

## Volunteering

(you don't need to get dirty – unless you want to...)



Getting involved is a great way to meet people and to make new friends. We do need volunteers to join our workparties but there are lots of other things you can do to lend a hand. Volunteering is fun and there are many different ways you could help the canal trust. Here are some of them:

**Help man our exhibition stand.** Over the summer we take our stand to all sorts of rallies and events in Shropshire and Staffordshire. We always need help to man the stand and to talk to interested visitors. Training is given and you won't be abandoned on your own!

**Help our Oral Archive team.** This team are talking to, and recording the memories of, the people who can remember when our canals were in use. They need interviewers and also people to transcribe the recordings.

**Can you take control of meetings?** We need someone to Chair our Shrewsbury Support Group.

**Are you good with paperwork?** We always need help with applying for grants.

Apart from these examples there are plenty of other jobs that we need help with including things like updating our website and our Facebook pages, fundraising, scrap metal recycling, stamp collecting, proof reading and event planning

## Regular Work Parties

Come along and get some fresh air and exercise and perhaps learn new skills. You don't even have to be a member to take part in one of our work parties.

Our regular work parties take place on three Saturdays each month:

**Newport:** Every 1st Saturday of the month, 10am - 4.00pm.

**Wappenshall:** Every 3rd Saturday of the month, 10.00am - 4.00pm.

**Shrewsbury:** Every last Saturday of the month, 10am - 4.00pm.

If you want to find out more or to enquire about how you can help, then email [volunteer@sncanal.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@sncanal.org.uk) with your details and what you are interested in doing or take a look at the Volunteering page on our website.

[www.sncanal.org.uk](http://www.sncanal.org.uk)

S&N News - Issue 61/2 2016

# S&N News



The quarterly newsletter of the  
Shrewsbury and Newport Canals Trust

Issue 61/2 2016



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sponsored by  
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The SNCT display at Shrewsbury Museum

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*send your copy to the editor*

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The quarterly newsletter of the  
Shrewsbury and Newport Canals Trust



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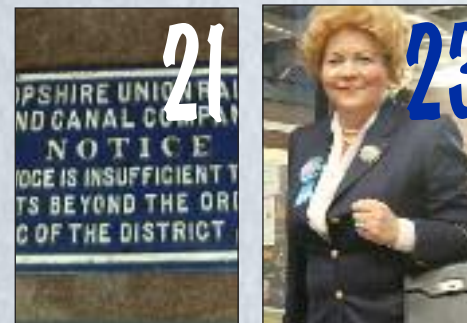
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*The views expressed by contributors to S&N News do not necessarily represent the views or policies of The Shrewsbury and Newport Canals Trust*



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



## notes from the chair

As I write this, the sun is out and it really feels like Spring at long last. This means that we will soon be into the "Events Season" for the Trust, which kicks off with the Norbury Canal Festival over the first May Bank Holiday. But there are many other events through the Summer months that the Trust attends. Some members (usually those of a certain age!) tell me they can't "help to dig out canals" but wish that they could help in some way. Well, here's an idea - come and do an hour or two on the Trust stand at one of the many events we attend through the season. It is very rewarding, as you meet a lot of nice people and usually end up learning a lot too. Don't worry if you can't answer all the questions that people ask either, just jot any questions down in the visitors book and get a 'phone number and someone will get back to them later with an answer. Most of the events we attend are very interesting to see too, so if we cover 10 am till 4 pm (6 hours) which is normal and get 3 couples to do 2 hours each, it is then possible for everyone to spend up to 4 hours looking round the rest of the event. This makes for a really nice day out and you will also meet other members, a lot of whom will tell you that the Trust is just like an extended family when you get to know each other. So just keep an eye out for upcoming events and come and join us. You can find some of those that are coming up in near future in this edition, but there is more information about all events the Trust plans to be present at on our website and on Facebook. I hope to see some of you this year!

Have you ever been to our AGM? Usually those 3 letters conjure up a boring meeting where you might get roped into doing a Trustee's or committee job. Well our AGMs are nothing like this! The "boring bit" where accounts are presented etc. lasts for no more than 30 minutes and you will hopefully learn something about what has been happening in the Trust over the previous 12 months. The rest of the day consists of a couple of really interesting presentations and a lunch! This year we have managed to get Dr Geraint Coles as a guest speaker and you will see elsewhere in this edition that Geraint is a very interesting guy with much to share about canal restoration. Lunch is just £5 and provides a chance to meet other people just like you! It's a fun day and well worth attending, so do try to get there this year.

