

BROADSHEET

Magazine of the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal Society



February 2023

Volume 64 Number 688

www.swcanalsociety.co.uk



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Committee meetings held at the Bonded Warehouse, Stourbridge starting at 7:30, and are held at least 10 times a year, members may request to attend.

Printing

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The contents of this magazine are printed as a matter of information for members of the SWCS but may not necessarily be the official policy, or opinions of the Committee. No item may be used without the prior consent of the editor, except for comment by other Society magazines.

Registered Charity Number 243702

Contents

Editorial	1
Chairwomans Report	2
Membership Renewal	3
In Memoriam	4
AGM Notice	6
Minutes of the 2022 AGM	6
Did You Know Part V	10
Letters	18
Devil's Den A Novella	19
Montgomery Canal Restoration Under Threat	20
Truly A Winter Pastime!	21
Whittington Horsebridge Voted Nations Second Most Scenic Waterside Setting	22
Membership Renewal Form	24

Editorial

As ever thank you everyone who has contributed to this edition of Broadsheet. This one has been a tough squeeze to get everything in which is both nice and unusual problem to have and has resulted in my not being able to include everything I might have wanted. But please don't let that put you off sending content and ideas through. Also, picture submission would also be very welcome!

As you will have probably spotted I have made a few changes to the layout, I hope this meets with approval, I would say that I haven't finished yet and view this first set of layout changes a work in progress and again would welcome feedback.

Following my last Broadsheet and the inclusion of the Christmas Story I have been contacted by a few members to pass on their knowledge of these stories including an explanation that the Chief Bod referred to David Tomlinson and that the Castle in the Air referred to Barton Aqueduct. I would like to return to more of these stories in the future. Collected together with some annotation I suspect they would make an interesting volume in their own right.

Max



Chairwomans Remarks

Happy New Year. Although it seems a little strange to be saying that at the beginning of February. With the first edition of a New Year it's difficult to avoid the tropes of "winter is gone, spring is coming". Yes, it is lovely that the days are lighter for longer, and bar the constant threat of a weather bomb (seemingly perpetuated by the newspapers rather than any evidence), I quite enjoy a bit of winter. Would we appreciate spring as much if we hadn't had the long winter nights first? Despite the dark evenings, plenty have made it to the Social Evenings over the past months to an array of fascinating talks and a Christmas event that saw teams competing in curling. Thank you to Glyn and Rosemary to organising.

A talk that I enjoyed very much, was about the Hatherton and Lichfield Resoration. I've been fortunate to have reaped the benefits of years of tireless campaigning by various groups, and have cruised and walked a number of canals. To see the process taking place now, and all the progress that restoration societies have made is inspiring, and reminds me not to rest on our laurels.

The Staffs and Worcs is a beautiful canal and whilst it has been saved, it is in our hands, a legacy, to ensure that it stays beautiful and cared for,

for years to come. Inspiring users to cherish it and care for it. Any ideas or suggestions on how we can continue to engage with all those on the cut, in the form of volunteer lengthsman (or women), work parties, litter picking parties, people to share knowledge, all are welcome. As with any charity we are desperately in need of volunteers. No matter how small you think your contribution may be, it all helps and is greatly appreciated. Please talk to me or get in touch with any ideas that you may have or offers of assistance. I've already been contacted by some members (you know who you are), and letters to the editor to be included in the magazine are always welcome.

With regards to the AGM. Normally this is held in June, but due to a holiday that we booked about 2 years ago (long before I committed to the role of chair), I would be unable to attend (along with the Vice Chairman). Therefore it has been decided to bring the meeting forward to May. Just to add more confusion to moving the date to May, it is also on the 3rd Monday of the month (15th May) due to the King's Coronation. I do hope that you can attend. If you are unable to attend, you can submit any queries or comments to be raised in your absence.

Membership Renewal



Do you have an article you would like to submit for inclusion in **Broadsheet**?

The deadline for Issue 689 is Friday 28th April

Another date for your diary. Building on the success of last year's rally at Bratch, the Main Committee and Rally Committee have agreed to hold another rally on the first weekend of September. A site meeting has been held, but a location is yet to be confirmed. As soon as a suitable location is decided upon we will let you know.

Rhian



Due to the change in the frequency of Broadsheet publication the notice regarding renewal of membership falls a month earlier than it has traditionally occurred.

A renewal of membership form has been provided with this copy of Broadsheet.

To enable the society to continue claiming "Gift Aid" on your behalf our records need to be updated to ensure that we are only collecting from members who have completed a declaration.

So however you pay your subscriptions, please complete the renewal form and return to the membership secretary at the address on the form.

Alternately photograph or scan the completed form and send to wharfinger@blueyonder.co.uk.

