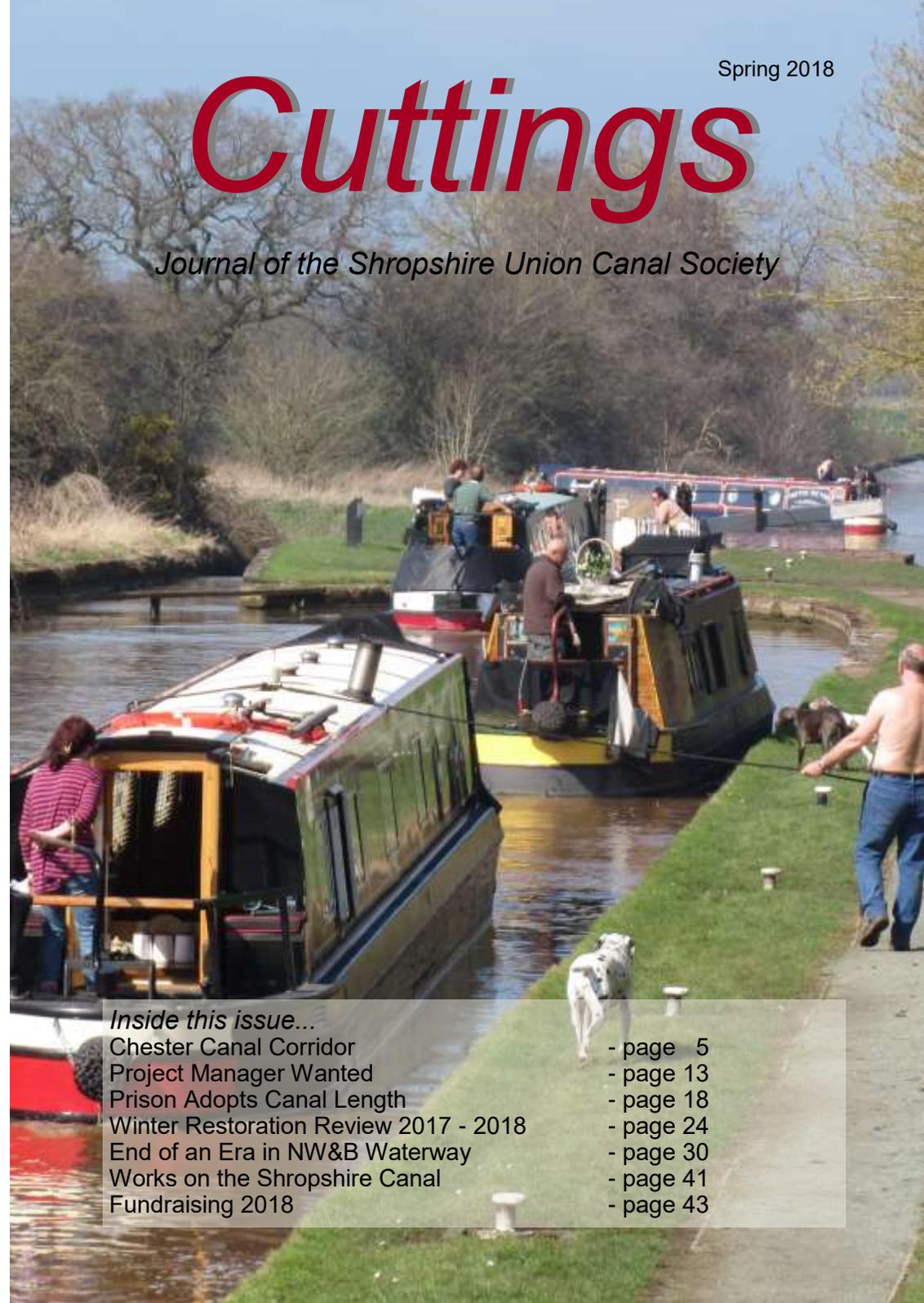


Cuttings

Journal of the Shropshire Union Canal Society



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COVER PHOTO

A busy scene at Hack Green
© Chris Owen-Roberts



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Cuttings

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Canal & River Trust

In case of need, the Canal & River Trust contact number is 0 30 30 40 40 40



Chairman's Report

It is early January as I write this piece sitting in front of a hot log burning fire with the wind and rain lashing the house outside and trees being swept to the ground, and it is difficult to contemplate the canal season ahead after the busy autumnal events of last year. I trust that by the time you read this, Spring, with its inherent sense of life starting again, will be poking its head out of the thunderous skies.

Wendy Capelle's richly deserved retirement leaves a large gap within CRT's NW&Bs area with uncertain times ahead as to who will eventually follow in her path and whether, as rumour has it, 'our' area will become part of a bigger grouping (see page 38). The Society has, however, strengthened its communications with the CRT hierarchy which has proved a great advantage as far as the restoration on the Monty is concerned.

It is with regret that that I have to announce that the outstanding work done by the existing Cuttings editors will have to cease after this edition due to health reasons. I have received a considerable amount of letters of appreciation for the high standard of the magazine – so this will be a difficult role to fill. However I trust that there is someone out there who would wish to see the magazine continue as it is such an important component part of the Society. Could you please contact me directly by email with your offer so that we can keep the magazine production rolling along. The existing editors have helpfully offered to assist with background information, should it be required, for whoever takes over.

Now that it has been established that the first section of relined canal by Pryces Bridge is functioning correctly, the volunteers are in a position to continue on to the next section and work their way towards Crickheath. Contractors should be replacing the winding hole at Crickheath Wharf this year and once this is completed, it will give us a visual end to the HLF work on this section – and something to strive to get to as soon as is sensibly possible.

Rich Hamp SUCS Chairman

Editorial

This is the twenty-first issue of Cuttings since we took over at the beginning of 2013. This should be some cause for celebration but regrettably we are having to look at passing it on to someone else. I (David) am just starting a lengthy and intensive course of chemotherapy (my third since 2013) so it is difficult to know how this will affect me. Consequently we are looking for someone to take over the job of editor.



We have enjoyed editing Cuttings and it has given us the opportunity to meet lots of interesting people. If you would like to take it on, feel free to contact us. Full support will be given, and in particular, Chris will help with laying out the pages ready for publication, should you require it (see page 21).

This issue hopefully has something for everyone. There's more on history, updates on restoration efforts, new initiatives for our canals, winter works by CRT, volunteer updates and fundraising ideas. This shows that the Shropshire Union Canals are vibrant, interesting, colourful and important, supported by a fantastic crew of volunteers undertaking a wide variety of tasks through a number of active and friendly groups. Overall the canals offer something for everyone and hopefully Cuttings reflects this.

David and Chris Owen-Roberts
Editors of Cuttings

Chester Canal Corridor

The Chester Canal, the Shroppie from Ellesmere Port to Nantwich, has received official recognition as the Chester Canal Conservation Area. It is supported by both Cheshire East and Cheshire West & Chester councils along with the Chester Canal Heritage Trust (CCHT) with support from the Canal & River Trust.

