

SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS NEWPORT

- **Wednesday 2nd September**
Wednesday 4th November
7.30pm British Legion Club
Audley Road, Newport TF10 7DP
Contact: *Steve Heise 07732 977855*

TELFORD

- **Monday 10th August**
Monday 12th October
7.30pm The Elephant and Castle
1 High Street, Dawley TF2 9JQ
Contact: *Alan Harding 07944 753009*

SHREWSBURY

- **See website for dates**
7.30pm Meole Brace Bowling Club,
Meole Rise, off Upper Road,
Meole Brace, Shrewsbury SY3 9JF
Contact: *Bernie Jones 01743 709601*

Tickethouse Lock Garden Party



Members Ruth and Terry Otter will soon be moving into Tickethouse Cottage on the watered section of the Newport canal. They have kindly offered to host an event to help publicise the Trust on Saturday 8 August. The Trust gazebo will be on the towpath by Tickethouse Lock and members of the public will be invited into Ruth and Terry's garden for a cup of tea and piece of cake. We hope to recruit some more members, raise funds via the donation boats and to raise the profile of the Trust and its endeavours.

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 475970

WAPPENSHALL

Every third Saturday of the month
10am - 4pm

Contact: **Philip Jones**

Email: philip_jones_51@hotmail.co.uk

Telephone: 01952 240828

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*

COPY FOR S&N NEWS

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**COPY WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED
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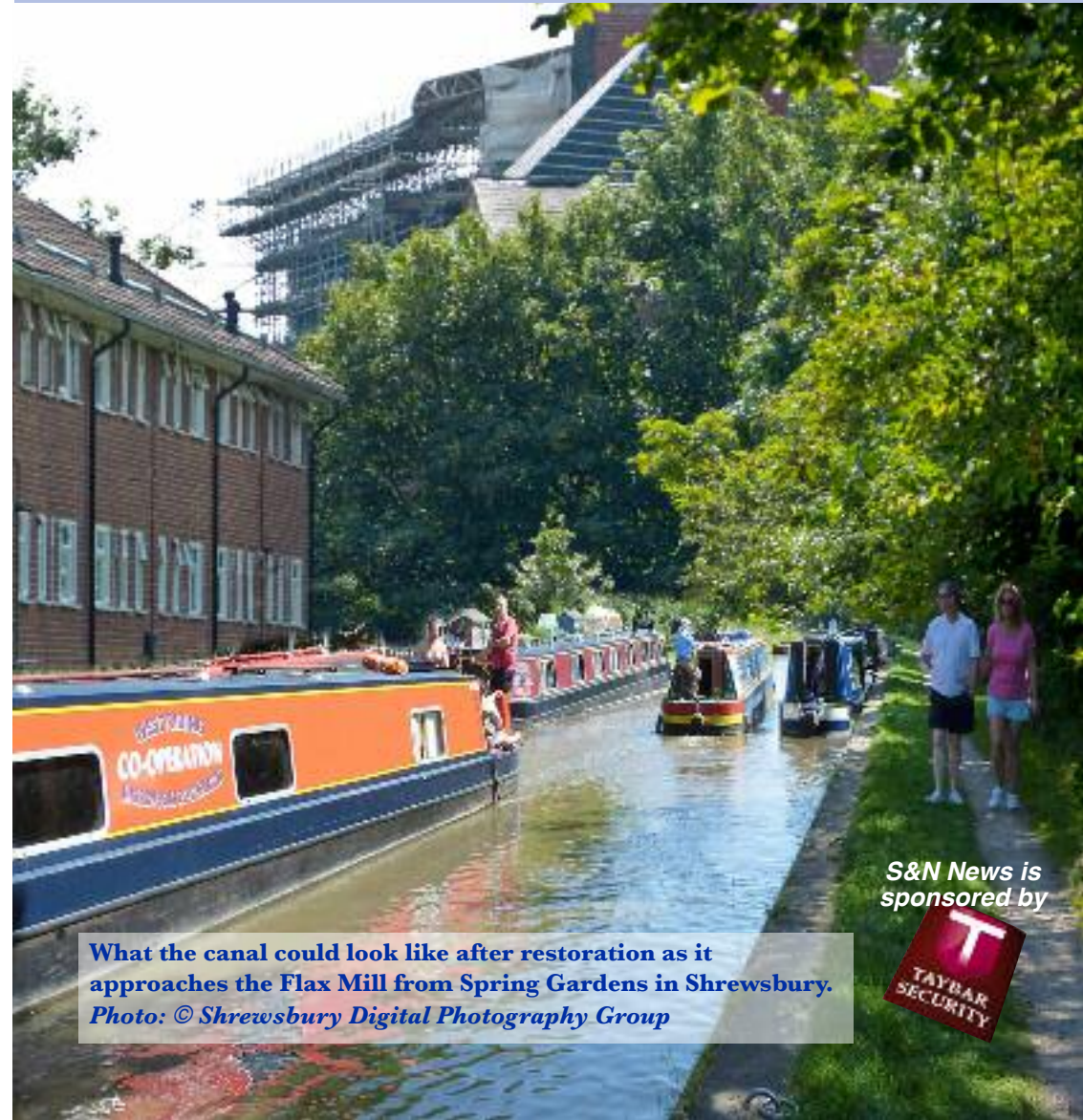
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S&N News



