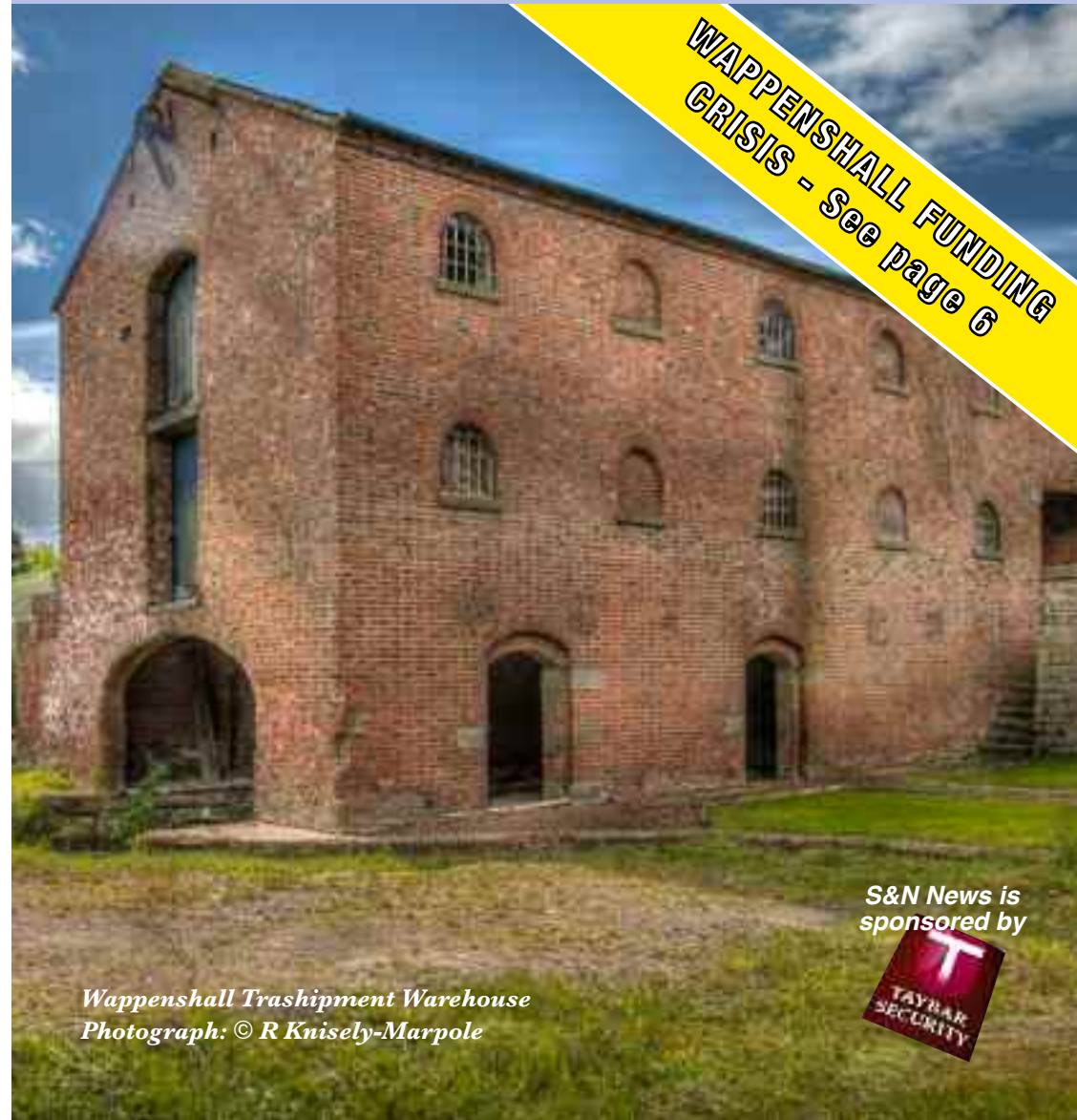
# S&N News



The quarterly newsletter of the  
Shrewsbury and Newport Canals Trust

Issue 56/1 2015

**WAPPENSHALL FUNDING  
CRISIS - See page 6**



S&N News is  
sponsored by



Wappenshall Trashment Warehouse

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**Working to restore the canals in partnership with the  
Norbury to Newport Canal Restoration CIC**



## from the editor

So, here we are in February with Spring just around the corner. That can only mean one thing for the SNCT – our big event of the year, the Norbury Festival, is nearly here again!

