

BROADSHEET

700<sup>th</sup>  
EDITION

FEBRUARY 2026

STAFFORDSHIRE &  
WORCESTERSHIRE  
CANAL SOCIETY



1959

2026

# Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal Society 2024 -2025

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Vacant

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### **Length Scheme**

Vacant

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## **Committee Meetings**

Committee meetings, starting at 7:30, are held atleast 8 times a year, members may request to attend.

## **Cover Photograph**

Based on the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Broadsheet

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**

**[www.swcanalsociety.co.uk](http://www.swcanalsociety.co.uk)**

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## 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](mailto:sunbeam2@btinternet.com)

### REPRESENTATIVES

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

### COMMITTEE

Served on a committee before?  
Share your wisdom!

Never served on a committee before?  
Try something new!

Contact - Rhian  
[dobbsrhian@gmail.com](mailto:dobbsrhian@gmail.com)

# Editorial

This edition marks what we believe to be the 700th issue of Broadsheet.

“Believe” is perhaps the right word. As anyone who has looked through old Broadsheets will know, Broadsheet’s numbering over the decades has not always been perfectly tidy. Some numbers were repeated, others skipped, and without a complete run it is impossible to say with absolute certainty where the true total lies.

But perhaps that is fitting.

Broadsheet has never been a glossy publication produced to a rigid formula. It has always been something far more valuable — a record of enthusiasm, volunteer effort, frustration, humour, campaigning, restoration, meetings, friendships and the quiet determination that keeps canals alive.

In preparing this issue, I returned to an earlier milestone: the 10th Anniversary edition of 1969. Its editorial, written by my mother, reflected on reading back through the earliest Broadsheets — laughing at some pieces, nearly crying at others, and feeling proud simply to have been part of it all. That sentiment still rings true today.

This edition echoes that moment in several ways. The cover recreates the 10th anniversary design. Inside, we have again reprinted Nitwits or Martyrs? — still as sharp and recognisable now as it was in 1960 — along with the very first Broadsheet from February 1959. That first issue set

a tone we still recognise: practical, enthusiastic, slightly improvised, and driven by people who simply cared enough to do something.

What stands out most, reading across the decades, is continuity.

The names change, the challenges change, and the canals themselves continually demand attention — breaches, culverts, stoppages, restoration, funding, maintenance. Yet the underlying thread remains the same: a community prepared to give its time, knowledge and energy so that these waterways continue to exist not just as heritage, but as living places.

If this is indeed the 700th Broadsheet, it is not really a celebration of a number. It is a celebration of everyone who has written, typed, stapled, edited, delivered, spoken, organised, restored, fundraised and stuffed — over more than six decades.

And if it turns out not to be exactly the 700th?

That hardly matters. The important thing is that Broadsheet is still here — still being produced, still being read, and still recording the story of the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal Society as it continues.

Max



# Chairwoman's Remarks

Belated New Year's greetings to you. Hopefully 2026 has been kind to you so far and may it continue to do so for the rest of the year.

As usual Phil has lined up lots of speakers for the rest of the year which I am looking forward to seeing and hearing. I was pleased to see such a good turnout for our January talk especially considering the snow that we'd had a couple of days before. I was anxiously checking the weather and would have cancelled had more snow been forecast. I'm looking forward to Andy and Helen Tidy's talk this month – and of course hopefully some jam.

The continuous updates from CaRT continue apace – and sadly the Staffs and Worcs seem to be taking its fair share of emergency stoppages, along with maintenance work. There are updates in this edition on Penkridge and the Llangollen breach. A friend pointed out to me that the canal network was a bit like Trigger's Broom – that whilst it is 250 years old, that not all of the network was of that age. I concede the point, but it's probably doing a lot better than many "modern" highways and byways, even with a limited budget. Also like many modern roads it is probably carrying more traffic than was ever dreamed possible when built. Whilst it is easy to complain and CaRT do need to be held accountable, I'm glad I'm not trying to juggle budgets and expectations of so many different stakeholders.