The quarterly newsletter of the
Shrewsbury and Newport Canals Trust

Issue 58/3 2015



**What the canal could look like after restoration as it
approaches the Flax Mill from Spring Gardens in Shrewsbury.**
Photo: © Shrewsbury Digital Photography Group

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what's in your S&N News

- | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|----|---------------------------------|----|-------------------------------|
| 5 | Dates for your Diary | 8 | Norbury Canal Festival | 18 | Barbed Wire Tommy |
| 6 | New IWA Raffle | 12 | Cheap Coal from Donnington Wood | 20 | Newport Himalayan Balsam Bash |
| 7 | Wappenshall Wharf Update | 16 | AGM Report | 23 | Clean up on the Newport Canal |



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

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from the editor

I am sure that those of you who take the printed S&N News will have noticed that, in the last issue, we moved to full colour throughout the magazine. This has been an objective of the Trust for some time and we have now achieved it as the result of improvements in printing methods, which have reduced the cost, the advertising that we carry in the magazine and the generosity of our sponsors, particularly Taybar Security.

Along with our recently re-vamped website, S&N News is one of the Trust's main means of letting our members know what is happening and the progress we are making towards restoring our canals. We therefore need to make it as attractive as we can so that people want to read it. This new era of full colour will, hopefully, help with that.

Over the years we have encouraged people to take S&N News electronically, to keep down costs. Our thanks are due to the many members that have chosen to do this but, with our new cost structure for the magazine, it is no longer as critical. If there are any members who have chosen to take S&N News electronically but would like to change back to the printed version, they are very welcome to do this and should let either myself or *Brian Nelson*, our vice chairman, know and we will make the change (addresses on P2).

John Myers, Editor



notes from the chair

Well, Norbury Festival has been and gone and so has our AGM. Many thanks to everyone that worked so hard to make them both a great success. We now look forward to the WRGies summer camp on 22-29 August. Please do come out to see them at least, or join in and help at both Forton and Meretown work sites. If you can't make it during the day, why not join us in the evenings at the Village Hall in Norbury, which will be their "hotel" for the week?

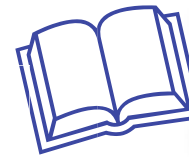
There will be a quiz and other social activities and they are a great bunch who freely give up their time to work on our canals.

Hope to see you at one of the many events that the Trust stand, or Jusfashow will be at this summer. See details opposite.

Don't miss the visit to Joule's Brewery on 23 September. It's a great night and you will help raise funds for Wappenshall. See page 18 for ticket details.

Lesley Smith will be entertaining us as Elizabeth I on 16 October and this too will be a great night out that will raise a significant amount towards Wappenshall.

Of course, another way that everyone who uses the Internet to buy products can raise money for the Trust is by using EasyFunding. It really is simple. Just Google EasyFunding and register, which takes 2 minutes. When asked which organisation you wish the money to go to you put SNCT. That's it! Next time you buy from the site they send a percentage to the Trust. All the big names are there, Amazon, M&S, Tesco, Waitrose and Sainsbury's, plus about 350 more. Why not register now.



Dates for your Diary

Do, please, check the website for updates

- **Newport Garden Party★**
Saturday 8th August 10am to 4pm
Tickethouse Lock, Newport
 - **WRG Summer Camp**
22nd - 29th August from 10am
Working at Forton Aqueduct and at Meretown Lock, Newport adjacent to A41
 - **Whitchurch Boat Rally★**
Saturday and Sunday
5th, 6th September 12-00 - 5-00pm
Whitchurch Canal Arm, Whitchurch
 - **Wappenshall Open Day★**
Sunday 13th September 10.00am
Conducted tours around the Wharf
and refreshments in the adjacent garden of Bridge House, TF6 6DE
 - **Wellington Walking Festival★**
Monday 14th September 2-00pm
Circular route from Wappenshall Wharf along towpaths where possible and tour around the wharf and warehouses
 - **Visit to Joule's Brewery**
Wednesday 23rd September 7-00pm
Great Hayes Street,
Market Drayton TF9 1JP - *See page 23*
 - **An evening with Queen Elizabeth I**
Friday 16th October 2015 7.30pm
Burton Borough School, Audley Avenue
Newport TF10 7DS - *See page 11*
- ★ *We need help to 'man' the Trust stand for a couple of hours at these events.*
Contact Bernie Jones on: 07971 016322

