

Situations Vacant

Norbury Canal Festival 2016
Bank Holiday
April 30th,
1st, 2nd, 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

please contact... Bernie Jones
email: chair@sncanal.org.uk
Telephone: 01743 709601
or 07971 016322

www.sncanal.org.uk

Work Parties



NEWPORT

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

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: Andy 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

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

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 60/1 2016



S&N News is
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Working to clear Hadley Park Lock



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what's in your S&N News

The quarterly newsletter of the
Shrewsbury and Newport Canals Trust

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from the
editor

15 years old
and moving
forward

In many ways this is an amazing issue of the magazine. The Trust has now been in existence for just over 15 years and it has moved forward slowly, as all canal restoration trusts do, but suddenly it feels like we have really taken off.

In this issue you will find stories on our progress restoring the canal at Forton, the start of work parties on the Trench Arm (in anticipation of up to £100,000 of funding) and an update on our successful hedgelaying project at Meretown, all in addition to the regular monthly work parties held at Shrewsbury, Wappenshall and Newport. So, the SNCT is getting very active on the ground and starting to achieve results.

We now need our members, those who can, to get more active and involved. Suddenly we are working regularly at five sites and we need more help. If you can spare even a couple of hours, do come along. There is plenty to do and you will be made very welcome.

Dates and contacts are on the back page of this magazine and on the website.

John Myers, Editor



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



notes from the chair

The Christmas and New Year celebrations are over and we finally have a winter after all the rain and ridiculous warm weather. So planning for our activities in the spring and summer is well under way!

The biggest event of the Trust's year will be the annual Norbury Canal Festival on 30 April - 2 May. PLEASE put this into your diary now and come to help - even if only for an hour or two. A couple of days before the event we need volunteers to help transport marquees, gazebos, fencing etc from Wappenshall to Norbury and to help to install everything. We particularly need members to do a stint in the Trust stand and the WOW gazebo during the event and then, of course, to help take everything down, tidy the site and transport our displays and fixtures back to Wappenshall. It's not all work though! We do always have a lot of fun too. So do get in touch with me and let me know when you are able to give a hand.

Until 17 April the Trust has an exhibition in the Community space at the Shrewsbury Museum. If you have not been yet, do go and see it. One way of doing this for free is to volunteer to do a couple of hours at the exhibition as a helper. This just entails answering questions from visitors, or writing them into a book if you don't know the answers! *Peter Cann* would welcome your offer of help - peter.f.cann@gmail.com or 07985 046461.

I am grateful for all the work that has gone in to significantly improve the Trust's Facebook presence. This has proved to be a great success as it has already attracted new members and some younger volunteers. It is also a great way to keep bang up to date with Trust news, successes and progress. Please see elsewhere in this edition how to get involved - and tell all your social media friends too!

Finally my congratulations and thanks to everyone involved in the IWA Restoration Raffle. I set you the challenge and we won!

See all the raffle details on page 20

*Bernie Jones
Chairman*

SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

NEWPORT

- **Wednesday 2nd March**
Wednesday 4th May
7.30pm British Legion Club
Audley Road, Newport TF10 7DP
Contact: John Myers 01785 255263

TELFORD

- **Monday 15th February**
Monday 11th April
7.30pm The Elephant and Castle
1 High Street, Dawley TF2 9JQ
Contact: Alan Harding 07944 753009

SHREWSBURY

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



Do, please, check the website for updates

- **SNCT Exhibition at Shrewsbury Museum**
Tuesday January 12th until April 17th
The Music Hall, Market Steet, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 1LG
Open from 10am to 5pm daily
Check Museum website for opening dates and times.
Volunteers needed
- **An evening with Maggie Thatcher**
Friday 8 April 7.30pm
Burton Borough School,
Audley Avenue, Newport TF10 7DS
see advert on P9
- **Local IWA Branch AGM**
Monday 11th April, 7pm
at the Narrowboat Inn, Ellesmere Rd.,
Whittington SY11 4NU
SNCT members welcome
- **Norbury Canal Festival**
Bank Holiday Weekend
30th April, 1st, 2nd May
Norbury Junction,
Staffordshire ST20 0PN
Opens each day at 10am
Volunteers needed
- **Shrewsbury River Festival**
Sunday 5th June
10am - 5pm
Quarry Park, Shrewsbury
- **SNCT Annual General Meeting**
Saturday 11th June 12 noon
Wappenshall Wharf TF16 6DE.
Full details in the next S&N News