*Bernie Jones*  
Chairman

## SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

### NEWPORT

- **Wednesday 6th July**  
**Wednesday 7th September**  
7.30pm British Legion Club  
Audley Road, Newport TF10 7DP  
Contact: *John Myers 01785 255263*

### TELFORD

- **Monday 13th June**  
**Monday 15th August**  
7.30pm The Elephant and Castle  
1 High Street, Dawley TF2 9JQ  
Contact: *Alan Harding 07944 753009*

### SHREWSBURY

- **Tuesday 24th May**  
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

- **Floating Litter Pick and Canal Paddle**  
**Sunday 22nd May**  
Meet at the Black Shed, Newport at 10:00. Contact [barry.witts@gmail.com](mailto:barry.witts@gmail.com)
- **Shrewsbury River Festival**  
**Sunday 5th June**  
10am - 5pm  
Quarry Park, Shrewsbury
- **SNCT Annual General Meeting**  
**Saturday 11th June 12 noon**  
Wappenshall Wharf TF16 6DE.
- **WRG weekend camp, Forton**  
**Saturday 18th - Sunday 19th June**  
Members welcome to take part
- **Balsam Bash Saturday 9th July**  
see advert on P9, volunteers wanted
- **Lions Day on Wheels**  
**Sunday 10th July**  
Bowring Park, Wellington
- **Tickethouse Lock, Newport**  
**Garden event adjacent to lock**  
**Saturday 6th August**
- **WRG summer camp**  
**Saturday 13th August - Saturday 27th August**  
*The WRG volunteers are coming for two whole weeks this year*  
Members welcome to attend
- **Whitchurch Boat Rally**  
**20th - 21st August**  
Volunteers wanted
- **IWA Event: Festival of Water**  
**27th-29th August Bank holiday**  
Pelsall, near Walsall, West Midlands

## New Members

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

- Thomas & Valerie Walsh**  
Dawley, Telford
- Karina Houghton & Michael Gibbs**  
Brookside, Telford
- Mike & Barbara Short**  
Madeley, Telford
- John Lewis**  
Shrewsbury
- Maggie McKean**  
Shrewsbury
- John Oliver**  
Oadby, Leicestershire
- Helen Simpson**  
Lanchester, County Durham
- Nick Kapella & Fiona Winwood**  
Shrewsbury
- Cyril Cowdrill**  
Stirchley, Telford
- Malcolm Braine**  
Norbury, Staffordshire
- David Smith**  
Stone, Staffordshire
- Anthony and Susan Hill and Irene Williams**  
Middletown, Northern Ireland
- Robert & Martin Lansley**  
Albrighton, Shropshire
- Susie & Stuart Guthrie**  
Upton Magna, Shropshire
- Austin Seven Club**  
Shropshire
- Edgmond WI**  
Edgmond, Shropshire
- WM Railway & Canal Historical Society**  
Birmingham
- Newport 21 Group**  
Edgmond, Shropshire
- Smethcote WI**  
Smethcote, Shropshire

# THEY'RE GIVING MONEY AWAY!

easyfundraising  
.org.uk

John Lewis  
in store | online | mobile

next



Late  
Rooms  
.com

Argos

By the time this is read you may already have booked your holidays online through [easyfundraising.org.uk](http://easyfundraising.org.uk) and helped raise our funds by hundreds of pounds.....No? If you haven't booked yours yet, you are excused. If you have, then why not through easyfundraising? The answer to this question could be: 1. I didn't know about it. 2. I don't know how to use it. 3. It will cost me more. 4. I don't trust it.

### The things to remember when signing up for [easyfundraising.org.uk](http://easyfundraising.org.uk) are:

1. register yourself to raise money for Shrewsbury and Newport Canals Trust.
2. it's for almost anything you can buy on the internet from nearly 2000 retailers.
3. remember to sign up for 'gift Aid' if you qualify when you sign up.
4. **IT IS ABSOLUTELY FREE**, you don't pay a penny extra for anything - you are taking back some of the retailers profit and giving it to the Trust, helping the trust to restore our wonderful canals. I can't over stress that this it is **FREE MONEY**.