This year our Festival will take place on the three days 2nd, 3rd and 4th of May, and we need help from everybody to make it another success. Last year 43 members turned out to help between the build up day (Friday), the open days (Saturday, Sunday and Monday) and the clear up day on the Tuesday. This was a lot more than in previous years and we certainly noticed the difference. It was very enjoyable and, in this case, many hands did make light work – and it would be wonderful if we could do the same again this year

We need everyone who can make it to Norbury, even if its only for a couple of hours, to come and to help. There will be plenty to do. On set up day we need to fence the car park, erect our marquees, mark out the field and generally get the site ready. Over the 3 open days there will be children's activities to organise, boat trips to run, stalls to be manned, car parking and a host of jobs to keep everything running smoothly. On the Monday evening and on Tuesday we will need to get everything taken down and returned to storage.

Please do come along. It's very enjoyable and a great feeling to get involved and know that you are contributing to a big event that will help the Trust

*John Myers, Editor*



## notes from the chair

You will see elsewhere in this edition that the Wappenshall project is in desperate need of your help. If you have not done so already, please do send in your pledge!

A flyer for a completely new and magnificently evocative series of S&N Canal scenes is included in this issue of S&N News and is on the SNCT website. Created by life member and local artist *Alan Reade*, and individually signed by him to raise money for the Wappenshall appeal, members can buy sets of these prints, possibly as gifts for families and friends. If you don't want to make a pledge then please consider buying one (or all) of these. Do please go online and print the flyer and post copies in your local pubs, clubs, shops, doctor's surgery waiting rooms and public places to get as much publicity for the Trust in general and the Wappenshall Fund-raising Appeal in particular. Hard copies are also available from me.

The Canal and River Trust's very active CEO, *Richard Parry*, has agreed to speak to our AGM on 6 June. This is quite a coup for the Trust, as he is a very interesting speaker and will answer any question put to him in a direct manner. Put the date into your diary!

*Bernie Jones  
Chairman*

*The views expressed by contributors to S&N News do not necessarily represent the views or policies of The Shrewsbury and Newport Canals Trust*

## Dates for your Diary

Do, please, check the website for updates

- **Saturday 21st March 2015**  
**Local IWA branch AGM**  
followed by a presentation by Bernie at Coracle Inn, Sundorne Road, Shrewsbury SY1 4RR.  
*SNCT members welcome*
- **Bank holiday weekend**  
**2nd-4th May 2015**  
**Norbury Canal Festival**  
Norbury Junction, Staffs ST20 0PN  
Opens each day at 10am  
*Volunteers urgently needed - see item on P9*
- **Saturday 16th May 2015**  
**Social visit to Anderton Boat Lift**  
in association with local branch of IWA including the 'Top of the World Tour' and a boat trip  
*(see page 16 and the website for full details)*
- **Monday 25th May**  
**Lions Fun Day**  
Quarry Park, Shrewsbury
- **Saturday 6th June 2015**  
**SNCT Annual General Meeting**  
**12-30pm**  
Wappenshall Wharf, Wellington TF6 6DE  
*(details in the next S&N News and on the website)*
- **Sunday 7th June 2015**  
**Shrewsbury River Festival**  
**10am-5pm**  
Quarry Park, Shrewsbury SY1 1JA
- **Saturday and Sunday**  
**4th-5th July 2015**  
**Making Waves Festival**  
Welshpool

## SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS NEWPORT

- **Wednesday 4th March**  
**Wednesday 6th May**  
7.30pm British Legion Club  
Audley Road, Newport TF10 7DP  
*Contact: Steve Heise 01952 273820*

## TELFORD

- **Monday 16th February**  
**Monday 13th April**  
7.30pm The Elephant and Castle  
1 High Street, Dawley TF2 9JQ  
*Contact: Alan Harding 07944 753009*

## SHREWSBURY

- **Tuesday 31st March**  
**Tuesday 26th May**  
7.30pm Meole Brace Bowling Club,  
Meole Rise, off Upper Road,  
Meole Brace, Shrewsbury SY3 9JF  
*Contact: Bernie Jones 01743 709601*

## New Members

*We welcome the following new members*

- Pauline Dallow**, Newport
- Sam & Joy Pownall**, Newport
- Stephen, Nicola & Martin Boney**, Ketley Bank
- Tom Parkhouse**, Norbury Junction
- Neil & Diana Clarke**, Little Wenlock
- Gillian & Clive Robertson**, Maidstone
- Chris, Megan & Grace Hardy and Caroline Grant**  
Wellington
- John & Susan Hopkinson**, Corwen
- Newport Female 77 Group**, Newport
- IWA Birmingham & Worcs Branch**, Birmingham
- Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust**,  
Hereford
- Chris Hardy Tyres Limited**, Telford
- Market Drayton Cruising Association**,  
Market Drayton
- Powys Amateur Radio Club**, Berriew
- Condover WI**, Condover
- Shrewsbury Hard of Hearing Group**, Shrewsbury

# WAPPENSHALL WHARF PROGRESS REPORT

## Wappenshall Funding Crisis - project in danger!

**Our planned restoration of the warehouses and basin at Wappenshall is in crisis. The total projected cost of the project is £1.5 million and the Heritage Lottery Fund grant will contribute £1 million towards this, leaving us with another £500,000 to find.**

So far we have managed to raise £70,000 via other grants and a direct appeal to our members has, to date, added over £10,000 of pledged funds.

