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Spring 2021

# The Wharfinger

HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST



EDITION  
**147**

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## Trust Business



*From the desk of the Chairman*

As I sit down to write this article of 'from the desk of the chairman' I review the last edition and try not to be too much like a stuck record. Well, I cannot wish you a Happy New Year again as it has already been a number of months of very difficult times since then.

I hope the country is opening soon and I know one Trustee who cannot wait for the Gluten Free Fish and Chips at the Lock Keepers.

I wish to thank a couple of people.

Some excellent Narrow Boat donation boxes have been received from Wales (no pictures yet until they can be shown in H&G colours) – thank you very much to Ron Shackell....

...and to Keith Bunting in Rutland for the bird boxes which have arrived since the last Wharfinger. These have already gone out to the sites and hopefully new life will be created within them this year.

The first event of the year in our event calendar has been cancelled (Droitwich Festival in May).

Our own AGM has had to be moved - the hall in Ledbury is now in full swing as a Covid vaccination centre and won't be available to us. Updates will be in the next edition of the Wharfinger - the date and time remain the same (Wednesday 23rd June) but we need to find a new location or we may even have to resort to using Zoom.

As we develop sites and gain volunteer access to work them. We then open them to the general public. It is important we respect other parts of the landowners land otherwise further access will be withdrawn. Should you visit one of our sites please keep to the towpath to respect the landowners land and the arrangements with the Canal Trust

**But I can say we still need help...**

The sites will hopefully be starting up at some time, if not already by the time you read this. We need help on all sites, promotion events need support (when we can get out and about) and the board needs help with taking minutes - maybe not everyone's ideal role, but it is an important one as we work further at improving the board operation and getting the message out to the membership and the wider audience.

Even if you think you would like to do something, but someone is doing it already, give me the challenge to find a role for you.



*Ralph Barber*

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## Malswick Planning Application

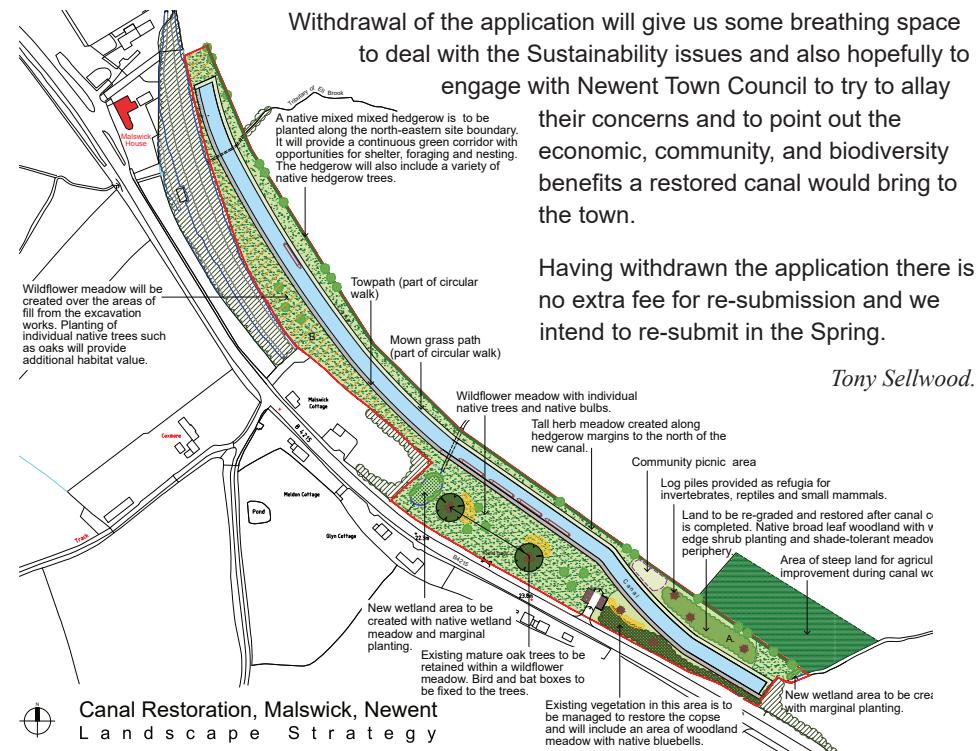


In late October last year, after consultation with Forest of Dean District Council Planners, we submitted a Planning Application for 600 linear metres of canal to be constructed at Malswick on the protected line set out in the Forest of Dean Allocations Plan. In late January this year we withdrew the application on the advice of our consultants for two main reasons.

Firstly, we were asked at a late stage for a great deal of further information in respect of Sustainability and Ecology, and in particular our Consultants submission that Great Crested Newts were not an issue on our site was challenged.

This has necessitated contacting local landowners to secure permission to survey ponds on their land to gauge their suitability as habitat for Great Crested Newts which could migrate onto our land and be injured during earthworks. Following the results of those surveys mitigation measures may need to be agreed.

Secondly, Newent Town Council had concerns regarding our application, and after debate they voted against our proposal, by a narrow margin. We shall continue with our projects to enhance the town, but do not feel confident in proceeding with the application in view of the current opposition.



Withdrawal of the application will give us some breathing space to deal with the Sustainability issues and also hopefully to engage with Newent Town Council to try to allay their concerns and to point out the economic, community, and biodiversity benefits a restored canal would bring to the town.

Having withdrawn the application there is no extra fee for re-submission and we intend to re-submit in the Spring.

Tony Sellwood.

# Over Site News



Disruption and delays are the main feature of the past few months. Due to the National Restrictions, the site was closed for the majority of November.

We re-opened at the beginning of December, achieving four work days in the month before the move of Gloucester into Tier 4 Restrictions after Christmas resulted in closure for the last week in the year. The following week, National Restrictions were again applied, with the result that no work has been possible yet during 2021.

During the days that were possible in December, the main feature that delayed some of the work was the weather. Strong winds and sometimes torrential rain meant that welding work on the repair of Mr. Maysey was neither feasible nor safe. The rain locally and in other parts of the country brought both the River Leadon and the River Severn to flood level, with some parts of the site again under water. Despite these difficulties, some progress was nevertheless made.

## Mill Barn

Alternative designs for the new building continued to be discussed, but the outstanding issue of where the building could be positioned remained a problem.