New Members
We welcome the following new members to the Shrewsbury and Newport Canals Trust

- Michael & Susan Hughes**
Apley, Telford
- Eric & Judi Pridding**
Hadnall, Shrewsbury
- Ian Bell**
Bicton Heath, Shrewsbury
- Janet Moulton**
Hereford
- William & Barbara Deason**
Newport, Telford
- Stephen & Tricia Bentley**
Rodington, Telford
- Mick & Judith Rowe**
Leegomery, Telford
- Ken Whapples**
Birmingham
- Geoff & Yvonne Brown**
Gnosall, Staffordshire
- Glyn Thomas**
Church Aston, Newport
- David Everitt**
Broseley Wood, Shropshire
- Christopher & June John**
Melrose, Scotland
- Barry Stamp & Diane Key**
Stafford
- MOB Gardening Club**
Newport, Telford

Shrewsbury Museum Display latest

By the time you read this the Trust's exhibition in the Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery will have been open for almost a month, but don't worry – you haven't missed it! The exhibition runs until Sunday 17th April.

As I write this, at the end of 2015, the Exhibition Committee is working hard putting the final touches to the displays. We had our first meeting way back in April, and over the next eight months we agreed on the topics to concentrate on and identified places where we could source suitable artefacts. Apart from some items being loaned by members of the Trust, we are displaying objects loaned from the National Waterways Museum at Ellesmere Port, the CRT boatyards at Ellesmere and Norbury, and *Tony Lewery's* personal collection, including some things he looks after on behalf of the 'Saturn' project.



Some of the items used in a smithies workshop

The main themes of the displays are: aspects of canal engineering, including the role of smithies and foundries; how tolls were collected; the use of horses as motive power; the domestic lives of boating families; and canal restoration, with particular reference to our Shrewsbury and Newport canals. The displays include maps, a timeline (which includes a projection into the future!), 'roses and castles' painted ware and horse paraphernalia. A particular feature is an audio-visual display of some of the interviews with local residents that have been carried out by the Oral History Project, illustrated by past and present-day scenes of the canal in Shrewsbury.

During the event, we have arranged for four speakers to present talks in the museum, at 2.30 pm on Saturday afternoons. Tickets for the talks can be obtained in advance from the museum (01743 258885). The price of £3 per head is excellent value, as it also includes free entry to the museum (normal price £4).

The main purpose of the exhibition is to raise awareness of our canal's past, present and future in Shrewsbury, so tell all your friends – and your friends' friends - to come along and visit us!

Peter Cann

Talks at Shrewsbury Museum

16th January	Barrie Trinder	<i>'Wappenshall wharf: its place in the history of canals'</i>
6th February	Neil Clarke	<i>'The canals of East Shropshire'</i>
19th March	Tony Lewery	<i>'The restoration of the Shropshire Union flyboat Saturn'</i>
9th April	Bernie Jones	<i>'The Shrewsbury & Newport Canals and their Restoration'</i>



Final date for £1m HLF Wappenshall grant application extended

In early 2014 we launched an appeal to find match funding of £500,000 which we need to restore the warehouses and basin at Wappenshall Wharf. The total projected project cost is £1.5 million and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant will contribute £1 million towards this, as long as we can raise the balance.

The final date for us to raise the money and submit our Round 2 application to the HLF was the 12/12/2015. I am delighted to advise you that the HLF has now extended that deadline and our final submission date for the Round 2 application is now 12/12/2016. This is partly in recognition of the quality of the project and partly because the HLF has deemed our progress towards match funding to be satisfactory under the present difficult financial circumstances.

