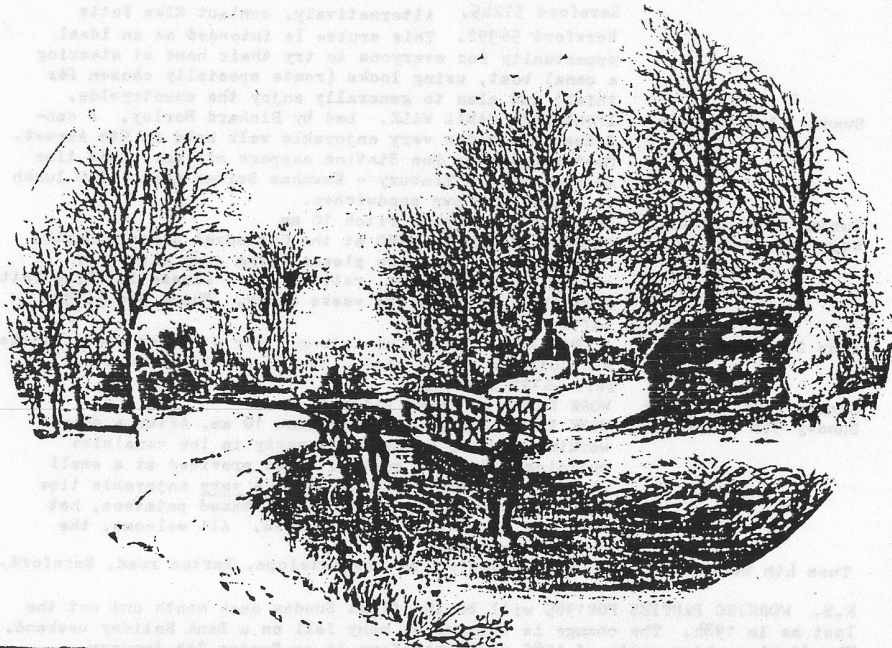


THE HEREFORD WHARFINGER

THE JOURNAL OF
THE HEREFORDSHIRE
AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE
CANAL SOCIETY

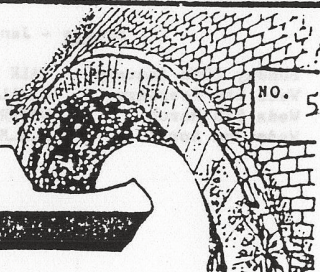
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25p

(FREE TO
MEMBERS)

AUTUMN ISSUE



Events - September - December 1984

- Sunday 9th September BLISTS HILL AND IRON BRIDGE Depart Edgar Street carpark (by the Nell Gwynne) at 9.30 am arrive Blists Hill about 11.00am. Free carpark and park and ride bus service available to other sites. If you are not starting from Hereford please contact Mike Potts to arrange a meeting point; also if you require transport or further information. Please ring a few days before the event. Tel. Hereford 56392 after 6.15 pm
- Sunday 30th October WORK PARTY at Crews Pitch 10am.
5th - 7th October CANAL BOATING WEEKEND. A cruise on the Worcester to Birmingham canal. Cost for whole weekend (Friday pm to Sunday pm/ Monday am) £20-£25 plus food. One day cruise £10 - £12. Anyone wishing to continue the cruise for the rest of the week at a special low rate please contact Philip Ashurst as soon as possible. Initial deposit with booking before 16th September; balance payable before event. Information and bookings, please contact Philip Ashurst, Hereford 57245. Alternatively, contact Mike Potts Hereford 56392. This cruise is intended as an ideal opportunity for everyone to try their hand at steering a canal boat, using locks (route specially chosen for this!) and also to generally enjoy the countryside.
- Sunday 21st October LEOMINSTER CANAL WALK. Led by Richard Morley. A continuation of the very enjoyable walk held on 5th August. Meet Leominster Bus Station carpark at 11am. This time we explore the Tenbury - Newnham Bridge area. Pub lunch or bring your own sandwiches.
- Sunday 28th October WORK PARTY at Crews Pitch 10 am
Weds 7th November MEMBERS SLIDES EVENING at the Cathedral School, Castle Street, 8 pm. Members please bring your slides of canals, boat holidays, rallies etc. Please let Mike Potts have them at least two weeks early. Phone Wfd 56392 (after 6.15 pm)
- Weds 21st November A CHAT ANA' 'ALF. Come along for a natter about canals and join us with a pint. Social evening open to all Tel: 56392 for venue
- Sunday 25th November WORK PARTY at Crews Pitch 10 am.
Sunday 9th December WORK PARTY PARTY at Crews Pitch 10 am. After a short workin' morning a Christmas party in the canalside building. Bring a bottle. Food provided at a small charge. (probably 75p or so). A very enjoyable time was had by all last year. Soup, baked potatoes, hot dogs and mince pies was the menu. All welcome, the more the merrier
- Tues 4th December SKITTLES EVENING at the Antelope, Barton road, Hereford.

