



# S&N News

**Spring 2007**

[www.sncanal.org.uk](http://www.sncanal.org.uk)

**Issue 26**

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The Shrewsbury & Newport Canals Trust is a Registered Charity, no. 1088706 and a Registered Company, limited by guarantee, no. 4075920.

*Patrons: John Craven OBE & Nick Owen*



*The May Day Weekend Festival & Rally at Norbury Junction brought out the crowds.*

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

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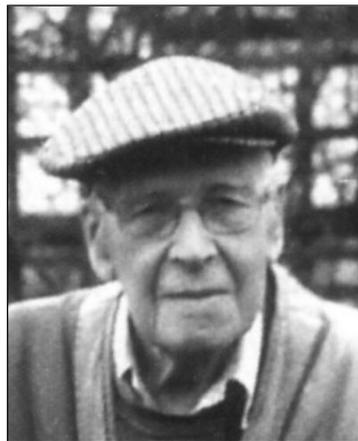
### Tom Manning

It is very sad to report that the Trust's first President, Mr Tom Manning, has died in Newport at the age of 96. The Trust was represented at his funeral by David Adams.

Tom's introduction to canals came as a child with recollections of the Cadbury milk boats at Goldstone Wharf on the Shropshire Union. He moved to Newport in 1929, where he also recalled the occasional boat carrying coal passing through.

An interest in photography began with a box camera before he moved on to a pre-war folding Agfa Speedex Record. Travelling around on a BSA 125 Bantam motorcycle he took photographs of many canals, including many that were not to survive much longer. These have become an invaluable record.

Those he took of the Shrewsbury & Newport in the early 1950s, the negatives of which he donated to the Trust, are an invaluable record of the canal before it was destroyed. Many can be seen on our website.



Tom expressed a wish, at the age of 91, to be on the first boat to travel down to his home town of Newport. Sadly, I'm sure he really knew inevitably, it was not to be, but when that event does take place we will remember him.

*Steve Bean*

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## Membership

We are very pleased to welcome as individual and family members:

Simon & Annette Wain & Family of Brewood  
Frances & Richard Macpherson of Shrewsbury  
Michelle & Derek de Monye & Family of Telford  
Tim Owens of Oswestry  
Anthony Gawthrop & Janis Gwynn of Shrewsbury  
Graham & Jean Hobson of Newport  
Linda & Anthony Clegg of Crewe  
Elizabeth Young of Telford  
Richard Johnson & Gail Sowden of Manchester  
Anne Lindop of Crewe  
Barbara Myatt of Market Drayton  
Timothy & Stephanie Bagnall & Family of Telford

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## Dates for Your Diary

Please also watch the website for updates and further details (Events page).

- ◆ **Saturday 16 June 2007** - Trip to Anderton Boat Lift & Ellesmere Port
- ◆ **Saturday 30 June 2007** – Withington Village Fete \*\*
- ◆ **Saturday 15 July 2007** – Upton Magna Summer Fete \*\*
- ◆ **Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2007** - 7.30p.m - Trustees' meeting – Newport \*
- ◆ **Saturday 21 July 2007** – Newport Show \*\*
- ◆ **Saturday & Sunday 8/9 Sept** – Ellesmere Boat Rally \*\*
- ◆ **Saturday 15 Sept 2007** – Trip to Dudley & Netherton Tunnels – see page 24
- ◆ **Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> Sept 2007** - 7.30p.m - Trustees' meeting – Shrewsbury \*

\* Please contact the Secretary to confirm date and location if you would like to attend. Also note that members may be asked to withdraw for certain confidential items

\*\* The Trust will have a stand at this event. If you can help erect/man/dismantle the stand please contact Tam Hazan (details inside front cover)

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## **In Brief...**

### ◆ **Shrewsbury Northern Corridor Masterplan**

Following publication of the Shrewsbury Northern Corridor Masterplan and Implementation Strategy a six week public consultation period was run, which will have concluded by the time you read this.

The Trust was disappointed that the report took a very limited view on the role of the canal in any future development of this area, effectively saying that whilst they believe the canal restoration to be “a good thing” they see it as far too challenging and expensive to be a reality and so not something they could build into their proposals in a big way.

As a result the Trust has succeeded in obtaining meetings with SABC senior officers to go through the report in detail and for us to show them exactly how the canal restoration could become much more pivotal in a full regeneration project for this area of the town. As S&News goes to press these meetings have not been concluded, but we hope that more encouraging news can be given in the next issue.

### ◆ **Electronic S&News**

A number of members have raised the subject of receiving S&News by email instead of a printed copy through the post. Clearly this has an advantage to the Trust in saving the cost of printing and posting, and to the member by receiving it up to two weeks earlier and in colour!

If you would prefer to receive S&News as an Adobe Acrobat attachment to an email, please email ‘[news@sncanal.org.uk](mailto:news@sncanal.org.uk)’ with the subject as ‘Email S&News’

### ◆ **Telford & Wrekin Flex Card**

Members who live in, or close to, the Telford & Wrekin area that have, or want to get, a Flex Card (Leisure discount Card) may be interested to know that it now entitles holders to get 40% off Ironbridge Gorge Museum passports. The cost of a card for an adult is just £5 for residents of the borough and £7.50 for others.