So far we have managed to raise £150,000 so the outstanding amount that we still need to find is £350,000. Our appeal to our members and the boating community has resulted in pledges or donations of nearly £50,000 and successful applications to charitable bodies has reached just over £100,000.

Our success to date has shown us that we can succeed. We still have hopes that Telford and Wrekin Council, who own Wappenshall and have leased it to us, will be able to find some funds to help but, like all local authorities, they are short of money. We have a new plan to make a direct appeal to local people and we have applied for £100,000 of European funding with the support of Telford and Wrekin and of the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership. We are making more applications for grants to newly identified grant giving charities and we are working hard to engage philanthropic individuals to take an interest.



SNCT goes social:



Facebook is a universal presence in the 21st century. While the Trust is working towards restoration of our 18th and 19th Century heritage, it also needs to make the most of modern technology and communication methods. The SNCT now has a Facebook presence at <https://www.facebook.com/ShrewsburyAndNewportCanalTrust/>. So please visit, like and share – even if you don't have a Facebook account you can still check out what is happening by searching online for Shrewsbury & Newport Canals Trust Facebook.

Our new page has a number of aims including: supplying members with updates of how ongoing work is progressing; reminders and reports of events, meetings and work parties; increasing awareness of the Trust and its aims; building relationships with other canal groups and within the wider canal fraternity; making contact with people who can help our efforts.

Our new Administrator was an active volunteer until a few years ago, before his young son came along and we are delighted to see him, and his son, back. The aim of the page is to balance a professional image (without being too pompous) with a mix of social reporting and hard facts. But it is still in development and will need a few tweaks yet. We have already had a few offers of help as the project goes forward, but any extra expertise would be much appreciated. Within a month the page has already attracted 150 followers - if every trust member 'likes' and 'shares' the page, just think how far we can spread our message.

Lesley Smith is **MAGGIE THATCHER**

8th April 2016 at 7.00pm
Burton Borough School
Audley Ave, Newport TF10 7DS

*Ticket price to include two-course
hot meal:*

*homemade steak and kidney pie
a choice of sweets*

Bring your own drinks and glasses.

*Please notify us in advance if you
require a vegetarian alternative*

Tickets £20 per head

SNCT FUNDRAISING EVENING



SNCT a winner in the IWA raffle

In July 2014 our Treasurer, Steve Bean, received a letter saying "Dear Mr Bean, we would like to give you some money..." The letter was from the Inland Waterways Association (IWA) and it announced their first Restoration Raffle to raise money for waterways restoration projects across the country. The proceeds of the raffle are split amongst the canal trusts in proportion to the number of tickets each sells. As many readers will know, we came second in that raffle last year and received a cheque for £968, beaten only by the Friends of the Cromford Canal.

As that first raffle was so successful the IWA decided to run it again for a second year - so we decided to pull all the stops out to try to win it. The aim of the second raffle was to raise £15,000 for distribution to the restoration projects and to the WRG Van Appeal, which is trying to raise £120,000 to purchase four new vans.

The results have just been announced and, in the event, we were only beaten by the WRG Van Appeal, which has national appeal. That means that we sold more tickets than any other restoration trust, making us the most popular canal restoration in the country!

This success means that, this year, we will be presented with a cheque for £1,300 which will go to the Wappenshall Appeal. At the moment the winners of the prizes have not been announced so we don't know yet if any of the tickets we sold were winners - but, in any case, the SNCT is definitely a winner in the IWA Restoration Raffle.



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under new management

stamps make money for the Trust

Please keep collecting all your used stamps. In view of the high cost of mailing them, can we suggest that you bring them to Trust functions or you can still send them to:

Elaine Evans,
231 Monkmoor Road,
Shrewsbury SY2 5SW.

who has taken over as our central stamp collector from Mal Evans

Work on the Trench Arm

Early in 2016 the Trust will receive up to £100,000 for the restoration of the locks on what we now refer to as the Trench Arm, the eastern part of the Shrewsbury Canal. The money is Section 106 funding (a contribution from a developer towards the costs of providing community and social infrastructure) for which we were sponsored by Telford & Wrekin Council. In this case the development is the new Miller houses next to the Trench Arm, between Silkin Way and the A442. The money will be paid when the 22nd house is sold, which is not far off. The Trust has no intention to return this part of the system to navigation; indeed it would not be practical as it was built to a narrower specification than the rest of the UK canal system, so modern boats would be too wide for it. This funding can only be spent on the restoration of these locks and surrounding canal but we hope that the trust will benefit from their restoration and that they will form part of a walking route through to Wappenshall.