Renewals can also be made at the March meeting at Bradmore.

Judith Gray. (Membership Secretary)

Renew by 1st April 2022

In Memoriam

Nigel Jackson RIP

Nigel died on 22nd December 2022 aged 76, and his funeral was held on 20th January at St Leonard's Church in Ipstones – the village where he was born and grew up.

With Ipstones being so close to Froghall wharf and tunnel, it was only natural that Nigel was keen to explore the Caldon Canal and further afield. At Endon he met up with Malcolm Braine, and before long Nigel and Jenny were crewing the trip boat 'Cactus' for Malcolm from Great Haywood.

He became immersed in the old ways of the cut, and lived a life so closely allied that he could have dropped back into the turn of the 20th century with ease!

During the 1980s Nigel joined forces with the Fuller twins and lots of material was carried by boat for tow path repairs in the Potteries.

The job of Dock Attendant became available at the Black Country Living Museum and Nigel fitted right in. He would regale the visitors with canal

stories and knowledge, and brought the otherwise dull dock to life. His painting, sign writing and rope work skills kept visitors enthralled. He became a proficient dock man, and under the guidance of Joe Gilbert and Ken Keay, the day boat 'Birchills' underwent a major restoration in Nigel's care.

Nigel's last job was as a Skipper for Dudley Canal & Tunnel Trust which again gave him the opportunity to exercise his skills as a raconteur.

After a spell of living at Dimmingsdale Wharf aboard 'Harold' and butty 'Phoebe', they later moved to Hinksford, before retiring and returning to 'live on the bank' at Ipstones.

The funeral was attended by many Staffs & Worcs Canal Society members. A collection was made at the funeral and was donated to a local conservation society and a Parkinson's charity.

He is sadly missed by Jenny, Phoebe and grandson Leo.

Tony Gregory

Jean Dobbs. 1935 – 2022

It was with sadness that I heard the news from Max and Rhian that Jean had passed away on Christmas morning.

Jean, together with her late husband Roy, had been stalwarts of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Society, and ambassadors of our waterways, for over forty years. During the 1970's Jean was closely involved, and supported, many aspects of our Society's activities. She became Chairman (Person!) in 1983/84, and later served as our President between 1995 and 1996; continuing thereafter as one of our Vice Presidents.

Another roll undertaken for some years during the 1990's by Jean, with Roy at her side, was that of Society outings organiser. Initially organising day trips, to such places as Morwellham Quay, Buckler's Hard, and the Isle of Wight. She then decided that these long day trips were too exhausting, and suggested that we extend them long weekends. This idea ultimately took us on visits to the Isle of Man; Southern Ireland; and the Caledonian Canal/Loch Ness area of Northern Scotland. (Who now remembers our tour guide Regina in Ireland, or the hotel that really was not expecting guests at Drumnadrochit!!)

My personal memories of Jean are many. When she had just taken over as Chairman I well remember her face, and the questions!!, when I first asked her to sign six blank cheques. The first Stourbridge Open Weekend in 1983 was very much a Society event, indeed its Autumn Cruise, with Jean our Society Chairman. "Wouldn't it be a good idea to have a few old vehicles in the street", she said, and "What about a couple of stalls to make a bit more money". From little acorns!

Jean had been involved with Stourbridge from the early days of the Society's Stourbridge Sub-Committee, and continued her support of the Stourbridge Navigation Trust and many of their events, notably Open Weekends and Santa Boat Trips.

During my Chairmanship of the Society Jean was always helpful, someone that I could readily turn to for help, advice, AND COMMENT!! Over the years, Jean and Roy continued to support our Society whenever possible, and attended most of our Rallies until very recent years. However there was one 'downside' to N.B. Jubilee being at a rally if you happened to be busy; it could take an hour to get past their boat!!

Happy Memories; Thank you Jean

Chris Dyche

Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal Society

2023 AGM Notice

Notice is hereby given that the 2023 Annual General Meeting of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Society will be held on Monday 15th May 2023 at 7.30pm at Bradmore Community Centre, Wolverhampton. Members wishing to put resolutions to the meeting must send them to the Secretary, Mrs. Ann Pollard, in writing 14 days before the AGM. Such resolutions should be supported by the signature of the proposer and seconder, both who must be members of the Society. Members are also invited to nominate Officers and Committee Members to attend subsequent Society Committee meetings. They must be proposed and seconded. The person so nominated must state in writing their willingness to stand for that post, to the Secretary prior to the meeting. The full meeting Agenda will be published in the June 2023 edition of Broadsheet. Please be present at the meeting if you possibly can. If not please ask that your apologies are recorded, thus showing your continued interest in the affairs of the Society.