Our fundraisers have looked at over 200 grant bodies to see if we are eligible and applications have been made to over 100 of these but so far with little effect. Before the recession we are told that applications to funding bodies used to be successful in about a third of cases but the success rate has now gone down to less than 1 in 20. One major grant of £100,000 we thought we would be successful in obtaining has been turned down

So, what can we do? We are still pursuing other funding sources and, as mentioned above, you will already have received the appeal to pledge your support and if even half of our 1250 members pledge something that will make a significant dent in the amount we are trying to raise. The pledge form is reproduced on the right and if anyone reading this can help then please complete it and send it back to me at the address on the form

We have a deadline later in 2015 to raise the full amount needed. If we do not reach our target by then, the pledges will not be called in, so you know that if you make a pledge and that we call it in, the fund raising has been successful.

It is important to realize that there is now a real possibility that the Wappenshall project will fail. If anyone has any idea where else we can find the matching funds do please let me know

So far we have had a stage one payment of £72,000 from the HLF to put our plans together and we have to then apply for the balance of their £1million grant. The plans are all now in place and our HLF monitor believes we are ready to submit our bid for the balance but, because of the funding shortfall, we have already had to put off making this application. We cannot apply for the balance of the HLF funds until we have proof that the rest of the money will be forthcoming and, if we do not have this money in time, the HLF grant will lapse.

*Bernie Jones*



All Photographs on this page © R Knisely-Marpole

**THOMAS TELFORD  
@ WAPPENSHALL WHARF**

## PLEDGE FORM

**I would like to support this project**

**with my pledge of:** £.....  
*(amount in figures)*

.....  
*(amount in words)*

I understand that this pledge will be redeemable by the Shrewsbury & Newport Canals Trust on completion of fund-raising if the target is reached

Signature.....

Name.....

Address.....

Post Code.....

Organisation *(if relevant)*.....

Please tick if you are a UK Tax Payer, so we may calculate Gift Aid

Please return as soon as possible  
Bernie Jones, Tangalooma, Withington,  
Shrewsbury SY4 4PX

Or copy and e-mail to  
[bjones@sncanal.org.uk](mailto:bjones@sncanal.org.uk)

*All funds raised will be solely used for this project*

# Letters (or emails) to the Editor



## Further reminiscences of Hadley Park Locks

Clifford Bennett's piece on the Hadley Park locks in S&N News 55/4 2014 reminded me of a phase of my life in 1978/9 when I was helping the Panel for Historical Engineering Works to record old civil engineering works, some of which were in danger of being lost due to neglect or new development. One of these historic engineering works (HEWs) was the Shrewsbury Canal and in particular the

Hadley Park locks which, when built were isolated and could be designed to suit local requirements rather than those of the national network. One of these features was the guillotine gates at the downstream ends of the locks which, through many years of disuse and neglect, had by 1979 become in a dilapidated and perhaps dangerous state. I photographed each of the reasonably accessible locks which I identified as numbers 3 Turnip, 4 Hadley Park, 8 Britton and 9 Wappenshall.

The Institution of Civil Engineers has published a series of modestly-priced books containing details of HEWs in the various regions of the UK, for further information see:

<http://www.ice.org.uk/Information-resources/Panel-for-historical-engineering-works>

*Alan Reade BSc CEng MICE FConsE FFB*



*Turnip Lock No.3 on the Trench Arm in 1979*



*Hadley Park Lock No.4 on the Trench Arm*



## Bridge House Care Wellbeing & Rehabilitation

Bridge House is situated in the beautiful countryside of Wappenshall, Telford and is a very special day care centre. The centre provides excellent help to both individuals and family groups which is considered important. Those in need of help due to illness, trauma or accident find the care and understanding they require at Bridge House.

**Bridge House, Wappenshall, Telford TF6 6DE**

Telephone: 01952 676 953  
[www.bridgehousecare.co.uk](http://www.bridgehousecare.co.uk)



## Situations Vacant

**Norbury Canal  
Festival 2015**  
Bank Holiday  
2nd 3rd 4th May



### **Volunteers - Your Trust Needs You!**

**We need a lot of volunteers to help with:**

- putting up marquees and preparing the site
- running the event on the open days inc. manning the Trust stall, car parking, selling trip boat tickets, etc
- taking it all down at the end

**WE PARTICULARLY NEED ANYONE WHO HAS AN RYA HELMSMAN'S CERTIFICATE OR EQUIVALENT TO HELP WITH THE TRIP BOATS**

**please contact... Bernie Jones**

email: [chair@sncanal.org.uk](mailto:chair@sncanal.org.uk) Telephone: 01743 709601 or 07971 016322

# Hedgelaying

– a new skill for canal enthusiasts

I've always wanted to learn to lay a hedge. I am just one of those people who needs to get hands on to appreciate a skill and also I hate to see overgrown "hedges" (trees really) with very little cover for small birds or wildlife.

