



BOWKNIFE

Newsletter for

Llanymynech Wharf Visitor Centre

July 2022

Chair's Report

The last year turned out to be a financial success, after a late start to our season due to the Covid restrictions.

When we were able to do limited opening, we offered family trips on any day of the week. This proved to be quite popular with the public, partly as there was nowhere else to go! This year we have done two such trips already and hope for more. This along with our usual Sunday trips meant that we were able to cover the boat licence and insurance.

Plant sales added to our income. The little envelopes of cash under the door made it a pleasure to open up on a Sunday.

The GWB has continued to be reliable needing very little work, but the paint on the front doors and right hand side needs attention.

The boat safety inspection took place last year. It was a pass with only a few recommendations.

Getting enough volunteers to run the shop/ teas continues to be a problem with Ann and Carol doing most of the work.

Roy Mansell
Chairman

From the Treasurer

We are only just recovering from the effects of Covid. People are starting to book family trips and things are starting to return to normal, we started with boat trip in April with lots of lovely ladies and gentlemen from Chester who belonged to a group called The University of the Third Age. They enjoyed a guided walk around the Heritage Area followed by pre booked meal at a restaurant in Llanymynech before enjoying a boat ride with us.

We opened the Visitor Centre at Easter and on Easter Sunday we had lots of people visiting us for Boat rides and the Visitor Centre was kept busy serving refreshments. The following day Easter Monday was a little disappointing but we did sell our first Ice Creams of the year but only managed one boat trip, still that happens sometimes.

The following Sundays in May and June have been good bearing in mind the weather has been a bit mixed. As regards finance, it looks like being a good year for us because we still have the best months to come yet. The plant sales have started to happen and we are lucky to have interested gardening people who kindly take cuttings and bring to us for sale, it all helps to keep us afloat and keep our boat running. Hopefully when this canal opens up to the wider network, we will be a popular destination there is lots to see here with the Lime Kilns, all part of our history at Llanymynech.

We still need new volunteers to run the boat and staff the Visitor Centre. We are open every Sunday from Easter to late September including all bank holidays. Please help us.

Brian Lawson



Restore the Montgomery Canal!

Llanymynech is one of the key places along the Montgomery Canal and Llanymynech and the canal are known to many people across the country including over 120 who entered the Canal Triathlon in May, volunteers at restoration work parties, and supporters who have made donations to the restoration. While many of the entrants, volunteers and donors live locally, others are across the country, from Scotland to Southampton. Restoring the Montgomery Canal is not a local project.



Triathlon canoes in Welshpool lock

It is now seventeen years since the canal's Conservation Management Strategy was launched at the Senedd and the House of Commons. It's a powerful strategy, held as an example to other canal projects across the country: not restoration for boats and nothing else, nor only for the preservation of the historic locks, bridges and other structures, and not just to protect its special wildlife to the exclusion of other benefits. The plan is instead to bring the canal to life with boats, *and* to protect and celebrate its canal-age structures, *and* to protect and enhance its habitats, flora and fauna, *and* to benefit its communities with opportunities for recreation and well-being, jobs and business.

The Montgomery Canal is one of many canals coming back to life across the country and many now have 'honeypot' sites where visitors sit with a coffee or beer and watch the boats go by. There

are opportunities like this along the Montgomery too – Llanymynech is one of course – so it would be helpful to think now what sort of destination it might be and for this to receive ideas and suggestions from the local community.

In the next few months the canal in Shropshire will be extended nearer Llanymynech when volunteers of the Shropshire Union Canal Society complete the lottery-supported restoration to Crickheath Basin. Work should be starting too on the reconstruction of Bridge 86, Schoolhouse Bridge, just south of Crickheath. It has taken the volunteer team five years to arrange the formal engineering and legal approvals. Covid and its effect on the construction industry has caused delays and other problems for the bridge team who are now working to finalise site arrangements for the project. It is likely that there will be less volunteer involvement than had been planned at the start and this is having a significant effect on the cost of the project leading to a renewal of the fund-raising appeal. With support from TV stars Timothy West and Prunella Scales and from a donor who is matching every £1 raised up to £50,000, the appeal has received tremendous support over the last few months. Some of that match-funding is still to be used and we do need to build up funds to be able to complete the bridge: with the matching and a 25% tax rebate from Gift Aid, a £10 donation adds £22.50 to the appeal and a £25 donation is worth no less than £56.25. There is a link for donations at <https://themontgomerycanal.org.uk/donate>. Can you help?

