

Spring 2014

Cuttings

Journal of the Shropshire Union Canal Society



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Cuttings

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Canal & River Trust

In case of need, the Canal & River Trust contact number is 0303 040 4040

Editorial

This issue brings news of several grant applications for our canals and planning consent for the Whitchurch Arm (page 23). With the Redwith to Pryces Bridge Section of the Montgomery Canal on target for completion in May (page 25) we reach an important milestone.

Fundraising activities continue with many planned for the Shroppie in 2014 including the IWA Campaign Festival at Chester and the Montgomery Canal Triathlon helping to put the Shropshire Union Canals on the map.

Successful Open Days at Beeston and Grindley Brook (pages 6 & 8) show the C&RT commitment to boating and improving the network.

In this positive frame, photographs and information is needed by C&RT (page 13) and SUCS (page 43) to help celebrate the Shropshire Union Canal Society Golden Jubilee and to encourage further support for restoration across the network. We hope you will be able to help.

David and Chris Owen-Roberts
Editors of Cuttings

Chairman's Jottings

Here's wishing you all a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

Nearly a month has gone already at the time of writing this. So far this winter we have had lots of wind and rain but no hard frosts and frozen canals. Members who live in some areas of the country such as the South West have had terrible flooding and we send them our sympathy - we need rain to keep us all alive and our canals going, but there is a limit and we cannot control it.

In November I went with a small picture display and literature to the Open Day at Beeston Locks. It was a very cold day but Joe Public came to see the mysteries of a canal lock. A report by our editors appears on page 8.

The weather was again a feature when the C&RT National Chairman, Chief Executive and Trustees visited Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and the Montgomery Canal. Several Society members were at Redwith to accompany them along the towpath bordering the current work site and just beyond Pryces Bridge to show what the next area for restoration is like. In the evening Anne and I attended a reception in Oswestry - attended by many delegates as well. Once again, the standard of work done by volunteers was highly praised.

January saw Anne with our information board at the Open Day at Grindley Brook. Again the weather was bad but it was an excellent attendance by the public. C&RT are using these occasions well to inform the public.

We hope to have an exhibit at the IWA National Campaign Festival at Chester on 7 & 8 June. If anyone is interested in helping us please contact Pat or Anne.

If all goes according to plan, the volunteer work on the Redwith to Pryces Bridge section will be completed in time for the dam to be removed and the top plank raised to allow water into the restored section in May (see page 25). The volunteers can then have their well-deserved 'party'. The official opening is being organised by C&RT with an input from us. The date is not yet known but please look on our website for up-to-date information.

After so many years of being Project Officer for the Montgomery Restoration, Mike has decided that he will hand over the reins after the opening. We are very fortunate that David Carter, who has deputised for Mike on occasions, has agreed to take over the mantle. We are very indebted to Mike, and his very supportive wife, Jan, for all he has done and will continue to do in a less responsible position.

We have accepted the resignation of Dr Maurice Ward as a Trustee and member of Council but he will still be involved in Society activities and volunteer work. We thank him for his time served on Council.

Pat Wilson
Chairman

Lockwinds 2014

The dates for the Lockwind are:

Thursday 22 May from 10.00 am to Monday 26 May until 5.30 pm (clearance of site). All are welcome to come and help especially on Thursday when the tents and gazebos are to be erected; also Monday afternoon for packing and tidying up.

We would appreciate items for sale - either beforehand to Pat or myself - or at the Lockwind.

EARLY WARNING of the August Lockwind

Thursday 21 August - Monday 25 August - more details nearer the time.

Anne Lindop

AGM

To be held at Llanymynech Village Hall on 8 November 2014. More details to follow.

Anne Lindop

Open Day at Grindley Brook

The Canal & River Trust treated us to another of their popular Open Days with the three-lock staircase at Grindley Brook being fully drained. Visitors were welcomed by C&RT's Campaign Manager Michelle Kozomara and North Wales & Borders Waterways Manager Wendy Capelle was organising the groups of around eight people. Although due to start at ten there were several people already there so the first group went down early. Our group was the third and led through the locks by Simon Lewis, Maintenance Manager for the Shropshire Union.



Paddles - original oak above and modern plastic below



Cuttings Spring 2014

The main job during the stoppage was replacing the top gate of the staircase. However whilst the locks are drained the engineers do a thorough inspection of the locks and any paddle gear or gate components that need repair or replacement can be attended to. The brickwork is also inspected and any repairs made. This time some paddles were being replaced or components repaired and also the fit of the gates was being improved. This is done using a sacrificial strip called a liner that is fitted to the edge of the gate. Raddle (although apparently children's powder paint works just as well) is applied to the abutment and the gate closed, paint being transferred to the strip at the high points. These are then carefully chiselled off until the fit of the gate is near perfect.

Whilst some of the paddles are made from oak and still in very good condition, replacement paddles and frames are made from plastic. Improvements in the design mean that these should not cause the problems associated with the notorious initial attempts at using plastic for paddles elsewhere.

The tour started with a short introduction by Simon before descending into the top lock. The lock still has the original brick floor although the sides of the lock have been rebuilt in the past with engineering bricks. The brick floor was still in very good condition although the edges by the lock walls showed signs of being rubbed, this part being shallower due to the bowed shape. No doubt some very well-loaded working boats have passed through in the past.

We then moved on to the middle lock. This has undergone some extensive repair work in the past, unfortunately mostly with concrete! Both the lock walls have been rebuilt with concrete along with the floor. On display in the lock was one of the new plastic paddles and its associated backing plate. This has narrow strips of white plastic fixed which reduces the contact area between the paddle and the plate. This significantly reduces the friction and should make the paddle much easier to use.

Lastly we went down into the bottom lock. Here an interesting feature could be seen below the cill where the paddle culverts allow the flow of water into the lock. It is interesting to note the construction of this and although it would normally never be seen, it says something for the original engineers that they went to the trouble of making a tidy job of the construction. At the other end of the lock, the canal had been sealed off several metres beyond the bottom lock cill. Here could be seen how the floor extended about three metres beyond the cill in brick before continuing under the road bridge in rock rubble.

At this point the party was joined by C&RT Chief Executive Richard Parry who once again was out and about to meet and chat to visitors, staff and volunteers. Finally we were led back up to the lockside and directed to the café where C&RT volunteers were dispensing much-appreciated tea and coffee to visitors.

Overall, more than 500 visitors were taken through the locks by the Trust's engineering staff. Another 100 or more visitors to the site, many just out for a walk, took the opportunity to see the drained locks from the lockside. One visitor was present when the existing gates went in 25 years ago. She was aged 7 then and her dad was working locally at Viking Afloat. She brought her family along to share the experience with them.

The day was a great success and a credit to all the C&RT management and workers who turned out on a Sunday to provide this interesting and informative event. If you get the chance to visit one of the Open Days it is an opportunity well worth taking up.

David Owen-Roberts



Well made culvert between the locks

Chris Owen-Roberts with Richard Parry



Beeston Locks Open Day

A rather grey November day saw Beeston Iron and Stone locks open for inspection by the public while new top gates were fitted and the cills refurbished. Whilst we could view the stone lock from above, due to work in progress it was not possible to go down into the lock. Beeston Iron lock however was ready for re-watering and we had the opportunity to go down onto the cill. Unfortunately the lock wasn't completely dewatered so we were unable to see the timber floor of the lock, but the iron plates that made up the surface of the cill were open to close examination.