New Members

We welcome the following new members

- Richard Egglestone & Sylvia Astbury**, Belle Vue, Shrewsbury
- Helen Brockman & Richard Metyard**, Whitchurch
- Alastair & Naomi Battrick & Family**, Uckington Heath
- Peter & Beryl Williams & Family**, Wellington
- Peter & Joyce Lindsell**, Bridgnorth
- Terry & Jayne Gurd & Family**, Market Drayton
- Trevor & Sally Parkin**, Yarnfield
- Keith Davis**, Stafford
- John Baker**, Baswich
- Nick & Lottie Pavard**, Church Eaton
- Roy & Jean Wood**, Derrington
- Robert & Amanda Norgrove & Family**, Wellington
- Charles & Maureen Thomas**, Telford
- Dylan & Joanna Harrison & Family**, Newport
- Jim & Rosie Taylor & Family**, Norbury Junction
- David Torrens**, Whitchurch
- Deborah Sutherland**, Chetwynd End
- Michael & Shirley Mee**, Wheaton Aston
- Sue & Philip Lyttle**, Shrewsbury
- Helen Humphreys**, Shrewsbury
- Jeremy & Hilary Griffiths**, New Zealand
- Maurice & Joan Bailey**, Muxton
- Elisabeth Kirkness & David Little**, Shrewsbury
- Margaret & Philip Richards**, Rugby
- Nigel & Karen Pepper**, Hyde Lea, Staffs
- Mike Cooper**, Wheaton Aston
- Alan & Ruth Guar**, Penkridge
- Les Restall**, Wheaton Aston
- Steve Reading**, Wheaton Aston
- B K & S Jessup**, Wheaton Aston
- Ray & Diana Cowley**, Wheaton Aston
- Brian & Sheila Townsend**, Cannock
- Sonnie & Sally Mee-Harris**, Warwick
- Chris Norton**, Sundorne
- Stephanie Rhoebe**
- & Andreas Reschke**, Cologne, Germany
- David Dixon**, Lichfield
- Julia Ayres**, Chipping Norton
- Pitchcroft & Church Aston WI**, Newport
- Shrewsbury Schools**, Shrewsbury
- Friends of Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust**, Coalbrookdale
- Sheriffhales WI**, Sheriffhales

The second most popular canal restoration in the UK? Can we beat that next time?



You may remember that the IWA's first annual restoration raffle, in 2014-15, raised £14,286. After taking out expenses a profit of £13,277 was left to be split amongst the 54 waterway restoration charities who took part and sold tickets.

We came second amongst all the UK's waterway restoration charities and received a fantastic £968 for selling the second largest number of raffle tickets in the country. Only the Friends of the Cromford Canal sold more, so they received £1200.

Well, the IWA has decided that the first raffle was so successful that they are going to hold it again this year - so we now have the chance to come first if we can sell even more tickets. After her success last time, *Gwyneth Munroe* has kindly agreed to organise it again for the SNCT.

With this magazine you will have received two books of IWA raffle tickets and you can see the fantastic prizes on offer. Can you help us get to the top of the leader board by selling those tickets to your friends, neighbours or workmates? If you run out, there are lots more tickets available and the Trust will be selling them at every event that we attend.

The finish date for the raffle will be after the final date for our Wappenshall fundraising. We have therefore decided to use the funds raised from this raffle to buy a new Trust gazebo – our existing gazebo was donated to the Trust many years ago and it has seen a lot of service, being used at almost every event that we attend, and it is literally falling apart. A gazebo with our name prominently on it is a very necessary part of getting us seen and noticed, so this is a really worthwhile objective for the raffle.

For more tickets or for those who take S&N News electronically contact *Gwyneth Munroe* supplying your address to gwyn_chris@yahoo.co.uk or 4 Pelham Road, Upton Magna, Shrewsbury. SY4 4UA Return any money raised as a cheque made payable to SNCT to *Bernie Jones*, Tangalooma, Caernarvon Lane, Withington, Shrewsbury SY4 4PX



Members have done a marvellous job by pledging over £41,000 including Gift Aid towards the Wappenshall Appeal. This is a magnificent sum! Thank you to everyone that has made a pledge but if you haven't pledged yet there is still time to do so, by using the form that is downloadable from the website.

Some further grants have been obtained and the total match funding figure (including pledges) now stands at a little over £130,000. So there's only another £370,000 to go now. We are fairly confident of getting a £100,000 DEFRA grant, as we have the support of Telford & Wrekin Council in this regard. TWC, who actually own Wappenshall Wharf and lease it to the Trust, are also looking at how they may be able to help us.

We are still hoping to obtain a significant grant from the EU, via the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) as well.

