

How the Llangollen Canal was saved

By the outbreak of the Second World War there was no commercial traffic on the Llangollen Canal (then known as the Welsh Section of the Shropshire Union Canal).¹ The brochure of the one firm hiring pleasure boats on the canal system, Inland Cruising Association Ltd of Christleton, extolled the merits of the Llangollen Canal, and the canal itself was in good enough condition for their boats to be able to get to Llangollen and back in a week.²

The 1944 Acts

The London Midland & Scottish Railway (Canals) Act 1944, took away the public's right of navigation on this and some other canals; indeed it went further, explicitly stating that 'the closed canals shall not be used for navigation' with the exception that pleasure boats would be permitted to use the Llangollen Canal between Chirk and Llantiliso.³ The Ministry of War Transport insisted that they should have the right to require canals which were currently navigable to remain navigable until six months after the end of the war, and a suitable clause was included in the Act.⁴ In fact, the legal definition of the end of the war was not when fighting ceased in Europe (May 1945) or even in the Far East (August 1945) but when the 'War Emergency' was deemed to be at an end, which was not until 8 October 1950; however, no evidence has been found to show that the Ministry exercised its right in the specific case of the Llangollen Canal. Nevertheless, from 1 April 1945, responsibility for maintaining bridges carrying highways passed to the appropriate local authorities or, for trunk roads, to the Ministry of Transport.⁵

The Llangollen Canal was being used to supply water to the LMSR (the canal's owner) at Chester and to canalside farmers; water was also being sold to other industries such as Monsanto (at Cefn Mawr) and United Dairies (Ellesmere). Following a challenge by the River Dee Catchment Board it was realised that there was no legal power to sell water. As the supply was so important to those industries a second Act included clauses permitting a daily average of 11½ million gallons to be taken from the Dee, reducing to almost 6¼ million gallons after 1954, by which time all sales to industry were to have ceased.⁶

After the War

During the night of 6/7 September 1945 the canal breached between Sun Trevor and Wenffrwd Bridges, washing away a 200ft section of the Ruabon-Llangollen railway line which ran lower down the

hillside. The morning mail and newspaper train plunged into the gap, killing the driver. All other things being equal, the cheapest remedial action to retain the water supply would have been to install trunking or a wide-bore pipe; this would probably have required the approval of the Ministry, which surely would have been given because the fighting had ended and navigation on this section had no conceivable benefit to industry. However, the LMSR does not seem to have approached the Ministry, and the canal was reinstated. Possibly, because the men and machinery had to be on site to rebuild the railway, repairing the canal cost much less than it would have done if they had come in for that alone.⁷

The Inland Cruising Association resumed hiring after the war, but with only four boats instead of the thirteen they had in 1939. The normal hiring was for a week, and the usual trip was up as far as Ellesmere and back. Energetic hirers could get to Trevor, but Llangollen required a fortnight. The boats were not narrowboats but small cruiser-style boats, similar to those on the Broads, with a shallow draft, so less affected by weed and the lack of dredging. Nevertheless, all boats were equipped with pulley blocks and ropes.⁸ At this time the Grundy family's cabin cruiser *Heron* was one of the few private boats using the canal. When purchased it was lying below Frankton Locks, which it ascended in August 1945. Every year from 1946 onwards it was taken up to Llangollen.⁹

In his classic book *Narrow Boat*, Tom Rolt said that he had wanted to take his narrowboat *Cressy* up to Llangollen in 1939 but was prevented by the outbreak of war.¹⁰ With great difficulty mainly because of weed growth and low water levels he got as far as Ellesmere in 1947.¹¹ Rolt reported that he succeeded in getting up to the Horseshoe Falls at Llantiliso aboard *Heron* in about May 1948. From Trevor to a mile short of Llangollen the boat had to be bow-hauled much of the way; at that point stop planks had been inserted which gave a reasonable depth of water for the horse-drawn pleasure boats operating from Llangollen wharf.¹²

Nationalisation

The canal was nationalised on 1 January 1948, though the Shropshire Union system was not transferred from the Railway Executive to the Docks & Inland Waterways Executive (D&IWE) until 25 July 1948.¹³