The locks on the Shrewsbury Canal are very interesting as they are guillotine locks, with the bottom “gate” being closed by the lowering and raising of a full width wooden panel. The advantages over the more traditional design are that the lock occupies less space, does not require room for a gate to swing open, and is quicker to fabricate and install. It is mechanically more complex, however, requiring the use of a gantry and overhead lifting gear. The resemblance to the French guillotine is obvious.

In anticipation of the money becoming available, a workparty was held at Hadley Park Lock and another is planned at Turnip Lock. The object of the work parties is to clear as much of the vegetation from the lock gates and structures as possible. This will then let us see what



Clearing Hadley Park Lock area begins



work and materials will be needed as we plan the restoration of these important structures. These locks are listed and possibly very fragile and we will be monitored by the conservation officer as work progresses.

On Saturday 14th November 2015, 21 volunteers from the Trust turned out to start clearing the vegetation from around the guillotine lock at Hadley. Volunteers came from all three support groups and it was great to see members working together. When we arrived you could hardly see Hadley Park Lock for ivy but we managed to clear all this off the structure, the surrounding brick work and the walls of the lock. In the afternoon we managed to take down one of the big trees which had roots in the lock brickwork but, more importantly, we discovered both the original lock gate and the paddle mechanisms at the top of the lock.



The ivy and the undergrowth cleared away

Wappenshall Slowly Gives Up Its Secrets

Since the SNCT first took over the Wappenshall site it has presented us with many enigmas. As we have come to understand more of the site, some of these have been solved or understood but more keep appearing.

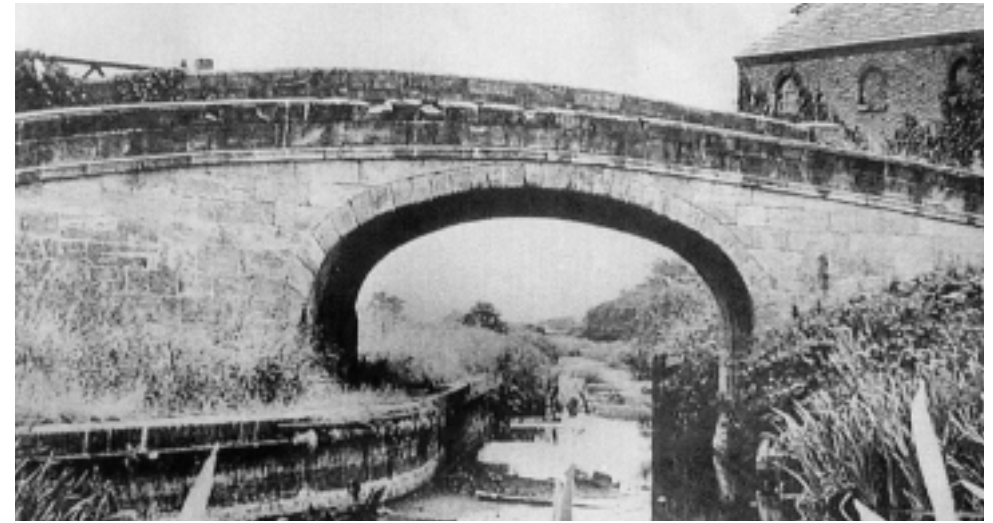
Last year we had to drain the water from below the large warehouse so that our specialists could check that the area was sound. Whilst we had it drained we decided to remove an old canal gate that had been submerged there for a very long time.