Whilst I'm sure many of you have been involved in some way with the canals for many years (a lot longer than me certainly as I'm a relative newbie), I did find it strange hearing the Chief Exec of CaRT being introduced as Campbell Robb and not Richard Parry.

The committee has been meeting regularly, mainly online with some in person meetings. If anyone feels that they can contribute to the Society in anyway, I promise that being a committee member isn't onerous and we're a friendly bunch. There are quite a few posts up for grabs, and a committee member without portfolio would be welcome.

Finally, I would like to thank Liz Osborne for all of her support over the years of the Society. Liz has resigned her role as Vice President of the Society and whilst I am sure that we will continue to see her at social meetings and gatherings I wanted to ensure that her hard work for the Society over many years is acknowledged.

I hope to see members at the Society Meetings in Bradmore over the coming months and if there is anything you would like to raise or discuss you can email or telephone me.

Rhian



# Meeting Report : October : The Staffs & Worcs Canal , Historical A-Z

A full house was entertained and educated by our own Julian Souter's presentation of a Staffs&Worcs Alphabet. Every letter was covered from **A for Act of Parliament** to **Z for Zachariah Brewster** in a most comprehensive way.

For each letter Julian presented his findings on an aspect of the Canal's early history, explaining the intricacies of having an Act passed for the construction of the works all the way to information about Zachariah of Coven Heath.

One or two mysteries were explored including the question of the first lock ; was it really at Compton? Julian has put a great deal of effort and time in researching this much asked question. There was also the milepost mystery : they were mentioned in early Canal Company Minutes but were they ever put in place and, if so, what's happened to them?

He has also studied the working diaries of several of the engineers and contractors employed on the canal, giving a day to day account of work and progress on the undertaking.

Geology and water supply and their effects on the canal route and features were explained and social

history explored – several characters were illiterate and 'signed' for their wages with X.

Altogether this fascinating talk gave us an idea of the sheer amount of research that Julian has put into his project in many different places – it's surprising how much can be discovered in graveyards as well as in archives!

As a result of Julian's talk, I for one am looking forward eagerly to the publication of the book next/this year as I'm sure many more of you are.

Phil Clayton



Do you have an article  
you'd like to submit  
for inclusion in  
**BROADSHEET ?**

The deadline for  
Issue 701 is  
**Friday 24th April 2026**



# The Whitchurch Breach: what happened, what it means, and what comes next

In the early hours of 22 December, a major breach occurred on the Llangollen Canal near New Mills Lift Bridge, west of Whitchurch. At approximately 4.14am, a section of the canal carried on a raised embankment collapsed without warning, rapidly releasing water into surrounding fields and leaving a long stretch of channel almost completely dry.

Initial reports described a “sinkhole” some 50 metres long. It was later confirmed that the failure was caused by the collapse of an earth embankment more than 200 years old, just short of the junction with the Whitchurch Arm.

Two narrowboats were swept into the breach as the water escaped, while another was left precariously suspended on the edge of the void. Several further boats were stranded on the exposed canal bed. Emergency services, together with Canal & River Trust (CRT) staff and specialist contractors, were quickly on site. Between ten and fifteen people were evacuated from boats and moorings along the affected length. It was later described as “very fortunate” that no one was injured.





### Securing the canal

During the daylight hours of 22 December, emergency measures were put in place to stabilise the area and prevent further loss of water. Temporary dam boards, barriers and exclusion zones were installed, and the canal was closed between bridges 31A and 28, extending up to Lock 6 at Grindley Brook.

Despite these efforts, water continued to escape into surrounding land, raising concerns about flooding and the wider environmental impact. By 23 December, temporary dams had been constructed to isolate the breached section, allowing pumps to be used to maintain water levels on either side.

One of the boats affected, Pacemaker, had been left hanging over the edge of the collapse. Following careful preparation, specialist winching

operations successfully moved and refloated the vessel away from danger. The two boats washed into the breach itself, Sefton and Ganymede, are being recovered after the edge of the hole was reprofiled into a gentler slope to allow controlled extraction.

