

# The LLIMEY



[www.llanylime.co.uk](http://www.llanylime.co.uk)

## The News Letter of The LLIMEYS

Llanymynech Limeworks Initiative – Members, Enthusiasts and Youth – Society

Friends of the  
Llanymynech Limeworks  
Heritage Area

Summer 2025

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## Limeworks Update

### **W**elcome to our 2025 news letter!



As usual, throughout the year, we have been carrying out maintenance around the Limeworks Heritage Area, a never ending, but very rewarding task. We constantly receive positive and encouraging comments from the many visitors to our unique site.

The winter storms did their usual damage to the site, with one of our larger ash trees on the embankment above the lower field being blown over. It has taken many hours of hard work to clear it, with a number of villagers benefiting from free firewood for their burners! The other damage was mainly small windblown trees and branches, which we were able to quickly clear.

The volunteers have worked with our Shropshire Council Ranger, Mike Simms, to keep the area open for our visitors, notably clearing the English Brake Drum of several years of growth. Without this work, the stonework would deteriorate and make the building unsafe. Mike has also helped us with various faults occurring in the Stables Block such as the lights and water heater failing and our first aid kit being in need of updating. There are also regular checks carried out on the water quality, the emergency lighting and the fire extinguishers.

We continue to maintain links with our local schools, both Careghoffa and Bryn Offa Primary Schools regularly bring pupils to enable them to learn in an outdoor

setting, as well as learning about the Heritage Area. Last year also saw a visit by Morda Primary School, which we hope will lead to a lasting relationship.

This last year has seen some new additions to our volunteers and we welcome David Hurst and Heather Dawson to the fold, both of whom are already leaving a lasting impression. Welcome to you both.

David has helped make an impact with our maintenance of the site and Heather has taken on the task of increasing public engagement with the Heritage Area.

More details can be found in the article by Heather in this news letter and if you would like to contribute to the initiatives being introduced by Heather, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Last year it was very noticeable that our open days, held under the auspices of the 'Heritage Open Days' in September, didn't attract many of you to visit us. So this year we have decided to hold our open days during the spring and summer, hopefully with better weather and with something for all of the family.

We look forward to seeing you enjoy the Limeworks and don't forget, we are always looking for new volunteers to join us!

**Details are on our web site**

[www.llanylime.co.uk](http://www.llanylime.co.uk)

**Bob Cotter**  
**LLIMEYS Treasurer**



## Limeworks Events 2025

LIMMEYs at Llanymynech Heritage Area hosted a very successful two-day celebration of Spring on April 11 and 12th.



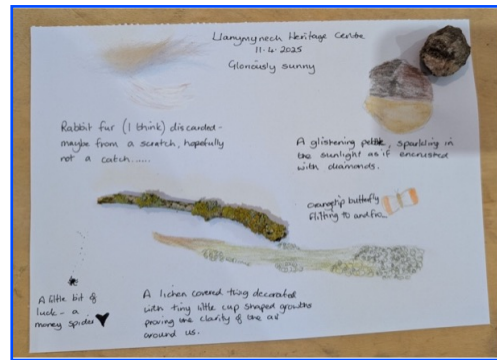
Friday the 11th was an adult-themed day. The first workshop of the day was a fascinating walk around the Heritage area led by Allan Dawes from Shropshire Ornithological Society. We were introduced to the beautiful songs of our local birds, including the less well-known Blackcap. Allan also had lots of interesting things to tell us about bird behaviour and habitats. This was the launch of our Bird Survey. In 1999, a comprehensive site survey was conducted; we are repeating this exercise this year. Volunteers are welcome to join in with the survey. Please email [events@llanylime.co.uk](mailto:events@llanylime.co.uk) if you are interested in helping.



The second workshop of the day was a fascinating walk around the site with Cath Price from the Shropshire Wildlife Trust. Cath had some interesting stories to share with us about the plants growing in the Heritage area and how they had been used in the past. Along with the Bird Survey, we are also conducting a Flora Survey and are seeking volunteers to assist. If you are

interested, please get in touch at the email address above.