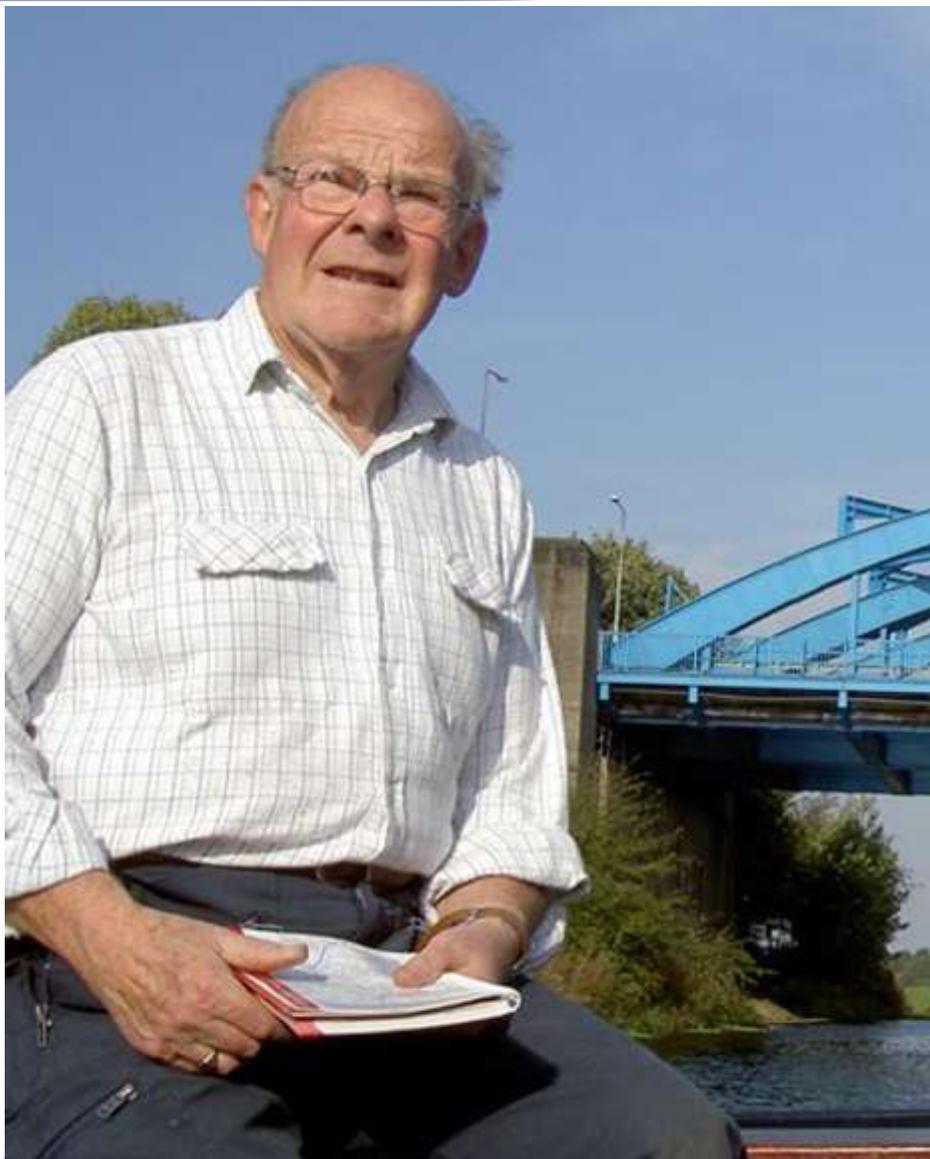
The Chester Canal is one of the earliest broad-beam canals, opened in 1779, built to link the rivers Dee and Mersey to the inland salt towns of Cheshire. The CCHT is always interested in hearing from people who wish to get involved with the area, and can be contacted through their website: <http://www.chestercanalheritagetrust.co.uk/index.htm>



Beeston
Stone Lock
on the
Chester
Canal



Ian Christopher Atherton



Ian Christopher Atherton

December 1935 – November 2017



Ian joined our restoration volunteers at the Newhouse Lock project and continued through work at Crickheath and on to the Redwith-Pryces length. He lived in Poole in Dorset which meant that on a work party weekend he would leave home around 4:30 am, stop for a short nap on the way and then arrive on site soon after 9:00 am to put in a full day's work! Ian always gave 100% to the work in hand. He never minded what he did and clearly enjoyed getting his hands dirty alongside like-minded people. There was always animated conversation and laughter where Ian was working. If there was one hard hat left on a chair after tea-break you could be sure it was Ian's and he would be tracked down for a gentle reprimand to remember his 'lid' next time!

He would stay over in a B&B on a Saturday evening with other volunteers and was always lively company at the evening meal, especially when the usual leg cramps took hold and he would suddenly spring up and start doing lunges in what was often an inappropriately small space. He rarely remembered what he had ordered to eat (orders were taken at lunchtime and phoned ahead) so had to be watched when food started to arrive as he was likely to take anything that was passing! Ian suffered several bouts of ill health and was unable to attend regularly during the last year or two at Redwith but he was warmly welcomed when he was able to return for a visit to celebrate the opening of the length.

Such an interesting character and a pleasure to be around, Ian gave such a lot to those who worked alongside him and to the restoration of the Montgomery Canal.

Jan Friend

Mooving Sponsorship for Macmillan

Swanley Bridge Marina near Nantwich is celebrating the third year of its unique fund raising scheme for Macmillan Cancer Support, where calves from its farm are sponsored at its World's Biggest Coffee Morning event. For a £5 donation to the charity, participants get to choose a calf, name it and follow its progress at the farm. When the animals grow up and produce calves of their own, these animals are sponsored too.

According to the marina, some of its moorers have sponsored enough animals to start their own herds! In 2017 the fundraising event raised £300, which increased to over £700 thanks to raffle takings and other donations.



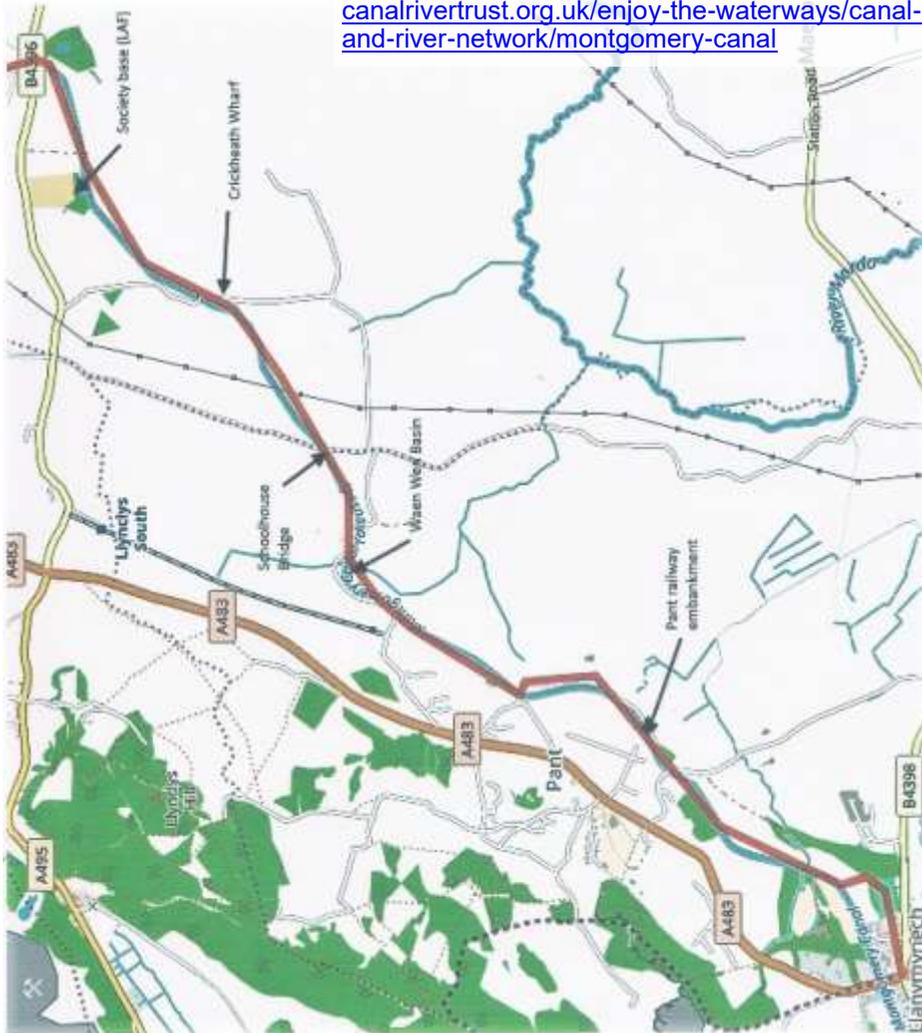
Photo: Swanley Bridge Marina



Montgomery Canal Restoration

One of our long-standing members, Mr Hoblyn, has asked if we could publish a map of the locations currently being worked on. The map below shows where the main work parties are active. The Canal & River Trust (CRT) website also has a detailed map of the whole length of the Montgomery Canal, including lock and bridge names. You can find it on the CRT website under the "Enjoy the waterways" tab, then select "waterways map" followed by Montgomery canal under the "view list" link. You can then zoom in to see more detailed information.