CRT has also stressed the importance of maintaining water flows around the breach, not only for boats downstream but because the Llangollen Canal forms part of the wider network used to convey fresh water for public supply.

### A long road to recovery

While immediate safety concerns have been addressed, the longer-term picture is sobering. CRT has confirmed that a full investigation into the cause of the failure is under way. Earth embankment collapses are rarely the result of a single factor, and the Trust

has said it will publish a summary of its findings once investigations are complete.

Rebuilding the embankment and restoring navigation is expected to be a complex and costly task, likely to take until the end of 2026 and cost several million pounds. Until then, the canal will remain closed through Whitchurch, with significant consequences for boaters, local businesses and the wider waterways economy.

### **Community response**

In the aftermath of the breach, support for those directly affected has been swift and generous. Emergency

accommodation was arranged for displaced boaters in partnership with Shropshire Council, and a fundraising appeal quickly grew far beyond its original modest target.

The response has served as a powerful reminder that canals are not simply heritage features or leisure amenities, but living infrastructure — supporting homes, livelihoods, wildlife, water supply and tourism. As repair plans move forward, many campaigners argue that incidents such as Whitchurch underline the need for sustained, long-term investment in Britain's ageing waterways.

## **Martin Brookes**

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# Lock 38, Penkridge: Bywash Culvert Failure and Subsidence Risk

Navigation on the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal is currently severed at Lock 38 following the collapse of the bywash culvert adjacent to the lock. The failure was identified on 31 December 2025 after debris was observed in the lock tail, triggering investigation and the immediate closure of the canal between Filance Lock and Lock 38.

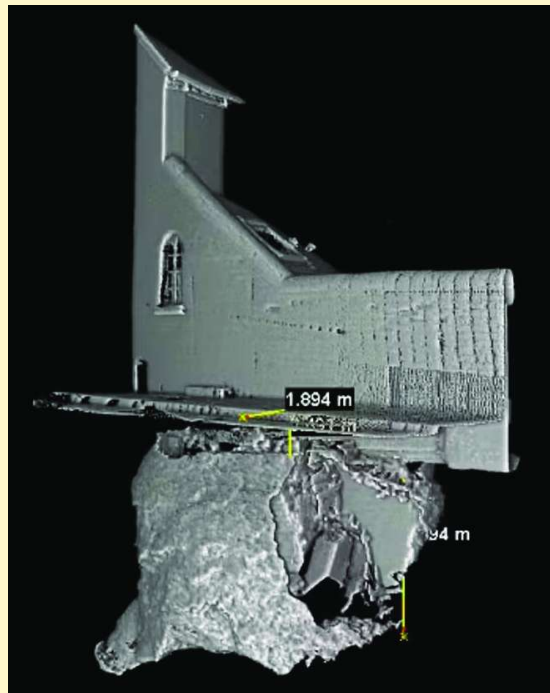
The culvert, which passes beneath the road bridge at Cannock Road and alongside the lock cottage, has collapsed over a significant length. Loss of material has resulted in a large underground void, raising concerns about ground stability beneath both the highway and the adjacent property. As a precaution, the road was closed and the canal isolated while the extent of the damage was assessed.

Stop planks were installed above the top gates to retain upstream levels and prevent further drawdown through the failed structure. Lock 37 was also closed to allow controlled water management. The towpath has remained open throughout.

## Structural condition and stabilisation

Engineering assessments have confirmed collapse of the culvert barrel with associated washout of surrounding infill and undermining of foundations beneath the bridge and the nearby cottage. In response, the void has been stabilised using specialist concrete to arrest further movement and reduce the immediate risk to overlying structures.

Contractors are now clearing





compacted debris from the remaining culvert runs while further investigations continue to establish the original alignment and construction. Once this is confirmed, options for reinstatement will be assessed, including reconstruction along the original line or installation of a replacement culvert through the stabilised ground. At the time of writing, no reopening date has been confirmed.