Thank you

Ann Pollard

Minutes of 2022 Annual General Meeting

Apologies Chris Dyche, Nigel Poxon, Don Gray, Glyn and Rosemary Phillips, Robert Kyte, Mary and Derek Overton

Matters Arising

None

Meeting accepted minutes as a true record

Website not up to date, Adam to look at.

Presidents Report

Steven gave his report 3 nominations for committee positions officers to be agreed at the neat meeting, Julian at next meeting agreed as chair Max took on the role as vice chair and editor Broadsheet. Meetings arranged by Tony Gregory and refreshments by Carol and Liz

Speaker system appears to be working well.

Broadsheet reduced to 4 per year. Covid interrupted. Meetings meeting arranged for on line. Julian's role as Chair was limited as awaiting an operation.

Max has chaired the sub-committee meeting for 250th celebration. There is a need for volunteers

The society lost Ken Dunham and also David Tomlinson this last year

This year we have a vacancy for Chair

Facebook attracts a lot of hits but does not materialise in membership

Chair's Report

Julian expressed regrets that he has to step down as chair. As he his getting back to normal there are not enough hours in the day.

Dealt with the membership in the background. Max has stood in for a number of the chairs tasks.

19 new members since Christmas

53 have yet to renew picked up a few about 20, leaves 30 who have not heard from

Julian will maintain his membership of the society

Treasurers Report

Angela presented her report to the meeting Inherited accounts in November very little happened pre covid. Without Malcolm donation we would be overspent by £122

Without Bradmore meeting we had no income from raffle refreshments etc. Hoping next year will be healthier

Account statements were handed to members present

Pre rally payments have already come out of the account

Malcolm Braine legacy has been received.

Julian received a letter from Hazel. Wrote back thanking the family and asked the family what they would like to do. Awaiting a response, an outline discussion has taken place where it was made clear that it was not to go towards a bench. Spoke to Hazel after the meeting regarding the Stafford River Link Bridge. Nowhere near getting a bridge together at the moment felt that money was better staying within our accounts for the time being.

Peter asked Angela if we could break it was indicated that we could cover the costs of Bradmore and Broadsheet

Reporting regarding our Legal obligation to have insurance. We have £10 million public liability. Premium is discounted because we are IWA members, and we would have required this level of cover for Bratch to take place.

Note that we require a proactive way of encouraging membership-recommendation to look at adding some more tangible benefits to membership e.g. chandlery offering 5% 10% off if a society member.

FaceBook page is promoting the society and this is one of our aims.

Treasures Report Proposed by Peter Rogers Seconded David Osborn that the Treasurers report be accepted

Meeting agreed

Ratification of President Steven proposed as President for further 12 months and Vice-Presidents. All vice presidents ratified.

Election of Officers

Chair Rhian Dobbs proposed Tony Gregory, seconded by Carol Gregory

Vice Chair Maxwell Dobbs

Treasurer Angela Clarke

Secretary Ann Pollard

Proposed Tony Gregory and seconded by Fred Cooke that these be elected en bloc. Meeting agreed

Committee Members No further nominations so those elected will serve another 1 year

Election of Auditor Dennis Cooper proposed and Judith Gray seconded that we remain with our current auditor Tina

Any Other Business

Thank you for Tony Gregory for all his helps with meetings.

Sheet at the back of the hall if anyone wishes to suggest topics for meetings organised for Sep,Oct, Nov. Dec. Jan

Peter wanted to make members aware of the constitution it is significant we review the constitution (last revised 2011) as currently felt that is not fit for purpose there is a draft constitution available online to look at. Perhaps we should make for any alterations can only be raised at an annual general meeting.

The new constitution would need be reviewed the October meeting there is no clause as to what happens should be necessary to close the society.

Safeguarding policies need to be added

If making major changes the charity have to ensure that every members has to receive two thing existing constitution and the revised version.

DBS checks and safeguarding checks when required needs to be added to the constitution.

Issue raised by Bob Derricot regarding how this meeting is convened No notice of any resignation from committee just announcing the date in the date of the calendar Broadsheet

Needs updating distinct difference as to how we operate

General discussion took place

Left for the committee to come up with a new constitution to look at and agree.

What was appropriate in 2011 needs updated for 2022

Charity commission provide update and ours must be fit for purpose

Judith suggested that Peter and Tony look at the constitution a copy to be produced for the committee to look at first then produced to a meeting that can be picked apart then committee agree and then call an EGM for recommendation for acceptance.

