

# Abandoned canal could be back in use within a year



Diggers are used for some of the heavy work on the canal restoration



Michael Limbrey presents a cheque to Bernie Jones

**THIS once-busy stretch of canal has lain unused for more than 70 years.**

But now, with the help of a group of eager volunteers, it could be filled with water within a year.

Workers from National Waterways Recovery Group have been helping to clear Meretown Lock on the Shrewsbury to Newport Canal.

Their work coincides with the Shrewsbury and Newport Canal Group, which cares for Meretown Lock, being presented with a cheque from the Inland Waterways Association for £450 to help with the work.

The volunteers have been staying at Burton Borough School, while using their expertise to help prepare the canal to be brought back into use.

Bernie Jones, from the Shrewsbury and Newport Canal Group, said: "We're so grateful that the WRG has come to help out."

"They are a superb bunch of people and we can't thank them enough."

"I also can't thank Newport Town Council enough for the help that they have given the project, without them, we couldn't have got this project off the ground."

In January, work was carried out to dig out a metre deep trench at Meretown Lock in Newport.

Pipes have also been laid which will bring water from the Strine Brook into the 110-metre stretch, which was filled in when the canal was abandoned in 1944.

The section, which is owned by Newport Town Council, will link together with the stretch of Newport Canal in the town centre

which is already filled with water and will go in the opposite direction up to the A41.

The new water pipes will eventually connect to a pump which is currently keeping the canal between Meretown Lock and Newport town centre topped up.

The project is part of the trust's long-term aims to bring the Shrewsbury and Newport canals back into use.

It is hoped that the canal from Newport will continue under the A41 towards Stafford, linking back up with another stretch of old tow-path.

Earlier this year, the trust revealed it had received £72,000 of lottery funding to restore an old warehouse beside the canal at Wapenshall Wharf near Apley, Telford, with a further £909,900 to come.



Workers from National Waterways Recovery Group help to clear the lock

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