On 1 March, Rolt (IWA Secretary) and Robert Aickman (IWA Chairman) met Sir Cyril Hurcomb,

Chairman of the British Transport Commission (BTC), to which the D&IWE was responsible, to discuss the future of the canals. During this meeting attention was drawn to the Llangollen Canal, their concern being that as the legal powers for abandonment had already been granted, this canal was under a special threat. The IWA representatives said that the Act should be rescinded because the bridges could be lowered at any time. A few days later Robert Davidson, a member of the D&IWE, wrote saying that the IWA's views 'in many ways harmonise with our own'. Then on 27 May a 'very satisfactory' meeting was held with Sir Reginald Hill, Chairman of the D&IWE, which ended with a promise of an investigation into the 'scandalous matter' of the Llangollen Canal.¹⁴

In an interview with the *Liverpool Daily Post*, Robert Davidson was quoted as saying, 'The Executive ... is sympathetic towards the use of canals for pleasure and may set aside for this purpose stretches not now used commercially, such as the Lancaster Canal and the Welsh reaches of the Shropshire Union, and is prepared to look kindly upon firms starting boat hire.'¹⁵ The IWA was invited to state which canals it considered should receive first consideration for the encouragement of pleasure traffic; the IWA responded that they should be the Kennet & Avon and the Llangollen Canals.¹⁶ Prospects for the retention of the canal therefore looked promising.

Bridges

In the summer of 1949 the Grundys took *Heron* to Llantiliso again and Cecile Dorward, another IWA member, reached Trevor on her narrow boat *Phosphorus*, as did Rolt on *Cressy*. They reported that the canal was in a much better condition — higher water levels and less weed.¹⁷ However, the fear about highways authorities lowering bridges had become a real threat. Shropshire was proposing to lower St Martins Moor Bridge carrying the B5069 Gobowen–Overton road¹⁸; Denbighshire wanted to lower Wenffrwd Bridge carrying the A539 Ruabon–Llangollen road. The IWA wrote to both County Councils pointing out that the natural levels of road and canal were such as to allow full navigable headroom and good road alignment. Members were urged to make representations about the 'folly and destructiveness' of the proposals.

Tom Rolt enlisted the assistance of the Council for the Preservation of Rural Wales (CPRW) and the Council for the Preservation of Rural England; discussions were held with the Town Planning Institute and the Chief Planning Officer of Shropshire. The Llangollen Urban District Council

(UDC) backed the campaign, as did various local newspapers. Contact was also made with the National Farmers Union as the Shropshire Farmers' Union was lobbying for the lowering of all the bridges on the canal.¹⁹

In October 1950 the County Surveyor of Shropshire reported on 19 road bridges over canals. The 1944 Act required highways authorities to reimburse the D&IWE for any extra cost of maintaining the canal caused by bridge lowering²⁰, and the Hurlleston–Llangollen canal, unlike the others included in the 1944 Act, had to continue to be maintained as a water supply channel. The County Surveyor considered that a 4ft headroom would enable maintenance barges to continue to pass through, but Christopher Marsh, Divisional Waterways Officer for the North Western Division of the D&IWE staff insisted that they needed 7ft 6in for their dredgers and would not respond to the suggestion that they adapt their craft.²¹

The two bridges which were the responsibility of the Ministry of Transport, at Grindley Brook (A41: Whitchurch–Chester) and Moreton Bridge (A5: Oswestry–Llangollen), presented no problems as the required headway of 7ft 6in could easily be provided. Similarly, two of the county bridges gave no problems. For ten, the extra expense of providing a 7ft 6in headway would add £20,000 to the total cost. To retain the required headway at the other five bridges would make road improvements impossible. The report referred to 'dangerous hump-backed bridges' and stated: 'There is no doubt that from the highway interest point of view, the lower headroom for these bridges is vital.'

