

The Real Canal Tavern?

For many years the Canal Tavern in New Park Road, Shrewsbury has been a bit of an anomaly. It looks like a canal tavern – the age and style seem to fit the bill – but where's the canal? It requires the observant visitor to take the trouble to peer over the wall at the back of the hostelry and exercise a vivid imagination to translate the overgrown wilderness into something resembling a ribbon of water.

Then you can appreciate the history behind this pub and the name it bears. I felt that a visit from the Trust was long overdue and made contact with the Landlords and owners Richard Goddard and Tracy Wraight who invited myself and Borough Councillor (and active Trust member & supporter) Tam Hazan round for a chat about what the proposed restoration might mean for the Canal Tavern and its regulars if we can get the route along its original line into the town.

In Richard and Tracy we found the strongest possible allies. They had put a lot of effort into researching the historic roots of the Tavern and its links to the canal, originally as tenants and then as the pub's owners. They had found it a challenge to unearth much detail on the canal itself or to be sure what future might lie before it. So, with the recent publicity on the work of the Trust they were keen to find out more about what is planned and how they could play a part in it. In our initial discussion all sorts of ideas came out for money raising ventures and for events that they would be prepared to host at the Tavern and we hope to return to discuss these ideas further. They took out a Corporate Membership on the spot and are looking to recruit more members from among their regulars.

During our visit we were proudly shown the new hanging sign for the front of the pub which depicts the Tavern in its heyday, complete with colourful working narrow boat. I hope this is an omen for the future and that we can work with Richard and Tracy to make this picture a reality. Don't forget, if you are in the Castlefields area of Shrewsbury, look out for the Gasworks Lane turn from Castle Foregate and pop in to the Canal Tavern in New Park Road. You are assured of a warm welcome and can drink to the future of the S&N on its return to Shrewsbury.



Pictured with the new sign are Tam Hazan and Richard Goddard.
Brian Nelson