Presentations

Steven showed the meeting the Tony Guy Plate. The following presentations were made:

Tony Guy Plate - awarded to Tony Gregory in recognition for all work He has done for last 2 year

Bi-Centenary Medallion - awarded to Ian Cowdale in recognition for years of editing Broadsheet

DID YOU KNOW PART V

The fifth and last of a series of articles about the earliest days of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal

By Julian Souter

In the last edition of the Broadsheet, I examined some of the obstacles encountered during the construction of the canal between 1766 and 1772 and how they were overcome. In this article I am turning my attention to the people who financed and drove the project forward, their business, family and personal relationships. The evidence for this is located in a range of archives, parish records, wills and canal records.

The motto for the Trent and Mersey Canal was “In patriam populumque fluat” or “They flow for country and people” suggesting that the enterprise was essentially public-spirited and altruistic. The same sort of investors bought shares for the Staffs and Worcs as did for the Trent and Mersey. We shall quickly see that they were very much in it for themselves using their wealth as landed gentry or merchants (or both) to accumulate even more. The ordinary folk of Wolverhampton could hardly afford £100 per share (roughly equivalent to £22,000 today) let alone the maximum of 20 allowed (about £445,000)! So who did invest

in the canal and what relationships did they have with each other?

The best person to start with is James Perry, the man credited with leading the group of businessmen planning and then running the canal in its early stages. James Perry, merchant, was appointed Company Treasurer at the first meeting, having to provide security in the form of a bond for £10,000. He also had 10 shares. The combined cost in today’s money would have been an astronomical £2.6 million! Immediately this raises the question not only of who James Perry was, but also how did he accumulate his wealth?

A beautiful, leather-bound King James Bible can be found in the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Record Office. It belonged to an Elizabeth Saunders and on its fly-leaf are the names and dates of Perry family members. James Perry’s father Thomas was born in Bilston and buried in Penkridge. His mother was called Elizabeth. James was born on 3rd August 1732 and died on 20th September 1808; he was buried in Trysull. Ann Perry his wife and two sons, Thomas and James are included,

all three also buried in Trysull. Parish records reveal that Ann's maiden name was Jesson and that she was the sister of John Jesson, the canal company's Clerk (responsible for all its legal dealings) who also witnessed the wedding of James and Ann at St Peter's in Wolverhampton on 21st August 1760. He was actually doing legal work for James Perry as early as 1753, many years earlier demonstrating that these family relationships had been established long before the coming of the canal.

James Perry's will tells us a great deal more about his family and business dealings. Thomas as the elder son

inherits the lion's share including an estate in Eardisley, Herefordshire, consisting of the "Park" mansion house and several farms(1) as well as estates around Wolverhampton and Milson in Shropshire. All other parts of the estate in Staffordshire are bequeathed to James junior. James's wife Ann gets the estate at Lyne Hill just outside Penkridge that James inherited from his father. There are smaller bequests for Sir Edward Littleton, the chairman of the canal company, a Henry Jesson (nephew of John) and James's son-in-law Thomas Herrick (see below). There is also a reference in the will to business dealings in America.

1 James Perry senior acquired the Eardisley Park Manor and Estate in 1783. He continued to purchase property in the area and subsequent deeds record him as "Lord of the Manor".

Martin Brookes

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In St Michael's Church, Penkridge there is a monumental inscription:

“Sacred to the memory of THOMAS HAYES of the City of Bristol, Merchant, a native of this place who departed this life December XXVII, MDCCXCI aged LXX. His remains by his particular request were deposited at the had (sic) of the grave of The Rev. THOMAS PERRY his kind friend and instructor in early life.”

Thomas Hayes (1721 to 1791) wrote his will in August 1788, giving us some fascinating new information about James Perry, described as “my working partner and dear friend ... now resident in Wolverhampton”. James is named as sole executor and inherits Thomas's whole estate in England and America “as token of my love and gratitude for the favours and protections offered me in my youth by his father”. James was clearly a very fortunate man!

James Perry therefore had business dealings in both England and America. The partnership between James and Thomas was founded in 1754 as Perry & Hayes and there are records of shipments of iron and other materials to New York as late as 1790. In 1764 they had invested in a forge in

New Jersey. Their involvement in New York ended with the American War of Independence when as loyalist merchants their property was seized and they were banished for ever under the threat of death if they ever returned. They were therefore entitled to claim for losses to the British government and these amounted to about £59,000 (over £11 million today). Perry & Hayes also had contracts with the canal company between 1769 and 1772 to the tune of about £461 of business (about £90,000 today), what we might describe, borrowing from the vernacular, as a nice little earner, nobody worrying about any kind of conflict of interest back then.