### Not an isolated event

While the circumstances at Penkrige are serious in their own right, the failure will be uncomfortably familiar to those with long experience of the canal. At Wolverley Court Lock, erosion of the sandstone upon which the



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bywash had been constructed led to loss of support and a prolonged stoppage while more extensive remedial works were undertaken.

In both cases, the initial indicators were relatively modest — debris and abnormal flows — masking a far more extensive loss of material below ground. Once deterioration of this kind begins in structures of this age and form, failure can accelerate rapidly, with impacts extending well beyond the canal prism.

### **Wider concerns**

The Penkrige incident has inevitably attracted wider attention, not least because its effects extend beyond boating. Campaign group Fund Britain's Waterways highlighted the collapse as another example of under-maintained infrastructure affecting roads and properties as well as

navigation, adding it to a growing list of recent failures elsewhere on the network.

For the Staffs & Worcs, the implications are clear. Bywash culverts of this type are unglamorous, largely invisible, and difficult to inspect comprehensively, yet their failure has the potential to undermine locks, bridges, cottages and highways in a single event. Penkrige follows Wolverley Court in demonstrating that these are not theoretical risks.

As with Whitchurch, the issue here is not complexity of design, but age, condition and cumulative deterioration. Two and a half centuries on, some of the canal's most critical structures remain hidden until they fail — and when they do, the consequences are felt far beyond the towpath.



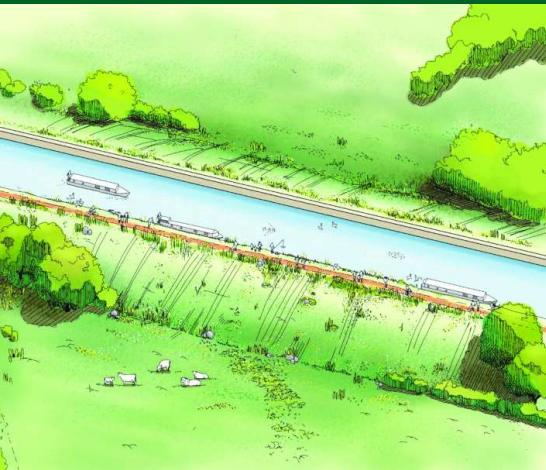
# APMARINE

## Boat Safety Examinations

07938720817

[ajparker1792@gmail.com](mailto:ajparker1792@gmail.com)

# Bridgewater Canal Breach Repair Update - December 2025



*Stabilisation nearing completion, Principal Consultant appointed, design works underway.*

The Bridgewater Canal Company has confirmed that the repair programme following the New Year's Day breach at Little Bollington has now moved into its next phase, with stabilisation works nearing completion and the formal design process for reinstating the embankment now underway.

As part of this progression, SLR Consulting (formerly Wardell Armstrong) has been appointed as principal consultant to lead on the design and project management of the reinstatement, following a competitive tender process.

Since January, extensive work has been undertaken to protect and secure the canal. Temporary dams, stoplogs and embankment support have stabilised the site, and the unnavigable stretch has been reduced to under half a mile.

In September, the adjoining landowner, the National Trust released its Geo-environmental Site Investigation, undertaken with guidance from Cheshire East Council and the Environment Agency. The report confirmed: "Testing showed that the flood-affected soils at the site do not pose a risk to human health from chemical or microbiological sources."

This enabled full access for specialist surveys, which have now been completed. The results are informing the design process which is underway.

Further targeted ecological and environmental surveys will take place in the coming weeks. Once finalised, these will allow the contractor procurement process to begin. Subject to the outcomes of ecological surveys and engineering design, we envisage

construction works to begin in summer 2026 with a completion by the end of 2026.

SLR Consulting said: “We’re pleased to support the Bridgewater Canal Company as this project moves into the design and planning phase. With our experience in civil engineering and canal infrastructure, we look forward to helping restore this historic stretch of the Bridgewater Canal.”

