

The LLIMEY



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The News Letter of **The LLIMEYS**

Llanymynech Limeworks Initiative – Members, Enthusiasts and Youth – Society

Friends of the
**Llanymynech Limeworks
Heritage Area**

July 2022

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Chair's Report



Things began to get somewhere approaching normal towards the end of 2021 after the hiatus of the Covid restrictions. Our local schools were using the facilities and groups such as WI's and U3A's began booking visits. Unfortunately, a planned visit with a variety of activities for Bryn Offa school to celebrate our becoming a Local Nature Reserve had to be cancelled because of Covid.

Tony, Martyn, Nick, and Bob were able to continue with all their maintenance tasks (fence and gate repairs, strimming and leaf clearance, removal of dead trees and branches, to name but a few). They have made seats from the ash tree that had to be felled as it was entangled with overhead wires. With the permission of the owner, Tony and Martyn have been surveying the field belonging to Rock Cottage and have already made some interesting discoveries.

We managed a low key Heritage Open Days event with guided walks only which was well attended. This year the topic is Astounding Inventions which will suit us very well.

With financial help from Shaun Burkey , Country Parks and Sites Officer (north), we have upgraded the two interpretation boards by Gill's Pool and Black Bridge and installed one to illustrate the features of the sculpture by the entrance to the car park. The large board in the car park is deteriorating and will need renewal soon and one by the Hoffmann kiln has been vandalised.

We have been plagued with another bout of vandalism. The culprits have used windows in the Stables for target practice, spray painted inside the Hoffmann, broken gates on the inclines, damaged grilles on the Hoffmann kiln, dropped rocks onto an interpretation board, removed bricks and the joist from the tally house....I could go on! Most of this happens in the early evening when there are fewer people about. I wonder if their parents are aware of what they get up to when they go out after dinner.

We have been filmed for TV once again. In the autumn of 2021 S4C came and filmed us for a programme about the Tanat Valley. Once again Tony lent his technical knowledge and expertise to the film makers.

Glyn Gaskill has resigned as our treasurer and Bob Cotter has taken on the role. Thanks to Glyn for all his hard work over the last years. Gareth Eggar is moving on from the Wildlife Trust and will no longer be around to be a LLIMEY. Gareth has been involved for about 15/16 years. I wish him well in his new job. Thanks are also due to Tony, Martyn, Bob and Nick for their continued work maintaining the site and to Dickon for the art work for the sculpture interpretation board.

As I am resigning as Chair at the AGM I would like to express my appreciation for all the help I've been given over the last 14 years. I've really enjoyed my time as Chair and hope to continue to be involved in some capacity. Thank you all.

Joan Zorn

A Limeworks Update



Sadly we are seeing a decline in the number of volunteers willing to assist in the upkeep of the Heritage Area. One of the stalwarts of the LLIMEYS, Glyn Gaskill has resigned as Treasurer and handed over the role to me. Our Chair Joan Zorn is also stepping down from that role. Both have given a lot of their own time helping to look after the Limeworks and associated buildings, so please join with me in thanking them for all of their efforts. We wish them well and hope that they will continue to help out where they can.

An ongoing issue at the Limeworks is one of Vandalism. We have suffered frequent damage to our buildings and woodland. The police have been informed, but don't have the officers to show a presence when needed. No one has come forward to point out the culprits and bring them to their senses, so we have taken the

decision to install some cameras around the area.

The first has been setup at the Stables Block where we have suffered smashed windows, littering, fires and other incidents. So far this is proving to be a deterrent and hopefully will be extended to the Hoffmann Kiln where some severe damage to the building has been experienced.



Damage to Grill and Brickwork

The main sign at the kiln has had rocks thrown onto it from above, brickwork in the kiln has been smashed and two grills for the air vents have been forcibly ripped out.

If you see or hear of anyone causing damage to the Heritage Area, please report it to the Police!

Bob Cotter



A Visit By S4C

Over the last few years several small film teams consisting of camera crews and sound engineers from the BBC & ITV have been on the Heritage site. Some notable people have visited us, John Sargent (BBC correspondent). Prunella Scales & Timothy West (actress and actor). Gareth Edwards (British Lion rugby player). Barrie Trinder and David Gwyn (Industrial Archaeology Historians). The CountryFile presenter Sean Fletcher looked in while making a programme on Offa's Dyke. He met Martyn, who showed him around and then later tried a climb in the quarry before moving on.