Meanwhile, much effort is being put into an event at Wappenshall to which we will invite carefully selected philanthropists. Our professional fund-raisers have advised us that in their recent experience, this is where most money has come from during these tough economic times.

We have also had a very encouraging letter from the Princess Royal's Trust (she is the Patron of the Canals Museums Trust). Unfortunately, they only meet once a year in January and as our HLF deadline is December, I hope to use this to advantage to buy us a little more time from the HLF.

Of course, as new funds open for applications, we are also applying to these. But, if there's anyone out there who knows of any other way to raise funding, PLEASE let me know!

Some members have also been doing their bit. From collecting stamps, to recycling metal and meeting my Chairman's Challenge, it all really does help. If you would like to do your bit, we now have a "Donate" button on the Wappenshall Appeal page of the website, so it couldn't be easier.

Bernie Jones



winding gear inside the Transshipment Warehouse

The Norbury Canal Festival

We had wonderful weather for the 2013 and 2014 festivals, so three in a row was possibly too much to ask for. The 2015 Festival started in the rain on Saturday but the weather gradually improved over the weekend, so that Sunday afternoon was a bit grey but otherwise fine and Monday was excellent

This year we managed to achieve a long term goal, with the help of a friendly local farmer, by creating our car park right next to the canal, across the road from the pub. The new car park gave quick access to the Festival through a new entrance directly on to the towpath, so visitors did not need to walk on the road.

Also, for the first time, CRT allowed us to reserve some moorings to the north of the road bridge, so we were able to book a record number of boats into the Festival. The Festival now extends along over half a mile of canal bank and this meant that our harbourmaster, *Ray Buss*, was kept even busier than in past years. This year we had more trading boats moored along the towpath and we had to turn some away.

The trade stalls along the towpath and in the field behind the pub were more varied than in previous years and the crowds that came, particularly on the Sunday afternoon and Monday, had plenty to keep them busy.



The opening event of the Festival was the traditional Boaters Meal on the Friday evening, when a record fifty one people sat down to enjoy a fantastic carvery, all washed down with some good ales. The evening events went off with a bang as well. In the marquee the bands for Saturday and Sunday evenings "Jammin at the Junction" played music to suit all tastes and, by Sunday evening, they had everyone up and dancing! Roll on 2016 when I am told we are due some better weather

Bernie Jones





SNCT Clothing for summer and winter

Take a look at our new range. With the recent addition of T shirts and baseball caps to our polo shirts and fleeces the range of SNCT branded clothing is a must for your wardrobe



We now sell:

- **T shirts and polo shirts** in Royal Blue with the SNCT logo in gold and available in Small, Medium, Large and Extra Large: T shirts £9, polos £10 each.
- **Fleeces** in Navy Blue with the SNCT logo in gold, available in Small, Medium, Large and Extra Large, at £20 each (note, the sizes are all generous).
- **Baseball caps** in Navy Blue with Shrewsbury & Newport Canals Trust in gold. One size fits all, £9 each.

As far as possible we distribute orders by hand but £2.50 needs to be added if posting is necessary. Pictures can be found on the Trust's website together with a printable order form.

For more information contact adharding@sncanal.org.uk

An Evening with Queen Elizabeth I



16th October 2015 at 7.00pm
Burton Borough School
Audley Ave, Newport TF10 7DS

A comical presentation by
Lesley Smith as Queen Elizabeth I

Ticket price to include two-course hot meal: homemade steak & ale pie (vegetarian alternative available) and choice of sweets. Bring your own drinks and glasses. Tickets are available from Bernie Jones on 01743 709601 or

bjones@sncanal.org.uk

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The Waterway which was made to bring cheap coal from Donnington Wood to Shrewsbury

by W. HOWARD WILLIAMS

This piece was originally published in the Shropshire Magazine in the 1950's and it is re-printed from a press cutting kindly provided by W. Howard Williams' daughter, Joyce Beech

The year 1792 saw not only the completion of the Shropshire Canal but also the formation of the Shrewsbury Canal Company. The object of the Company was to make a canal from Shrewsbury to the coalfield in the Donnington Wood area, with the view to providing Shrewsbury and district with a cheaper and more reliable supply of coal. In a previous article we noted that the London road between Oakengates and Shrewsbury was hazardous at all times, owing to the effect of many coal-carts on its poorly metalled surface. Infrequent supplies, due to bad weather, and frequent accidents were reflected in the high prices charged for coal in and around the county town.

The new Company engaged George Young, a Worcester surveyor, to survey the proposed canal. His plan, which is preserved in the County Record Office, was presented to Parliament the following year, when the necessary Act of Parliament was sought and obtained. The plan was certified and signed by the Speaker of the House, Henry Addington.