Stating the obvious

A number of C&RT volunteers and employees were present and Wendy Capelle, North Wales and Borders Waterways Waterway Manager, was on hand to organise the tours as groups of six were led down into the lock chamber. Chief Executive Richard Parry also came along in the afternoon to meet both staff, volunteers and visitors.

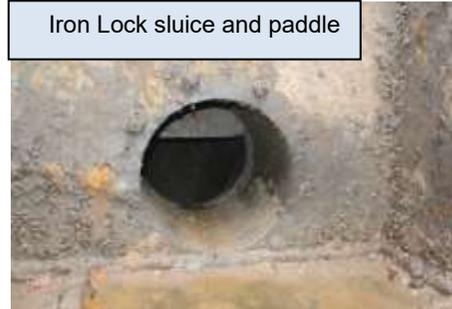
We joined group four and were taken first to the walkway above the cill to look down at the completed works. The volunteer leading us explained a bit about the history of the unique lock structure and explained why the composite gates (wood and steel) were being replaced by the more traditional wooden structures (cheaper to maintain and they last longer!). We were then taken down into the lock where we could wander around the cill



Visitors on the cill of the Iron Lock

and new gates. It was interesting to see inside the sluice with the relatively thin guillotine paddle sliding in slots within the metal structure. We were given ample time to look around and ask questions. The distortion in Beeston Iron lock, whilst not visible when the lock is full, could easily be seen by looking along the lock walls. The engineer in charge explained that because of the piling on the banks and the narrow towpath, access to both locks by land is not easy so

Iron Lock sluice and paddle



Iron plates on the cill floor



Stone Lock works



Stone Lock paddle chamber

recovering boats that sink in the Iron lock is a major undertaking. When asked if they found many windlasses, the engineer said that they hadn't this time with only one lost windlass on the cill. However, he did say that they usually find much more and anything from cameras to mobile phones and the inevitable windlasses usually turns up. By lunchtime they were up to group 12 with plenty more people arriving for what turned out to be a busy day at the locks.

Afterwards we were given the opportunity to visit the work in progress at Beeston Stone Lock. We were led up by volunteer Dek Owen who pointed out the original line of the canal and the location of the original staircase locks. The unstable land however led to the catastrophic collapse of the locks in 1787 and the canal remained semi-derelict with a tramway bypassing the breach. In the early 19th century Thomas Telford was asked to advise and recommended the building of a lock with cast iron plates to resist the movement of the sand. Beeston Iron Lock opened in 1828.

At Beeston Stone Lock we were taken onto the scaffolding walkway over the cill by site engineer Dave Clarkson who explained what was going on. In particular he talked about the health and safety issues surrounding the use of stop planks on wide locks and explained how these were supported by steel posts located into steel beams at the top and bottom. The design of stop planks, particularly for wide locks, is still undergoing development. We were unable to go down into the lock as, although nearly completed, some inevitable delays meant that work was still going on to

continued...

finalise the fit of the gates. Nonetheless it was very interesting to see the men at work.

Back on the towpath, the indomitable Pat Wilson was manning the Society stand and few managed to pass without receiving a Society leaflet and membership form. This after Pat had spent much of the previous day on the Montgomery Canal. Also present were the IWA and the Chester Canal Heritage Trust, the latter handing out a very informative leaflet about Tiverton and the Beeston locks.

Overall the day was a great success and the C&RT staff deserve a lot of credit for opening up the locks for events such as this. Deserving of even more credit are the number of enthusiastic and well-informed volunteers without whom C&RT would struggle to carry out the Open Days.

David Owen-Roberts

ROWAN TAYLOR, BLACKSMITH



Rowan is a highly skilled blacksmith having won the Best Blacksmith award from the National School of Blacksmithing. He has also recently been awarded a certificate in heritage skills for blacksmithing. Now established in the forge at the Waterway Yard, Ellesmere, Rowan is available to take on commissions as well as selling his very popular animal head pokers and a wide range of artistic ironmongery. Please ring or email for more details.

Email: rowan_o_c@yahoo.fr
Phone: 07593 830 200
Facebook: South Saxon Forge

The Blacksmith's Forge
 Ellesmere Canal Yard, Birch Lane, Ellesmere, SY12 9AA

Helicopter Escort for Narrowboat

The high-flying staff at RAF Shawbury, which trains helicopter pilots for all three of the armed services, have tried out the canals.



RAF Shawbury from the cockpit of a helicopter

Norbury Wharf's trip boat, The Shropshire Star, has now been chartered twice. The first took them to Gnosall with one of the helicopters from the base in attendance escorting The Shropshire Star from the air – an exercise in extremely slow flying. It wasn't all fun as they had a meeting on both the outward and return leg of the journey; albeit in the comfort of the boat whilst enjoying the scenery.

The second cruise involved working locks and steering the boat at Tyrley! Later the team hired a day-boat from Norbury to try steering and navigating a boat.

There are plans for the very popular Friday night Fish and Chip cruises to resume in March.



Norbury Wharf
The Shropshire Star passing through Gnosall

Share Your Experience!

Have you been on a trip that is slightly different or to an event on the canal? Why not share your experience with other members? We are always interested in hearing of members' exploits that relate to the Shropshire Union Canal and its associated branches. Our feedback suggests that other people like to hear about it too. We would particularly like to hear from people on the southern half of the main line – surely there is life south of Market Drayton?

Or maybe you have a question about the Society. Have your say and if appropriate we will ask Council for a response.

Hurleston Lock to be Widened

After many years of trapping boats in the reduced width of Hurleston Bottom Lock at the junction of the Shropshire Union and Llangollen canals, it was announced in December that work is to be carried out to reduce the pinch point. Time and time again the flight has had to be closed whilst efforts were made to release a narrowboat stuck in the lock, especially those whose owners would not raise their fenders, with the boat subsequently becoming jammed. The picture shows a boat with its fenders down, completely fast.



Many boaters made a point of mooring opposite just to see the fun as boaters ignored the shouted request to take their fenders up. Older wider boats too, even without fenders were prone to getting fast. The boats would enter the empty lock without any problem, but with the upper courses of the brickwork bulging on the towpath side, as soon as boats with fenders or the older historic boats were raised, they became securely jammed. All too often, as attempts were made to free the boats by releasing water, the boats then sometimes hung up and were known to suddenly come free and crash down as paddles were left open.

The problem with the bulge is that it has not been fully investigated, so it is not really known if the bricks can be 'shaved off' or if the course will have to be taken out and rebuilt further back. However, work was planned from the 10th February to solve the problem whilst a stoppage is in force for work on the lock gates. As a listed structure, before the work can be undertaken, listed building approval was needed, and it was not known how long it would take to obtain permission.

Canal & River Trust



Hurleston Bottom Lock and the start of the Llangollen Canal

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	<p>01270 812677</p> <p>Coole Lane, Newhall (Audlem) Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 8AY</p>  <p>www.overwatermarina.co.uk</p>	

Old Photographs Wanted

Canal societies, waterways enthusiasts and amateur photographers are being encouraged to help a campaign aiming to broaden support for the restoration of the nation's currently derelict canals through striking photographs of canal restoration efforts over the past 40 years.