The S4C film team was by far the biggest to invade the site so far. The first visit last autumn consisted of a small recce team who arrived along with four



Preparing the Cameras

locals. Carol Jones and myself acted as advisors, whilst Rhys Owen and his



Setting up at the Tally House

daughter, both fluent Welsh speakers translated. Rhys was to star in the actual walkabout.

A team of Eight arrived in mid November 2021 for filming and made their base at the tally house for a day of filming. They took in the quarry, the Toposcope overlooking the valley, the self-acting winch drum, the inclines, the tramway system at the base, and finally the Hoffmann kiln, stable block and the canal. The day finished with a bang using a lime based product. The programme went out just before easter 2022.

Four programmes were made about The Tanat Valley, the last one being the Llanymynech Quarry and the Heritage Area.

Tony Beardsell

NEW BENCHES

In 2019 an Ash tree near the tunnels under the A483 had to be cut down as it was overhanging some power lines and was a danger to traffic. Most of the smaller branches were moved off site, but the trunk was too heavy and was left. It was put up for sale, but proved to be too awkward to move or cut up.

So, we decided to make some benches from it.



The log prepared for cutting



Nick cutting the log



Cutting up the odd bits



Number one on its way



Number one by the Tally House



Number two on its way



Gently does it

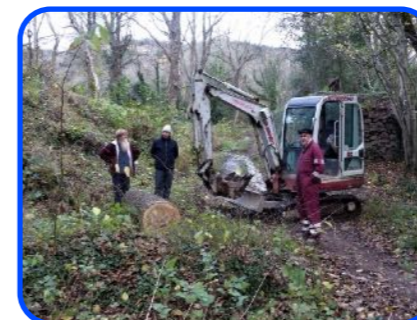
Digger Courtesy of Clive Humphries



Nearly there



Number two in position



Right tool for the job!



The bench by the Tally House

This is just part of the work carried out over the winter. Our team has been busy removing dead and dying trees and their dangerous branches. Mending fences and steps and to help everyone move throughout the newly designated Local Nature Reserve removing some of the internal gates.

Most of the wooden gates are no longer required because we don't graze sheep in the area any more. The gates have started to decline, with posts rotting and no longer able to support the weight of the gate, so it was decided to remove them. This has the added bonus of allowing our less able visitors to move around the area more easily.



The bench by the Stream

Rock Cottage Archaeology



Marking out and using the metal detector

This year we have been able to have another look at the Rock Cottage Field, with 4 visits in April and one in May. The field is under new ownership and is now well mown, so this has enabled us to plot more clearly the line of the original tramway.

Wet soil conditions helped the metal detector and we were able to probe quite deeply into the tramway. We were also able to fix a datum point at the hedge line as a lot of the scrub has now been cleared.

The image above shows the tramway emerging from the hedge behind the large silver birch tree, and continuing in a curve. We found that the tramway consisted of 4' lengths of cast iron inverted 'T' rail mounted on stone blocks and set at equal angles to create the curve. We have marked the line of the curve with several pegs to contour the track bed.

A large number of John Curr cast iron chairs were found. One side had been

sheared off most and probably the reason they were discarded (see photo). Tin clips were found which were used to hold the sheared sections of rail together.

The general overburden and soil creep down the slope made looking for colour changes more difficult, however the pièce de résistance, were the two

segments of cast iron wheels found in the track bed at a depth of 15" & 17". The cast iron plates must have taken a pounding from the truck wheels at each straight edge curve.

Towards the lower end of the site a change in the chairs was noted.



An impressive haul!

Birkinshaw cast iron chairs had been used with two bolt holes. Most, like the John Curr chairs, had one side sheared.

Tony Beardsell

Limeworks Maintenance



Over the winter period and now into the spring and summer, we have worked steadily to maintain the Heritage Area. A number of trees had to be cleared after the winter storms and we also started to remove some of the heavy ivy growth from some of our more mature trees.

Each year Shropshire Council have the Hoffmann Chimney inspected and maintained by a team of Steeple Jacks. This year they needed to repoint some of the brickwork and the image below shows them at work.



Steeple Jacks at work on the Hoffmann Kiln

It has been more than 10 years since the pathways around the Heritage Area were



Bringing the pathways back to original width

laid out and over the years they have gradually narrowed leaving enough room for one person to walk. With the aid of a digger, courtesy of Clive Humphreys, we have now widened the pathway near the Hoffmann Kiln.

As we no longer graze sheep in the fields around the kilns, all of the wooden gates and posts have also been removed as they were slowly rotting away. This has opened up access to the area and made it easier to move around.

Our latest task is to remove all of the growth from the top of the Draw Kilns. Shropshire Council intend to make an interactive video of the Heritage Area and this will help to see the kilns more clearly as well as preserving the stonework.

