

Richard Parry to speak at AGM



photo courtesy of Canal & River Trust

The Wappenshall funding crisis has had one unexpected benefit. We can still hold this year's AGM there, giving our members the opportunity to take a conducted tour of the site and see how plans for restoration have developed.

Richard Parry, CEO of the Canal & River Trust (CRT), will be our keynote speaker. CRT still owns four short sections of the Shrewsbury and Newport canals, including the first stretch that we plan to re-water at Forton, so they are a key stakeholder. As CRT becomes more actively involved in the restoration of the canals, the SNCT is getting increasing support from them. Their volunteer co-ordinators have been teaching us to hedge-lay at Meretown and have offered us other important training needed as we actually start the restoration of our canals. Richard is a gifted speaker and this is an excellent opportunity to come along and hear how he sees CRT developing in the future.

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

Telephone: 01952 273820

WAPPENSHALL

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

Contact: Alan Harding

Email: aharding@sncanal.org.uk

Telephone: 07944 753009

SHREWSBURY

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

Contact: Andrew Dady

Email: 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

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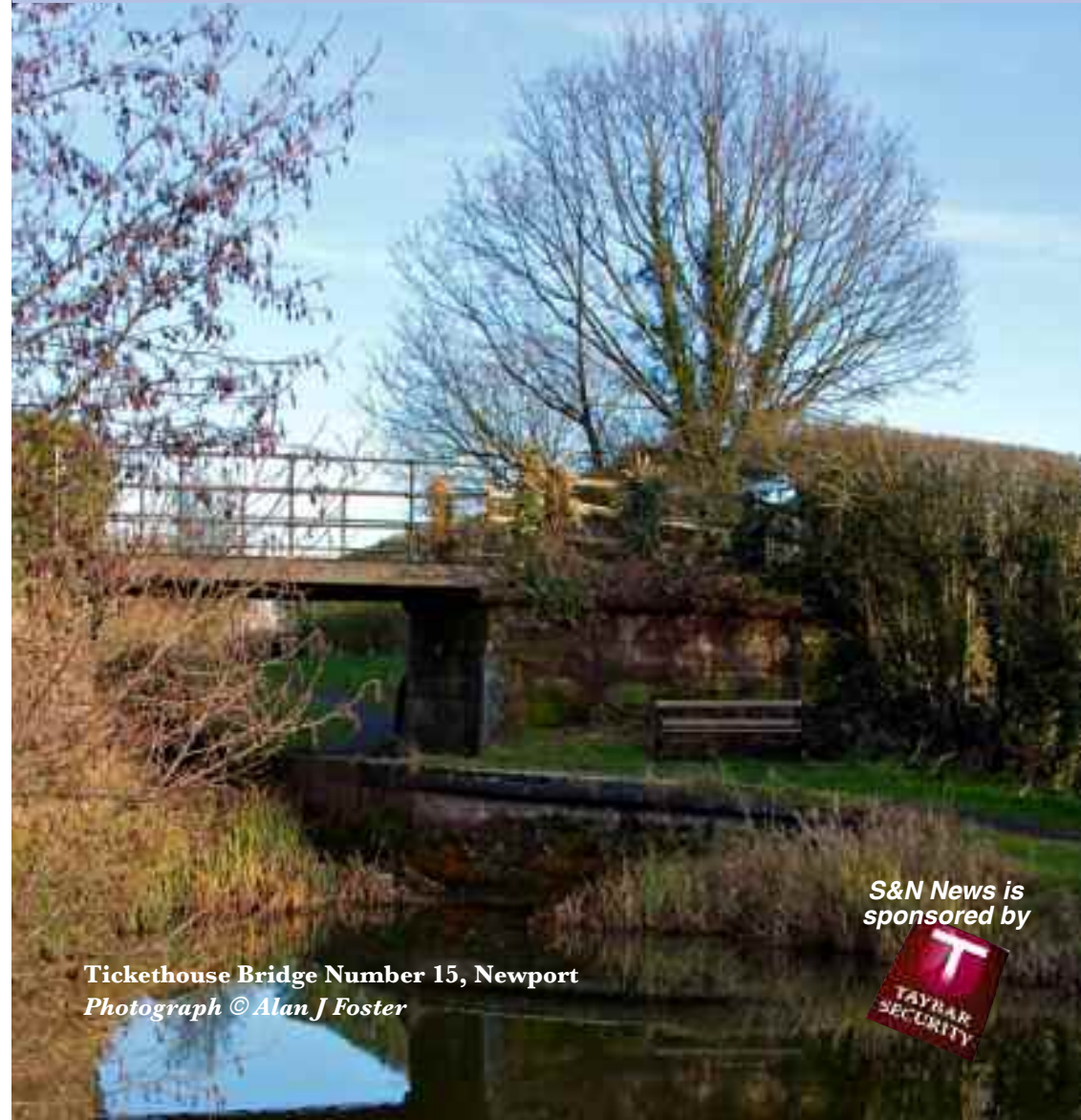
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S&N News



