



Monmouthshire, Brecon &
Abergavenny Canals Trust

Canal Connections

AUTUMN 2018



The NEWSLETTER OF THE
MONMOUTHSHIRE, BRECON & ABERGAVENNY
Canals TRUST

www.mbact.org.uk

Tel: 01633 892167

Registered Charity No. 515897

Registered Office: Fourteen Locks Canal Centre, Cwm Lane, Rogerstone, Newport, NP10 9GN



Monmouthshire, Brecon & Abergavenny Canals Trust

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the **Monmouthshire, Brecon and Abergavenny Canals Trust's** first newsletter, which is replacing our printed magazine "*The Reed Warbler*" for the time being. We have been unable to produce "*The Reed Warbler*" for over a year now, and the Trust's Committee is aware that, during that period, we have been unable to keep our membership up-to-date with our activities and with news of forthcoming events. It is our intention to produce this newsletter on a quarterly basis, with extra editions produced if the need arises.

Our team of enthusiastic volunteers continue to work hard to achieve the Trust's main aims, which are:

- The **Improvement and Maintenance** of the navigable canal from Brecon to Five Locks, Pontnewydd
- The **Sustainable Regeneration** of the canal from Five Locks, Pontnewydd to Newport and from Newport to Cwmcarn.
- To promote **Greater Awareness** of the economic benefit to the local communities and business through Tourism, Leisure, Heritage Skills, and Public Engagement Training
- To improve **Education and Interpretation** through displays and presentations of the culture and history of the canal and its people.

The canal has a rich and varied waterway heritage - it is a valuable tourism and community asset, which is available for everyone to enjoy. It is the Trust's purpose to help, with our partners, to ensure that the long-term future of the canal is secure.

The current volunteers follow a long tradition of caring for this small but remarkable waterway. In recent years the impact of volunteers on the Trust's operation at **Ty Coch, Cwmbran** and through its ongoing work and commitment at **Fourteen Locks** has been immense.

From restoration and conservation, assisting visitors at **Fourteen Locks**, managing the proposed new visitor facilities project at **Ty Coch** and working to establishing the new Trip Boat '*Lord Raglan*' at **Goytre Wharf**, the enthusiasm and commitment of a small but growing band of volunteers shows no sign of slowing down.

We must not be complacent, so recruitment is high on our agenda. People who care and have the time can make a real difference.

We must also be visible and involved with our partners.

RJD

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THE ADVENTURE TRIANGLE PROJECT

We are pleased to report that, following four years of discussion and meetings, the **Adventure Triangle** project has finally been given the green light to go ahead.

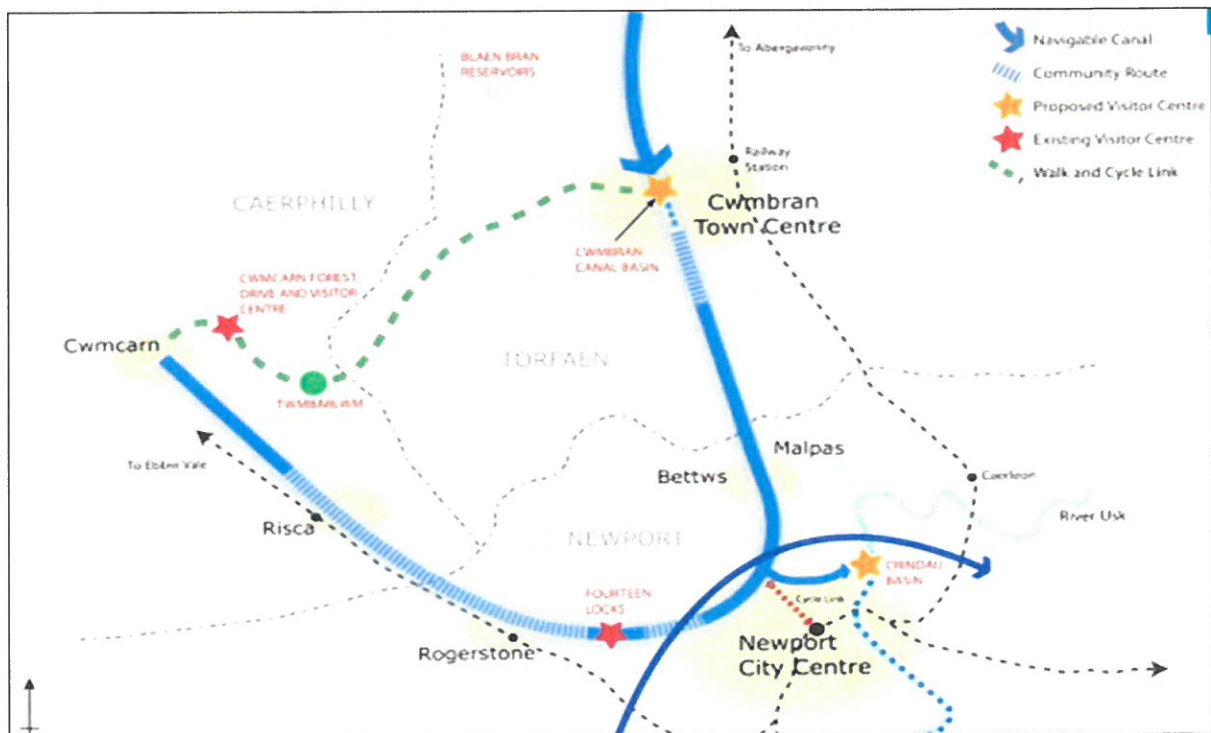
A total of **£4.6 million** has been raised to pay for the scheme, including contributions from the **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)** and the **Welsh Government**

