

# THE WHARFINGER



**Newsletter of the Herefordshire &  
Gloucestershire Canal Trust**

**50p  
free to members**

**Edition 36  
Autumn 1992**

# WHO DOES WHAT . . .

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Cliff Penny

VICE CHAIRMAN

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Liz Connors

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THE WHARFINGER

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Those in italics above are not Directors of the Council of Management

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David Penny; Liz Connors; Karen McKay; Cliff Penny

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CONTACTS on the inside of the back cover.

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SOLICITOR Sue Newbould  
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Printing of The Wharfinger  
has been kindly sponsored  
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our voluntary work which is intended to  
be for the long-term benefit of the  
community - *thank you.*

## CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

### A VERY BUSY TIME!

As I write this we are just over half way through the year yet we have already attended more promotional events (including our own Open Weekend) than in any previous full year. Our Membership is continuing to grow. Fund raising has *already* exceeded last years (record breaking) total. The Restoration Group have just obtained approval for a six month budget that, at our rate of restoration progress two years ago, would have lasted for six years! *A very busy (and exciting) time.*

Such progress does, however, bring with it new challenges. Each promotional event has to be booked, organised (even if it is someone else's event!), display and sales stock transported, set up, staffed, packed up, money counted and banked, everything transported back home, replacement sales stock ordered, "thank you" letters written ... for each event. *It doesn't just "happen"!*

Membership is not just a question of taking and banking the money - the hidden administration is very significant indeed - especially where Members delay renewal, change address, forget to amend Bank instructions etc.! Mailing lists have to be constantly updated and potential Members courted.

Fund raising is not just selling a few tea towels and *Big Prize Draw* tickets etc. here and there. It involves continued research into new quality (and profitable) "lines", frequent re-ordering and applications for Grant Aid. The latter should not be underrated - we are in ever increasing competition from many other worthy causes for what appears to be a shrinking source of critical funds.

Our Restoration Group are rapidly finding out that increased progress also brings great increases in paperwork. Budgets have to be drawn up, plant insured, land owners talked to, materials ordered, as well as actually organising the work, hiring plant etc. *- it is not just a case of turning up and digging!*

It is essential to our continued success that our wholly voluntary efforts are publicised by (an ever increasing) list of newspapers, specialist magazines, local radio (occasionally TV as well); in addition to keeping our Membership (including our Corporate supporters), local authorities and other interested organisations - the latter few via *The Wharfinger* - fully informed.

*The Wharfinger* itself is a significant item; what is read in a matter of an evening takes many hours to produce, spread over a number of weeks, to a restricted timescale. Our print

*continued on page 2*

## CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS . . . (ii)

Sponsorship is another vital element, enabling our production quality to be aimed high and our Membership rates kept low. The distribution of **The Wharfinger** is now a major task, both through the post to our growing Membership as well as via the numerous retail outlets in the two counties.

Almost everything that we do has a financial involvement - not just the obvious but items such as insurance as well. As any element of our work increases so does the related financial activity - a major increase in the workload of our Treasurer.

Our Members also rightly expect our regular social events to continue and each of these has to be planned, speaker/venue booked (sometimes coach and/or boat as well), refreshments and sales stand organised as well as publicity put in hand and the "thank you" letters written.

Members of other organisations, locally and nationally, request speakers about the Canal (with increasing frequency - *the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal has been "discovered"!*) at their social evenings - placing yet another workload on some members of our Council of Management.

The increase in activity also places a great burden on our monthly Council of Management meetings. We are introducing some quite radical changes in the way that our day to day operations are administered; not changes for changes sake but brought about by sheer necessity! [see page 11.]

Our Minutes Secretary has always had an important role; very much so at present. Apart from having a record of decisions for legal purposes our new Groups need to be fully informed as well.

We are all volunteers - *it is so easy to take someone, and what they do for us, for granted.* It is so easy to see the end results and forget what has been necessary in order to achieve them. However, our motto of working *together* is becoming very important; our success is dependent on what we are achieving *together*. That includes YOU - every one of our Members!

With the rapid increase in Membership and our financial turnover (coupled with our Charitable Trust status) it is now essential that we continue to adopt efficient "business" methods - as someone once said to me (from another, long standing, Canal Trust) - *we may be volunteers but that does not mean that we are amateurs.* So your Canal Trust will be changing the way we handle some things; this is essential in order that we can continue to report that we have had "a very busy time"!

Cliff Penny, Chairman/Liaison Officer

## THE FINAL A.G.M.

The Burgage Hall, Ledbury, was the scene of an historic meeting at the end of April - the final Annual General Meeting of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Society. For so many of the formative years the work of the Society had centred on Hereford - so it was, perhaps, fitting that the last AGM should reflect the new spirit of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal - a Ledbury location being much closer to the centre of things!

Some 50 Members came to say goodbye; and to rapidly move on to "Part Two" - the public launch of the Charitable Trust. Before doing so, however, we reflected on the achievements of (yet another) record breaking year. This was graphically (literally!) illustrated by

colourful "pie" and other charts - bringing to life the printed figures of Membership, Restoration and Finance.

