

S&N News

May 2001

www.sncanal.org.uk

Issue 2



Longdon-upon-Tern Aqueduct

The above photograph shows the aqueduct still in water. It comes from a collection generously given to the Trust by Tom Manning of Newport, which he took in the late 1940s/early 1950s.

It is appreciated that some members may know little about the history and structures of the canals and it is therefore intended to feature a part of the canals in each issue. As the logo of the Trust is this aqueduct what better place to start – see back page.

See also page 6 for a recollection of swimming in this water!

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Membership

Publicity is very important at any stage of a campaign but perhaps particularly so in the early stages when a growing membership helps demonstrate that there is widespread support for the idea of restoration. At the end of April we had 111 memberships including 189 individuals and 8 group/corporate memberships. So very many thanks to those that have joined, and even more thanks to those who have generously added a donation.

‘Canal Boat’ Article

The February edition of *Canal Boat* magazine featured a double page spread on the S&N under the title ‘Telford’s Forgotten Canal’. The Trust provided some of Tom Manning’s photographs for use in the article. Largely a history of the canal the article also looked forward citing this as “without doubt a restoration to watch in the years ahead”. A back copy of the issue should be available from the publisher (Tel: 0118 9771677 or at www.canalboatmagazine.com).

Competition Result

You may recall that in the first issue a small competition was run to come up with an apt name for this newsletter. A number of entries were received which were considered by the trustees and – well you may have guessed from the front page – it was decided to stick with the original. Thank you to those who suggested alternatives – some were just too clever! The prize is still available though – see page 5.

Website

You may also have noticed from the front cover that we have a new website – well not a new site but, for the technically minded, a new URL. Our site can now be found at the much easier to remember **www.sncanal.org.uk**. It certainly seems to have great benefits as a number of new memberships have already come through this route.

A Case For Restoration

This is the title of a revised and expanded version of the *2020 Vision* document that was produced by the Shropshire Union Canal Society to launch the Trust last year. It has been produced to promote the restoration to councillors, council officers, landowners etc. Copies are available from Steve Bean at a cost, to cover production and postage, of £2.00.

Dates for Your Diary.

Thursday 17th May - 7.30p.m. Trustees meeting, Guildhall, Newport.

Thursday 19th July - 7.30p.m. Trustees meeting, Guildhall, Newport.

Saturday 21st July - Newport Show is cancelled but an alternative event will possibly be held in the town at which we will exhibit - phone a trustee for details.

* These meetings are open to members. It is suggested that you confirm with a trustee before travelling.

Northern Canals Association

In early April I attended a meeting of the NCA in Leeds. Not having been before I didn't know what to expect or have any idea of those likely to be attending. As it turned out it was very well attended by representatives of, I would think, virtually every canal restoration north of Birmingham. It was extremely encouraging to hear of progress on many of the schemes, some of which have been progressing slowly for many years but are now at, or very nearly at, the stage of fully reopening. This includes the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, which was once called the "impossible restoration" but which has now reopened throughout (including the longest canal tunnel at Standedge) as widely covered in the press and on television. There were also talks from British Waterways and the Waterways Trust. It was also good to speak to some of the other representatives over lunch and to receive encouragement. It was amazing how many said they wondered why it had taken so long for the S&N to have its own organisation. All in all a day that confirmed my strong belief that the S&N can be reopened.

Steve Bean

Select Committee Report

In March, following on from the Government document *Waterways for Tomorrow*, the Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Select Committee published a report. These are a few of the recommendations that relate specifically to restoration:

- The maintenance of high environmental standards and the promotion of nature conservation in and along waterways must be an important priority. We recommend that nature conservation priorities should be formally designed into restoration projects at an early stage [using] techniques for bank protection which avoid hard edges and encourage biodiversity...We also recommend that the granting of lottery and other funding for canal restoration schemes should be conditional on adequate safeguards being built in at project planning stage to protect and enhance biodiversity.
- A further problem is the threat posed to the disused waterways with potential for restoration by "ill considered" road building schemes. In its policy document ...the Government states it wants "to see new road and other development proposals take proper account of waterway restoration" and accordingly has promised to "issue guidance on new road proposals which affect restoration projects". This guidance must be issued at the earliest date, to ensure that any disused waterways can be fully restored.
- We recommend that the Government introduce a Waterways Bill which would ...introduce powers for British Waterways to construct new waterways, enlarge existing ones, to develop waterside property and to restore abandoned waterways.

