

## **IWA North West Region Meeting – Mar 11<sup>th</sup> 2015**

### **REPORTS**

#### **Region Chairman's Report**

Since we last met in October I am happy to report progress on the two CRT based committees I sit on. The Montgomery Partnership has now got John Dodwell as its chair and he has brought some fresh thinking to the Monty. In addition to the main restoration work where Stage 2 of an HLF bid is due to be submitted soon, he wants to initiate several 'bite sized' smaller projects with local funding and ideally volunteer led. In this context he asked if the IWA knew of any engineer volunteers, and with the assistance of Rescom, I have arranged for Roger Bravey to get involved. Roger is a highly qualified structural engineer, living near Stockport and already involved with the Stockport Canal restoration.

As far as the NW&BC CRT Partnership is concerned, we have a new Chairman, Brenda Harvey, in place and she is in the process of recruiting new members to the committee. We have progressed to the stage of specifying projects related to our long term strategy, so there should be some visible sign of activity soon. There is a more receptive atmosphere to working with other groups and I am working with Derek Smith, IWA's trailboat guru, on a project to evaluate and develop the network of slipways and launching sites for unpowered craft.

On the IWA National front, I have instigated and am chairing a working party to look at the branch structure and membership participation. The starting point for this is the maxim 'If it ain't broke don't fix it' so branches that function efficiently will be relatively untouched, but the aim is to move to national IWA and Regions to act much more in a supporting role with less emphasis on regulations and rules. There will be consultation with branches and membership when we have some ideas to consult on. The first fruit of this initiative is that it has been agreed that members in Scotland will no longer be automatically allocated to Lancs and Cumbria, but will be asked if they want to be members of a specific branch, eg where they keep a boat, or remain affiliated just to the NW region. This takes away from L&C branch the impossible task of trying to represent members stretching from the Scottish Borders to Shetland. I am happy to discuss this initiative more fully at the meeting.

There have been some emails and more discussion between Trustees as to the availability of committee members' names and personal emails etc on websites etc. In summary, Waterways.org.uk email addresses are preferred and individuals addresses etc should be cleared with the individual. DP issues may be relevant – **comments welcome**.

Lancs and Cumbria is not in a strong position and gives some cause for concern; I was unable to attend their AGM on Feb 26<sup>th</sup> With Manchester also without a Chairman and Treasurer we have an urgent need for new activists in those two branches.

I have been able to get out and about much more since October and attend some branch meetings. I had a brief, but basically unsuccessful, stay in hospital in January to try and resolve my enduring knee problem, but am learning to live with it and hope it will improve in time.

On a local front Shrewsbury & N Wales have been saddened by the recent deaths of Ray Pearson, whose wife Fiona recently retired from the committee and Mick Johnson a well known local waterways enthusiast.

And finally as previously notified, my second three year term as your Region Chair ends in the autumn and its time for you to have a change and me to have a rest; will volunteers for the job please form an orderly queue?

Alan Platt

17 June 2015

Manchester Branch report to NW Region committee

Meeting at Blackbrook Heritage Centre 11-03-15

Manchester Branch committee met in November 2014 and February 2015. It was decided at that meeting to move the AGM to April so as to be able to produce a magazine and circulate all members with a notification. This discussion raised the question of how far in advance an AGM notification may be circulated? Also suggested since, is the possibility of “moving” the AGM to the autumn in the hope that more nominations will come forth. The rationale for this was that members might have more time to spare in the winter months. **Advice please.**

The branch has been able to produce a magazine for the first time in 12 months and received a prompt Per Capita payment in return. My thanks to Head Office for that effort. The new “Manchester Packet” joint Editor, with myself, is Phil Broughton who is also our webmaster. However following the “hole” the Price’s left in the committee, I am conscious that we are once again putting many eggs in one basket. And should Phil be unable to continue we have little in reserve.

Our volunteer weekends are going ahead on a monthly basis. Following “guidance” from the branch committee I have resolved the communication problems with the Rochdale and Ashton canals Operations Manager. I have recently had a fruitful meeting with Terry Evans the volunteer coordinator and I now feel we will be able to plan clean-up events at least three months in advance. A second “adoption” proposal has been offered on top of the LPF Canal one we are currently negotiating. The email circular we send out, derived from “email permission E-address’s,” has proved to be helpful in informing volunteers of clean-ups and is in itself a good way to connect with members. Due to the fact that we have only seen our grappling irons for a short time between them being borrowed by various branches; we presume that other branches are getting involved in many clean-ups. May I at this point thank Alan for the regular car boot full of equipment he brings back from Trustee meetings and the like.