The difficulty centred around the location of sewer pipes under the site, it being against various Regulations to build over the top of a pipe.

Information from volunteers who were involved in the very early days of the site suggested that pipes ran directly beneath the preferred location. However, having paid for copies of the official Severn Trent records, we found no sign on the plans of any pipes where we understood them to be.

A day spent lifting manhole lids (which also do not appear on the plans), indicated that there was certainly some pipework beneath the site, although the detail was still not clear.

Thanks to information we managed to gather, we were able to narrow down the date when we believed some of this installation work was done. A search through the Trust's photo archives by Nick Dymott successfully turned up some records from 2005 showing the pipe being installed.



These confirmed that the proposed position of Mill Barn was indeed on top of the pipe and a new location is currently being considered.

## Heritage Boats

During December, these were prepared as far as possible for the winter, and fuel tanks filled to capacity.

Renton and Alder also took a couple of trips along the canal to help keep the waterway as clear as possible and just to get the engines warm and the batteries charged.

## Visitors



The canal towpath remains extremely popular with people looking for somewhere to take a walk and particularly with local residents exercising their dogs.

Toby is one of several local dogs who have been walking the path day in and day out, regardless of the weather, for a number of years now.



The site has also received more unexpected visitors...

During a quick trip to the site in mid-January to pump out the bilges of the boats and to check generally that all was well after some very heavy winds, there suddenly appeared at the entrance three large Fire Appliances - a Land Rover with a rescue boat on a trailer, a pick-up truck and a Fire Service car - together with all the crews.

The road outside The Lock Keepers was blocked solid! The immediate thought was that there was some kind of emergency in progress, although there had been no sirens or blue lights. However, as it turned out, the purpose of the visit was part of their forward planning for any emergency, and in this case they were investigating any possible sites along the River Severn where a rescue boat could be launched quickly if needed.



Having moved the vehicles around so that the road was no longer blocked, a walk along the river bank soon showed that there was not really any suitable spot capable of launching their boat.

However, the Service also have a small rescue raft, and seeing the canal with its convenient slipway, felt that this was an opportunity not to be missed for a bit of training.



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Having asked if this would be possible, the crews promptly got kitted up and went off up the canal to practice their paddling skills, and at the request of John Hamer, "rescued" some lumps of timber that were floating in the water.

Over may not become a launch site for the Rescue Service boats, but may possibly see more training in the future.

*Fire Service pics by Monica Hamer*



*Andy Fowler*



## Tree Surgery at Malswick



In November a partially dead and possibly dangerous tree was taken down at the western end of the Malswick site.

The trunk of the tree contained several disused woodpecker holes and we were advised by Elizabeth Pimley, head of ecology at Wild Service, to make a thorough check to ensure no bats had taken up residence in the holes.

On the day of the felling operation Elizabeth gave the woodpecker holes a final check with a boroscope; still no bats.



The tree surgeon Matt of MJ Padden Tree Services impressed everyone present with his strength and skill at removing the boughs of the rather irregular shaped tree.

The final few parts to be removed contained the woodpecker holes and these were carefully lowered to the ground by site leader Robert Heigham and re-inspected by Elizabeth; still no bats.

Any pieces of wood suitable for logging up were set aside and later stored at The Malswick House.

*Alan McBride*

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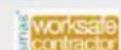
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## Reflections of a site leader



Vineyard Hill - taken by Tim Randles

It's a volunteer workday morning and I open up the site entrance. I unlock the workshop, open the storage containers, unlock the site hut and then the first job is to put the kettle on. Tim arrives with the milk and we make the tea.

As the team arrive we fill the mugs, catch up on the events of the past week, decide what needs to be done today and who will do which job before all setting off to the allotted tasks.

No! That is a memory - a distant memory - from the days before Covid entered our vocabulary.

During the past months, when work days have been allowed, I open up the site entrance. I unlock the workshop, open the storage containers and set out the hand sanitiser, cleaning materials and the Thermos flask of hot water for hand washing.

As the team arrive, we stand in the car park - socially distanced - decide what can be done then set off to our individual tasks. Later in the morning it starts to rain.

We all return to the site hut, perhaps take an early lunch or set about the cake that someone has brought in. There is usually cake - either someone's birthday or maybe simply because it's nobody's birthday. The kettle goes on again, we put the world to rights until the rain stops then all set off to carry on where we left off.

No! That is a memory - a distant memory - from the days before Covid entered our vocabulary.

During the past months, we continue to work until we are wet through, then gather in the car park - socially distanced - and agree there is little more we can do that day. We lock up the workshop and containers, the team get in their cars and go home and I lock up the site and go home as well.

Even if we have been fortunate enough not to have contracted the virus, Covid has affected every one of us in so many different ways. How we live, how we work and by no means least, in the context of the canal, how we can function as a team.

When the first set of restrictions began to be eased and a limited return to the site was possible in June last year, there were plenty of jobs that could be done as individuals, all well distanced. Grass had not been cut for many weeks. Mowing, brush cutting and strimming are all very suitable for social distancing. However, such things as work on the boats is more difficult, especially if the work needs two pairs of hands. The engine compartment of a narrowboat and social distancing are most definitely not compatible.

As the weeks passed the weather tended to worsen, further restrictions were re-

introduced, and the tasks that could be safely achieved were reduced. The number of volunteers also reduced, for very good reasons, as volunteers dealt with their own personal circumstances.

As I reflect on the year gone by, we are again in a period of national restrictions, with the site closed once more. None of this helps to maintain or promote a good and cohesive team atmosphere, but I am optimistic for the future.

As medical science and a huge concerted effort to introduce the vaccination program promise finally to bring the pandemic under control, the path may ultimately be open for a return to the type of work days we knew before. But I fear that will take some time. Shielding, distancing, separation and, at times, isolation have become an integral part of daily life, and for many it has become almost second nature.

Personally, I now feel uncomfortable if other people are too near - I avoid shops unless absolutely necessary - and when out for a walk, I instinctively step aside as runners or cyclists pass by, puffing and panting, and wait a few moments before stepping back onto the path in their wake.

