

BOW KNIFE

Newsletter of Llanymynech Wharf Visitor Centre June 2018

Chairman's Report

This year has been as good as any recent years. We, the committee, decided against running trips for Halloween and the Santa Cruises as there was so much competition that the work of decorating the boat and other work involved was not rewarded by the number of passengers we were able to attract. We decided to try running trips on into October but this was not a success.

This spring The George Watson Buck was due for its lift out and blacking. Brian was able to get funding toward crane hire from the Tirgwynt Community Fund, IWA, SUCS and the Friends of The Montgomery Canal.

At previous lift outs we had spoken to the foreman of the BW yard who allowed us to crane out near to the Visitor Centre. Under CRT control this did not work and we were asked for nearly £1000 for the use of the yard for the week! Michael Limbrey was able to put us in touch with Ani Sutton of CRT who, after a meeting with Brian and myself, was able to get these charges waived. GWB was lifted out at the end of May and painted under near ideal conditions. Thanks to all who helped.

Passengers continue to be a mix of locals, holiday makers from the Vyrnwy caravan site, walkers from the Offa's Dyke trail and canal enthusiasts. This year the plant sale has been extended to a summer long event which is bringing in a steady income.

The ladies have planted up the Chris Backshall memorial trough which



has brought a splash of colour to the wharf.

Membership remains at about 35, with several new members including Jenny and Norman Harris who have become very active members of the team.

I thank everyone for their efforts.

Roy Mansell

Visitor Centre

This year started rather slowly as Easter was early, and the weather had not had a chance to warm up.

The plans for the centre are to make it as attractive as possible, not easy as it is an old stable.

In memory of our past chairman, Chris Backshall, a wooden planter was bought and filled with daffodils. A variety of plants were added after the daffodils had faded.

This was the start; we filled pots with flowers, and with help from volunteers a permanent plant sale area was created. This has proved not only decorative but profitable.

The centre has been cleaned and restocked. A few new items have been added to the canal ware, and favourites that have sold well have



been replaced. As well as sweets, drinks and ice creams we can now offer pot

noodles and cuppa soups, giving our visitors more variety.

The inside of the centre is sadly looking a little the worse for wear, but hopefully there is a plan to lime wash the walls and repaint the doors. Watch this space!

As always I would to thank the volunteers for all their help in the visitor centre, and for producing so many plants for our new venture.

Liz Amys
Visitor Centre Manager

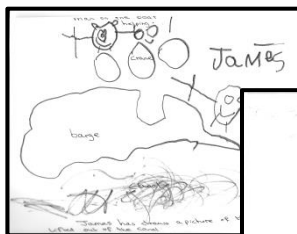
The BIG Lift

On Monday May 21st the crane arrived to lift out the George Watson Buck, so that it could be cleaned up and painted below the water mark. There were plenty of onlookers, including the children from the Border Pre-school, who were really interested in the proceedings.

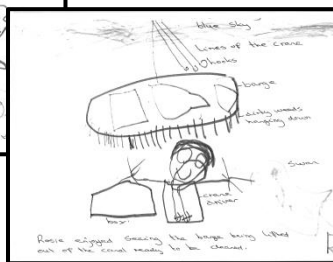


Once out, Roy Mansell, Brian Lawson, Tim Brunsden and Ann Jones made a start on getting rid of all the algae and loose rust; this took a surprisingly short time, so by lunch time we were able to have a break while the boat dried out and then we could restart. In the afternoon we were joined by Alan Barnes, so the job took even less time.

The second coat of paint was applied on the Wednesday and on the Thursday, a third coat. On Friday the crane returned to put the boat back in the water, resplendent in its new paintwork. The pre-school came back to watch, but unfortunately the boat was already back in the water. The children had drawn pictures of the boat being taken out of the water and brought us copies of their artwork to put up in the Visitor Centre.



We had pictures of the boat being put



back in the water, so they saw those. The interest they took in the whole process was heart- warming.

We are very grateful to the Tirgwynt Community Fund, SUCS, IWA, and the Friends of the Montgomery for providing us with the funds to hire the crane to get the GWB out of the water and back. The total cost was nigh on £2000.

Some 'George Watson Buck' History



The boat was built in 1997/98 by the apprentices and staff at JCB Ltd. under the direction of Simon Piper. This group were apparently a work's club who called themselves "The Navigators" although I am not entirely sure about this point. However, the boat was loaned to the North Staffs Handicapped Boat Committee in May 1998 with a licence to use it for charitable purposes as set out in the licence agreement. During the next four years the boat did sterling service with the Committee, carrying almost 2000 special needs children per year on the Caldon Canal in the Churnet Valley.

In early 2002 the Committee was wound up and passed its assets to the Beatrice Charity and at this time the Charity was just bringing into service its refitted holiday boat for use as a modern day boat. The Charity therefore decided that the "Lady B" would only be used as a reserve boat and wouldn't be worth the cost of licence, mooring and insurance. It was therefore decided to hand back the boat. This was done, after repainting it and it was then left moored in Red Bull Basin for the next three years, virtually abandoned until finally being taken over by SUCS for use at Llanymynech, when it was renamed 'George Watson Buck' after the engineer who worked on the Monty in the early 1800s and was responsible for the repairs of the Vyrnwy Aqueduct.

Stephen Lees and Brian Lawson

Ann Jones

Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Last year we had lots of help from Joanna Savage who volunteered with us as part of her Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Joanna was a great asset. She came most Sundays and Bank Holidays and cheerfully did everything we asked of her. Once she knew our routines she really got 'stuck in'. She helped in the centre



and on the GWB. We miss her assistance this year.



If you know any youngsters looking for a volunteering opportunity do point them in our direction.

Joan Zorn

The Odd Bods

We first met Jenny and Norman Harris (The Odd Bods) at Steve Evison's music event at the Centre last June. Jenny



expressed the wish to become more involved with us. What a stroke of good fortune!

Jenny comes

on most Sundays to sing and play guitar and Norman does many 'odd jobs' around the Centre and acts as number 2 on the boat.. They have both been co-opted onto the committee. Jenny has organised a repeat of the Canalside Entertainment started by Steve. This will take place on September 8th as part of Heritage Open Days.

Jenny also hosts our Facebook page
Thank you, Jenny and Norman.

Joan Zorn

Dates for your diary

Friday 3, 10, 17, 24 August. 1.30 - 4.30

Free boat trips for children accompanied by an adult

27 August (Bank Holiday) 1.30 - 4.30

Strawberry Cream Teas

Heritage Open Days

8 September 12.30 - 4.30

Canalside Entertainment

Sean Price and Friends

Kizzy and El

The Lady of Llanymynech

Penndragon

The Odd Bods

Cafe Lola

9 & 16 September 1.00 – 4.30

Boat Trips

Restoration of Montgomery Canal

Go to <http://restorethemontgomerycanal.uk>

to find out about current progress and how you can help

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 Liz on 01691 828165

elizabethamys44@gmail.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!

Follow us on Facebook