John Jesson, James Perry's brother-in-law, led a colourful life as a lawyer based in Graiseley in Wolverhampton. He had an illegitimate son, also called John. We learn from the Memorandum Book of Henry Jesson, John's nephew mentioned above, that John junior's mother was his father's housekeeper, Mary Hewlet, described disparagingly as “a remarkably plain woman”(2). John junior was destined to inherit his father's estate until we find in a will dated 27th February 1802 a somewhat dramatic and startling revelation:

2 Adding, somewhat bizarrely, until one reads a little later that he acted as his uncle's physician, that “he had the misfortune when a boy at School of losing his right Testicle”.



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“... my said son John Jesson hath for the space of three years and upwards ... behaved in the most undutiful unnatural and even inhuman manner towards me ... and hath become more and more opinionated positive and obstinate and desperately violent in his temper and behaviour ...”

all of which has led to his decision to disinherit him and leave his entire estate to James Perry junior, one of his other nephews. He clearly had an intimate knowledge of the Perry family affairs as he adds that he knows that James’s brother Thomas

for whom he has an “equal regard” will be amply provided for by his father. Nephew Henry is outraged complaining that he has been deprived of his birthright “being his Heir at Law & me who had never offended him ... having attended him many years as a Surgeon for which he never gave me a farthing”. He also refers to him as “the old Scoundrel ... may God forgive him”. Whatever his talents and experience as Clerk and Attorney to the Canal Company, John Jesson senior was not well regarded by some other members of his family.

What John Jesson senior wasn’t to know, however, was that James Perry

junior would predecease Thomas and leave everything – including the Jesson estate – to him. Neither brother married and so when Thomas died in 1853, the great family fortune was left to his sister Mary who had married Thomas Bainbrigge Herrick whose family hailed from Beaumanor in Leicestershire. It then passed down to their son William. A codicil to Thomas's will dated 3rd May 1820 reveals that he and his family lived in "Meredale House, Wolverhampton", Bantock House today. Thomas's will leaves the house and farm to Mary as well as the use of all lands and estate at Woodthorpe and Woodhouse in Leicestershire. William is to inherit his father's estate. On his father's death he moved to Beaumanor. By the time Thomas Perry died, both his sister Mary and brother-in-law Thomas Herrick had also passed away, so Thomas left everything to their son William. The estate was a combination of James Perry senior's, John Jesson's, James Perry junior's and any additional accumulated land, property and wealth from Thomas himself including land and property in Herefordshire. An indication of this can be seen in his will in which he bequeaths to William property in Hereford, Radnor, Monmouth, Salop, Stafford, Worcester and Warwick but on the interesting condition that he adds "Perry" to the family name.

William lived in great luxury in Beaumanor Hall in Leicestershire as seen in the Census of 1861. His name is now recorded as William Perry Herrick. By 1871, the Census shows that William had married Sophia, someone half his age but they were childless when he died in 1876 and so the Perry line came to an end. Sophia died in 1915.

Returning to records of the early days of the canal company, the elected committee consisted of 15 members. Sir Edward Littleton who by virtue of his shareholding (20 – the maximum allowed) was elected chairman, a position he held for a remarkable 46 years. Sir Edward was an MP and High Sheriff of Staffordshire and lived at Pillaton Hall before moving to the family seat of Teddesley Hall. There are several monuments and inscriptions today in St Michael's Church in Penkridge where James Stafford, Sir Edward's second cousin by marriage, was minister for 50 years; he was also a member of the canal committee between 1766 and 1794, the year of his death. Sir Edward died childless and his baronetcy accordingly expired. His estate, however, passed to Moreton Walhouse of Hatherton through his marriage to Sir Edward's sister Frances. Moreton Walhouse was another committee member from 1766 to about 1795. He was a well-connected and wealthy man

in his own right and became even wealthier on the death of his brother-in-law, Sir Edward when he inherited an estate worth about £18,000 a year (about £1.6 million today). He took the name Littleton by royal licence in 1812 and in 1835 became Baron Hatherton. The postscript to this merging of families is that the Hathertons, whose family name remained (and still remains) Littleton, were associated with the running of the canal until its nationalisation in 1948,⁽³⁾ also giving their name to the Hatherton Branch near Calf Heath.

Other committee members included a familiar Wolverhampton name, Molineux: Benjamin Molineux was a member from 1766 until his death in 1772 when his son George inherited the family iron business and took his place on the committee, keeping things in the family and securing vested interests in the successful running of the profit-making canal. He built Molineux House in Wolverhampton as the family home, now fittingly the Wolverhampton Archives where a large number of canal-related documents and maps can be found. Benjamin had links with the

³ The Foreword to Ian Langford's *Towpath Guide to the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal* was written by Lord Hatherton, the 6th Baron, in 1972, the bi-centenary year of the opening of the canal.