Peter Parkinson, Managing Director of the Bridgewater Canal Company, said:

“We recognise how important the canal is to boaters, local residents and the wider Cheshire Ring. We’re pleased to have appointed SLR Consulting as principal consultant; their extensive experience in civil infrastructure and canal projects will be invaluable as we move into the next phase of these complex repairs. We remain committed to restoring navigation and will continue to keep everyone updated as plans develop.”

# PHIL JONES

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# "NITWITS OR MARTYRS?"



The Martyr

The Nitwit

*(reprinted from December '60)*

Why is it that so many otherwise intelligent women make the fatal mistake of taking an interest in their husband's hobbies?

The wife of an angler sits for hours on a fly-infested bank with the picnic basket, wireless, and everlasting knitting; the motor maniac's wife picks up nuts and bolts and spanners, talks about carburettors, and is left with greasy overalls and oily dusters to wash whilst he slips off for a run to try the engine. Even the gardener's wife can't enjoy the

lawn properly after she has finished weeding, in case the deck-chair marks the lawn.

But the most wholesale, full-time hobby of all — the Boat Husband — takes the cake. I have one.

From the first step on board all is changed. Gone are the days of stairs, cupboards, rooms, windows, or floors, and henceforth they are companionways, lockers, cabins, sidelights and decks. Then at night you lie awake for hours trying to memorise about ropes (or are they warps?) and knots and hitches,

sheepshanks — and when does a bend become a hitch, or is that a granny?

When the boat is laid up for the winter there are bilges to be cleaned, the hull to be scrubbed down before painting, varnishing to be done, and anti-fouling to be plastered in every nook and cranny under the hull. The skipper is busy with the engine, so he can't help with these jobs!

Comes the spring and the urge to get afloat. Bedding, crockery, utensils, fuels, Calor gas, food, etc., etc., have to be taken by car as near to the boat as possible and transhipped — but skipper can't help, the engine has to be looked at. You dump everything on board, park the car in a convenient safe place, undo the mooring lines, stow the mooring pins and push off hard, scrambling aboard whilst Skip handles the wheel.

This makes Skip thirsty, so before "cheesing" ropes on fore and aft decks a *cuppa* is needed, and whilst still falling over things trying to get them stowed away comes a cry from Skip — "Lock ho!" He drops you at the nearest bridge so you can run along the towpath and get the lock ready to save the boat hanging about.

There always seems to be a lock at a pretty little village you would like to explore, but as Skip always says:

*"We can explore on the way back. It is a pity not to push on whilst the engine is behaving."*

There are a couple of letters to be written before the next village and a 'phone call he forgot to make, and "whilst you are there you may as well bring a tin of oil and a few extra cans of beer. Don't forget the paper." Meanwhile he looks at the engine and on your return, "Be an angel and take the wheel — the tail-shaft needs greasing."

In the morning Skip warms the engine whilst you lift away the well covers, mop down decks and sides, wash up the breakfast things in between casting the boat off and setting away.

All the time you are unconsciously acquiring the vocabulary of the canal by constant use (and surreptitious peeping into certain glossaries in canal books). If you let Skip down by standing with your mouth open when something is mentioned in the jargon, you are extremely unpopular.

You take photographs, pass him the binoculars, make *cuppas* and cortices every half hour, fill up fuel

tanks, see the water tank is kept full, pass spanners, take the wheel whilst he looks at the engine (usually at washing-up time), work the locks, and shop for “something jolly good for the inner man”.

The crew comprises of skipper, engineer, navigator, cook, galley slave, cabin boy, secretary and cleaner-cum-handyman. On our boat skipper is just skipper — I am all the rest.

Invariably at some lock or bridge someone will come along and be heard to remark:

*“You’ve got a nice boat there — I suppose it takes a lot of hard work to maintain her?”*

to which Skip replies:

*“Not a bit of it. Get yourself a good engine, keep the boat well painted, varnished and anti-fouled during the winter months, and there’s nothing else to do but enjoy life.”*

M.E.M.



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## Pontcysyllte, rebuilt in

**LEGO**

For most readers of Broadsheet, the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct needs no introduction. Its scale, audacity and continuing function are long familiar. What is new, however, is the medium through which that achievement is now being interpreted.

