



BOW KNIFE

Newsletter of Llanymynech Wharf Visitor Centre June 2017

Chairman's Report

I was elected as Chairman of Llanymynech Canal Wharf after the sad passing of Chris Backshall. Chris will be sorely missed not just by LCW but by many organisations in the village. He was a man who could do most things, and if he could not he knew someone who could.

Regarding the Visitor Centre and the George Watson Buck, we have had quite a good year with our special days, the strawberry tea, plant sale and Halloween trips all being a success. Thanks to everyone who helped at these events.

The boat is looking bright and smart in its new coat of paint. It has had an oil and filter change plus a new fan belt fitted and has run faultlessly all year.

Visitor numbers seem to have been boosted this year by walkers on The Offa's Dyke path who finish their stage in Llanymynech. They then have free time to come to us for a cup of tea or a boat trip.

Brian Lawson has recruited two new skippers for the boat but some Sundays we are struggling to man the VC. We do need to recruit more help either from our membership or beyond.

Can I thank everyone who has helped in any way to keep the VC open and the GWB running.

Roy Mansell -Chairman



Treasurer's Report

The last three years have seen the financial health of the Llanymynech Canal Wharf improve greatly. In spite of a very poor Santa Cruise in 2016, due, I believe, to far too much competition from other sources, we have been able to make sufficient income to pay virtually all our bills! If things continue this way next year, we might even, for the first time, produce a small profit. Donations have been very generous and we are really grateful to those kind individuals. I am looking forward to seeing how next year unfolds.

Liz Amys – Treasurer

Visitor Centre Report

Once more the canal visitor centre is open to visitors! Although we only open on Sunday afternoons and Bank holidays, the interest in the canal and its history makes for some very pleasant visitors. We have increased our canal ware stock with more of a variety of painted items, which have already proved very popular – as always, boats and swan ware are a regular purchase.

We have missed our Chairman Chris Backshall since his sad death in September 2016. His support was valued and he was a great help to me in the Visitor Centre.

In his memory we wanted to create something rather different, so the committee has decided to order a specially commissioned large planter to sit outside the visitor centre which we will fill with shrubs and flowers. Big pots will complement this and will add to the attractiveness of the display. Any contributions of pots or plants will be gladly received.

I would like to thank Joan and Ann for their help and tremendous support in the running of the visitor centre in recent times, as I could not have managed without them.

Liz Amys – Visitor Centre Manager.

Music at the Wharf

Thanks to the efforts of Steve Evison under the auspices of CRT we had a wonderful afternoon of music on 4 June. Thankfully the weather was warm and sunny after giving us the jitters with a downpour during the setting-up time at 1pm. Around 100 people turned up to see the six participating groups. We were entertained by Helen Elliot's Young Musicians (pianists and singer), The Odd Bods musical duo, Morton Choir, Café Lola, Oswestry String Quartet and Pendragon, with music ranging from classical to jazz to folk.



Thanks to all the musicians we had a great afternoon that we hope can be repeated in the future.

The Odd Bods have promised to drop in occasionally on Sundays to play impromptu, and also to attend some of our special events. We look forward to an ongoing relationship with them.

Joan Zorn

London to Llanymynech by boat!

It may be 240 miles; you may have to work through 246 locks; it might take you three weeks - and you might not be able to make the journey just yet. But that's the vision.

We want to bring visitors to Llanymynech to enjoy all it has to offer, and we want to offer the residents of Llanymynech an asset which will enhance the area, add to their properties, and create opportunities: a restored canal future generations will value.

Projects are now under way supported by £2.53 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund: they will restore the canal to Crickheath, the next point where boats can turn, opening over a mile of new canal. Then there are just two dry miles through Pant: not easy, but nothing that has not been done before, either here on the Montgomery Canal or on one of the many canal projects across the country.

Experienced engineers - volunteers - are looking in detail at what we have to do to reopen this section of the canal. And we are raising funds to for the materials and equipment that volunteers will need to bring boats to Llanymynech.

Our appeal was launched by the High Sheriffs of Shropshire and Powys on 26th April. Earlier that month we received a grant from a legacy administered by the Inland Waterways Association and with other funds already raised, we have over £100,000 in the appeal fund - half of what we need for Schoolhouse bridge, the major obstruction on the route.

We are asking the public to fill our collecting buckets with £2 coins for those two miles: that would give us about £250,000 - not enough for the whole section, but a good start. We hope that anyone who really wants to see the canal reopened as soon as possible will support us with a regular monthly or annual donation.