### ◆ **Charles Flint**

Last June, Trustees were saddened to hear the news of the death of member Charles Flint of Bayston Hill. However, following his wishes, the retiring collection at the funeral service was donated to the work of the Shrewsbury & Newport Canals Trust.

It has been decided that some of the money be used for a memorial seat, to be positioned at a significant and attractive point alongside the canal. It may also be possible to fund a fingerpost, highlighting the start point of the S&N at Norbury Junction.

The Trust sends its condolences to the Flint family, and also thanks them for the contribution towards the restoration and regeneration of the Shrewsbury & Newport Canal.

#### ◆ **Help S&NCT raise funds.**

If you shop online, why not help the Trust raise funds, at no extra cost, from purchases you would make anyway. By accessing your intended seller via [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) and choosing “Shrewsbury & Newport Canals Trust” as your favoured cause, you can shop with online stores as you would normally, but simply by using the links from this site first each retailer will make a cashback donation to the Trust.



For example, spend £25 with WH Smith and 3.5% will be donated. You will have raised £0.88, at no extra cost to your purchase. Make a purchase from Amazon and 2.5% will be donated. Insure your car with The AA and raise £30.00, or purchase a mobile phone from Vodafone and earn £29.00, and so on.

There are currently 400+ Brand Name retailers and to raise funds you just use the links from the easyfundraising site first - it's that simple!

#### ◆ **Assault & Robbery on the Shrewsbury Canal**

At the Shropshire Quarter sessions William Willday and John Morris were charged with assault and robbery of David Davies of Upton under Haughmond near Shrewsbury. Willday was the Captain, Morris the navigator, and Davies a passenger on a canal boat owned by Messrs Pickford & Co. The offence occurred whilst the boat was proceeding from the Castle Foregate wharf at Shrewsbury towards Uffington during the hours of darkness. As the boat approached a tunnel on the canal it met a coal boat crewed by witnesses Messrs Wycherley and Peplow. The manacled passenger Davies screamed for help and was freed when the boat was eventually boarded. Both the accused were sentenced to fourteen years transportation.

*Salopian Journal 25 October 1837.*

*[Many thanks to member Derek Jones of Lichfield for spotting this item in the Shropshire Family History Society Journal, to the SFHS Journal editor Geoff Culshaw for permission to reproduce it and to George Spender of Shrewsbury who originally submitted the item to SFHS Journal.]*

## Norbury Festival & Rally

The fourth Norbury Festival & Rally was held over the May Day holiday weekend. You can see from the cover photograph (there are more on the website) how busy it was. Alison Frizzell at the Junction Inn and Simon & Lisa Jenkins at Norbury Wharf Limited agreed that it was the best so far.

Over 25 boats attended, including 6 'heritage' working boats. Twenty different stalls were taken on land whilst the 'Cheese Boat' sold 600 cheeses.

Over the two days over 100 members of the public came on the trip boat, some taking to the canal for the very first time.

Thanks go to everyone who attended; those who manned the carpark; steered the boat; put up and down stands etc., etc.; entertained throughout the event; and to the sponsors, Waterways World, Towpath Talk, West Midlands Co-Op, Norbury Wharf Limited, Peek Products and Price Fellows. Planning now begins for next year's event!



♦ **Found** - An item of gold jewellery, probably from a charm bracelet, was found at the Norbury Festival. If you think it is yours please contact Steve Bean.

## **Annual General Meeting and Members' Day.**

The AGM and Members' Day took place on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2007 at Lilleshall. There was a good attendance of members and we were pleased to entertain the mayors of Telford & Wrekin, Shrewsbury & Atcham and Newport Town as well as Mark Pritchard MP and the new High Sheriff of Shropshire, Mrs Meriel Afia.

For those members who were unable to attend, the following items may be of interest:

### **◆ Chairman's Address**

In my address last year I spoke of 'pushing boundaries', about the significant progress that the Trust had made in our efforts to promote the restoration of the canal. I talked about developing a strategic vision and promoting a greater sense of purpose; to get greater recognition of our restoration ambitions; to foster and establish working relationships, partnerships and alliances with those that share our vision. I was also able to report on a major shift within British Waterways' thinking regarding their attitude toward the Shrewsbury; mostly as a result of our meetings with Derek Cochrane, Regeneration Director of British Waterways.

So, what have we achieved?

Last month the Third Review of Inland Waterways Restoration and Development Projects in England, Wales and Scotland was published by IWAAC. The report highlights 23 schemes, from a total of 118, rated as "Nationally Significant". The Shrewsbury and Newport is one of those 23. Significantly only 6 of these projects match the required criteria for "Key Benefits", i.e. a Strategic Link and/or extension to the national connected system, urban regeneration and rural regeneration. Our project is one of those 6. Remember this should be seen in the context of at least 117 other projects in UK.

Their commentary on the scheme reads: "Council welcomes progress by Trust since the last review on this outstanding heritage waterway. Feasibility study and detailed engineering report completed (showing that full restoration is feasible in engineering terms) and partnership being formed. Implementation issues, including water supply and wildlife being considered with care. Privately financed development issues expected to provide about 25% of restoration costs but success in obtaining regional/national funding will be a key. An early priority should be the conservation of the surviving heritage structures on the route. A successful restoration would be a significant addition to the national system and the waterway heritage."