The map can be found at: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/canal-and-river-network/montgomery-canal>



Ellesmere Canal - Part Five

We conclude the story of the Ellesmere Canal by E A Wilson with this final part 5. Here E A Wilson summarises some of the features of the canals. Our thanks to the Shropshire Magazine for permission to reproduce the article.

About "Narrow Boats", "Bridge Holes", "Fly Boats" and the strenuous art of "Legging" by E. A. WILSON, M.A.

CANALS in England were built in a rather haphazard fashion by many independent authorities. There was no uniformity. The cost was governed by width and depth, so they were built as small as their particular purpose would permit. The Ellesmere Canal was mainly "agricultural" and did not form part of any main trunk route. Thus, considerable stretches are both narrow and shallow. Many bridges were required to carry roads and connect farm lands divided by the canal.

To save cost, the canal was narrowed so that the "bridge-hole" allowed one boat at a time. Locks were expensive, and along most of the Ellesmere Canal were only wide enough for one boat. This narrowness controlled the design of the barges. The only way to make larger barges was to extend their length. Even this was limited by the length of the locks, so that a more or less standard type of barge, known technically as a "narrow boat" came into use on the smaller canals.

At first, a towpath was necessary, as narrow boats were either towed by men ("bow hauling") or, more usually, by animals. A single horse was often used. "Fly-boats", the express boats used for quick delivery, had two, as did "packet boats" for passenger traffic. Sometimes two donkeys were substituted for a horse. When a canal branched, the horses had to cross over the canal to get on the towpath of the branch, and a "roving bridge" was built over, or near to, the junction. Tunnels were very costly, and to save expense they were sometimes made with no towpath. The horses were taken over, or around, the high ground by special paths, while the narrow boat was propelled through the tunnel by the men lying on their backs and pushing against the walls with their feet. This was known as "legging".

The walker along the towpath finds a wooden shelter housing a number of stout wood planks at many bridge holes. Inspection will reveal an iron-bound groove in the masonry on each side of the canal. The planks are known as "stop planks". They fit into the grooves to form a dam. A section of the canal can thus be temporarily emptied for repairs. Nowadays, the shelter is often replaced by a long box made up of square concrete sections, cemented together and closed by iron doors.

When I first came to the Ellesmere district, I was puzzled by the old derelict kilns at various points, though there is no limestone in the district. Lime was needed for agriculture in the rural areas of Shropshire.

continued...

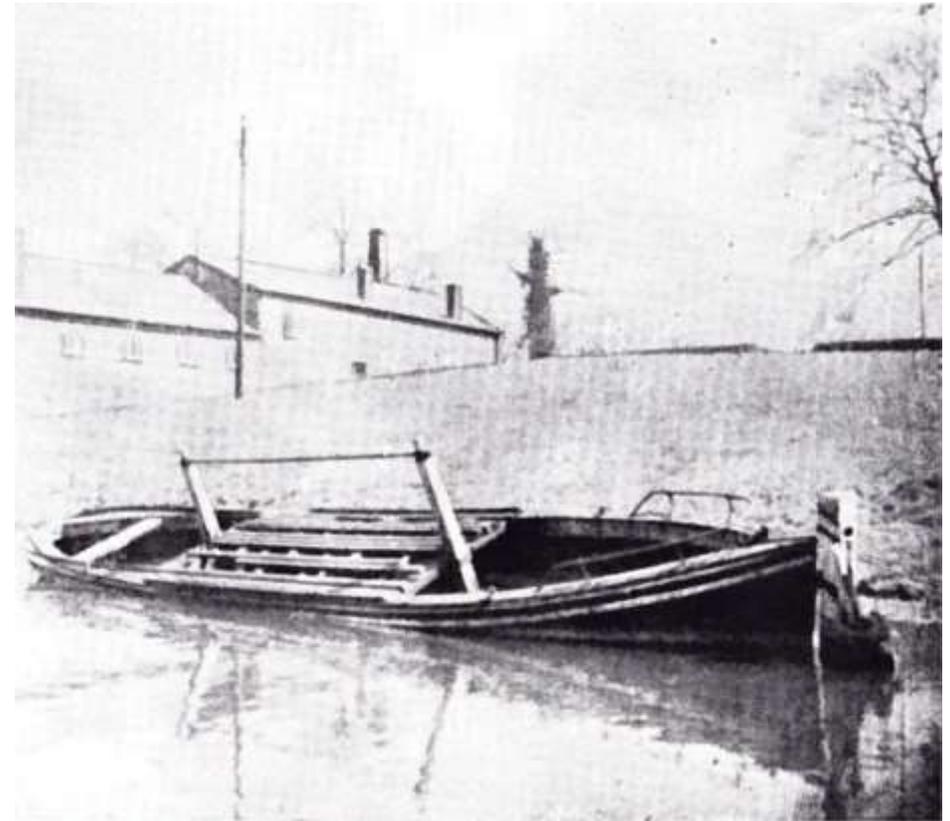


Limestone was quarried at Llanymynech and brought by narrow boat to these kilns where it was burnt to provide lime. I have found lime-kilns as follows: two kilns at Colemere, where the canal runs at a higher level than the mere, so that the top of the kilns is level with the canal, enabling the limestone to be loaded directly into the kilns; a block of three kilns at Hampton Bank; a block of four at Weston Wharf; and at Quina Brook, where the Prees branch ends, a block of five, facing the Wem-Whitchurch road, with three more in the side of the same bank. Those facing the road are so hidden by trees and bushes, that most people must pass them by unnoticed.



Colemere Sluice

When designing canals, allowance had to be made for exceptional conditions, such as heavy rain, which might lead to overflowing. Sluices were provided where the canal ran along an embankment, allowing excess water to be run off, but an additional safeguard was the "storm-overflow", a broad stone (or concrete) runway leading from the canal bank just above the normal level to a lower level. There is such an overflow at Colemere where the storm water can flow from the canal into the mere, and a larger one



Ice breaking boat

adjacent to an accommodation bridge at the beginning of Fenn's Moss.

From time to time, the banks need attention and the addition of puddled clay. Along the Prees branch there is an extensive clay pit, from which clay has been obtained for this purpose for many years. The trucks are filled with clay and hauled by wire rope up to the wharf, where the clay is loaded into maintenance barges. Sometime back they took their loads to repair the bank along by Fenn's Moss. Some wharves are simple landing stages, as at Hampton Bank and Colemere, but others have warehouses and then there was usually a crane to aid the loading and unloading of the barges. Two such cranes survive, though not used, at Ellesmere Wharf; the crane at Weston Wharf has disappeared; and at Welsh Frankton both warehouse and crane have gone. However, at Bettisfield, I recently saw both a warehouse and crane in use.

The flow of water in canals is very slow and they sometimes get frozen over. This was serious when canals were the main arteries of transport, and special "ice-boats" were built. There is one of the old wooden ones aground at Ellesmere.

continued...