At the time of writing we have 41 members raising **FREE** money for the trust. So far they have raised £452.49. Three new members joined this month (February), welcome to the team. Top fundraiser at present is Joan C, a supporter from Bishops Stortford, just behind Joan is Alan H (a Trustee). Competition is brewing here, Joan is determined to stay in 1st place whilst Alan H as a trustee is equally determined to show that we look after our own!!! As for me I'm languishing in 3rd place. I have just been in the free donations section of the easyfundraising website and by signing up for some children's boxes through 'Toucan' and 'Weekend Box' I have raised £1.25 and I also signed up for 'Which' this did cost me £1 but it raised £2.31. So this morning I have raised £3.56 without leaving my seat.

Good luck to you all and Happy Fundraising

*Alan Boney*



Well, progress at last with match funding. After a great number of meetings, emails, phone calls and a large electronic form being filled in, we have got through the first round of our funding application for £100,000 from the EU. And before you ask, no, if the referendum results in us leaving the EU, we will NOT lose this money! This is because it will take at least 5 years to completely de-couple and because these grants are being managed through DEFRA, by the Regional Payments Agency, they are guaranteed up till the budget that has already been granted to the UK Government has been spent. Our Round 2 application form (all 38 pages of it) is now being completed and needs to be in by June. A decision will be made known to us by August and we have been advised that we should get it.

Many thanks to those members who have helped to deliver 5,000 Appeal leaflets to those homes within a 2-3 mile radius of Wappenshall. This has already started to reap benefits with donation cheques and pledges rolling in. Also, perhaps just as importantly, this is demonstrating the immense local support for the project, which will greatly help convince the HLF that the surrounding community are right behind us too.

Watch out too for the "white door" that has been erected at the entrance to Wappenshall Wharf that shows the target amount and how much we have raised. This ensures that local people are kept informed of progress and therefore keeps everyone interested.

By the time you read this, I hope that we have managed to launch our Text Donation initiative via Facebook and the website. It is expected that this will reach many people beyond our immediate membership and result in some significant donations.

There are a couple of other initiatives we are working on to bring in this vital match funding. More of this in the next edition.

Remember, if we don't hit the £500,000 target by December this year, we lose the £1M HLF grant. So please do try to help support this drive to get the rest of the money.



# The Newport Gold Dig

Around 2000 wild primroses have been planted alongside Fishers Lock in Newport by local families, Scouts, Guides, Brownies and Rainbows in collaboration with SNCT and Canal and River Trust (CRT) volunteers.

Planting, which took place on Saturday 9th April in glorious sunshine, was made possible by a £2500 Community Project Award from Grow Wild /The Big Lottery fund. This aims to encourage communities, and young people in particular, to take an active interest in pollinator-friendly, British wild flowers.

Our project got going with families from Staffordshire and Shropshire home education communities getting together on 29th March to create a felt wall hanging to help generate publicity for our planting day. This beautiful artwork on the theme of canals, primroses and bees was displayed in the window of Newport Guildhall from 1st April. Members of the public were invited to join us on planting day to learn about canal restoration and wildlife with SNCT and CRT information stalls and kids activities from the Bumblebee Conservation Trust. Our youngest participants made seed bombs, containing native primrose seed, to throw into adjacent woodland or alongside Strine Brook for an even greater impact next Spring. Children from Newport primary schools also took part, with an art competition to create protective signage for our plants. The winning entries were displayed in the Guildhall alongside our felt wall hanging, with prizes kindly sponsored by Stakeholder Design.



The planting at Fisher's Lock will form part of a 'Golden Triangle Trail' between Newport, Gnosall and Norbury Junction and will provide a focal point for a planned annual Spring primrose walk. Initially this nature trail will require walkers and cyclists to navigate minor roads from Newport to Norbury Junction. However, once the towpath of the Newport Branch canal is reinstated, this will become a completely traffic free route taking in the towpath of the Shropshire Union Canal from Norbury Junction to Gnosall and recently completed Greenway (along the old railway line) between Gnosall and Newport. By focusing on a walking and cycling route it is hoped that this may encourage support for the Newport Canal restoration, and possibly some new SNCT volunteers!

The remainder of our Grow Wild project grant is being used to create native primrose seed kits which local families will propagate over the Spring/Summer months ready for a second planting day in October. This will take place, in collaboration with students from Harper Adams Conservation Society, at Summer House Bridge, close to Meretown Lock in Newport.

This project is a continuation of a 2013-15 initiative led by Norbury and District Women's Institute to reintroduce native primroses alongside our canal towpaths for the benefit of wildlife and local people. As many SNCT members will be aware, the canal embankments around Norbury Junction used to be famous for their display of Spring primroses, drawing visitors from near and far. Managing the embankments for the benefit of primroses will encourage other wild flowers to flourish.