The Act which sanctioned the canal authorised the Company to raise amongst themselves £50,000 and a further £20,000, if necessary. The transport charges authorised were the same as on the Shropshire Canal, i.e., 2d. per ton per mile for all goods, except that, "until such times as the new canal shall pay an 8 per cent dividend, a charge of 1d. per ton for every boat to pass the inclined plane." After that the charge was to cease. Manure was exempt from these charges.

Work began in 1793 with Clew as engineer and William Reynolds acting in a consultative capacity. The following year Clew died and Telford was appointed engineer.

For something over 11 miles out of the Shrewsbury basin, the canal was cut on a dead level, although it had to be carried over three short valleys by means of aqueducts, and through a 970-yard-long tunnel.

From Long Lane to Trench Wharf, a distance of 4½ miles, the canal was lifted 139 feet by means of 11 locks. An inclined plane, 223 yards long, rising 73½ feet, was constructed from the Trench Wharf to the Wombridge Canal. The section of this latter canal from the top of the Trench Incline to its junction with the Donnington Wood and Shropshire Canals - 1 mile and 88 yards - was purchased from William Reynolds for £820, half its original cost, and incorporated in the Shrewsbury Canal Navigation.

Canal in Iron Trough

The canal was notable for several novel innovations. The aqueduct which still carries the canal over the River Tern at Longdon, was the first cast-iron one ever to be constructed. At the instigation of Thomas Eyton, the canal company's chairman, the task of making the trough was given to William Reynolds, who carried out the work at his Ketley ironworks.

The trough was made in 1795 and is still in excellent condition. It is 62 yards long and traverses the valley at a height of 16 feet above the meadows.

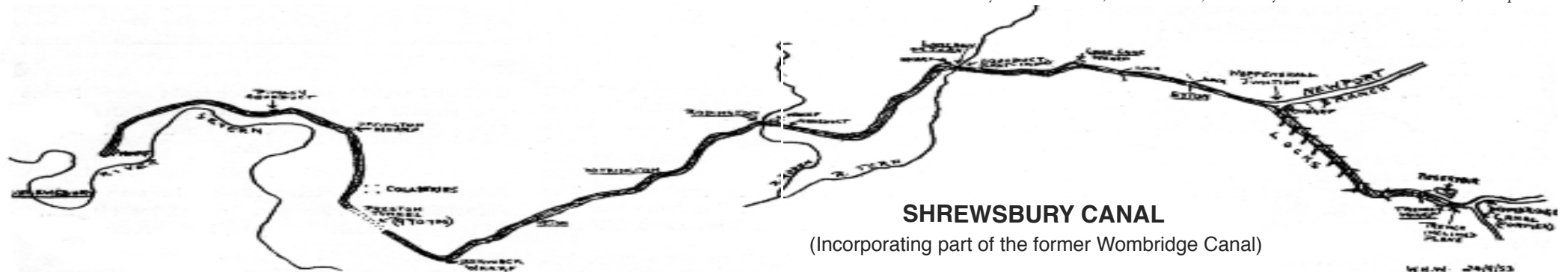
Another unique feature is that the locks, which are the smallest of any in use on canals in the country, are only 81 feet long and 6 feet 4 inches wide. They are so constructed that they could pass from one to four of the 20-foot-long tub-boats at once.

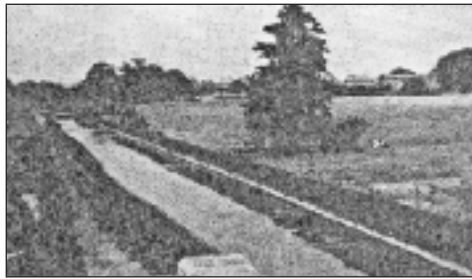
The bottom gates on these locks were also unusual. Instead of being opened and closed in the usual manner, they were raised and lowered by special winding gear and referred to as "guillotine" gates.

Though more than a dozen wharves were at one time to be found along its banks, not more than three or four wharf buildings can now be seen. The chief items distributed from these wharves were coal and lime. During the last few decades of the canal's active history, the Lilleshall Company were the chief users of several of these wharves, although even before 1900 they made little use of that part of the canal above Wappenshall Junction.

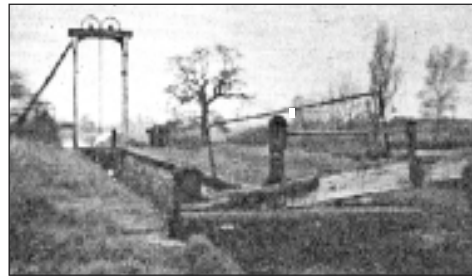
They quite naturally made the fullest use of their mineral line from Muxton Bridge and Donnington to the Humber Arm of the Newport branch canal, thus saving the time that would have been lost by boats having to negotiate the Trench Inclined Plane and the nine locks below.