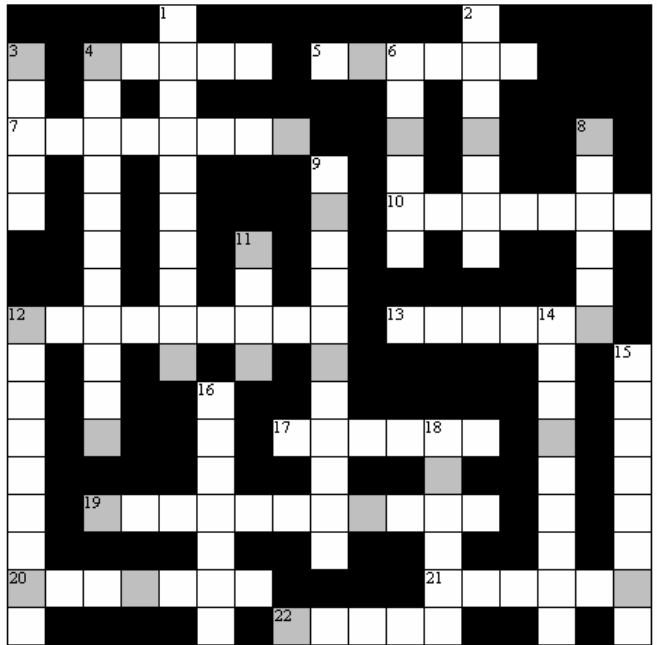
Competition

As there is still a prize left from the 'name the newsletter' competition here's another competition which might just get rid of it – not that it's not a very nice prize!

In this crossword, all the answers are names of bridges, locks etc. or towns and villages on or close to the line of the canals – so get your maps out! When you have completed it, take the letters in the shaded squares, rearrange them into another place name (10 letters) and a feature of the canal (two words 7,6). Send just these two answers, with your name and address to Steve Bean by post or e-mail (addresses inside front cover) before 15 July 2001. First correct answer drawn will win.

Across

- 4 Stick to hit the workers?
 5 A grassy bridge this one.
 7 Nothing more than a large village.
 10 Remove European Union from border pile..
 12 Poet William's lake?
 13 The stone for this bridge came from here.
 17 In favour of going forwards, and not back.
 19 Walls happen around this junction...
 20 .. neither inter this one.
 21 Bull to the backroom at this bridge.
 22 Broken plaything in backward north east.



Down

1. Useful for shifting brewer's barley at this bridge
 2 One could live in this bridge.
 3 Halley's bridge?
 4 Liquid from Newport's river.
 6 Makes eye and ...
 8 ... family over the straight line.
 9 One wouldn't spend the winter here.
 11 Bridge at a South London garden?
 12 A dark country road.
 14 Doting Ron is found here.
 15 Not a short river crossing.
 16 Fresh harbour?
 18 There's racing at this Park.

Boyhood Memories of the Shrewsbury Canal

My name is George Lewis. I am now 82 and live in Wellington, but in my younger days I lived at 14 Lucerne Terrace, Hadley, about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the Shrewsbury Canal.

Many a fine day my mother would take my brothers and me a walk down to the canal as a day out with a packet of wine gums, a bean stick, cotton bent pin and a few worms to try our hand at a bit of fishing. I can't remember catching any but it was great fun.

The part of the canal we went, was from Hadley Park lock to the Wappenshall wide hole. Should it come on to rain we would fish under the arches of the old warehouse which are still there at Wappenshall. One could see plenty of fish there but they would not bite as I think they could see us as much as we could see them.

As I got older some of the lads and myself went to the stretch of the canal that ran at the back of Sankey's works in Hadley. It was there that I learned to swim as the water was always warm coming from the boilers as at that time the works generated their own electricity. Sometimes after we had a swim we would go for a walk past Trench Lock. The Trench pool would be on our left and the canal on our right with the incline just in front of us. They say it closed in 1921 but when I was there around 1932 I have a feeling we saw a barge on the way down, but then again I could be wrong.

I also went swimming at the Hadley Park Lock with the other lads on many occasion as it was only a short walk from Hadley. The lock was always full of water, and one thing we did was try swimming to the bottom of the lock and bring up some mud to prove that you had been to the bottom. I did it once but did not think I was going to see daylight again. It was such a long way back up.