The report commented: 'The position is again complicated by the attitude and campaign of members of the Inland Waterways Association, whose interest is to preserve canals for pleasure craft. They claim that this particular length of canal is one of the most beautiful in England, and on no account should it be obstructed below 7ft 6in (or very slightly lower) and thereby prevent its use for this purpose.' He also noted that 'certain trade interests also seem to be arising ... with boats for hire' and that 'local press comments are supporting the non-lowering of these bridges'. It was agreed that a joint conference should be called, though subsequent minutes do not mention whether it was held.

Because the St Martins Moor Bridge was particularly dangerous and the works there urgent, he put forward a scheme which would give the desired height, though it would increase the cost by £2,500 to £8,500. This was approved, subject to the Ministry of Transport agreeing to pay its 60% grant. The Ministry did not give its approval for

several years, and it was not until the 1955/56 financial year that the work was done, by which time it cost £11,000.²²

In May 1952 Robert Aickman was able to claim 'a major success for our Association': Denbighshire County Council had decided not to lower the A539 bridge but instead to improve the road approaches. The report in the *IWA Bulletin* also noted that the Shropshire bridges had been reprieved for a less noble (but equally effective) reason, budget cuts caused by the national financial crisis.²³

Water supply channel

By 1950 the general policy of the British Transport Commission (BTC) was that non-trafficked waterways should be transferred to other authorities such as river boards and local authorities, who could then develop them for other purposes.²⁴

The IWA became aware that negotiations were under way for the canal to be used as a water supply channel for domestic users in south Cheshire, a new reservoir being built near Nantwich. This would require the canal to be well-maintained — and access for maintenance would of course be easiest by boat — but the water supply authorities had little sympathy with navigation requirements. Indeed, the IWA understood that the water company was contemplating replacing the locks with weirs.²⁵ In fact the Mid & South East Cheshire Water Board had considered taking over the Llangollen Canal in order to acquire 18 million gallons of water a day but, having ascertained that this would require heavy expenditure, had decided not to proceed with the scheme.²⁶

Meanwhile the canal was being dredged, the water depth was better than it had been, and a weed-cutter had started to be used.²⁷ Nevertheless, the canal was still difficult to navigate, particularly for

narrowboats. Many lock walls bulged; if the boat had 'spread' through old age it could be necessary to use a winch or ask passers-by to help. Mr Hughes, the Section Inspector, though helpful to boaters was especially interested in fishing so did not want to discourage weed growth. As narrow boat engines were then generally cooled using external water, filters frequently blocked.²⁸

The Llangollen rally

To publicise the potential of the canal, the North-Western Branch of the IWA held a rally at Llangollen from 18 to 21 June 1952. The organising team comprised Stan Offley (Branch Chairman), Ray Slack (Branch Secretary) and Bill Thistlethwaite (Branch Treasurer); the harbour-master was Reginald Grundy.²⁹

Festivities started with a dinner at the Boat House Restaurant by the Mere at Ellesmere on Monday 16 June. Guests of honour were Christopher Marsh from the D&IWE and Edward Wilson, senior biology master at Ellesmere College and a prolific researcher and writer about the canal.

The twenty-one boats moved on to Llangollen, arriving there on the Wednesday. The cup for the boat travelling the furthest distance was awarded to Bert Kennerley's self-built *Oak Day*, which had come from High Lane on the Macclesfield Canal. The boats, decorated with bunting, were ranged out on the off side of the canal, the official rally site being the field by the winding hole, opposite the café. Large numbers of local people and holiday-makers walked up to the towpath and were made welcome by the IWA members. Associated with the rally, a public exhibition was held in Mr Moore's Old Welsh Flower Shop, adjacent to the Bridge End Hotel. On the Thursday the Chairman of Llangollen UDC gave an official welcome at the Royal Hotel before the



*The Llangollen rally:
coffee party on Glenrosa
Left to right: Mrs Offley,
Mrs Alderson, Mr Alderson,
Mr Grundy, Mrs Grundy,
Mrs Slack*

start of a film show which was so popular that not everyone who wanted to could attend. The following afternoon Mr Roberts organised an outing to Horseshoe Falls in his horse-drawn trip boats, giving all the takings to the IWA Branch funds. The well-attended rally dinner was held that evening at the Bridge End Hotel, several more films being shown afterwards. (The dinner cost 8s.6d a head, the same as had been charged at Ellesmere.)