The campaign, set to be launched in the Spring, will see C&RT and the IWA call for more to be done to bring the nation's lost canals back to life.

They're looking for standout images, ones that really demonstrate the perilous position the canal network was once in and the extraordinary efforts of a pioneering few who recognised the benefits restored waterways could bring. Images can be sent to kate.langley@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Stop Press - Canal Closure

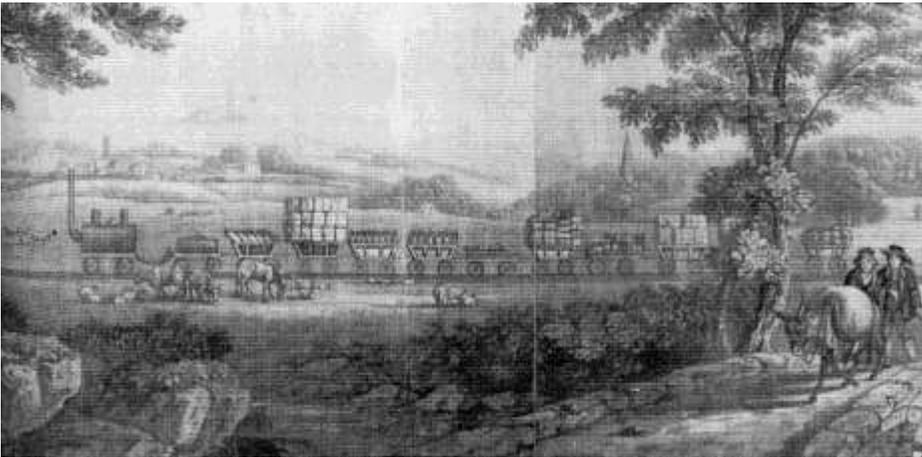
As Cuttings went to press C&RT were preparing an emergency stoppage on the Llangollen Canal at Hampton Bank between bridges 49 and 50. The canal and towpath will remain closed until Friday 4 April for piling to prevent a breach.

Rail-Road or Canal?

We have heard much in the news recently about the possible impact of HS2 on the countryside between London and the North West, but uncertainty about the impact of railways on the countryside is nothing new. Nor for that matter were canals absolved from controversy with many influential landowners making significant demands on the canal developers, not least the diversion of the canal at Nantwich to avoid upsetting the incumbents of Dorfold Hall. Here, Peter Brown looks at some of the issues facing the developers in the early nineteenth century...

Imagine it's 1825. You live comfortably in the country, and have a couple of Ellesmere & Chester Canal £100 shares paying 4%. You've never seen a steam locomotive though you know there are a handful - slow, inefficient and dirty - at work pulling coal trucks in the North East and in South Wales. But you've seen the canalside smoking chimneys of Frost's flour mill and Walker's lead works in Chester.

Then you hear the proposal for a 'rail-road' from Birmingham to the Mersey, passing by Market Drayton, Nantwich and Chester, but all you really know about it comes from what you read in the Chester Courant and the Chester Chronicle. Margaret Monk, proprietor of the Courant, likes the idea, saying it 'unites safety, smoothness and speed of transit'. John Fletcher, proprietor of the Chronicle, thinks it is an imposition and a swindle - but as he owns 30 shares in the canal company, 'He would say that,



The illustration is a publicity engraving of 1825 for the Birmingham & Liverpool Rail Road. The line is shown as unfenced, with people and animals going about their business peacefully. The train has an interesting mixture of loads, including a platoon of soldiers.

wouldn't he?', to coin a phrase.

People who own land near the intended route say that estates and farms will be split up by deep cuttings and high embankments. The comfort of residents 'will be destroyed by the incessant din and smoke of machinery'. They say it isn't safe. There's the danger of boiler explosions. Crashes will be caused by broken rails caused by cold, wear or pressure, or 'by the force of the machinery thrown the slightest degree out of the right line'. Davies Davenport, Cheshire MP since 1806, calls locomotives 'infernal engines', and he's respected for his independence, sound common sense and readiness to promote constituency interests. The crossing and re-crossing of turnpikes and other well-frequented roads will be intolerable. Elderly gentlemen will not be able to cross the rail-road without the certainty of being run over. Young gentlemen are fearful for their pheasants. Farmers fear that cows will not graze within sight of locomotives, and if cows are frightened they may miscarry; also the demand for oats and hay for horses will diminish and prices will tumble.

One man has estimated that all the rail-roads currently being proposed will require over 2½ million tons of coal a year to run. The price of coal will increase so much that carriage by rail would be uneconomic. Iron prices have already almost doubled. And can it be supposed that our coal and iron mines are inexhaustible?

Other correspondents say that the £800,000 cost of the rail-road is greatly underestimated, and that the project will benefit nobody except bankers, lawyers and surveyors. Anyway, the alternative proposal for a canal from Nantwich to Wolverhampton would completely meet all the transport needs, and would have the advantage of linking our canal with other canals in the kingdom, giving a direct route between Chester and London, for example.

Building a rail-road will inevitably reduce the income of the canal company. Share prices will fall - and if the company could no longer pay a dividend, the shares would probably become worthless. You're not concerned for yourself (you're fair-minded, of course) but many widows and orphans rely on their income from canal shares.

You've heard that the Marquis of Stafford intends to invest £20,000 in the new canal from Nantwich to Wolverhampton, but he's also said to be investing in the proposed rail-road from Liverpool to Manchester.

What do you think?

Peter Brown

[Based on advertisements, correspondence and editorials in the two Chester newspapers in 1824 and 1825. The rail-road scheme was defeated; the canal built.]

Forthcoming Events

Looking for something to do in March or April?

The National Waterways Museum at Ellesmere Port has a number of events lined up for March:

Model Boat Show 1 - 2 March 2014

Organised by the Ellesmere Port Model Boat Club, the weekend will see the museum basin and locks taken over by intricate radio controlled boats which will demonstrate their owner's skills at both model making and boat piloting. There will also be exhibitions of masterpieces of model boats from various clubs based in the North West and traders' stalls. Admission only £3.50.

Sociable Crochet. Tuesday mornings throughout March and April plus Sunday 16 March and Easter 18 - 21 April.

The award winning Coffee and Crochet Group are offering a novel activity to visitors – Sociable Crochet. Using very large hooks and thick yarn to make a rug which will grow rapidly, it will be easy for anyone, whether they are experienced or have never held a hook, to participate.

Norbury Wharf will resume their Friday Night Fish and Chip Cruises on their trip boat Shropshire Star this Spring (see page 12). Contact the wharf for details: info@norburywharftd.co.uk

And further ahead...

Norbury Canal Festival organised by the Shrewsbury & Newport Canals Trust and the Norbury C I Company, 3 & 4 May. More details at www.sncanal.org.uk.

Third Montgomery Canal Triathlon - Saturday 10 May. Cycling from Newtown to Welshpool, canoeing from Welshpool to Llanymynech and walk from Llanymynech to Welsh Frankton. More details see page 26.

SUCS Spring Bank Holiday Lockwind. 22 - 26 May. All help welcome. Contact Anne: (01630 647289 anne.lindop@orangehome.co.uk) or see page 5.

IWA National Campaign Festival is to be held in the Tower Wharf area in Chester, 6th - 8th June. See IWA website for more details.

