

S&N News

SPRING 2023

The quarterly newsletter of
The Shrewsbury and Newport
Canals Trust



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Wappenshall Basin slowly filling
(see page 6)

www.sncanal.org.uk



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*what's
in your*

S&N News

The quarterly newsletter of the
Shrewsbury and Newport Canals Trust



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COPY FOR S&N NEWS

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The views expressed by contributors to S&N News do not necessarily represent the views or policies of The Shrewsbury and Newport Canals Trust



notes from the chair

Firstly, I was shocked and greatly saddened by the death of one of our most dedicated volunteers, Marion Weir before Christmas. The Trust owes her, and husband Jim, huge thanks for all that they have done in their 8 years of membership. I will greatly miss her smiling face as one of the prime movers of the Wappenshall Wharf project too. Please see her obituary on page 15.

Christmas is over and a New Year has begun and 2023 I'm sure will be an important one for the Trust. After 22 years as a Company Secretary and 11 years as Treasurer, Steve Bean has decided he needs to relinquish the Treasurer's job. In addition, you will read elsewhere in this edition of S&N News that John Myers is stepping down as Editor after 11 years in the seat. I thank them both for their unstinting support over my almost 12 years in the Chair. If anyone out there is keen to take on either of these jobs, please get in touch with me soonest. Steve has offered to work beside a new Treasurer for up to a year, if required. John has also offered to share how he has put together the Trust magazine over the next few editions, if necessary. I sincerely thank them for their generosity.

Also, 2023 should see Wappenshall Wharf's café opened in the Autumn. This will be a major milestone in our restoration

achievements. See page 6 for further details of progress.

Then there will be the first physical AGM to be held since 2019 at Rodington Village Hall on 25th March 2023. I know many members will want to be present as virtual meetings are nowhere near as good! We will have a guest speaker from Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust who will share their plans for the new attractions now at their multiple sites. This will include how they will partner with SNCT at Wappenshall and develop it into "Thomas Telford @ Wappenshall Wharf." So, please make a note of the date and put it into your diaries. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

Bernie Jones
Chairman

New members

WE WELCOME THE FOLLOWING
NEW MEMBERS

Jude Paton
Newport

Posthuma, Jacob & Ruth de Boer
Shrewsbury

John and Elizabeth Smith
Turriff, Scotland

Karen Asquith
Telford

Could you edit or help to edit S&N News?

I have now been editor of S&N News for over 11 years and it is time for a change. I need to free up some of my time for other canal related projects.

I am happy to talk through the job with anyone who would like to take over as editor. There are four issues each year. A new editor will have to be reasonably computer literate and will hopefully have knowledge of Photoshop and similar programmes. There is an organisation in place to typeset and layout the articles, to print the magazine and to despatch both the paper and electronic versions. I will be happy to help a new editor get their feet under the table and to support them through their first few issues as well continuing to write articles.

Alternatively the job could be split into two, with one person (myself initially) editing the magazine by gathering the content and writing the stories whilst a second person takes on the co-ordination of liaising with the typesetter to take those stories through to print-ready pages.

If anyone would like to take over as editor or could undertake the production job, or knows anyone who might be interested, please put them in touch with me, John Myers, either at editor@sncanal.org or phone 07711 858986.

Finance director needed

Within the next few months the Trust will require a new Finance Director. If you think you might be interested and would like to see the Role Description once it is approved, or have any questions, please contact Steve Bean at sbean@sncanal.org.uk



Dates for your Diary

- **Norbury Canal Festival**
Bank Holiday Weekend
29, 30th April, 1st May 2023
Norbury Junction,
Staffordshire ST20 0PN
Volunteers needed
- **C-Fest**
Shropshire Union Canal,
Gnosall
14-16 July 2023

Twincl and your new debit card

Some members who have been supporting TWINCL have dropped out recently. This may be because a new Debit Card has superseded the one that was in use. If you have been a TWINCL supporter and have had a new card in the recent past, contact Alan Boney alanboney4@gmail.com who will advise how to register your new card or contact TWINCL direct on 01952 327788. We really do need your support!