There is a slatted wooden deck with a strong post at each end, supporting a stout, horizontally-placed iron bar. The bow was protected by iron. Several men stood on the deck on either side of the iron bar, and gripping this firmly, rocked the boat vigorously from side to side to break up the ice, while six horses strained their hardest to keep the boat going forward. The man at the tiller endeavoured to steer a direct course. Mr. L. T. C. Rolt, in his book *Narrow Boat*, paints the scene vividly: "Two gangs of breakers made a spectacular arrival at Banbury... Long before they came in sight their approach was heralded by a grinding and crashing sound, then round the bend came the sweating horses keeping a fine pace, as though entering into the spirit of the adventure. Finally, the boat itself appeared, rolling almost gunwale under from the efforts of her heaving crew, who, ruddy-faced from the cold wind and strenuous labour, seemed oblivious alike to the jets of icy water which spurted from overside and the dirty puddle which slopped to and fro beneath their feet. At the tiller stood an elderly lengthman, balancing first on one leg, then on the other as he endeavoured to keep the bucketing craft upon some semblance of a course."

There used to be a certain amount of passenger traffic on some of the canals, and although I doubt whether this applied to most of the Ellesmere Canal, we have a most extraordinary "museum piece" in one of the Duke of Bridgewater's original packet boats, the "Duchess-Countess". It has now come to rest beside the canal in the peaceful fields not far from Welsh Frankton, and serves as the home of an elderly, but very active, person who once travelled on her. Coming upon the boat one evening, its owner, seeing my interest, courteously invited me aboard. I was shown pictures and cuttings, and was able to learn something of the boat's former history.

The Duke of Bridgewater, who built the canals which started the "canal age", ran packet boats by which passengers were conveyed at the rate of a penny a mile. He often travelled on them himself. The "Duchess-Countess" was probably built 150 years ago [*writing in the early '50s*]. For nearly half a century she plied daily between Stockton Quay and Manchester, carrying passengers, her daily trips starting at 6.0. a.m. and finishing promptly at 7.0. p.m. She was manned by a crew of three, the captain, the mate and the "jockey". Although only of six foot beam, her length allowed her to carry thirty passengers and provide for their refreshment. Drawn by relays of four horses, she travelled at six miles an hour. Boats travelling outwards from Manchester had the right of way over those approaching the city, but the "Duchess-Countess," the pride of the canal, had the right of way in either direction. Any boat disputing this right was summarily dealt with, for at her bows there was a large S-shaped knife, which cut through its opponent's tow rope in a most cavalier fashion!

Passengers became fewer as the "railway age" progressed, and at last this proud old aristocrat of the canals was reduced to the ignominy of carrying goods, cattle and poultry and bringing back fustian. Her daily trip was finally abandoned in 1915. She was tied up at Stockton Quay for a time and then was given a fitting burial when she was taken to Runcorn and submerged

with some other boats in the Big Pool.

However, this was not the end. After being submerged for 18 years she was refloated again in 1934, when a retired Warrington man refitted her and with two friends, set out to explore the Ellesmere and neighbouring canals. One of these friends was the present owner who finally brought her to her present resting place and lived afloat in her for some time. Although the bones of the old aristocrat were still strong, time had taken its toll, and she began to leak. It was war time, labour and materials were scarce, so with the aid of friends the owner dragged the boat out of the water on to the bank. Here she lingers on. For how much longer? One can hardly tell. But surely this must be one of the most interesting links in that great and glorious story of British enterprise which produced great men and great Works. Let us hope that the "Duchess-Countess" will not be allowed to succumb a second time, but will find a fitting resting place in time to come, where all may draw inspiration from her story.

[Editor's note: A group has been formed which hopes to build a replica of the Duchess Countess and operate her on the Montgomery Canal. More information about the boat can be found at duchess-countess.org.uk]

Project Manager Wanted

TO REBUILD SCHOOLHOUSE BRIDGE ON THE MONTGOMERY CANAL

A Project Manager is needed to organise the planned rebuilding of Schoolhouse Bridge in north Shropshire, the last lowered bridge needing to be rebuilt in the county. The construction works are planned to take about six months, probably during the summer of 2019. There will be a lead in time of say, 12 months, including submitting a planning application (to which the planning authority is sympathetic). This assignment would suit someone retired or in the process of winding down their working life. A small remuneration might be available.

Applicants will have to show their experience in:

- project managing civil engineering related projects such as by having an HND or similar qualification in project management;
- working with a work force varied in skills and abilities. The work is planned as a volunteer led project (with suitable skills) in conjunction with sub-contractors for building the bridge arch and finishing the road surface (previous experience in working with volunteers is not essential, but direct supervision and direct involvement with construction work teams would be an advantage);
- successfully managing multiple low complexity projects. The applicant would work with teams from the Canal & River Trust to obtain planning permission; procure materials and plant hire; working with the Trust's full time manager of volunteers and co-ordinating the efforts of the volunteers;

continued...



- using project management systems.

The successful applicant would work together with a retired civil engineer volunteer who specialised in bridge design/construction and who has already carried out a lot of basic design work. The applicant will need to work with external consultants to confirm design stability etc. to the satisfaction of the highways and canal authorities.

If you feel this is an opportunity for you, then please contact John Dodwell, Chair, Montgomery Canal Partnership at john.dodwell@rolandon.com or 07802-961485

Fairies...

Many of us believe in fairies. After all, how else does our used underwear, so carelessly discarded on the bedroom floor, miraculously reappear a few days later neatly folded in our wardrobe or bedroom chest of drawers? Similarly, about once a week, our sheets and duvet covers attain a renewed freshness that surely must rely on some magical intervention.

As if this wasn't evidence enough, proof of the existence of fairies has been seen on Nantwich Embankment, where the night-time frolicking of the faerie folk is clearly seen in the fairy rings marking the place of their crepuscular frivolities.



'Fairy ring' on the offside of Nantwich Embankment, October 2017.

Now do you believe in fairies?

(For further information, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairy_ring)



Another Award for Church Minshull

For the second year running Church Minshull Aqueduct Marina has won the UK Inland Marina of the Year as awarded by The Yacht Harbour Association at the London Boat Show. Exhibiting for the first time with their own stand at the London Boat Show, Aqueduct Marina was introducing the Cheshire canal network to London and an international audience.

The Inland Marina of the Year award is voted for by marina berth holders and sponsored by Marine Insurers, NMU. The award recognises the best of over 160 Gold Anchor accredited marinas from across the globe.

Robert Parton, Managing Director at Aqueduct Marina commenting on the award said, "We are delighted to have won the Inland Marina of the Year award 2018. In an increasingly competitive market where customers have plenty of choice of marinas and moorings around the inland network it is particularly rewarding to win as a result of boat owners' votes. Our thanks go to all those who voted for Aqueduct Marina, The Yacht Harbour Association for organising and to NMU for sponsoring."

Simon Haigh, Chairman of The Yacht Harbour Association, gave his praise to the Marina, "Many congratulations to Church Minshull Aqueduct Marina in the NMU Marina of the Year Awards 2018. These awards have built huge momentum since they were introduced and really mean something because it is marina customers who are voting for their marinas, recognising the excellence of facilities provided and the level of service which they receive."

To commemorate the achievement, Aqueduct Marina directors, Robert Parton, Andrea Parton, Jennifer Parton, Stuart Martin and Phil Langley were presented with an etched glass trophy and framed certificate by NMU. Overwater Marina at Audlem were this year's runners up.



Left to right:
Directors Jennifer,
Andrea, Robert,
Phil and Stuart at
the London Boat
Show with the
Marina of the Year
certificate

Enterprise Team News

Pontcysyllte
Aqueduct from the
road



Llanymynech Car Park - An application was submitted to 'Awards for All' for funding to enable the resurfacing of the car park near to the heritage centre and Montgomery Canal. Unfortunately the application for 'Awards for All' funding was unsuccessful. An approach has been made to request possible Community Infrastructure Levy funding in the absence of other sources. A response is awaited.