This follows lengthy representations with our partners in the scheme - **Torfaen CBC** (who will lead the project), **Caerphilly CBC** and **Canal & River Trust**.

The improvement of the facilities at **Pontymoile Basin** and the creation of a new holiday hire boat base at **Five Locks** are part of the project. Canalside infrastructure has also been proposed to compliment the growing **South Sebastopol** community, which could include clearing silt from the canal channel.

In **Caerphilly**, an 'adventure hub' is planned at **Cwmcarn Forest**, along with enhancements of cycle and pedestrian routes along the canal.

Major works across **Mynydd Maen** are also planned to support walking, mountain biking and horse riding between various hubs in the two authority areas.





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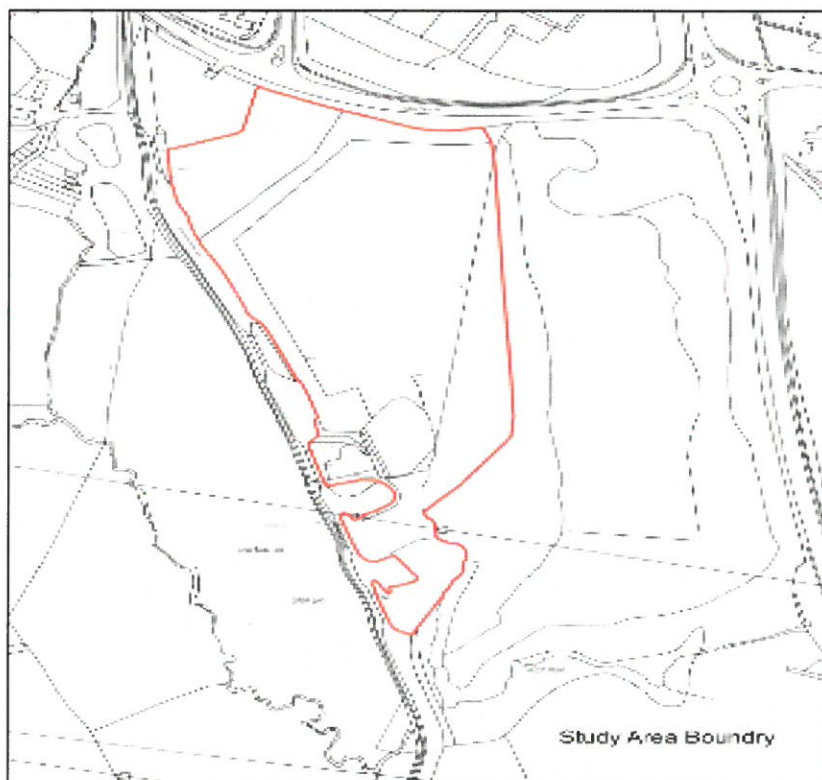
TY COCH WATERWAY PARK

The aim of the **Ty Coch Waterworks Project** was to restore **1.5 km** of canal at **Ty Coch, Cwmbran**. This included the restoration of eight locks, dredging the canal channel and creating a picnic site.