So there you have it. This is the considered and concise view of the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council. This time last year the Shrewsbury and Newport Canal did not figure in any of these deliberations.

It clearly describes the S&N as “an outstanding heritage waterway.” The report recognises the opportunities for both urban and rural economic and social regeneration. It talks about strategic partnerships.

I don't need to stand here this morning and preach about the benefits of restoring the canal or even how important the re instated canal will be to the communities it will once again serve; after all if you don't buy into this vision it is unlikely that you would have turned out today. What I do want to emphasise this morning is the importance of our relationship with the Local Authorities. Government is at last recognising the value of this project in sustaining their own economic and social regeneration policies. As a Trust we are cajoling and enthusing our local authorities at every opportunity, but we need our local politicians to demonstrate their support, whether it is in planning policy, facilitating or by giving us a seat at the discussion tables.

In Shrewsbury we have fought for and achieved real recognition from SABC in their core policy documents, but yet we failed to persuade the planning officers and committee to incorporate the canal in their development of the Sports Village. A major opportunity lost. Whilst we are happy that the canal will be restored through the curtilages of the Flax Mill scheme and indeed that the canal is openly considered as a major artery in the North Shrewsbury' regeneration, the Borough have been less than helpful in encouraging the developers of the MEB site to consider canal reinstatement.

In Telford we are encouraged by the proposed core policies in the Local Development Framework and it is vitally important that the Wappenshall site is not endangered by allowing the redevelopment and conversion of the warehouses. Officers still need persuading however that anything other than adaptive reuse of the buildings could prejudice the whole canal restoration.

The past fifteen months or so has seen an acceleration in working party activity, specifically around Lubstree and Wappenshall. We have been awarded a grant of £7,000 from the lottery funded ‘Awards For All’ scheme, and this money will be used to look in detail at the feasibility of restoring two strategic sections of the canal. The Trust recognises the need to give the membership and our supporters a very tangible sign that the canal restoration is under way. I believe that we can achieve this at both Wappenshall and Lubstree by getting a boat on the water. I'm going to stick my neck out here... ..I want to be able to stand here in front of you all in twelve months time and be able to eulogise about the first trip boat on the Shrewsbury and Newport canal in over sixty years! Believe me. . . we are going to do it.

I suspect a few of you may have spotted my boat on the main line or on the Welsh canal sporting the ‘Shrewsbury Canal Wharfingers’ cabin sides. This has encouraged so much enquiry and debate, and hopefully a few new members; but it

has also served to remind me of how much promoting we still have to do. I've had people living in Shrewsbury walking the towpath and stopping and telling me that they had no idea of the existence of the canal.

Finally. ... a hobby horse of mine. You pick up and read any of the contemporary press that focuses on the Inland Waterways and there are constant references to restoration schemes for derelict or long forgotten canals. You may recall earlier that IWAAC referred to some 118 or so canal restoration schemes. One of the things that we set out to achieve with the Shrewsbury and Newport Canal was to get some differentiation between our scheme and all the others, all of which are standing at the same funding trough! We've thought long and hard about this and our stated aim to work with the private sector to draw down perhaps up to 25% of the costs does set us apart from a lot of other schemes. However there is something far more generic that we need to address. In the dim and distant past I was fortunate to have been taught by Barrie Trinder at the Ironbridge Institute and one of the things that really stuck in my mind and has remained in my own philosophy was Barrie's thoughts on 'adaptive re use'. Throughout the 1990s I was fortunate to serve with Roger Evans, our Mayor here today from Shrewsbury, on the Borough and County Planning and Development Control Committees and we were constantly faced with schemes that invariably involved old and tired structures that come to the end of useful life, structures that were the subject of demolition or very major surgery. My first base was always 'how can this be adaptively re used?' If it was demonstrated to me that it just was not feasible then fine, I was relaxed about the scenario.

In order to realise our shared dream of once again seeing the Shrewsbury and Newport canal meandering through the Vale of Shrewsbury around Haughmond Hill and into the county town I am of the opinion that we should be talking, not about restoration, but reinstatement, revitalising and re-engineering the navigation; adapting and reusing both the built and natural environment. In recent months I have been fortunate to have visited Stalybridge, and indeed yesterday I was involved in a meeting canalside in Skipton on the Leeds and Liverpool and it is really exciting to see how the built environment has been adaptively reused to facilitate real sustainable regeneration, attracted millions of pounds worth of inward investment whilst celebrating the original structures.

You will be hearing later from John Yates and I'm sure he will have his own thoughts on this, but I really do feel that we need to be innovative in what we are doing.....looking at what can be achieved with the structures at Wappenshall, Lubtree, Withington, Norbury, Berwick and at the Flaxmill .....simply by thinking laterally and not by being afraid to start again if necessary. It may only be in the subtle change or use of the English Language in describing what we are looking to achieve, but it will set us apart.

Thank you for listening and I hope that after the AGM some of you may feel able to express your opinions on anything I have broached today.