Caution is everything and everywhere, and influences all that we do. As a result of this, I believe that once the virus is under control and life can begin to return to some type of normality, it may still be a considerable time before people regain the confidence to mix and work together in the way that we remember.

Rebuilding a good team working atmosphere will, I think, be one of the big challenges in the months ahead. I believe it can happen, but I believe it will not be quick. This is a purely personal view.

Anyone reading it may find some resonance with it, but equally, they may regard it as the ramblings of a neurotic old man, but either way it is how things appear to me at the moment. However, with some optimism, I look forward to the time when, as a team, we can once again work together, eat cake, have a mug of tea and put the world to rights when it rains.

Andy Fowler

## **Virtual Social Evening**



**Not at the Royal Oak,  
but in your own home.**

We are going online with a social evening - for one month to start with.

Our very own speaker and former Chairman Dick Skeet will present a virtual talk entitled "The Canal in the News" via the online internet Zoom platform on 20 April 2020 at 7.30pm.

We will need your email address to allow us to advise you how to take part a few days prior to the event.

Please email [membership@h-g-canal.org.uk](mailto:membership@h-g-canal.org.uk) with the title "April Social Evening" and we will respond with login details needed in due course...

...and check the Trust website for updates nearer the time.

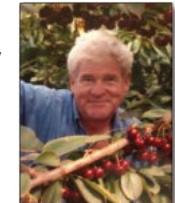
## **Robert (Bob/Rob) Simpson - 1948-2020 RIP**



### **Intrepid Explorer**

In December Robert Simpson passed away. In the early 1990's, Robert became acclaimed for his illustrated talks about the exploration of disused local canal tunnels.

Robert and his sister were brought up by their parents on a smallholding above Oxenhall Tunnel. Following the closure of the canal in 1881, a railway was largely built over the route between Ledbury and Gloucester. Oxenhall tunnel, like other early canal tunnels, had only been built to a bore of 12' x 9' and also because of its level, it could not be utilised by the railway, so it was bypassed. Consequently it began to silt-up and deteriorate.



Prompted by Robert's interest, his father organised the exploration in the late sixties. They entered from the southern portal, using a canoe, an inflatable rubber dingy and battery powered car headlight units to illuminate their way and enable photographs and cine film to record their exploits. When they reached the first fall, they dug their way through at the highest point and then dragged the equipment after them. If my memory is correct, they dug through a second roof fall, but were unable to penetrate a third. Afterwards his father gave a number of talks to local groups about their adventures.

Following his father's tragic death and after the formation of the Canal Society, Chris Clark (with whom Robert shared an interest in vintage cars), persuaded Robert to assume his father's mantle. The first talk, on the evening of 16th January 1992, took place at Dymock. It had been efficiently promoted by Cliff Penny on local radio, in the newspapers and by the Society. So many people arrived, that when the Village Hall had reached its capacity, about eighty people had to be turned away! The author David Bick opened the meeting, Robert gave his talk and Mike Potts concluded, by talking and illustrating the early restoration of the canal accomplished by the Society approaching Skew Bridge, Monkhide. Chris Clark introduced Robert as an intrepid explorer, a soubriquet which he valued.

Following the success of the Dymock talk, Robert gave a second talk in March of the same year in Newent (when 200 people were present), and a third talk in Ledbury in January 1993. His talks created a great interest in the nascent Canal Society. In November 1993 in Gloucester, he gave a talk about the exploration of the disused 3,817 yard long Sapperton Tunnel, near Cirencester, on the Thames and Severn Canal. Robert established Chicory Crops (one of our corporate members), now managed by his two sons, Jake and Rupert, and was also an aviator.

Our condolences go to his partner Elizabeth and his two sons.

This obituary is based on information provided by long-standing members Chris Clark and Ray and Barbara Moses, who also share Robert's enthusiasm for vintage motor vehicles.

Nigel C Jefferies

## Brian Fox RIP



Brian had been a member of the Canal Trust, and Society before it, for more years than most of us care to remember. He was a long-standing member of our Council of Management and was Chairman of the Trust from 1998 to 2000. While on the whole he served with a quiet diligence, I can recall times when his "Hang on a minute ..." introduced much needed wisdom and common sense into a conversation and his considered judgement on many things steered us in the right direction.

Together with Mike Potts (see opposite), he holds the record for the longest return boat trip on the canal since navigation ceased in 1883. I'm writing this almost exactly 25 years to the day since he and Mike Potts navigated a rectangular plastic boat from one place in the middle of nowhere to another place a mile away, also in the middle of nowhere. Crucially, the two places were on different sides of the main Hereford to Worcester road. The canal bridge was removed many years ago and replaced by a culvert which looks scarcely big enough for a duck to get through never mind two blokes in a boat. But they managed it - as far as I know, the only people daft enough ever to do so.

But it is as the Oxenhall Team Leader that we will most remember him. He led the team which turned a Grade II listed hole in the ground, half full of rampant vegetation and decaying masonry, into the stone-walled canal lock we can see today. Very little of the original stonework could be used again so a stock of good second-hand stone was assembled from redundant railway or road bridges across the two counties. Each stone had to be cut and dressed to fit the lock, almost all by people who had to learn the necessary skill on the job. It was a remarkable achievement.

A short distance away the team rebuilt the crumbling aqueduct which takes the canal over the Ell Brook – which becomes much more than a brook after heavy rain! In more recent years the team have moved to the site of Newent Station to clear the site for the rebuilding of the station and the inclined plane, all the while having to maintain the whole of that section of the canal. Tuesdays at Oxenhall will never be quite the same.



We shall miss him in so many ways, not just as a surveyor and restoration team leader, but also for the knowledge he carried around in his head, and for his experience, patience and diplomacy. He had no illusions that boats would be passing through Oxenhall any time soon but that didn't matter.

It is fitting that a plaque in his memory is to be put up. He deserves to be remembered by the future generations of people who will be able to enjoy the canal but who will never be able to thank him in person. I'm rather hoping it will include those words on the commemorative tablet to Sir Christopher Wren in St. Paul's Cathedral - "Reader: If you seek his memorial, look around you."

*Dick Skeet*

## Brian Fox & Mike Potts boating under the A4103



Just recently, we have lost yet another of our good friends Brian Fox, who died of a heart attack. Very sadly we have lost so many of our good friends in the last couple of years.