The quarterly newsletter of the
Shrewsbury and Newport Canals Trust

Issue 57/2 2015



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Tickethouse Bridge Number 15, Newport
Photograph © Alan J Foster



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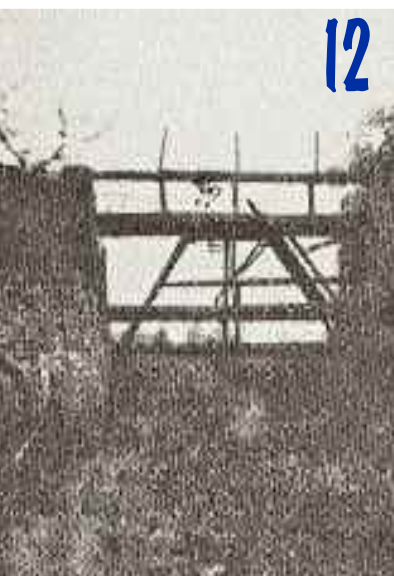
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Working to restore the canals in partnership with the Norbury to Newport Canal Restoration CIC

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

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notes from the chair

At the time of writing this, planning for the Norbury Canal Festival is well advanced. We had the maximum 36 boats booked in by mid-January, which was a first. Ray Buss, our Harbourmaster once again, has the good problem of fitting them all in, but thanks to CRT allowing us to use 70 metres of mooring to the north of the bridge (another first) we can fit in an extra three narrowboats.

We have an outstanding headline band in Vavoom on Saturday evening, preceded by The Lydia O'Dowd Band. These are two top acts and should not be missed. The Junction Inn will be serving a new menu for the event.

This is the Trust's biggest event of the year, so if you have not been before, please put the dates of 2-4 May into your diary. We always need as many members as possible to help set things up on the Friday, during the event and on the Tuesday afterwards to help tidy up and transport marquees, fencing, chairs and other kit back to Wappenshall. So if you can come to help out - even for just a couple of hours - it really is a case of "many hands make light work."

We have 3 months in the spring of 2016 to exhibit at the Shrewsbury Museum. This will present a unique opportunity for the Trust to not only tell the story of the canals and the Shrewsbury Canal in particular, but also to raise the Trust's profile and recruit some more members. If you are interested in helping with this project, please let me know.

Finally, I am pleased to report that Lesley Smith is now through her major health problem and has agreed to come to entertain us on 16th October. This is the re-scheduled date from last November. Please come along and support this major fund-raiser for the Trust. Details in the next newsletter.

Bernie Jones
Chairman

Dates for your Diary

Do, please, check the website for updates

- **Trustees Meeting**
Thursday 21st May 7.30pm
Withington Parish Rooms,
SY4 4PQ
 - **Lions Fun Day***
Monday 25th May
Quarry Park, Shrewsbury
 - **SNCT Annual General Meeting**
Saturday 6th June 12.30pm
Wappenshall Wharf, Wappenshall TF6 6DE
details enclosed and on the website
 - **Shrewsbury River Festival***
Sunday 7th June 10am-5pm
Quarry Park SY1 1JA
 - **Dinghy Dawdle**
Sunday 21st June 10am
Black Shed Newport TF10 7LD
volunteers needed see page 10 for details
 - **Welsh Waterways Festival***
Saturday and Sunday 4th-5th July
Welshpool
 - **Himalayan Balsam Bash**
Saturday 11th July 10.00am
Water Lane, Newport, TF10 7LD
volunteers needed see page 5 for details
 - **Upton Magna Fete***
Sunday 12th July
 - **Lions Day on Wheels***
Sunday 12th July, 11.00am to 4.00pm
Bowring Park, Wellington TF1 2BP
 - **Whitchurch Boat Rally***
Saturday and Sunday
5th, 6th September
Whitchurch Canal Arm, Whitchurch
- * We need help to 'man' the Trust stand for a couple of hours at these events.
Contact Bernie Jones on: **07971 016322**

SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS NEWPORT

- **Wednesday 6th May**
Wednesday 1st July
7.30pm British Legion Club
Audley Road, Newport TF10 7DP
Contact: Steve Heise **07732 977855**

TELFORD

- **Monday 15th June**
Monday 10th August
7.30pm The Elephant and Castle
1 High Street, Dawley TF2 9JQ
Contact: Alan Harding **07944 753009**

SHREWSBURY

- **Tuesday 26th May**
Tuesday 28th July
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

- Susan & John Hopkinson**, Corwen
- Jo & Ronald Haseman**, Priorslee
- Anne & Jim Tranter**, Rowton
- Anna Newman & John Cliff**, Highley
- Malcolm Bates**, Birmingham
- John Haynes**, Shrewsbury
- Jan & Michael Thompson**, California
- Claire & Robert Broderick**, Longdon on Tern
- Cathy & Paul Niblett**, Trentham
- John Howat**, Rawtenstall
- Adrienne & Rob Barnwell**, Norbury
- West Midlands Transport Circle**
- Wrekin U3A**, Shifnal
- Hadley Five-0**, Hadley
- Church Stretton Rotary Club**

2015 Himalayan Balsam Bash

Newport Canal, 10am Saturday 11th July
Meet at Black Hut, Water Lane,
Newport TF10 7LD



We are working to remove Himalayan Balsam entirely from the Newport Canal. This species is an invasive non-native plant that smothers other plants. Whilst it is pretty and colourful, it crowds out other flora and can take over whole areas of canal and river bank.