There is better news on other projects as follows:

Trevor Basin Pathways – Following the submission of the Expression of Interest in the early part of 2017, the project was invited to full bid by WEFO (Welsh European Funding Office) which was submitted in December 2017. The project is currently being appraised with the expected outcome within the next 6 months.

Trevor Basin Car Park – The new short term car park secured Planning Permission in December 2017 with works due to begin in the early part of this year. The funding application to the Visit Wales Tourism Amenity Infrastructure Scheme was successful and will provide funds towards a package of works including the car park itself, signage and interpretation to create a sense of arrival to the World Heritage Site and canal. It is anticipated that the project will be completed by the Autumn.

Gledrid to Lions Quay Towpath Improvements – The full application was submitted at the end of January under the Rural Tourism Infrastructure (RDPE) programme. If funding is successful the project will seek to extend the improved towpath out from the World Heritage Site to link in with key visitor destinations and attractions in the area.



Grindley Brook Open Day

The Canal & River Trust (CRT) are holding another of their popular lock open weekends, this time at Grindley Brook on the 3rd and 4th of March.

As well as walking in the drained lock chamber, visitors will be able to try their hand at fishing, and there will also be lots of children's activities on offer.

Duncan Davenport, customer operations manager, says, "The Grindley Brook locks on the Llangollen Canal include the three locks in the staircase, together with the three locks below. It's a beautiful area and popular walking route so why not combine a walk with coming along to see us at the open day? Walking in a drained lock chamber is an incredible experience and I really want to encourage everyone to come along and see it."

The Works

The replacement of both the top and bottom lock gates here is essential as the gates are nearing the end of their 25-year life early, after a lot of wear and tear. It's one of the busiest locks in the country, with over 6,000 boats travelling through it every year. The gates will be replaced with bespoke gates crafted from British oak at the CRT workshop in Stanley Ferry in Yorkshire.

CRT lock open days are well worth a visit to see how the lock is constructed below the water level, and give an insight into the quality of workmanship of these historic structures.

Lock invert and culvert entrance at Grindley Brook



Prison Adopts Canal Length

The Shropshire Union Canal near Market Drayton is to benefit from a groundbreaking partnership between HM Prison Service and the Canal & River Trust (CRT).

HMP Stoke Heath, an adult male training prison near Market Drayton, will be working with CRT to provide vocational training opportunities on the canal towpath at Tyrley Locks to help prisoners close to release gain valuable work experience.

The prison has formally 'adopted' a one mile length of the canal, in response to the Trust's national appeal to encourage community groups to get more involved in caring for their local canal. Jason Watts, a volunteer coordinator with CRT, said, "This is a win-win arrangement for everyone. The canal and towpath will be kept in tip top condition around Tyrley Locks which is a very picturesque, popular spot on the Shropshire Union Canal. The prisoners will be fully supervised at all times. Tasks will include vegetation management, grass cutting, litter picking, painting fences, huts and lock gates, and towpath repairs."



Canal & River Trust volunteer coordinator Jason Watts (far left) presents an adoption certificate to Gary McManus, a prison officer at HMP Stoke Heath (centre). Looking on (L to R) are: Sue Cawson, Ani Sutton and Angela Barnett from the Trust

Gary McManus, a prison officer at HMP Stoke Heath, explained, "Any prisoners taking part in the scheme will have undergone a rigorous risk

assessment beforehand. They will all be near the end of their sentence and eligible for release and will have volunteered for work. We are delighted to be working with the Canal & River Trust to make a real contribution to upgrading the canal environment around Tyrley Locks. Our prisoners will gain immensely from the experience and visitors will have the pleasure of walking along a clean and tidy canal towpath."

Stoke Heath prisoners will be working on the canal an average of three days a week, depending on demand.

Printing Errors

We had a letter from a Society member whose Autumn copy of Cuttings had some collation errors, namely some pages being inserted twice and others missing. Although we have not had any other complaints, if you did have some missing pages, please let us know and we will send you a replacement copy.

Envelopes

The envelopes used by the printer for Cuttings are of necessity lightweight as we are very close to the 100g limit for normal postage rates. If you have received Cuttings with a badly damaged envelope, please could you let us know so that we can see if a slightly sturdier envelope is needed.

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Market Drayton Art Project

The Shropshire Union Canal through Market Drayton is to get a major facelift, thanks to an innovative arts project launched by Market Drayton Community Partnership and Canal & River Trust (CRT).

Plans are in place to develop an arts and heritage trail and interpretation boards along the town centre towpath. Organisers are awaiting a grant funding application from the Big Lottery's Awards for All scheme.

As a first stage in the major project, local artists, supported by a grant from the Shropshire Housing Group, have been working with Longlands Primary School and local residents to create two amazing murals which will brighten the drab concrete road bridge carrying the A53 bypass over the waterway (Bridge 64).

Ani Sutton, development & engagement manager with CRT, said, "This is an amazing project which is really going to brighten up the canal towpath through the town centre. The Canal & River Trust exists to help people to enjoy their local canal, whether they're walking, jogging, cycling, angling or boating. The Shropshire Union Canal has so much to offer and the arts project is an innovative way to add an extra layer of enjoyment in celebrating the beautiful rural waterway."

Dr Richard Priestley, chair of the Market Drayton Community Partnership, commented, "We are delighted that the first phase of the arts and heritage trail is now established and look forward to future phases being actioned. It is very nice to be able to thank all those who participated in this work and supported us in helping to make this stretch of the canal towpath more welcoming for the benefit of boaters, walkers and visitors."



Market Drayton Mural Group



SUMBA

Volunteers of the Shropshire Union Middlewich Branch Adopters (SUMBA) admit that their latest recruit is a complete dummy. This is Neville (No, not a new rôle for Neville Preece - p30), a display mannequin who joins SUMBA from the National Waterways Museum in Gloucester, where he had been languishing in storage.

Neville, wearing period clothes, now has a new rôle as part of a display at Sykes Hollow 48-hour mooring inside the newly restored pit manager's hut (See Cuttings Autumn 2017 p42). He made the journey to his new home aboard historic boat Malvern. Neville did not take part in SUMBA's recent work party at Sykes Hollow, but supervised from a distance. The latest work included laying diamond-section matting to make the towpath easier to use by disabled boaters near railway bridge 5a and Brickyard bridge 6.

An interpretation board has been installed close to the Sykes Hollow hut, explaining the Middlewich Branch's history. A work party also engaged in further hedge laying at Cholmondeston Lock.



Neville, the Sykes Hollow dummy

Cuttings

Would you like to take on the job of editing Cuttings?

Due to health reasons (see editorial on page 4) David is seeking to retire after this issue. Chris will still be able to help in the layout and setting up but we are looking for someone to take over the rôle fully. As now, the position can be shared.



We have been editing Cuttings for over five years and have enjoyed the participation that it entails. It is an opportunity to become more involved with the waterways and the people who are actively dedicated to restoring and managing the Shroppie system.

For more information about the rôle feel free to speak to one of us, our contact details are on page 45. A familiarity with Microsoft Office would be an advantage but other DTP packages will be acceptable.



Nantwich & Border Counties Yacht Club

N.B.C.Y.C. Is situated on the Shropshire Union Canal near Nantwich, Cheshire. It is ideally placed to cruise in six directions, amongst which are the Llangollen and Montgomery Canal, Mersey Trent Canal via Middlewich Canal. Chester or Birmingham via the Shropshire Union Canal.



Our club offers safe off line mooring for GRP boats. We can also take steel boats up to maximum length of 40ft on the main line.

We have a secure gated site with several buildings including a Club House with a fully fitted kitchen and meeting room. We also have a toilet block with Elsan facilities. The site offers electric hook-up's and water provided along the



length of the site. There are also workshops/sheds for your use. The club organises craning out every 2 years for GRP boats to allow your maintenance of your boats.