When the Newport branch canal was opened, narrow boats called fly-boats, specially constructed to enable them to negotiate the narrow locks, operated on the whole length of the canal, to the bottom of the Trench Incline. Fly-boats were fast, narrow boats, crewed by three men and two horses, and operated





The iron trough in which the canal was carried over the Tern at Longden.



Britain Lock on the old Shrewsbury Canal. These locks, 51 feet long and 6 feet 4 inches wide, were the smallest in England.

from Ellesmere Port, the terminus of the Birmingham-Liverpool Junction Canal. Four of these fly-boats came regularly to the Trench Wharf, each making one-and-a-half trips weekly. One fly-boat made a weekly trip to Shrewsbury.

Owing to there being no 'winding' place or turn-about above Wappenshall Junction, flyboats had to be towed stern first when plying to wharves at the Trench, as it would be easier to negotiate the locks on the return journey, when they were invariably more heavily laden.

Industrial undertakings using the Shrewsbury Canal in Shrewsbury would be the Gasworks, established in 1820, and probably the Maltings. At its eastern end would be the artificial fertiliser manufactory at the Trench Wharf; The Shropshire Iron Company, nearby; and the various occupiers of the site of the present Hadley Castle Works at Hadley. This site was first developed by Nettlefold and Chamberlain as the "Castle Ironworks" in the 1870's.

In 1846 the Shrewsbury Canal was one of the navigations which joined together to form the Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company, and although in 1847 this new merger came into the hands of the London and North Western Railway, the system never lost its identity, and is still referred to as the Shropshire Union Canal.

By the end of World War I, it was becoming increasingly evident that the active life of the old Shrewsbury Canal was coming to a close. The only traffic passing the Trench Incline was for the Donnington Wood Flour Mill. Except for that and an occasional boat of slack for Sankey's Hadley Castle Works, the canal above Wappenshall was dead.

The Shropshire Union Canal, although railway owned, was maintained as a going concern, with its own fleet of craft, for over seventy years, chiefly because it operated through a rival's territory. When the "Big Four" railway companies amalgamated in 1921, the Shropshire Union Carrying Company was dissolved and the fleet dispersed. So far as the Shrewsbury Canal was concerned this was the death blow. The Trench Inclined Plane was abandoned, having been in use for 124 years.

Until this date, tar-boats made regular weekly trips between Oldbury (Worcs.) and Shrewsbury Gasworks. Tales are still told of "Harry the Tar" with his wife as crew, and other well-known canal "characters," whose comings and goings added their own touch of colour to the canal. Undoubtedly the last commercial traffic to operate on the Shrewsbury Canal were the acid-boats of Messrs. Fellows, Morton & Clayton, which brought sulphuric acid to Shrewsbury Gasworks from Messrs. Chance & Hunt's of Oldbury until about 1930 or 1931.

The Newport Branch

The last canal to be made in East Shropshire was the 10½-mile-long Newport branch of the Birmingham[sic] and Liverpool Junction Canal. It was surveyed in 1826, and completed in 1833 at a cost of over £80,000. Telford was the engineer and W. A. Provis the contractor.

Leaving the main canal at Norbury Junction, the Newport branch falls 139 feet through 23 locks, passing through Newport, to join the Shrewsbury Canal at Wappenshall Junction. About 7½ miles of this navigation are in Shropshire.

An arm of the canal planned to be made from the Buttery to join the Donnington Wood Canal at Limekiln Bridge, Lilleshall, did not materialise. In its place the Humber Arm was made from the same place to Lubstree, near Donnington, and the Lilleshall Company constructed a mineral line from the canal at Muxton Bridge to the wharf at Lubstree.

Although no industrial undertakings were on its banks, this canal was a most important adjunct to the local system, as it afforded local industries an outlet by water to the whole of the Midlands, the industrial North, and North and Central Wales.

The Newport branch was wider and deeper than the other local canals, thus allowing the larger craft of the Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal to operate thereon.

In 1846 this branch, with its parent canal, became part of the Shropshire Union.

When this company ceased to be canal carriers in 1921, the traffic coming off the main canal on to the Newport branch and the Shrewsbury Canal was reduced to a mere trickle, ending altogether by about 1931.

The question is often posed : "Why were these local canals allowed to fall out of use? "The reply can only be: "Changed Conditions!"

These local canals were constructed to serve local industries and to suit existing conditions. They had to be made on a smaller scale with smaller than usual craft.

Even had the local canals been wider and deeper, it is doubtful if they would have survived into the New Elizabethan Age, as the industries for which they were intended to serve are most of them gone. The road and rail services are today organised to such a pitch as to preclude even the remotest hope of seeing a resumption of activity on any of the remaining stretches of local canals.

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AGM Report



From L to R, Tim Nelson, Mayor of Newport, TWC Councillor Stephen Bentley and Phil Morris-Jones MBE, Mayor of Wellington.