August Bank Holiday Lockwind - 21 - 25 August. All help welcome. Contact Anne (as above) or see page 5 for details.

Maesbury Canal Festival, - 6 - 7 September, Montgomery Canal. Organised by the Friends of the Montgomery Canal and the local IWA branch. Volunteers are needed to help with this very popular event. More details in the next issue of Cuttings.

Wirral Autistic Society

The Wirral Autistic Society (WAS) is a registered charity that provides specialist support to individuals with autism. WAS recognises that each individual has a right to live their life as they determine and in recognising this they have created a shared understanding of each individual's strengths and needs. Staff support individuals in many activities and provide experience such as life skills, work placements, health and wellbeing, personal development and recognised certificates.



The Society has its own narrowboat, the Raby Enterprise, that is used five days a week on the Shropshire Union Canal. I looked on the C&RT website and found an opportunity for our service users to adopt the stretch of canal from the Shady Oak to the Crows Nest at Tattenhall. This gives them the opportunity to be involved in the waterway community and environmental projects within the area we use and also gives them the chance to work towards gaining a voluntary recognition certificate from the Canal & River Trust.

So far, and ongoing, we have regular litter picking walks along the tow path from the Shady Oak at Beeston to Tattenhall and trim borders around the ties and water's edge. The next set of tasks we have started, weather permitting, is the re-painting of all the sign posts and bollards along 'our' stretch. Hopefully for 2014 we are open to most tasks the C&RT would like us to complete and we can give something back to the lovely area around Beeston and Tattenhall.



WAS staff team with their adoption certificate

Keith Saunders, Health and Well Being, Narrowboat Manager for WAS

Independent Small Tasks Team Volunteers

A work party was held by the independent Small Tasks Team Volunteers group on 7 November 2013 at Lees Lane, Bridge 144, near Ellesmere Port Boat Museum. Previously, on 21 August, we held a work party at Lees Lane and installed fencing. Subsequently some of that fencing was damaged/removed by contractors. We were asked by C&RT to make good the damage before it encouraged further damage to the fencing. This we did but unfortunately it only lasted until 19 November when contractors working for the local authority removed sections once again. They replaced all the fencing along the road with metal fencing, re-tarmacked the pathway and a canal side area. There is some degree of confusion over land ownership rights to be clarified between C&RT and the local authority.



Bridge 144, Lees Lane - before and after our work party

On 1 December we had a stall at the Aqueduct Marina Christmas Fair to raise funds for the group. Thanks to the generosity of Robert and Andrea Parton (Directors of the Marina) we were designated the worthy cause of the day. We are very grateful to Robert and Andrea, the staff at Aqueduct Marina, the Christmas Fair stallholders, the moorers and the marina friends for the very generous support to the STTV. With the windfall proceeds we were able to purchase a good quality rechargeable drill (with two batteries) - an item that we sorely needed and that will be of immense value to us - and other small hand tools.

We held an "end-of-term" luncheon on Friday 13 December in Nantwich when many of us gathered to enjoy a meal together, with Wendy Capelle (Waterways Manager) and Paul Corner (formerly C&RT Volunteer Co-ordinator) as our guests.

We started 2014 with a list of 16 projects of various sizes and stages of preparation and we have made good progress in working through the list.

On 16 January we intended just to



Bridge 144 after the local authority works

have a work party at Hoole Lane Lock and Chemistry Lock - to install totem posts and signage at the water point, to undertake works around the redundant sanitary station and to paint canal side artefacts. However, the response of STTV members to the call for volunteers was so great that we had sufficient numbers of volunteers to run two work parties on the same day. The second team undertook improvements at the Stanney Mill Lane Visitor Mooring (which provides access for boaters to Cheshire Oaks).

Redundant Hoole Lane Lock Sanitary Station



Capping the old Elsan point

Clearing soil preventing access

On 23 January a commemorative bench was installed at the Stoak Leisure Area by Picton Lane Bridge 136. We had intended to undertake another work party in January, principally painting close to the Nantwich Services building, but unfortunately inclement weather on the day resulted in a postponement.

If you see evidence of damage, theft or misuse of facilities please photograph it or at least report it to C&RT at Northwich so that it can be made safe, replaced or repaired as necessary. Alternatively, let STTV know and we will liaise with C&RT to rectify matters if possible.

(For further STTV information contact Paul Mills on 0151-336-1049 or Maurice Ward on 01942-260459/07791-350207.)

Marinas News

Wrenbury

The application for a marina in Wrenbury near the Cotton Arms was withdrawn in mid-January following considerable local opposition. The principal objections seemed to centre around the impact it would have on the village centre along with the church and its surrounds. It even got a mention in Steve Haywood's column in Canal Boat magazine! The other Wrenbury marina application, near Wrenbury Heath Bridge, is still rumbling on. Although the decision target date was over a month ago, no decision has yet been announced.

Ellesmere

The Development at Ellesmere, which as well as a marina for 188 berths also includes a development of 250 houses and other buildings, is currently awaiting an Environmental Impact Assessment. Unfortunately the Shropshire County Council planning site does not show any documents or comments for this development so it is not possible to judge what the local feeling is. There does though appear to be some conflict between various councillors as to what benefits it will bring to the town.

Church Minshull

Aqueduct Marina on the Middlewich Branch has just been awarded 5 Gold Anchor status for marinas by the Yacht Harbour Association, supported by the British Marine Federation. The awards are determined through a comprehensive marina audit, mystery shopper events and berth-holder questionnaires, establishing a marina as a good place to moor under agreed and verifiable quality standards which also includes the internationally recognised ICOMIA Clean Marinas Award.

Norbury

Norbury Wharf are claiming that 2014 will be a "turn round" year for canal-orientated businesses. They report strong sales of boats through their brokerage and also say that bookings are significantly up for hire boats with agents reporting bookings up by 20% over last year, particularly for the popular school holiday weeks.

Whitchurch

Whilst not a marina as such, planning permission has been granted for a basin at the end of the Whitchurch Arm, see page 23.

Recycling Mobile Phones

If you have any old mobiles that could be recycled to raise cash for the Society, please contact Pat Wilson 01270 528296

Montgomery Locations



We sometimes get asked by people not familiar with the area exactly where some of the locations are that are referred to in various articles.

The ideal map is the OS 1:25,000 or 1:50,000 sheet 126 (Shrewsbury). Redwith Bridge is located at OS grid reference SJ302241. The map above should help identify the locations.

There is limited roadside parking near most of the bridges, with a wide gateway by Redwith Bridge. If there is a restoration party in action, there is off-road parking just west of Redwith Bridge which should be open whilst work is in progress.





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Whitchurch Consent

Planning consent has been granted by Shropshire County Council for the canal extension and a new basin with moorings and a turning area at Whitchurch. Fundraising is now underway to enable this project to go ahead. See <http://www.whitchurchwaterway.org.uk/canal-basin> for full details.

The Whitchurch Canal basin will extend the existing Whitchurch Canal Arm further towards the town. It will provide an attractive amenity for the residents of the town and complement the area comprising the Whitchurch Country Park and the Greenfield nature reserve. The scheme will provide additional mooring facilities and will encourage users of the canal to visit Whitchurch Town Centre.



