

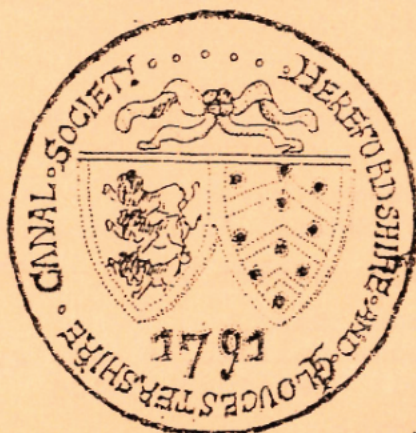


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MEMBERS



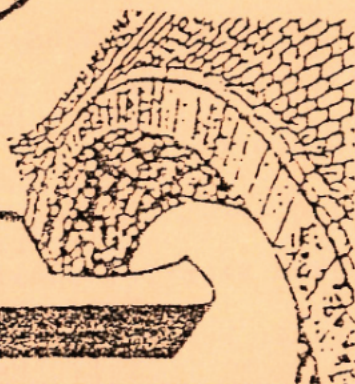
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IN 1983

THE

WHARFINGER



Journal of the Herefordshire and  
Gloucestershire Canal Society

EDITION NO. 18

WINTER

1987

# HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL SOCIETY

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PETER PRICE, ESQ.

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Tel: 056881 470 Herefordshire.

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Tel: Golden Valley 540559

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Tel: Hereford 275244

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Tel: (0242) 512802

Derek Gray, 40, Hewitt Avenue, Hereford.



### TOTAL CANAL RESTORATION

In reply to Richard Morley's article in the last edition of The Wharfinger, I must first point out that I wholeheartedly respect Richard's views. Richard is a keen and very active member of the Society and has been for a number of years.

I have had an interest in the canal for many years, a number of them before the Society's formation, so when I first heard of the Inaugural Meeting, it was music to my ears! I would love to see the canal fully restored and although the task is enormous, I will do as much as I possibly can towards this. Our efforts may never achieve this end, but it will not be for the lack of trying.

I agree that we must restore the lengths which are more feasible, but we must not ignore the less feasible. We have had permission to restore one short stretch which at the moment is no more than a field, with no trace of a canal in it. It ran along the edge of the field but has since been filled in.

I feel that if our aim was just to restore sections, we would not get the support we need. Local authorities and tourist boards are more likely to support us if there is a possibility of our canal being a good tourist attraction. A reasonable length with perhaps a trip boat and other activities — boat and canal use, fishing and leisure walks would bring some support and return. But I feel it would be mainly of local interest only. Much more of the canal is likely to disappear unless interest is shown in all of the canal.

It is in the last couple of years that the Society has really started to move. We are gaining credibility in the eyes of many bodies, restoration work is speeding up and public interest is growing. Although the ultimate aim may be fully to restore the canal, I feel that the Society has always been aware of its limitations, acts and treads very carefully so as not to lose the credibility it has gained.

The task of restoration is enormous, but if a major road were to be built on the route, I am sure that obstacles would be overcome some way or another. The real problem, of course, is finance. Even a land-locked canal is of great interest if it is long enough — good examples are the Monmouthshire and Brecon canals — but the scope could be enormous should it be linked to the waterways network.

I agree the money could be better spent on the less fortunate of the world perhaps, but one could say that of anything. The money spent on one nuclear weapon, threatening many lives, would feed millions. We are a nation of possessors — the advertising and marketing of products promotes this, — but these days, unfortunately, the gap between the haves and the have nots is rapidly growing and it's happening right here on our own doorstep. Perhaps even our small efforts may provide jobs for some of the less fortunate of us.

The leisure industry is the fastest growing industry in the country and we have quite a potential source of employment available, not only in restoring the canal, but in the maintenance of it, canal side trade and canal use.

Mike Potts



# I.W.A. NATIONAL RALLY - HAWKESBURY, 1987

8am on a fine August morning saw three of us at Hawkesbury Junction, near Coventry, hard at work erecting the timber frame that would house the first ever display of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Society at the Inland Waterways Association Rally.

By 9am we had successfully worked out which timber went where, tightened all the bolts and clad it in waterproof sheeting. When the Showground was opening to the public at 10am we were putting the finishing touches to our display and soon after that our first customers were putting their noses around the entrance.