This year's AGM was unfortunately held again at Wappenshall for the sixth year running – unfortunate as we had hoped to have contractors on site by now.

For once the weather smiled on us and the day was dry and sunny. Over 100 people attended, one of the best AGM's yet. Before the AGM itself Richard Parry, CEO of the Canal & River Trust, gave us an upbeat review of the CRT's activities, funding and future plans with a particular emphasis on how they are increasing their commitment and support for canal restoration.

Our chairman, Bernie Jones, thanked Richard and commented on the CRT support that the SNCT is getting, particularly for our plans to re-water the section at Forton, which CRT own, and from the new CRT Restoration team in connection with our plans and submissions.

Each year, under our Articles of Association, four trustees retire in rotation and the tenure of our three co-opted trustees expires, so there are seven vacancies. This year, for the first time, we had more people wanting to be trustees than there were vacancies and so we had to have an election, a very healthy sign of the way that the trust is developing. The members present voted to elect Alan Harding, John Freeman, John Heather and Julie Harris. At the trustees meeting immediately after the AGM John Stevens, Tony Forrester and Leon Murray, were co-opted. Our thanks go to retiring trustees David Adams and Eric Cox for all their past work for the SNCT and their promises of continued support for the work of the Trust.

After lunch Barrie Trinder MA PhD FSA, the distinguished author and Midlands industrial archaeologist, gave a talk on the S&N canals with particular emphasis on his research in connection with Wappenshall. He has studied much of the original material stored in the archives and he gave us a new perspective on the history of the wharf, with some fascinating details of cargoes loaded and unloaded in the early years after the wharf opened.

Afterwards Alistair Price led a number of members on his now traditional walk, this time to see the remains of the tub boat canals around Ketley

Shrewsbury and Newport Canals Trust Wappenshall Open Day

hosted in the garden of
Bridge House, Wappenshall TF6 6DE

Sunday 13th September 2015
10.00am - 4.00pm

- Guided Tours round the historic buildings
- Refreshments
- White elephant and book stalls
- "Jusfashow" our display narrow boat will be open to visitors

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'Barbed Wire Tommy'



In the early years of the 1950's I seemed to spend a huge amount of time fishing down at the canal, particularly at Wappenshall Lock and the wide holes at Kinley and Preston. My father, his father and, I believe, the generations before were all anglers on the canal. My grandfather *John Bennett*, a Hadley Councillor for 25 years, was a frequent winner of canal fishing competitions, as reported in local newspapers of the time, but the locations were never mentioned. The family seem to have had the canal and fishing running through their blood, along with great knowledge of the areas where the canal ran and most certainly the 'Weald Moors'. My grandfather was born in 1876 in Horton Lane just a few hundred yards from the then operating Trench Lock. My father, *Jack Bennett*, was born 1900 at Trench, even closer to the lock than grandfather.

In the early 1900's the family lived and worked in the area now known as Trench Lock and it was during this period that my immediate family became acquaintances of 'Barbed Wire Tommy'. You may ask 'Who on earth is 'Barbed Wire Tommy'? Well it took me until the 1990's to eventually discover who this man was and I had to consult a local historian, *Terry Gilder* from Edgmond, to get the answer. During many walks and fishing trips with my father in the late 1940's and early 1950's he often referred to 'Barbed Wire Tommy'. I can hear him saying now 'Barbed Wire Tommy' would do things this way or that'. As a young boy, I never once queried with my father as to who he was, but I always digested the information that was coming my way.

Barbed Wire Tommy was a Hadley man whose correct name was *Thomas Hankinson*. He would have been born around the same time as my grandfather in 1876 and they would have undoubtedly known each other well. How did *Tommy Hankinson* get his nickname? Trench Lock area at this time was heavily industrialised and *Tommy Hankinson* worked in one of the iron factories making barbed wire for the war effort of 1914-18 and so his fame began. He was clearly a man with great knowledge of the canal and the areas from the Trench inclined plain to Wappenshall and beyond. To my family and I'm sure to many others of the early 1900s 'Barbed Wire Tommy', was a legend and I believe his memory should not drift away, lost in time. He has a grandson '*Dusty*' *Hankinson*, aged about 86, still living in Hadley Park Road, Hadley.

A gentle man with many memories!
the late Clifford Bennett

Shropshire Iron Company Fire
In 1915, this manufacturer of telegraph wire and barbed wire suffered the ravages of a fire. Tommy Hankinson spotted the blaze and a chain of buckets was quickly organised while someone rushed to the post office to inform the fire brigade, which arrived two hours later.

local newspaper article from the time - extracted from
Shropshire: Remembering 1914-18
by Janet Doody.



Do you know your Slumbering Monk from your Green Monkey?