WAPPENSHALL PROGRESS



The basin filling up

Wappenshall East Basin is now complete and is filling up with water very quickly. This really is a milestone for the SNCT, the first bit of canal that we have dug out and restored since the trust was founded in 2000. All the ancillary work has been completed including installing two emergency escape ladders and repairing and re-mortaring the stonework and brickwork around the basin. The fenders under the bridge (re-purposed railway lines that reflect the history of ownership of the canals by the Shropshire Union Railways & Canal Carrying Company) have been re-attached with stainless steel fixings. The re-constructed towpath has been finished and the brick section of towpath under the Junction Bridge has been taken up and re-laid on a new firm base – the bricks were carefully stored so that they could be re-laid in the original order. To prevent the water becoming stagnant in the basin, an aerator will be installed. To adjust the level, water will be pumped in or out from the Northern Interceptor



The new doorway taking shape



New pipework installed



Digging up the floor of the Romney building



The sewerage installation in the Romney building

Channel (as the adjacent section of the Trench Arm is officially called). In all, this has taken a couple of years to do and our dedicated volunteers have a lot to be proud of. We're on our way and a formal opening is planned for later in the year.

The emphasis has now turned to the smaller transshipment warehouse. Our good friend Brian Hales, from the Stafford Riverway Link project, has given generously of his time to complete all the external brickwork replacement, a massive job involving removing individual bricks then turning them and re-mortaring them in place with the clean side facing outwards. A new entrance was necessary to replace the old disintegrating sliding wooden door. Brian has built this new, wider entrance to the building and new self-opening glass doors will be fitted in due course. Work is now continuing to repair the large side doors and their frames. Their enormous hasp and staple closer mechanisms will be retained, and the doors will be fixed to the external wall. An information panel will be erected to explain how they worked. The doors will be replaced by a glass window to the north and glass doors to the south. A new toilet block was needed for the site, and this is being built as an attachment to the west end of the small warehouse. It is progressing well and will shortly be weathertight when the roof is completed. As the whole project is now coming on at such a pace, it is planned to open the café in late autumn of this year. I'm really looking forward to my first cup of coffee!

During December, under the guidance of Trustee John Heather, a necessarily small team (because of the proximity of large equipment and exhaust fumes inside the building) has dug up the concrete floor and installed the 3 very large sewage treatment plant tanks 3 metres under the ground in the middle of the Romney Building. An 8 tonne excavator was hired so that they could be moved around the site and lifted into position. A lot of storm and foul drainage work has been completed as well as installation of underground ducting ready for electrical and communications cables to be installed.

Bernie Jones

Update on Bainton and Berkhamstead

Bainton - the motor

Work continues on Bainton with the rear cabin wooden floor, which would not fit properly, finally sorted out. The sections of floor have been planed back several times until now they fit correctly and all the edges have been painted with red oxide. Now the adjusted floor is in place it is easy to get at the prop shaft and bearings.



Bainton with alternate knees cut out

In the hold all the steel knees have rusted and are badly corroded. To ensure the structural integrity of the boat, one knee from each of the alternate cross-pieces, on alternative sides, has been cut away ready for replacement. The steel plates and round bar are on order to make the new knees, which will then be welded in place. Once the first half are in place the rest will be cut out and replaced. Bainton will be going into dry dock during February 2023 for welding repairs on three snapped rivets in the engine cabin floor area.

Berkhamstead - the butty

I am pleased to announce that we have gained Berkhamstead's first cargo in roughly 45 years! The Gnosall Towpath Group have asked to borrow Berkhamstead for use on site to help with towpath restoration. With assistance from the Norbury Wharf Company, Berkhamstead has been loaded with three grades of stone.

She was towed to Gnosall using NB IbeX on Saturday, 7th January 2023, where she was moored up and left on site.



Loading the butty

The towpath group are clearing soil and mud from the towpath and then unloading the stone to build up the towpath at various locations along the bank of the Shropshire Union in Gnosall. Berkhamstead is being bow-hauled from site to site and the stone unloaded as needed. Once the job is complete in February IbeX will again tow Berkhamstead back to Norbury Wharf.