Presented by: JOHN TURNER



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slave trade owning a warehouse in Dublin where he housed goods for export to the West Indies. In Sketchley's 1767 and 1770 Wolverhampton Directories Benjamin is listed as an ironmonger in Tup Street. He was actually given in 1766 as a present a slave born in Sierra Leone in 1763 and had him baptised George John Scipio Africanus Molineux at St Peter's Church in Wolverhampton on 31st March 1766. The family looked after him for many years eventually apprenticing him to the iron trade from where he moved to Nottingham, married and had children of his own.

In Pearson and Rollason's Directory of 1781 and the Wolverhampton Directory of 1783, George Molineux is listed as a merchant and ironmonger in Goat Street. George was a High Sheriff for Staffordshire in 1791, a magistrate and a Town Commissioner. He was also a founder member with James Perry and others of the Wolverhampton Chronicle and Staffordshire Advertiser in 1789. With James Hordern he entered into partnership in the banking world and they were appointed joint company treasurers succeeding the Perry brothers in 1816. It is clear from his George's will, drawn up in 1820 a few

months before his death, that he was a man of wealth and property: all his ten children were catered for.

The name of John Hodgetts referred to above occurs approximately 70 times in John Fennyhouse Green's list of landowners through whose land the canal passes. Much of it extended from Greensforge to Stewponey and past Prestwood, where he lived with his wife, Elizabeth whose maiden name was Foley, the daughter and heir of William Foley of Prestwood(4) whose forebears had accumulated enormous wealth from the iron trade for generations. Ian Langford in his *Towpath Guide* questions why the Foleys were not shareholders in the canal company – they were! John Hodgetts had also inherited extensive lands and property in Staffordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire from Humphrey Hodgetts a “kinsman” who had married Sir Edward Littleton's aunt but had died without issue. The Hodgetts and Foley families are memorialised in St Mary's Church, Kingswinford and St Peter's Church, Kinver.

There were several other members of the committee elected in 1766 who had numerous links with each other, including John Baker, the Clerk of the Works, Nathaniel Barrett, a wealthy

4 Prestwood House or Manor was occupied by the Foleys for generations. The house on the site today is used as a nursing home that can be seen from the canal just past the aqueduct over the Stour.



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land owner and farmer, Corbett Hale whose forebears had lived in Enville for at least 200 years, Gregory Hickman, a Wolverhampton ironmonger and Peter Hinckes a Wolverhampton land owner with property in Autherley, Bushbury, Monmore Green, Sedgley and houses in Wolverhampton itself. We also find Joseph Lane and John Weston Smith, successful Wolverhampton ironmongers. Samuel Garbett lasted less than half a year on the committee falling out with his colleagues as he did with the BCN committee of which he was a member. Finally there were William Wenman, Henry Wood junior

and John Watson about whom I have uncovered very little. I'd be extremely interested to hear from anyone who might have any information about them.

This is the last of my 'Did you know?' articles for the Broadsheet. Readers may be interested to know that I will be doing a presentation at Bradmore on 13th February in which I will attempt to draw together the various strands of my research. The title of the presentation is "Unlocking the past" with a focus on the construction of the Staffs & Worcs Canal between 1766 and 1772 and the people behind the enterprise.

Letters

Hi Max

You mentioned in your last editorial that Dudley Archives don't have any copies of the Broadsheet before 1966. Some time ago, before I joined the Society, I discovered the very first and subsequent editions in the Wolverhampton Archives. They are listed as D-SWC/9/3/1. No 1 is dated 1st February 1959. Something that amused me was a complaint in the July/August edition about "lack of courtesy on the part of many pleasure boat users in not slowing down when passing moored craft ... serious accidents can occur through failure to practice this courtesy." Not a lot has changed then! The January 1960 Broadsheet contains the society's mission and purpose "to

advocate the development and maintenance of the waterway and its promotion to fullest use in conjunction with other Midland Navigations." Finally the Archives also house some great records of the early days of the society including photographic records of various rallies held in the 80s. I would recommend a visit to Molineux House!

Kind regards,

Julian Souter

Thanks for the information I will probably make a trip to W'hampton to work through the early editions. It would be ideal if we could build a digital copy of all the material we have..



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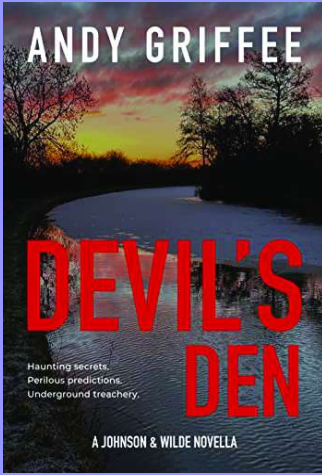
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Devil's Den: A Novella



News of the Devil's Den by Andy Griffiee was recently posted on the Societies Facebook page, I found the description intriguing. The story is apparently part of series taking place across England's waterways

Hallowe'en is approaching and Jack Johnson has found a temporary mooring for his narrowboat near Kinver. His on-off relationship with the young army widow, Nina Wilde, is mending slowly after the heartache of their time in Oxford. But a chance encounter and an overheard conversation in a local pub kicks off a perilous sequence of events - some of which are distinctly other-worldly.