The Docks & Inland Waterways Executive helped make the rally a success. The canal had been cleared and dredged, and various lock gates had been repaired. Boaters attending the rally were given a 50% discount on their tolls.

The report in the Branch newsletter, *The Nor' Wester* concluded: 'Altogether the rally well fulfilled the objects for which it was arranged, in that it provided a very happy week of social pleasures for those taking part, it showed the general public that the canal was open for use and capable of providing first class holidays, and it reminded the canal authorities of the serious regard which the Branch has for this waterway.'³⁰ However, it is not certain how much effective publicity was actually generated: the *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, for example, did not mention it.



The Llangollen Rally

*From foreground: Glen Rosa – Ray Slack
Obsession – Dr Wallis, Ulass – Lt Comm Sharpe*



The rally plaque

Negotiations and lobbying

Despite the publicity, in the years 1951 to 1953 the income of the Llangollen Canal was less than 15% of the expenditure, and the annual loss averaged £21,700. (See the Appendix for an analysis of the figures.)³¹ In line with the BTC's policy, the D&IWE again requested the Water Board to take over responsibility for the Llangollen Canal; the Water Board refused to do this, but instead proposed contributing a sum towards its maintenance. As before, the IWA was particularly concerned about the possibility of this meaning that locks would be replaced by sluices.³²

Early in 1953 the D&IWE announced that they had started negotiations for the transfer of non-commercial waterways to the local authorities through which they ran. The list totalled 600 miles, and included the Llangollen Canal.³³ The Ellesmere Rural District Council (RDC) resolved that it was 'in favour of the retention of the canal only in so far as it was of use to farmers, and that they had no interest in its maintenance as a thing of beauty or as a means of attracting visitors to the area'.³⁴ Nothing came of the proposals for transfer largely because nationally the local authorities were unenthusiastic about the prospect.

Mr J A Hill, an IWA member, leased the D&IWE's boatyard at Trevor in 1953. Later that year it was said there were five boat-hiring companies within easy reach of the canal, with more than 30 boats between them, and that more than 400 boat trips had been made during the year.³⁵ This was also the year that the Nantwich & Border Counties Yachting Club was established at Nantwich Basin.³⁶

The North-Western Branch convened a meeting on 23 November 1953 involving some forty national and local organisations and commercial undertakings with an interest in the Llangollen Canal. Support for the retention of the canal was expressed by various local authority representatives,

industrialists, farmers, anglers, the Ramblers Association (if only for the use of the towpath, part of which should be included in a long distance path from Prestatyn to Chepstow), the CPRW, and the Country Landowners Association, amongst others. Stan Offley, Chairman of the North Western Branch of the IWA, commented that the officers of the D&IWE had been most helpful. Alderman E A Cross of Wrexham said that he was also a member of the Board of the Dee & Clwyd River Board; he thought that a lot depended on the scheme to enlarge the capacity of Bala Lake, as that was going to have a great effect on the amount of water that would be available to put into the canal.³⁷ It was unanimously resolved to support the canal's maintenance in good navigable order and as a means of water supply.

It was also agreed to create the Welsh Border Canal Preservation Committee with 20 members, including a number of IWA representatives. The Chairman was Mr R J Edwards, a member of Wrexham RDC, and the Secretary Trevor Williams, Clerk to Wrexham RDC.³⁸ Unfortunately, little was actually achieved by the Committee. In August 1955 a report in *The Nor'Wester* said disenchantedly: 'It is a mistake to pack committees with important people who are there because they add tone and dignity to the proceedings. The only real test is genuine enthusiasm, and this is much more important than education or an important position in society, though neither of these attributes disqualify. ... We have some people who are really keen, some who would do good work if they were kept at it, some who approve in a general way but are never likely to take an active part, and some who are hardly interested and in one or two cases appear to be the nominees of hostile interests.'³⁹ Because the new Chairman of Llangollen UDC had been expressing his concern, the IWA Branch Committee decided to get in touch with him; this resulted in 'a more united and energetic body' being created, though that too seems to have achieved little.⁴⁰

