

## SUMBA scores a century

Canal enthusiasts from the Shropshire Union Middlewich Branch Adopters (SUMBA) celebrated their 100th volunteer work party on 19th November.

Formed in April 2014, the group immediately entered the record books by adopting a huge 5½ miles of the Shropshire Union from Barbridge Junction to Church Minshull. Most adoption groups look after a mile or less. SUMBA has since grown to more than 50 volunteers, with around 25 men and women turning up to each of its regular work parties.

The group's organiser Graham Russell said: "Our volunteers have donated more than 4,900 hours to improving the canal. The response to our initial call was amazing and the existing group far exceeds our original expectations. To be celebrating our 100th working party is a great achievement and a source of pride for all our volunteers who have worked so hard with us."

Over the last two-and-a-half years work has included towpath and canalside maintenance, vegetation control, painting and repairing locks, litter picks, installing picnic tables, benches and barbecues, and planting fruit trees and shrubs. SUMBA's 'Clean for the Queen' event in March 2016 resulted in a massive 12-mile litter pick from Calverley to Middlewich, involving

35 volunteers. A major hedge-laying project near Venetian Marina was runner-up in the Canal & River Trust's prestigious national Living Waterways Awards 2016.

Wendy Capelle, CRT local waterway manager, thanked the group for its tremendous contribution, adding: "SUMBA is a fantastic example of how volunteers play a vital role in improving the canal environment. Hundreds of walkers, boaters, anglers, cyclists and joggers have benefitted from their hard work and now have an improved experience along the Middlewich Branch."

Visitors enjoy the ales and sausages.



SUMBA celebrates its 100th work party at Church Minshull Aqueduct Marina.