Phil Jones

Meet Simon Rowberry the new Trustee



Simon discovered the Shrewsbury & Newport canals in 1974 and spent a (very) long weekend walking the route from Shrewsbury to Norbury. Two years later, he founded the Shrewsbury & Newport Canals Group, whilst still in his mid-teens. The Group held a number of working parties over the next couple of years, notably at Berwick Tunnel, Brick Kiln Bridge and Oulton on the Norbury Flight. However, the Group was young, over-enthusiastic but under-resourced, and it petered out by about 1980.

His involvement with the canal brought him into contact with the various Council Planning Departments and as a result, Simon decided to become a town planner. More than 40 years later, Simon can reflect back on a career in which he has reached the lofty heights of Director of Planning, worked all over the world and still retains a deep interest in canal restoration. He now runs a small planning consultancy as well as helping Councils out as a Head of Planning on an interim basis – he is currently helping out a Council in a part of Southern England where, unfortunately, there are no canals at all.

Simon is the Trustee with responsibility for advising the Trust on all matters relating to planning and also for liaising with the four Local Authorities along the canal route (Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, Stafford Borough and Staffordshire County) on planning, highways and related land use and development matters.

Simon lives in Warwickshire and is married with a son in his mid-twenties. As well as canal restoration, Simon's interests include photography, Scandi-noir fiction, languages and music. His two most closely guarded secrets are that he supports Southampton FC and that he plays guitar in a classic rock band that tours Eastern Europe now and again. Always a glutton for punishment, Simon is also currently studying part-time for an MSc in Real Estate at the University of Manchester.

How other local canal restorations are progressing

- *The Montgomery Canal*

The Monty, as it's locally known, is situated in the stunning countryside on the border of Wales and England. In the north it is in England's North Shropshire while in the south it follows a route through Wales's old Montgomeryshire to Newtown in Powys.

The canal runs 33 miles (53km) from Frankton Junction on the Llangollen Canal to Newtown via Llanymynech and Welshpool. It fell into disuse following a breach in 1936 and was officially abandoned in 1944. Restoration began in 1969 with the "Big Dig" in Welshpool, to prevent a plan to use the canal bed for a new by-pass. Today over half the canal has been restored and a number of groups are working to close the gap between Maesbury in Shropshire and the isolated restored length at Welshpool.



The block laying team.



Laying the final block

The Shropshire Union Canal Society (SUCS) has been working here since the 1970s to restore the canal. Recently, after seven years battling to restore another 600 metres, their volunteers have seen their efforts reach a successful conclusion by reaching Crickheath Basin. The restored channel has been re-profiled and then a liner installed and held in place with concrete blocks, the final "golden block" being laid in October, just in time for the deadline imposed by the funding bodies.

Wasting no time, SUCS have already started preparatory work on the next section dubbed



and back in water

"Crickheath South", which will restore the channel between Crickheath Bridge and Schoolhouse Bridge. This will start in 2023 and will include the restoration of the historic wharf at Crickheath.

A further two miles of dry channel restoration remains beyond Crickheath before a short already restored section of canal at Llanymynech is reached (the border between Wales and England actually runs down the main street of Llanymynech). For first time in over 100 years it will then be possible to navigate from the national network via the Llangollen Canal to the Montgomery Canal in Wales.

In the meantime the Restore the Montgomery Canal group (consisting of the Friends of the Montgomery, the Montgomery Waterway Restoration Trust, the local branch of the Inland Waterways Association and SUCS) have been planning and raising the funds to restore the "lowered" Schoolhouse Bridge, the last major barrier on the English side of the border. Over £500,000 has been raised so far and planning is well advanced, with Beaver Bridges, a Shrewsbury company, recently appointed to do the re-build. Michael Limbrey, Chairman of the Restore the Montgomery Canal group said: "The rebuilding of Schoolhouse Bridge will be one of the most exciting projects on the Montgomery Canal. We have to close a public road, dig out the 1960s embankment across the canal, construct a new arched bridge and then open the road again – all in a few months!"

On the Welsh side of the border a £15.4 million government grant from the Levelling Up Fund has been given to a group headed by Powys County Council to restore navigation to most of a 4.4-mile section of the canal from the English border at Llanymynech to Arddleen, near Welshpool.