When I was heavily involved with the restoration of the local canal Brian and I took a small boat and went along the canal from near the Kymin, through the small culvert under the A4103 Worcester road, under the three bridges and up to Middle Court in Monkhide, probably about  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile. We would have been the first to cruise that stretch of the canal for many, many years!



As far as I know we were the only two to do it. We did a lot of work together and had some very good times. We have lost yet another very good friend.

I haven't got a picture of us together as one had to stand on the bank to take the photo. We did both travel the whole length including going through the culvert under the A4103.

*Mike Potts*



# The Middle Basin of the H&G in Hereford



This charming illustration was drawn to my attention by the late Anne Sandford, archivist, when I was carrying out research into the former canal at Hereford Library.



Following the formation of the Society in April, 1983, I used it to produce a greetings card, which was the first item of merchandise the Society produced to raise funds and promote interest in the canal.

On the back of the card my former address and that of James Dunn was printed, for people who wanted to learn more about the Society and the canal to contact.

It was printed by a former company called Reprodux, located close to Hereford Railway Station and we sold them for 35 pence.

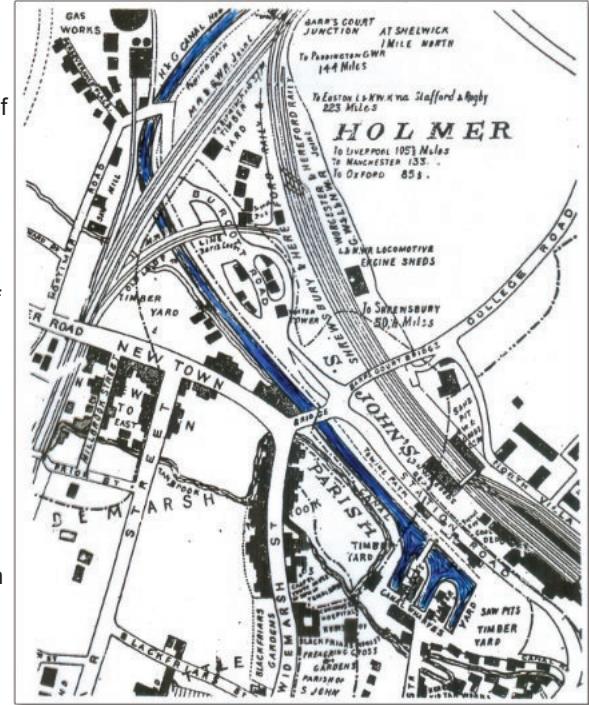
There is a faint copy of the picture on page 30 of David Bick's book about the Canal. It also appears on page 21 of David Whitehead's book; *Yesterday's Town: Hereford*.

In the lower right-hand corner of the card, the name DORRINGTON appears, which I assume is the name of the engraver. The card also includes the original title the, "Middle Basin of the Hereford and Gloucester Canal", which in both books has not been included; I retained it, since it was obviously authentic.



I include this illustration in my Power Point talk about the history of the construction of the former canal, since it is the only known illustration of part of the terminus in Hereford. In the centre distance is the spire of St. Peter's Church, in front of which the Hereford War Memorial would later be built, to the right is the tower of Hereford Cathedral and further right, the spire of All Saint's Church, before its lean developed, which was corrected in recent times. I believe the logs are on the site of Mr. M.E. George's saw mill.

Edward George originally established his business at Withington, but when the canal basin was opened in May, 1845, his entrepreneurship caused him to open a saw mill in Hereford. In the 1870's David Whitehead records he was joined by Mr. Tudor, and the business became George & Tudor's; indeed when my wife and I came to Hereford in 1976, it was still known by that name, until it was taken over in recent times by Jewson.



The map shows the course of the canal from the southern portal of Aylestone Hill tunnel.

The name of Tudors continues today as a builder's merchants, in Burcott Road. Notice the log in the canal in front of the three children and the log to the left of the two people; they appear to have been floated along the canal to be sown into timber. In the middle distance, one narrow boat is being unloaded with the aid of a crane. Another narrow boat with its three crew has just arrived, perhaps from Gloucester and the narrow boat on the left appears to be manoeuvring, to be tethered to the horse on the towpath, in order to depart. On the towpath one boy is in conversation with a fisherman, two men are discussing business and a gentleman and his lady are enjoying a walk beside the canal.

When the canal was opened to Withington in 1844, 3,000 people are said to have gathered. On completion, narrow boats carrying about 30 tons of merchandise, drawn by a single horse could travel from Hereford through Aylestone Hill tunnel, over the aqueduct across the Lugg and onwards to the Severn at Gloucester and from there, further afield. In 1966 reminiscing about his life, the Poet Laureate John Masefield, thought the canal was wonderful. Masefield must have been reflecting the views of relatives and friends, since he was born in 1878 and the canal was closed on 30th June 1881.

Nigel C. Jefferies

# Battleships



## Question;

What have the Netherlands, a battleship and coots got to do with a canal in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire?

## The answer:

In 2019, we were receiving a number of complaints about the reeds and weeds in the canal at Over, not particularly good for the model boats. Also, at the other end in Hereford at Aylestone Park. Initially we tried a Jenlis Weed Razer Pro and while it had some success, we needed something else.

Thanks go to the Netherlands who created a boat for cutting reeds and another for scooping/picking them up. We found a UK company that owned and operated a couple of these boats. At the start of February 2021, we employed them at Over and at Aylestone Park and they have done great work at clearing the reeds and weeds.



Before and after reed cutting at Aylestone Park

Personally, I think coots are very resilient birds, having seen them nesting in old tyres hanging from canal boats and jetties in London, nests lined with plastic bags!



A battleship in action at Vineyard Hill.



Video footage of these strange machines can be seen on the Trust's YouTube channel.

Ralph Barber

# Grand Holiday Draw 2021



Friends and colleagues will be eager for the chance of a great holiday for just £1!

Once again we have some great prizes, so let's make this another successful fundraising event!