#### ◆ **Income**

A breakdown of Trust income for the year ended 30 September 2006 was given:

Subscriptions & Member' Donations	£4636.50
Other donations and bequests	£ 645.00
Grant received	£7000.00
Sales	£ 221.93
AGM Lunch & Raffle	£ 483.15
Interest	£ 102.42

#### ◆ **Special Resolution**

The special resolution put to the meeting to amend clause 3 of the Trust's Objects as set out in the Memorandum of Association, 'To promote **and undertake** the restoration.' was unanimously passed.

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#### **"Dog and Master" Caption Competition**

At the Norbury Festival Eric Cox, Trustee and one of the Festival organizers, stood still for too long while close to the face painter's stall.

There will be a small prize to the person who gives the best answer, in the opinion of the judges, to the question, 'What are the thoughts of the one on the right?'



Answers by post or email to Steve Bean (details inside front cover).

## **Report on Progress Made on Acceptance of the Trusts Plans in the Local Authorities Core Strategies**

In my last report on progress in issue 20 I made reference to the importance of getting the Local Authorities (LA) to recognise the benefits the canal can deliver and that positive strategies and policies should be included in the Local Development Framework and Development Control Documents to enable the canal reinstatement. The new planning procedures covered by the Governments new policy referred to as the Compulsory Purchase Planning Initiative is aimed at speeding up the process of land assembly, land release, and land allocation for housing, employment, and infrastructure development. The main emphasis is on housing, which for a number of years has fallen short of the national requirements resulting in the explosion of escalating house prices.

For those of you who are not familiar with the new system it is as follows: - The LAs are firstly required to prepare provisional Core Strategies for all aspects covered by planning. The resulting document showing options, with the LA's preferred option indicated. This document is then the subject of the first round of public consultation, inviting comments. A bureaucratic procedure that is difficult for the average layperson to get their heads around and give a response. In principle these responses are intended to lead to amendments with the revised document again being subject to a second round of public consultation. In principle again the responses are intended to lead to further amendments included in the final document which is subject to the third consultation, but at this point the die is cast this final document having already been entered into examination stage, unaltered, to go before a Government appointed inspector who eventually decides if the Core Strategies are sound or unsound, based upon bureaucratic measures dictated by Government bureaucrats. At this stage the persons, groups, companies who have made representations at the consultation stages have the option to send a representation of their case to the examiner. The examiner having studied all the documents submitted then prepares a list of questions for the LA to answer, in what is referred to as a Position Statement (PS) document. This is then made available to all the respondents to scrutinise and prepare their response, to the answers given in the PS by the LA. At this stage the respondents also have the option to give notice that they wish to attend the examinations, although this does not give any more advantage than the written statement. The next stage is a pre-examination meeting to which all respondents are invited and where the examiner indicates how the examination process is to proceed. The examiner decides the Main Matters (MM), which are to be the subject of the examination, each of which being the subject of an informal round table examination session. To make this practical by keeping numbers down groups and individuals are requested to club together and elect a spokes person to sit at the table, although all can attend the event as spectators and can if invited by the

inspector ask a question or give a view. On the basis of the respondents submissions put before the examiner it is decided which respondents are invited to attend which sessions.

The Telford & Wrekin (T&W) pre-examination meeting was held on the 6<sup>th</sup> March and the T&W Position Statements were made available by the 30<sup>th</sup> March deadline. The comments in response were required to be submitted by the 24<sup>th</sup> April. Out of the six main MM sessions we have been invited to sit on three: Session 2 MM5 - The Spatial Distribution of Employment, Session 3 MM3c – The Spatial Distribution of Housing – Newport and Session 3A MM3A – The Spatial Distribution of Houses – Telford. The two on housing are in respect of our proposed housing developments at Islington Newport and at Wappenshall Telford both of which are planned to help fund the canal in those areas. The session on employment is in relation to the jobs the canal has the potential to create.

It was not until September 2005 that the Trust became aware by chance of this new planning procedure and its implications for the Trust's plans. This was in connection with a question asked of T&W planning officers about the possibility of a planning application being approved for the proposed housing development at Islington, intended to fund the A41 bypass crossing. As it turned out we had missed out on the first consultation and were within one month of the deadline on the second consultation for response submissions. After a very quick learning curve of what was involved a strong submission was duly prepared and approved by the Trust Board and delivered one day before the deadline.

When T&W's final document, to be put before the examiner, was made available it was disappointing to find that all our plans and requests for inclusion had been totally ignored. Considering T&W have the longest stretch of canal, 21 kilometres, the only mention the canal was given was for Newport, quote: *Development associated with promoting the town as a visitor destination, including the reinstatement of the Shrewsbury-Newport canal, where this demonstrates a direct benefit to the economy of the town and sustainability of its central-area in particular will be considered.* In response to this a strong case was prepared to go before the examiner quoting Government policies and guidelines to which LA planners are expected to work, but had been ignored by T&W. Also the Inland Waterways Association Advisory Council, the main adviser to Government on canal restoration, has advised how canals can enable urban and rural regeneration, and has been commended to LAs by Government, was also ignored. This Trust's response resulted in the examiner asking the question quote: *Should reconstruction of the Shrewsbury and Newport Canal be included as a strategic proposal, given the suggestion that it might lead to over 1000 new jobs, and tourism-based regeneration in the north of the Borough (including Newport)? How firm is its potential funding?* T&W's Position Statement comments in answer to this question were very defensive and negative

towards the canal their main comments being quoted in italics below:-

*5.5.3 - It is noted from the feasibility study that there is a requirement to secure a substantial amount of capital investment (£86 million). As the identified funding sources are to be from a wide range of external organisations, it is the opinion of the Council that it is for the Shrewsbury & Newport Canals Trust to prove that sufficient funding is realistically obtainable to enable work to commence during the plan period.*

NOTE: The plan period extending to 2021 and possibly 2026.