This was followed by a workshop on Nature Journaling with Kate Long. It was surprising how calming and relaxing this workshop was. After a discussion about Nature Journaling and how to undertake it, we all spent quiet time in an area of our choice, really immersing ourselves in nature and then recording what we saw in our journals.



The final workshop of the day was led by our local Watercolour Artist, David Walker. Everyone was pleasantly surprised to learn that with David's guidance, we could paint pretty good pictures of some of the local birds.

Saturday was the family fun day. Cath Price from the Shropshire Wildlife Trust led two workshops.

The first was Pond Dipping, which everyone enjoyed. We found a wealth of wildlife in the pond, including three varieties of Newts. Luckily, one of our visitors was a wildlife expert



qualified to handle the Greater Crested Newt, as one of these came up in the net!

In the afternoon, Cath led an egg and nest identification session. She had brought a vast array of excellent bird egg replicas and old nests she had collected. It was amazing to see just how small many of these eggs are.



Throughout the day, self-led nature and craft sessions took place outside the stables block. These included Bug Hunting Kits, Scavenger Hunts, Flower Identification, Mindful Colouring, Dream Catchers, and wooden plaque decoration. The local charity, Severn Community Connections, financed these kits, for which we are very grateful. These kits will be available for loan from the Stables on specific dates. For more information on our events, please visit our website or Facebook page, or join our mailing list by emailing [events@llanylime.co.uk](mailto:events@llanylime.co.uk).

Martin Young led guided tours of the heritage site on both days. He took everyone to the quarries and kilns, sharing his wealth of knowledge about how the limestone was quarried, transported, and heated in the kilns.

Two of our supporters, in their 80s and 90s, served tea, coffee, and cake throughout the day. They did a great job.



## Volunteers Needed

The success of the Llanymynech Heritage Area and Local Nature Reserve depends on the dedication and enthusiasm of volunteers. Whether you are fascinated by history or passionate about nature, your time and effort can make a significant impact.

Volunteers are needed to assist with maintenance tasks, support the bird and flora surveys, and help organise events and open the stable exhibition. No experience is necessary, as training will be provided. Joining the volunteer team is a fantastic way to meet like-minded individuals, build new skills, and contribute to the preservation of this fantastic local area.

## How You Can Get Involved

If you're interested in volunteering or participating in upcoming events, visit the Llanymynech Heritage Area's official website or contact us at [events@llanylime.co.uk](mailto:events@llanylime.co.uk). Together, we can ensure this beautiful heritage area and nature reserve remains a haven for heritage wildlife and the community for generations to come.

**Heather Dawson**

## Facebook Site

We now have our very own Facebook site, which has been set-up and run by Heather.



The site is called:

**Llanymynech Heritage Area and Local Nature Reserve**

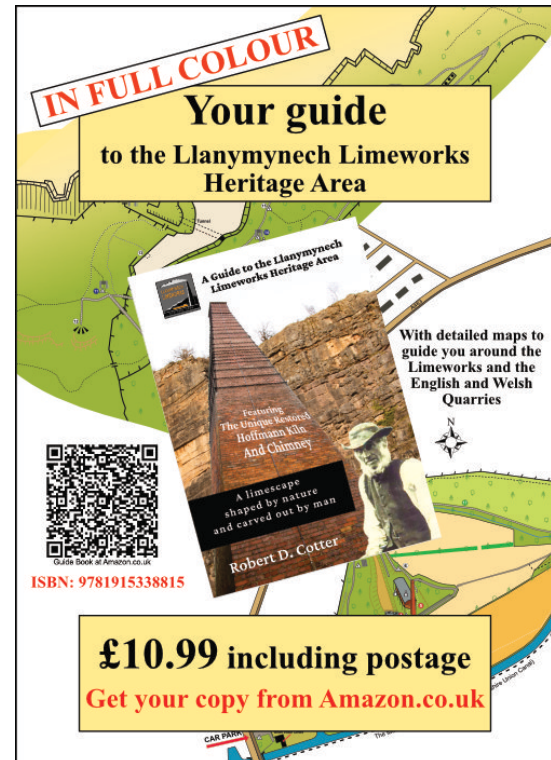
Here you will find lots of information about the flowers and birds of the area, including images of some of our rarer flowers.