In late 1953 and early 1954 there were many pro-canal reports in the national, regional and local press which must also have influenced public opinion.⁴¹

IWA North Western Branch members were asked to write to their MPs about the British Transport Commission Bill then before Parliament. This included proposals to amend the 1944 Act, and members were asked in particular to press for a clause to give the explicit right of navigation.⁴² Mr Garner Evans, the Member of Parliament for Denbigh, spoke in the House of Commons about 'the most beautiful canal in the country'.⁴³ However, the desired clause was not included.

Although local managers were generally happy to get whatever use of the canals they could, the national

attitude at Board level continued to be unsympathetic. In April 1955 the Report of the Board of Survey (the 'Rusholme Report') was published; this repeated the recommendation that canals carrying little traffic should be closed or transferred to other organisations. The report mentioned that 'possible uses are for pleasure boating and fishing, and several waterways constitute valuable amenities'. However, these seem to have been regarded as problems not opportunities: 'The existence of these ancillary uses has in the past proved an obstacle to physical abandonment.'⁴⁴

Stan Offley, Chairman of the IWA North Western Branch, wrote to all the MPs in the area about the potential closures. Seventy-seven replies were received: almost half expressed unequivocal support; two were opposed; and the rest (Offley stated) were 'politicians' letters in which they refrained from committing themselves although they indicated that the matter was constantly in their minds'.⁴⁵

Towards the end of 1955 British Transport Waterways' parent body, the British Transport Commission, showed signs of changing its attitude. When the BTC's Bill was published on 28 November the canals proposed for abandonment totalled 90 miles, not the 771 implied by the Rusholme Report. Sir Brian Robertson, who had become BTC Chairman in September 1953, stated that he regretted that the Board of Survey had not had a more independent basis.⁴⁶

Success

The British Transport Commission Act 1954 included the power to supply water from the Llangollen Canal to industrial customers in perpetuity and for the Mid & South East Cheshire Water Board to convey water from Froncysyllte to the canal reservoir at Hurleston.⁴⁷ These domestic water supply proposals were formally discussed in 1955 at a public inquiry, attended by Ray Slack. An explicit declaration was made that there was no intention of interfering in any way with boating or fishing. The Water Board would pay the British Transport Commission (the D&IWE having been abolished) an annual rent of £19,000, which was slightly more than the maintenance cost of the whole canal. The principal negotiator on behalf of the BTC was again Christopher Marsh. The IWA was delighted with the outcome, describing it as 'a demonstration of what can be done ... by multifunctional utilisation'.⁴⁸ The formal agreement was signed in 1957; the enlarged Hurleston Reservoir was officially opened on 18 September 1959.

From the IWA's point of view, the main worry was when the Dee & Clwyd River Board proposed

bye-laws which would have made it illegal to discharge overboard even washing-up water; as a result of strong objections from the North-Western Branch the draft was amended to exclude boats on waterways controlled by the British Transport Commission.⁴⁹

Meanwhile, the numbers of visiting boats was increasing. In 1956 it was reported that 94 boats had reached Llangollen by the end of July, as evidenced by their masters signing the visitors' book at the Llangollen Pottery. Some 200 boats visited Llangollen in 1957.⁵⁰

That year British Transport Waterways published their 'Inland Cruising Booklet No 1', titled *Cruising the Llangollen Canal*. The General Manager's introduction said this was 'one of a series which is being prepared as a guide to holiday-makers and others cruising on the waterways of British Transport, in the hope that the information given will help towards the enjoyment of their cruise'. This was formal public recognition that the future of much of the canal network lay in pleasure boating, not in commercial carrying.⁵¹

The D&IWE's magazine *Lock and Quay* never mentioned pleasure cruising; the first mention in *Waterways*, its successor published by the British Transport Waterways, was in the summer of 1958, when an editorial announced: 'British Waterways are doing more and more to encourage pleasure cruising of all kinds on the canals', and went on to welcome 'the private owner, the firm with craft to hire and the enthusiasts who hire them'. The North Western Division itself had three hire boats: *Water Arabis*, *Water Bulrush* and *Water Crocus*.⁵²

On 5 September 1960 the canal breached near Millars Bridge on the Trevor-Llangollen section and was repaired promptly.⁵³ It was evident that the Llangollen Canal was now safe from any threat of closure to navigation.