Discussions are already underway regarding restoration between the Welshpool length in water and Newtown, the historic terminus of the Monty. So, at long last, the restoration of the Monty is in sight. It will be a massive achievement for all those who have striven for so long to bring this canal back to life and it will bring renewed attention to canals like our own Shrewsbury & Newport which still have a way to go...



View from the towpath towards Schoolhouse Lane. The road is high above the canal, but it needs to be even higher for the canal to go under it



Narrowboat, Welshpool Lock

Rosset1954, Creative Commons licence

The Shrewsbury Group's Autumn Activities

Most of our efforts during the autumn have been concentrated around the canal at the northwest end of Berwick Tunnel, but in September we worked at Widows Bridge on the southeast side, finishing off the repointing work that the August WRG camp had started. We finished the southern side of the bridge, relaying the large sandstone coping stones, and made a good start on the northern parapet wall.



Widows Bridge repointed

the bank and silting up the canal. One of these has been successfully piped, and the other, after much excavation by our expert digger Martin-the-mole and his accomplices, is now in a fit state for a silt trap, headwall and overflow to be constructed at its base. Another success has been the completion of the boardwalk on the offside of the canal - an integral part of the all-ability nature trail. This was carried out under the able direction of Ian, assisted by new volunteer Rich. Its completion will spur on our efforts to complete the trail from each of its ends.

We have also been preparing the ground around the large goat willow near the donkey shed, for the 'cherry picker' we'll be using for its felling in January. Once this tree is gone, we will be able to profile the towpath to its correct alignment.

We had a successful launch of our log sales enterprise this autumn. We had sufficient pre-split

During November WRG volunteers Mikk Bradley, Mike Lilliman and Ann Lilliman spent a weekend continuing the rebuilding of the northern wall of the 'donkey shed' by the northwest tunnel portal. The wall is now about 2/3 complete, but further construction will have to wait until next spring, when the danger of frost has passed.

Meanwhile, we have been working on two land drains whose outfalls were at the top of the northwest cutting, and so were eroding



Field drain piped under old retaining wall



Boardwalk completed.

logs to fulfil our pre-Christmas orders, and once the log splitter trailer is up and running, we will be in a position to fulfil the remaining orders in the New Year. As I write, Stuart and Andrew, ably supported by Dave, have almost completed the trailer conversion.

If you're running out of firewood this winter, we should be able to supply well-seasoned ash logs for you. Please see the advert below.

Want to keep warm this winter?

In exchange for a suitable donation, Shrewsbury Group have available small quantities of well seasoned hardwood logs, available by the bag or by the trailer load (approx. 0.5 m3).

Please contact Peter on **07985 046461** or email **peter.f.cann@gmail.com** for details



Notice of Annual General Meeting 2023

Following several years of meeting via Zoom the next AGM will once again be held in person. It will be good to meet as many members as possible once again.

Venue & Programme

The meeting will be held at **Rodington Village Hall, Rodington, SY4 4QS** on **Saturday 25th March 2023**.

The hall will be open from 10:00am for coffee and a chance to catch up on the last few years. Before the formal meeting we will have a talk from a member of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust about their Thomas Telford Collection.

The Annual General Meeting will be held at 12:00 noon.

Agenda

1. To receive apologies for absence.
2. To approve the minutes of the 21st Annual General Meeting held on 11th June 2022.
3. To receive the Report of the Trustees and Financial Statement for the year ended 30th September 2022.
4. To receive the Report of the Chairman.
5. To Elect Directors/Trustees.

All documents relating to the agenda items will be emailed to all members for whom an email address is held and posted on the Trust's website at www.sncanal.org.uk/ as they become available. They will be found by selecting the "About Us" tab then selecting "AGM 2023". Limited copies will also be available at the meeting.

Lunch

Lunch will be available following the formal meeting at a cost of £5 per head. This will be collected on the day, but please **book by 18th March** by email to pjones@sncanal.org.uk. Please also indicate if a vegetarian option is required.

It is hoped to be able to arrange a further speaker after lunch. Again, for further details, please refer to the website

Marion Weir, 1952-2022



The infamous green gloves!