A six-foot LEGO model of the aqueduct has been created as the centrepiece of a campaign to see Pontcysyllte adopted into LEGO's official global collection. If successful, it would become the first Welsh landmark represented in the range, placing a working canal structure alongside a small number of highly symbolic UK sites already immortalised in bricks.

The model is not a caricature. All eighteen piers are represented, along

with the River Dee below, the water channel itself and a narrowboat making the crossing. Smaller versions — including an 18-inch display model — allow the structure to be rebuilt at a domestic scale, transforming a piece of civil engineering into something that can be assembled, examined and understood through construction.

### **More than novelty**

This is not simply a case of a famous structure being miniaturised. The choice of LEGO has a strong local resonance. Between 1962 and 2000, LEGO was manufactured and packed in Wrexham, making the area the long-term UK base for the company's production and model-making. For many, the bricks used to recreate Pontcysyllte will be materially

connected to the same industrial landscape that produced the aqueduct itself.

A large LEGO version of the aqueduct is already on display at Ty Pawb Museum, created as part of The Bridge that Connects — a community project delivered by Glandŵr Cymru in partnership with the Canal & River Trust in Wales. The project has used creative approaches to explore the World Heritage Site's history, engineering and social impact across communities along the canal corridor.

### **Reaching different audiences**

The campaign to bring the model into LEGO's official collection requires 10,000 public votes. That threshold matters less for what it produces than for what it demonstrates: that canal heritage can still reach beyond its established audience.

The model is due to be exhibited at the Institute of Civil Engineers in London, and has already been used as an educational tool with local schools. By engaging with the aqueduct through building rather than description, younger audiences are being introduced to the principles of structure, load, alignment and scale in a way that drawings and photographs rarely achieve.

### **Translation, not simplification**

For those already familiar with

Pontcysyllte, the LEGO project is not about re-explaining the aqueduct, but about how industrial heritage is made legible to a different generation. LEGO is a material that younger audiences — and many adults — understand instinctively. They may be comfortable assembling complex structures from interlocking plastic components, while having little experience of working with sand, cement, or masonry.

Re-creating the aqueduct in LEGO does not attempt to replicate materials or methods, but it does communicate structural ideas that would otherwise remain abstract. Piers, spans, alignment and load paths become visible through assembly. In that sense, the model acts as a bridge between modern, modular thinking and the physical realities of historic construction.

For canals that increasingly depend on public understanding as much as public use, this approach has value. It does not pretend that brick and stone can be replaced by plastic, but it acknowledges that familiarity with one form of construction can be used to illuminate another. If building the model prompts even a small number of people to look again at how the real structure was put together — in stone blocks, iron plates and mortar — then it has done its job.

# BROADSHEET No. 1 FEBRUARY 1959

**With this being an anniversary edition the follows a reprint of the first Broadsheet.**

An historic event this — our first Broadsheet! May all our future publications bear news of success and fortune for the Society.

Strict economy in outlay of expenses necessitates that matters are briefly described; but if there is anything unsaid, please do not hesitate to contact any member of the Committee, whose names and addresses appear at the end.

It would need many suitable adjectives to describe the success of our first meeting, for success it really was. A total attendance of 81 people resulted from our initial appeal for supporters.

At 7.30 p.m. on that night (Friday, February 6th) we had 7 paid-up members. At 10 p.m., there were no less than 57 paid-up members — a truly magnificent response, especially considering the cold, damp and foggy weather. It was especially pleasing to see those who had travelled long distances; we do thank them and hope to see them as often as possible.

The meeting room had been festooned with many pictures, cuttings, and various canal impedimenta, from which everyone seemed to find at least one or two things of interest. Particularly noticeable was the friendly atmosphere, and the ability of our regular waterway enthusiasts to seek out new faces and make a few introductions.