**5.5.3 Our response 1.11** - The Trust submitted a bid to the Lottery Living Landmarks Fund in January 2006 to fund the Inclined Plane and the canal down to Wappenshall Junction i.e. the whole length of the Newport Canal. The submission was congratulated for technical innovation that met the criteria but lost out on inadequate evidence of land assembly and local authority and area community support. It was implied that if these inadequacies were rectified the scheme's merit was such that it would qualify favourably for Lottery funding in the future.

The Trust considers that unless the T&WC Core strategy can demonstrate transparent robust support for the canal as a strategic project for the area it will be a very difficult uphill struggle for the Trust to raise the necessary capital funding. It is a chicken and egg situation and the Trust considers that it is essential that the Planning Support is in place first, other wise it presents a stumbling block to the acquisition of funding. Also the Trust is looking to the Core Strategy to support and enable its strategy to acquire private funding from potential regeneration projects at suitable locations along the route, which in turn Public Funding Organisations are more readily prepared to provide funding to match.

*5.5.6 - Given the still relative uncertainty of the scheme's potential deliverability as well as the current proposals put forward by the Shrewsbury and Newport Canal's Trust; the Council believes that at this point the reconstruction of the Shrewsbury-Newport Canal does not warrant a strategic proposal within the Core Strategy DPD.*

**5.5.6 Our response 1.16** - With voluntary inspired community beneficial projects such as the S&NC it is easy to take the authoritative view that it's a pipe dream that will take decades to achieve and in the end may never happen. The canal is a community beneficial project that deserves the full and unequivocal backing from the Local Authorities who have an undeniable stake in the project. If all stakeholders involved have the combined will and dedication to work in harmony to make it happen, it will happen, and could happen much quicker than one imagines. If this dedicated harmonious approach had been adopted at the time the Trust attempted to initiate a cooperative partnership The Living Landmark lottery bid may well have been successful, as it fitted the criteria of what a living

landmark should be far more accurately than many of the bids that were successful. If it had been successful the Newport Canal would have been funded in total at a stroke.

Many other comments on this MM5 were also challenged with appropriate responses as were the other two main matters MM3c and MM3A.

With regards to Stafford, and Shrewsbury & Atcham, Borough Councils. Not being aware of the new planning procedures until September 2005 we missed out on their consultations process. However a submission was prepared for each and approved by the Trust Board and both were accepted retrospectively. SBC showed keen interest in our proposed plans for their area and were upbeat and positive in their response, but unfortunately their submission to the examiner was declared unsound and they are now starting afresh. The canal project had no bearing on this decision. S&ABC have been more reticent in the early stages as our plans in the Shrewsbury urban area are very expensive and we are looking for the private developments in the area to provide the finance via 106 agreements imposed by the authority, this being the same process used to gain private funding for affordable housing and improvements to infrastructure. The dilemma being, can the pot be big enough to meet all requirements. However based upon Stafford and Lichfield having their submissions declared unsoundness S&AC decided to withdraw their submission and take time to establish how unsoundness is established. Our persistence in pointing out the enhancing qualities our plans for the canal have to offer and the tourist benefits it will deliver for Shrewsbury has had the desired affect and attitudes are becoming more positive and supportive.

The basic problem with this new planning system is that everyone is inexperienced in how best to approach it and operate it and even the examiners are in the same boat. It appears to be over bureaucratic and inflexible with no room for common sense discretion and has countless flaws that need to be ironed out by more sensible amendments. At present the time factors in arriving at the submission to the examiner stage and the time factor involved in going through the whole process again if declared unsound is defeating the whole object of shortening the time required to arrive at land allocations for development. The system is inflexible to the extent that the examiner can only declare soundness or unsoundness based upon bureaucratic dictated criteria and not have the discretion to advise amendments that would prevent the submission being declared unsound i.e. black or white with no shades of gray allowed.

If we can now get T&W out of their entrenched negative attitude towards our plans for the canal in their area we will be in a much stronger position to move the project forward. The chief planning officers for SBC and S&ABC have agreed to meet with me and other representatives of the Trust to establish an agreed cross boarder strategy for the whole canal, based upon our proposed plans. At present

each of the boroughs are ploughing their own furrow and the only coordinating function is being provided by the plans we have developed for the whole canal route. However the approach to the T&W chief planner on the same basis maybe best left until the results of the examination is known, which unfortunately will not be until November.