So when *Glenn Young*, our regional CRT Volunteer Co-ordinator, offered us the opportunity of training I jumped at the chance, along with John, and we set off in December for our first day on the River Weaver near Northwich. There we joined a dozen other volunteers who made us very welcome; some very experienced and a few of us who were really novice. Glenn got us initially to watch a team of three volunteers working on one section while he explained how it works. There are different approaches across the country but essentially the method is very similar. By the end of our first day, we had each been allocated to a team



*Hawthorn trees prepared for laying*



*Thinning the trunk before laying*

separately and had actually had a go at all of the steps in laying an upright or two. We enjoyed it so much that we returned a couple of weeks later for a whole day working on the same section and were really chuffed to see a result for our efforts.

Since then we have put our skill to good use on the Newport Canal at Meretown where there is about 100 metres of overgrown hedge to lay by the towpath. At the SNCT's December work party, a good number of people turned out and did preparation work stripping the lower part of the trunks up to head height along half of the section. Then, in January we put on an extra work party to tackle the first actual laying of the uprights, this time with training support from *Roger Birch*, one of Glenn's team. Over a dozen people turned out on an extremely windy cold day but, thankfully, it stayed dry. By the end of the day, everyone had had a go at the actual cutting and laying and our first 10 metres was looking very good. Progress is quite slow at this stage as everyone is learning but we have two more work parties, in February and March, when we will speed up a bit as we get more experienced. Then we will have to take a break until the autumn to leave nesting birds to do their thing. Just what we want of course although they will gradually have a better place to do it!

*Sam Myers*

If anyone is interested in joining us at the work parties, please ring: **07711 858986**



*Separating tangled branches*



*Starting to bend a trunk*



*Part of the finished hedge*

## The Junction Inn Country Inn and Restaurant

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[www.norburyjunction.com](http://www.norburyjunction.com)

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Carvery every Sunday 12pm till 2pm then roast dinners available and full menu

Pie Day every Wednesday, Steak Nite every Friday

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**5 ★ Council food safety award**

# The Wombridge and Ketley canals and the first British inclined plane

by W. Howard Williams

This piece was originally published in the Shropshire Magazine in the 1950's and subsequently reproduced by Shropshire Libraries in the book "Shropshire Canals" in 1980.

No corrections have been made to the original text of this article. Republished with the kind permission of Shropshire Magazine: [www.shropshiremagazine.com](http://www.shropshiremagazine.com)

In the previous article we saw that the Earl Gower and Co., were the canal pioneers of Shropshire. They were alone in the field for at least 19 years. By this time, 1787, Richard Reynolds, of Ketley, had handed over the management of his ironworks at Ketley and Donnington Wood to his sons, William and Joseph.

About 1787, William Reynolds discovered valuable deposits of coal and ironstone near the surface of the ground at Wombridge. Plimley (General View of the Agriculture of Shropshire, 1803), tells us that William Reynolds, "put into practice an idea he conceived some years before, of uncovering the strata of ironstone and coal which lay near the surface of the ground, so as to get the whole of the strata to a certain depth."

Lack of a good road between Wombridge and the Donnington Wood furnaces presented no problems to Reynolds. He constructed a canal about one-and-a-half miles long which began just south of Wombridge Church and ended in a junction with the Donnington Wood Canal. The Wombridge Canal, which cost only £1,640, was on a level throughout.

By a stroke of good fortune, the newly formed Shrewsbury Canal Company in 1792 sought to purchase a little over a mile of this canal and incorporate it in the Shrewsbury Canal. Reynolds parted with it for £820 - half its original cost. There is little doubt that by 1793 Reynolds had taken all the coal and ironstone he wanted from Wombridge and was pleased to find a purchaser for the canal.

In its time, this canal served three industrial undertakings on its banks. Close to where Wrockwardine Wood Church now stands, the Reynolds brothers erected a glass-house sometime before 1792. Most of the objects were made of dark green glass, such as door-stops, jugs, rolling-pins and bottles for the French wine trade. The glass-house ceased to exist between the years 1835 and 1842.