For the next three days they kept on coming: the Knowledgeable, ("Why did Stephen Ballard site the Skew Bridge at Monkhide?"), the naive ("Hertford seems a long way from Gloucester") and the plain uninterested ("I don't want to win a holiday on the canal - I didn't even want to come here today!").

But come they did - and many took the time to peruse our posters and to ask questions. WE had our formal visitors - Ken Goodwin (Chairman of the I.W.A.), assorted dignitaries and a brace of local mayors - but the best contacts were the informal ones: the person who would look around the stand and start talking and turn out to be the Editor of a Waterways Magazine, or a famous Historian, or even someone who lived near the Hereford and Gloucester Canal and did not know of its existence. It worked the other way too, walking round other people's displays is a good way of getting our Society known to a wider audience. There were all sorts of unexpected results - like the lady from the soon-to-open Waterways Museum at Gloucester, who asked us to provide some display material for it.

There was a great atmosphere at the Rally. Fortunately, we had enough volunteers on our rota to allow everyone to have a chance to wander round the stands, the boats and the displays in the main arena.

We soon discovered that our Stand was as good as the best of them - and better than some! Another interesting observation was that the toilets at our Open Day were very superior to those at the National Rally!

On paper, it may not look as if we achieved a lot and although we sold all our remaining raffle tickets, we didn't offload vast quantities of goods or enrol dozens of new members, but despite that, I am sure we managed, in fact, to achieve a great deal. We, ourselves, learned how to get the teamwork together to mount and run a stand at the premier Waterways event in the country. More importantly, we made ourselves known where it really counts - to a far wider range of people and bodies than hitherto.

As one of the visitors to our stand put it, "The Hereford and Gloucester Canal Society has finally arrived!".

Robin Andrews





Once again our Draw was quite successful and raised around £206, less expenses for printing, etc.

The prizewinners were as follows:

- 1st PRIZE: FAMILY CRUISER HIRE on the lovely Monmouthshire and Brecon Canals was won by Mr. Gilchrist, 8, Deveraux Close, Tupsley, Hereford.
- 2nd PRIZE: COMPACT 35mm CAMERA was won by Mr. Lewers, Meadowbank, Breinton, Hereford
- 3rd PRIZE: from The SOCIETY was won by Mrs. S. Frost, 7, Denys Close, Dinas Powis, Mid Glamorgan.

Our sincere thanks to them and to everyone who participated in the Draw. Our grateful thanks also to RED LINE BOATS of Goytre Wharf, near Abergavenny, for the donation of a week's cruise hire in 1988, to CAMERA CRAFT, 53, St. Gwen Street, Hereford for the donation of a 35mm Camera and to Mr. Little of Poole Close, Hereford for his help in making the Draw.

Before the Draw took place, a small audience watched a very varied selection of slides shown by Mike Potts and John Golding. A selection of canal videos were also shown.

Thank you once again for your support.

Peter Woodfield.



A WARM WELCOME TO THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS:

- Mr. L.J. Boughy, 37, Lyndhurst Road, Wallasey, Merseyside.  
Mr. M. Davies, 1, Rosebury, Ewyas Harold, Herefordshire.  
Mr. & Mrs. G. T. Hyett, 23, Burdon Drive, Bartestree, Hereford.  
Paul Carson, Homme Cottage, Monkhide, Herefordshire.  
Mr. & Mrs. E. W. Bacon, Westo, Ullingswick, Herefordshire.  
Mr. E. M. Garland, 39, Valance Road, Erith, Kent.  
Mr. R. P. Hassell, 51, Ramsey Grove, Eiton, Bury, Lancs.  
Mr. J. W. Cook, 1, Richmond Hill Avenue, Clifton, Bristol.  
Mrs. M. Slynna, Flat 7, Scott House, 200 Southgate St., Gloucester.  
Mrs. D. Webb, St. Anthony, King's Cople, Hereford.  
Mr. & Mrs. E. Lewes, Meadow Bank, Breinton, Herefordshire.  
Mr. J. R. Wilkins, Chanetonbury, Pencombe Road, Bromyard, Herefords.  
Mr. L. W. Jones, New Buildings Farm, Clyro, Herefordshire.  
Mr. F. A. Smith, Davidsfield, Cople Avenue, King's Cople, Hereford.  
Mr. & Mrs. Ward, Farm View, Upperfield, Ledbury, Herefordshire.  
Mr. & Mrs. Ballard, Lockside Cottage, 3, Middlelock Lane, Hatton, Warwickshire.  
Mr. P. Ball, 17, Norton Road, Bristol.  
Sir John Knill, Canal Cottage, Bathampton, Bath.  
Mrs. K & Mr. P. Jennings, Eign Court, 163, Whitecross Rd., Hereford.  
Mr. & Mrs. Turner, 34, Cherry Orchard, Kidderminster, Worcestershire

