



# BOW KNIFE

Newsletter of Llanymynech Wharf Visitor Centre

June 2016

## Chairman's Report

We have enjoyed a reasonably successful year. There has been mixed support on the Sunday Afternoons and Bank Holiday Mondays on which we were open and weather did not appear to be a factor in this. The special events at Halloween and at Christmas continue to be popular. We continue to cater for private groups and parties, adults and children.

I should add that we receive a great deal of positive feedback from our visitors and this, alone, is rewarding for everyone involved in providing the Canal Experience.

Once again the income from operating the "George Watson Buck" Narrow Boat and the Visitor Centre has covered the costs associated with the Boat and the Centre. (The cost of keeping the boat in the water, before we even move it, is now in excess of eleven hundred pounds).

Of particular concern is the need to involve more members of the wider community in our activities. As I have said on a number of occasions the continuing success of Llanymynech Canal Wharf depends on our ability to promote what we are doing and on our being able to encourage more people to join us.

The Management Committee, together with a number of volunteer supporters, undertake a huge amount of work throughout the year maintaining and improving what we do. But we are all getting older and there is a pressing need to recruit new volunteers. (I recently mentioned in passing to group leaving the Boat that the two-man crew had in excess of one hundred and sixty years between them).

Apart from the Boat and the Visitor Centre we have a small exhibition of canal related artefacts and memorabilia which could be further developed, so there is much of interest which new members of our team could become involved in. We will also be happy to provide helming training for people committed to qualifying as helmspersons.

My sincere thanks to the Management Committee Liz Amis, Ann Jones, Brian Lawson, Roy Mansell, Paddy Martin and Joan Zorn, and to all of the volunteers that work with us.

*Chris Backshall.*  
*Chair*

## Treasurer's Report

The last few years have been quite difficult. The canal being choked with weed did not help as there were times when the George Watson Buck had real trouble navigating the waterway. However, 2015 saw an upturn, albeit small, in income which we hope will continue. There is much more interest in, and awareness of, canals these days and with luck, and our recent foray into social media, we will see more visitors at the Visitor Centre, which in turn will improve our finances for 2016.

Our final accounts for 2015 will be available at the AGM.

*Liz Amys – Treasurer.*

## Visitor Centre Report

A new season is starting at Easter and the Visitor Centre is cleaned and stocked with canal wares ready for our visitors. The winter has been mild, which allowed the George Watson Buck to move ice free. This meant that Father Christmas and his elves were able to welcome many families for our annual Santa Cruises, enjoyed, as always, by children, parents, grandparents and volunteers.

The company which usually supply us with canal ware have been taken over by a much larger concern, giving the VC a greater choice of goods to sell. We do hope that visitors will be encouraged to purchase the new offerings.

2015 was a year of ups and downs, some weeks very busy, and some rather slow. However, we saw many new faces and enjoyed lots of good conversations.

After problems with weed in the canal, at long last cleared by CRT, we can now look forward to a weed free year and hope that many of you can join us to enjoy the Visitor Centre and GWB (George Watson Buck). As always the volunteers have been wonderful, we really could not manage without them. Here is to an exciting 2016!

*Liz Amys – Visitor Centre Manager.*

## Thanks to the volunteers!

There has been a marked recent improvement along the stretch of canal used by the boat.

Last season saw the canal silt up until almost unusable, and the tow path narrow and flanked by tall claustrophobic growth. Luckily, the Canal and River Trust responded to our appeals and dredged the canal before the Santa Cruises. Now volunteers have taken the tow path and canal banks in hand.

This year, before the birds started nesting, S.U.C. volunteers did an excellent job taming the long untended hedges along the tow path between the Barley Meadows estate and the winding hole. A long section was carefully layered after a great deal of unwanted growth had been cut out. Another section, near the winding hole was cut back but not layered as the branches were too mature. This took a couple of long weekends' work and included cutting the vegetation along the nearby canal bank. The tow path is now much wider and pleasanter to walk along. These volunteers were followed by ones from Canal and River Trust. They started by collecting and burning the leftover wood from the S.U.C.'s work. Today (March 4<sup>th</sup>) they have been busy, in the rain, clearing along the Heritage Area side of the canal and burning unwanted material.

Having watched them working, I think we ought to be grateful to them for giving up their time to work hard in sometimes miserable weather to improve the canal for all its users.

*Paddy Martin*



## Strawberry Cream Teas, Plants and Cakes

Offering strawberry cream teas was new venture for the 2015 August Bank Holiday. We were pessimistic as the day dawned in typical Bank Holiday fashion ...wet and windy!!!!. We needn't have worried. We had a brilliant day, although our customers needed to avail themselves of the shelter of the gazebos.

Easter Monday 2016 was disappointing, but the plant sale on the first May Bank Holiday went well.

Another new idea was our cake sale on the second May Bank Holiday. Another success .... every cake was sold!

## Boat Update

Many thanks to committee member Roy Mansell who has struggled with weather windows for repainting the boat this year. This picture taken on 22<sup>nd</sup> May show him (the boat not Roy) looking good and ready to go. . Anne Jones has carefully made a stencil of the name and that should complete our refurbishment program for this year. We know most boats are considered to be female but our George Watson Buck is definitely male.

The superb three cylinder engine has just been serviced and hopefully will continue to start first time and run smoothly like it has always done.

Please come down to see us at the wharf any Sunday afternoon between 1.30 and 4.30 pm. from Easter till September, help us on the boat or in the Visitor Centre, you will be made very welcome

*Brian Lawson*



## From a new committee member

Getting involved with the canal when I came back from the U.S.A took me back to a time in my childhood when I used to stand on the bridge over the canal watching the boats go through the lock on my way home from school; it always held such a fascination for me. On our little boat, we have many children because it is a short trip, and to pass on some of that fascination of boats and water is something that is great fun. It has also allowed me to make some wonderful friends from whom I have learnt so much about canals and other aspects of life.

*Ann Jones*

If you would like to volunteer at the Visitor Centre ... as helmsman or no. 2 on the boat or as a helper on the Wharf or in the Centre then contact Brian on 01938 590254 one.lawsty@btinternet.com or come and meet us one Sunday afternoon

A couple of Sunday or Bank Holiday afternoons between Easter and end of September is all it entails!