Conclusions

The local authorities, with the notable exception of Llangollen UDC, did little actively to save the canal. Their decisions not to lower bridges were made to minimise the cost to them, not because they thought they were making the right decisions for the local economy or environment.

The money from the Mid & South East Cheshire Water Board was crucial, but there seems no evidence that its motives were anything other than obtaining a suitable water supply at a reasonable cost; the wider benefits probably had no influence on its decision.

The Inland Waterways Association played an important role, first by making people aware of the issues, then by mobilising public opinion and

influencing decision-makers. In the 1940s Tom Rolt himself was particularly active; in the 1950s the initiative lay mainly with the North Western Branch, especially its indefatigable Chairman, Stan Offley, and Secretary, Ray Slack.

However, two groups whose effect should not be understated are the hire firms and the private boat owners. The evidence of the increasing usage of the canal, albeit for leisure rather than commercial carrying, was probably a major factor in demonstrating the economic value of its retention for navigation. In particular, hiring introduced many people to the waterways, enthusing some of them to become members of the IWA, lobbyists and boat-owners. It is generally true that government bodies are more influenced by people's actions, in this case their willingness to invest, than by their petitions and letters.

From 1948 and through the 1950s, the legislation under which the waterways and railways operated was that they were transport organisations with a duty to break even financially, taking one year with another. The minutes of the Docks & Inland Waterways Executive make no mention of non-commercial use of the canals, except for a couple of passing references to fees.⁵⁴ It is therefore not surprising that the senior staff were either indifferent to the closure of the Llangollen Canal or keen on seeing responsibility passed to another body.

The one exception was Christopher Marsh, Divisional Waterways Officer for the North Western Division, whom Tom Rolt referred to as 'the only member of the senior staff of the new Executive who had canal water in his veins'.⁵⁵ (He was later designated Divisional Manager.) After gaining wide engineering experience in the docks of South Wales, waterways in Belgium, flood prevention works in Ceylon and five years as Resident Engineer at Sunderland Docks, Marsh had been appointed Engineer & Manager of the Weaver Navigation in 1934.⁵⁶ He gave technical assistance to the Ministry of War Transport in their consideration of the Bills leading to the 1944 Acts,⁵⁷ and seems to have been an exception to the comment made by a senior civil servant in 1941: 'Succeeding generations in the canal industry are apparently less and less inclined to activity; their general attitude seems to be a desire to be left in peace.'⁵⁸ Regarded by some as autocratic, he was very much the 'boss' in the North West and sometimes openly disagreed with the powers-that-be in London, which may be why he was passed over for jobs at the highest level in the D&IWE and British Waterways despite his ability. However, he was well-known to his staff and respected by them.

Marsh himself claimed the principal credit for having saved the Llangollen Canal. For example, at

the IWA Branch dinner in 1957 he said that he had invoked the clause which effectively prevented the local authorities from lowering bridges, and that he had been negotiating with the Water Board for seven years.⁵⁹ It does seem a fair assessment that his vision and persistence were the principal reasons why the Llangollen Canal remained open to navigation, though what his personal motives were can only be guessed.