We were sorry to hear of the death of Marion, an extremely active member of the SNCT, on 16 November following a short illness.

Marion did a massive amount of work for the Trust both helping with the organisation and attending our workparties. She worked tirelessly, producing and maintaining our Health and Safety documentation, transcribing the oral archives (now held in the Shropshire Archives), taking minutes of Trustees meetings, organizing the Telford Support Group and sourcing and buying materials.

At different times she worked at all the Trust's workparty sites and she became our expert at lighting bonfires, so one Christmas Jim even bought her a blowtorch. When Wappenshall took off in 2018, Marion and her husband Jim joined the team there, doing a lot of work on restoring the small warehouse. In 2020 the work to dig out and restore the East Basin started and she contributed in all sorts of ways both in preparing the documentation and creating the concrete slabs. Her green gauntlets were a common site in the basin!

In August 2021 Marion and Jim were presented with a personal letter by Anna Turner, the Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire, thanking them for all the work they had done for the canal trust. Then in April 2022 Marion and Jim were presented with the IWA's Tetlow Cup for their contribution to the restoration work at Wappenshall and behind the scenes work that kept things going through the pandemic. Marion said this was a team award for everyone that had worked on the East Basin project.

Marion was bit of a larger than life character, happy to get involved and contribute to everything going on but never happier than when getting covered in mud. She will be sadly missed by friends and members of the SNCT. Our thoughts are with Jim and her family. The Wappenshall volunteers have dedicated their completion work on the small warehouse to her memory.

Hidden Waterways Project 2019 – 2022

The Hidden Waterways Project – led by The Hive – is now drawing to a close with the final exhibition currently running at The Hive in Shrewsbury until Feb 13th 2023.

The aim of the project was to use a range of creative workshops to reach the many young people in the local community who face challenges in their lives. The workshop activities were centred around our local Shrewsbury Canal and enabled us to use much of the material from the SNCT Oral History Project that had been collected back in 2013 – 2019.

Other project partners included the Flaxmill and the Artshack and together we shared a host of creative ideas at the start of the project. But our plans were interrupted by Covid and things went quiet for a while. Since the summer, however, I've been able to work closely with several workshop leaders including the art, animation, ceramics and poetry tutors.

I have discussed the history of our canal with the workshop participants and led them along the canal route into town. I've sent the tutors copies of relevant 'canal stories' from the

archive and read aloud relevant extracts from the transcripts as we walked along. The resulting work is both informative and exciting.

The ceramics tutor got her group to make a series of ceramic tiles depicting various canal scenes including locks, bridges, wildlife and boats.

The art tutor got her group to create a series of canal related images from their canal side walk, and also use material from the canal stories they'd heard. These images were then either printed, drawn or described and the collected work assembled in a large collage.

The poetry tutor used canal related terms and extracts from some of the recordings to create individual verses and prose for public display.

The animation tutor used humour to bring some of the recorded stories to life including the tale of 'greenybuns' the green slimy monster that young children were scared of, particularly when they walked under dark canal bridges!



A canal collage



Ceramic tile depicting wildlife

The animation video is playing continuously just inside the entrance to The Hive. The work from the other workshops – including a photographic display – can be seen in The Hive's

exhibition room and is well worth a visit.

Canals not only provide much valued recreation space and green corridors, but many creative opportunities for artists, writers and other creative souls. In the case of this project, several less fortunate young people have had the opportunity to get to know their local canal in a creative and personally expressive way. It has also been a valuable opportunity to bring some of the stories from the recently completed Oral History Project to a wider public.



A boat entering a lock, sculpted in cardboard. A still from the very funny video animation

Margaret Cann Dec 2022

Postscript

The SNCT Oral History collection, a mixture of transcripts and recordings, is stored at Shropshire Archives as reference X9548. The link to this is: https://www.shropshirearchives.org.uk/collections/getrecord/CCA_X9548. Select the tab 'Browse this Collection' to open up the different sections and see a list of all the records. If you want to visit to read the transcripts or listen to the oral histories, then please book a space in the Archives search room. If you want to listen to the oral archives please highlight this in the notes when booking so that it can be set up for you. See more about visiting at: <https://www.shropshirearchives.org.uk/visit-us/plan-your-visit/>



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Why a section of canal is missing by Town Bridge, Newport

In 1968 British Waterways agreed to transfer the 1½ miles of the derelict Newport Canal in the town to Newport Urban District Council. They also donated £3,630 to cover back maintenance, which was used to dredge and re-water the canal. Dredging started in 1969 and continued throughout 1970.