What I enjoy most about working with volunteers is their enthusiasm. Thank you to everyone who has supported this project so far and helped to make it a success.

*Christine McDougall*

<https://www.growwilduk.com/community-projects/newport-gold-dig>

## A 'two minute' job collecting wood



Ruth on the off-side at the entrance to the top gate of Tickethouse Lock

Not very long ago we finally moved into Tickethouse Lockhouse. One morning recently I crossed over 'our' Tickethouse Lock to collect some dead willow for our wood stove. Whilst there I got tempted to cut back the willow branches which had fallen over and were obscuring the entrance wall of the lock. Once I had started I couldn't stop so I quickly went and got my hi-viz SNCT jacket so that I would look 'official'. There were a lot of dog walkers about and I received many positive comments, with people particularly asking about the likelihood of the canal re-opening (Definitely!). Two hours later, after pulling out yards of nettles from around the edging stones, it looked very smart and I had thoroughly enjoyed myself.

At one point I sank into a soft hollow and digging around I found some dressed edging stones. The next day, my husband Terry and I dug out a surprisingly large quantity of roots, soil and debris and revealed a beautiful stone lined feature, which we assume is the lock's bywash culvert. Further excavation is foiled by the willow! We hope to keep the area trimmed in the future to keep it looking good.

Ruth



Is this the Tickethouse Lock bywash culvert?

## The WRGies are coming – and they need help

Come and join them at Forton on 18-19 June

In June the WRGies will return to start working at Forton to take this section on to the next stage. By then the ground will be hard enough to take the weight of the heavy plant and we can continue re-profiling the canal bed, re-building the towpath and installing a drain, all ready for re-watering later in the year.

The WRGies do keep coming back to help us and part of the reason is that our members always get involved and work alongside them. So come along for a day or for both days, get involved and make a difference.

You will need steel toe capped boots and suitable clothes for a construction site. Hard hats, high viz waistcoats and gloves will be provided.



© Wayne Gaskell

Forton restoration from above with some of the Bentonite lining still uncovered

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# Meretown - Hedgelaying Complete



*The last tree being laid*

In March the team completed the laying of the 140metres of old hawthorn hedge between Meretown Lock and the A41. The hedge had become so vastly overgrown that it completely blocked the view to the north, with many of the trees dead and most overgrown with ivy, some of it over 100mm (4") thick.

We started the project in November 2014 and it has taken some 11 workparties to do the job. The Canal & River Trust's Roger Birch trained and supported us over this period and we owe him an enormous vote of thanks for his cheerful encouragement in even the worst weather.

Meretown Lock now bears no resemblance to how it looked when the SNCT first started to work on it. At that time the lock was invisible under a small forest of trees in the canal bed which had reached out to join with the trees of the old hedge and almost blocked the towpath – indeed, we had to cut some of this “tunnel” back to let people cycle through. Since then the WRGies and our members have removed the trees from the bed of the canal, exposed and repaired the lock and now we have completed the rehabilitation of this section of canal ready for restoration and re-watering

With some 18-20 members plus volunteers from Harper Adams Conservation Group each month at our workparties and with over 30 people who have taken part, we have a strong group with experience of how to lay a hedge. Now we need a new overgrown hedge to work on next winter!



*The completed length with Meretown Lock on the left*

# 2016 Himalayan Balsam Bash

Newport Canal, 10am Saturday 9th July

Meet at the Black Shed, Water Lane, Newport TF10 7LD

This will be our third year working to entirely remove Himalayan Balsam from the Newport Canal. Last year we were delighted to find that the work we had done in 2014 meant that there was very little balsam on the canal to the east of Town Bridge. The balsam seems to have originally infested the Strine Brook so, to succeed in clearing the canal, we need to eliminate it from the Strine as well. We did our first clearance in Strine Park and down to Town Bridge last year so, hopefully, we will be able to quickly clear both the Strine and the canal to the east of Town Bridge this year and move on to the area to the west of Town Bridge.

Himalayan Balsam is an invasive non-native plant that smothers our native plants. Whilst it is pretty and colourful it crowds out other flora and can take over whole areas of canal and river bank.

If we can pull it all out for 3 or 4 years that will control it and we can eliminate it.

Please bring gloves and wear long trousers, full length sleeves and suitable footwear for working by the canal. Gloves and protective glasses can be provided. Waders and wellingtons will be useful for the Strine Brook.