The odds are stacked against Jack and Nina as they are forced to work into the early hours at gunpoint. But there are other forces at work in a subterranean tunnel complex and they play a deciding factor in the outcome.

Devil's Den is available for Kindle on Amazon

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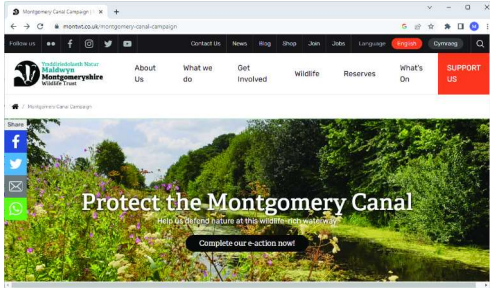
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Montgomery Canal Restoration Under Threat



Many of you will have heard or received the e-mail from regarding the Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust and their attempt to push for a ban on boats to restored sections of the Montgomery Canal. Personally I find this horrifying partly because it appears to be the height of foolishness, but also the modern world seems to be a place where foolishness is contagious.

The canal is being restored under a Conservative Management Strategy which took several years to produce and in which Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust were actively involved. This Strategy protects the natural heritage to ensure rare species are not at risk while providing an amenity for residents and visitors, including boaters, with benefits for recreation, well-being and the local economy. In other words all the social, economic and environmental benefits you would expect for any well-managed project – a Canal for All.

There is nearly £14 million of Levelling-Up and other funding for

Powys County Council and the Canal & River Trust to restore parts of the Montgomery Canal in Powys.

However, Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust is proposing that the canal is left alone it shouldn't need stating that will surely just lead to the canal they view as being so important disappearing entirely.

Their next suggestion is that only horse-drawn boats should be permitted!! Aside from the practicalities of this, it increases the likely hood of differing user groups coming into conflict and that this pretty much resolves to the same as banning boats and waiting for the canal to naturally disappear.

It strikes me that an incredible amount of investment (money, time, effort, blood, sweat and tears) has gone it to restoration this canal (I have in front of me now a report by Ken Goodwin on the canal from 1982) on the basis that it is to be restored, to have extracted this from people to then not restore the canal or to block its restoration as intended strikes me as morally bankrupt act!

It is important to protect wildlife but particularly where that wildlife finds home in something man made then surely wildlife need to accommodate the support of the structure upon which it depends.

I am sure a lot of the waterways community responded to Michael Limbery the Chair of the Montgomery Restoration Trust's appeal to complete a survey or two in support of the trusts position, but I think we need to watch out for more of this wrong thinking that forgets our Canals are manmade structures that need maintaining and using or they will be lost to all.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

LENGTHSMEN

Is there a stretch of the canal you can keep an eye on and report any issues?

NAVIGATION ISSUES

Spotted any issues that you think need raising with CRT?

Contact - Ann
sunbeam2@btinternet.com

REPRESENTATIVES

Would you be willing to attend waterways events and represent the society even if only for a couple of hours?

Contact - Rhian
dobbsrhian@gmail.com



TRULY A WINTER PASTIME!

Tony Gregory

For our December meeting, and thanks to Glyn & Rosemary Phillips, the Bradmore meeting room was set up for the sport of Curling.

Rather than suffer the prevailing icy conditions, we were able to slide the 'stones' along the polished floor of the room rather than the ice just outside! Nineteen brave souls made the journey away from their firesides, and enjoyed fierce competition. Split up into four teams aptly named after Staffs & Worcs junctions, Stourport were the victors in the end.

The 'bring & share' supper went down well, and everyone hurried off home as soon as the games finished. A good night!



Whittington Horsebridge Voted the Nation's Second Most Scenic Waterside Setting

A picturesque bridge along the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal has been voted the nation's second most scenic waterside setting in the largest study of the UK's waterside spaces ever conducted.

Thousands of images of landscapes featuring canals or rivers were uploaded and assessed to identify and investigate what elements create scenes of 'everyday beauty'.

More than 5,000 images were submitted by members of the public through the Canal & River Trust's 'Rate this Scene' initiative this year.

The six-week study saw more than 15,000 people casting votes to rate the scenic quality of the pictures.

This was the second phase of the nationwide study carried out by The CaRT in collaboration with, the University of Warwick.

