

Spring 2019

# Cuttings

*Journal of the Shropshire Union Canal Society*

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COVER PHOTO *The Middlewich Breach site repaired* © CPP Civils



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## Canal & River Trust

The Canal & River Trust customer services contact number is 0303 040 4040



## Chairman's Report

Once again, I have to state that whilst writing this report, the picture outside my window is one of heavy snow. I trust that by the time you read this we will have advanced far enough into 2019 for the heavens to have lifted and that more clement weather will be with us.

A quick recap of 2018 sees a number of highs and lows for the society. The death in early November of Harry Arnold has left a gaping hole in the canal world and his avid support over the last 50 years, particularly with the Monty, will be seriously missed. His obituary follows on page 24. Unfortunately, the society has also received the news that Tony Byrne died in December. He and his wife were stalwart members of the society and he acted as a very successful Work Party Organiser in the mid 1970's. His obituary will follow in the next edition of Cuttings.

On a brighter note, the current restoration of the Monty has moved forward with completion of the current section in December. This was helped by the attendance of 30 different volunteers in early December to finish the work and allow for the Canal and River Trust to now complete the water testing regime.

Following the punctured mains water pipe at Crickheath Wharf, Land and Water work on piling has been somewhat delayed, but their present timetable includes finishing the work in March. Several worthwhile organisations currently operate on maintenance of the Monty, including TRAMPS who should be congratulated on winning joint runner-up in the Towpath Talk Top Volunteer Team for 2018.

Elsewhere on the system, it is good to see boats travelling the whole length of the Middlewich Branch following completion of the remedial work carried out by contractors to repair the breach.

I trust that the winter closures on the main line, including the Northgate Lock 2 in Chester and Wharton's lock on the main line will be open again as well as work completed at Hurlestone and Grindley Brook on the Llangollen Canal. Remedial work on Locks 1 and 4 at Frankton Locks should be completed to allow the Montgomery Canal to be reopened early in March.

Now that Canal and River Trust have had time to 'bed down' in their new regional areas, it is becoming easier to re-establish working relationships with, predominately, the West Midlands workforce. Should any members have a need to contact CRT staff and find this difficult, please feel free to get in touch and I will do whatever I can to aid any contact problems!

I do sometimes feel slightly cut of from the outside world living in rural West Wales. However, I strongly feel that as chairman of the society, I am here to reflect and acknowledge any concerns that the society's members might have. Consequently, if you feel that the society is not focusing in any way on your ideas and opinions, I would really like to hear from you.

I trust that you get the opportunity in the next few months to get out and about near your canal, be it cycling, walking, boating or just sitting and enjoying the view.

Rich Hamp, SUCS Chairman

## Editorial

Winter always seems to be a long, drawn-out affair, but up until very recently, we had had a winter, which we think could be described as fairly benign. That was until we decided that in view of the milder days in January, we would meet up with some friends of ours, who moor their boat at a marina on the Middlewich Branch.

With best-laid plans, we set off on a crisp sunny morning on 17<sup>th</sup> January, but once the sun went, it became colder. Having managed to get to the top of Lock 3 at Audlem, we decided to call it a day as frost-bite did not seem far away from the extremities! Having passed through Nantwich on the Saturday, we saw David & Chris Owen-Roberts on their boat. The smoke signals coming from their boat indicated that they were snug & warm inside, whilst we were open to the elements on the rear of ours. However, a cheery wave meant a lot and we carried on towards Barbridge. As the days passed, the weather appeared to go even colder, but we were able to meet up with our friends and cruise to the end of the Middlewich seeing first-hand, the excellent job done by Canal & River Trust on the major breach, which occurred in March 2018.

At the bottom lock we turned around to go back along the Middlewich and moored up in a very rural spot. The following day, we were ice-breaking on the Middlewich and eventually arrived in Nantwich, mooring up quite early as it started to rain. We were joined by our friends again and decided that the sun was over the yard-arm somewhere! It was much later that we looked out through the window to see that it had been snowing heavily.



The following day, the weather forecast said that it would be bright and sunny, but by 11am, it was still very frosty with thick fog. Whilst they were not ideal travelling conditions, we had to move as we needed to get home as we had a commitment at the weekend. Further ice-breaking was required and peering into the gloom near to Audlem Bottom, we saw another boat travelling in the opposite direction. A cheery wave was exchanged, but they looked as cold as we felt. The next day, although quite cold, was much clearer and we arrived home after an albeit cold cruise. We did, however, get a winter canal "fix".

Winter works are now complete or close to completion on the Main Line, but as we go to press, we have heard that the repair at Hurleston Bottom has had to be halted as the work is much more involved than CRT originally envisaged. Unfortunately, we will have to wait another year before we can cruise the Llangollen as we cannot risk getting our boat stuck in the bottom lock again!

The really nice thing about the Spring Edition is that we all wait in anticipation of the new boating season with the dawning of bright flowers, fresh leaves on the trees and bushes and the sight of ducklings and cygnets (and maybe a few passing boats as well).

Rod & Carol Hamilton-King  
Editors of Cuttings

## Snippets from The Shroppie

- ◆ Good to see **The Shroppie Fly** is open again – the new management team of Simon & Lucy are ready & waiting to welcome back previous customers and look forward to greeting new ones.
- ◆ **Prue and Tim** were spotted at Ellesmere Port recently doing more filming out and about boating.
- ◆ The crane at **Audlem Mill** is currently fenced off restricting the adjacent water point to boats of 50ft and under. No news yet of when the structure will be made safe.
- ◆ **Hurleston locks** – CRT report planned works to rebuild lock 4 have been problematic. Given that the works required would take significantly longer than originally planned (end of May at least), they have taken the decision to suspend the works this winter. The work will now be deferred to next winter and restart in November. The lock flight will be re-opened on 22<sup>nd</sup> February.