Saturn's Travels in 2014

If you would like Saturn to attend your event or you would like us to plan an educational event please contact info@saturnflyboat.org.uk

Event	Date
• Easter Gathering and SUFBRS AGM The National Waterways Museum Ellesmere Port (www.boatmuseumsociety.org.uk)	18 - 21 April
• Llangollen Schools education days, this is a joint project with Llangollen Wharf (www.horsedrawnboats.co.uk)	May
• Overwater Marina Open day, Audlem	1 June
• IWA Campaign Festival, Chester	7 - 8 June
• Middlewich Education Days	W/c 9 June
• Middlewich Folk and Boat Festival (www.midfest.org.uk)	13 - 15 June
• Aqueduct Marina Family Fun Day	20 July
• Audlem Festival of Transport (www.audlem.org)	26 - 27 July
• Alvecote Historic Boat Gathering	23 - 25 August
• Maesbury Canal Festival	6 - 7 September
• Whitchurch Boat Festival (www.whitchurchwaterway.org.uk)	20 - 21 September



Saturn at Maesbury in 2012

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Opening Redwith to Pryces Bridge

The "to do" list for the restoration works is getting shorter. Inevitably thoughts start looking forward to when Redwith to Pryces Bridge can be connected to the system again. As I write this in January, it looks like a canal with the amount of rain water in it, but it's not quite the same as being "connected"!

If all goes according to plan we should finish by the 12 May. That is the date we have given to C&RT to let them plan when the water can be let in again. This will involve the removal of a clay dam and lifting the top of the five stop planks at Redwith slightly. The length will then take 4 to 5 days to fill. It is anticipated that this will happen before our following work party weekend on the 7 & 8 June. We can then safely remove the fencing along the edge of the canal and the final result will be there for all to see. If you would like to witness the first drop of canal water entering the length then please ring Mike on 01948 880723 in early May.

Have you volunteered on site for this project?

To mark such a triumph, the Society is planning to have "a bit of a do" on the weekend of the 7th and 8th June with an invitation extended to anyone who has volunteered on this section and their partner, to come along and join us. Even some quiet time of reflection will not be frowned upon and no large stick will be waved to keep people working - once the fence has been taken down! Other preparations for the moving of the site will be on-going throughout the weekend for the restless types, but it's OK if you just want to come and look, chat and enjoy.

The expected format (in brief) for the 7th June will be:

- Boats are welcome - please let us know beforehand to avoid complete chaos! (Please remember there is no winding hole...)
- Afternoon tea served at Redwith and Pryces from 2:30 pm - parking on site at Redwith.
- Evening gathering at Canal Central, Maesbury Marsh to include:
 - Use of canoes
 - Marquee
 - Food
 - Entertainment
 - Camping available if required

Tickets for the evening event (we need to know numbers early) will only be available up until 5 May 2014. Please ring Jan on 01948 880723 or email jan@canalcottage.co.uk for an update on format and to obtain your tickets.

There will, of course, be an official Canal & River Trust opening of this length, but at the time of going to press the date is unknown. Any other questions please contact Jan or Mike.

Mike Friend

3rd Montgomery Canal Triathlon



The third Montgomery Canal Triathlon is being held on Saturday, 10 May. The first section, cycling from Newtown to Welshpool, will benefit from the completion of the works to upgrade the towpath into a national cycleway so there will be no more tree roots to negotiate. The contractors have started to work on the next section from Buttington to Pool Quay, and this will be completed before the Triathlon, including improving the canoe soft launch pads where necessary.

Arrangements are in place for the contractors to then install 6 canoe soft launch pads in Shropshire, one either side of each of the Aston locks. Funds to enable these to be installed have been raised by donations to the Friends of the Montgomery Canal from the use of their canoes kept at Maesbury over the last 5 years.

Entrants on the third section will come across the results of the excellent hedge-laying carried out by SUCS volunteers over the last three winters which have improved the towpath from Pant Basin nearly to Crickheath.

At Pryces bridge they will see how the volunteers have transformed the derelict canal which will soon be back in water. The new lining certainly holds water as the canal is currently half-full with the rain-water collected over the winter months.

We will have the presentation at the end of the Triathlon in a marquee at Welsh Frankton, from where we will bus entrants back to collect their bikes and canoes.

Peter Richards



Photo taken from Pryces Bridge in January showing the new section of canal holding rain water.

Membership News

We all extend a warm welcome to:

The Rae Family of Newton, Chester
Mr S Stamp of Bebbington
Mr and Mrs Attridge of Haslemere, Surrey
Mr Tony Hales of Henley-in-Arden
Mrs B Newsome of Preston Gubbals, Shrewsbury
Mr R Smith of Sunninghill, Berks
Mr B Ashley of Stourbridge
Mr N Vitue of Swinton, Manchester
Mr R Howat of Rawtenstall, Lancs
Mr and Mrs Marshall of Albrighton
Mr and Mrs Moran of Wimbourne, Dorset
Mr D Wheeler and Family of Augan, France
Mr P Hollinsworth of Rhyl
Mr F Goodwin of Builth Wells
Mr and Mrs Anguish of Welton, East Yorkshire

Gift Aid remains an important part of the Society's subscription package. Whilst the majority of members have signed a Gift Aid declaration, there are some who have not. I appreciate there can be a number of reasons not to but, if you pay UK income or Capital Gains tax, it would help the Society if you can complete a declaration. There is no need to do anything now but, over the next few months, I will contact anyone not yet signed up with a request to complete a declaration.

We are always looking for new members so if you know of anybody who would like to join us, please point them at our website which contains a downloadable membership application. Alternatively, contact me and I will send you a small pack of membership applications and publicity leaflets.

You can contact me about these or any other membership matter at 28, Millfield Drive, Market Drayton TF9 1HS, telephone 01630 656525 or by email to sucsmemsec@btinternet.com.

Ian Hendley

Recycling Printer Cartridges

Peter James (01743 364100, 71 Washford Road, Shrewsbury SY3 9HW) recycles printer cartridges for SUCS. If it is easier, you may still drop any cartridges in with Pat at Rincop, Wardle and she will deliver them to Peter.

A big thank you, please to James and Angela Cross for Ink Cartridges. The total for the year so far (since April 2013) comes to £171.

Waterway Walks

IWA Chester and Merseyside Branch holds monthly Waterway Walks. In March and May the walks will be on the Shropshire Union Canal.

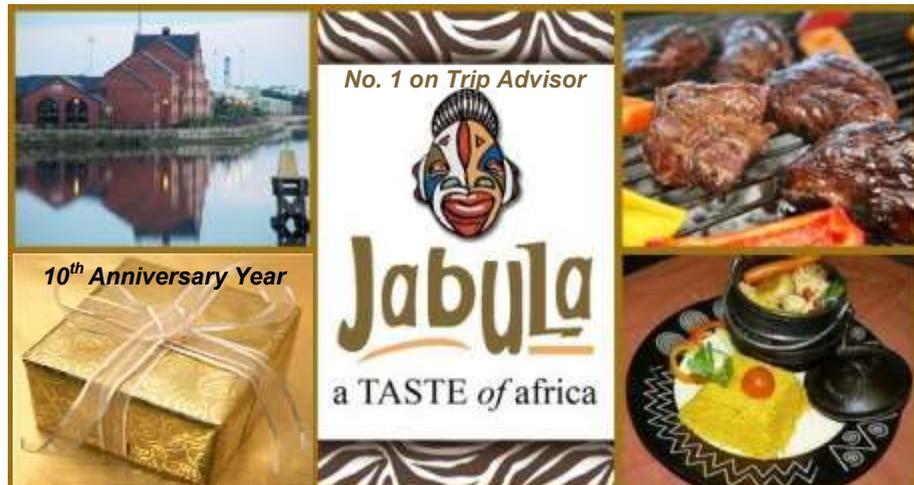
All walks take place on the 4th Thursday of the month commencing at 10.15 am and are open to IWA members and non-members alike. Each walk starts and finishes at a pub. Anyone requiring lunch at the pub at the end of the walk can book his or her meal just before we set out on the walk. Halfway through each walk we stop for welcome 'bring your own' refreshments'.