*D.J.Rogers*

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## **Wappenshall Wharf, 1835-50**

### **Part 1: The wharf and the Sutherland Estates**

*[This article by Peter Brown was originally published in the July 2005 edition of the 'Journal of the Railway & Canal Historical Society', and is reproduced with the kind permission of the author and editor of the Journal. The second part of the article will deal with the trade and the carriers].*

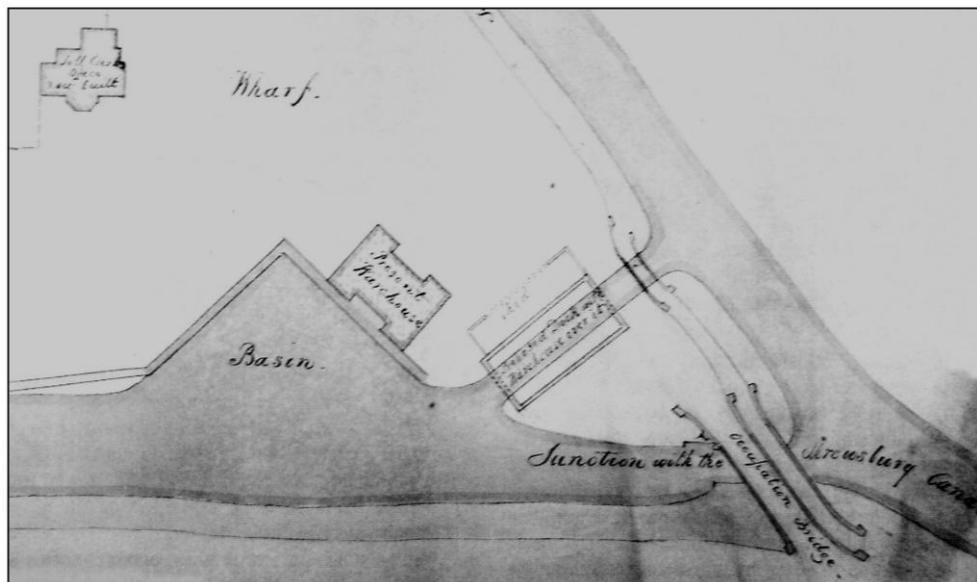
Wappenshall Wharf is situated 2½ miles northeast of the market town of Wellington in east Shropshire. (Map reference: SJ663146) The Shrewsbury Canal, a tub-boat canal from the coal-mining and iron-founding district east of Wellington to the county town, opened in 1797 but there was no canal connection to the rest of the country until the Newport branch of the Birmingham & Liverpool Junction Canal (B&LJC) was opened through from Norbury Junction on the Wolverhampton-Nantwich main line on 2 March 1835.<sup>1</sup> Although the canal from Wappenshall Junction to Shrewsbury had been rebuilt to take full size narrowboats, the section southeast towards the inclined plane at Trench remained unconverted. The junction was therefore the obvious place to build a wharf, both for the transshipment of goods between tub-boats and narrowboats, and for the unloading of goods destined for the Wellington area.

### **The development of the wharf**

At Market Drayton, the Canal Company itself developed the wharf. Not so for Wellington — the major landowner in the area was the Duke of Sutherland<sup>2</sup> and it was the Sutherland estate which developed and managed the wharf. A two storey warehouse of typical appearance was built by the triangular winding hole preparatory for the opening; nothing has been ascertained about who designed this.

As early as July 1835 it was noted that there were delays at Wappenshall because of the lack of room at the wharf and warehouse.<sup>3</sup> In particular, William Botfield, the iron and coal master with works at Old Park and Stirchley, wanted covered accommodation for transshipment. James Loch, the Duke of Sutherland's Principal Agent,<sup>4</sup> considered that the traders should themselves construct the extra

accommodation which they were demanding, paying a rent (which 'should not be excessive') and being subject to strict conditions. He was concerned that it was difficult to judge what was necessary: 'when people trade on another's capital, applications will not be infrequent and always pressing', but on the other hand, if one is too cautious 'the prosperity of the place may be improperly repressed'.<sup>5</sup>



*Plan of Wappenshall Wharf in 1836, showing the basin, the junction with the Shrewsbury Canal and the skew occupation bridge, the toll clerk's office, the 'present warehouse' and the 'proposed dock and warehouse over it'*  
(Shropshire Archives, 972/175)

However, Loch was over-ruled by the Duke himself. A second warehouse was therefore planned, built end-on to the wharf so as to permit further development, as suggested by Loch.<sup>6</sup> Three storeys tall, it was built over a second link between the Newport branch and the Shrewsbury Canal, enabling unloading or transshipment to take place in the dry. Unusually, a cart road passed through the building. The architect and contractor was James Trubshaw, who was a personal friend of the Duke, having worked for the him both at Trentham Hall and Lilleshall Hall, and who also had much canal experience.<sup>7</sup> James Loch appears to have had misgivings about employing Trubshaw, the implication being that he feared the building would be over-designed;<sup>8</sup> at this time he was very concerned about the rate at which the Duke was spending money generally. Construction of the new warehouse started in February or March 1836 and it was in use by January 1838.<sup>9</sup>

The two warehouses, together with the skew towpath bridge and the wharfinger's

house, still stand — the later warehouse is a particularly elegant building, and we can now be grateful that the Duke ignored Loch's advice. The contemporary plan (part of which is reproduced above) also shows a weighbridge. By 1840 an inn, appropriately called the Sutherland Arms, had been built and leased to John Tranter.<sup>10</sup>

### The wharfingers

John Tomlinson was appointed wharfinger early in 1835. From the start he also acted on behalf of the Canal Company, which evidently caused some problems as the following year Loch found it necessary to remind him that he was the Duke's servant, and that his first duty therefore was to the Duke.<sup>11</sup>

The accounts show that Tomlinson was paid £50 in 1842 for 6 months salary and expenses, and £117 in 1843 for 18 months salary and expenses, figures which do not seem consistent. The assistant wharfinger was paid £50 and £97 in the two years, but the periods were not stated. Another man was employed for weighing the iron.