Less than 300 yards from the site of the glass-house stands Donnington Wood Flour

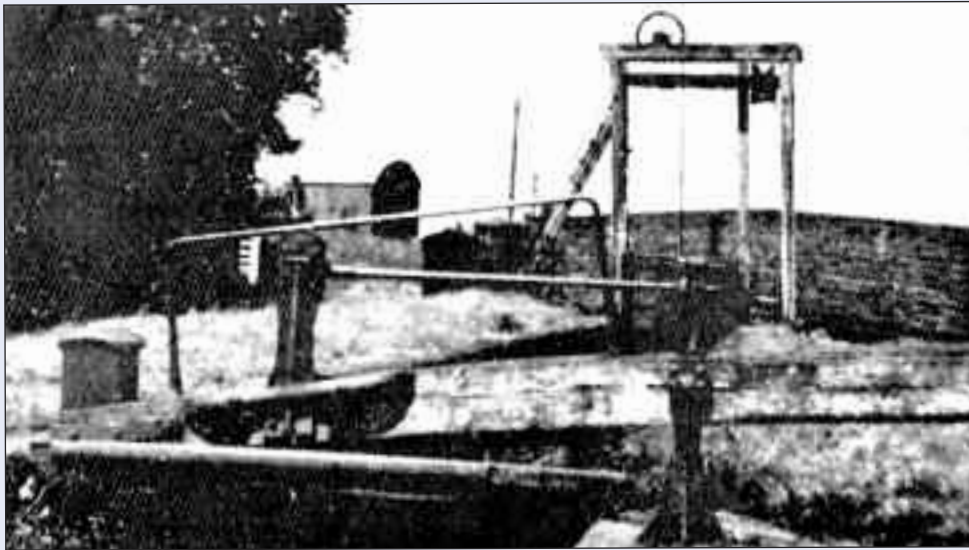


Mill, erected on the side of the canal in 1818 by John Bullock. The mill is still a very flourishing concern which, until a decade ago, was still owned by the family who founded it.

At Wombridge, James Foster erected two furnaces near the canal in 1818, and added a third at a latter date. In 1843 he closed the Wombridge Works and transferred the plant to Madeley Court. The Wombridge Works were opened again in 1854 by John Bennet for the Wombridge Iron Company and a forge was added. Until its closure about 1900 the firm was famous for the manufacture of wire and wire-rods. From 1904 the old Wombridge Canal was used only as far as Bullock's Mill, wheat supplies coming there from Ellesmere Port until the canal closed in 1921.

While Reynolds was making the Wombridge Canal, his mind was also occupied with other thoughts in the same vein. One of these was how best to improve the means of transporting coal and ironstone from the Oakengates district to his works at Ketley. The poorly metalled road between Oakengates and Shrewsbury, via Ketley, was constantly churned up by the passage of many coal carts, making them treacherous at all times and often impassable.

A canal was the obvious solution to the problem, but there were two snags that had to be overcome. The first was a fall in the contour between Oakengates and Ketley Works of 73 feet. The second was that there existed a general shortage of water in the district owing to surface streams having been tapped at source during many years of mining. Even had the water been available for the nine or ten locks necessary to



*Trench Lock, the highest lock on the navigation*

overcome the fall in contour, the venture would have been uneconomical.

The canal was begun in 1787 and was level to the south side of Ketley Hall. The 73 feet fall was overcome by the adoption of an inclined plane between the upper and lower canals. The idea was not a new one, although it was the first inclined plane on any British canal. Reynolds has been credited, erroneously, with the invention of this device.

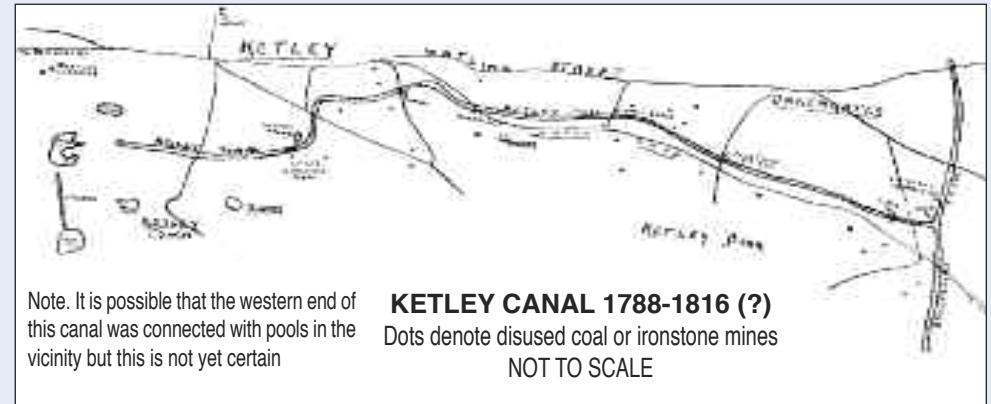
The site of the inclined plane was in doubt for many years, but it is now certain that it was on the south side of Ketley Hall and falling westwards. What is not certain, however, is whether the lower canal went all the way to Ketley Ironworks or whether a light railway connected the works with the lower pond. The authorities, who hold the latter view, seem to be supported by a clause in the “Shropshire Canal Act” which refers to “a navigable canal and railway from Oakengates to Ketley Works.”