*Christopher Marsh, Divisional Waterways Officer,
North Western Division of the Docks & Inland
Waterways Executive
[Waterways, June 1966]*

**Llangollen Branch:
Expenditure and Receipts, 1951-3**

	1951	1952	1953
	£	£	£
Expenditure			
Maintenance			
Dredging	212	205	1,388
Locks & lock gates	300	225	598
Reservoirs, weirs, dams & aqueducts	100	197	554
Banks	11,914	8,159	7,950
Bridges & tunnels	3,574	4,451	737
Buildings let to tenants	1,161	730	928
Other buildings	817	500	494
Craft	636	1,241	742
Motor vehicles	454	220	329
Plant & machinery	2,544	2,861	2,413
Miscellaneous	1,375	1,430	1,871
Engineering admin	<u>1,019</u>	<u>1,484</u>	<u>1,569</u>
	24,106	21,703	19,573
Other expenditure	<u>3,439</u>	<u>2,872</u>	<u>2,784</u>
	<u>27,545</u>	<u>24,575</u>	<u>22,357</u>
Income			
Traffic receipts	55	190	175
Water sales	1,592	1,226	1,516
Rents	1,556	1,539	1,395
Miscellaneous	50	81	22
	<u>3,253</u>	<u>3,036</u>	<u>3,108</u>
Net expenditure	<u>24,292</u>	<u>21,539</u>	<u>19,249</u>

Source: *Canals and Inland Waterways: Report of the Board of Survey* ('The Rusholme Report'), 1955, Appendices 4(B) and 5(B): PRO, MT115/101