1<sup>ST</sup>  
PRIZE

## NARROW BOAT HOLIDAY for FOUR

ONE WEEK PRIOR TO 31/5/22 excluding Bank Holidays. *Donated by Black Prince Holidays*

2<sup>ND</sup>  
PRIZE

## One Day's BOAT HIRE on the MON & BREC CANAL

*Donated by ABC Boat Hire*

3<sup>RD</sup>  
PRIZE

## ONE NIGHT DINNER BED & BREAKFAST for TWO

at The Lock Keepers, Over Wharf, Gloucester. *Donated by The Lock Keepers Company*

Tickets still just £1 each.

The prize winners will be drawn at the Social Evening at The Royal Oak, Much Marcle, on 21 September 2021.

Our thanks to our friends and supporters **Black Prince Holidays**, **ABC Boat Hire** and **The Lock Keepers** for donating the holiday prizes – every pound raised is a pound towards restoration of the Canal.



Members are being sent two books of tickets to sell to family and friends. If you would like more books or as a non-member wish to purchase some tickets please contact Janet Moult via the Contact Us page on our website.

Alternatively, virtual (but valid) tickets can be purchased on the Trust website [Fundraising Makes a Difference](#) page.

Thank you.

Janet Moult

Promoter: Mrs J Moult, 18 Coningsby Court, Coningsby Street, Hereford, HR1 2DF.

Registered under the Gambling Act 2005.



In the last edition we left the canal just entering Ashperton tunnel.

The track leading to the Grade 2 listed Walsopthorne farmhouse lies over the tunnel. The track goes between some mounds which are some of the spoil taken out when the canal was built. I don't know if they had to flatten any to put the Canon Frome cricket pitch in place!

The canal emerges from the tunnel into another deep cutting and then can be seen following the wiggling line of trees before curving round gently to reach the A417 at

what used to be the Canon Frome wharf.

The line then curves across the fields, occasionally to be seen in dry periods in crop marks, winging around to reach Monkhide.

If you have walked through Monkhide you will know that the canal can be seen there partly restored – work was done here back in the '80's and of course you can see the wonderful Skew bridge – an amazing construction for a very minor country road.



The line of the canal sweeps straight across the picture to cross the Hereford to Worcester road A4103 and on into Yarkhill and through Kymin before crossing the Westhide road. The line of the canal follows the valley bottom – clearly visible on a map – all the way towards Withington Marsh.



Kymin and Westhide Road



Yarkhill - canal extending westwards away from the A4103 towards Hereford



Once over Locks Lane – the lock cottage is still there (privately owned with no access) – we proceed on to meet the Bromyard / Hereford Road and the site of the Withington Wharf. See our Withington Walk leaflet for local detail.



Curving around, the canal then dashes across Sutton Marsh towards the River Lugg and the site of the old aqueduct – virtually nothing to be seen today.



Then down towards Hereford through Shelwick, past The Burcott, crossing under Roman Road and on into what is now Aylestone Park. Such a contrast with the park on one side and the trading estate on the other.

The line then disappears into Aylestone tunnel emerging into the salubrious surroundings of trading estates.

*Aylestone Park extending lower left with the Trust built slipway into the canal circled*

Below, you can see the green corridor skirting PC World where the trust negotiated space for the canal to be rerouted. As you know we own the canal route behind Newtown Road – currently rented out to Tudors – and under the Burcott Road bridge. The original basins were under where Jewson's now operates – Canal Road still leads there.

Thanks again to John Hamer for a fascinating flight.



*The route into Hereford from Aylestone Tunnel passes alongside Newtown Road, loops under Farrier's Way and then runs alongside Burcott Road and beneath the extension of Widemarsh Street before extending towards the original basin just beyond where Yazor Brook passes under the new Link Road by the station.*

A complete route of the canal from Over to Barr's Court can now be seen on line at <https://osmaps.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/route/7326068/HGCT>

Ralph Barber

## Introducing Roger Coombs



– new site leader for Oxenhall

I am a retired Mechanical Engineer residing in Kemble where I have a small market garden and workshop. Prior to my retirement my late wife and I owned and ran a motor vehicle repair business and MOT station in Gloucester.

My main interests are: vegetable and flower growing, bee keeping, wood turning and joinery, metal fabrication, and Natural History, birds and insects in particular. I was a principal member of Ross on Wye Men's shed which has been running successfully for several years. I am now actively involved in starting a Community Shed (men and women) in Newent.

I was a narrow boat owner for many years and have great affection for our inland waterways. Since last summer I have worked on engineering projects at Malswick House with Chris and Ian.

*Editor's note: You can get in touch with Roger by email - [oxenhall@h-g-canal.org.uk](mailto:oxenhall@h-g-canal.org.uk)*

## Digital Image Archive



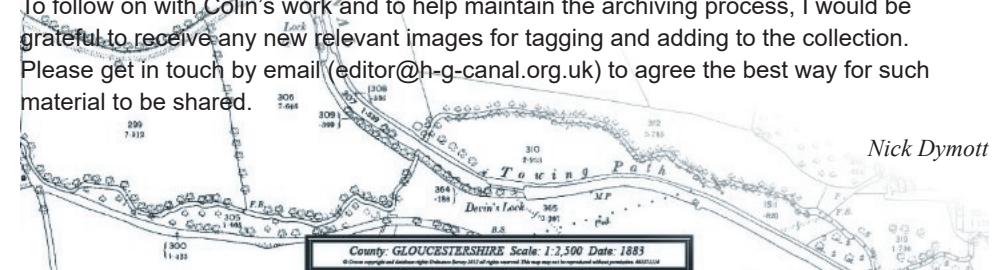
Did you know that the Trust has a digital image archive?

The archive contains over 25,000 images, most of which are photographs, either taken on digital cameras, or derived from scans of printed photos.

The collection also includes a great many scanned or photographed images of archive drawings, maps, certificates and publications, all relevant to the history of the Canal or the Trust.

The archive was managed for many years by Colin Dymott, who spent a lot of time seeking out much of the historic material, as well as gathering copies of new photographs as they were taken by himself and others at various Trust events over the years. Colin has recently passed the collection to me, and efforts are now being made to tag the images, with the intent of making the collection searchable in the future.

To follow on with Colin's work and to help maintain the archiving process, I would be grateful to receive any new relevant images for tagging and adding to the collection. Please get in touch by email ([editor@h-g-canal.org.uk](mailto:editor@h-g-canal.org.uk)) to agree the best way for such material to be shared.