The watered stretch of the Newport Canal is infested with Himalayan Balsam and, if it is left unchecked, it will wipe out the native plants which have helped to make this a Site of Special Scientific Interest. If we can pull it all out for 3 or 4 years that will control it and we can beat it.

Last year we held a very successful Balsam Bash and managed to clear it from the canal to the east of Town Lock. That will have weakened its hold there so, this year, we should be able to clear that area more quickly then move on further downstream.

Himalayan Balsam pulls out easily. We need to remove as much of it as we can and we need volunteers to help us. Can you spare a couple of hours?

Please bring gloves and wear suitable footwear for working by the canal. If we manage to get into the area to the west of Town Bridge volunteers will need protection from tall nettles.

Contact: John Myers **07711 858986**
Email: editor@sncanal.org.uk

WAPPENSHALL WHARF PROGRESS REPORT

I have been overwhelmed by the response to our Wappenshall Pledges Appeal. As I write this, over £32,000 has been pledged and some members have been kind enough to send a cheque too. This support is doubly important, since the HLF set a lot of store by the members of the Trust (and others) that don't merely say they are in support, but are actually willing to put their hands in the pockets to fund the project.

This wonderful involvement, by so many people, has sufficiently impressed the HLF that we have been able to negotiate an extension to the date by which we need to raise the remainder of our match funding. We now MUST close this funding gap by no later than 15 December 2015, or the £1M grant will lapse.

We have not stood still whilst all this has been going on either. Firstly, you will have seen the set of 7 wonderful water-colour prints that life member *Alan Reade* has painted. There was a flyer in the last edition of S&N News giving details. For every print sold, at least £5 will go to the Wappenshall Appeal, so please DO support this and order your prints. If you can't find this, see page 7 opposite.

But perhaps the most significant step we have taken is to employ Wooton George, a team of professional fund-raisers. This company was recommended by CRT's Head of Fund-Raising, Ruth Ruderham and early indications are good. They have identified 4 key areas and 2 of these are being actively pursued at present. The other two will be longer term and will significantly help to raise money beyond the Wappenshall Project for actually restoring sections of the canals.

Can I just appeal to anyone reading this who has not yet made a pledge, to PLEASE do so without delay. Use the pledge form opposite or simply call me on 01743 709601 or call/text 07971 016322 or email bjones@sncanal.org.uk and I'll take any details from you and help you to help us make the Wappenshall dream a reality.

S&N Prints for Sale



Alan Reade, Bernie Jones and publisher Simon Morris at the launch of the posters

Claverley civil engineer *Alan Reade* has long been interested in canals, he is a life member of the SNCT and a gifted watercolour artist. When he heard about the funding crisis for Wappenshall he came up with an idea to help. He volunteered to visit some of the key sites along the Shrewsbury and the Newport canals and to paint them, so that prints from his paintings could be sold to help raise funds for the appeal. Alan has previously done something similar to this for the Severn Valley Railway and been very successful, raising significant sums of money

A flyer showing the posters was sent out with the last issue of S&N News and they can also be viewed on the trust's website at <http://cms.snct.co.uk/superb-watercolour-prints-of-our-canals-for-sale>. Those prints are now for sale, all signed by the artist and are available in various sizes priced from £8 each (plus p&p if sent by post) from Smith York Fine Arts Publishers in the Fusion Building at the Jackfield Tile Museum, Ironbridge TF8 7AP, telephone 01952 883461. At least £5 from the sale of each print will be donated to the Appeal

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.....

Telephone No.....

Email address.....

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,
Caernarvon Lane, Withington,
Shrewsbury SY4 4PX

Or copy and e-mail to

bjones@sncanal.org.uk

All funds raised will be solely used for this project

SNCT display planned for the Shrewsbury Museum



photo courtesy of Shrewsbury Museum

Some Shrewsbury based SNCT members were not impressed that Shrewsbury's new museum, when it opened, barely mentioned the canal. I contacted the Museum's Manager (and SNCT member) *Phil Scoggins*, to talk about this. He explained to me that the museum's management team had made a decision that, as far as possible, they would only show tactile exhibits. They had been able to find very little connected with the canal that could be used for display purposes. However, after discussion, Phil was kind enough to offer the Trust some space on the top floor of the museum for up to three months. Phil was kind enough to offer us the whole of the top floor of the museum for four months in the Spring of 2016, for the Trust to put on a display solely about the canals.

So we need everyone who can help to make this an impressive display to come forward with their ideas. Just as importantly, we need an SNCT team to plan the event and to man whilst it is open. It's a big space to fill, but we do have things like the metal parts of the crane that used to be on the wharf at Wappenshall. We could also start to produce some of the educational items planned for Thomas Telford @ Wappenshall Wharf e.g. a scale model of the skew bridge made from wooden blocks to show its construction. But I'm sure there will be plenty of good ideas out there that others can think of. So, if you have any, please let me know soonest. And do please volunteer to help to plan this major event for the Trust.