N.B. WORKING PARTIES FOR 1985 will be the first Sunday each month and not the last as in 1984. The change is because so many fell on a Bank Holiday weekend. The first working party of 1985 will therefore be on Sunday 7th January.

Events - Jan - April 1985 Further details in next Wharfinger

- Sunday 20th January WALK on the Brecon - Abergavenny Canal.
Weds 6th February CANAL TALK
Weds 6th March WATERWAYS FILM EVENING
Weds 3rd April A.C.M. and CANAL HOLIDAYS TALK

We hope you like the changes in format to the Wharfinger. In the forthcoming issues there will be additional alterations. However to help make this possible we urgently need a regular supply of articles from our members. Items about 150 or 300 words long would be most suitable. We are interested in any canalside news and views. For example, canalside holidays you have enjoyed, unusual or amusing events, rallies attended, interesting canalside walks, canal museums, canalside pubs, other societies' news, natural history of the canal etc.

In future Wharfingers we should like to initiate a letters page where members could exchange ideas and views.

Please send your letters and articles to the editor:

Janet White
19 Crampian Close
Hereford

In the autumn we shall be holding a JUMBLE SALE to raise funds for the Society. If you have any jumble to donate or if you wish to volunteer to help out on the day, please contact one of the following committee members:

Mike Potts Hereford 56392 after 6.15 pm please
Nigel Jeffries Hereford 850661
Robin Andrews Hereford 268854
Peter Woodfield Hereford 269500

Our archivist, Mr Morris is kindly collating historical information passed on to him by members of the Society. If you own any old maps or documents related to the canal he would be very grateful if you would allow him to see them. To contact him please phone Bridge Sollars 649

Our canal walks are proving very popular and a good time is had by children and adults alike. We do not do any marathon walks but take a very leisurely walk/part drive. Do come along to our next walk, bring your family and friends; non members are welcome too. We are arranging many more events for the autumn and winter. Please come along and support them. All our events are informal and enjoyable.

We require more willing volunteers for our working parties. There are all sorts of jobs to do (no mud shovelling) from tea maker to bonfire maker, grass, weed and timber cutters. We suggest you wear wellies or strong boots. Useful tools could be saws, scythes, spades and shovels. These working parties all have great fun. If enough new faces turned up perhaps we could persuade Mike Potts to fall in the canal again for them!

On 7th November we are arranging a slides evening. If you have any slides or videos about your canal holidays etc and would like them included in the show please contact M.Potts. Tel: Hereford 56392 (after 6.15 pm please)

Ideal gift for Christmas! A years membership to the Society.

A Day Out in Ledbury.

It was a hot July morning when a group of us met to see the sights of Ledbury. Canal sights, that is.

Ledbury stands on the junction of the old and new parts of the Hereford and Gloucester Canal - the 18th century, winding its way to the wharf at the town boundary, and the 19th century, more purposeful, with deep locks and no-nonsense directness, its initial goal the water supply at the Leadon and ultimately the complete route through to Hereford.

We started at the end of the old, the wharf that for 30 years was as far as the Hereford and Gloucester Canal went (surely they called it by another name in those days?) Michael Handford, our leader, as enthusiastic as ever. And where better to start than his protegee, that fascinating building variously described as a Mavvies Barracks and a cider warehouse?

Michael painted an extremely convincing picture of the building as a Mavvies Barracks, housing the labourers who built the older part of the canal as it neared Ledbury. Some of his audience refused to be convinced, however, and one local resident affirmed his certainty that it was a cider store, pointing out that the view of it today, surrounded by open fields, is completely different from that when the canal was built, when most of the fields were cider orchards. Our Secretary Nigel Jefferies, for his part, expressed concern at the mechanical digger parked nearby.