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR SUPPORT

# RESTORATION NEWS

MORE HELP  
WANTED  
PLEASE



## WORK PARTY REPORT - SUNDAY, 1st November, 1987

Unusually well attended day with fine, dry weather. We successfully erected the dam on the Ledbury side of the Skew Bridge and partly built the one on the west side.

Some light tree clearance was carried out on Mr. Edge's section of hedge and a channel was dug out to find an extinct land drain on the Ledbury side of the Skew Bridge.

The barbed wire fence, removed for dredging purposes in 1986, on Mr. Williams' land, was re-erected.

Our thanks must go to the group of Leominster Venture Scouts, a new recruit (JANE) and the usual stalwarts.

Next Work Party - Sunday, 6th December at Monkhide.

Work to be attempted:

- 1) Finish construction of dams, pump out and test.
- 2) Dig out and remove spoil from around coping stones at Skew Bridge.
- 3) Grease Smalley.
- 4) Mark and identify hand tools belonging to the Society.
- 5) Continue repair work on dumpers.
- 6) Continue light tree clearance on Mr. Edge's section of hedge.

Peter Woodfield.

The Wharfinger is published quarterly in March, June, September and December. The last date for copy to reach the Editor, Mike Potts, is the 12th of the previous month.

Produced by Mr. Bernard Warburton at the Ross-on-Wye Resource Centre.

N.B. Articles in this publication do not necessarily represent the views of the Society, but only of the writer.

RESTORATION WORK

Our work parties carry on at Monkside each first Sunday in the month. The next work party will start at approximately 10am on Sunday, 6th December 1987 and dates for early 1988 are:

Sunday, 3rd January  
 Sunday, 7th February  
 Sunday, 6th March

Your assistance is appreciated.

WORK PARTY ATTENDANCE

7th September, 1987: Tony Austin-Bailey, Stephen Fitzmaurice and Mike Potts

4th October, 1987: Stephen Fitzmaurice, Tony Austin-Bailey Nigel Jeffries and Mike Potts

1st November, 1987: Tony Austin-Bailey, Stephen Fitzmaurice, Peter Woodfield, Jane ....? and a number of the Leominster Venture Scouts. Our

Our thanks to all these for their help - with apologies should I have missed anyone. The above record was done from notes and memory only.

ASSIST NCE GIVEN

I wish to extend the thanks of the Committee to Leominster Venture Scouts for their kind help with our work party on the 1st November last. Grateful thanks to:

Justin Williams	Justin Banks	Robert Preece
Kevin South	Andrew Faulkner	Mike Smith
Patrick Pritchard		

The Committee also wish to thank the people who attend the work parties each month by publishing an attendance record in each edition of The Wharfinger. Thanks to the people mentioned above.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Please send in your letters for inclusion in The Wharfinger. Canal news and stories, your views, advice and other items are always welcome.

HELP WITH THE WHARFINGER

My thanks to Mrs. Dorothy Webb of King's Cople for her kind offer of help in producing this and future issues of this magazine.

CHRISTMAS DINNER

Full Christmas Dinner, with Christmas Pud., Mince Pies and all the trimmings!

on SATURDAY, 16th JANUARY, 1988

at COUNTRY PAYRE in Hereford. £5.00 per head.  
 Please bring a bottle of your favourite wine.  
 Tickets are available from Mike Potts, 3, Cranstone Upper Breinton, Hereford HR4 7PL or from Camera Craft, 53, St. Owen Street, Hereford.  
 Bookings must be made before 24th December, 1987 please.



