



## Brecon celebrations

Up to 2,000 people came together to light up the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal for a week of celebrations to mark its 225th anniversary as communities in Gilwern, Llangynidr, Talybont and Brecon all hosted spectacular lantern parades across four evenings to herald a special milestone in the history of the canal.

Each night a procession of people saw hundreds line the towpath as the parade headed north towards Brecon. In addition to the lanterns there was live music, a special life size illuminated horse and otter on the towpath plus boaters along the canal who decorated their boats in lights displays to add to the spectacular setting. Members of the public paddled in illuminated canoes while a floating lit up swan model glistened on the water.

Starting in Gilwern on Monday, the week culminated in a special entrance into a lit up Brecon Basin on Friday evening as the celebrations concluded outside Theatr Brycheiniog at the most northerly point of the canal in the centre of Brecon.

The evenings were part of Glandwr Cymru's year long celebrations to mark the anniversary.

David Morgan, development manager for Wales at Glandwr Cymru, said 'To see up to 2,000 people coming to the canal to mark the anniversary is a reflection of the love there is for this special waterway and the role it plays in the communities it runs through in the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park and into Brecon.

'Every night we were joined by hundreds of people of all ages with lanterns, costumes and a fantastic energy that certainly saw us Light Up the Brecon Canal to remember the people who built the canal and the impact that it has made in the local area over the centuries.

'These unique celebrations wouldn't have been possible without the amazing support and enthusiasm for the canal from local people, including in Llangatock where the weather sadly stopped that evening's celebration. We are thankful to the community councils, partners and all the people and volunteers who helped make these events possible and we hope everyone who joined us went away not only having had a great time but recognizing how vital the Mon & Brecon is in this part of Wales.'

**Richard Joyce**

## Fastest known paddle

American Scott Miller, one of the team who set a speed record in 2023 for running the Mississippi, has set up the Fastest Known Paddle website this year to pull together all the descent record claims in one place. These are not world records, of course, as they relate to specific locations, but they give scope for all the claims to be put together centrally. A single first known descent already undertaken ought automatically to be the fastest.

To be considered, an attempt has to have some documentary preparation in advance, tracking during the attempt and subsequent documentation. If you wanted to prove you were the fastest in the past you needed to go to the world marathon championships at a time and location selected in advance by others, if given permission by your home governing body. The new website allows you to choose where you want to go, at a time convenient to you, including monthly health disruptions. You can fit in with work and other constraints and pick suitable weather. This last point has one point of concern as records are most likely to be broken when rivers are in spate, likely to push up accident rates.

There are also likely to be variants for different start and end points, as we saw for the Thames last year, for supported and unsupported, for male, mixed and female, for canoes and kayaks and, no doubt, for various other permutations and combinations.

It does get round problems with Andrew Manwell's permanent triathlon concept, needing to check in with local shop keepers in remote villages, who might not always be available, or it enables you to go to places where races are not run.

The greatest potential problem is likely to be the site being overrun by its own success as every trip you undertake has the potential to break records of one sort or another or being the first with a particular set of criteria. It is based on a running equivalent that has 6,000 records registered.

Meanwhile, Scott will attempt to contribute again with a run down the Missouri next year.