We speculated on the purpose of the building, discussed it, photographed it, pondered over it, and moved on to the site of the wharf itself across the road. Little did we think that a few days later all that would remain would be a heap of rubble. Nigel's suspicions, ignored by the rest of us, had been quite correct.

So yet another building associated with the canal has been lost. Perhaps not one of great historical interest when seen in the national context, but undoubtedly something that added charm, colour and - dare I say? - intrigue, to the life of our local canal. We must mourn its passing, and resolve to try to make landowners (including local authorities) more aware of the significance of those structures that do remain in their keeping.

Of the wharf itself, little remains. It is now an overgrown area where nature runs rampant. But who knows what may lie beneath those buddleia-covered hummocks?

We followed the line of the canal up past the site of the old gas-works, but the embankment and the disused road bridge are products of the Railway Age. Here, the canal had been filled in a hundred years ago.

And so to a local hostelry for lunch. Thinking about canal-digging is evidently thirsty work.

In the afternoon, the main section through town. Originally six deep locks were sited here. After the railway came, all that was changed and what remains is a smooth track that makes a footpath where you have the illusion of being miles away from the busy market town around you.

But it does mean that the levels are rather hard to envisage. At one stage you are walking virtually on the bed of the canal and a little further on the canal was 20 feet overhead. Mike Handford pointed out the way the towpath, still visible at the side of the cutting, went up not in a smooth line but in little steps marking the sites of the locks. High up in the brambles is the wall where boats moored to load and unload.

We also explored the short arm of canal leading to the warehouse on the Much Marcle road. Here Michael's good relationships with local residents paid off, as the owner, Mr Lloyd, did not object to our motley party tramping through his garden and over the old warehouse, now his garage.

Some of us walked the full length of the railway/canal to the Hereford Road, while the less energetic went by car. The Community Programme are at present working on a project to clear it of undergrowth, and when completed it will provide a splendid green strip from side to side of the town. Unfortunately, little remains that shows there was a canal along this section, although the Community Programme have now uncovered what appears to be the base of one of the locks, which they are planning to leave as an interesting feature.

On the Hereford Road the canal has left the railway to continue its journey to Hereford, and is clearly visible beside the Smithy. When the canal was in use this building was a pub where the boatmen paused to quench their thirst and swap news before resuming their journeys. And this seemed a fitting place for us to pause in our exploration of the canal. The next section will have to wait for another day.

Many thanks, Michael, for a most instructive and enjoyable day out.

Robin Andrews.

Work Party News.

Although there is not a great deal of news to report on the restoration (We are awaiting the loan of some machinery to enable further clearance work at Monkhide), we are pleased to say that we have recently been given a chain saw by Mr. Michael Godson, a new member. Fitted with a new clutch, a good service carried out together with the chain re-sharpened, we were able to make very good use of it on our last work party. It enabled us to remove without too much effort the huge tree branches which had lain by the skew bridge for some time. The canal has drained to reveal much brickwork to be rebuilt supporting the towpath beneath the Skew Bridge. The water level has been reduced to a lower level and there is a fair amount nearer Crews Pitch. Apparently this is the first year for many that a reasonable amount of water has remained in the canal.

We are at the moment considering bank re-inforcement at the Crews Pitch end and the winding hole at the wharfe. Because so many of our working parties fell on a bank holiday weekend, in 1985 we shall change the monthly date to the first Sunday in every month.

Peter Woodfield and Mike Potts

Waterways Quiz

Just for fun. Answers in next Wharfinger.

1. Name Britain's longest canal tunnel ever constructed and the canal it is/was on.
2. Which two waterways does the Anderton boat lift link?
3. On which canal does the Saperton Tunnel stand?
4. Which canal is raised by the Bingley five rise locks?
5. Rennie's magnificent aqueduct carries which canal over the River Lune?
6. Which two canals join at Hawkesbury Junction?
7. On which canal does the Stoke Bruerne Canal Museum Stand?
8. Which is the longest flight of locks in the country and on which canal will you find them?
9. On which canals stood the Hay incline?
10. Which two canals linked the Thames and Severn canal to the Kennet and Avon?