*Old Wombridge Canal (incorporated in Shrewsbury Canal, 1793), basin and winding house.*

*Note the two sets of winding gear, one for the incline and the other drawing the carriers over the sill.*

*Drawn from an old photograph by J. F. Smith*



Note. It is possible that the western end of this canal was connected with pools in the vicinity but this is not yet certain

**KETLEY CANAL 1788-1816 (?)**  
Dots denote disused coal or ironstone mines  
NOT TO SCALE

Telford’s article (date 1797) in Plimley’s, gives the impression that the canal went to the works. The Ketley Tithe Map of 1840 does not reveal any railway, but a queer shaped pool near the works has a slang of water, probably 50 yards long, reaching out eastwards in the general direction of Ketley Hall. Incidentally, this Tithe Map does not show the inclined plane. The fact that the map shows several pieces of the canal to be missing is evidence in support of the theory that the canal had been abandoned long before 1840, despite the fact that Bagshaw’s Directory of 1851 states that “The commercial intercourse of Ketley is facilitated by the Shropshire Union Canal.”

Dutens, a French engineer, found the inclined plane disused in 1818, and it is doubtful if it or the Ketley Canal were ever used again.

Telford, the great engineer of roads, canals and bridges, to whom we are deeply indebted for so much reliable information, tells us that the boats on the canal were of eight tons capacity.

They were similar in size to those later used on Shropshire and Shrewsbury Canals but were of greater depth.

Until the completion of the Shropshire Canal in 1792, the Ketley Canal had mainly a one-way traffic from Oakengates to Ketley. The Shropshire Canal Act made provision for (the) junction of the two canals and this was made just south of Snedshill Ironworks. The levels of the two canals were adjusted by a lock on the eastern end of the Ketley Canal.

The western end of a 20 yard long tunnel at Potter's Bank collapsed in 1897.

The Ketley-Coalbrookdale token, which was struck in 1789 to commemorate two feats of local engineering to gain world-wide fame, bears on its obverse side a replica of the Ketley inclined plane, with the Ironbridge on the reverse. The token was payable at Ketley and Coalbrookdale.





On 20th November SNCT member **Sean McDougall** (in the centre) organised a fund raising event at the Junction Inn, Norbury. Award winning Canadian singer and songwriter **Reid Jamieson** and his vivacious wife **Carolyn Victoria Mill** played for over 50 people and an excellent and enjoyable night was had by all. Donations were shared between the SNCT and the Air Ambulance.

## IWA Shrewsbury & North Wales branch Joint Events

(See SNCT website for more information)

### Monday 23rd February 2015

#### Quiz Night at the Navigation Inn, Maestermyn Marina, Whittington SY11 4NU

The SNCT, as well as the Shropshire Union Canal Society, have been challenged by the IWA to send teams to compete at their annual quiz night. There is a meal at 6.30 (prior notice of anyone wanting to eat please to [val.haig@waterways.org.uk](mailto:val.haig@waterways.org.uk)) and the quiz follows at 7.30. This is always an excellent night out so come along with friends or join a team on the night for a fun social evening.

### Saturday 16th May 2015

#### Have you ever wanted to see the Anderton Boat Lift up close?

Well now you can. A “Top of the World” tour and a boat trip on the Anderton Boat Lift and the River Weaver has been arranged.

The Top of the World tour is open to up to 16 people (2 lots of 8) and will be in late morning. It will take you along the aqueduct and into the control room and machine deck. As it takes you to the top of the lift, it is not suitable for anyone with a fear of heights and there are stairs to climb. After the tour is lunch then a boat trip down the lift and along the river, getting back at about 3.30pm. The costs per person are £10 for the Top of the World (due on booking) and £9.75 for the boat trip (due by 10/4/15); you can book for either or both. Send your cheques (made out to the Inland Waterways Association) to Val Haig, 7 Barnton Edge, Stone ST15 8ZR

## “Shrewsbury has a canal – it’s just temporarily buried!”

John Yates

Former SNCT Trustee **John Yates** was the guest speaker at IWA Shrewsbury & North Wales Branch’s autumn social evening and talk, held at Shrewsbury’s Brooklands Hotel in early November. Shrugging aside a wet autumnal night, an audience of almost forty including a number of SNCT members enjoyed an excellent fish-and-chip supper and an informative and thought-provoking presentation in convivial surroundings.

In a wide-ranging talk under the title “Canal Heritage – A Journey”, John took us initially on an autobiographical cruise chronicling his early adult life and burgeoning interest in, first, steam railways and subsequently, after gaining his degree at UEA Norwich, boats and canals.