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## Problems at the Pool.

The cry went out - pool pump has packed up and the residents are getting concerned!

A hasty visit to this very picturesque spot in the centre of Dymock revealed a woeful dilemma. Things had gone wrong and the harder they tried the worst it got, eventually leaving in the depths of despair.



A Trust team trio fetched up and assessed the situation. The pool was perilously low exposing the shallows to masses of flying insects and the pump refusing to make a go of it.

The troops sat down with bowed heads inside the little kiosk and started with the main control panel. They found some failed links which entailed calling up replacements and some signs of strange pops and bangs and metering the pump supply wiring, which came up with some very strange readings.

So, the borehole cabling had to be hauled up and 55 metres later the offending wiring was found. A quick dash to Dean Electrical produced a custom under water pump coupler which entailed amazing acrobatics to make up and ensure an intrinsically safe under water connection. The low-level probe was checked and with much anticipation the system was switched on.

Nothing.... Angst and despair !!

Back to basics revealed open circuit wiring which was hastily re-fixed and a retry - success, lots of wiring, pretty lights and backslapping.

A plunge in the pool to gloat on success and the euphoria evaporated, 400 volts of 3 phase was producing a miserable trickle. Waves of despair swept over, and the 50 metre underfoot had to be hauled out. Everything checked out OK so in desperation the phases were reversed, the pump descended back underground, test success, sighs of relief all round.

A long term run up and the pool refilled with the system running well so a call to the boss to tell him how clever we were was halted when Bob says, "it's not quite right". There is a design flaw, and we must all have a big think. So, off everyone has to go for a big think. Chris comes up with wizz idea and mails Bob and then lock-down strikes so everyone is totally thwarted!

*Chris Phelps*

## Trading Company reminiscences



2020 was a strange year in many ways - it was the first time for many years that I was not going round the country to Boat Shows!

Looking back – so many memories came flooding back, Brian and I had taken the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust stand to many shows so it was inevitable that we would get involved with the H&G on moving to Hereford. The first time ended inauspiciously at Worcester, whilst helping to dismantle the stand Brian cut his hand badly. The WRGies (Waterway Recovery Group) came to the rescue and took him to A&E and they fed me while I was waiting at the showground.

WRGies helping brings back memories of their Chairman, Mike Palmer, trying to clear a path to our stand at IWA Festival at St Ives, of extricating myself off the car park at Crick eliciting a round of applause from volunteers as I kept going on the mud back to the road, but having to be pushed at Braunston by a young Scout and covering him from head to foot in mud.

We attended many shows in the past – most weekends in summer – but the first was usually Tractor World at Malvern Showground. Tom and Derek were the main helpers, the Show included an outdoor auction where the auctioneer drove up and down lines of bits of metal – Tom usually came back with something he had needed for years.

The memories were flooding back when I decided to look back at old Wharfingers to see where we had been in the last 20 years. The IWA Festivals were the “big away” shows and we travelled round the UK, north to Huddersfield and Runcorn, east to St Ives (not Cornwall), Waltham Abbey, Milton Keynes and Reading.

These required a van to take displays and stock for three days and we met up with regulars from far afield, Des, Lesley, Steve, Becca among them. Many others travelled from Hereford, the Weaver family and others too numerous to name.

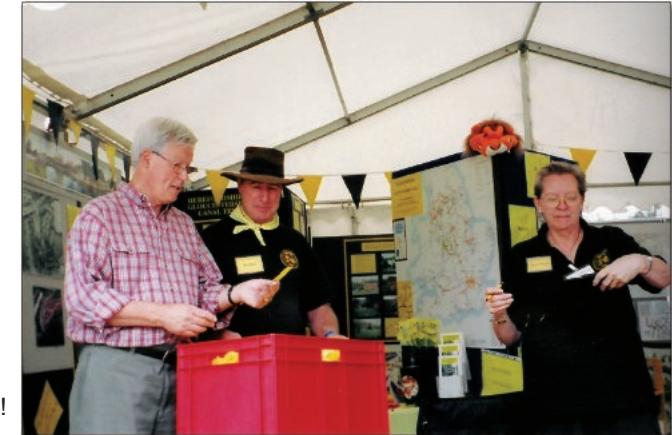
The highlights were the “tea runs” - so frequent the refreshment stalls got to recognise the H&G tray. One WRG branch sold mugs and offered free refills for rest of show – not a good idea for them.



The other highlight was the making of the Grand Holiday Draw.

We persuaded various celebrities to our marquee, Tim and Pru, John Craven and local dignitaries to make the draw.

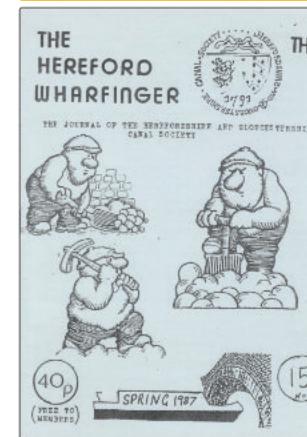
Too many memories are rushing back so I think I will hold some over until the Editor has blank pages to fill!



John Craven pulling the winning tickets in the Trust's Grand Holiday Draw during the IWA National at Beale Park, Reading in 2003.

Janet Moul

## Wharfinger Magazine back numbers

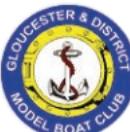


The editorial team is trying to secure a complete physical set of Wharfinger back numbers ahead of Edition 150 being planned later this year.

Currently, we believe we are only missing the following editions; 3, 4, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18 and 19, which at the time looked like the image here. Maybe a good time to have a sort out in your loft or garage!!

It is hoped that all copies will be scanned into an electronic format and added to the Trust's digital archive and possibly made more widely available through the website.

If you can help please get in touch - [editor@h-g-canal.org.uk](mailto:editor@h-g-canal.org.uk)



## Gloucester & District Model Boat Club

### 20 Years at Over

We have been sailing at Over now for 20 years and below is an extract from our Chairman Ted Tedaldi's history of the Club from our website.