Notes and references

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2. Inland Cruising Association Ltd's brochure, 1939. Information from David Wain, 16 August 2005.
3. London Midland & Scottish Railway (Canals) Act 1944, 8 & 9 Geo VI ii, Section 3(1)(a)
4. LMS (Canals) Act, Section 3(6)
5. LMS (Canals) Act, Section 10
6. London Midland & Scottish Railway Act 1944, 8 & 9 Geo VI i; E A Wilson, 'The history of the use made of water in the Shropshire Union Canal', *Journal of the Railway & Canal Historical Society*, January 1959, 7–11
7. Andrew Talbot, 'Llangollen breaches', *Waterways World*, June 2004, 58–9; Keith Beck, *The Great Western North of Wolverhampton*, 1986, 105
8. Information from David Wain, 16 August 2005.
9. Information from Martin Grundy, 31 July 2005
10. Tom Rolt, *Narrow Boat*, 1944 (republished 1946), 147
11. *IWA Bulletin 8*, [?October] 1947, 4; Tom Rolt, *Landscape with Canals*, 1977 (Alan Sutton, 1984), 106–118
12. *IWA Bulletin 14*, [?June] 1948, 9–10. This trip from Weston Rhyn to Llantilisio on board the Grundy's *Heron* is not mentioned in Rolt's autobiography.
13. Docks & Inland Waterways Executive, 28 July 1948, minute 220: PRO, AN77/1
14. *IWA Bulletin 14*, [?June] 1948, 1, 12. There is no reference in the minutes of the D&IWE to this meeting — indeed there are only two references to the IWA in the whole of the six years' life of the D&IWE.
15. *Liverpool Daily Post*, 7 June 1948
16. *IWA Bulletin 16*, [?October] 1948, 5
17. *IWA Bulletin 20*, June 1949, 20; Tom Rolt, *Landscape with Canals*, 1977 (Alan Sutton, 1984), 147–161
18. Shropshire County Council, Roads & Bridges Committee, 14 June 1949, minute 11(b): Shropshire Archives (SA), SC3/1A/1/14
19. *IWA Bulletin 22*, October 1949, 5; *IWA Bulletin 30*, [?January] 1952, 19
20. LMS (Canals) Act 1944, Section 10 (9)
21. Shropshire County Council, Roads & Bridges Committee, 10 October 1950, minute 8: SA, SC3/1A/1/14. The St Martin Moor Bridge scheme was not new — the LMSR and Shropshire County Council had signed an agreement on 13 June 1940 to transfer the bridge. (D&IWE, 3 July 1951, minute 1805(a): PRO, AN77/3)
22. Shropshire County Council, Roads & Bridges Committee, 10 October 1950, minute 8; 31 March 1953, minute 6 and capital programme: SA, SC3/1A/1/14
23. *IWA Bulletin 31*, May 1952, 11–12
24. Joseph Boughey, *Hadfield's British Canals*, 1994, 263
25. *IWA Bulletin 24*, February 1950, 10–11; *IWA Bulletin 27*, [?May] 1950, 12
26. D&IWE, 11 July 1950, minute 1169: PRO, AN77/2
27. *IWA Bulletin 27*, [?May] 1950, 12; *IWA Bulletin 36*, February 1953, 7; *IWA Bulletin 30*, [?January] 1951, 7
28. Information from John Stothert, 5 June 2005
29. *The Nor'Wester* (the magazine of the IWA North Western Branch), October 1951, 2: The Waterways Trust Archives (TWT), D7370/01. Mr Grundy was the father of Martin Grundy, a Vice President of the IWA.
30. *The Nor'Wester*, June 1952, 2–3; August 1952, 2: TWT, D7370/02; information from John Alderson, 28 November 2005
31. *Canals and Inland Waterways: Report of the Board of Survey* ('The Rusholme Report'), 1955, Appendices 4(B) and 5(B): PRO, MT115/101
32. *IWA Bulletin 36*, February 1953, 7–8
33. *IWA Bulletin 36*, February 1953, 1
34. *IWA Bulletin 36*, February 1953, 8
35. According to Mr R H Wyatt of the Canal Cruising Company, Stone, quoted in the *Oswestry Advertiser*, 25 November 1953
36. *The Nor'Wester*, December 1953, 2: TWT, D7370/03
37. *Oswestry Advertiser*, 25 November 1953
38. *The Nor'Wester*, February 1954, 2: TWT, D7370/04
39. *The Nor'Wester*, August 1955, 2: TWT, D7370/05
40. *IWA Bulletin 50*, April 1956, 24
41. *IWA Bulletin 40*, October 1953, 18; *IWA Bulletin 41*, February 1954, 6–8; *IWA Bulletin 42*, April 1954, 18
42. *The Nor'Wester*, April 1954, 5: TWT, D7370/04
43. *Hansard*, 23 February 1954
44. *Canals and Inland Waterways: Report of the Board of Survey* ('The Rusholme Report'), 1955, paragraph 220: PRO, MT115/101. One should not be too quick to condemn the report: the authors' brief was to make an ailing transport business financially successful.
45. *The Nor'Wester*, August 1955, 1; October 1955, 5: TWT, D7370/05
46. David Bolton, *Race Against Time*, 1990, 116–130
47. British Transport Commission Act 1954, 2 & 3 Eliz LV, sections 12 & 13; E A Wilson, 'The history of the use made of water in the Shropshire Union Canal', *RCHS Journal*, January 1959, 7–11
48. *IWA Bulletin 48*, Autumn 1955, 20–21; *The Nor'Wester*, June 1955, 1: TWT, D7370/05
49. *IWA Bulletin 53*, February 1957, 14; *IWA Bulletin 60*, December 1959, 63–64; *IWA Bulletin 64*, June 1961, 64
50. *IWA Bulletin 52*, October 1956, 40; *IWA Bulletin 55*, January 1958, 8
51. *Cruising the Llangollen Canal*, first edition undated but published about Easter 1957. This seems to be the first time the name 'Llangollen Canal' was used officially. Two years earlier the Rusholme Report had referred to the whole waterway from Hurleston to Llantilisio as the 'Llangollen Branch'.
52. *Lock and Quay*: TWT, E2001/011; *Waterways*, July and August 1958: TWT, E96/25
53. Andrew Talbot, 'Llangollen breaches', *Waterways World*, June 2004, 59–60
54. Minutes of the Docks & Inland Waterways Executive: PRO, AN77/1–5
55. Tom Rolt, *Landscape with Canals*, 1977 (Alan Sutton, 1984), 147
56. Information from *Waterways*, June 1966: TWT, E96/25; David Wain, 16 August 2005; and Bob Cotton, 11 September 2005. In 1964 Marsh was awarded the OBE; he retired two years later.
57. Correspondence, February & March 1944: PRO, MT52/132
58. Memorandum, 21 November 1941: PRO, MT52/109
59. *The Nor'Wester*, June 1957, 3–4: TWT, D7370/07; also information from Martin Grundy, 31 July 2005