Somehow managing to combine a “day job” as a local government officer in London and operating a coal supply business with his wife Sue on a motor and butty in the Midlands, John fortunately also developed a keen interest and skill in photography. This served his audience well throughout the evening as he illustrated his points with a splendid and, at times, very evocative collection of images spanning six decades.

From his autobiographical past, with its photographs of much-altered urban canalscapes – what a transformation at Brindley Place! – he moved to the conservation challenges of the present day, where John is now an inspector with English Heritage as well as serving on Canal & River Trust’s Council and its Heritage Committee.

Highlighting that we want and need to conserve not only structures, but also fast-disappearing traditional skills, such as building wooden and riveted-steel canal boats, boat painting and signwriting and horse boating, John discussed some of the differing and sometimes conflicting approaches to conservation before taking questions from the audience.

Our thanks go to IWA Shrewsbury & North Wales Branch for the invitation, as well as for their continued and ongoing support for the work of the Trust.

Michael Haig



Shrewsbury Canal stone edge coping just visible (adjacent to brick wall) at Ditherington Flax Mill Maltings

photo courtesy John Yates



# The Weald Moors and Kinley wide hole

The early 1950s was the time I became a little more proficient at fishing, as well as discovering the wonderful remoteness of the Weald Moors. Perhaps the most frequented place I fished was the Kinley wide hole, which was easily accessed and adjacent to the Wappenshall and Preston Moors. The canal here carried just a reasonable amount of weed, was quite deep in places and the whole stretch of the water, from the Kinley Bridge way up towards Preston wide hole was very special. It had lovely views in all directions, as the Wappenshall and Preston Moors collided, and there were often cattle taking water from the canal edges in the fields opposite. On fine days, there was a constant sound of crickets with yellow hammers singing and, from the moor, lapwings, curlew and skylark made their presence known. My father was a true lover of the canal, the Weald Moors and the fields around where, at the seasonal time, he collected mushrooms and water cress.

In those early years of the 50s, there was no reel, special rods, floats or fancy baits, just a straight forward, three piece rod, the ferules of which held a nylon line, with float, hook and gut, tied off at the rod handle. For roach and perch, a size 16 hook would be used and for bream, a size 14 and a size 10 for tench. Pike fishing was altogether a different matter!

The Kinley wide hole had a reputation for good fishing and I soon learned the best places to fish. The bait for roach and bream was sugared bread paste, held in a muslin cloth, which then stiffened after wetting. For perch, I used maggots or worms, for tench it was bread; a large piece and placed on the bottom, with the heavy float lying flat on the surface. I could sit on the bank for hours, enjoying the sound of the birds behind me and the peace and quiet. Strangely, very few other people came along and only once did I encounter the water



Heather Dodd

People ice skating on Kinley Wide taken around 1962. The feature is also referred to as Wappenshall Wide. The bridge in the distance (upper right) is bridge 28 and Wappenshall Junction is 440 yards beyond it.

bailiff, but one Saturday morning, on a very hot summer's day, something very unusual happened!

After breakfast at home, I decided that it was a reasonable day to go fishing at Kinley wide hole. All tackle and bait prepared, off I cycled and arrived at the Pump on the Preston road about 20 minutes later. The distance from the Pump to Kinley bridge was only about 50 yards and at the bridge a five barred gate opened up to the Weald Moors. Normally, this little stretch of lane was very quiet and rather dark as the hawthorn trees bent over from each side. I was surprised to see, parked in the lane facing the bridge was a charabanc, no one about and I rode up to the bridge and looked across the wide hole, where I saw about twenty fishermen just packing up and weighing their catch. It had obviously been a contest that morning; I had never seen a fishing contest on any part of the canal before. I nosied around to see what they had caught, which wasn't much and I came to the conclusion that the fishermen were from Wolverhampton.

Once the weighing in had finished about six men completely stripped off and dived into the water, swimming and splashing about. My thoughts of a good days fishing quickly went.

After about 20 minutes or so, they all regrouped and made their way back to the charabanc and peace and quiet was restored, as I sat on the bank, wondering what to do next. Decision made, I got back on my bike and went home!

My brothers, Gerald and Terence often swam in the Trench Pool and at Peaty Lock, but all this contest stuff and swimming, in the waters I knew so well, was really something new!

Clifford Bennett.