Bernie Jones



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



Kevin Pardy (on the right), Shropshire Concorollor for the Sundorne area, officially unveiled the newly installed information panel at Sundorne, Shrewsbury with Anne Jones, Derek Taylor, Paul Hancox and Chairman, Bernie Jones. The panel is situated next to the bed of the canal at Lesley Owen Way and highlights the 400m of canal bed which has been cleared by the SNCT workparties over the last two years, ready for re-watering.

Newport Canal Dinghy Dawdle 2015

Sunday June 21st 10am - 3pm

Both Telford and Wrekin Council and Natural England (NE) have agreed that, for a second year, we can navigate the 1½ miles of the Newport canal that is in water, in unpowered boats. Natural England have requested that we limit the number of boats to 5 this time, to avoid excessive disturbance to rare aquatic weeds - last year they allowed us just 3 boats so this is excellent!

With this in mind, we will prioritise two man Kayaks or canoes to give more people an opportunity to get on the water. This year we hope to navigate the entire in-water stretch from end to end and give local people an idea of what it's like to see boats moving along the waterway - it was built for boats but the only recent activity has been fishing.

We have decided to incorporate a floating litter pick into the day, retrieving small items from the water and offside that cannot be reached from the bank. This will be more in the nature of paper and cans rather than bicycles and prams! We will need some assistance from the bank to help with this activity.

Everyone will meet and unload the boats at the Black Shed from about 9.30am. It would be useful to have a photographer. Anyone willing/wishing to help or participate with the Dinghy Dawdle please contact *Barry Witts* at barry.witts@gmail.com



Getting ready for the summer?

We have just added 'T' shirts and baseball caps to our range of SNCT branded clothing



The 'T' shirts are royal blue, like our Polo Shirts, and show our SNCT logo. They will be available in small, medium, large and extra large sizes and are priced at £9 each.

The baseball caps are navy blue to match our fleeces and have the SNCT name (in full) embroidered onto them. One size fits all as they can be adjusted and, again, they are priced at £9 each.

We order 'T' Shirts and baseball caps in batches from our supplier, so if you are interested please contact adharding@sncanal.org.uk with your order and contact details.

As long as we have enough interest, we will be adding 'T' Shirts and baseball caps to the Sales part of our website so you can order the full range of SNCT clothing whenever you want!

Lesley Smith

a comedy evening

16th October

at Burton Borough School

We are delighted that *Lesley Smith* has overcome her health problems and is planning to entertain us on 16th October at Burton Borough School in Newport. The evening will include a meal (bring your own drinks) and a comical presentation by Lesley. Tickets will be £20 each. More details in the next issue

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The Shropshire Canal of 1788 was the first Public Enterprise of its kind

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

THE canals dealt with in the previous article were private undertakings. The Shropshire Canal, which was a much more venturesome enterprise, was financed by public subscription. It was a venturesome project because the contours of the countryside through which it was to be cut varied so greatly that no fewer than three large inclined planes had to be constructed, together with two long tunnels and one short one and a small aqueduct.

It is not at all surprising that the man who conceived the idea of making the canal, who surveyed it and did so much to bring the task to a successful conclusion was none other than William Reynolds, of Ketley. In a letter to his brother-in-law, dated January 1788, he mentioned that he was making a canal from Oakengates to Ketley and had another in contemplation from Donnington Wood to the Severn.

In "A Dynasty of Ironfounders", Rastrick claims that this canal was a Coalbrookdale Company undertaking. A study of the "Shropshire Canal Act", 1788, Telford's article in Plymley's "Shropshire" and other authoritative works of reference, make it difficult to reconcile this claim.

In 1788, a subscription was entered into, and an Act of Parliament was obtained for the purpose of "making and maintaining of a navigable canal from Donnington Wood, to, or near a place called Southill Bank, and then by two several branches to communicate with the River Severn; one near Coalbrookdale and the other at Coalport.

There were to be 500 shares each of £125. The Act, which is a lengthy document, lists the owners of lands through which the canal would be cut, and gives the names of the 58 subscribers who formed the "Company of Proprietors of the Shropshire Canal Navigation". These include:- The Marquis of Stafford, The Earl of Shrewsbury, Lord Berwick, Sir Wm. Jerningham, Isaac Hawkins Brown, Robert Burton, William Cludde, Samuel Darby, Thomas Eyton, Thomas Gilbert, William Hallen, Egerton Leeke, William Pulteney, Richard and William Reynolds, Joseph, Elizabeth and Hannah Mary Rathbone, Hannah Rose, Cornelius Reynolds and John Wilkinson.

