



BOW KNIFE

Newsletter of Llanymynech Wharf Visitor Centre

June 2019

www.llanylime.co.uk



Chairman's Report

The past year has been one of our better years due mainly to our opening on Friday afternoons during the school holidays. This drew many grandparents who had grandchildren to entertain.

The Sunday afternoon trips have been variable, some days busy with boat trips while other Sundays we did only a staff outing but took money from sales of tea and souvenirs.

The 2018 Heritage Open Day was the usual busy time, with the boat having its busiest day of the year giving free trips.

It was on the Heritage Open Day that Chris Smith filmed the Llanymynech part of his video "Life on the Monty" which covers the whole length of the Montgomery Canal, but did give good coverage of the heritage area from the air and a short bit on the George Watson Buck and crew.

The video was shown at our well attended coffee morning held in the Church hall this spring. We opened The Visitor Centre for the Oswestry Round walk and for the FMC Triathlon. The shop benefited from good sales at both events.

The George Watson Buck continues to chug along with very little trouble. He/she is probably our biggest attraction but also our greatest expense, with sales from the Centre often being more than boat ticket sales.

During the winter closure Craig O'Brian and a team of CRT. volunteers painted the inside of the Visitor Centre and the stable doors. This gave us the chance to take stock of what we had in the centre and change the displays. The season long plant sale has brought in a steady income with money pushed under the door being a pleasant surprise on a Sunday opening up.

We applied to become a registered charity. This application was turned down by The Charity Commission on the grounds that we do no real work for charity. We are now looking at becoming a not for profit company.

money for boat licence insurance and fuel. The GWB is relatively trouble free but is 20 years old and I feel that we should be prepared for any major expense in the future. Membership is in slow decline with older members falling by the wayside and few new members joining. Even those new members are of the older generation as we, in common with other organisations fail to attract younger people.

Roy Mansell

Treasurer's Report

The report this year is for once a happy one. For the first time in three years we have made a small profit.

Opening on Fridays in August has made a big difference, and has made up for the increase in the boat licence and insurances. Although we will not be able to contribute much to the Montgomery Restoration Fund, we at least can keep our little part of the canal alive. With the help and support of our small army of amazing volunteers next year's report may be even happier.

Liz Amys
Treasurer

Recent developments on the Canal

Shropshire Union Canal Society (SUCS) volunteers have worked hard to complete Phase 1b of the channel restoration, adding another 125m to the 75m recently restored



*Channel rest phase a and b
in water Crickheath Piling*



The creation of Crickheath Winding Hole, delivered by contractors, was delayed due to some adverse weather, and to the presence of a Seven Trent water main. It is now progressing well and should be completed anytime now.

SUCS will soon start work on the last phase (305m) which will take them to the winding hole.

Sylvia Edwards CRT



Crickheath Winding Hole Progress

Events 2018/19

Free on Fridays: A new initiative saw us offering free boat trips to children (accompanied by an appropriate adult) on Fridays in August. This was hugely successful. We even had to turn people away as we were over-subscribed

Heritage Open Days in September were again well attended with people taking advantage of the free boat trips, but unfortunately wet weather put a dampener on the 'Music at the Wharf' open-air concert on the Saturday meaning the stalwarts in the audience had to huddle under a gazebo! Thanks to Jenny and Norman Harris for organising all the acts.

Village of the Year: We hosted the judges and representatives of local clubs and groups one evening last summer, and gave the judges a boat trip on the canal. They obviously liked what they saw as Llanymynech was awarded the title of Montgomeryshire Village of the Year 2018. Well done, Llanymynech.

Concerts: We decided to sponsor two concerts at the Village Hall this year: In November the Ceiriog Valley Male Voice Choir and Jigsaw Sound from Shrewsbury in May. Unfortunately these were poorly attended although thoroughly enjoyed by everyone who did come

Macmillan Coffee Morning: Rather than a coffee morning we held an afternoon tea on our last open day of the year to support the charity and raised over £80

We held a successful coffee morning at the Church Hall in March at which we showed the new CRT film 'Life on the Monty'. If you weren't able to come you can see the film on the CRT website <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk>

In May we were a 'comfort-stop' for the Montgomery Triathlon participants who were also pleased to have the chance of a cuppa and a sit-down before continuing the walk to Crickheath before taking to the water in canoes.

We are the halfway point on the Oswestry Round Challenge which takes place in June. Having coped with a hilly 15+ miles many walkers are glad of a brief respite and a chance to take advantage of our refreshments before the relatively flat route back to Lion Keys. Other walkers only ever intended to do half the route and arranged their transport home from Llanymynech.

Plants: Rather than have just one day of the year for a plant sale, we decided to offer plants throughout the season. This was a good decision. We had a selection of plants all summer and were delighted that people even bought plants when the centre was closed and left payments under the door! Here are some of the plants we have for 2019



Restore the Montgomery Canal!