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## Wellington LA21 group announce Weald Moors project



*The almshouses at Preston on the Weald Moors with the line of the canal in the foreground*

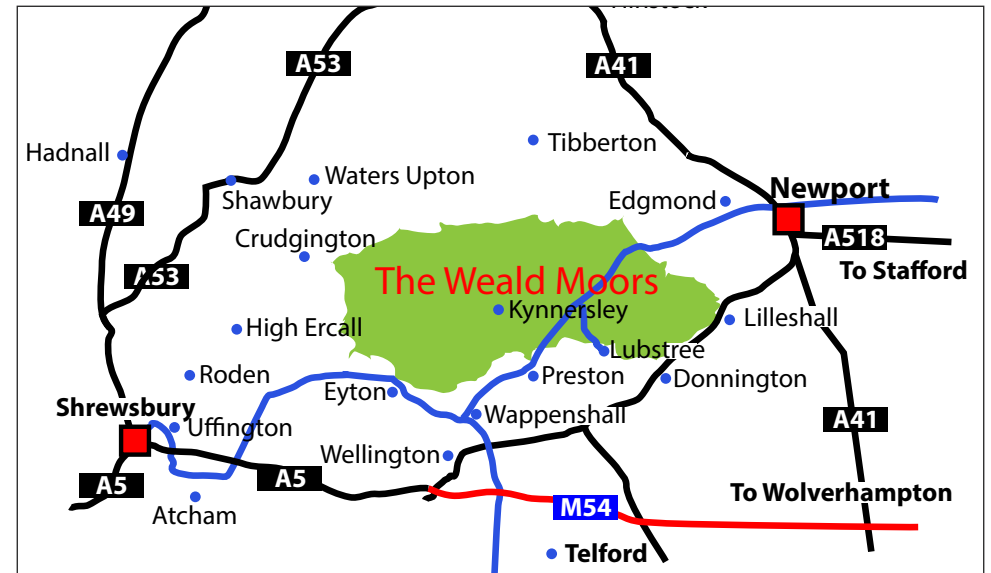
Wellington Local Agenda 21 Group has announced details of its first project for 2015, Explore the Weald Moors. With the support of the Big Lottery Fund's Awards for All programme, they will be producing a comprehensive guide to the habitat and flora and fauna of the east Shropshire wetlands — one of the West Midlands most precious wildlife sites. The SNCT has been asked to support this initiative and is delighted to do so, particularly as so many miles of our canals cross the Weald Moors.

Stretching for over fifty square miles between the market towns of Wellington and Newport, the Weald Moors are characterised by rush-filled drainage dykes, damp pastures and wet woodlands. The project will provide a comprehensive guide for local people to explore the moors and discover the many nuances of a fragile landscape that has been millions of years in the making.

The Weald Moors origins extend far back into the Earth's history and owe their existence to cataclysmic events at the end of the last Ice Age, when peat and other organic deposits formed along the course of what is now the River Strine and its many tributaries. Above the peat level, a number of islands emerged upon which settlements such as Kynnersley and The Wall grew up, together with other communities on the edge of the moorland, including Preston, Eyton and Crudgington.

The moors are an important area for recreation and the project will promote green travel links between Wellington and Newport — highlighting the best routes for cyclists, walkers and riders to explore what is, for many people, a relatively undiscovered landscape. As part of the project, a number of events to celebrate the ecology of the Weald Moors will also take place. A spokesperson for the group commented "we are hugely grateful to Awards for All for allowing us to bring this important project to fruition. The support of local people will be crucial to the success of the scheme and we would love to hear from anyone with memories of wildlife on the canal as it crossed the moors".

If you'd like to get involved, or discover more about the project, please contact them by e-mail [Wellingtonla21@gmail.com](mailto:Wellingtonla21@gmail.com) or via Twitter: [www.twitter.com/wellingtonla21](http://www.twitter.com/wellingtonla21)



*A map showing the approximate position of The Weald Moors. The Newport Canal crossed the moors to Wappenshall Wharf where it joined the Shrewsbury Canal. Canals marked in blue*

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**“They teach anything in universities today.  
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*Orson Welles*

Over the last two workparties at Wappenshall work has been underway to drain the area below the main transhipment warehouse. This was necessary so that our structural engineer, *Bob Johnson*, could inspect the base of the building and make sure that it is sound.

There had been two earlier failed attempts to get the water out but, this time, the group was determined to succeed as it was crucial that we get it drained. The only alternative would have been to get contractors in to do the work.

A group of four, *Phil Jones, Jim and Marion Weir and Alan Harding*, set about digging a trench through the bund into the West Basin. This went well until it was realised that the level of the ground beyond the bund was actually higher than the level of the water under the building. This then necessitated digging the trench right down to the level of the canal itself. It was, to say the least, extremely muddy.

It was discovered that there was a 150mm tall concrete bar that prevented the draining of the last water from the basin. Eventually a concrete breaker had to be borrowed from *John Freeman's* hire company to take that out and allow the last of the water to run out. It was VERY hard work to remove the remaining sediment from the bottom of the drained basin as it was mostly clay which, mixed with water, was very heavy and difficult to lift out by hand.

The basin was successfully drained and *Bob Johnson* reports that everything is sound.



*The Mud Larks*



*Working to clear water from the wharf under the Transhipment Warehouse*