The canal began in a junction with the Donnington Wood canal, and almost immediately came the inclined plane 320 yards long, with a perpendicular rise of 120 feet. The canal then proceeded through Cockshutt, along the ridge of high ground above Wrockwardine Wood and Oakengates. After passing beneath the road between Oakengates and St. Georges, the canal passed through Snedshill Tunnel, 279 yards long. Thence it passed through Snedshill Ironworks, near which it was joined by the Ketley Canal. South of this junction, it passed under what is now the London - Holyhead Road, near to the Greyhound Inn by means of a short tunnel. About 300 yards south it passed near to Hollinswood Ironworks. Further south were the Dark Lane



Site of the Wrockwardine Wood inclined plane, as it appears today

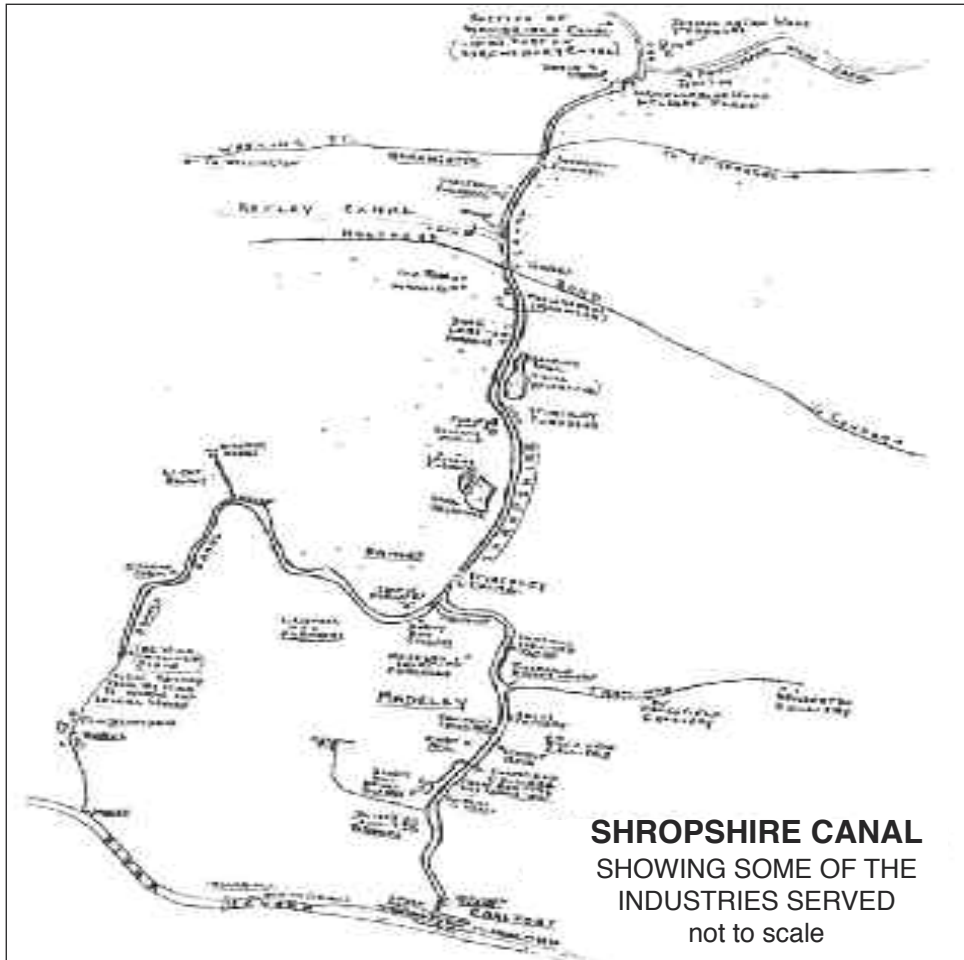
Furnaces of the Botfields on the west bank, while a little further on was Randlay Pool, one of the canal reservoirs. Nearby were the Stirchley Ironworks, also a Botfield Works. The Jerry Furnaces were on the opposite side of the canal, while about half-mile distant were Bishton's Langley Furnaces, which were served by a light railway. Nearer to Stirchley was another reservoir. The canal passed through the 281 yard long Stirchley Tunnel before it divided.

On emerging from the tunnel, the main line of the canal struck off across the meadows to Windmill Farm. Here a long incline, 600 yards long, was constructed. At the top of the incline were the boat-repair sheds. After passing the Windmill Incline, the canal passed under the road and into the Tweedale basin. From here light railways served the Madeley Court Furnaces, and the Halesfield and Kemberton Collieries. Water was brought to the canal here from those collieries.

The canal proceeded east of Madeley. Near the Queen Street Bridge, Messrs. Edge and Co., Chainmakers, once had a foundry, whilst Martin Randall's China Works once occupied a site near Hill's Lane Bridge. A light railway served Hill's Lane Colliery nearby. Further south, one can still see the gaunt remains of a bridge by which pit spoil was taken by a light railway from Shawfield Colliery to Blist's Hill Brickworks. Boat-building and repair sheds were situated at Blist's Hill. Here also were brick-and-tile works on opposite sides of the canal. The Blist's Hill Furnaces of the Madeley Wood Company, close by, were the last cold-blast furnaces to operate in the county. Randall records that, at a time of industrial strife in the middle of the last century, a body of strikers from other works in the district threatened to divert the canal into the works here, if the men did not stop work in sympathy with them.