"The Club, at very short notice had been asked to sail at the opening of the Hereford and Gloucester Canal at Over. We pitched ourselves over the far side of the basin for two days' sailing. From this a meeting was arranged with Dave Penny, Trust director. Here over a cuppa, we struck a bargain to sail at Over. Since then they have had their trust in us as we do in them. We consider Over as our home and enjoy its unique sailing and country walk."

After a succession of various locations, the Gloucester and District Model Boat Club settled in at Over 20 years ago this year, a fact we would like to celebrate if the present epidemic ever lets us. We are good tenants by keeping the basin weeded all through the summer and on sailing days showing the passing walkers, of whom there are a surprising large number what a wonderful asset the restored canal basin is for the people of Gloucester not just as a Canal but as a facility for other waterborne activities.

We cover all generations from ancient Grandfathers (like your Scribe) to youngsters not yet in their teens, we have disabled members who enjoy the facilities and the company of fellow members, the only help they ask for being for someone to launch and recover their model boats as they would not be safe on the Slipway.

There is a thriving Competitive Sailing section who normally race every other Friday with Micromagic class boats with sometimes as many as 20 skippers keenly hoping to win one or all of the races that afternoon. We have Winter and Summer series of races for them.



*A fine line up of members and their boats on what looks like a typical fun day*



*Micromagic Racing on a Friday*



*Lady sailors with their Micromagics*



*Young members of a 3 generation family group trying out our "Have a go" Tug one and Tug two built by Danny and Ted with which anyone can try their hand at Radio Control boating.*



*Trevor's motor cargo boat Benarty VI. Trevor is one of the members who travels from Hereford to sail*

## Canal Walks



H&G Canal Trust has produced a series of walk leaflets which explore various parts of the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal.

### STAPLOW, WITHINGTON WHARF, DYMOCK, LLANTHONY LOCK, OXENHALL and OVER BASIN

All proceeds towards the promotion and restoration of the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal.

More details and ordering options available on the website.

Turn on AmazonSmile in the Amazon app to generate donations.



AmazonSmile customers can now support Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust in the Amazon shopping app on iPhones and Android phones! Simply follow these instructions to turn on AmazonSmile and start generating donations.

1. Open the Amazon Shopping app on your device
2. Go into the main menu of the Amazon Shopping app and tap into 'Settings'
3. Tap 'AmazonSmile' and follow the on-screen instructions to complete the process

Please help support H&G. So simple to use if you do your shopping with Amazon.

## Logs for Sale Proceeds to Trust Funds

These logs are processed by our volunteers from the clearance work during canal restoration. The sale of them helps to fund the cost of our work restoring the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal.

Logs are available for purchase at £75 per builders dumpy bag.



Purchases can be arranged by contacting our Malswick site team by email: [malswick@h-g-canal.co.uk](mailto:malswick@h-g-canal.co.uk)

## Keeping in Touch



The present restrictions have highlighted that we have no direct contact for most of our members, other than by post.

We would love it if you would please send your current email address into our Membership Secretary Nigel Jefferies so we may update our records – thank you.

[membership@h-g-canal.org.uk](mailto:membership@h-g-canal.org.uk)

Your information will be stored securely and can be amended or deleted on request.



Boats gathered at the Slipway possibly waiting for a trip down to the Winding Hole

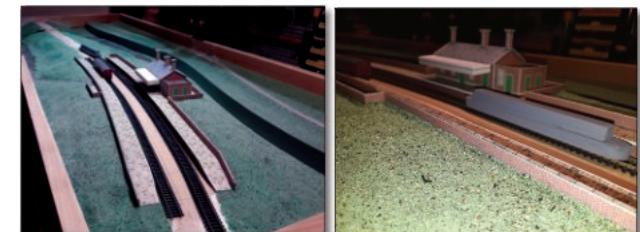


Disabled members enjoying their model boating

## Newent Station update



Photos here are of the improved model of Newent station, discussed previously. It will be a great visual aid to our sales promotion stall at events when we can finally get out and about.



The boat still needs a carriage.

I think we will have to ask our model maker to show some of the lovely trees that we have on site.

The question I have is which one of the seven wonders of the canals in the UK will we knock off the list when we have our own H&G inclined plane? If I can dream, what would be the seven wonders of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal?

Pics by Chris Phelps

Well, of course, the inclined plane; the Oxenhall Tunnel (one of the longest on the waterways system); the amazing skew bridge at Monkhide; not many canals have tunnels with tow paths inside (yes, I do know of a couple that exist elsewhere); I have already mentioned the amazing gluten free fish and chips at the Lock Keepers as well as other food served there; what a stop that would be after working your way via the River Severn into Over basin through a lock that has one of the greatest tidal ranges on the system. How many wonders can you think of?

Ralph Barber

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL  
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CALL NOW TO BOOK YOUR PLACE

## Surplus Plant and Equipment Welcome



We are now the owners of another Shanks Pony reciprocating blade cutter. It was dropped into the workshop for a check over and we look forward to giving it a go next year along the towpath. Also, on loan a compressor for the team to, at least, pump the tyres up as I did notice one was a bit flat.

Thank you very much to the member who supplied the Shanks Pony cutter.

If you have any unused equipment that you may think could be useful, please contact us via the web site or on email [information@h-g-canal.org.uk](mailto:information@h-g-canal.org.uk)

Ralph Barber

## Site Days



### Regular Volunteer Work Parties

Due to the ongoing Coronavirus situation, at the time of going to print limited volunteer working is taking place on site until further notice.