The new footpath and drain are installed

In March 1970 Shropshire County Highways were upgrading what was then the main A41 trunk road through Newport and they began removing granite setts from the High Street in Newport (granite setts are the flat topped “cobbles” that can still be seen in St Mary’s Street). The setts were then dumped in the soft peat by the side of the towpath to the west of Town Bridge, where the canal has been filled in. As the heavy setts sank into the peat they caused 88 metres of the newly dredged canal bed to rise. The Town Surveyor assessed that the clay lining of the canal had been breached, so it would be too expensive to reline and re-water the section. With much regret it was agreed that the canal needed to be filled in, and so this section of canal is still missing today.

The footpath here and the adjacent ground regularly causes problems as it has a tendency to hold water and get very wet – there must be some doubt about how much of the clay lining is no longer working!

Telford and Wrekin Council have recently installed a new footpath along this section, including a drain along the edge towards the canal which will, hopefully, improve the situation.

It is interesting that, in the course of the excavations, some of the buried granite setts were actually visible!



Granite Setts on St Mary's Street, Newport

It's all happening at Newport...

The new path to the west of Town Bridge is only a part of the canal upgrading work that has been undertaken at Newport. This last quarter has seen a lot of activity and improvements along the canal here. Some of this flows from a major re-furbishment organised by Telford & Wrekin Council which has been in preparation for about three years and has been funded by a Section 106 payment from the Plough Lane development, plus some funding from Newport Town Council.



The towpath from Town Lock to Meretown Lock has been re-surfaced during a three week rolling programme and it now looks extremely good. It will be followed by repairs to the damaged banks along the length of the canal and replacement of the dilapidated steps by Town Lock with a wheelchair and pram compatible ramp.



After many requests in recent years, the two large trees next to Town Bridge and Town Lock have finally been removed. They were too close to the bridge and the lock and were in danger of damaging them. For the first time for probably 50 years the full beauty of the bridge over the canal and the Strine Brook can now be seen.



In issue 85, we reported the damage caused when a car drove into Town Bridge, with some of the stones cracked and a section of wall pushed out of place. This has now been repaired by conservation experts Midland Masons. A section of the bridge has been rebuilt and the cracked stones have been replaced - new stones were brought down from a quarry in Scotland and cut to size.



Arthog Outreach is based in Wellington and operates locally, offering outdoor education and opportunities to participate in adventure activities. On 5 December Arthog organised two canoe training courses for Castle House Preparatory School in the Basin at Newport. This was an experiment to see how suitable it is - the conclusion is that its great for introductory courses, so we will hopefully see them there again soon.

The iron foundry that manufactured the Longdon-on-Tern Aqueduct



Photo by Franco Fisemanded on Unsplash

Pouring molten iron

Ketley Iron Works was at one time during its career the fifth largest ironworks in Britain. Located in Ketley, Shropshire, now in Telford, it was established in 1756 when Abraham Darby II and Thomas Goldney III, ironmasters, leased the area from Lord Granville Leveson Gower.

Within two years two furnaces were in blast and in 1775 Richard Reynolds, who had been a partner in the business since 1757, bought out Goldney's stake. By 1776 three furnaces were working followed in 1785 by a forge. With the Ketley Canal supported by Reynolds and completed in 1788, the site was well placed to receive coal and ironstone to run its works from the surrounding area by boat.

By 1789 the works were owned jointly by William and Joseph Reynolds, the sons of Richard. It was during this time that the works was contracted to make cast iron components to reconstruct the Longdon-on-Tern aqueduct. The contract was for flanged cast iron plates to be secured with wrought iron nuts and bolts, the sides of the trough consisting of

wedge-shaped plates, the use of cast iron instead of stone meaning that the build would be completed far more swiftly.