Coal was brought to a wharf at Blist's Hill from the Meadow Pit, south of Madeley, by way of Baguley's Wind and the High Bridge over the Coalport Road.

The canal continued to the Hay, where the steepest of the inclined planes connected with a lower pound, 3/4 of a mile long, cut parallel with the River Severn, but above flood level, at Coalport. Between this pound and the river were erected warehouses, which were constructed so that goods could be conveniently transferred from canal boats to river craft and vice versa.



It has been estimated that goods including coal and iron, in excess of 100,000 tons passed through these warehouses annually in the peak of local industrial prosperity. It is an ironic thought that today Coalport is a forgotten inland port.

The branch canal, after leaving the main line, passed over a small stone aqueduct at a point where the Dawley - Madeley road passed through the small village now called Aqueduct. It then wound its way towards Dawley, passing and serving Dawley Castle Furnaces and Botany Bay Colliery, and several smaller collieries en route. Then on through Little Dawley to a point near to where Doseley church now stands. From here a light railway served Horsehay Furnaces. The canal then doubled back, horse-shoe fashion, crossing beneath Holywell Lane and Green Lane to end at the top of the "Wind" at what was then known as Brierley Hill. The original plan was to take the canal over Lincoln Hill, near to the Rotunda, and to connect with the river near Styches Weir by means of an inclined plane, but this part of the plan was abandoned.

At the "Wind," a connection with the nearby Coalbrookdale Works was effected by twin shafts, 120 feet deep, sunk to a tunnel into which a light railway was run. The "Wind" operated on the same principal as a

similar device at Lilleshall on the Donnington Wood Canal. This railway served the Dale Works and went on to the Loadcroft Wharf on the river near Dale End.

The canal and branch were completed in 1792.

In 1794, the Coalbrookdale Company abandoned the tunnel and shafts and constructed an inclined plane.

A map of Dawley Parva Manor, dated 1825, describes the section of the canal from the apex of the "horse-shoe" at Doseley to the top of the "Wind" as "dry canal". It had evidently been substituted by a light railway which is shown as running from the canal near Giggie Lane, through Lightmoor to Coalbrookdale.

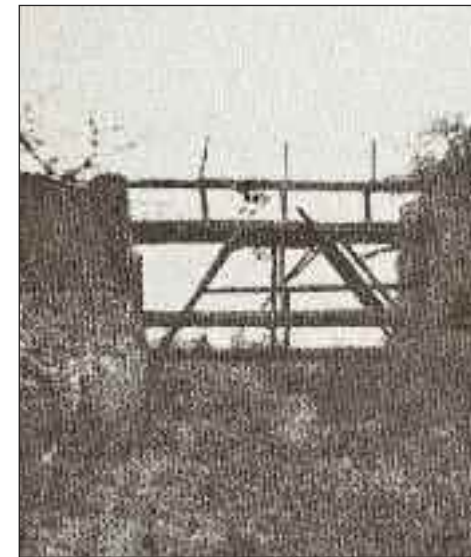
In 1854 the canal was leased to the London and North-Western Railway, who planned to replace it with a railway. The necessary Act of Parliament to authorise this was obtained in 1857, and the Deed of Transfer is dated February, 1858. The Act authorised the closing of the section of the canal from the bottom of the Windmill incline, to and including the Wrockwardine Wood incline, and the branch canal. The Coalport branch railway was opened in 1861.

The section of the canal from Tweedale basin to the river remained active until 1902, when the section from Blist's Hill Furnaces to the river was abandoned. The remaining section continued in use for the supply of fuel to Blist's Hill Furnaces from Kemberton and Halesfield Collieries, and shortly after the furnaces were blown out in 1912 the last part of this once very active waterway was abandoned.

The boats used were the square-ended tub boats carrying 5 tons, and they passed the incline at the rate of six up and six down per hour.

The actual cost of the Shropshire Canal and branch, which was about 10 1/2 miles long, was £47,500.

According to "Fenn's Funds" (a primitive Stock Exchange Year Book) for 1837, the dividend paid on a £125 share was £8.



Remains of the bridge which carries the mineral railway from Shawfield Colliery to Blist's Hill brickworks



The aqueduct which carried the branch canal to Dawley

snippets



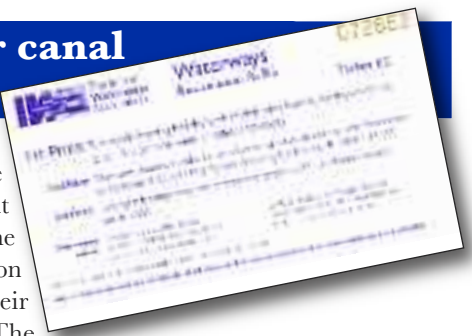
Earlier this year **Jennifer Green** (on the left) and **Kate Langley** from the Canal and River Trust, came to Wappenshall Wharf to make a short video. This can now be seen on the CRT website. The theme is volunteering and the production is intended to encourage more people to get involved with the work of restoration trusts like ours. It features our chairman, Bernie Jones, with some cut away shots of Wappenshall and of Jusfashow.