We extend a warm welcome to following new members:

Mr and Mrs Lloyd
Mr R J Jeffries
Miss L Mason
Mr and Mrs Wheeler
Mr L J Boughey
Mr and Mrs Withington
Mr P Woodward

Leominster Canal Walk

A group of about twentyfive members and friends met on one of the hottest days of the year - July 29th - to explore the few remaining features of the Leominster Canal.

We gathered on a carpark in Leominster and, having condensed the party into five cars, set off for Griston Tunnel. This feature, a three hundred metre tunnel through the small range of hills that marks part of the Severn-Wye watershed, is still remarkably well preserved despite being unused for about 130 years. The tunnel portals are still intact and there is water to a depth of some 18 - 24 inches as far into the tunnel as can be seen. Despite this the tunnel appears to be blocked by a fall.

A few miles to the north, near the village of Wooferton the group were able to inspect the remains of Wooferton lock. One wall of the lock is still identifiable as such and the line of the canal is visible as a line of earthworks. A narrow tunnel carries the line of the canal under the Shrewsbury to Hereford Railway Line and nearby is a well preserved inverted syphon carrying a stream under the canal.

After lunch at a pleasant pub in Little Hereford, beside the River Teme, the group moved on to visit the outstanding feature of the canal. This is a remarkable brick built aquaduct crossing the River Teme just to the west of Little Hereford. Earthworks sweep round an imposing bend above the flood plain of the Teme and one suddenly comes upon the aquaduct. The remoteness of this feature was presumably the reason why its central span was bombed by the RAF as target practise during World War 2.

The two remaining spans, one on each side of the river are in remarkably good condition and left a vivid impression on the minds of the group.

Because of the heat it was agreed to visit the remaining features of this canal in a second walk.

Everyone on the walk was impressed with the preparation and study put into the day by Richard Morley to whom our thanks for a splendid day are due.

Official Approval - after 100 Years in the Cold

In a quiet sort of way, the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Society achieved a notable victory when its document "Hereford's Canal - a Combined Project" was given official backing. Hereford City Council's Health and Leisure Committee recently discussed the document, following which the City Health and Leisure Officer wrote to us as follows: "... it was recommended that the Committee will lend its support to your proposal to restore the length of the Hereford and Gloucester Canal from College Hill to Roman Road but regrets that no financial support can be given at this time."