For the future, the volunteer work party team are planning to continue south of Crickheath Basin next year and detailed studies are under way to assess the costs of restoration through Pant – and its benefits – to support funding bids for the final section to link Llanymynech to the national canal network.

South of Llanymynech a grant from the UK Government Levelling-Up Fund, a bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and other funding opportunities mean it may be possible to reopen the canal through to the isolated Welshpool section in the next few years. Obstructions to be tackled will be the two bridge blockages in the first mile, followed by long-awaited repairs to the

Vyrnwy Aqueduct, and finally the two A483 blockages near Arddleen.



Vyrnwy aqueduct

Work south of Llanymynech will also include substantial new nature reserves as part of that restoration strategy to protect and enhance the canal's wildlife interest as a protected Special Area of Conservation. They will follow significant investment in extensive new reserves near Aston Locks south of Queen's Head. If you have not been there, you will find walks and places to observe wildlife including an elaborate hide themed as an otter's holt. Summer will see many wild flowers and busy dragon- and damselflies, one of the features of the canal. Do visit. And when you have visited it would be very helpful if you would complete a short survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MontyAstonFeedback>.



Aston otter's holt Hide

Last year we missed the opportunity to mark the bicentenary of the final opening of the Montgomery Canal to trade in Newtown. Though the canal was open through Llanymynech in 1797, with a second canal company extending the line to Berriew, a third company's extension to Newtown took longer. Most of the engineering works had been completed earlier but it was not

until 1821 that the final water supply and other arrangements were in place for regular narrowboat trade which continued until abandonment in 1936.

Restoration has of course taken longer than it took to build the canal but there are exciting times ahead, for the canal and for Llanymynech.

Michael Limbrey



Schoolhouse Bridge in the 1930s



And now

The Lost Years

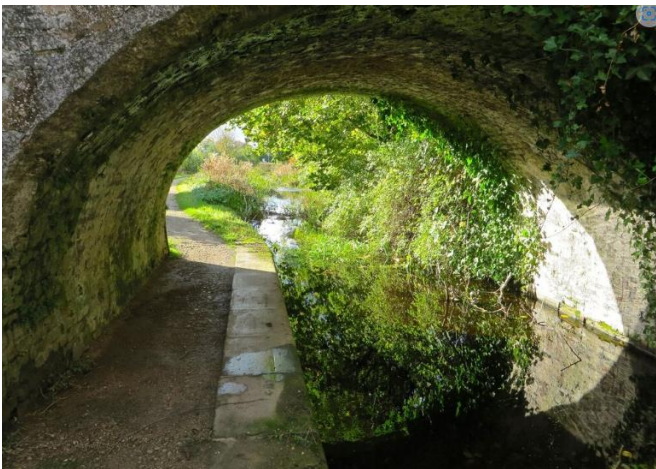
2020 was a complete no-show for obvious reasons, although we did continue with the plant sales. Last year (2021) was a tad better. We opened at Easter with outdoor refreshment sales only and boat trips available for pre-booked family groups. By the end of the season we were able to allow visitors inside the Centre again.

We also trialled a booking system for boat trips on any day of the week. This was such a success that it will be a permanent fixture.

Plant sales continue to provide a good source of revenue. Liz, Paddy and I sow seeds in the Spring to provide popular annuals and perennials. We also have a number of supporters bringing plants grown from cuttings or split from over-large clumps.

As you can imagine we weren't able to take part in Heritage Open Days, for obvious reasons. This year should be better, particularly as the theme is Astounding Inventions.....a good description of a canal!

Joan Zorn



Walls Bridge

Book a Boat Trip

To book a boat trip at any time

contact Roy

bobbyroymansell@btinternet.com



Can you help?

We need volunteers to help in the Visitor Centre and on the Boat.

Just one or two Sunday afternoons between 1.30 and 4.30 from Easter to the end of September would be useful

Contact Roy

bobbyroymansell@btinternet.com

Or come down to meet the team one Sunday afternoon

www.lanylime.co.uk