A MONKHIDE ODYSSEY

The problem was: 'How to get the little ones afloat?' The older, more experienced canoeists, enjoying the annual Quaker Camp in the south of the county, had the Wye close at hand, but the strong currents, the long distances and the hazards presented by the various rapids at Symonds Yat, clearly rendered it an unsuitable venue for nautical toddlers.

I then recalled the rather satisfactory recreation that had been enjoyed at Monkhide on the Open Day and we duly set off, on a sunny Tuesday, bound for Crews Pitch. The ride was delightful and we took verdant country roads that led through Hoarwithy, Caplar and Fownhope on the way to the Hereford and Gloucester Canal.

It is true that there were some quizzical looks on our arrival. First, we had to take the gate off its hinges to gain admission (sorry, Major). We were then confronted with a somewhat unprepossessing area of dilapidated buildings, dried mud and a stretch of murky water that could have been, not unfairly, described as stagnant and slightly smelly.

However, the situation was accepted. The Author launched a double canoe, coaxed a suitably life-jacketted three year old into the front seat and set off in the direction of Skew Bridge. Others, in the meantime, had the single canoes afloat and were soon demonstrating their skills in the newly cleared winding hole. I think there must have been about a dozen children present, with three parents and the boatman.

The sun shone down as the morning wore on, paddles flashed and glinted in the sunshine and a great swathe was cut through the duck weed as we plied to and fro from the canal's most famous structure. The grown-ups gradually accepted the steady accumulation of aquatic filth on their offsprings' clothing, in the atmosphere of youthful merriment.

Eventually, we walked along the towpath to admire the various artifacts of Messrs. Ballard and Jefferies. We pincied, canoed again and then it was time to return to camp. But Two Canoes and THREE CHILDREN were missing!!! The other canoes had been loaded onto the cars and we were ready to leave.

With some trepidation we retraced our steps along that well-worn towpath, there to be confronted by a most amazing sight!!!

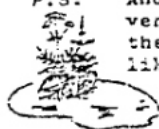
Where there had once been a green and slimy canal, now there was deep, clear water. Where there had once been three innocent Quaker children, there now loomed (thanks to a most ginormous duck-weed fight) three green monsters, plastered from head to foot with all manner of aquatic herbage!

And thus was our problem solved. We had succeeded in floating the children and, as so often happens in science, another problem had been solved by chance - 'How to deal with Duckweed'!

Richard Morley

P.S. 'And how many new members accrued as a result of this venture', do I hear you ask? Well, actually, as they were mostly visitors from Colchester, I hardly liked to ask!

R.M.





The Editor,  
The Wharfinger.

## Letters to the Editor



Dear Mr. Potts,

### Our Policy for the Future

A thoughtful article in the last Warfinger by our Secretary and Civil Engineer has raised serious doubts as to the practicability of total restoration. That such a caution was deemed necessary is an indication of how far the flood-tide of enthusiasm is running in this direction, even though such an aim is not yet official policy. As has been pointed out, over 20 miles of canal have gone without trace and in my opinion, to aspire to a complete re-opening is simply out of the question.

However, that certain members have been lobbying in this direction has been evident for some time and being much concerned with our credibility with the general public and local authorities, this trend was a contributory factor in my recent resignation as your Vice-President. I am aware that in some quarters, to advocate caution in the current 'Canal Mania' atmosphere is to invite charges of faintheartedness, or worse. However, I think my book, with its (at the time) revolutionary ideas for the future, provides the answer to that.

Mr. Morley has produced an excellent and detailed survey of what is involved in a full restoration, both from Hereford to Ledbury and from Ledbury to Gloucester. Before being steam-rollered into a momentous decision, let this report be made fully available for general consumption so that every member is aware of exactly what would be involved. We must convince ourselves of the wisdom of so drastic an escalation of our objectives before we stand a chance of convincing the world at large.

David Eick.  
B.Sc., M.I.Mech.E., F.S.A.

### THE INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION Gloucestershire Branch



Meets at the TEWKESBURY MARINA YACHT CLUB,  
Bradon Road.

On TUESDAY, 23rd FEBRUARY, 1988 at 7.30pm  
there will be a VIDEO EVENING entitled

"THE LONDON RING"

- a journey undertaken by some of our members last year.