Its objective was to collate real world data to provide scientific insight into the importance of 'everyday beauty'.

This year's study brings the total number of pictures entered up to more than 15,000, with over 28,000 people casting more than 1.6m votes to date.

Using an online game, 'Rate this Scene' was developed in partnership with the team at Warwick Business School and Fellows of The Alan Turing Institute.

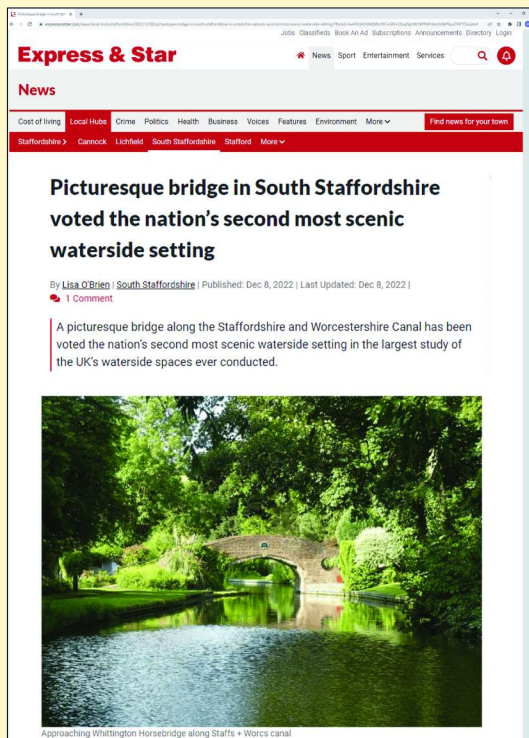
Participants are asked to rate canal photos

New findings have revealed that some of the most popular scenic elements include trees, reflections on the water and big skies.

However, when these features are combined with elements unique to inland waterways including boats, bridges, locks and marginal vegetation, they are deemed even more aesthetically pleasing by members of the public.

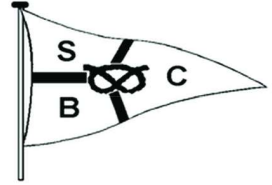
The Whittington Horse Bridge, near Kinver was voted the nation's second most scenic waterside setting.

The overall highest-rated scene captured in this year's study was a picture taken at Grand Union Canal in Wistow, Leicestershire.



The screenshot shows a news article on the Express & Star website. The article title is "Picturesque bridge in South Staffordshire voted the nation's second most scenic waterside setting". The byline is "By Lisa O'Brien | South Staffordshire | Published: Dec 8, 2022 | Last Updated: Dec 8, 2022". There is one comment. The article text reads: "A picturesque bridge along the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal has been voted the nation's second most scenic waterside setting in the largest study of the UK's waterside spaces ever conducted." Below the text is a photograph of the Whittington Horsebridge, a stone arch bridge over a canal, surrounded by lush green trees and foliage. The caption below the photo reads: "Approaching Whittington Horsebridge along Staffs + Worcs canal".

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Diary Dates

Bradmore Meetings

A series of talks and presentations, usually waterways orientated but with occasional eclectic contributions on a variety of other subjects - open to the public free of charge.

Meetings held at the Bradmore Community Centre, Birches Barn Road, Wolverhampton starting at 7:30pm

February 13th

Julian Souter "Unlocking the past"

A focus on the construction of the Staffs & Worcs canal between 1766 & 1772 and the people behind the enterprise.

March 13th

David Brown "Dams & Reservoirs"

Covering water supply, how they are built, what can go wrong and how society addresses the risks, followed by an overview of the S&W reservoirs, Calf Heath, Gailey, Dimmingsdale, Pool Hall, Springslade, Pottal and Hatherton.

April 10th

Chris Dyche "The Stourbridge Fens" & "Rally Roundup"

A look at our boat rallies over the past 35 years.

May 15th

Annual General Meeting followed by

"Photographs of the Staffs & Worcs canal by the late Dr. Patrick Thorn, part 1" presented by Tony Gregory.

June 12th

Ian M. Bott "The Midlands Zeppelin outrage"

The events of 31st January 1916 and damage inflicted on our canals and factories.

Local Events

18th - 19th February.

Kidderminster Lock

An opportunity to explore the drained lock chamber

Electronic Broadsheet

We are now making all future copies of Broadsheet and loose inserts available electronically. This would be by "opting in" for those members who chose to receive Broadsheet electronically.

There is no intention of discontinuing the sending out of "hard copies" to other members.

Please contact Steve Gray by email to wharfinger@blueyonder.co.uk with your name and email address if you wish to "opt-in."

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Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal

46 Miles and 43 Locks
From Stourport Basins
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