The project was carried out in partnership with **Torfaen CBC**, with core funding from the **Heritage Lottery Fund**. Work began in **2012** and was completed in **September 2017** and was delivered to the planned budget of **£1.4 million**. A highlight of the project was the development of a new design of lock gate, which would greatly increase the life of a conventional timber gate and prove more cost effective to install and save on maintenance costs. In **September 2017**, the project won the **Construction in Wales “Preservation and Rejuvenation Award”**.

The next stage is for the **Ty Coch Waterway Park**, an inspired project and the idea of one of our volunteers. This project has reached the stage when a **Feasibility Study** was completed in **June** by consultants engaged by the Trust’s Committee.

We are now in preliminary discussions with **Torfaen CBC** to progress the project, alongside a Solar Farm Scheme proposed for the old tip which is located between the proposed Waterway Park and Cwmbran Drive. If given the go ahead the next stage is a topographical survey, site investigation and traffic management plan, before a pre-application can be prepared. Whilst this work is in progress we are considering possible grant applications, which will enable the project to be funded.





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TEN YEARS OF FOURTEEN LOCKS

MBACT have now been involved in the management of **Fourteen Locks Canal Centre** for ten years, and the anniversary was celebrated in grand style at the centre back on Spring Bank Holiday Monday.

We welcomed visitors from **Canal and River Trust**, who were represented by Trustee **Sir Christopher Kelly**, along with councillors from **Newport City Council**, **Torfaen County Borough Council** and **Caerphilly County Borough Council**.

We were also joined by the many **MBACT** and **CRT** volunteers who work along the **Mon and Brec Canal**, and a fun day was had by all.

The picture below shows **MBACT Trustee and Chaplain Rev. John Collier** cutting the cake along with **MBACT Chair Richard Dommett MBE**.





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FOURTEEN LOCKS CANAL CENTRE

Kate and her team have had a busy year. Apart from the ten-year anniversary celebrations mentioned on the previous page, the **Fourteen Locks** facility has continued to act as a community centre for the local area, with meetings and activities for a wide range of ages and interests. The shop has been developed to help fund the running of the centre, and with a view to help support local artists and crafts people.

Events as diverse as **Pebble Decorating Workshops**, **Literary Evenings** and **Dinosaur Trails** have proved popular across the age divide, but perhaps one of the most successful ventures was **GoWild@FourteenLocks**, a family fun day held back in August during the school holidays. Around 500 children and adults attended this free event, which was organised in conjunction with **Newport City Council**, and funded by the **Tesco Community**. Children and adults alike were able to learn about the wildlife in the area from **Newport's Green Team** and **Gwent Wild Life Trust**, with bees and hedgehogs supplied by **Gwent Bee Keepers** and the **Hedgehog Helpline** respectively. In addition, story time was provided by **Maindee Library**. It was great to see so many children enjoying the outdoors, from pond dipping to bug hunting. One of the aims behind this type of activity is that if children can appreciate the wonderful wildlife around us, then, hopefully, they will grow up to understand it's importance to us all and protect our Natural Heritage. Many thanks to all who came along and helped make it such a great day.

The picture below shows one of the favourite attractions of the day – the Fire Pit, with children toasting marshmallows and cooking popcorn.





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THE COMMUNITY BOAT – The Lord Raglan

Work is continuing with the remodelling and refitting of the **Community Boat – The Lord Raglan** - as shown in the pictures below.

Having been marooned at **Uskmouth Power Station, Newport** for several years, fabrication and welding work was finally completed, and the vessel was finally launched on the **Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal** at **Mamhilad** in **September 2017**. It was then towed to its new operating base at **Goytre Wharf**, where work is well under way to fit the vessel out with material approved by the **Maritime and Coastguard Agency**, and funded by grants from the **Brecon Beacons National Park Authority** and **Brecon Beacons Trust**.