The Acting Chairman spoke for roughly 20 minutes, outlining the policy of the Staffs. & Worcs. Canal Society. Rules were then read to the meeting by the Acting Secretary, in the hope that, unless anyone present could see anything seriously amiss with them, everyone would agree that the Society was run in accordance with those rules — at least until our first A.G.M. (1st May).

Excellent refreshments followed, during which period our Secretary was, quite literally, inundated with membership applications. 'Twas a gratifying sight! Everything was eventually sorted out, and members were handed their receipts complete with draw ticket.

This draw (see our first circular) is open to the first 50 lady and 50 gentleman members.

**Each winner will have the choice of:**

- A traditionally painted tea-tray
- A pair of windlasses
- A traditionally painted water can
- A book (probably on Telford's life)

Every effort is being made to raise at least 100 members before our next meeting, so do please try and rope in your family and friends also.

Following our break for a cuppa, George Welker gave us a wonderful hour's entertainment with coloured cine films. The films were quite new, the colour and quality being nothing short of magnificent. Thank you, Mr. Welker, on our behalf.

At 10.00 p.m., Mr. Sam Lomas foxed most of us with a quiz and then entertained us with one or two reminiscences.

At 10.15 p.m. the meeting closed and visitors were able to have a general natter.

Please come again, everyone — we shall have more chairs to sit on, more eats to eat, and more good things to see.

### **Next Meeting**

Friday 6th March, 7.30 p.m. Community Room, Merridale Court Flats  
Merridale Road, Wolverhampton

### **Directions**

- **Bus No. 43** to Merridale Court (3 mins walk)
- **Trolley No. 13 or 12**
- **By car:** Ask for Chapel Ash, then bear down Merridale Road

### **Programme**

- **7.30 – 7.45** Chat and inspection of wall-show
- **7.45 – 8.15** Refreshments
- **9.15 – 9.30** Draw
- **9.30 – 10.00** Slide show (*Hotel Boating*)
- **10.00 – 10.15** Another tale
- **10.15 – 10.30** General "natter"

*In between*, the Chairman will give a brief account of affairs up to date.

### **Your Acting Committee**

- **Malcolm Braine** — Chairman
- **David Tomlinson** — Secretary / Treasurer
- **John Garratt**

# Listed warehouse at Wappenshall reopens as canalside café



A Grade II listed canal warehouse at Wappenshall Junction has reopened following an eight-year programme of restoration led by volunteers from the Shrewsbury and Newport Canals Trust.

The building, designed by Thomas Telford in the early nineteenth century, had fallen into a serious state of disrepair before work began. Ivy covered much of the structure, window frames and the external staircase had rotted, and weather ingress was widespread. Despite this, the underlying masonry, walls and foundations were found to be fundamentally sound — a testament to the original construction, more

than 220 years on.

## **An extensive programme of works**

The restoration has involved far more than cosmetic repair. Volunteers undertook drainage works, structural repairs, plastering and the construction of a new car park. Internally, the building has been fitted with underfloor heating, new electrical and water supplies, and a gas installation to serve both space heating and hot water.

Alongside the building works, the Trust also refilled the adjacent East Basin — a major undertaking that took approximately 18 months to complete and restored a key element of the historic canal environment at the junction.

Bernie Jones, chairman of the Trust, said that while the building itself had been in a “parlous state”, the integrity of Telford’s design made restoration possible. He credited the scale and success of the project to the sustained commitment of volunteers over nearly a decade.

## **A practical new use**

The restored warehouse now houses a café, The Welldeck at Wappenshall, which opened in mid-December. It is run by Kal Wood and her daughter

Ellie, with support from volunteers. The interior has been furnished largely with donated items that have been refurbished for reuse, in keeping with the wider ethos of the project.

An upstairs room within the building is intended for group use, meetings and guided walks, extending the function of the site beyond refreshments alone.

Ms Wood has said she hopes the café will act as a gateway to the canal's wider story, particularly for local schools. With wildlife now established in the restored basin — including fish and bats — the site offers opportunities to explore environmental as well as historical aspects of the canal.