Contact: John Myers **07711 858986** Email: [editor@sncanal.org.uk](mailto:editor@sncanal.org.uk)



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3/4

**SNCT Pin Badges**  
**Have you got yours yet?**

Your £1 donation, or more if you feel generous, is needed to help fund Wappenshall.



You can pick one up at any Trust event or you can get one by mail order.  
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Or email your order to [derek.kath@talktalk.net](mailto:derek.kath@talktalk.net) and pay by bank transfer  
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# Shrewsbury Museum display a great success

Our three month long display, from January to April, at Shrewsbury Museum has now ended. It proved extremely popular, with attendees coming from all over the country. It was very successful both in terms of the number of people who visited it and of the way it focused attention to the Shrewsbury and Newport canals. A lot of people in Shrewsbury itself have discovered that they do have a canal.

Particularly encouraging are two comments from the museum staff:

*“The story of Shropshire’s canals is a very important one that is under-represented in terms of actual objects within the museum’s own collections. So it has been a pleasure to work with the SNCT and the National Waterways Museum to put on this exhibition which reflects this importance so well.”*

**Emma-Kate Lanyon**, Curator (Shrewsbury Museum)

*“The display has proved popular with visitors and the quality of the interpretation provided by the SNCT is much admired by staff. Hopefully this is the start of further collaborations between the museum and the Trust.”*

**Phil Scoggins**, Interpretation Officer (Shrewsbury Museum)

This fantastic opportunity for the Trust did take us outside our comfort zone, as the SNCT has never done anything like it before. It has proved to be an excellent learning curve for our people in putting on a large and varied display and we have learnt many lessons which will be needed when the displays at Wappenshall are ready to design. The background to the display is explored in the article opposite.



Advertising the museum display in the Square

Mayor Miles Kenny opening the exhibition



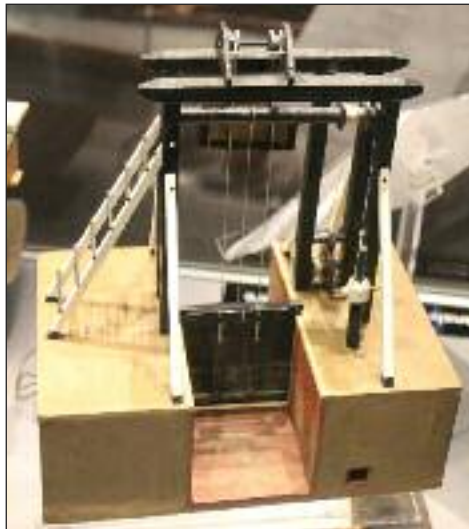
# Committee decisions - *Putting on the museum exhibition*

Our committee met a number of times from April-December 2015. At first we had little idea what to exhibit, where to source the items and how to go about exhibiting them. It was immediately apparent that some of us had previous experience of setting up exhibitions, whilst others had useful contacts to track down items to exhibit. We had a couple of brainstorming sessions to discuss what our ‘storyline’ should be, how we could tell it and what its title should be. Tasks were allocated to various committee members, working individually or in small groups. Detailed drawings of the museum space available to us were prepared and 20 ‘focus areas’ were identified.

The canal artist and historian Tony Lewery was contacted, and he agreed to lend us some items from his collection. We paid a visit to the National Waterways Museum at Ellesmere Port to see what was in their collection and we were able to hand-pick bits and pieces we thought we'd like to include. We also visited the CRT workshops at Norbury Junction and Ellesmere to see what they had to offer. In addition, we borrowed items from various SNCT members.







*Some of the displays in the exhibition*

Part of the exhibition was an audio-visual display which matched some of our oral history recordings with views of the area of the canal which the interviewees were speaking about. We also included short documentaries on the canal and canal songs by Mal Edwards MBE and others. Our original storyline underwent several changes, depending on which artefacts we were able to locate. The items from the workshops at Norbury and Ellesmere were arranged in a mock-up of a blacksmith's smithy. Also included was Les Vaughan's working model of the guillotine gate at Turnip Lock.

Staff from the National Waterways Museum helped us set out their items in the week before we opened; all was done under the watchful eye of the Shrewsbury Museum curator. We were advised to keep the descriptions of the displays as short as possible, so we put together laminated 'further information' sheets for those visitors who wanted to know more.

Four talks were organised for Saturdays over the course of the exhibition and we were pleasantly surprised that they attracted virtually full houses. We also arranged two walks along the route of the canal which were well attended.