The Montgomery Canal Triathlon in May brought over 230 entrants to the canal, some from nearby but others coming many miles to tackle one, two or three sections of the 35 miles – by cycle for 17 miles from Newtown, on foot for 11 miles from Pool Quay and by canoe for the last seven miles, to finish below Frankton locks. In addition, there were over 80 marshals supervising road crossings and helping canoeists past locks, plus a celebrity to start the event. The fastest entrant finished in just under 4¼ hours, but others took more than twice as long.

The Triathlon was filmed for a BBC Wales series of programmes on Welsh Canals fronted by Sir Gareth Edwards – he's the celebrity.

At the end, we asked people what they thought of the event and over 80% gave it top marks!

Shortly before the Triathlon, senior Canal & River Trust officers came to see the canal. The Trust has just reorganised along regional lines, but that's not very convenient in canal terms so operational matters throughout the Llangollen and Montgomery Canals will be run by the West Midlands Region while other issues will be managed by the Wales & South-West Region. It's a bit complicated, so it was good to show the two Regional Directors the achievements and the challenges of the Montgomery Canal restoration.

The value of a restored canal has recently been shown by an Inland Waterways Association report *Waterways in Progress*, supported by a short video introduced by David Suchet:

www.waterways.org.uk/waterways/restoration/waterways_progress.

Waterways in Progress shows benefits achieved by other canal projects well before restoration is finished, and we have similar examples on the Montgomery Canal: Shropshire Paddlesport at Queen's Head, Canal Central at Maesbury, the nature reserves, Llanymynech Wharf and one of three different boat trips, the Welshpool Transport Festival (22/23 June) and of course the Triathlon.

On the ground, contractors are, as I write, testing the new basin at Crickheath, and after the obligatory hunt for Great Crested Newts the volunteers of Shropshire Union Canal Society will resume their work to restore the dry section of the canal to the basin, all part of the programme supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

After Crickheath, the next project will be the rebuilding of Schoolhouse Bridge in Long Lane. For a couple of years now we have been planning this project and raising funds for it. At the moment the technical details are being finalised with a view to applying for planning permission in the summer. And we are still trying to complete the fund-raising through the *Restore the Montgomery Canal!* appeal. We have been delighted with donations from supporters across the country, both single gifts and regular monthly payments, and will continue fund-raising through the summer: more on our website www.RestoreTheMontgomeryCanal.uk.

You may have noticed recent investigations on the Grade II* listed Vyrnwy aqueduct: engineers now have to work out how to repair this structure and to fund that work. Repairs cannot come soon enough, as far as I am concerned!

In planning for the future, volunteers have been looking at the bridge blockages at Carreghofa and in the Arddleen area. Discussions for Walls Bridge on Carreghofa Lane have been based on a variation of the scheme proposed in the 1980s involving a diversion of the lane and the canal. We need more local discussions about how this can be achieved.

In Wales too there have been discussions about the way the canal can be restored and how that can be funded. Everyone we speak to on both sides of the border is very positive, but you will not be surprised to hear that few have yet run up to us with bags of money. We keep hoping!

Michael Limbrey

A Snap Shot of Last Season on the Canal

We had a wonderful season weather-wise, which had a knock on effect with visitors. Even if we did not have takers for the boat, then there was always a call for drinks and things to eat from walkers and other visitors.

Thanks to Jenny and her music, we attracted a lot of visitors. It was amazing how the atmosphere changed when there was music at the centre; it had a way of lifting our spirits as well as we joined in with her.

We decided to open up on a Friday afternoon during August, which proved to be very successful, both with the fun that was had and financially. Children went free, and adults had to be accompanied by a responsible child! This caused much hilarity with the children. Often we would have a couple of adults with a group of children, but we still managed to make money because the children spent money on things from the centre. We took a risk with the children going free, but it really paid off with the amount they spent afterwards!

During the closed season, the centre was painted by CRT volunteers, so it feels a lot fresher and brighter. Before we opened, Liz and Joan made some changes to the displays with a history of canal life and a warm welcome to Doris, our canal lady. At the present Liz is working on the exhibition in the portakabin.

Ann Jones.

The Visitor Centre...Just the place to find an unusual gift or to meet Doris



And finally

Collecting litter from the canal something which has to be done all too regularly.



Volunteer with us

We are always looking for people to help out in the Visitor Centre. This entails just a few (or even only one) Sunday afternoons between 1.30 and 4.30 from Easter to the end of September. This would involve serving in the 'shop' and greeting visitors

If you are interested ring Liz 01691 828165

Volunteers to helm or act as number 2 on the 'George Watson Buck' are also needed



Contact Brian 01938 590254

Or come and chat to us one Sunday afternoon