#### Tuesdays

Malswick

Robert Heigham

[malswick@h-g-canal.org.uk](mailto:malswick@h-g-canal.org.uk)

#### Thursdays

Yarkhill

Chris High 01568 615 575  
[yarkhill@h-g-canal.org.uk](mailto:yarkhill@h-g-canal.org.uk)

#### Ad Hoc

Hereford Roving Team

John Pritchard 01432 272972  
[hereford@h-g-canal.org.uk](mailto:hereford@h-g-canal.org.uk)

Kymin

Ralph Barber 01432 853 086  
[kymin@h-g-canal.org.uk](mailto:kymin@h-g-canal.org.uk)

#### Wednesdays

Over Basin/Vineyard Hill

Andy Fowler  
[overbasin@h-g-canal.org.uk](mailto:overbasin@h-g-canal.org.uk)



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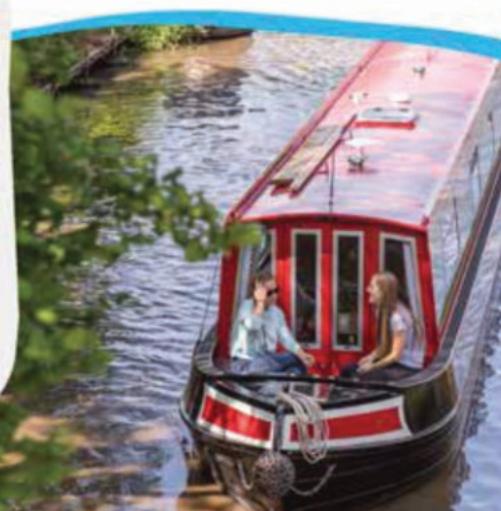
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## Sailing4Disabled



Hello everyone, well when all this is over it will be just like Christmas all over again, except no frantic search for the lights that I'm sure I put in the attic! At least there will not be loads of paper and cardboard to get rid of, but lots of unwrapping of the boat and finding life jackets if the mice have not nested in them or eaten them, but just like Christmas still lots of surprises as to what we will find.

Spoke to a helper today and raised a question as to whether we will still have the volunteers when we come out of this. I know that my younger volunteers (well younger than me) are eager to get back to the boats, as for the older they are now 2 years older and may have found new interests to keep them happy and may not want to return? only time will tell.

At the giving of the traditional presents at Christmas one of my grandsons handed me an envelope and said "Pop, this is for you as we know that when we need anything that we don't have 99.9% of the time you will have it or find a solution to the problem, so you have an extra envelope and a letter! your Christmas present and all of the grand children's appreciation for what you have given us! It read as follows:

*To Pop.*

*Two years ago, as you know I embarked on the adventure to grow my hair for the "Little Princess Trust". But what I didn't tell everyone, was that to go alongside the hair donation I also set up a fund to give back a little something for Sailing for Disabled. To me the work you have done and still do, is incredible! As a kid I never really understood the whole meaning behind what you do, but once I became older and looked back, I now understand. You do it to bring hope and meaning back into people's lives who have been dealt the worse hand. You show them that their disabilities shouldn't hold them back and that they can achieve anything if they put their mind to it! To which I commend you. Because of this understanding of what you have done and still do I now live my life with the same motto. Let nothing hold you back as you can achieve anything if you put your mind to it!*

*The sailing club has been a part of all of our families lives for years and hopefully many more years to come. I hope that with my donation I can at least help make one person smile!*

*Callum Quinton*

He then gave me another envelope and said, "on our behalf give the helpers and disabled a thank you from us by the form of a BBQ which we know your good at and handed me £500. I was really taken back as we don't volunteer for reward but do it because we need to brighten up someone's life, even for a 20 min boat ride this makes all the difference!

Thank you to all my volunteers that give up their time, for without them we wouldn't be there at Over Wharf, Gloucester.

Stay Safe.

*Pete RWB*

## Social Media

Did you know that in addition to the website and The Wharfinger, the Trust has a presence on Facebook, Instagram and, as noted on page 18, also on YouTube.



## Membership Matters



Have a question on your membership? Contact Nigel, our membership trustee - details on inside back cover - see opposite.

Your personal details – membership status, address, telephone number or email address - anything need amending? Contact Nigel to have the changes updated.

Your membership renewal due date appears on the envelope your Wharfinger has arrived in. Send the payment to Nigel to continue with your membership.

Want to make a single or establish a regular annual payment to the Trust via your bank? The Trust's sort code is 16-21-20 Account number 11600694.

It will help greatly with the admin if you can please mention on the banking paperwork your initials, surname and postcode so we can match against your membership.

Thank you,

*Nigel C Jefferies*

## Advertisers supporting The Wharfinger



As ever, we are grateful for their support, without which publication of **The Wharfinger** would not be possible.

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New advertisers are always welcome - rates start at £39.00 per issue and include artwork if needed.

For information on advertising in **The Wharfinger**, please get in touch with Ginny Birkett - see opposite page for contact details.

## Contact Details



### Hereford Team - John Pritchard

01432 272 972 [hereford@h-g-canal.org.uk](mailto:hereford@h-g-canal.org.uk)

### General enquiries -

[information@h-g-canal.org.uk](mailto:information@h-g-canal.org.uk)  
6 Castle Street, Hereford HR1 2NL

### Want to Help?

The Canal Trust is always in need of new volunteers as our activities continue to expand. We can normally find a use for any skill from gardeners to first aiders, brickies to those willing to help with a shovel, pen or laptop.

The H&G CT also welcomes offers of gifts of good quality used tools and machinery from those who no longer need or cannot use it.

### Want to Join?

Please support our voluntary work by becoming a Member of the H&GCT. A membership form is available online or from our Membership Secretary.

#### H&G CT New UK Membership Rates

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Our objective is to rebuild the 34 mile Canal linking the centre of Hereford to Gloucester and its connection with the 2,500 mile inland waterway network. We have major restoration sites in each county, together extending to some 4 miles. The intention is to provide a financially sustainable independent Canal which does not require regular financial support from public bodies for its future operation and maintenance.

## The H&G Canal Trust

The Canal Society, formed in 1983, became the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust, a registered charity, in 1992. It has an ordinary and corporate membership approaching 1,400, here and abroad.

## The original Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal

Work started in 1792 reaching Ledbury from Gloucester by 1798. In 1827 Steven Ballard was appointed to oversee the Canal's completion, which reached Hereford in 1845; this was one of the last major canal routes completed in Britain. The Canal stretched from the River Severn at Gloucester, via Newent, Dymock and Ledbury to Hereford, using 22 locks and 3 tunnels. It was closed in 1881 to allow construction of the Ledbury-Gloucester railway which in turn closed in 1964.

= Canal Walk leaflet available.

= Restoration sites suitable for public access.

*It should not be assumed that Rights of Way exist.*

*We work on the Canal with the cooperation of land owners and their neighbours.*

*Please help us maintain good relations with them.*

Thank you.



The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service