I'm sure that Eric Tanner would be very happy to know we have used his legacy to refurbish a Welfare Unit. This is nearly complete and will be used for the benefit of volunteers at remote work party locations for a hot drink, or to 'spend a penny'
Editor

The second most popular canal restoration in the UK?

In August 2014 the Inland Waterways Association launched a new idea, an innovative raffle which aimed to raise £10,000 for the benefit of individual waterway restoration charities like the Shrewsbury & Newport Canals Trust. Each person who bought a ticket was able to nominate their preferred restoration trust on the ticket stub. The number of nominations received by a trust would determine the proportion of the raffle's profit they would receive.



The raffle succeeded beyond everyone's wildest dreams. It was drawn on 16th January 2015 and the total amount raised was £14,286. After taking out expenses a clear profit of £13,277 was left to be split amongst the 54 waterway restoration charities who had taken part and sold tickets.

The fantastic news for the SNCT is that we sold the second highest number of tickets, as a result of which we will receive £968. Only the Friends of the Cromford Canal sold more, so they will receive £1200. In fact, of the 54 charities which took part only five earned over £500 and most were in the £1-200 band. For the full list of the 54 restoration projects and their respective waterways society, and the money they each received see www.waterways.org.uk/support_us/raffle/projects

This success really reflects a tremendous effort by the SNCT's members. Ably organised and led by *Guyneth Munroe*, the members did not let any opportunity to sell tickets escape them, with a magnificent result.

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Swan attack at Wappenshall Lock

This was one fishing trip that I would never forget!



It was summer and about 1956/57, more than likely a Sunday afternoon. The canal towpath between Wheat Lessowes and Wappenshall Lock was becoming overgrown and made cycling along it very difficult, so the alternate route to the canal from my home in Hadley to Wappenshall was down to Apley, turn right on the Wappenshall/Preston Road and Wappenshall Wharf was about a mile away. I was all geared up to fish in the mouth to the lock, where the water was deep and oxygenated by strong rapid water flowing down into the mouth from the guillotine, which was in poor repair; in fact the whole lock had obviously seen much better days! However, the stretch of water from the lock back down towards the boathouse and the wide hole was perfectly clear and weed free. The old original bridge still existed then and, when fishing on the slope to the mouth of the lock, you could see through the bridge, along another

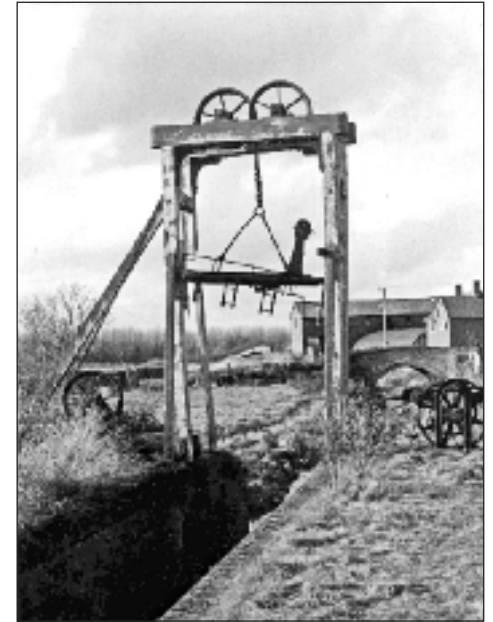
clear shorter stretch, to the wide hole. Altogether a fine day for fishing but I was never a person who got too disappointed if no fish were caught, as I got great pleasure in the environment around me, no matter what the weather. As was quite normal, there were no other people fishing, so I prepared the tackle, bait of bread paste, landing net and keep net, which I put lower down from my fishing position and used a size 14 hook to my nylon line. Everything was now ready for me in my efforts to catch quality bream, not carp, in the area where I had been very successful in the past. I fished about 4 feet from float to bait and about 2 feet from the bottom. After catching one bream of about 1lb, I sat and waited for movement of the float as it lay towards the opposite side of the lock mouth.

Something frightening was about to happen. Upon looking right towards the bridge I saw two swans swimming towards me from the wide hole, keeping close to each other and possibly a male and female. I knew that there was a swan's nest on the far bank of the wide hole, as there had been a nest in the same place in years gone by. The pair of swans glided along the water and swam under the bridge; they were like an elderly couple returning from church, arm in arm. Now, I have never been a great fan of geese and swans, so I became a little anxious as they continued towards me. They were now about 100 yards or more from any nest or cygnets they may have had in the wide hole and I had never seen swans this far from their nest. I sat with fishing tackle in hand and line cast, as fear began to encompass me. They were now just a matter of 5 feet away from me, when both swans raised themselves out of the water and made an attack towards me. I dropped everything as their wings came

close and I ran straight through the hawthorn hedge, at the back of me, which left many scratches and cuts. After a while, I walked back to the bridge on the field side and rested near the damson trees, checking to see if the swans had gone. After some time they retreated back to the wide hole and I went back to the lock, retrieved my tackle and cycled home, still shaking from my experience. The bream I put back into the lock.

Why these swans attacked, with such force, I do not really know, as I was well away from their nest. I do know one thing though, I now keep well away from these creatures, no matter where they are.