The end of year accounts were eventually finalised by HO, although the monies ring fenced from grants towards clean-up are still to be dealt with. Again I would like to thank Jeannette Chalk at HO for her infinite patience.

The branch website is updated or enhanced regularly, sometimes on a daily basis, although as our webmaster is a keen gardener, I fear this diligence will not be kept up! There is an article in the current magazine to highlight the content of the website and we hope this will encourage some members to be more internet adventurous, in a good way!

We continue to use the members email circulation service provided by HO and we have combined monthly Open meeting and clean-up dates in one email to prevent over use. We attended the inaugural meeting of the IWA “Ring the Ring” initiative at CRT’s Red Bull office. Various aspects were discussed and it was agreed in principle that the IWA branches on the Cheshire Ring would survey the original locations, that were put in by Manchester Branch in the 1980’s, before the end of March. Supply some 200 new rings and fit whatever was agreed with volunteer labour. CRT agreed in principle to facilitate where possible, provide materials and expertise. Liaison is via Alison Smedley for IWA and Steve O Sullivan for CRT.

Having just got a reply from Alison on a question I asked, can you add to my report or do you think is viable to **discuss** the following at the meeting;

Is there any merit in establishing a branch/Region award for the best location/part of a canal cleaned up by volunteers.

Benefits would be to highlight IWA efforts in volunteering. Promote a little competition between various groups, and publicity.  
Steve Connolly

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## **Region Meeting 11th March 2015**

### **Report from Shrewsbury District & North Wales Branch**

Since the last Region Meeting in October 2014 the Branch has held two business meetings in December and February.

#### **Branch Events:**

November: Autumn social evening and talk by John Yates on 'Canal Heritage'.

January: Winter Walk at Chirk

February: Quiz night

February: Stall at the Darwin Centre, Shrewsbury

#### **Other Events attended:**

February: CRT Cholmondeston Lock Open Day

#### **Planning Issues:**

- Lidl Store at Welshpool: Objection made to the proposed design
- Proposed extension to Wood Lane quarry near Colemere: Comments made regarding the planned woodland to shield the quarry.
- Mid Wales electricity connection: Further representations made for the line to be underground where it crosses the canal near the Vyrnwy Aqueduct.
- 35 dwellings at Llanymynech: Not opposed but comments made concerning heritage, visual integrity, tourism and economy.
- Chirk Bank: The erection of dwelling in the garden of 'Cartref' opposed for historical reasons, size and ground stability.
- Wrenbury and Wrenbury Heath Marina applications: Submissions made to the Planning Inspectorate concerning the appeals against the refusal of planning permission. In both cases the Branch is against the granting the appeal on grounds of land designation, need, congestion and design.
- Solar Panels on the Montgomery Canal at Crickheath: Comments made to ensure the proposed installation is shielded from the canal.

#### **Meetings attended:**

- 12th November 2014: Michael Limbrey / Alan Platt attended Montgomery Canal Partnership Volunteer Sub-Group
- 13th November 2014: M L attended Severn Rivers Trust consultation, Welshpool
- 19th November 2014: M L attended visit to Welshpool by Macmillan Nurses organisers, Shropshire and N Wales in connection with proposed Coracle event as part of 'Making Waves'
- 21st November ML attended CRT Consultation for HLF bid, Welshpool
- 26th November 2014: M L attended committee meeting of Llimeys (Friends of Llanymynech Limeworks) in connection with proposed Llanymynech events as part of 'Making Waves'.
- 27th November 2014: Michael Haig attended NW Region/CRT Navigation Liaison Meeting in Northwich

- 3rd December 2014: M L & A P attended Montgomery Canal Partnership, Llanymynech - fist meeting chaired by John Dodwell
- 10th December 2014: Campbell Boyle attended Staffordshire Waterways Group in Stafford
- 16th January 2015: M L attended Welshpool public meeting called by Russell George AM and Welshpool Mayor, with John Dodwell, Shrops. Councillor Arthur Walpole, Glyn Davies MP, Welshpool Town Clerk et al
- 16th February 2015: M L gave Montgomery presentation to Liverpool University students for 'Windows on Waterways 2030' project for Llangollen, Trevor, Ellesmere, Meres & Mosses, Llanymynech, Welshpool
- 18th February 2015: M L attended Liverpool project consultation, Welshpool, attended by Russell George AM, Welshpool Mayor, Glyn Davies MP, Welshpool Town Clerk and many others.
- 19th February 2015 M H attended CRT aqueduct restoration public consultation in Nantwich
- 27th February 2015: Peter Brown met with Carl West CRT Technical manager to discuss the formula used for forecasting the extra boat movements created by new marinas.