Panels to advertise the display were produced and positioned on the ground floor of the museum and up the stairs. Fliers promoting the exhibition and the talks were distributed in the museum, the library, the theatre and at various other places throughout the town.

The Mayor of Shrewsbury, canal enthusiast Miles Kenny, and his wife Mrs. Aurora Kenny kindly opened the exhibition whilst Jusfashow featured in the Square on the opening day. Thanks to the Ironbridge Gorge Museum, some of us were able to appear at the opening in the guise of 19th century boat people.

We manned the exhibition for 6 hours each Saturday (when the museum is most visited), and included a visitors' book in the exhibition, for comments and for booking the walks. Entries were most encouraging and supportive.

*Peter Cann*

## The Staffordshire Waterways Group

Although most of the S&N canals are in Shropshire the first four miles, connecting the canals to the mainline, are in Staffordshire. This section also has most of the locks, so its very important.

For the last couple of years a new group, the Staffordshire Waterways Group (SWG), has been meeting regularly. It is a partnership of canal societies, from all the Staffordshire canals including the SNCT, working with Staffordshire County Council and the Canal & River Trust to provide a vision for the county's waterways.

The Group has just launched a new website [staffwaterways.org.uk](http://staffwaterways.org.uk). This includes an approach to how each canal could be improved to provide a better place to live and to create economic growth, as well as looking at the value of the waterways from a number of perspectives including community, business, tourism, health, transport and the environment.

Individuals, groups, councils and businesses are invited to contact the Group if they want to get involved, have an idea they are looking to develop or wish to support any part of Staffordshire's waterways. Through the website and the SWG network the Group will provide contacts and make connections to help new projects get underway.

*Gill Heath*, Cabinet Support Member for Environment and Rural Affairs at Staffordshire County Council, said: "The new website is a wonderful tool to connect all our communities and their waterways."

*Roger Savage*, chairman of the Staffordshire Waterways Group, said: "Staffordshire is at the heart of the national inland waterways network; it has more miles of canal than any other shire county, along with rivers, lakes and reservoirs galore. We need to look after and to grow the use of our waterways.



*Fradley Junction - busy Sunday relaxing by Staffordshire canals*

© Waterway Images

# The Shrewsbury Canal

by “KIWI”

This article is taken from an item that appeared in the Shropshire Magazine in about 1965 and subsequently re-printed 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 permission of Shropshire Magazine [www.shropshiremagazine.com](http://www.shropshiremagazine.com)

*This is the best description I have come across of the scenery along our canals, some time after they were abandoned but whilst there was much more to see than today. Its very evocative and really brings them alive for me. I had not previously realized that the section through the Weald Moors was raised on an embankment - the views must have been fantastic! Ed.*

In a previous article in the Shropshire Magazine, I mentioned among waterways in Shropshire at present unusable the Shrewsbury Canal. This consists properly of the Newport Branch, the Shrewsbury Canal itself and the Trench Branch, but the whole can conveniently be referred to as the Shrewsbury Canal. It is the most truly Shropshire of all the canals, although it runs in Staffordshire for the first two or three miles of its course, not entering Shropshire until within about half a mile of Newport.