During one of our regular monthly workparties we used the Tirfor winch to slowly drag the extremely heavy, waterlogged and muddy gate out from under the warehouse and up a slope at the edge of the filled in basin. That was a few months ago and, since then, as the gate has dried out we have removed all the mud and debris from it. Slowly we have revealed the remains and have discovered that it has a hole at the bottom of the gate where a sliding paddle could open and shut; the ironwork surround for this is still there and it sticks out on one side of the gate



The remains of the gate after being pulled from the water

The gate was installed by the Birmingham & Liverpool Junction Canal (B&LJC), when it built the Newport Canal. It was designed to protect the water of the Shrewsbury Canal from an unplanned breach of the Newport Canal or a planned de-watering of the Wappenshall basin. The paddle could be used to let water through in a controlled manner. The other connection between the two canals, under the transhipment warehouse, could be closed off with stop planks, the grooves for which are still there.



A 1967 photograph of Junction Bridge No.29 showing the stop gate on the right under the bridge

There is a similar stop gate at Nantwich, at the northern end of the B&LJC, and this certainly protected the former Chester Canal. Our local canal historian *Peter Brown's* opinion is that these stop gates were required to protect the pre-existing canals. Although he cannot recall any such requirements in the B&LJC's Acts, it could have been an informal agreement between the various companies.

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Mary Burn - St Mary of the Boats

by W. Howard Williams

Extracted from an article originally published in the Shropshire Magazine in September 1969 and re-printed from a press cutting kindly provided by W. Howard Williams' daughter, Joyce Beech

THE NUMBER OF people in Shropshire who can claim that they remember *Mary Burn* must be very few, and those who do almost certainly come from a somewhat isolated village in east Shropshire. Since the formative years of Miss Burn's life were spent in Shropshire, I feel that some tribute to her is long overdue.

Mary Burn was born in Hyderabad, Sind, India in January 1863, where her father, the *Rev. Andrew Burn* was missionary. For family reasons Mary's parents decided to return to England in 1865. The *Rev. Burn* took over the curacy of Kinnersley on the Weald Moors. Later he became Rector, an office he held until he resigned in 1893.

Mary Burn's childhood in this quiet country parish was rather sheltered and her education left much to be desired. Rather belatedly, it was decided when Mary was 17 to send her to a kind of finishing school, - the Perse School for Girls in Cambridge. After completing her



education but before returning to Kinnersley, to take her place and help her parents in their parochial duties, *Mary Burn* made one or two trips abroad. It is thought she returned to Kinnersley about 1885.

While she was at home at Kinnersley Mary became interested in people who spent their lives on our canals. "Boat people are in a class of their own", she said, "they belong to no special parish, have no roots or property on the soil of England -

they are nomads with all the nomads intolerance of restraint".

Mary and her father embarked on this special missionary work among the boat-people who came to the canal wharves at Wappenshall and Lubstree - both of which were within a mile or so of the Rectory.

There would be a simple service, enquiries to be made about other boat families, and gifts for the little ones. One Sunday afternoon, in company with *Miss Evelyn Felton*, she came up to Lubstree Wharf, the terminus of the Humber Arm on the Newport Branch Canal, to see a new 'boatbaby'. As she went to step on to the boat it moved away from the wharf-side and Mary ended up in the canal.



© Robert Longden - robertlongdenarchive.com.

© Kahlani Hotel Boat

Safe on dry land again she went to nearby Lubstree Farm where she was given a change of clothing. This was in 1892, according to the late *Mrs. Stephen Ward*, whose sister-in-law provided the dry clothing for *Miss Burn*.



Miss Burn learned a great deal in those days about the problems of the boat-people; the need of education for their children; of the need of somewhere on land for the older boat-people to live when they were too old to carry on working. Eventually Mary was able to get other people interested in her projects on behalf of the boat-people and lived long enough to see these and other of their problems eased.

Miss Burns' father resigned the living of Kinnersley in 1893 and Mary, now 30 years old, was relieved of some of her parochial duties. From time to time she had contributed to the *Church Army Gazette* and, by coincidence, she was asked to call at the 'Gazette' office. As a result of that visit *Miss Burn* was appointed sub-editor. Promotion to Editor came swiftly and she spent many years in that role.