Clifford Bennett.



Wappenshall lock No.9 in 1966

Obituary Clifford Benett

We are very sorry to hear of the death of *Clifford Bennett* on 15 January and our thoughts are with his wife, Enid, and his three daughters. Clifford was one of the longest standing members of the trust, as he joined in November 2000, only a month after the SNCT was formed. His membership number was 47 – one of a small and very select band.

My own contact with him came in August 2014 when he sent me a short story of his memories of the area around Wappenshall in the 1950's and 60's. He also asked if I would be interested in his further memories. I replied enthusiastically and published that first story on Brittan Lock in our November 2014 issue. Clifford then supplied me with a fascinating series of articles which we are printing each quarter in S&N News

Editor

4/4

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Letters (or emails) to the Editor



Memories of Clifford

I was born just 41 days apart from Clifford in 1942. We grew up in the village of Hadley and soon formed a lifelong friendship with a shared love of nature and we had one foot always firmly in the past. Hadley was an industrial village and we both mourned the decline of this industry but treasured the industrial architecture, especially the canal system, that was left behind and always felt that a lot of it was worth protecting and restoring. We shared a few adventures in and around Wappenshall and the Trench Pool, which was a feeder for the Trench branch of the canal. I was in awe of Clifford's fishing skill as he frequently caught pike and sold them to the local butcher for a shilling each to supplement his meagre pocket money. I caught nowt and ended up throwing my tackle in the far end of the Trench Pool in disgust.

Unsurprisingly we attended the first meeting of the canal restoration society and joined up together. Many trips have been enjoyed in hired day boats along the Shroppie and also the Mon and Brec with Clifford waxing lyrical as each bit of nature passed us by. Myself, a writer and author, constantly encouraged my friend to put pen to paper as I felt that Clifford clearly had the superior gift and knowledge to do so and, in my view, his ultimate efforts bear comparison with that other nature loving Shropshire writer, Mary Webb. It is just sad that he did not live long enough to see them all in print.

Derek Gambie



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4/4

Puzzled by 1949 Pimley picture

I used to play at Pimley Farm and I lived on the Sundorne Road where the canal was at the bottom of our garden. I recently came across some photographs, on the site Britain from the Air, of the Royal Agricultural Show in 1949 that was held on fields between Sundorne Road and the canal. If you go to the website take a look at picture EAW024189. If you look closely at the lower right hand side you can see Pimley Manor and in the grounds below the house, almost hidden in the trees, are a series of military huts. They were painted green and were semi cylindrical in shape and made of corrugated iron sheets. I remember these as a young boy but can find no clues on the Internet to any camp being there in WW2. Please can you or any of your members help to solve the puzzle?

Regards from Devon, Howard Jones

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Collecting stamps and metal raises money for the Trust

Dear Editor,

Through the pages of S&N News I would like to give a big thank you once again for all the stamps sent to me in the last year. But we need more, as soon as possible, from our 1200 members. Only 20 members send them at present. We need you all to collect them so that we can raise as much funding as possible. Please send them to the address below, bring them to a Trust function or give them to any of the Trustees listed on page 3

We can also raise funds from scrap metal so, if you are having a clear out or spring clean, please bring any scrap to Wappenshall Wharf where we collect the scrap and aluminium cans (not steel ones). You can

leave any material under the stairs at the side of the small warehouse or out of sight behind the Wappenshall sign at the entrance.

If you are coming to the AGM why not bring your scrap or stamps with you?

Thanks again for all your efforts.

I have been stamp collecting for over 50 years and have accumulated a large collection of spares. These are sorted into stock books and are ready to go. If any member wishes to purchase stamps at 5p each from Great Britain (all reigns), Australia, Canada, New Zealand and some from the USA, please send a cheque & stamped addressed envelope to:

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Hedgelaying round-up



A lot of canal restoration groups take up hedgelaying as a means of doing work in the winter and keeping their workparties together - and its a lot of fun. But the hedgelaying season is now over, as we can only work on it whilst the birds are not nesting or we would disturb them.

As mentioned in the last magazine, we were very fortunate that the Canal & River Trust offered us some training in how to lay hedges as we have one at Meretown that desperately needs laying. We are very grateful to Glenn Young of CRT for organising the training and to Roger Birch who actually came along to show us how it should be done and then helped us get "hands on".

At Meretown we found that the hawthorn "hedge" had grown into trees and I can assure you, from experience, that old hawthorn is very tough. In theory we should have been able to use billhooks to weaken one side of the tree so that it can be laid over to form the hedge - in reality we often needed axes, for their extra weight, and even occasionally a chain saw. But we succeeded in laying about 40 metres of hedge and in preparing another 20 metres ready for the autumn, when we can start again. In April we will underplant the laid hedge with hawthorn whips to strengthen it.

As you can see, the finished hedge looks quite impressive and it is a vast improvement on the overgrown trees that we started with in December. We had lots of wonderful compliments from the many local walkers at Meretown. Next November we will continue this work on the remaining 100m and we should make quicker progress with our, now, experienced team.