A large amount of materials, equipment and services have been donated to the project by local and international companies and we are extremely grateful to these organisations for their support. Sincere thanks are also due to **ABC Leisure**, who operate **Red Line Boats** at **Goytre Wharf**, and who now manage the whole of the **Goytre Wharf** site. We have been allocated a prime mooring position close to the Café, which is equipped with the necessary water and electricity supplies.

Last, but not least, we must thank our hard-working team of volunteers, without which the whole project would not have progressed this far. Their boundless tenacity and dedication are the main reason why our vision of a **Community Boat** will soon become a reality.

It is hoped that **The Lord Raglan** will be fully operational by early next year when it will be available for **Public Trips** and **Private Hire Booked Voyages**, where it will be able to cruise the canal to meet customer needs. Other possible uses include Education, Art, and a venue for Meetings and Weddings. We hope to have more detailed information regarding the availability of **The Lord Raglan** in the next edition of **Canal Connections**. As with most of our projects, we are looking for volunteers to help organise and crew **The Lord Raglan**, as well as our other **Trip Boat, Edith-Elizabeth**, which is also based at **Goytre Wharf**. More information is available from the Trust's office at **Fourteen Locks Canal Centre**.





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ANNUAL DUCK RACE

The annual **MBACT Duck Race** took place, as usual, on August Bank Holiday Monday at **Llangynidr**.

Approximately **2,000 ducks** were launched into the canal, watched by hopeful adults and children. The **Duck Race** has become a regular favourite in our calendar, and is also one of our most important fund raising events of the year. The lucky winners should have all been notified by now, so if you were not amongst them, then better luck next year.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The **34th Annual General Meeting** of the **Monmouthshire, Brecon and Abergavenny Canals Trust** will take place on **Wednesday 21st November, 2018** at the **Fourteen Locks Canal Centre, Cwm Lane, Rogerstone, Newport, NP10 4GN**, starting at **2 pm**.

The agenda for the AGM will be distributed separately to this newsletter.

All members are encouraged to attend – it is, after all, your Trust and you are entitled to have a say on how it is run on your behalf.

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CANAL CONNECTIONS – with Llswerry Runners



The canal is used by many people in a variety of different ways. From walking and cycling to boating and fishing, even commuting to and from work and school. Everyone “connects” with the canal in their own individual way and one of the reasons we titled this newsletter ‘**CANAL CONNECTIONS**’ is to highlight the various ways these connections occur.

One such connection has been made between **Llswerry Runners**, one of the largest social running clubs in South Wales, and the **Fourteen Locks Canal Centre**. The canal, once a main artery for coal and iron ore transportation, now gives a marvellous opportunity for runners to choose either flat terrain or the challenge of the hilly towpath which scales the major locks system from which the centre gets its name. The centre has ample parking, a cafe and a small shop which make it the perfect meeting place.

Llswerry Runner, and former **Police Sergeant Kevin Russell**, went one step further by joining the team of volunteers that work along the canal. He has become so passionate about the work he has decided to raise funds to repair the **Fountain and Dragonfly** sculpture in the old boat park. He explains “As a volunteer at the Fourteen Locks Canal Centre, it’s my chance to give a little bit back to the community, and what better way to do this than run my 18th Marathon in Newport”.

The canal towpaths offer the perfect environment for “green exercise”, proven to be therapeutic to those with mental health conditions, such as depression, anxiety and stress. With these conditions on the increase as well as the need for physical activity programmes, the beautiful settings of canals and waterways are set to play a new role in our communities, that of helping with our happiness and health.



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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Halloween Trail

Saturday 27th October – Sunday 4th November

Fourteen Locks Canal Centre: 10am – 3:30pm

Christmas Fayre

Friday 16th November

Fourteen Locks Canal Centre: 6:30 – 8:30pm

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 21st November

Fourteen Locks Canal Centre: 2pm

Meet Santa

Saturday 15th December and Sunday 16th December

Fourteen Locks Canal Centre: 10am – 3:30pm

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