We have a generous donor who will match the first £60,000 that we raise from the public over five years. This means that a donation of £10, which could be increased to £12.50 by Gift Aid, could be doubled to £25. £10 worth £25 for the canal - that's quite a deal!

You can see how we are getting on through our website

www.RestoreTheMontgomeryCanal.uk

We would love supporters in Llanymynech to promote our appeal. What about a sponsored walk, a coffee morning, or busking at the crossroads? We have plenty of promotional leaflets and display material just waiting to be used.

All to get boats to Llanymynech.

Michael Limbrey



Around 2003/2006 this

became this.

Let's do the same for the canal through Pant.



Easter 2017

What a washout! Although our opening for the season on Easter Sunday was a reasonable success with a number of families enjoying Steve Evison's Easter Egg Hunt and our Easter activities and boat trips, Easter Monday was a disaster. Heavy rain throughout the day meant that all the volunteers were left twiddling their thumbs and wondering why they bothered! The season can only get better.

Facelift for GWB

As soon as weather permitted, Roy started on the painstaking work of preparing the boat for painting. Out came the pressure washer and all the muck was removed. He'd hop around that boat like a two year old!! Eventually it was time to paint, and over time, the job was completed. The weather was often not conducive to paint drying,

it kept raining, so it took time to finish the job and get the lettering done. Now we have a brightly painted boat to be proud of. Kudos to Roy.

Ann Jones

Macmillan Coffee Morning

In September we decided to support Macmillan by holding a coffee morning in the Centre. This was a great success and raised over £80 for the charity. Pints of coffee were drunk and pounds of cake were eaten in the Centre and on the boat. Towards the end of the morning Brian treated everyone on the boat to a trip up the canal. Thanks to everyone who supported the cause and provided cakes and tombola prizes

Montgomery Triathlon and Oswestry Round

We have been pleased to open the Visitor Centre on the relevant Saturdays to support these events. The Triathlon competitors and Oswestry Round walkers were glad to avail themselves of our facilities---particularly the toilet! To our advantage around £50 was spent on refreshments by the participants.

Special events in 2017

Watch out for:-

Monday 28 August -- Strawberry Cream Tea

Sunday 10 September, Heritage Open Days—Free Boat Trips

Sunday 29 October, Hallowe'en – Make a Pumpkin Lantern and feast on pumpkin soup



Future events from Steve Evison with CRT

Canal art workshop

From field to pot. Come along and learn how you can process your own clay and make a pot, just starting by digging a hole in the ground!!

July 23rd
(2 – 4pm)
Underhill Farm
Pant
SY10 9RB

**Booking
essential**

BIG DRAW EVENT. This is your chance to come along and join Llanymynech's very own big draw event. Lots of space, indoors and out, for you to get creative and depict our amazing canal heritage.

1st October
(2pm – 5pm)
Underhill Farm,
Pant
SY10 9RB
Drop in event

Canal at night walk An exciting opportunity to walk by the canal and see what happens at night!!

1st October
(6pm – 8pm)
Venue to be confirmed
**Booking
essential**

Book events at
enquiries@underhillfarm.org



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 Joan on 01691 839130
j.zorn@btinternet.com

or come and meet us one Sunday afternoon

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

Chris Backshall

We were greatly saddened by the death of Chris Backshall last year. Chris was a founder member of the Duchess Countess Trust which was later renamed the Llanymynech Wharf Visitor Centre. Chris was our Chairman for the last few years. He was a fount of knowledge about the history of the Llanymynech Branch of the Ellesmere Canal (later to become connected to the Montgomery Canal and part of the Shropshire Union Canal system).

Chris was such an integral part of the Llanymynech community that he will be missed by many local organisations:- St Agatha's Church where he was a church warden for many years, Carreghofa Community Council, Carreghofa School, Four Crosses branch of the British Legion, Llanymynech History Society, Probus, Llanymynech Heritage Partnership and Oswestry Heritage Forum. (Apologies if I have missed any groups).

He worked with a number of us developing the Llanymynech entry for the local studies display at the Meifod Eisteddfod in 2015. You can see the panels we produced (with the sponsorship of the Powysland Club) displayed in the Village Hall.

Chris came to Llanymynech from a part of Hampshire that I knew well. He was as well versed in the history of the Portsmouth area as he was of this part of the Marches.

I thoroughly enjoyed his 'documentaries' when travelling with him between Newtown and Llanymynech. I certainly learned lots of local history from him on these journeys.

Chris was a village 'institution', and a good friend, who will be sorely missed.

J Z