We are a sailing and social club with a varied calendar of events on the canal, on site and in local venues. We also have 2 working weekends which we expect members to participate in as this allows us to keep our costs lower than most surrounding clubs/marina's.



There is a C&RT service station with shower facilities just over the bridge from our site.

For further information and membership and mooring application forms visit our website at www.nbcyc.club



Waterways Archive, Ellesmere Port

We reported three years ago (Cuttings Spring 2015) about the CRT Archive Collections.

CRT have now updated their access details to the archive, and details can be found at canalrivertrust.org.uk/places-to-visit/national-waterways-museum/the-waterways-archive (you can follow the links from the CRT Home page rather than typing in the full address, or click on the above link if you have the digital version of Cuttings).

There are certain charges for access, but some limited searching by the staff is available free. If you do go to the archive, you can photocopy for free, one copy of any item for personal use. You can still access the digital archive; follow the link on the above page or go to canalrivertrust.org.uk/archive

For instance there is a lot of material surrounding the building of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct.



Archive photo of Pontcysyllte Aqueduct
(Photo: Canal & River Trust)



Winter Restoration Review 2017-8

Gone are the days when winter work consisted of some therapeutic hedge laying! The three work parties this winter undertook a variety of heavy duty tasks in support of the restoration.

First off was work on the Phase 1A channel to prepare for a leakage test. This consisted of blocking sumps and making sure that banks could not be overtopped. The test itself was done by CRT either side of Christmas and the indications at the time of writing are that it was successful.

December saw excavation of the final newt pond at Redwith. This was a prerequisite for the submission of the December newt licence application. If successful (we will know in March), it will permit work right through to Crickheath.

The biggest winter tasks have been vegetation clearance in the channel. The offside bank along Phase 2A, (i.e. alongside the 'solar field') was partially cleared to allow the bank to be assessed. The second area tackled was at Crickheath. This brought back memories for the longer serving volunteers since it involved a return to the area where we last worked in 2008. The whole site was cleared of ten year's worth of trees and bushes in preparation for the start of newt trapping in March. The planned construction work at Crickheath will be done by contractors in the summer.

David Carter



Clearance work at Crickheath



Phase 1A channel during the water test

GDPR

Legislation enforcing the regulations about how everyone in the UK handles data comes into force in May this year. It is known as GDPR and the Society has begun a review of the membership information it holds and how it is used.

As a membership based Charitable organisation we clearly must hold sufficient personal information to enable both the collection of subscriptions and the distribution of Cuttings. The Society presently believes that an individual consents to this through signing a membership application and/or renewing a subscription. This consent will be embedded within a Data Protection Policy document to be published on our website.

If, at this stage, you have concerns about GDPR and the Society, please contact me at 28, Millfield Drive, Market Drayton TF9 1HS, telephone 01630 656525 or by email to sucsmemsec@btinternet.com and I will endeavour to answer your questions.

Ian Hendley
Membership Secretary



Crime on the Shroppie - Part 7

Bye-law Offences

The seventh in a series of articles featuring a selection of crimes in the Shropshire Union area as recorded in press reports and canal company minutes from 1775 to 1920.

Several incidents concerned water being wasted. In April 1840 Edward Turner was found guilty of wasting water in Tyrley Locks when he 'drew the cloughs [paddles] of the upper gates of the said lock before the lower gates thereof were closed'. He was fined 9 shillings 6 pence, plus 10 shillings 6 pence costs. The total amount exceeded the wages of a skilled craftsman at that time. If it was not paid immediately Turner was to be imprisoned at Stafford Gaol for one month.

The following month William Frampton appeared in Court, the charge being that he 'did draw the cloughs of the lower or fifth lock [of the Tyrley flight] before another boat then being in the next or fourth lock had passed down and through such fifth lock'. This offence, being considered more serious, resulted in him being fined 30 shillings plus 10 shillings costs, though the period of imprisonment if he did not pay immediately was again one month.

In both cases half of the fine went to the canal company, the other half to the Court. The magistrate imposing the fines was Thomas Twemlow of Peatswood, whose estate was adjacent to Tyrley Locks.

One Sunday evening in the summer of 1863 the lock-keeper at Frankton heard water being run through the locks. The previous day Enoch Bereford and James Wagg had been told they could go no further as at that time only certain cargoes could be moved on a Sunday. The canal company prosecuted for the breach of its bye-laws, the offence being made worse because there was then a water shortage and also because it was done so carelessly that an adjacent workshop was flooded. Their fines and costs totalled £1.11s.4d each.

Thomas Jones was working through Grindley Brook locks in 1872. Instead of letting a paddle down by a windless, as the court was told he should do, he let it run down by itself, the force of which damaged the paddle. He was ordered to pay for the damages estimated at 4s.3d and 6s costs. It was probable that this case was brought as a warning to other boatmen, as Thomas Shuker, the lock-keeper told the court that the company sustained considerable loss through such carelessness.

Another incident at Grindley Brook happened four years later. Henry Owen was accused of attempting to pass through the locks when he should have given way to Edwin Hanner. He was fined £1 including costs.

Steerers were responsible for their boats. In 1857 James Williams and Thomas Jones were each fined 12s by magistrates at Ellesmere for mooring their boats in 'improper places'. And in 1880 Edward Evans of Vron was

fined 10s plus 10s costs on each of two counts: throwing about a ton of ironstone overboard at Vron and leaving his boat blocking the canal, delaying other boats for about six hours. He was drunk at the time.

In 1858 J Vaughan, a boatman employed by the Shropshire Union Company, was charged with deserting his boat and cargo. He was taken before Col Tottenham of Berwyn House, near Llangollen, on the day he was arrested who promptly sent him to Ruthin Gaol for one month with hard labour; he was also warned that if he was found guilty of a similar offence he would be jailed for the maximum term of three months. (Justice was speedy in those days.)

Peter Brown

Cerddoriaeth I'r Monty

Music for the Monty

23rd to 24th June

Music for the Monty will see musicians busking at a number of venues around the town during the Welshpool Transport Festival (including down on the wharf where the coracle races will be entertaining visitors) with the aim of drawing attention to and raising funds for the 'Restore the Montgomery Canal!' campaign.



To date a dozen musicians and bands have volunteered to take part and busk during the weekend for **Music for the Monty**. The line up for the ticketed concert on Saturday evening is currently being put together and there is a wide choice of music from the groups volunteering to perform for free. This includes the 'Kytes' a Welshpool band who play popular covers; 'I AM SAM' a four piece Folk/Indie group from Oswestry; and the 'Shropshire Boat Men'. However, if you are a member of a band or sing solo, the books are not closed and there is still time for you to volunteer to support the event.

Music for the Monty is also keen to work with local businesses who are willing to support the objectives of promoting local talent and restoring the Montgomery Canal. In return we are offering free tickets to the evening concert, the opportunity to publicise your business to festival visitors and, of course, a sense of pride in helping to reopen this historic canal which could connect Welshpool to the rest of the canal network and provide a tourism boost to the town's economy and the surrounding areas.

For boaters the idea of being able to cruise down to Welshpool must be a great attraction - so to support the event and book your ticket for the Saturday evening concert visit www.musicforthemonty.co.uk for details.



Welshpool Town Lock



Winter Works

The Canal and River Trust (CRT) have been busy with lock and culvert repairs. Before Christmas the locks at Hurlston were drained. Work was carried out on locks 2 and 3 and the opportunity was taken to drain lock 4 so a full dimensional survey could be taken. This will hopefully be used in the next stoppage program to remove the width restrictions.

Also closed was the Audlem flight with gate repairs to lock 2 and 14 along with repairs to the Bywash at lock 9. Work was also carried out on Adderley Lock 1, Beeston Stone, Bunbury and Tyrley Locks 3 & 5.