Tomlinson's record-keeping was sometimes criticised, as was the occasional lateness of his traffic returns. Although dismissed at the end of 1845 and held liable for the outstanding arrears totalling £435, one gains the impression that his problem was sloppy accounting and ineffectual debt collection, rather than fraud. The financial mess he left behind him took several months to sort out as it proved necessary to contact each of the carrying companies. He was replaced by Joseph Barlow, who was probably the 'good Bridgewater clerk' referred to in correspondence; also the accounting system was improved.<sup>12</sup>

### Trading accounts

Because the records are incomplete, it is not possible to construct trading accounts for the whole of the period.<sup>13</sup> In summary, the known figures are:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Receipts</i>	<i>Payments</i>	<i>Surplus</i>
1839	303	195	108
1840	521	159	362
1841	593	225	368
1842	579	178	401
1843	507	339	168
1844	484	275	209
1845	486	153	233
1846	495		
1847	731		
1848	630		

1849	486
1850	231

By 1846 the total amount expended on capital works (principally buildings) at Wappenshall was stated to be £5,342.

These accounts show that the wharf was clearly profitable, even after allowing for the investment which had been made in warehouses. However, because the capital cost was so great, the return on capital employed was only about 5%. James Loch was proved right: if the Duke had taken his advice and licensed the traders to make the extra accommodation they wanted, rather than providing it himself (made even more costly by employing a regionally-respected architect/contractor), his investment would have been only about £1,500 instead of over £5,000, his return on capital employed would have been much greater and his financial risk significantly less.

### Payments

The detailed figures for payments are tantalisingly incomplete and do not agree with the totals above because the latter excludes capital items such as ‘making canal basin’. In summary the figures for the two years for which records survive are:

	<i>1842</i>	<i>1843</i>
	£	£
Employees	129	272
‘Making canal basin’	172	-
Maintenance	46	31
Other	<u>8</u>	<u>12</u>
Total payments	355	315
Income	<u>579</u>	<u>508</u>
Surplus for the year	<u>224</u>	<u>193</u>

‘Making the canal basin’ cannot refer to constructing the triangular winding hole, which was done by 1835; perhaps it was enlarged or improved. The amount seems too big for it to refer to dredging.

### Receipts

Analysis of the monthly cash receipts from mid-1841 to mid-1849 shows little seasonal variation. The peak month tended to be March, the lowest months June and July. This appears to have been typical for canal revenues; Pickford’s payments to the Oxford Canal show exactly this pattern, which has been attributed to the timing of manufacturers’ export shipments.<sup>14</sup>

Railways came late to Shropshire. The railways from Shrewsbury to Wellington and on to Stafford (and hence to the main population centres and ports) and to

Oakengates opened on 1 June 1849; the line from Oakengates to a temporary station at Wolverhampton opened on 12 November that year. The immediate effect on the trade at the wharf is clear from the monthly income for 1849:

January	- £48	July	- £49
February	- £41	August	- £54
March	- £63	September	- £28
April	- £48	October	- £24
May	- £45	November	- £23
June	- £38	December	- £25

The railways had a significant, if brief, effect on the revenues in another way: the record year of 1847 included a substantial amount of rails, chairs and other iron products for railway construction.

	<i>Wharfage &amp; warehousing</i>	<i>On delivery of goods</i>	<i>Transshipping under the dock</i>
	d	d	d
For every package not exceeding ½ cwt	1	1	½
above ½ cwt not exceeding 1 cwt	2½	1½	½
above 1 cwt not exceeding 3 cwt	3½	2	1
above 3 cwt not exceeding 6 cwt	5	2½	1½
above 6 cwt	7	3	2
All articles not in packages per ton	7½	4	3
NB Cranage will be charged on all packages exceeding one ton as follows:			d
above 1 ton not exceeding 2 tons			4
above 2 tons not exceeding 2 tons			6
above 3 tons not exceeding 2 tons			8
above 4 tons not exceeding 2 tons			10
above 5 tons not exceeding 2 tons			1 / 2
above 7 tons not exceeding 2 tons			2 / 6

*Table 1: Schedule of charges for wharfage, warehousing and carnage, 31 December 1835*

### **Charges for wharfage, warehousing and cranage**

After the wharf had been open for a year, James Loch somehow gained the impression that no charge was being made for warehousing, writing to William Smith, the Land Steward or Sub-Agent responsible for looking after the Duke of Sutherland's interests in Shropshire: 'You may build warehouses as big as the Wrekin, and if you put no rent on them they will not satisfy the trader.'<sup>15</sup> In fact charges were made according to weight. The schedule as at 31 December 1835 was as set out in Table 1.