But the best of all was the aqueduct at Longdon on Tern. I had a bicycle for my 14th birthday so I was able to go there often. It was good there as it was always clean and free of weeds. We had lots of races to see who could swim the length in the shortest time. I think the last time I was down to the canal was when I was a member of Hadley chapel gymnastic team. It was a nice summer evening and that evening the chapel was locked so the meeting was put off. Someone suggested we should go for a run so about 6 of us set off from Hadley, got on the canal towpath at Hadley Park lock and ran on to Wappenshall and back. I had a job to walk the next morning

George Lewis

[If you too have memories of the canal like and care to share them please let me have them and I will be only to delighted to include them in a future edition –
Steve Bean]

SHREWSBURY & NEWPORT CANALS TRUST

Membership Application

The annual membership fees are:	Individual Membership	£8.50
<i>(please circle category)</i>	Family Membership*	£10.00
	Youth Membership (under 18)	£3.50
	Group / Corporate Membership	£20.00

Supplement on all annual rates: for EU £2, for rest of the world: £4.

*Family membership is for people living at the same address: only one copy of newsletters and other material is sent per family membership. Only the person indicated as "applicant" below will be entitled to vote.

I/We wish to join the membership of Shrewsbury & Newport Canals Trust in the category indicated above. I/We also wish to make an additional donation of £_____. I/We enclose a payment of £_____ (cheques made payable to "Shrewsbury & Newport Canals Trust").

I/We hereby agree, if elected, to be bound by all the provisions of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Trust (copies available on request).

I/We further agree to my/our membership details being recorded on computer, solely for the Trust's organisational purposes.

Signed:.....Date:.....

Gift Aid Declaration – please sign if you pay tax

I want all donations (includes membership subscriptions) I make from the date of this declaration to be treated as Gift Aid Donations (you must pay an amount of income tax or capital gains tax equal to the tax reclaimed on your donation(s)). I will inform you if I cease to pay tax.

Signed:.....Date:.....

Forename

Surname

DoB (if under 18)

Applicant:

Others:
(family
membership)

Address:

.....

.....(Postcode).....

Telephone number: E-mail:

Please post with your remittance to: The Membership Secretary,
The Shrewsbury & Newport Canals Trust, 4 Arscott, Pontesbury, Shrewsbury, SY5 0XP

Features of the Canal – Number 1 - Longdon-on-Tern Aqueduct

Longdon-on-Tern Aqueduct is the oldest cast iron aqueduct in the world. That is not to say that it was the first – quite. It is now commonly accepted that a much smaller cast iron aqueduct opened on the Derby Canal some weeks earlier, but that one no longer survives.

The iron aqueduct at Longdon should in fact never have been. Josiah Clowes was engineer for the Shrewsbury Canal and just like most other canal aqueducts built up until that time he designed, and began to build, a substantial masonry structure sufficient to carry its own weight, that of the water and a thick lining of puddled clay to retain the water. Between 10-12 February 1795 however the works were washed away by an abnormal flood but, perhaps fortunately, Clowes had just died.

So, who did the canal company turn to – yes, Thomas Telford. He was appointed on 28 February 1795 to take over construction of the canal but just 14 days later the company approved the erection of an iron aqueduct at Longdon by William Reynolds & Co., the cost not to exceed £2000. It was stated that the plan was to be approved by Telford and, although often attributed to him, it seems unlikely that the idea was actually his. Indeed he himself later wrote that the idea was that of Thomas Eyton, chairman of the company, and the design determined by Reynolds and Telford – it does perhaps look as if it was designed by a committee!

The fact remains that the aqueduct was designed and built in very quick time. The iron plates were cast at Ketley and the aqueduct built between the surviving masonry ends of Clowes aqueduct by March 1796. The trough was 62 yards long and 16 feet high – or rather the troughs, as the towpath ran in what is virtually a second trough alongside, the horse's feet being at the same level as the bottom of the canal! Beneath, cruciform-section struts spring in all directions to support the trough.

Even if Longdon was not Telford's idea, its success certainly gave him the know-how which allowed him to build Pontcysyllte Aqueduct (1007 yards long and 121 feet high – slightly larger!) on the Ellesmere Canal just a few years later.

Today the aqueduct still stands across the Tern but looking rather forlorn without the approach embankments. It is now a listed Ancient Monument. If visiting the site please note that it is on private land and that permission should be sought, although it can be seen from the road to Wellington just outside the village.

It is very unlikely that the original aqueduct could be used again in the restoration. But what an opportunity for a modern day Telford (or Eyton or Reynolds!), to design something equally innovative and spectacular to cross the river alongside. Perhaps in another 200 years that could also be an Ancient Monument!