After Christmas many of the locks on the Llangollen Canal were closed for repair; too many to list here but details can be found on the CRT website at https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/media/static_maps/North_Wales_Borders_A4.pdf



Pre-Christmas works at Hack Green (left) and Hurlston (right)



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End of an Era in NW&B Waterway

This autumn marks the end of an era for the Canal & River Trust's North Wales & Borders Waterway with the retirement of three key staff, who collectively have notched up nearly a century of service to the canals.

Waterway manager Wendy Capelle, who was based in the charity's Northwich office, left in December after 18 years' service, just before her 60th birthday on Christmas Day. As a qualified management accountant, she initially joined the Trust's predecessor organisation British Waterways in the finance department, but for the last eight years has been at the helm of North Wales & Borders, leading a team of up to 60 staff looking after canals and navigations in Cheshire, Shropshire and North Wales.

She said, "I have loved working for the Trust. I've worked with some great people and I've appreciated all the opportunities I've been given in different roles. The charity is doing some great work to improve the nation's waterways and make them a special place to visit, and I will miss being part of the enthusiastic team making this happen."

Howard Griffiths (59) has just retired as the Trust's customer service supervisor for the Llangollen and Montgomery canals. Based out of the Trust's Ellesmere office, he has lived all his life on the Montgomery Canal, mixing work and pleasure in a career spanning 39 years caring for his local waterways.

His father was also a canalman for 24 years and Howard has remarkably spent his entire life living in the same lock keeper's cottage at Aston Locks, near Oswestry, where he was born, raised, married and brought up four daughters of his own.

Howard said it was the people – friends, colleagues, customers – who have helped to make his job extra special. "All the teams I have worked with have been top notch. Our job involves the Llangollen Canal which is one of the busiest waterways in the country and the Montgomery - one of quietest and most peaceful, well-known for its nature. You get to know everyone and when the sun's shining and everything is going well, it's hard to beat it." His colleague Roger Birch now steps up to be supervisor.

Neville Preece (62), who will retire in early 2018, is the supervisor for the southern section of the Shropshire Union Canal, based out of Norbury. He first started working on the waterways 41 years ago as part of the dredging fleet on the River Weaver Navigation, which was then still used by commercial cargo vessels.

Over the years he has taken on a number of roles from length foreman and harbour master to a supervisor in Chester. He recalls, "The waterways were very different when I first started work. Hundreds of coasters travelled along the River Weaver to ICI at Winnington, near Northwich, every year, carrying soda ash, chlorine, cement and raw talc. They then went via Marsh Lock

into the Manchester Ship Canal and sailed to Scotland, Ireland and beyond. "I love talking to people. Every day is different. It is the sort of job that if you like it, you're here for the rest of your life."

Experienced waterway manager David Baldacchino will take over from Wendy, with interim responsibility for North Wales & Borders from 1st January 2018.

Left to right,
Howard,
Wendy and
Neville



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Services Update

Hurleston Services

The service point at the top of Hurleston locks has been closed now for some months. This is due to major plumbing issues and it is not planned to reopen the service block. The two existing water points will be retained. However a new site is planned to replace the services on the lower Llangollen Canal. No decision has yet been taken but Wrenbury has been talked of as a possible site.

Barbridge Water Point

There are still ongoing discussions on who is responsible for the supply pipe to the water point by the junction. However CRT plan to install a new water point above Cholmondeston lock during their winter work program. It is also hoped that boaters will be able to use the water point below the lock by the marina.

Nantwich Water Point

The water point on the Nantwich service block is notoriously slow. CRT are currently investigating the supply and also the possibility of putting in a second tap.



Nantwich Services



2018 Montgomery Canal Triathlon

Saturday 19th May 2018

Complete one or two sections or attempt all three!

Covering 35 miles of the Canal in one day:
CYCLE 17 miles from Newtown to Pool Quay
WALK 11 miles from Pool Quay to Morton
CANOE 7 miles from Morton to the Weston Arm, Lower Frankton

ENTRY CLOSING DATE: 5th May 2018

For entry forms visit
www.montgomerycanal.me.uk/fmcevents2018.html

The triathlon follows the route of the Montgomery Canal. The cycling section is along cycleway-standard towpath. The walking section is generally flat but some lengths are unsuitable for wheelchairs, with some stiles and tree roots. Canoes have to be carried around four locks - but help is available.

First Aiders on duty throughout the event.

Light refreshments and WCs available at the end of each section.

A commemorative medallion made from local slate for all entrants completing a section.

Organised by the Friends of the Montgomery Canal in support of the restoration of the Montgomery Canal (see www.RestoreTheMontgomeryCanal.uk)

Friends of the Montgomery Canal is the membership section of the Montgomery Wayway Restoration Trust, a non-profit standing company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales No. 1059717, registered Charity No. 919448. Registered Office: Tylod House, 11-13 Market Street, Oswestry, Cyn. LL23





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Small Tasks Team Volunteers

December was a quiet time for work parties, but featured the annual Christmas Dinner! Held at the Cheshire Cat with guests Wendy Capelle and Neville Preece, both shortly to retire, it gave us an opportunity to thank them. The weather was not very kind, but a goodly number of volunteers managed the journey and a good time was had by all!

The January work party was scheduled for 25th and 26th at Marsh Lane, Nantwich. The weather was unkind on the first afternoon, but made up for it on the second day, a glorious day! The work involved re-building the access steps at Bridge 90. The steps are busy now that many houses have been built nearby. The work was almost completed, just needing delivery of the right gravel on the Monday, when a few volunteers returned to finish the job.

Meanwhile, a small group of us went litter picking. We completed the stretch from Calveley southward on day one, and on day two cleared from Nantwich Canal Centre to Bridge 90.

Access steps at Bridge 90 before renewal



Litter picking (above) and work in progress on renewing the steps (right top to bottom)



Lockwinds 2018

The first lockwind of the year will be held at Cholmondeston Lock on the Middlewich Branch from Friday 25th May 2018 to Monday 28th May 2018. Setting up will be from 2.00 pm on Thursday 24th May 2018.

The lockwinds raise essential funds for the Society and although there is a serious side to them in that we must maintain the safety of ourselves and all boaters and members of the public who visit, there is also a great social side as we work alongside other Society members and engage with everyone who boats through the lock or visit our sales stalls. Pat Wilson loves to be lockside with the preserves stall, but welcomes others to help her. Fred Barrett has some of our publicity stands on display and we get a great deal of interest about the work of the Society – and often find new members.

I would urge all members who may have some free time over that weekend (even half a day is welcome) to contact me with offers of help. It really is great fun. nbrosie2002@gmail.com is the contact e-mail or 07801344646 mobile number.



If you are not available for this one, the August lockwind will be Friday 24th August to Monday 27th August, with set up on Thursday 23rd August.

Also, as mentioned in the last Cuttings, if you have any items we could sell to raise funds for the Society please let me know.

Gill Robertson

Stamps Coins & Post Cards

I have just finished sorting the large amount of stamps which came from WRG/IWA. These had been collected and waiting to send to me for many years. I am pleased to report that quite a few SUCS members still get their stamps to me via several routes. Total funds raised so far this financial year is £810. A great total.

Special thanks this time to:

J Bannister
P Bradley and friends
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Membership News

We all extend a warm welcome to:

Mr and Mrs Connolly of Auckland, New Zealand
Mr and Mrs Fairbrother of Aberystwyth

Gift Aid forms an important part of the Society's annual income and, whilst a number of members have completed a Gift Aid Declaration, a significant minority have yet to do so. If you pay income or capital gains tax and have yet to complete a declaration, please ask me for the form - it costs you nothing but makes a significant difference to the Society!

The Society depends on a steady influx of new members so if you know of anybody who would like to join, please point them at our website which contains a down-loadable membership application. Alternatively, contact me and I will send you a small pack of membership applications and publicity leaflets. There is also a form on the back page of this magazine.