You can contact us about the activities taking place as well as ask us questions if you want more information.

We would also appreciate your feedback on the activities, our web site and the Facebook site, so that we can improve what we provide for you.

## Limeworks Guide Book

Don't forget to order your copy of our Guide to Llanymynech Limeworks



## Vacant Committee Positions

Following on from our previous article on Community Resource, we now have a number of Committee positions for which we would like to invite applicants.

In addition to wanting more volunteers to come along and assist us, we have the following committee positions to fill:

- **Chair Person**
- **Secretary**
- **Treasurer**
- **Equipment Officer**

Whilst the position of Treasurer is currently filled, the incumbent, Bob Cotter, also looks after our website and would like to concentrate efforts in that area.

If you have some free time and feel that you are able to assist us, please let us know.

The role descriptions can be obtained by going to our web site [www.llanylime.co.uk](http://www.llanylime.co.uk) and then filling in our volunteer form, (link at the bottom of every page) to join us.

We look forward to hearing from you!



## Limeworks Clothing

Some of you may have noticed that our volunteers are wearing some smart new clothing with the Limeworks logo proudly displayed.



T Shirt



Polo Shirt



Overalls



Sweat Shirt

The clothing comes in various colours and sizes and can be obtained from Mid Wales Embroidery.

[midwalesembroidery.com](http://midwalesembroidery.com)

## Stone Wall Repairs

Some of our embankments have been subjected to vandalism over the years, with cyclists making their own paths down a steeper section. This means that the stonework, placed over 150 years ago, is dislodged and the wall gradually collapses.

Two sections close to the Tally House have now been reinstated by the volunteers with work on other sections still to be carried out.



The wall close to the Tally House - Before



After the repairs



## English Brake House Maintenance

The brake house at the top of the English incline had become steadily covered in growth, including an oak on top of the wall, and was in need of some TLC!. To help maintain the integrity of the building we worked with Mike Simms, our Shropshire Council Ranger. Mike had previously obtained permission from the Shropshire Wildlife Trust to carry out the work and so Martyn, Kevin and Bob joined Mike to clear the growth.

The work took several hours to complete and included cutting back the growth from the surrounding area to help keep the area clear.

Once completed, we were able to see the full extent of the Brake House once again. This will obviously be an ongoing job as mother nature will try to reclaim the ground and if you have some spare time, why not come along and help!



Before work started



After work was completed



## Hoffmann Kiln Grills

The same company that repaired the steps leading to the Hoffmann Kiln, Philips & Curry, have now repaired and replaced the vandalised air vent grills in the kiln.

These grills are there for safety reasons, to ensure the no one, including pets, can get into the air passages. Should this happen and they become stuck, it would cause a major incident!

Additionally, they have carried out repointing of the brickwork where some of the arch bricks were loosening and in danger of falling out.



Refurbished grills now back in place

## An Appeal For Help

For some time now we have been aware that our picnic tables next to the Stables Education Block, are in decline. The tables and benches have been there since the restoration work finished, which makes most of them about 17 or more years old and they are definitely showing their age.



Picnic Benches  
Before (front) and After (rear)

We have turned each of the table and bench planks over and sanded them down to give them a little longer life. But it won't be long before they need completely replacing.

If you know anyone who is able to provide replacement picnic tables or is able to assist with the repair or refurbishment of them, then please get in contact with us.

**We would be grateful for any assistance that can be given.**

## Thomas Savin - A man with a vision

The development of the Llanymynech Limeworks owes much to the fascinating and enigmatic Thomas Savin

Born in 1826 near Oswestry, he started work as an apprentice draper before branching out to be a hop and seed merchant, a grocer and colliery owner. But the new thing in Britain was railway building, and he went into partnership with David Davies of Llandinam as a Railway Contractor. While Davies had the greater knowledge and perseverance, Savin provided the energy and drive for a number of challenging enterprises. He insisted that Oswestry, rather than Welshpool, became the important railway town with the locomotive works for the Cambrian Railways. While Oswestry Town Mayor in 1863 Savin began to build and buy his hotels on the Welsh coast, including the huge neo-Gothic building at Aberystwyth that is now known as the Old College. In that same year he took over the lease of the Llanymynech quarries to add to his quarries at nearby Porthywaen.