27th March – Tiverton

Starting at the Shady Oak, Bates Mill Lane, Tiverton, Tarporley CW6 9UE, this walk of about 4 miles covers the footpaths, lanes and Sandstone Trail on both sides of the Shropshire Union Canal. A feature of the walk is the view it gives of the towering crag on which sits Beeston Castle. OS Explorer 267 Map reference 533 602.

22nd May – Bunbury

From the Nag's Head, Vicarage Lane, Bunbury, Tarporley CW6 9PB this walk uses footpaths, lanes and the towing path of the Shropshire Union Canal and is about 4.5 miles long. OS Landranger 117 Map reference 565 578. Details from Ron Evans (rjkinglesley@tiscali.co.uk).



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Money Matters

This overview of the Society's financial situation towards the end of each accounting year is for those of you who are interested in our financial machinations but find the annual Financial Report a bit too formal and structured. A full report will, of course, be published on our website in August and an abridged version in Cuttings in September. Should you want a full paper copy, a request and a C5 stamped addressed envelope will do the job. For any questions you might have, an email or telephone call will at least get a holding answer if not a full one! Since this short article is compiled at the end of January, the figures quoted below owe something to my crystal ball!

The general economic background really remains static but optimistic with low interest rates. Society membership has fallen slightly but remains stable and, I believe, simply reflects a small but negative shift in the general public's perception of our waterways.

The running costs of the Society are met by income derived from subscriptions, gift aid, and advertising income generated by Cuttings; for this year that income totals some £11,000. Our gift aid income will increase slightly with the introduction of the Small Donations Scheme which covers donations to the Society through our collecting boxes. The running costs themselves cover expenses which include publishing and distributing Cuttings, our insurance, audit, general administration, stationery and postage costs. The latter has been significantly reduced by the use of email membership renewals and "E" Cuttings. Those expenses total some £9,500.

The funding of enhancement and restoration work – the main activities of our Society – principally depends on donations, the sale of used stamps and recycling (£1,300 this year) and general fundraising (£3,500 this year). We have also received £17,600 towards our Montgomery restoration; the greater part of this is Canal & River Trust contributions towards machinery hire with the balance made up of individual donations. Investment in the restoration of the Montgomery Canal has seen the greatest expenditure of nearly £60,000; some £43,000 of this was for the purchase of materials and has used the funds raised by the "Barrows of Boulders" appeal. Enhancement projects, including winter hedging, were much less at around £2,500.

These summary figures show that the year will result in an excess of expenditure, after including depreciation on plant and equipment, of some £28,000. However we have virtually completed the Redwith to Pryces Bridge restoration and can look forward to working south of that site and the costs are not unreasonable. Well done and thank you to all who have made a contribution whether it was large or small.

Ian Hendley

Art Exhibition at Audlem Mill

Every year, Audlem Mill in Cheshire hosts an exhibition of what is probably now the largest number of canal paintings assembled anywhere. The 2014 Canal Art Exhibition from 6 April to 4 May, organised in conjunction with the Guild of Waterway Artists, will include paintings, and some photographs, by many of the best canal artists in the country.

In 2013 the exhibition featured over 160 works and most of the Guild of Waterway Artists members were represented. The exhibition always attracts many hundreds of visitors from all across the country. Most come by car, but some make it by boat! Quite a few visitors have said that they now plan their season's boating to make sure that they are on the Shroppie at the right time, and of course they can also then enjoy the other delights of Audlem, which is a quintessential canalside village.



The Canal Art Exhibition is just one of many events at Audlem Mill during 2014 which will be of interest to boaters. There will be exhibitions of needlework and canal related items, and there is also the gathering of about 40 historic narrow boats on 26/27 July, organised by Audlem Mill as part of the village's Festival of Transport, which also has around 300 old vehicles on the second day – completely free days out!

Audlem Mill, one of the oldest and best known canal shops, is at Audlem Wharf, close to bridge 78 on the Shropshire Union Canal. For visitors by boat, there are moorings right outside the Mill. Further details of Audlem Mill events will be posted at www.audlemmill.co.uk, or phone 01270 811059.

Restoration Work Party Dates

The planned restoration work party dates for 2014 are:

1 & 2 March
5 & 6 April
3 - 5 May
7 & 8 June
5 & 6 July

2 & 3 August
6 & 7 September
4 & 5 October
1 & 2 November
see the website for more details.

Wappenshall Wharf Funding

Ambitious plans to restore the canal warehouses at Wappenshall in north Telford, built by Thomas Telford, to create "Thomas Telford's Wappenshall Wharf" are to be supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) with a phase one award of £72,000.

The Shrewsbury and Newport Canal Trust (SNCT) aim to restore the canal-side warehouses and wharf at the junction of the Shrewsbury and Newport Canals at Wappenshall. The site is important as the Shrewsbury Canal was Telford's first canal and the Newport Canal was his last. Work is planned to start in the Autumn of 2014 and will be completed within 2 years.

A first round grant of £72,000 has been awarded to the SNCT to fund the development of the plans for the project. This success is a key step to prepare for a second round application for a further £909,900 to be used with other grants to complete the work at a total cost of £1.453 million.



Wappenshall Wharf Photo - Richard Knisely-Marpole

The restored buildings will include a café and a space for community use and for business meetings, celebrations and other events.

An educational programme is also planned that will involve students from local schools and colleges.

Wappenshall Wharf was built between 1835 and 1838 as a loading point for goods to be transported by canal

and it acted as a "half way house" for narrowboats traveling between Norbury Junction and Shrewsbury, some 24.5 miles. After the Shrewsbury and Newport canals were officially closed the buildings were used as a coal merchants up until 1967 and then by a truck repair company until 2009. Telford and Wrekin Council's Cllr Eric Carter then led an initiative to buy the site and lease it to the SNCT.

The SNCT now hope to attract match funding and start the restoration of the canals themselves.

John Myers, [Shrewsbury and Newport Canals Trust](#)

Mammoth Task to Save a Moth

The barberry carpet moth was previously found in hedgerows throughout England and Wales, but is now one of Britain's 10 rarest and most threatened moth species, and confined to a handful of sites. The moths live exclusively on barberry plants - the very prickly berberis vulgaris - but these plants are thought to have been removed from hedgerows in the 19th century as they were identified as a host for a fungus which affects agricultural crops.