### **Important Restoration issues:**

Whitchurch Waterways Trust grant application: The Heritage Lottery grant was turned down due to the lack of heritage in the plans. The situation to be discussed at the Trust's next meeting with a possibility of splitting the project into smaller stages. The money pledged by the branch to be on hold until plans are known.

Wappenshall restoration crises: As the Shrewsbury & Newport Canals Trust needs to raise more money in match funding to satisfy the requirement of the Heritage Lottery grant the Branch will increase the pledge of £2,500 to £3,500.

**Branch Magazine:** The autumn issue can be seen on [waterways.org.uk/shrewsbury](http://waterways.org.uk/shrewsbury). The spring issue will be circulated late March.

**Branch Committee change:** Fiona Pearson resigned to care for her husband.

Dawn Aylwin  
Secretary  
March 2015

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### **Report from the Sankey Canal Restoration Society for IWA North West Region Meeting at Blackbrook, St.Helens, on Wednesday 11th March 2015**

#### **Lancashire Legacy; SCARS Container**

October 24<sup>th</sup>      **Blackbrook Container**

Email from Terry Deveney (St.Helens MBC) to say that SCARS can have the use of one of the containers at Blackbrook.

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> January

Received keys for the Blackbrook container, this will be our “north base” for tools and equipment.      Monday 19<sup>th</sup> January

#### **Spike Island Container**

I along with three other members of SCARS went to Spike Island in Widnes to meet Paul Wright from Halton BC to view the container that will be ours to use for storing tools and equipment in when it is clear out. We now have the keys for our “south base”

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The Blackbrook container has now been insulated and lined with plywood and is ready for use.

Thursday 2th November

**“Waterways World”:** Dave Smallshaw and I have been liaising with Andrew Denny assistant editor of Waterways World on an “Update and News” article of the Sankey Canal for the January issue, this was a three page spread and he hopes to do a more in depth report later in the year.

**New Mersey Gateway Crossing;** work is progressing on the construction of two of the three cofferdams which are required for the three main pylons of the bridge, along with the construction of the trestle bridge which is required for access to the cofferdams so that materials can be brought to the site. (See Merseylink website)

Merseylink have now opened a visitor centre in the Catalyst Museum, Spike Island, Widnes.

Monday, January 6<sup>th</sup>

**Meeting with the Leader of St.Helens Council**

**Barrie Grunwald and the Head of Regeneration Mark Dickens**

Dave Smallshaw and I had a very interesting meeting with the leader and his colleague who were very supportive of our project and will do what they can to help but stressed that the council has no money to spend on canal restoration at present. One of our suggestions was for the three boroughs through which the canal runs was to form a partnership with ourselves to see if we could work towards the restoration of the canal.

The next day I received a phone call from the Countryside Development Officer, Rick Rogers, who said that we had raised the profile of the Sankey Valley Corridor and made it a lot easier because the people at the top were now making noises.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> January we received an invitation from the Countryside Development Officer of St.Helens to a meeting of the Sankey Valley Corridor Collaborative Working, the list of invited people come from all the three boroughs, did we make something happen or was the idea being floated around anyway.

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January

**Meeting with Chantelle Seaborn,**

**Canal & River Trust Waterways Manager North West CRT at their Wigan Office**

Three SCARS members had a useful meeting with Chantelle Seaborn about which parts of the Sankey Canal CRT own and the flooding problems at Blackbrook. This has resulted in them agreeing to come and have a look at the canal around the Blackbrook area sometime in March.

Monday 26<sup>th</sup> January

**Meeting with Jill Doyle the Merseylink Communications**

**Officer for the New Mersey Gateway Project**

Three members from SCARS met members of the Merseylink team and had a good discussion about the effects the bridge will have on the Sankey Canal, the new swing bridge at Spike Island, and our plans for re opening the canal when the big bridge is finished in 2017.