MEMBERS AND NON MEMBERS WELCOME

AN OCTOBER EXCURSION

To begin on a personal note! As far as weather is concerned, 1957 has been my lucky year - whether camping, canoeing or walking. Whatever the Meteorological Office had predicted, the sun shone and the rain clouds stayed away. Thus, it came as no surprise that, in the middle of a singularly wet October, Sunday the 11th dawned bright and pleasant weather was sustained throughout the day.

Predictably, the sunshine brought out the crowds and by 10.15am, a multitude of five had assembled at the Hereford Bus Station in readiness for the day's meanderings. Since the Hoarwithy contingent were unfamiliar with the activities at Monkhide, thither we repaired. Having parked our cars at Crews Pitch, we ambled along the pleasantly restored tow-path, soon to be joined by our friends from Cheltenham and Bartestree. Much work has recently been carried out at the eastern end of Monkhide and it is expected that, before long, the whole of this  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile length of canal will be fully restored. By now, it was approaching noon and, our one appointment of the day, so we re-encarred and, briefly paying our respects to Tunnel Cottage at Ashperton, made our way to Staplow.

A field track led towards the fine embankment crossing the Leaden Valley and here we were joined by the owners, Mr. & Mrs. Hawkins from the farm. There was plenty to see here on a reach recently cleared of excessive vegetation: the half lock and sluice on the western side and - after an exciting little scramble down to the river bed - the splendid egg-shaped river culvert could be appreciated in all its glory.

We relaxed, ate our sandwiches and imbibed in the pleasantly appointed garden of the Oak Inn before moving on to the Fishery near Priors Court. Here, we strolled along the towpath of the canal where a 600 metre length is in private use for rearing fish. A couple of tame Bewick? swans were an added attraction.

Our final visit was to the eastern section of the Leaden Embankment, where an ancient stone was shown to be an old canal milestone, although the metal notation plate had long since been removed.

It was now 3.30pm, the clouds were building up again in the west so we bade farewell and set off north, south, east and west to our respective homes.

THANKS FROM THE "HOARWITHY CONTINGENT"

Fred Smith and I would like to send our most grateful thanks for the warm welcome we received on our first visit (11th Oct.) to a gathering of Society members since joining. Mike, Ian, Richard, Nigel and Graham explained so clearly about everything and everywhere we visited that we found it all quite fascinating. We were both very impressed with the amount of work which had been carried out, especially at Monkhide - it really looked quite attractive and we could envisage what the continuation of the work would contribute to the improved amenity of the area. Please do carry on with the good work of creating these havens of peace and tranquility and we wish the Society every success.

Dorothy Webb



A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A  
HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR  
MEMBERS



## THE MINES OF NEWENT AND ROSS

Although the Forest of Dean is well known for its mining heritage, the mines which worked over a period of centuries around its northern borders have been quite forgotten. The tiny Newent Coalfield was once considered of great potential, bringing a canal to the town. Iron-ore was raised for the Newent Ironworks in the reign of Charles II, and there were trials for silver and gold, one of which, near Ross, may be attributable to the Romans.

A history of this neglected local industry, which did not cease until within living memory, is told here for the first time. It encompasses the results of many years research, with details of present-day remains, and is fully illustrated with photographs, maps and plans.

The author is a chartered engineering consultant, and has written a number of books on local history and industrial archaeology, including *The Hereford & Gloucester Canal*, *The Old Industries of Dean*, and *The Gloucester & Cheltenham Tramroad*. He is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, and past-chairman of the Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology.

DAVID BICK

Obtainable from booksellers, or direct from the publishers.  
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ISBN 0 906885 06 X

PUBLICATION DATE: OCTOBER 19, 1987

£6.95

A5 88 pages Casebound.

## SALES

### BOOKS:

"The Hereford and Gloucester Canal"

by DAVID BICK

The hard backed book of our Canal . . . . . £5.50

"The Diary of a Rowing Tour from Oxford

to London in 1875" by Howard Williams . . . £4.50

(including navigation of the H. & G.  
and the River Wye)

\* \* \* \* \*

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HISTORIC CANAL PICTURES: Copies 6"x8"  
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Oxenhall Lock Cottage )

Canal Lock - location unknown )

Canal Wharf and Lock - location  
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\* \* \* \* \*

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