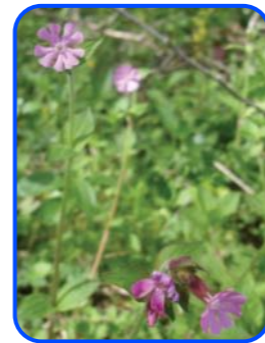
Tony Beardsell

Botany Group



Buttercups, Yellow Rattle, Ribwort
Plantain and Red clover

Despite the ravages of the illegal mountain biking routes carved out of the wood during lockdowns, the vegetation has made a reasonable comeback. There seemed less red campion but this may have been due to the cold spell in the spring.



Red Campion

The meadows have come into their own this year with a good mixture of flowers for everyone to enjoy.

Sadly, between COVID restrictions and some minor health problems of my own, the botany group has not met since 2019. Hopefully this year!

Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*)

Although we don't appear to have any Giant hogweed in the Heritage Area you should be aware of the problems it can cause. It is a close relative of cow parsley and originally came from Southern Russia and Georgia. It can reach over 3m (10ft) in height and although an impressive sight when fully grown, giant hogweed is invasive and potentially harmful. Chemicals in the sap can cause photodermatitis or photosensitivity, where the skin becomes very sensitive to sunlight and if you come into contact with the sap, you may suffer blistering, pigmentation and long-lasting scars.



Giant Hogweed



Hogweed

Native Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*)

There is a native hogweed, which can be found all over the Heritage Area and will be a familiar plant to gardeners and those who like to go walking in the UK. It can grow to six foot or so when in flower but is nevertheless a much smaller plant than giant hogweed. It can cause rashes and other skin complaints but reactions tend not be as severe as with the larger species. The native hogweed can support lots of pollinators, including beetles, flies, hover-flies, bees and wasps.

Paddy Martin

Llanymynech Rocks Nature Reserve

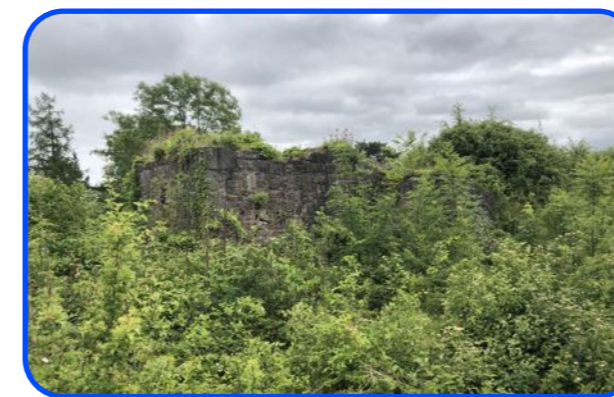
Sadly, we have learnt that Gareth Eggar a long standing member of the LLIMEYS and the North Reserves Officer of the Shropshire Wildlife Trust is moving to pastures new. Good luck in your new job Gareth, we hope that you will be able to keep in touch.

Whilst Gareth has done an excellent job of looking after the Shropshire side of the Nature Reserve, things aren't going quite so well on the Welsh side.

The area near the Welsh Brake House has become badly overgrown and is restricting the enjoyment that visitors to the area normally have.



Welsh Brake House Front View



Welsh Brake House Rear View

The information panel near the Brake House has been allowed to deteriorate so badly that the frame holding the panel has fallen apart.



Information Panel

On a brighter note the wildlife in the area is flourishing and on a recent trip to the Border View Point the butterfly caterpillars of the Red Admiral were seen.



Red Admiral Caterpillars

Stables Education Block

Available for hire for workshops, school and youth groups, parties etc.. The room has toilets, facilities for making hot drinks, microwave, digital projector and screen. We have lots of information about lime and limeworking as well as a model of the site as it would have looked in 1914 when it closed.

Check availability on www.llanymynech.org.uk (stable block bookings) or our own web site www.llanylime.co.uk

Book at llanymynech@hotmail.co.uk or with Dawn Williams on 01691 839147



Volunteers Needed

During the winter months, volunteers meet to carry out general maintenance around the heritage area. We meet on a Saturday at the Stables Education Block at about 09:30AM. Everyone is welcome, so if you can spare some time, please come along and assist.

Contact us at: www.llanylime.co.uk/about/volunteer-form/

Heritage Open Days

We plan to have open days again this year. Volunteers we be on hand for guided walks and to answer any questions you may have

The Theme This Year is ASTOUNDING INVENTIONS

Check our web site for dates in September

Weather permitting we will put as much information about the area as we can outside the Stables Block