Thursday, February 26<sup>th</sup>

**Sankey Canal Interlocks Project Meeting at the**

**International**

**Business Centre, Gemini Business Park,**

**Warrington**

**“Not Good News “**

**The Coastal Community Fund**

Tenders for the new electrically operated lift bridge at Marsh House Crossing (Fiddlers Ferry) have all come back priced over budget (£375,000) this will mean that ways of downsizing the project will have to be looked at i.e. the bridge could be installed with provision to make it operable at a later date. The other part of the scheme is now in place i. e. The two business marketing posts have been filled one full time Business Development and Marketing Officer and one part time Business Marketing Coordinator.

**Heritage Lottery Fund Bid;**

A pre-application enquiry has been submitted and acknowledged by HLF with initial

discussions indicating the areas the project will need to explore in more depth. Warrington BC has appointed consultants AECOM to assist in our application planning. The results of survey are not too favourable of us receiving the grant we would like, however we shall perceive and look at other options.

**WREN Funding for Spike Island Locks;** Halton BC is still compiling permissions from all the necessary bodies, no negative responses so far. The work is to go out to tender” at risk “shortly to comply with WREN funding conditions.

Latest news is that the tenders for the work on the locks as come back over budget.

Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup> **Northern Canals Association Meeting at Ironville, Cromford Canal** I attended this restoration group meeting at Ironville on the Cromford Canal in Derbyshire. A project similar in many ways to ours but they do seem to be able to find volunteers, especially to man their trip boat” Birdsong” There was also an interesting talk about Sustrans give by Gwyneth McMimm as well as the many varied reports from the various restoration groups.

Monday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> **Sankey Valley Corridor Collaborative Working Meeting at Risley Moss. Nature Reserve, Warrington**

Peter Keen and I attended this meeting of many diverse groups all with some kind of interest in the Sankey Valley Catchment area, some from the local authorities others from wildlife, healthy living and water management groups and some like SCARS with a specific project i.e.” Interlocks “Project that needs all the help it can get through working together as a partnership. I hope that this initial meeting will lead to the formation of a working partnership which will bring together benefits to all concerned.

Colin Greenall 2015-03-08

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**IWA Chester and Merseyside Branch  
Branch Chairman’s report to Region March 2015  
9<sup>th</sup> March 2015**

1) Following reorganisation with CRT N Wales and B C, David Clarkson Sen. Engineer has taken over responsibility for the River lock leading on to the DEE and is proposing to remove the metal drop in gate and replace with wooden stop planks. He is happy to work with us concerning a tidal level gauge which we intend to put in place and we now have a bench mark located on the lock side ready for the next stage if installation.

2) Working parties continue on a monthly sometimes twice per month basis with many thanks to Mike Carter . The branch has agreed money should be spent on more life jackets, PPE and tools for these parties.

3) Jim Mole is our new Treasurer as from 1<sup>st</sup> January due to Ron Evans standing down due to ill health.

4) As we approach the AGM on Tuesday 10th March we have designated three corresponding members, all ex committee.

Ron Evans

Mike Sumner

Brian Phillips.

They will all receive copies of the minutes and be encouraged to comment on any aspect. They will lose their entitlement to vote.

- 5) The Sankey project continues to throw up encouraging news and is in the safe hands of Colin.
- 6) After much intervention I regret to advise that the Student accommodation at Tower Wharf Chester will be going ahead.
- 7) Mike Carter is hoping to schedule a campaign cruise at Runcorn Weston Docks in September.
- 8) We continue to attract reasonable numbers to our social meetings between 60 and 70. This gives us a golden opportunity to interact for new committee members.
- 9) After much discussion the branch has agreed to record the volunteers time both with work parties, events and the more admin land based activities.
- 10) In closing I am pleased to advise you that following meetings with the Eldonian Village Trust, the Liverpool Director of Culture / Events Team and Liverpool Councillors we are proposing to form a joint working partnership and hold our bi-annual Boating Festival in Liverpool 2016. We hope this will take place on the last weekend in May at the Eldonian Village and the following weekend in the Albert Dock as part of the celebrations of the 200 years of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal and the Mersey River Festival.

This is reported to Region in confidence and it is hoped that a joint press release will come out shortly now having reached an amicable agreement on the partnership responsibilities.

Peter Bolt  
Chairman  
IWA Chester and Merseyside Branch

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