Down the years she never forgot her old home and the friends she had there. Her last visit to Kinnersley was six weeks before her death.

Her last Church Army function was to attend a Boat-peoples' Outing. One person who was closely linked with her in her work among the boat-people said: "I shall always think of her as St. Mary of the Boats".

Editor - we are unfortunately unable to run this front page of the *Church Army Gazette* of 22nd August 1936 any larger. In the top left corner is a triangular photo captioned "Water Babies". To the left of that is "She loved her dear Boat People. Every Christmas she gave them a tea" and to the right "Here she is on the School Boat seeing that everyone had a good time"

Restoration continues at Forton

Now that we have begun the restoration of the Newport canal at Forton, started last summer, we have really begun to attract the attention of the canal world. In particular the Waterways Recovery Group (WRG) seem to have taken the project to their hearts.

Back in August 2015 the WRG, with help from our SNCT volunteers, commenced the restoration of this section at their week long work camp. They started to re-profile the canal bed and to re-create the towpath along a 110m length of the canal. The section is sited between Forton Aqueduct and Forton Skew Bridge and is still owned by the Canal & River Trust, who gave us permission for the work. A steep learning curve followed to find out how to lay the heavy Bentonite lining, which had to be unwound from one tonne rolls and then jointed carefully so that it will not leak when the section is re-watered later in 2016.

A group of 22 WRGies from the London based section of the WRG returned for a weekend in early October and we were very fortunate - as there had been no rain to speak of since the WRG summer camp in August and the ground was firm enough to take the weight of the heavy plant required to continue the work.

As can be seen from the photograph below a great deal was achieved. With help from SNCT volunteers, the group managed to line approximately 25m on both banks, extend the towpath by a similar amount, clear the dense scrub over the whole of the Forton Aqueduct and re-mortar some of the wing walls of the canal under the skew bridge. Not bad for just one weekend!



The WRG are planning to have another weekend work camp on the 18th/19th June before the summer and they will be back for two full weeks 13th to 27th August. All SNCT members are very welcome to join the work parties and there is always plenty to do.

And unexpected help with Health & Safety



SUCS volunteers celebrated the re-opening of another length of the Montgomery canal in June 2014. Here you can see them on board the first boat to enter the Redwith Bridge to Pryce's Bridge length since 1935

Now that we have actually started restoring the canal at Forton it has become obvious that today's canal restorations are built on a small mountain of paperwork. Obviously this is for the good of the volunteers undertaking the work and of the Trust to ensure that we do not have accidents – but it does take a lot of work.

We are grateful that *John Heather*, with his background in the construction industry, has agreed to be the trustee responsible for our Health & Safety and that *Marion and Jim Weir* have volunteered to take on the role of actually writing up all the method statements and risk assessments.

Not very far from the Shrewsbury there is another canal restoration, the Montgomery, which is being restored by the Shropshire Union Canal Society (SUCS). The Monty has been under active restoration for a number of years and is being re-opened a bit at a time, so SUCS is very experienced in all the paperwork needed for restoration, as well as the practical side of running workparties using heavy machinery and large parties of volunteers.

On hearing that we have started our restoration, SUCS have immediately come forward and offered us the use of their existing, proven H&S paperwork with as much practical advice as we want. This is extremely generous of them as it will save John, Jim and Marion an incredible amount of time. We will review and amend each document and adopt it into our own system before we use it, to make sure we understand the contents and that they are relevant to our own plans.