### Bankrupt!

Savin's five years of railway building were exciting and extraordinarily busy, but in 1866 everything crashed spectacularly and in 1868 he was forced to declare himself bankrupt.

He owed over £2 million, the equivalent of perhaps £1 billion now. Eventually Savin

was allowed to keep four small companies including the Porthywaen Limeworks, with its quarries in Llanymynech. These companies were tiny in comparison to the ones he had partly owned, but he seems to have put all his energies into running them.



Thomas Savin as a young man

From then until he died he always seemed to have money problems, either owing money or complaining that he was getting a bad deal! For example, the Cambrian Railways would not let him have enough trucks to shift his lime and stone. Yet he still yearned for the limelight and invited local dignitaries to watch his new quarrying methods.

### Blasting

The first experiment took place on 17th September 1867. Using one and a half tons of blasting powder, an immense mass of rock was brought down, weighing over nine thousand tons. But this wasn't enough for Savin. His second experiment, using electricity to set off six and a half tons of explosive, produced even more stone but also damaged the roofs of many local properties. Four years later there was a smaller accidental explosion, with deadly results. It happened at Cooper's Rock, which is on the west side of Llyncllys quarry, and killed six men and boys. Following the Cooper's Rock disaster, Savin started to use dynamite - a new and costly but more stable explosive.



## John Roberts - Limeworks Foreman

The look in John Roberts' eye suggests that he knew his business and did not tolerate slacking. He was the limeworks foreman and this photograph from the 1870s shows him posing in what is probably his 'Sunday best' outfit.

He is checking that the piles of limestone around him on the canal wharf have been graded properly. Limestone for burning needed to be of a consistent size – about the same dimensions as a man's head.



the base of the incline. Here the empty trucks were connected to cables and

pulled back up to the quarry by the weight of full trucks descending.

### Friendly Druids

John Roberts was the first 'lodge leader' of the Order of Druids. This was a Friendly Society and not a group of early pagan worshippers as the name suggests. Friendly Societies emerged in the 19th century to provide basic life and accident insurance as well as opportunities to save money and engage in social activities.

### Dangerous reaction

Quicklime – the name for burnt limestone – reacts fiercely with water and is therefore not a good product to transport by canal in leaky boats. So limestone, broken up and ready for burning, was transported in its raw state to one of the ninety or more lime kilns that lined the Montgomery canal. Farmers bought quicklime from the kilns to spread on the land to make it more productive.

### Trucks with brakes

Behind John Roberts is a tramway truck equipped with a braking device. The journey bringing stone down from the quarries to the canal was all on a downward gradient and it was important to avoid a 'runaway'. Horses, donkeys and mules were used to return the trucks up to

The Order of Druids offered the additional incentive of requiring its members to swear to temperance i.e. not to consume alcohol. This may not have appealed to the many Llanymynech rockmen, who frequented the six pubs and numerous informal alehouses in the village at the time!

### The Roberts clan

Today there are still plenty of people in the village with the name Roberts, some of whom are directly related to John. One of them – Mary Roberts (sadly, now deceased) – presented the Limeworks Heritage Area with the ornate, framed certificate that is held in the Stables Education Block. It announces the inauguration of the lodge in 1874.

### **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 our web site [www.llanylime.co.uk](http://www.llanylime.co.uk)



### **Volunteers Needed**

Throughout the year, 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/](http://www.llanylime.co.uk/about/volunteer-form/)

### **Open Days 2025**

Throughout the summer months there are a number of free activities taking place. The activities are split into two categories, Adults and Families. Some activities are self led and others will have a lead to guide and assist you.

You are welcome to come along and join us, just check out our web site for more details

[www.llanylime.co.uk/events/](http://www.llanylime.co.uk/events/)

Or, come along to the the Stables Education Block, where full details are available