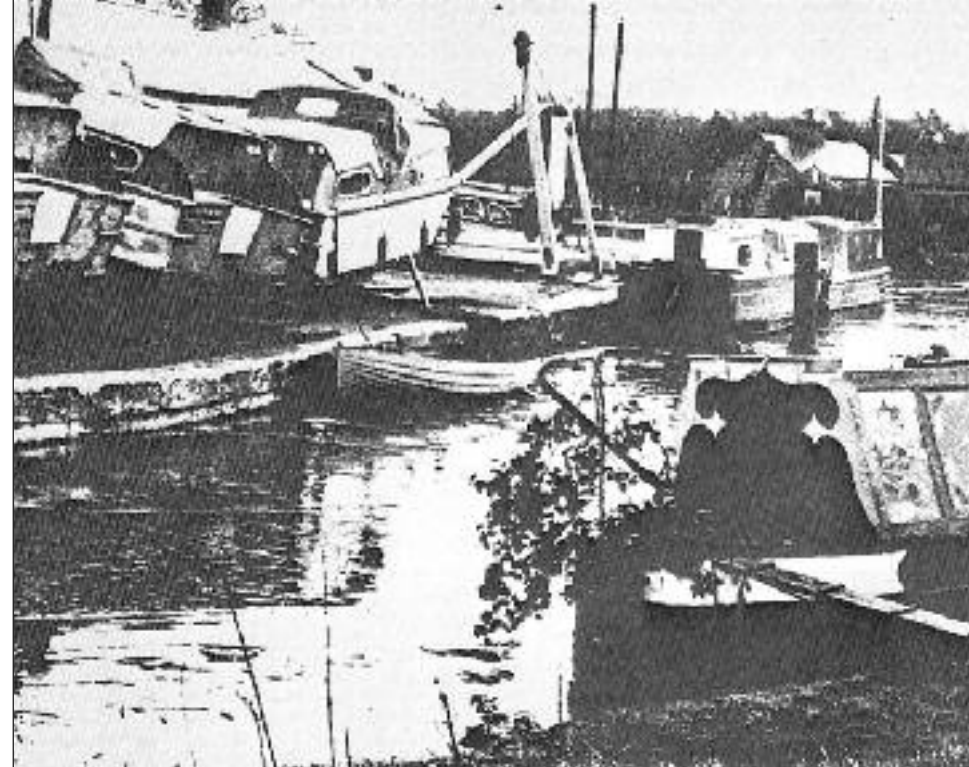
The Canal drops from its junction with the Main Line canal at Norbury by a magnificent flight of seventeen locks: some of the pounds between these locks are strikingly beautiful.

It then continues past the picturesque village of Forton and lovely Moss Pool, down Meretown Lock and Haycock’s Lock to Newport. Here there is a spacious basin, but what could be a thriving wharf and marina is at present a desolate scene of mud, reed beds and rubbish.

There is another lock at the Newport road bridge, while Tickethouse Lock and Polly’s Lock follow at five hundred yard intervals. (Who, I wonder, was Polly? I like to think of her as a pretty lock-keeper’s daughter, though her lock lies right out in the open country with now not a house nearby.) A mile later, Edgmond Lock brings the series to an end.

Soon after this, the canal begins to move out onto the Shropshire Weald Moors, a part of the country not widely known and with a charm of its own. There is a feeling of remoteness, which makes it hard to believe that the Oakengates conurbation lies only about two miles to the south. This part of the canal is raised upon an embankment, which is carried across Kynnersley Drive, (running between Kynnersley and Lilleshall) by a small, but exquisite aqueduct, well worth a visit.

After a picturesque section near the village of Preston upon the Weald Moors, our waterway moves on in gentle curves to Wappenshall Junction, where the Trench Branch leaves on the left, while the Shrewsbury Canal continues north-west. Here there are some wonderful old buildings in the true English canal tradition, not perhaps in the best of repair but still holding together.



Norbury Wharf about 1965

A little way past the Junction is one of the characteristic Shropshire Union drawbridges still in reasonable condition and shortly afterwards the Canal descends by its last two locks near Eyton upon the Weald Moors. These locks, five hundred yards apart, are interesting on account of their guillotine bottom gates: these were hoisted with the aid of a counter-balance weight to allow boats to pass underneath.

The gate on Eyton Top Lock has disappeared, but that on the Bottom Lock, which stands less than half a mile east of the Wellington-Whitchurch road, is still in place, almost complete.

After the main road, the canal enters what is for me, its most attractive section – here it winds through a beautiful, undulating plain, not so well wooded as to obscure the hills of the Wrekin massif on the one hand and Haughmond Hill on the other.

The River Tern is crossed at Longden by Telford’s cast-iron aqueduct and the River Roden at Rodington by a sturdy and beautifully proportioned aqueduct of brick. The church at Withington stands right on the bank of the canal: what a picture this would make if only the canal were full!

Two and a half miles beyond Withington, the waterway plunges into the Berwick Tunnel, 970 yards long, 6 feet 5 inches high and nine feet one inch wide (measurements from “Canoeing”, by William Bliss.)

To go through this tunnel in a canoe, by the light of a candle lantern, is an eerie experience. There is no towing path and in places water gushes down the sides; every now and again



*The beginning of the Shrewsbury Canal (the Newport Canal - ed) - it leaves the Main Line at Norbury and goes off under the bridge on the left*

one looks up one of the wide vertical ventilation shafts and sees the sky as if from the bottom of a well.

Upon leaving the tunnel, the canal squeezes between the flank of Haughmond Hill and the left bank of the River Severn, which it now follows more or less closely, to run past the attractive village of Uffington into the Ditherington area of Shrewsbury. It originally ran to a terminus within a quarter of a mile of Shrewsbury railway station, but the last mile of its course has been lost in urban development.