We are extremely grateful to the Shropshire Union Canal Society for their generosity and we agree whole-heartedly with *David Carter*, the SUCS Project Manager, who said “there is no point in every restoration trust having to re-invent the wheel, we are all in this together”

Obituaries

In recent months we have lost a number of our active volunteers, who will be sorely missed



Eric Cox

We are sorry to hear of the death of *Eric Cox*, a long time trustee and extremely active member of the SNCT, after a long struggle with heart disease. Eric served as a trustee from 2006 to 2010 and then again from 2012 to 2015. Eric was a “go-to guy” and our “Mr Fixit”, if he didn’t know how to do something he always knew someone who did. He was the man to go to get a chandelier for the agm or to get a toilet block for Wappenshall. At one time he was organiser of the Norbury Canal Festival. He was our first Wappenshall Project Manager, after we took on the lease from Telford and Wrekin Council. In that role he planned and

managed the re-wiring of the site, the clearing out and repair of the ‘Romney’ building, including filling in the vehicle inspection pits in the floor, and the location and digging out of the basin edges as well as major efforts to make the buildings weather tight to prevent further deterioration.

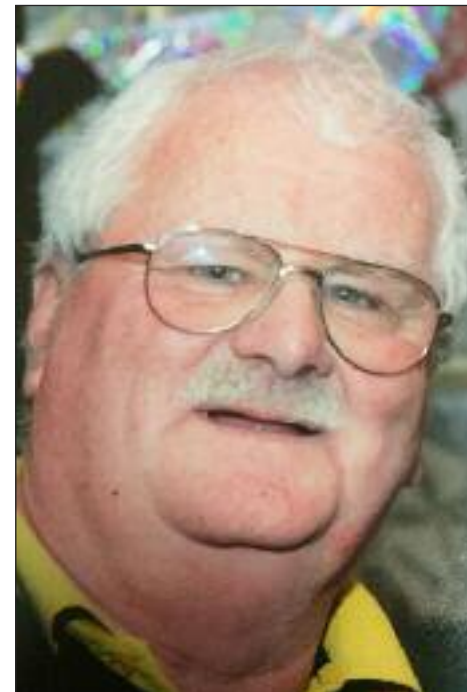
Eric loved finding out how things worked and his many passions included historic buildings, quirky vehicles, cars, lorries, bikes, trains and boats. In his other life Eric was a long serving town councillor and mayor of Broseley 2005-2006. He was instrumental in getting conservation status for the town and he steered the Broseley in Bloom initiative to success.

Eric leaves his wife Dorothy, his children Vicci and Charlie and granddaughters Lily and Emily. He will be sadly missed.

We are very grateful to Eric’s family for a donation of £500 from the collection at his funeral.

Mal Evans

Mal was born in Brixton, London and, as a young boy, used to collect newspapers and cardboard in an old pram for pocket money. This is, perhaps, where he gained his interest in recycling. After working for Freemans Catalogue and the Post Office in Clapham, he moved to Shropshire in 1979 and eventually found a job he liked working for the dairy, which he did until he retired.



Mal has been a regular at SNCT work parties and has collected aluminium tin cans and other scrap metal, as well as postage stamps, all to raise funds for the Trust. His wife Elaine and family and his “extended family” in the Trust will greatly miss him.

Mal’s wife, Elaine, has decided that in future she will take over from Mal the collection of postage stamps for the benefit of the Trust.

Fred Cooper

Fred Cooper had been an active volunteer with the SNCT for a good number of years. More recently he was our number one trip boat captain at the Trust’s annual Norbury Festival, working tirelessly as he skippered boats of happy visitors along the Shropshire Union Canal – indeed, we often had to encourage him to take a break and let