A note appended to the schedule stated, 'The person using the cranes must be liable for all damage done to them when moving weights exceeding 6 tons.'

implying that there was more than one crane, and that they were operated by the traders' employees.

The legal basis for these charges must have been queried, because early in 1839 James Loch sought a counsel's opinion from Loftus Lowndes. The answer could not have pleased Loch: the charges for wharfage and warehousing were in excess of those permitted under the Act authorising the canal, and there appeared to be no statutory power for charging for cranage. Normally private businesses could charge whatever they wanted, unlike entities set up by statute (such as the canal company). However, Section 145 of the 1826 Act which authorised the Birmingham & Liverpool Junction Canal explicitly regulated the charges at both canal company and private wharfs. Loch has appended a footnote to Lowndes' letter: 'The dock under the warehouse is private property, not part of the Parliamentary line. I apprehend the Lord may make a charge for that... accommodation.'<sup>16</sup> This seems a dubious interpretation of the legal position.

All users were charged the same fees. In particular, no preference was given to the Lilleshall Company, in which the Duke's uncle, Granville Leveson-Gower, Earl Granville (1773-1846), had a half share.

## **Decline**

The wharf records end in December 1850, implying that the Sutherland Estates ceased their direct management, though no confirmation of this has been found.

Joseph Barlow is shown in the 1851 census as wharfinger, and three wharf labourers are also listed. This seems surprising, seeing that in the more prosperous years of 1842 and 1843 the accounts show that the wharfinger had only two assistants. However, Bagshaw's directory for 1851 lists John Tranter, the licensee of the Sutherland Arms, as the wharfinger; one can speculate that this was under a rental or licence arrangement, rather than as an employee. The Sutherland Estate's rent book for 1860 shows Tranter as paying £200 a year for property at Wappenshall, but does not state what the property comprised.<sup>17</sup>

The 1851 census also lists a boat-builder, John Goodwin.

The decline in the activity at the wharf is evidenced by the Sutherland Arms closing some time between 1856 and 1861.<sup>18</sup> The wharf area continued in commercial use until almost the end of the 20th century, despite the last trade on the canal being in the 1930s. In the 1960s it was a coal yard, and later a haulage firm was located there.

The buildings are now (2005) derelict and, although listed Grade II, need a suitable new use if they are to survive. It is to be hoped that any new use will be compatible with the eventual reopening of this canal.

## Notes and references

I wish to thank Neil Clarke, Edwin Shearing and Ray Shill for their comments and advice.

1. The section of the branch from Wappenshall Junction to Newport opened on 22 January 1835. The rest of the B&LJC system opened on 2 March according to the Company minutes and the notices in the press, but according to the Wappenshall Wharf records, the first boat arrived from Wolverhampton on 28 February, carrying 6¼ tons of goods.
2. George Granville Leveson-Gower (1786-1861) had become 2nd Duke of Sutherland on the death of his father in 1833.
3. B&LJC Sub-Committee, 16 July 1835: Public Record Office (PRO), RAIL808/1.
4. James Loch (1780-1855) had been appointed Principal Agent of the Marquis of Stafford (who later became the 1st Duke of Sutherland) in 1812. He held a similar office for Lord Francis Egerton (later the Earl of Ellesmere) and was an auditor to the trust estate of the Earl of Dudley. He lost the latter role in 1837, the year he became Superintendent to the Bridgewater Trustees. He was a Whig MP for St Germain's (1827-30), then for Wick (1830-52).
5. Letters from James Loch to William Lewis, 28 Sept 1835 and to William Smith, 23 Dec 1835: Staffordshire Record Office (SRO), D593/K/1/5/31.
6. Letters from James Loch to William Smith, 1 March 1835, and to James Trubshaw, 8 May 1835: SRO, D593/K/1/5/31.
7. James Trubshaw (1777-1853) acted as consulting engineer for the Trent & Mersey Canal in the 1830s; he had also been a contractor for part of the Macclesfield Canal. His most notable achievement was as contractor for the Grosvenor Bridge at Chester (1827-32), its 200 feet span still being England's longest stone arch. See Anne Bayliss, *The Life and Works of James Trubshaw*, privately published, 1978: William Salt Library, Stafford.
8. Letter from James Loch to William Smith, 11 January 1836: SRO, D593/K/1/5/32.
9. B&LJC Committee, 18 January 1838: PRO, RAIL 808/1.
10. Robson's Directory, 1840.
11. Letter from James Loch to William Smith, 18 March 1836: SRO, D593/K/1/5/32.
12. Wappenshall Wharf, abstract of debts 1845-50: Shropshire Archives (SA), 972/175; letter from James Loch to the Duke of Sutherland, 11 February 1845: SRO, D593/K/1/5/47.
13. SA, 972/175; SRO, D593/L/4/25.
14. Gerald L Turnbull, *Traffic and Transport: an Economic History of Pickford's*, 1979, 88.
15. Letter from James Loch to William Smith, 18 March 1836: SRO, D593/K/1/5/30.
16. 7 Geo 4 c95; counsel's opinion: SRO, D593/E/7/18.
17. SRO, D593/G/1/24.
18. The Sutherland Arms appears in Slater's Directory of 1856 but not in Hatred's Directory of 1861.

*Peter Brown*

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