## Update on Painted Stools

In the winter edition of Cuttings, we featured some stools owned by Ian & Mary Bennett, who live on the Shroppie. We did receive some replies to the article, which were very interesting and the information was passed on to Ian & Mary. Subsequently, they heard from Narrowboat magazine, who informed them that they had managed to uncover the mystery of the stools. Alas, they have not been found to be linked to the Shroppie, but we thought that we would include the follow-up from the previous edition, for our readers.

It was established that the stools were painted by a George Farrin at his dock at Stoke Works on the Worcester & Birmingham Canal. Another stool was found with the name of "Dennis" on it and it was established that this was for a boat lad called Dennis Merrell. As a boy of eight, he helped his father, Jack, who regularly worked a Salt Union Ltd boat, carrying salt from Stoke Works to Holt Street Wharf in Birmingham, completing two trips per week. The warehouse was on the premises of salt and builder's merchant, Henry Johnson (Birmingham) Ltd, who was an agent for the Salt Union. These boats were repaired by George Farrin and it was his custom to make and paint little stools for each boat during docking, as a complimentary gift for the captain and his family.

Salt Union boats also carried the finished product from the Worcester and Birmingham to the Severn and on to a warehouse in Gloucester and, as George Farrin also docked many other craft that were operated by various carriers, who traded between Gloucestershire and the Midlands, it is not surprising that they turned up in a junk shop in Gloucester. What's especially important is that the stools show what George Farrin's paintwork looked like and could help identify other examples, if they survive.

George Farrin and his brother, Charles Joseph Farrin, were born at Floore near the Grand Junction Canal and became boat builders, both working in Braunston, prior to their relocation to Stoke Works in about 1877. Because they worked at both Floore and Braunston, it is likely those places influenced their painting style and perhaps gives us an idea of what Braunston boat painting looked like in the later years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



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Narrowboat Magazine



# Small Tasks Team Volunteers

As 2018 drew towards its end, STTV tackled the rotting landing stage above Swanley No. 2 lock. It was not clear immediately just how bad it was, but demolition soon revealed all! We began work on replacing the planks.



In December many volunteers attended the North West 'Volunteer Thank You Days' and several received rewards for reaching the requisite number of hours.



The memorial for Paul Mills was installed at Barbridge, planted with winter plants. It was erected by Geoff Lane and John Riley and planted up by Janice Riley and Moira Cain, who will replace the plants when the time is ripe.



The annual Christmas Lunch was the last event of the year. Steve Maguire represented C&RT at this well attended event, which was held at the Cheshire Cat, Chrisleton.



Back to work!!! January saw us once again at Marsh Lane, Nantwich. The task was to complete the towpath, with a stretch of stone over the existing groundwork and a new piece of path towards Bridge 90. Initially it looked somewhat daunting...



...but work was soon underway.



After two days the work was well on the way to completion.



We are always happy to welcome new members. Contact John Riley for details

Please address all STTV correspondence to:  
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john.riley295@btinternet.com

Bulletin matters to:  
John Bannister  
johnbann@aol.com



## Join the 'Daves'

'Join the Daves' urges Canal & River Trust, as it launches a new campaign to recruit more volunteers to take on the iconic role of lock keeper across 2,000 miles of canals and rivers.

'Dave' is the most common name among the Trust's thousands of volunteers and the charity is appealing for men and women from all backgrounds to join the army of 'Dave's performing this important task on the nation's waterways.

Britain's canals are more popular than ever before, with more boats using them than at the height of the Industrial Revolution. Last year over 1,000 people volunteered to be lock keepers, a task which involves helping boaters on their journeys and providing information and advice to visitors on the towpath.



Montgomery Canal Shropshire Wild Team volunteers at work

Of the many people volunteering for the charity in a range of roles, 130 'Dave's give up their time to carry out tasks, such as helping boats through locks, clearing vegetation, maintaining towpaths and teaching children via the charity's education programme. Hot on their heels are the 'John's, with 'Barbara's and 'Karen's leading the way among female volunteers.

Edd Moss, national volunteering development manager at Canal & River Trust, said: "The nation's canals and rivers go through such a diversity of cities, towns and villages and this is reflected in our volunteers. We've people from an amazing array of communities and backgrounds, so it was quite interesting to see such an abundance of 'Dave's volunteering with us.



"Of course, we'd love to continue to welcome dedicated 'Dave's and brilliant 'Barbara's to our volunteering team. But we would really like them to be joined by new names and faces so that we can do even more in 2019 to ensure canals across England and Wales are havens for people and wildlife.

"In particular, we're looking for people to sign up as volunteer lock keepers and help bring their local canal to life for everyone who visits. It's an iconic role, with volunteer lock keepers often known as the 'face of the canals', and great for anyone who likes spending time outside and talking to people.

"We value each and every one of our volunteers and appreciate everything they do to help look after our historic waterways. In return we do all we can to ensure they have opportunities to learn new skills and meet new people in a friendly and supportive environment.

"We believe that anything you do to spend more time by water is good for your mental and physical wellbeing, so that's an extra benefit for everyone."



Volunteer lock keepers

To support the recruitment drive and showcase the benefits of volunteering, the Canal & River Trust has penned a poem. It calls on people to 'Join the Daves' and has been brought to life by a host of the charity's staff and volunteers. Watch it here: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/volunteer>

The Trust needs volunteer lock keepers at nearly 80 sites across England and Wales. In Shropshire, there are vacancies at Frankton Locks, Grindley Brook and Tyrley Locks, near Market Drayton, amongst others.



# Restoration Update



The Block Gang

The period covered by this update featured only two work parties, but the work done in both ensured that the Pryces to Crickheath restoration has reached two significant milestones. Two factors have supercharged progress over the past six months – ever increasing numbers of volunteers, each with a highly developed work ethic together with enduring good weather.

The December work party was notable for an all-time record number of volunteers, who worked in remarkable spring-like weather. The first half of the event saw the remaining few metres of the Phase 1 channel lined and blocked and the channel prepared for its water test. The latter involved sealing the four sumps and adding the ‘chimneys’ necessary to isolate the land drain for the duration of the test. This action, rather than blocking the sumps, will permit the land drain to be brought back into use after the test, which will be done by CRT. The ‘chimneys’ can be seen in the photographs. Fortified by an excellent Christmas dinner, the volunteers then spent the rest of the work party completing the clearance of trees from the Phase 2A channel.



Channel clearance work



The channel in January

Another large turnout in January succeeded in clearing the lengthy Phase 2B of bushes and trees in the channel and the cutting down of the remains of the hedge on the towpath. This means that the channel and towpath are now clear of large vegetation all the way from Pryces Bridge to the contractor’s site at Crickheath. The whole of Phase 2 has now also been handed back to CRT for the newt exclusion and trapping process. As a balance to all the tree destruction, some thirty or so assorted tree whips were planted around the newt ponds at Redwith to create, what will become in time, a number of small spinneys.



View from Crickheath towards Pryces Bridge

As always there are detailed accounts of our activities on the Society website <http://www.shropshireunion.org.uk/montgomery-canal-restoration>.

David Carter



## Ponty marks 10 years of WHS

This year the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and 11 miles of the beautiful Llangollen Canal in North Wales is celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of being awarded World Heritage Site designation. The elite club of 1,000 UNESCO World Heritage Sites includes such iconic structures as Stonehenge and the Pyramids.



The enhanced profile provided by the special heritage status has made the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct a 'Must Do' destination for thousands of international tourists. Visitor numbers have quadrupled over the decade, with nearly half a million people viewing the 'Stream in the Sky' and the Trevor Basin Visitor Centre last year, providing a major boost for the local economy.

Tourists from 52 countries including Zambia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore and the Philippines, as well as most European nations signed the centre's visitor book last year.



The aqueduct has also become a regular media star. Last year alone, the Canal & River Trust hosted TV programmes *Bargain Hunt*, *Antiques Road Trip*, *Lost Railway Walks*, *Escape to the Country*, CBBC and several news broadcasts.



### Celebrations

A year of celebrations and events to mark this important milestone are being organised including a new photography competition, a specially brewed beer, spectacular luminaire structure lighting, 'Under the Arches' celebration and a wide range of community and cultural events and workshops.

### Call for volunteers

An army of volunteers keeps the World Heritage Site in top class condition for visitors. The Canal & River Trust is currently recruiting more people to join the team for the 2019 season. They need destination assistants to work in the free visitor centre; aqueduct, towpath and litter rangers; and volunteers to take part in the towpath taskforce. For more information, please email [trevorvisitorcentre@crt.org.uk](mailto:trevorvisitorcentre@crt.org.uk).



## Waterways Chaplains on the cut

*Malcolm Grey-Smart, a Waterways Chaplain based on The Shroppie at Market Drayton gives us an insight into what it means to be a chaplain*

I live with my wife, Steph, in a little cottage by the moorings at Market Drayton. The boat is virtually outside the house. It's absolutely super. It's a 50ft narrowboat we've owned for 16 years. We mostly cruise The Shroppie and the Midlands, because she only has a small engine and is 35 years old.

In 1976 we had our first daughter and decided to take her on holiday on the Llangollen Canal. We thoroughly enjoyed it. We didn't do any more boating on the canals until a friend offered to lend us his narrowboat for another holiday. We went up the Staffs & Worcs that time and really got a taste for it. We borrowed the boat regularly from him for the next few years. As our family grew up – and moved out – we decided to downsize and bought our boat. We've been IWA members ever since and have met many people on the network through the IWA.

Steph and I have been doing chaplaincy work for 16 years, but it's only since last year that we've done it in a more formal capacity for the Waterways Chaplaincy. The Boaters Christian Fellowship (of which we are members) is also a part of the Chaplaincy and our involvement started when Mark Chester, senior chaplain, came to speak at a BCF AGM. Hearing about their work, My wife and I both knew God was calling us to do it so we signed all the forms, sent them off and started the training. It's a very comprehensive process and covers all sorts of things, from Universal Credit to familiarising yourself with the local banks, doctors, etc so we can signpost people. It takes about 12 months in total.

As chaplains we support people who live on or use the waterways. We're largely volunteers from local churches and provide companionship and a listening ear to both individuals and businesses. It doesn't matter if they're boaters, cyclists, walkers, anglers or canal workers. We support and encourage people of any religion, orientation or race through good times and bad. We're here to offer practical and spiritual help. We support people who have been evicted from boats, or who need advice filling in forms, or simply liaise between boaters and Canal & River Trust. Sometimes cases are referred onto us by CRT's welfare officer.

At the moment there are just under 80 chaplains, but our aim is to have over 200 on the waterways. We recently had a celebratory service to mark the 10th anniversary of the chaplaincy in the Tower of London. All of our chaplains are hugely committed to the task. Just ask my wife: on her birthday this year I took her to a symposium on Universal Credit!

continued...



In terms of time commitment, if we're wearing our Chaplaincy gilets, we're on duty. We also walk up and down the towpath in Market Drayton once a week, talking to people, getting to know them and offering assistance wherever and however necessary. For instance, we recently met a couple who were new to boating, and came down the locks with them. As we did so, their boat started to get mechanically worse. We ended up giving them a lift back to Market Drayton. Fortunately one of our friends is also a River Canal Rescue engineer, so he was able to fix their boat and get them back on track. That's the thing about chaplaincy work – you never know what's going to happen next. Every day is an adventure. You help people out, share with them and do the best that you can. It's a very practical ministry. Very hands on. It's basically about loving people for who they are.

The funny side of life: last year we cruised up the Llangollen Canal. We'd just reached the narrow stretch and my wife went ahead to look for oncoming traffic. It was a beautiful, sunny morning and I spotted a couple of a similar age to me walking up the towpath and very obviously in love. I shouted out: "It's grand to see the days of romance aren't over yet." He, on spotting my Chaplaincy clothes, replied: "You're a Waterways Chaplain! Could you marry us?" We all had a good laugh together. Later, after we'd moored up, we spotted the same couple approaching on their boat. This time they'd obviously had a row and the man surreptitiously leant on the back of his craft and joked: "You don't offer instant divorces, do you?" That's what it's all about for me: enjoying life in all its ups and downs.



All the organisations we are involved with pull together in different ways. The IWA, BCF, canal societies and Waterways Chaplaincy. They've all got something slightly different to offer to people, but the common thread is a mission to make a positive difference on our waterways.

Article reproduced by kind permission of Waterways, the IWA magazine

Due to increased workload the north-west area has been split with Malcom & Steph now covering Audlem to Wolverhampton and Martin & Fiona Buck looking after Nantwich to Ellesmere Port.



# Reopening of the Middlewich

*Our cover photo shows the Middlewich Branch back to normal use after the major works required due to the breach that happened in March 2018*

The Middlewich branch of The Shroppie re-opened on Friday 21 December, following repairs to a major breach.

Canal & River Trust has carried out repairs to the canal after a section of the 200-year-old embankment washed away into the River Wheelock below in March.

Breach site before & after—looking south



More than 4,000 tonnes of stone was needed to rebuild the canal embankment so that it could be refilled with water and once again be enjoyed by boaters, walkers, runners and the local community.



The work cost nearly £3 million and was funded by the Trust as well as players of People's Postcode Lottery. Generous donations from the local community also raised over £30,000 for the emergency appeal.

Contractors, Kier and CPC Civils, on behalf of the Canal & River Trust, have rebuilt the 12m high embankment prior to constructing new concrete canal walls, a PVC lining membrane and concrete protection slab as well as reinstating the towpath before the reopening.

Eastern view of breach site—before & after photos



Volunteers have worked closely with the Trust, removing debris from the canal bed, carrying out towpath improvements, recovering bricks for re-use, painting lock gates and clearing vegetation. Several volunteers also undertook some hedge laying training recently, to learn how to restore the historic hedgerows that can be found along the towpath.



## Middlewich repair - continued

Andy Johnson, senior project manager at the Canal & River Trust said: “We worked hard on site to repair the canal as quickly as we could. We faced some complex challenges like removing stranded boats and access along the canal bed to reach the breach but we’re pleased that we re-opened the canal before Christmas. We continued work through January and finally demobilised the site on 31<sup>st</sup> January.”

View from the west of the breach site—before and after



Andy continued: “The Middlewich branch of the Shropshire Union Canal is not only loved by boaters but by the local community who use it to walk, cycle and run. The support for our charity’s work has been fantastic. We would like to thank everyone who has donated money and all the amazing volunteers who have given their time and effort to help restore this much-loved canal.”

Sanjay Singh, Senior Programmes Manager for environmental charities at People’s Postcode Lottery said: “I am delighted that players have supported Canal & River Trust to make this stretch of the waterway accessible again to the local communities who most benefit. Waterways provide a hugely positive experience for everybody to enjoy throughout the year and I’m delighted it will be enjoyed once more.”

All photos courtesy of CRT/Keir and CPP Civils

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# The boats are back!!

Following the re-opening of the Middlewich branch on December 21st 2018 it did not take long for the first boats to pass through. We asked boaters for their photos and these are a few of those photos.



Dec 21st: Fuel boat Halsall with Bargus in front; heading towards Middlewich

Dec 21st: Fuel boat Halsall with Bargus in front; heading towards Middlewich



Dec 21st: taken by Brian on NB Harnser; heading towards Barbridge



Dec 21st taken by Anne Powell; traveling towards Middlewich

Jan 21st: your intrepid editors Rod & Carol Hamilton-King on board NB Slimline Tonic bound for Barbridge



Jan 21st: Dave & Pauline Campbell on their way to Barbridge on NB Cheshire Star



## Harry Arnold MBE 1937-2018



© Beryl Arnold/WATERWAY IMAGES

26th May 1937 - 1st November 2018

Harry was born in 1937 and lived in Stockton Heath on the Cheshire side of the Manchester Ship Canal, close to the Bridgewater Canal. He went to the Grammar School in Warrington in 1948 and joined the photographic society where he developed a natural flair for composition and drawing and this began his future in photojournalism as a writer and waterways historian.

His National Service was with the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, stationed at Aldershot and later, Oswestry. He married his wife, Beryl, in June 1959 and took his first canal boating trip.

The early 1960's saw Harry's involvement with the Talylyn Railway in Wales. Tom Rolt was also a member of this organisation, whose book *Narrow Boat* further created an interest in the canal system for Harry. At the same time Dr Cyril Boucher, a leading advocate at the time for canal restoration, was giving lectures in Manchester, which further inspired Harry's enthusiasm

By 1965, Harry was working in a canal holiday business at Norbury Junction becoming involved with the local canal restoration movement, first for the Newport and Shrewsbury Canal Group which, when it became obvious that this project was not going to get the official approval to reopen the canal, went on to officially become the Shropshire Union Canal Society in November 1966. He was chairman of the society from 1968-1969 and the first editor of the society's magazine in December 1965, a role held until early 1972. Harry was also instrumental, with his friend Graham Palmer, in organising the "Big Dig" in 1969 at Welshpool. This major event saw the start of the restoration of the Montgomery Canal with over 200 volunteers helping to clear the canal in the town over an October weekend, after the threat of the canal's closure due to a proposed bypass through the town.

In 1970 David Wain asked Harry to become the first full time secretary of the Association of Pleasure Craft Operators. During his tenure that pump-out toilets were first introduced with Harry having the unenviable task of persuading enough operators around the system to install emptying machines.

Spring 1972 saw the production of the first edition of *Waterways World* with Harry as the Managing Editor and within a couple of years Harry was back to freelancing. By the early 1980's he was Editor of *Canal and Riverboat* and Associate Editor of *Popular Motor Cruising*. A desire by the magazine owners to sell saw Harry move on to create the monthly magazine *Narrow Boat*. This ran for a year in the mid 1980s before succumbing to under-capitalisation.



## Harry Arnold MBE - continued

The 1980's also saw Harry involved with the Shropshire Union boat *Symbol*. In an attempt to save her from dereliction, it was hoped that the boat would be based at the then boat museum (now The National Waterways Museum) at Ellesmere Port, of which Harry had been a founder member in the early 1970's. This was not to be and the boat had to be dismantled. Not to be deterred and with Harry's commitment as chairman of SUFBRS, the society formed a new partnership with British Waterways who then purchased *Saturn* and applied for a major Heritage Lottery fund grant to begin restoration work on this last remaining fly-boat.

Although Harry has earned a living from the canals for many years, he has always put much back with his involvement in the volunteer sector. His work over the years has included; Welshpool IWA Committee and National Council member, a founder member of Waterway Recovery Group, Ellesmere Port Boat Museum and the Montgomery Waterway Restoration Trust. One of his longest connections is with the Trent & Mersey Canal Society, including stints editing their magazine and being made a vice-president.

In recognition of the unbelievable contribution that Harry made to the British canal system, in 2008 he became a Vice-President of The Inland Waterways Association, whose magazine he had edited for 17 years. In 2010 Harry was awarded an MBE in HM the Queen's Birthday Honours List, for his outstanding contribution to the waterways over almost fifty years. In 2015 the Canal and River Trust awarded Harry the Living Waterways Lifetime Achievement Award as acknowledgement for his dedication to the canal cause.

As a professional journalist, editor and photographer Harry has been a regular contributor to so many different organisations and boating magazines and most recently, he had been retained to write for the free distribution newspaper, *Towpath Talk* and he had continued to write for the publication until his stroke on 13th October 2018.

I join the members of the Shropshire Union Canal Society in expressing our condolences to Harry's wife, daughter and son, with the recognition that there is now a big void where Harry stood for so many years.

Rich Hamp, SUCS Chairman



**Audlem Festival 2015.**

Harry with the daughters of Jack Roberts at the launch of Jack's autobiography as a Shropshire Union Fly-Boat captain.

© Julie Arnold/WATERWAY IMAGES

### Tony, Di & Harry 2011

Boat Museum Society President Di Skilbeck MBE honours Harry Arnold MBE and Tony Lewery, making them Vice Presidents of the society, for the part they played in founding and developing what has now become The National Waterways Museum.



© Julie Arnold/WATERWAY IMAGES

### Norbury Book Launch 2012

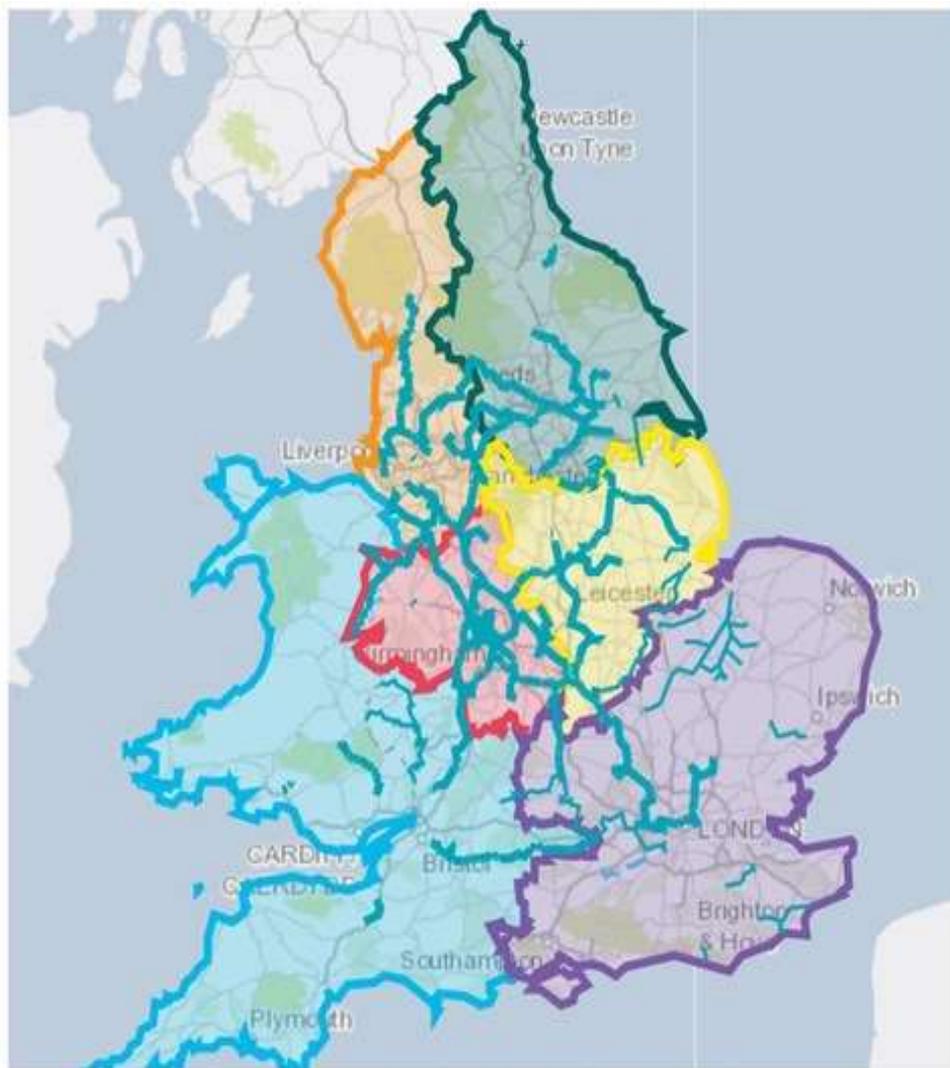
Harry, Beryl and Julie Arnold – plus Molly the family cairn terrier – at the launch of the book "NORBURY JUNCTION The Story of a Canal Community" Researched and compiled by Norbury Local History Group, Harry wrote the Foreword for the book and provided historical photographs and family memories from the 1960s and their time at Shropshire Union Cruises.



© Dianne Maxfield



## New CRT Area Map



## Canal Photography Exhibition

The Montgomery Canal's beautiful waterway scenery and impressive historic structures provide the inspiration for a touring photographic exhibition which moves to its final destination at Newtown Library on 2 February. The exhibition has already been enjoyed by hundreds of visitors in Oswestry and Welshpool.

The exhibition features the work of community photographers, as well as fascinating black and white archive pictures of the Welshpool Big Dig of 1969.



Sylvia Edwards, CRT's Montgomery Canal Community Development Officer said: "The exhibition contains some great shots of structures and wildlife, as well as showing the challenging mitigation measures the Canal & River Trust has had to put in place to get permission to restore the canal. Visitors will also be able to compare past and current canal restoration techniques employed by the hard-working, enthusiastic Shropshire Union Canal Society volunteers. The exhibition provides a brilliant window into a fascinating world of canal restoration".

The exhibition will be at Newtown Library until 30 March. Opening hours are Mon/Thurs/Fri: 9.30am-5.30pm, Tues: 9.30am-7.00pm, Saturday: 9.30am-1pm. Closed Weds and Sun.



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# The Wrexham Lager Brewery

*Peter Brown relates the history of Robert Graesser and the Wrexham Lager Brewery.*

Robert Graesser (1844–1911) was born in Mosel in Saxony, studied chemistry at Chemnitz and came to Britain in 1864.

In 1867 he established a canalside chemical works at Cefn Mawr, originally to produce shale oil from the local colliery tips (hence the street name 'Oilworks Road'), but he soon turned to the production of phenol from the crude carbolic which was a by-product of the expanding gas and tar industries. The canal was used both to bring in the raw materials and to take out the finished product. At that time phenol was used mainly in antiseptics; later that century its role in dyestuffs became important. As well as being the factory's manager and engineer, Graesser carried out the plant design and development work. The first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw demand further increasing, with phenol being used in the manufacture of early plastics such as Bakelite and also of explosives. The chemical works were taken over by Monsanto in 1928.

The Wrexham Lager Beer Company Limited was founded in 1881 by German immigrants living in Manchester, Ivan Levinstein and Otto Isler, who tried to recreate their local lager. However, the temperature could not easily be kept down during the brewing process, affecting the quality of the lager and making the company unprofitable.

In 1886 Robert Graesser bought a majority shareholding in the brewery. He introduced mechanical refrigeration as used at his chemical plant to keep the cellars at -1°C. Local sales did not improve as the people of Wrexham were used to drinking ale rather than lager, so by 1892 the brewery was again in financial trouble. However, Graesser found a non-local market in export sales, primarily through railways such as the Great Western Railway, shipping lines such as Cunard, and the British Army. For example, Wrexham Lager was recorded at Khartoum as early as 1898.

The Graesser family ran the brewery until 1949.



Peter Brown



# 2019 Montgomery Canal Triathlon

## Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2019

**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: 4<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

For entry forms visit  
[www.montgomerycanal.me.uk/fmcevents2019.html](http://www.montgomerycanal.me.uk/fmcevents2019.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 aid of the  
**restoration of the Montgomery Canal**  
 (see [www.RestoreTheMontgomeryCanal.uk](http://www.RestoreTheMontgomeryCanal.uk))

Supported through Tesco Newtown

Friends of the Montgomery Canal is the membership section of the Montgomery Waterway Restoration Trust, a non-profit distributing company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales No. 1508017, registered Charity No. 210448. Registered Office: Talbot House, 11-15 Market Street, Shrewsbury SY1 1LG



## Monty Goes International!

Early in 2018, the Society was approached by the Architects' Association of Catalonia in Barcelona, Spain about providing a speaker to give a presentation about the Montgomery Canal, to their 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Course. The Course this year focussed on historic waterways, which in Spain means looking rather more at Roman and other water aqueducts, which bring water from the hills to the cities. Society member and chairman of the Montgomery Canal Partnership, John Dodwell, was asked if he would give the address.

The address covered the history of the Montgomery Canal; how it all started and then declined, its subsequent revival and the part played by the Society from the 1960's to the present day. Another feature was an address by CRT's Heritage Advisor, Kate Lynch about two magnificent examples of canal engineering – the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and the Anderton Boat Lift.

The Montgomery presentation showed many photographs, including some from the Society's archives. Photographs of areas worked on by the Society included Carreghofa Locks and of course, relining the canal between Redwith Bridge to Pryces Bridge and beyond.

In closing John said, "I hope I have been able to show you something about the heritage and history of the Montgomery Canal, a wonderful example of Britain's Industrial Revolution and how it is being revived. I hope you have been able to see the value of working in partnership and the value of volunteers, demonstrating how inspirational they can be. Please remember that to them, nothing is impossible!"



The Architects Association were happy to pay a fee of €160 for the address, which in turn, has been donated to the Restore the Montgomery Appeal fund.

John Dodwell



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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.

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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](http://www.nbcyc.club)



## News from The Monty

### Film Release

Canal & River Trust are delighted to release "Life on the Monty", a short film funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, that celebrates the heritage, wildlife & people who make this beautiful canal so special. It includes archive footage of the original restoration from 1969, to celebrate the role of volunteers in its resurrection and a chance to see The Prince of Wales reopening the canal at Welshpool. A trailer is at <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/montgomery>, where you will also find a link to the film itself.

### Collect tokens from The Shropshire Star

A couple of years ago the *Restore the Montgomery Canal!* Appeal received several hundred pounds from the Shropshire Star's *Cash for Your Community* campaign. The newspaper is running the campaign this year and we are applying for the Montgomery again.

The chosen 35 finalists will have a chance of winning part of a £20,000 fund. Readers are asked to vote by collecting tokens published in the newspaper from 27 Feb to 6 April. There are prizes of £5k, £2k & £1k for the three groups collecting most tokens. The remaining £12k is shared based on the total number of votes. Last time, non-readers were able to write in so that extra tokens could be allocated; a good way of boosting votes.

To find out if we have been selected, please look in the paper or on its website – [www.shropshirestar.com](http://www.shropshirestar.com). Or email [c.bryansmith@bopenworld.com](mailto:c.bryansmith@bopenworld.com) - and Chris will advise if we have been chosen. If so, please collect the tokens and send them in as directed. Or please write in if tokens can be applied for by letter. It's a great way to support the restoration, and it may cost you no more than a stamp!

### 'Just the cost of a cup of coffee'

A campaign announced at short notice on the Local Giving site 'Grow Your Tenner' still managed to attract supporters. Matched funding and a generous anonymous supporter plus Gift Aid meant that a person giving just £2.50 a week – the cost of a cup of coffee – would benefit the Appeal by no less than £420 in a year! In the coming year these "cups of coffee" will bring the Appeal over £1,300, part of nearly £10,000 a year the Appeal receives through monthly donations. This is so very valuable, and we are so grateful to our supporters who give monthly as well as those who make one-off donations. This support is essential if we are to rebuild Schoolhouse Bridge and I'm delighted to say that with the help of these donations, the support of several major donors and the Society itself – we think that, subject to final costings, we only need a further £40,000 for the bridge.



## News from The Monty-cont

The later months of 2018 saw much progress with the bridge project, including an ecological survey which did not reveal any problems (to be completed with a bat-hunt in May), detailed discussions with Shropshire Council on bridge alignment, and a borehole survey (which necessitated a road closure.) Ground investigation results mean that detailed design can get under way with the bridge deck suppliers. We expect to apply for planning permission when these issues are settled with a view to rebuilding the bridge next year.

Rebuilding Schoolhouse Bridge will be the biggest volunteer-led project the Montgomery Canal has ever seen. It will underline what volunteers can achieve and will be the springboard to the next phases of restoration. The project is already impressing the authorities on both sides of the border. We intend to impress them more and are already starting to think about what happens after Schoolhouse Bridge, including of course the Society's involvement of the next stages of channel restoration.

After Schoolhouse Bridge? We hope our regular donors will continue their support. We already have some donations for the next stage, but clearly there will still be a need for funds and the appeal group is looking forward to see how best to proceed; Encourage more people to donate on a regular basis; IWA and other legacy funding; support from trusts amongst other ideas.

The Montgomery Canal will be a great asset for the local community and future generations. Much has been achieved so far through the generous support of donors and volunteers. Can we achieve more? After all, it might just be the cost of a cup of coffee

### Canal Forum

2.30pm on Tuesday 21st May at The Memorial Hall, Smithfield St, Oswestry, SY11 2EG To review progress of restoration and plans for the future. Free entry

## Grant for Wappenshall Wharf

We are delighted to announce that the Wolfson Foundation has awarded the Shrewsbury and Newport Canals Trust a grant of £20,000 towards our "Thomas Telford @ Wappenshall Wharf" project.

The money will be used to help the SNCT redevelop Wappenshall Wharf as a heritage site and tourist attraction, to protect the architectural and heritage importance of the buildings, to engage the whole community, especially young people, in education, training and the arts and to provide the best level of public and community access and use of the site and buildings.

Re-roofing of the small warehouse at Wappenshall Wharf nears completion



Chairman, Bernie Jones said "This is a major step forward for this key project in our Trust's history. I am very grateful to the Wolfson Foundation, as raising the money in the present economic climate has been a real challenge. With this grant we will certainly be able to complete Phase 1 now."

The Wolfson Foundation ([www.wolfson.org.uk](http://www.wolfson.org.uk)) is an independent charity that supports and promotes excellence in the fields of science, health, education and the arts and humanities. Since it was established in 1955, over £900 million (about £1.9 billion in real terms) has been awarded by it to over 11,000 projects throughout the UK, all on the basis of expert review.

When the Heritage Lottery Fund decided not to fund the restoration of Wappenshall Wharf the Shrewsbury & Newport Canals Trust trustees unanimously decided to carry on with the restoration but to do this in a number of phases. Phase 1, the restoration of the smaller warehouse and the re-watering of the basin, is progressing well and is on target for completion in 2019.

John Myers



## Diary dates for 2019

Month	Date	What	Where
March	2	Lock Open Day	Northgate Locks, Chester
April	19 to 22	Boat Gathering	Ellesmere Port
April	28	Open Day	Venetian Marina, Middlewich Branch
May	4 to 6	Canal Festival	Norbury
May	11 & 12	Floating Market	Market Drayton
May	21	Monty Canal Forum	2.30pm @ Memorial Hall Oswestry
May	24 to 27	SUCS Lockwind	Cholmondeston Lock, Middlewich Branch
May	25 & 26	Bike & Boats	Ellesmere Port
May	25 to 27	Floating Market	Chester
June	13 to 16	Folk & Boat Festival	Middlewich
July	19 to 21	Canal Festival	Gnosall
July	28	Transport Festival	Audlem
August/ September	31 & 1	Canal Festival	Whitchurch

## Membership News

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 downloadable membership application. Alternatively, ask and you will be sent a small pack of membership applications and publicity leaflets.

Having served as the Society's membership secretary for a decade and a half, I think it is about time for a change! I have been impressed by the support I have been shown by you all and will miss the occasional friendly phone call, so thank you one and all. Richard Feeney will be picking up the membership reins from around the beginning of March and you can contact him about any membership matter at 42 Foyle Road, Blackheath, SE3 7RH, telephone 07920 708255 and email [sucsmemsec@gmail.com](mailto:sucsmemsec@gmail.com)

Ian Hendley

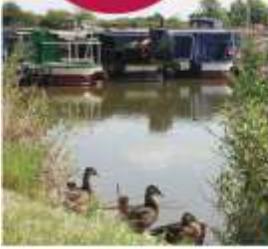
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## New Members

We all extend a warm welcome to:

Mr and Mrs Palmer of Dugspur, Virginia, USA

Mr and Mrs Hannan of Chilworth, Surrey as life members

Mr C Cooper of Worsley, Manchester

Mr and Mrs Chandler of Mold, Flintshire

Mr M Adams and family of Ruabon as life members.

Ian Hendley



## Stamps Coins & Post Cards

£429 is the total raised so far this financial year from the sale of used postage stamps. I have made another delivery to our dealer so the final total for the year will be in the next issue of "Cuttings".

My thanks this time to:

J Bannister	M & S Battaney	P Bradley & friends
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Pat Wilson

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## Fundraising 2019

We shall hold the first lock wind of 2019 at Cholmondeston lock on the Middlewich Branch from Friday 24<sup>th</sup> May to Monday 27<sup>th</sup> May. We will be in contact with the members who are often able to help at this event, but if anyone else fancies joining in for half a day or full day over that weekend please let us know. There will be plenty of tea and biscuits for the helpers and whatever the weather throws at us we will have an enjoyable time!  
[nbrosie2002@gmail.com](mailto:nbrosie2002@gmail.com) or 07801 344646

Gill Robertson



## Shop online to help SUCS!

Do you shop online?

If so please consider helping the Society by creating an account with Give as You Live ([www.giveasyoulive.com](http://www.giveasyoulive.com)) It costs you nothing and they do not require any details from you other than an e mail address and a password, and the name of your chosen charity which we would like you to set up as Shropshire Union Canal Society. When you shop on line, log in to your Give as You Live account and select the store you wish to use - Amazon, E Bay, John Lewis, Debenhams, M & S to name but a few. Any purchases you make will attract a percentage donation (varies from store to store but is shown online) direct to the Society. Please Help Us – it is so easy to do and costs you nothing!

Thank you!

Gill Robertson





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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

Cuttings is published 4 times per year, in June, September, December and March. Copy deadlines are 1st May, 1st August, 1st November and 1st February. **COPY CANNOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER THESE DATES.**



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## Work Party Dates for 2019

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

For more information contact:

David Carter 01244 661440,  
E-mail: [dcartersucs@gmail.com](mailto:dcartersucs@gmail.com)

## Collection Boxes

The collecting box income to the New Year just tipped the right side of £1000. Things go a little quiet now but we are always keen to hear of possible new locations for boxes.

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](mailto:haslemere@chester50.plus.com).

## Discounts from our Advertisers

Boat Safety Examiner Neal Dodd offers a discount to SUCS members. See advert for details.

## Please Support our Advertisers

Please mention that you saw their advert in Cuttings magazine!

Cuttings Spring 2019

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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

Name ..... (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dr/Rev)

Address .....

.....Post Code .....

Telephone ..... E-mail .....

Single, Joint, Family: £10 Juniors under 18: £5 Life Membership £200

If you are applying for Junior Membership please state your age here .....

Membership Number (for renewals) .....

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).

Name of Society: The Shropshire Union Canal Society

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.

Signature ..... Date .....

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: Richard Feeney, Membership Secretary, 42 Foyle Road, Blackheath, London, SE3 7RH. Telephone: 07920 708255 E-mail: [sucsmemsec@gmail.com](mailto:sucsmemsec@gmail.com)

Tick here if you have paid by Standing Order or Direct Transfer

Tick here if you are happy to receive Cuttings by e-mail



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