I am sure that some members do but most of you probably don't – so on Wednesday 23 September you have the chance to check them out, if you join us for a social event at Joule's Brewery. They are actually the names of just two of the beers brewed by Joule's, a once famous brewer which vanished after being taken over by Bass Charington in the 1970's.

The Joule's name has now been revived, under licence, at a new custom built brewery in Market Drayton. The new brewer has access to the same spring water as the original Joule's Brewery as well as the original brewing methods, recipes, trademarks, notes and, most importantly, the yeast.

In support of the SNCT's Wappenshall Crisis fundraising efforts, the brewery will, very generously, only be charging us for their costs, with the rest of the proceeds going to the crisis appeal. Our thanks go to member *Val Haig* for suggesting and organising this event for us.

Our group will meet at Joule's Brewery in Great Hayes Street, Market Drayton TF9 1JP at 7pm on Wednesday 23 September, when we will have an introductory talk about Joule's heritage and the new Market Drayton chapter in their story whilst sampling their fine beers. We will then be taken on a guided tour around the brewery. After the tour we return to the hospitality area and we can check if the beers have changed whilst we have been away. At the same time we will be treated to a "Giant Joule's Hot Pork Bap" which is sourced from local organic Fordhall Farm. (Vegetarian options are available) The evening will end at about 10pm.

Tickets cost £10 each and we have a limited number of places available so please call Val on 07976 280174 or Cindy on 01952 419768 to reserve your place. Payment will be requested in early September and the tickets will be issued at that point.



Newport Canal Himalayan Balsam Bash Saturday 11 July 2015

Last year I tracked the source of the balsam infestation to Strine Brook Park, where it had probably been brought in with topsoil or something like that. I checked further up the Strine but did not find any balsam higher up. I therefore decided that this year we would attempt to clear both the canal and the Strine Brook to the east of Town Lock as, otherwise, the canal would keep getting re-infested.

This year's Balsam Bash was a great success as we managed to cover much more of the overgrown area than expected. We were amazed at how successful last year's clearing of the canal to the east of Town Lock had been, as this year we found very little balsam on this section and three of us cleared it in about 1½ hours.

The bulk of the work party (fourteen all together) went into Strine Brook Park and we managed to clear the balsam from both the park and the Strine. We were helped by a path that has recently been created through heavy undergrowth along the Strine, I am told by the Environment Agency, as this gave us easy access to the stream bank.

We even had time to clear the towpath to the west as far as Tickethouse Lock, clear the high walled section of the Strine alongside the cross-over bridge by Town Bridge and to make a small start on the offside to the west of Town Bridge.

If our experience this year is a guide, hopefully next year we will be able to fairly quickly "police" the canal and the Strine to the east of Town Bridge then move on to make a serious start on the heavily overgrown western sections.

John Myers



Geoff Brown tackles the Strine Brook infestation

snippets

SNCT wins gold award for its 'contribution to the environment'



Bernie Jones receiving the Mayor's Gold Award in the Environment Category from the Mayor of Shrewsbury, Beverley Baker. This was for work done by the Shrewsbury Support Group (right). Bernie said "this award really is for Andy and Stuart Dady and all the folk who do such a great job at the Shrewsbury Work Parties".

Cheque presentation at Festival



Norbury History Society have made a generous donation of £100 to the Wappenshall Crisis Appeal. Left to right Pam Collard, Bernie Jones, Adrienne Barnwell and Tony Brown.



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Dinghy dawdle and canal clean up 2015



On Saturday 27 June a small band of Shrewsbury and Newport Canals Trust enthusiasts gathered at the Black Shed in Newport, for the second year running, to boat along the Newport Canal. The Newport canal is divided into sections by the filled in locks and other obstructions, so the idea was to manhandle the canoes from section to section. At the same time they planned to extend the organized litter pick on the bank and clean up the canal by collecting rubbish and litter and removing anything that should not be there.

The parts of the Newport Canal that are in water are a Site of Special Scientific Interest, so permission for the trip had to be obtained from Natural England (NE). NE agreed but limited their approval to just five boats so as not to disturb the environment.

The five canoes set off eastwards towards the A41 and, almost immediately, discovered a large doll floating in the canal. It was immediately given a home in the floating "litter lighter" being used to carry debris and it was towed behind one of the boats for the duration. The equivalent of about 8 bin bags of rubbish were collected, mainly bottles and cans and packets. The biggest items were some upholstered chairs which had to be dragged out with great difficulty.

There was less rubbish on the western section and a chance to admire the magnificent lilies growing at the end.

It was fantastic to see boats on the canal again, many local residents commenting on seeing them and the good work done. A small group of SNCT volunteers helped the crews transport the boats from section to section and a good time was had by all. Many thanks to *Barry Witts* for organizing the event and we look forward to the next one.