### **Heritage in use**

For restoration schemes, the long-term challenge is often not rebuilding historic structures, but finding viable uses for them once restored. At Wappenshall, the warehouse has been returned to active use without compromising its character, while remaining accessible to both visitors and the local community.

The project stands as a reminder that successful canal restoration depends as much on sustained volunteer effort and practical reuse as it does on initial capital works — and that well-built industrial structures can still adapt to modern purposes, given time and commitment.

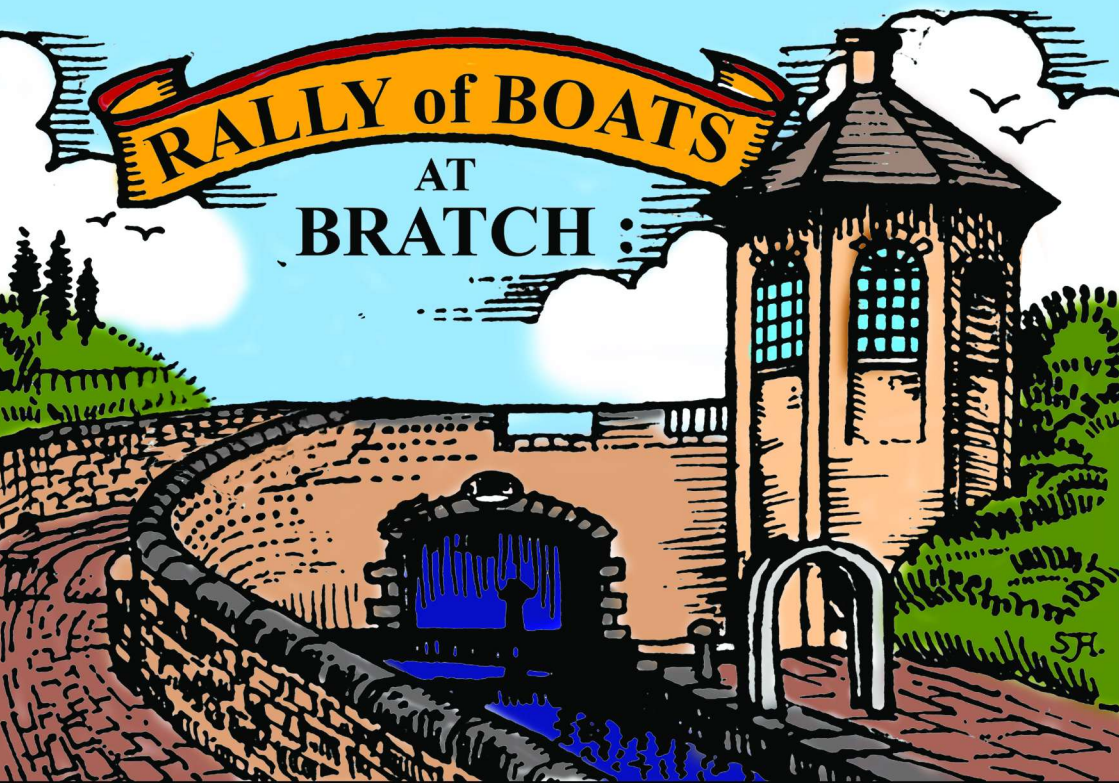
Presented by: **CLIFF TURNER**

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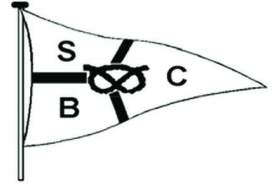
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# Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal Society

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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 9<sup>th</sup> 2026  
Andy & Helen Tidy  
Women of the Waterways (plus jam!)**

**March 9 2026  
John Jackson  
TBC**

**April 13  
Quint Watts  
Tales from a Coroner's Casebook**

**May 11  
Phil Wild  
TBC**

**June 8  
TBC**

## **Local Events**

**Rally of Boats at Bratch**  
Saturday 5th – Sunday 6th September Bratch Lane WV5 8DH

## **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](mailto:wharfinger@blueyonder.co.uk) with your name and email address if you wish to "opt-in."*

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