A project, which is part of a partnership between BIAZA zoos, Natural England and Butterfly Conservation, has been set up by Dudley Zoo to bring the moth back from the edge of extinction. The plan is to plant barberry plants at 100 metre intervals along the Shropshire Union Canal towpaths, linking Chester, Twycross and Dudley zoos, in the hope that the moth population will eventually increase.

The first phase of planting took place in June - approximately 10 km from Pretty Bridge, Caughall Road up to Chester City - and the second phase in December from Calveley to Barlock. Sue Russell

Canal Cottages to be Restored

The Canal & River Trust has announced £1.5m of funding to refurbish a number of its most historic canalside cottages. The properties include many humble lock keepers' cottages and toll houses, which date back 200 years to when Britain was in the grip of canal mania. Most are listed, including a number which are Grade II*.

The Trust is focusing on properties which are among the significant and best examples of their kind on the inland waterways. The programme has seen £750,000 invested in works to 13 cottages since 2011 and in November the Trust announced a further £750,000 over the next three years as it plans to refurbish and sensitively improve a further 12.

The work to restore these homes is revealing decades of well-intentioned but sometimes misguided decorating mistakes and 20th century maintenance oversights, ranging from use of impermeable modern paints and renders, to plastic gutters and uPVC windows.

Amongst the first properties to be refurbished is a Grade II listed cottage currently on the Buildings at Risk Register on the Llangollen Canal at Ellesmere in Shropshire.

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We have exceeded our target again this financial year! Total proceeds are £1,236.50 so far and I have just had a member bring a carrier bag full for me to sort and sell. It keeps me busy on these winter evenings... If you know anyone who has found tucked away in a drawer a PG Tips book/set of cards or any similar, I would love to have them as I know a dealer who wants them. Do remember that I can also sell old UK bank notes and coins as well as foreign ones. Every little helps.

Many thanks to everyone listed:

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Thanks also to those who have sent me mobile phones and inkjet cartridges. They are added into Peter James's total (P 27).

Pat Wilson

Collection Box Income

Collecting box income continued to creep up over the winter -- £1,253 since April 2013 - which is considerably better than last year already. And that doesn't count the small but significant income in Euros and other 'foreigners' which do, of course, go to the funds as well!

If you know a local business or venue in your area with links to the canal, why not ask them if we can place a box there? There are always gaps in our coverage and I'm happy to welcome new collectors. You can contact me via milseam@btinternet.com or 01691 839286.

Sarah Thursfield

Tel: 01270 525 040 E-Mail: info@aqueductmarina.co.uk
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Church Minshull Marina

are pleased to announce that we are part of the Gold Anchor Award Scheme and we are rated at 4.5 out of 5 Gold Anchors. This means that we reach the international standards set for marinas and that we offer excellent facilities, a very high level of service to our members and we have achieved the ICOMIA Clean Marina standard.

A variety of stalls, crafts, entertainers & food retailers will be present on the day. Donations collected will be given to the marina's 2014 charitable cause.
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Restoration Review 2013

This year must rank as the most productive in the history of the Society's restoration efforts. It was a year of remarkable progress in which all of the targets set early on were achieved or exceeded.

The principal target was to finish both the channel shaping and the lining operations along the whole length (Redwith to Pryces Bridge) before the end of the restoration season. This was a pretty ambitious aim given that there was 250 metres of channel to be shaped and the neck end of 300 metres of channel to line. It was realised right from the off that there was no hope of achieving the target using the working practices of past years. The main problem hitherto had been the conflicting demands on plant and labour of the shaping and lining operations, with the result that neither worked as efficiently as they could. To overcome this separate work parties for the two operations were held, and this more single-minded approach overcame most of the former problems. The other notable feature of the work parties was that the volunteers worked longer and more efficiently than in previous years due, in no small part, to the use of some innovative bits of equipment.

Happily the winter hedge laying work concluded in January allowing the planned February slot to be switched to preparatory work for the restoration effort. The weather in the first two months of 2013 was a continuation of monsoon conditions that caused so much trouble during the 2012 restoration



The 14 tonner gets to work

campaign. The rainy season had deposited an estimated 800 cubic metres of water in the channel giving almost navigable depth between the bridges and before any work could start this lot had to be removed. The bulk of the water was pumped through Redwith Bridge into the watered section of canal, an operation lasting two working days using four pumps. This, together with surveying and some other enabling works, set us up for the sterner tasks to come.

The first week of March saw the start of the new monthly 'two part' format with a six day long shaping work party. The participants were half a dozen or so machine drivers, surveyors, first aiders/welfare personnel together with an impressive array of diggers, dumpers and pumps. The most eye-catching item was a 14 tonne digger which had the power and reach to shape the offside bank slope in one operation. Aided by dry, but very cold, weather a 100m section of bank was finished in one and a half working days, a process that would have taken probably ten times as long using the smaller 3 tonne machines. Also for most of the week the Society's digger was working to reduce the adjacent channel base to just above grade. Six days of work transformed the appearance of the channel and the early indications were that the new working practices were delivering. This notion was reinforced by the March lining work party which took place a fortnight later. During this a full complement of volunteers lined 34 metres of channel, easily beating the previous best of 25m in a weekend. This work party turned out to be notable for another reason, namely, being the last in which blocks were transported by



The RAF go into action



March lining work party



The channel in April

dumper along the bed of the canal. During the weekend tests were made on the Society's 'secret weapon' – a home-made block chute – which allowed blocks to be transported along the top of the bank and delivered to the channel base without damage to the shaped channel bottom. Wading around in mud was to be a thing of the past, but would it work?

Volunteers for the April shaping work party arrived at a site resembling a Christmas card scene with snow and ice very much in evidence. The weather was bitterly cold throughout the weekend but, crucially, it was also dry which

greatly aided the cause. The 14 tonner was on site again and made short work of the shaping of the offside bank between tip slope and the compound. The other earthmoving operations concentrated on the base of the channel which was now beginning to resemble a canal from bridge to bridge. The April lining work party must go down as one of the most remarkable in the Society's history. Not only did it smash the record for most lining in a weekend, established the previous month, but it did so in freezing conditions with an average of only 15 volunteers on site through the weekend. The block delivery chute turned out to be a spectacular success. It was used to deliver blocks from a dumper located on the top of the bank into the lined section of the channel. In this way the lining gang were always working off the previously laid section of channel. And, wow, did this speed things up! We completed 38 metres for the weekend before we ran out of materials, and still had time to do some work on the land drains. To give some idea of how much things had accelerated the total of lining for the two work parties in 2013 was exactly 50% of the total for the whole of 2012. Maybe the target was achievable...

The May Bank Holiday weekend saw the third and final shaping-only work party. The weather once more proved co-operative. Dry conditions assisted progress and at close of play all the offside bank was shaped, and only 130 metres or so of channel bottom awaited final shaping. So, all the major earthmoving was finished. The May lining work party saw a further major landmark achieved with the



remaining 25m of channel lined to complete the lining at the Pryces Bridge end of the site, and 25m of the base laid at the other end of the site in preparation for the next month's effort.