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

Be Careful What You Fish For...

Many boaters carry a strong magnet on their boat to retrieve mooring pins or windlasses that make a bid for freedom. Some also fish around places where they hope to find an item of interest. A little more than interesting was an unexploded second world war bomb pulled out by Marie Kirkman near the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct.

The piece was safely dealt with by bomb disposal experts, but not before nearby streets near her home in Bala were closed off.

Changes to the Waterways Teams

CRT is currently restructuring senior management. This means that the senior management is being reduced. The current 10 waterway regions will become 6 headed, we believe, by regional directors, an enhanced role to the former Waterway managers. The boundaries of the 6 new regions are still to be determined, as are the teams and personnel that will work within those regions. The Waterway Partnerships will also be changing and the roles of new regional Chairs have been advertised. The aim, of course is to make the organisation more fit for purpose in the lead up to renegotiating the settlement with Government.



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Works on the Shropshire Canal

1847: Works on the Shropshire Canal

Jan Johnstone has sent us an interesting piece from the Worcester Chronicle dated 2nd June 1847:

SHREWSBURY AND BIRMINGHAM – we find that the works of this important line (railway) between Shiffnal and Wellington are making rapid and satisfactory progress, many hundred men being employed on this contract alone.

At Shiffnal one of the largest embankments in the kingdom is being constructed, and in connection with it will be a viaduct stretching across the main street in the town. The foundation for this mass of brickwork and masonry are prepared, and great blocks of fine hard stone are constantly arriving to aid in its construction.

At Oakengates (midway between Shiffnal and Wellington) a tunnel will have to be constructed under the Shropshire canal which we are told is to be diverted from its present course. All this necessarily implies some heavy and, considering it is in a mining district, perhaps troublesome work, but, in these days, 'engineering difficulties' seem to be a dead letter, so we have no doubt that all will progress well.

The "Shropshire Canal" mentioned is not the Shropshire Union canal of today. John Myers of the Shropshire and Newport Canals Trust (SNCT) has given us some further information:

The Shropshire Canal was an old tub boat canal and, as the Shrewsbury was also originally a tub boat canal and was connected to rest of the East Shropshire system of tub boat canals, we do sort of consider them as part of the area we (SNCT) cover. The Shropshire Canal joined the Shrewsbury Canal via an inclined plane. As the tub boats were only 6'2" wide there is no justification for restoration and most of them are too cut up and partly destroyed for it to ever be a prospect.



An historic image of the Shrewsbury Canal



Chirk Tunnel Survey

Chirk Tunnel had a major engineering inspection last November. Canal & River Trust engineering specialists used a boat to travel through the 421 metre-long Chirk and 174 metre-long Whitehouse tunnels to assess any structural changes that have occurred since the last principal inspection three years ago, including checks for leaks, cracks and damaged brick work. Their observations will be analysed to decide if any major repairs are needed. The tunnel contains more than a million bricks, with much of the surface sealed in clay to make it waterproof.

Opened in 1805, Chirk tunnel is the longest of three canal tunnels on the Llangollen Canal, and is remarkable as one of the first tunnels to incorporate a horse towing path. Previously boat owners would have had to 'leg' it through a canal tunnel by lying on the roof of their vessels and effectively walking along the roof.

CRT's principal tunnel inspector Chris Reynard comments, "A trip into the canal tunnel is like stepping back in time. It's dark, quiet, a little bit eerie and much of the brickwork dates back to when the tunnel was constructed two centuries ago. The Llangollen Canal is arguably more popular than ever before and our inspection is a good example of the type of work needed to keep it in top shape."



Chris Reynard (on the towpath) and Jonathan Muir inspecting Chirk Tunnel



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Fundraising 2018

We had a successful year in 2017 and attended a number of venues with the Society stall selling our preserves etc.

Our diary for 2018 is a bit empty at the moment! We will obviously be doing the lockwinds, and have booked to attend the Whitchurch Waterways Trust event at the beginning of September. We will hopefully have a couple of one day visits to Trevor Basin with the stall, and also hope to make an arrangement to go back to Grindley Brook.



The SUCS stall at Ellesmere in 2015

If any of you who live near the Shropshire Union Canal system have village fetes or similar events in 2018, please let me know if you think it could be worthwhile taking the Society stall to the event. Yes, it is about raising funds but it is also about raising awareness of our beautiful canal system. nbrosie2002@gmail.com Thank you.

Gill Robertson



Dates for your Diary

3 - 4 March 2018	Lock Open Day , Grindley Brook
30 March - 2 April 2018	Historic Boat Gathering , Ellesmere Port
5 - 7 May 2018	Norbury Festival , Norbury Junction ST20 0PN
19 May 2018	Montgomery Triathlon (see page 33)
25 - 28 May 2018	Cholmondeston Lockwind for SUCS
23 - 24 June 2018	Music for the Monty (see page 27)
2 July 2018	Montgomery Canal Forum Welshpool Town Hall, 2.30 pm
21st July 2018	Aqueduct Marina Open Event
28 - 29 July 2018	Gathering of Historic Boats and Festival of Transport , Audlem
24 - 27 Aug 2018	Cholmondeston Lockwind for SUCS

Recycling

Revenue from the ink toners and cartridges is a bit slow, but we have cleared the backlog that we had. We have raised in the region of £55 this year but the companies hold on to the money for a month or so before paying it over to us so it is not all in our account at the moment! Please keep them coming. Contact us on nbrosie2002@gmail.com



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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

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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.**



Work Party Dates for 2018

2/3/4	March	6/7/8	July
6/7/8	April (Note: Not Easter weekend)	3/4/5 7/8/9	August September
4/5/6/7	May (Note: Includes May Day BH)	5/6/7 2/3/4	October November
1/2/3	June		

For more information contact: David Carter 01244 661440,
E-mail: dcartersucs@gmail.com

Collection Boxes

Winter is a quiet time for collecting boxes. After the autumn round of box-emptying we have £1,326 to date, which is well up on last year. Our thanks to all the diligent souls who go round the sixty-odd locations with receipt books and sticky labels, sometimes for small returns; it all adds up.

Sarah Thursfield

Advertising in Cuttings

The advertising rates are:

Half page: £75.00 for one year (four issues)
Full page: £125.00 for one year (four issues)

There is a 10% discount for Commercial Members. Adverts can start in any issue and will be invoiced annually.

To find out more please contact Advertising Manager, Roger Beswick on 01244 332553 or e-mail haslemere@chester50.plus.com.

Discounts from our Advertisers

The following advertiser offers a discount to members: Boat Safety Examiner Neal Dodd.

Please Support our Advertisers

Mention that you saw their advert in Cuttings.

Cuttings Spring 2018

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Application for Membership or Membership Renewal of the Shropshire Union Canal Society

I hereby apply for election as a member of the above Society and agree to abide by the rules of the Society. I enclose my remittance for* being my subscription for the year ended 30 June 201...

Signed Date
PLEASE PRINT IN BLOCK CAPITALS

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Single, Joint, Family: £10 Juniors under 18: £5 Life Membership £200
If you are applying for Junior Membership please state your age here

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If you are a United Kingdom tax payer please sign the Gift Aid declaration below to enable the Society to reclaim the tax paid on your donations (including subscriptions).

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I want the charity to treat all donations I have made over the last four years and all donations I make hereafter as Gift Aid donations.

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If it is more convenient for you and helps the Society if you pay by Standing Order or direct transfer. Please ask for the appropriate form or set it up with your bank using National Westminster Bank Sort Code 55-50-05, account number 01630962 and give your membership number or post code as the identifying reference. If you pay automatically PLEASE LET THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY KNOW. Please send completed forms to: Ian Hendley, Membership Secretary, 28 Millfield Drive, Market Drayton, TF9 1HS. Telephone: 01630 656525 E-mail: sucsmemsec@btinternet.com

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