Many things were reported that night that will, hopefully, set the foundation stone on which further progress can confidently be made. Yet at times of great change some stability is also called for. With this in mind the proposal that, for our first year as a Charitable Trust our leadership should continue unchallenged was welcomed - as was the fact that Sir John Knill had kindly agreed to become a Vice President, joining founder Vice President Major Robert Barnes.

**ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 1991/92**  
If you were unable to attend and would like a copy of the Accounts please send a SAE to the Treasurer.

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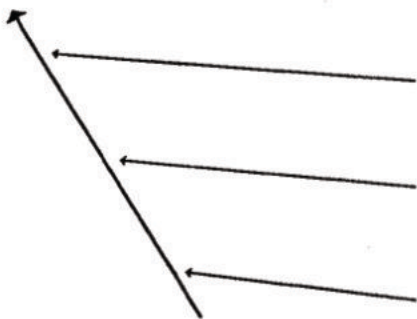
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## COMMITTEE MATTERS

*Four Committee Meetings are reviewed by our Chairman in order that our Members and supporters are kept up to date...*

### APRIL COMMITTEE

▪ A successful and informative initial site meeting with Gloucestershire Nature Trust, in respect of the main Gloucestershire restoration site, was reported. There would be a further meeting in the Summer.

▪ Arrangements for the AGM, to be held for the first time at Ledbury, were concluded.

▪ The Chairman had recently attended the AGM of the Gloucestershire Branch of the Inland Waterways Association and had been presented with a cheque for £300. This would be used to pay the costs of establishing the Trading Company - Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal (Sales) Limited. The Committee greatly appreciated this substantial gesture of further support from the Gloucestershire Branch.

▪ Hereford and Worcester County Council had confirmed that they will take action to prevent further water seepage through the fabric of Skew Bridge and would monitor the situation.



▪ It was agreed that any commercial organisation giving in excess of £250 (as a donation or in kind) at any one time would be given complimentary Corporate Membership for an initial year.

▪ Arrangements for Corporate Member and boat builder Mr John Pinder to fit out the trip boat that had been donated by Sir John Knill were agreed. All labour would be donated with the Canal Society paying for any major "bought in" materials at cost price. The Council greatly appreciated this assistance.

▪ The work of a number of additional restoration workparties was reported; most in preparation for the Open Weekend at the main Herefordshire restoration site at Crew's Pitch.

▪ Progress in respect of arrangements for the Open Weekend were reported.

▪ It was agreed that a promotional/sales presence would be mounted at both the reopening of the Dudley Canal Tunnel and the Herefordshire Country Fair.

*continued on page 5*

## COMMITTEE MATTERS (ii)

### MAY COMMITTEE

■ The Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust Council of Management's inaugural meeting in April, 1992 was reported.

■ The nominations/acceptances for the initial Trust Officers were agreed. The Chairman reported that Sir John Knill had agreed to join Major Robert Barnes as a Vice President. The Council of Management were delighted to hear of his acceptance.

■ Significant changes in the administration of our affairs were the subject of initial discussion. It was proposed that a number of specialist "Groups" be established, each with its own terms of reference and agreed budget. At least one member of each Group would serve as a Director on the Council of Management of the Trust. The Groups would produce minutes and regular reports to Council.

■ Trust Directors responsibilities had been confirmed by the IWA Solicitors and each Director was given a copy of the letter.

■ The Chairman reported on a number of Planning Applications. There was useful ongoing liaison with Hereford City Council and a developer.

*continued on page 17*



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*Perhaps we should be talking!*

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# ENTICING EXTRAVAGANZA

*By Velda West*

On Friday night Peter was not home until gone midnight. By Saturday night, I was a Canal widow. The twinkle of her water and her gentle curves had seduced him into lying by her side the whole night through.

Actually, it was not the Canal herself that needed his close attentions, Peter explained as he hurled a tent and sleeping bag into the car. After all, she has been keeping her own guard against all odds for the best part of 200 years. Rather, this impromptu overnight security stint was required to keep watch over some very recent additions to the Canal's attractive contours.

Crew's Pitch had undergone a most intensive facelift. Sweeping, strimming, sheep-shifting, skimming weeds and generally tidying both on land and in water had all been carried out with increasing intensity. By this weekend, the restored stretch of Canal was looking more beautiful than usual. And more tempting than ever in the eyes of potential despoilers.

Peter had volunteered to camp overnight near The Wharf to help preserve the admirable results of the cosmetic surgery; to deliver the stands and stalls, boats and bottles, tents and tables, and all other necessary adornments applied in readiness for the Extravaganza, unblemished through to the dawn.

The sun punched its way through the dawn and shone brutally upon the scorched flesh of the crowds all day. It was with relief rather than resentment that the sun was received. At last we could relax about what the weather would do during the event.

However, there was little chance for any other form of rest. As the paying guests began to trickle along the towpath, there were stalls to be manned, occasional PA announcements to be made, and signs to be hastily written.

Apart from the Trust sales and display stands, mercifully shaded in the cool of a grand marquee, a spread of other stalls took shelter in the long, low barn. This building, specially cleared and illuminated for the day, hosted all

manner of intriguing craft stands. