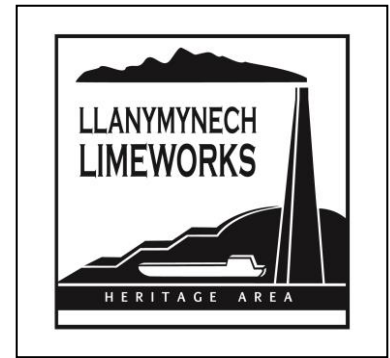




THE LLIMEY - June 2016

The Newsletter of the Llimeys –
Friends of Llanymynech Limeworks Heritage Area



Chair's Report

A lot has been happening around the site particularly during the winter months.

Tony and Martyn have continued to monitor the area and to trim, clear, leaf-blow and generally keep everything in good order. Our visitors are very appreciative of their efforts.

Together with Gareth Egarr's team of volunteers from Shropshire Wildlife Trust, another section of Llwyn Goch Woods was coppiced early in 2016. This resulted in an even better bluebell display this spring.



Another few days saw clearance of saplings and undergrowth between the Hoffmann kiln and the middle meadow which has opened up this area.

Unfortunately we also experienced an outbreak of graffiti on the inside and outside of the Hoffmann and some damage to the brickwork. Thanks are due to Martyn for cleaning off most of the graffiti. We must renew our endeavours to educate the local youngsters about the importance of the site.

Canal and River Trust have done some clearance work on their part of the site and will hopefully clear saplings from the tramway embankment leading to the tally house by the canal later this year once the birds have finished nesting. They are also developing a maintenance plan for this area.

We took part in the Oswestry Area's Heritage Open Days in September as usual. In 2015 we offered guided walks on the Saturday in addition to our Sunday activities. These proved very popular. Our activities on the Sunday included the showing of Georges Méliès films c1902, with music composed and played by Julian Cattley, and help from Dickon Faux-Nightingale. Mair Hughes, CRT's Artist in Residence, had an exhibition of her work so far. We will be participating again this year

In August, 2015, we were represented at the National Eisteddfod in Meifod. Llanymynech had a display in the Local History tent (Lle Hanes), produced by me, Liz Amys from the Visitor Centre and Ruth Allcock from Pant, which gave an overview of the limestone industry amongst other aspects of the village. Marion Ingram helped with translation into Welsh. The 4 display boards now belong to the villages and can be borrowed by local organisations. Ruth Allcock, Paddy Martin, Chris Backshall and I represented the villages at the Eisteddfod.



Joan Zorn



Clearance of tramways & coppicing

Martyn, Tony, Nick, Peter,

Gareth and his team had a good session coppicing an area of woodland at the bottom end of the site in the early part of the year. Major clearance close to the Hoffmann has also been carried out on the site of the old main line. It revealed a main line rail chair for double headed rail. Ivy clearance has also been undertaken to aid interpretation on the embankment just south of the tally house and other walls.



Cast Iron Inverted T Rail

In Feb/March this year Martyn, Tony, Peter & Nick started to look at the hillside tramway system using a local 1863 map. Although a plate way system was revealed last year after winter gales uprooted trees near the canal, expectations for this year were not high as the whole system had vanished off the later 1902 map.



In 1803-4, two railways with inclines using cast iron inverted T rail were built from the limestone quarries down to Llanymynech. Examples of T rail have been found this year. This type of rail is unique to Shropshire and Montgomeryshire. Another incline from Pant to the canal which opened in 1824, also used inverted T although it was preceded by plate. Another inverted T railway ran from Sweeney colliery to Gronwen Wharf. (Stone blocks, rails & waggon wheels remain at Barry Tuffins Boat Yard, Maesbury). A similar track in 1818 also linked Stondart Quarry to the wharf at Welshpool, proving that T rail was very common in this area. It was made in 3' & 4' lengths, mounted on a 4" wide chair with a centre pin to secure the rail to a stone block. Early castings could have been produced by John Kurr, the later ones produced by William Hazledine. The photo above shows a 35" section of rail with a 4" cast iron chair, found on the surface at the side of the lower terrace tramway at Llanymynech. Later a 3" support chair was found. We have also found parts of the double flanged wheels and the 5" split pins which held the wheels on the axles. These are on display in the stable block. After this we discovered the whole tramway track system seems to have been over engineered using flat bottomed rail. On the Welshpool-Llanfair Caereinion narrow gauge rail system, rail at 40/45 lb per yard fitted onto wooden sleepers, held with 5" spikes was used to support a loco weighing 21tons. We discovered rail at 32lb/ per yard on wooden sleepers fitted with 6" spikes was used to support a horse drawn 2 ton wagon. A 6" spike on the outside and a 4" spike on the inside seem to have been the norm. Other interesting finds were two coins, a George V 1922 sixpence, a George V 1917 penny piece, and a dog identity disc complete with phone number.

Tony Beardsell

Llanymynech Rocks Nature Reserve Update

It has been mostly business as usual during this past year. Several volunteer work parties continued clearing scrub from the important limestone grassland and coppicing part of the woodland between the inclines. The Hebridean sheep were on site from September to January for conservation grazing. It was a slow start for the spring butterflies owing to the weather. Numbers for most species were low, especially for the Pearl-bordered Fritillaries on the Montgomery side. Following a poor spring last year we really need a good one next year if this species is to survive and hopefully increase on this site.

As I write this the numbers of Common Spotted Orchids seem to be down on last year but there are new, spectacular spikes of Greater Butterfly and Bee Orchids.

People may have noticed an increase in the numbers of climbers on the rock faces. This is because a new updated guide "Clwyd Limestone" came out in December. I was able to work with one of the authors to get some information about wildlife and conservation on Llanymynech Rocks in the guide, including how climbers can help.



Gareth Egarr
North Reserves Officer, Shropshire
Wildlife Trust

Slowworm on Llanymynech

Rocks.....Christine Corfield

Hebridean Sheep under the rocks



Heritage guided walk from Llanymynech to Vyrnwy aqueduct on Sunday 11th of September from 2.00-4.00pm. Meeting point: Llanymynech Wharf Visitor Centre car park. A local walk leader will bring to life, with photos and local testimonies, the history of this stretch of the Montgomery canal: what makes Carreghofa locks so special, what happened to the ghost aqueduct and find out about the mystery building by the Vyrnwy aqueduct. This circular walk will take us back through fields to find out more about a legendary well, so appropriate footwear is recommended.

Community Payback scheme helps Montgomery Canal restoration work

A long term plan to restore the Montgomery Canal has been boosted by the use of a 'Community Payback' scheme to help with improving towpath surfaces and hedgerows on a half mile stretch between Pant Bridge and Pen y Garreg Lane in Shropshire.

The Canal & River Trust is working with Warwickshire and West Mercia Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) to carry out environmental improvement work along an important section of the dry canal.

This is a trial project, which forms part of the Heritage Lottery Fund-backed development phase of the canal restoration. Ten supervised sessions will allow the Trust to gauge the effectiveness of this new approach and may form part of the ongoing restoration project for years to come.



For more information about the Llimeys, or if you would like to join us, go to
www.llanymynech.org.uk or ring Joan on 01691 839130

Sylvia Edwards CRT