June saw the record for the length of lining laid in a weekend broken yet again. There were two major contributory factors to this success - a lot of preparatory work and some very substantial reinforcements on the first day. The reinforcements were in the form of 16 members of JATCC 394 Course based at RAF Shawbury. The trainee air traffic controllers really entered into the volunteering spirit and worked very hard all day to shift a prodigious amount of blocks into the section of channel adjacent to the compound. With the Society volunteers lining the base of the channel, and our visitors completing the sides nearly 60m of channel was finished during the day, comfortably breaking all records. This result could not have been achieved without the help of the RAF volunteers and such were their efforts that, as they left the site, they received a spontaneous round of applause from the Society members present. The result meant that it was now possible to stand on the end of the lined channel bed and see the lined channel at the other end some 100m away.

Alas the gap remained at 100m during July due to one of the recurring problems of the restoration – non delivery of the lining material. The lining gang thus spent the whole weekend doing the essential, but unglamorous, job of grouting the large area of blocks which had already been laid. Delivery of the liner enabled normal service to be resumed in August and the lining



gang worked wonders to reduce the gap to 65m. By the end of September it was 40m and by the end of October it was reduced to 20m. There was now only one more work party to finish the lining, but this story has a happy ending.

The rains came back with a vengeance in October and so the November work party kicked off on the Friday with yet another frantic day long pumping session. However come Saturday, dry weather and a full complement of experienced block layers ensured that the gap between the unlined sections

was remorselessly closed. By mid afternoon on the Sunday the job was finished. We had done it.

The other big news in October was, of course, the award of Phase 1 of a Heritage Lottery Fund grant to CRT for work on the Montgomery. This will be followed by a Phase 2 application which, if successful, will include funding for the Pryces Bridge to Crickheath

section. To publicise this award the Society were asked to put on a special 'work party' for the benefit of the BBC cameras. There was a healthy turnout of volunteers (photogenic or otherwise) who both demonstrated the use of the block chute and gave a series of interviews. The viewers of BBC Midlands Today were treated to this televisual epic a few days later.

With a view to the future, survey work started in November on the Pryces Bridge to Crickheath section. This included inspection of some of the watercourses around the canal and making a start on establishing levels at important locations along the section. The inspections highlighted the extent to which nature has reclaimed many of the areas which were cleared during the Society's previous work on the length, and the sheer magnitude of the task ahead. That, however, is for the future.

Although a number of jobs remain to be done – notably grouting, rip-rap, landscaping, and hedges - SUCS Council agreed that the completion date for the Redwith to Pryces length will be 12th May 2014. It is likely that the official opening will take place at some time in late May. The Society also plans to have an event for all of the volunteers who have worked on the section. Both promise to be memorable occasions.

So, a year of remarkable progress and one that will doubtless get an honourable mention in the history of the Society. Detailed monthly accounts of the restoration work can, as always, be seen on the Society website (www.shropshireunion.org.uk/). We have had a lot of fun doing the work and we look forward with more than usual anticipation to 2014.

David Carter

The block chute



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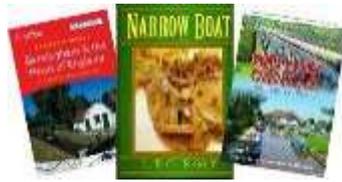
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The SUCS Needs Your Help! We hope everyone who can, will contribute to this important project.



Information Urgently Needed

Sometime in this present decade the Society should be celebrating its 50th anniversary - the question is When?

The first *Cuttings* was published when we were known as the Shrewsbury and Newport Canal Association. Due to the less than helpful reception the Association received regarding the possible restoration of the S&N, a Special General Meeting was held on 9th November 1966 to change it's name to the Shropshire Union Canal Society. The Society's aims were to "foster interest in the SUC system and to co-operate with other official bodies to increase the usage and facilities of the Shropshire Union Canal system".

The question is - when do you, the members of the Society, consider the Anniversary date should be?

Which leads us on to:

Recollections

The Society wishes to compile an Anthology of Recollections from as many members as possible of their involvement in all aspects of the Society's last 50 years of volunteering.

Whilst the Archivist should write to you all in person requesting your help - there are just too many volunteers out there (retired or otherwise) for me to sensibly contact everyone in person. So - were you involved in the setting up of the Society? Did you work on the Big Dig? Have you slaved away on restoration of any of the Welsh locks over the years? How did you react to Peter Walker's disastrous decision for the Monty in 1988? Just pick a subject that reflects your interest from the many different facets of our work and send a brief record of your "years of service".

The Society really needs your help with this project. No-one should be excluded from this project and we will publish the results as part of our 50th Anniversary year.

PS: The Society Archives hold copies of Council Meetings from 18th April 1968. Would anyone have any paperwork relating to Council Meetings prior to this date so that we can fill this "information void"?

Please contact the Society's Archivist at magric33@aol.com or 01970 832 538. Address: R.Hamp, Tygwyn, Bontgoch, Talybont, Ceredigion. SY24 5DP



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Dates for your Diary

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 5 March | Talk: Robert Aickman - Hero or Villain? 8.00 pm, The Lock Keeper, Frodsham Street, Chester |
| 3 - 4 May | Norbury Canal Festival - see page 16 |
| 10 May | Montgomery Canal Triathlon - see pages 16 & 26 |
| May?? | Official Opening: Redwith - Pryces Bridge Section
Check website for latest information |
| 22 - 26 May | Spring Bank Holiday Lockwind - see pages 5 & 16 |
| 6 - 8 June | IWA National Campaign Festival, Chester -
see page 16 |
| 21 - 25 August | August Bank Holiday Lockwind - see pages 5 & 16 |
| 5 - 6 September | Maesbury Canal Festival - see page 16 |
| 20 - 21 September | Whitchurch Boat Festival -
see www.whitchurchwaterway.org.uk |

Grant Application

An application has been made to Shropshire Council's Local Joint Committee for a grant totalling £1,200 to help provide expenses for SUCS hedgelaying parties. The costs applied for include a welfare cabin and toilets, refreshments and accommodation and training of machinery operators and site safety.

Articles for Cuttings

We are always pleased to receive contributions for Cuttings. Text, photos etc. can be sent by post or by e-mail. If you are 'no good at the words' simply send us the basis of your idea with all the relevant details and we will gladly put an article together for you.

Contacting Cuttings

Cuttings Editors **David and Chris Owen-Roberts** 01270 567492
35 Woodnoth Drive, Shavington, Cheshire CW2 5BW
E-mail: sucuttings@btinternet.com

The views expressed in Cuttings are not necessarily those of the Shropshire Union Canal Society.

Copy Deadlines

There are four issues of Cuttings per year, published in June, September, December and March. The copy deadline is 1st of the previous month, i.e. 1 May, 1 August, 1 November and 1 February. **COPY WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER THESE DATES.**

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For any of the above contact:

Ian Hendley, 28 Millfield Drive, Market Drayton, TF9

1HS, telephone 01630 656525 or e-mail sucsmemsec@btinternet.com.

Cheques should be made payable to the Shropshire Union Canal Society.

Items may also be purchased from the Society's website,

www.shropshireunion.org.uk via PayPal.

Advertising in Cuttings

The advertising rates are:

Quarter page: £50.00 for one year (four issues)
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There is a 10% discount for Commercial Members. The advertising year starts with the Summer issue of Cuttings (copy date, 1 May) but adverts are accepted at other times of the year on a pro rata basis. To find out more please contact Advertising Manager, Roger Beswick on 01244 332553, fax 01244 330122 or e-mail haslemere@chester50.plus.com.

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