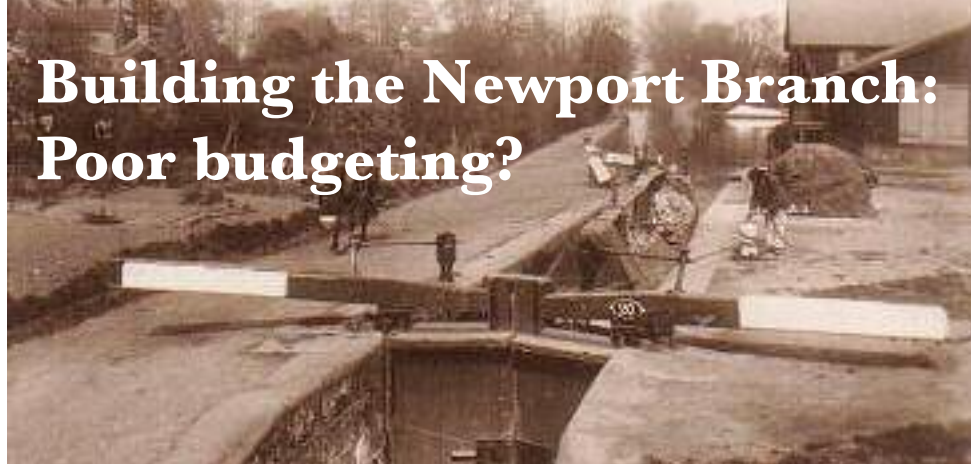


someone else take a turn! He was great with people and loved introducing them to the joys of the waterways.

Fred had a great knowledge and experience of traditional building methods and he was also a volunteer for the National Trust at Ilam, where he taught courses in dry stone walling. His knowledge of these traditional techniques came into its own when we needed to restore Moss Pool Bridge a couple of years ago - we knew that we needed to use lime mortar to re-lay the stones but only Fred knew how to specify and mix it.

Fred was a very private man with a great range of interests and we will miss him for his knowledge and dry humour.

Building the Newport Branch: Poor budgeting?



Lock 20, Newport Canal

At the first General Assembly of the Birmingham & Liverpool Junction Canal on 22 July 1826, Thomas Telford reported on the line he recommended for a branch from near Norbury, past Newport to meet the Shrewsbury Canal at Wappenshall. The branch was to be almost 10½ miles long, with 23 locks.

He estimated the construction costs, rounded to the nearest pound, as:

Earthworks including puddling	£20,059
Masonry: locks, bridges, houses, one wharf etc	£38,628
Total	£58,687

In December 1829 the contract was actually let to William Provis for £77,716, and the completed works were handed over on 12 January 1835.

The final contract figures, based on a report in 1834 by William Cubitt, who had been appointed consulting engineer following Telford's death, were:

Contract amount	£77,716
Variations:	
— arising by the repeated sinkings of the locks on the Newport Moors, and by carrying the Kynnersley Drive under the canal instead of over it	£1,800
— five lock houses	£1,361
— Newport wharf	£ 683
Total	£81,560

The cost of constructing the branch was therefore 39% more than Telford's original estimate. There is no obvious external reason for this difference. Labour and material prices hardly changed during this period, and (unlike the late 1840s, say) contract prices were not pushed up because of the large amount of work available.

To get the total cost of the branch it is necessary to add amounts originally estimated as £10,277 for land and £3,448 for professional and other expenses. Out-turn figures for these are not available for the branch. For the whole canal project, land cost much more than had been expected, so probably this applied here too.

Peter Brown

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HEDGE LAYING

The hedge we are tackling at Meretown Lock is about 130m long and, when we first started laying it in January 2015, we were complete beginners and yet we still managed to complete about 35 metres. Calling it a hedge is somewhat misleading as these are overgrown trees which are really well past their best for laying, which presented some challenges, not least to our Canal & River Trust trainer *Roger Birch*.

We had a fantastic start, in October, to this season's hedge laying as we had taken the chance to do a lot of preparation during the early spring and late summer. Indeed, old hands say that ninety percent of the job is the preparation work and we definitely agree. At the tail end of the last season and again in September we managed to remove and burn a lot of the top canopy from the trees, reducing their weight and making them more manageable, so we can now control the drop more easily and safely when we lay them.

Then in August the WRGies spent a lot of time removing an extraordinary amount of ivy from the lower part of the trees, so we could now actually see the trunks. As a result, this winter we have already managed to do a further 60 metres, so we only have another 35 metres to go. We should finish this at our February and March work parties although we will also have the under planting of the new hedge to do with whips (very small saplings). After that we will have to stop and leave the birds to do their thing until later in the year.

We have been particularly pleased at the number of enthusiastic volunteers who have turned out to all the work parties this winter. We are really building quite an experienced team and it looks like the "team" will be looking for a new section to be working on by next October...

Sam & John Myers