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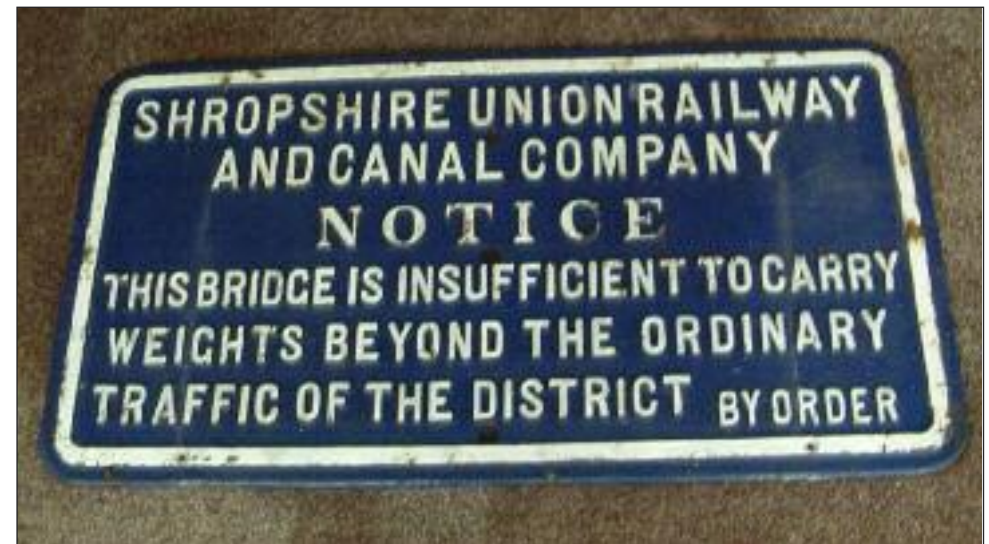
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*The Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company once owned the Shrewsbury and the Newport Canals and this sign could easily have come from one of our bridges*

## A Lucky Find at Crick

*Reprinted with the kind permission of Waterways World [www.waterwaysworld.com](http://www.waterwaysworld.com)*

My wife and I always attend the Waterways World Crick Show, not to look at boats, as we are happy with the one we have, but to look at the sales and trade stands. It's also an excellent venue to meet up with old friends of the canal.

We always arrive on the first day and enter as soon as the gates open. This year we entered the Kingfisher stand marquee on the left, just inside the main gate, and went to stand KF99 where *Phillip Douetil* had on sale an original Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company cast sign that I had been seeking for some considerable time. Some 15 minutes after the show opened I was the owner at what I considered a very fair price (after a little haggling). Phil agreed that I could leave it at his stand until we were about to go home.

Upon collection later that day I put it on a sack truck kindly loaned to me by Phil to take it to the car park. I was approached twice on my way and asked if I would sell it at a profit as both parties had seen it on the stand, only to be told that it had already been sold. I was asked if I was going to mount it on our boat, to which the reply was 'no'. It is now on the wall of my home, which is an ex-GWR railway station. I fear if I had tried to fit it on Mollie she would have listed to whichever side I had put it, as the sign is quite heavy.

I now look forward to next year's show - 2015's was a good one with plenty of interest for everyone. Well done Waterways World.

*BOB GALE, nb Mollie*

***Does anyone else have any interesting memorabilia relating to the S&N canals that we can feature in the magazine? Ed.***



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## Lesley Smith Is Maggie Thatcher

Lesley Smith brought history to life with her portrayal of Maggie Thatcher at the very successful SNCT fundraising event at Burton Borough School, Newport last month.

Margaret Thatcher is without doubt one of the most successful women of the 20th century. From her roots in a grocer's shop in Grantham, she rose to study chemistry at Oxford and also took a law degree. She then succeeded in doing what, in earlier times would have been unthinkable, she became Britain's first female Prime Minister. Her firm handling, both of the Conservative party and its policies meant she could also be a contentious figure, going down in history as 'The Iron Lady.'



Lesley Smith brought her portrayal of this extraordinary woman to an audience many of whom realised that they have lived through some interesting political times. Using entirely the words of Margaret Thatcher herself from the autobiography 'The Path to Power,' Lesley, with many asides and diversions, described Thatcher's path to 10 Downing Street and she pulled no punches but also made it very funny. The evening raised over £1200 for the Trust"



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