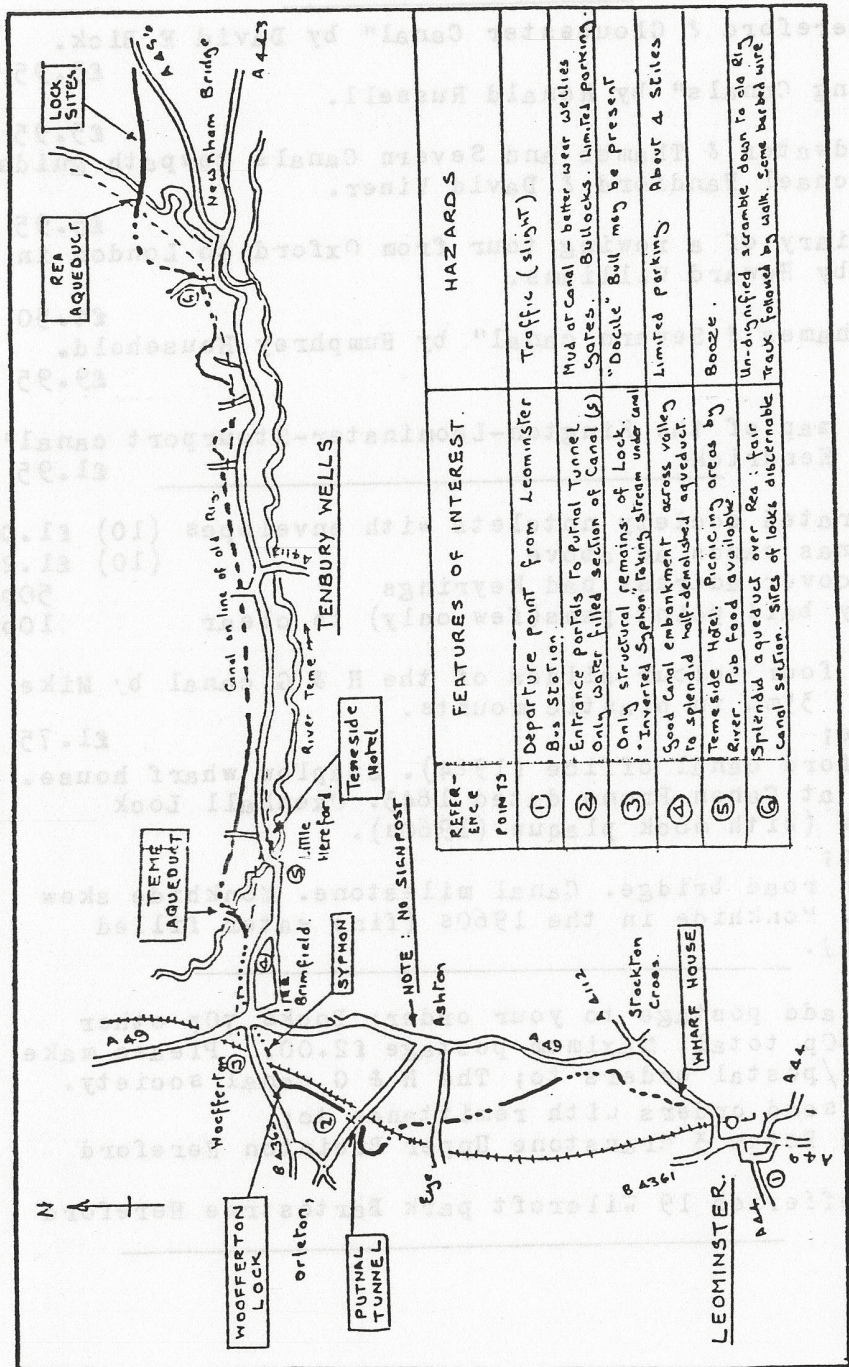
In a separate decision, the Planning and Transport Committee stated: "It is the Council's policy to secure the protection of the remaining line of the Canal where this has not been developed and where development could not otherwise be reasonably expected to occur."

While what is "reasonable" is open to debate, this is undoubtedly a decision of considerable significance which may ultimately do more than anything else to save this stretch of canal from extinction. The Committee was giving its reasons for refusing an application to build a house on the canal just outside the entrance to the College Hill tunnel, and goes on to say: "The development of the site could restrict any future proposals for the excavation of the canal highlighting the historical transport system of the City and possibly providing a recreation/landscape feature."

This is a policy which we in the HGCS applaud, and hope that in the fullness of time we will be able to assist it to come to fruition.

Sources

- (1) Personal communication, Mr K.F. Rayner, City Health and Leisure Officer, 11/7/84.
- (2) Planning decision (ref. no. E/0A/27084), 5/7/84.



SALES SECTION

BOOKS:

- "The Hereford & Gloucester Canal" by David E Bick. £3.95
"Walking Canals" by Ronald Russell. £5.95
"Stroudwater & Thames and Severn Canals towpath guide" by Michael Handford & David Viner. £5.95
"The diary of a rowing tour from Oxford to London in 1875" by Howard Williams. £4.50
"The Thames & Severn canal" by Humphrey Household. £9.95
MAPS;
"A new map of the Kington-Leominster-Stourport canal" by Geo Kendrick £1.95
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- Illustrated society notelets with envelopes (10) £1.00
Christmas cards as above (10) £1.20
Metal cover address pad keyrings 50p
Society ball point pens(few only) to clear 10p

Set of four colour slides of the H & G canal by Mike Potts. 35mm in plastic mounts.
Set one; £1.75

Hereford canal office (1984). Staplow wharf house.
Sluice at Canon Frome dated 1843. Oxenhall Lock Cottage (with mock plaque (1960s)).
Set two;

Roman road bridge. Canal milestone. Monkhide skew bridge. Monkhide in the 1960s (fine water filled section).

Please add postage to your order; Books 70p other items 60p total. Maximum postage £2.00. Please make cheques/postal orders to; The H & G canal society.

Please send orders with remittance to;

Mike Potts 3 Cranstone Upper Breinton Hereford Cr

11 Jefferies 19 Wilcroft park Bartestree Hereford