Ketley Iron Works was suffering from low demand by 1816 and the works were closed, only to be revived again in 1818 by the Ketley Company who operated a forge and three blast furnaces. By 1830, 5,750 tons of pig iron were passing through the company's gates.

In 1874 the Ketley Company works closed the site and by 1879, it was sold on to Nettlefolds Limited. The site of Ketley Iron Works at various times has been known as Sinclair Iron Company Limited, Allied Ironfounders Limited, AGA Heat and Glynwed Foundries. Today it is occupied by Saint-Gobain PAM whose by-line, by coincidence, is "A safer path for water" and whose products are ductile iron and cast iron products supplied to the UK's key utilities, telecoms, highways, civil engineering, construction and housing companies.

Jan Johnstone

Letters to the Editor



Dear Editor

Reading about the 'Milepost' found at Shrewsbury on page 21, I suspect that it is a actually an SU Company boundary marker. I have seen a few such things elsewhere, though I can't immediately recall where. Canal and railway companies tended to use them where they felt a need to define the extent of their land ownership. If it was a milepost, it would be marked with the mileage, as an aid to establishing tolls.

I expect Peter Brown will be able to put you onto other examples, meanwhile I'll look out in my travels with Saturn.....

Best wishes John Yates

Dear Editor

It was most interesting to see the two pictures on page 18 of the recent S&N News.

It is clear to me that the two bridges are in fact both of Kinley Bridge 12. Close examination of the brickwork in each picture shows identical patterns. Furthermore the bridges further up the flight as far as Hadley Park Lock are all over a lock tail, and did not have a towpath running under them (Wheat Leasowes, Peaty and Hadley Park). The next such bridges with a towpath in either direction are at Wappenshall and Wittingham Bridge near the former GKN Sankey works above Turnip Lock.

Please pass on my personal thanks to Jan Johnstone for showing us the two photos.

Kind regards Tony Clayton

See <http://www.tonycanalpics.co.uk/shrewcan> for Tony's pictures of the Shrewsbury Canal over the decades

A fascinating piece of history

Recently I acquired a postcard of Newport Town Lock in its heyday. In the background is the Black Shed, a historic landmark in Newport, which has been used for decades dating back to the time when the canal was fully used. Lock number 20 is full, the gates in fine condition, and with the excitement of a photographer present a collection of youngsters of various ages are standing at the front of the picture no doubt proud to be having the chance of appearing on a postcard.

The card was posted at 7pm [there were several collections a day then] on 15 July 1910 in Market Drayton to a lady, Miss Katie Brown, who lived at Chetwynd Rectory. The writer started with 'My dear Katie' and goes on to state that the harvest was now finished so he/she had been 'too late', I assume to help.

Nevertheless the writer was enjoying his/herself having had a 'race with Roly and Gertie last night and thinking about you... I am enjoying myself a treat...' the postcard is signed Mx, most probably a gentleman.

Interestingly the stamp on the back is sloping to the right and at one time this, in stamp language, was a way of sending a secret message to your loved one using the position of the stamps. This particular stamp which is sloping to the right is saying to Katie 'accept my love'.

Taking note of the date, 1910, I do wonder how many of the older boys on the postcard four years later would go to war, and how many returned, also how many ancestors of the children are still living in Newport today?

Maybe a reader might know?

Jan Johnstone



Lock components donated to SNCT

We have recently been given a treasure trove of metal parts which will be enormously helpful when we start to restore the locks at the Norbury-Newport end of the canal. These have been donated by the Erewash Canal Preservation



& Development Association, who have decided that they do not need them. The items are from the Aston locks on the Montgomery, so they are Shropshire Union pattern (as is the S&N) - being unwanted they were taken back to Langley Mill after the Aston Locks reopened in 2003. They include 3 ground paddle castings and 2 racks to fit them, 2 gate collars, a gate anchor (which the collar fits) and 2 handles for the ends of balance beams. Whilst

very helpful themselves, these items will be invaluable as templates for the lock furniture that we will need. Appropriately they were delivered by boat and we now need to move them from Norbury Wharf to the Black Shed.



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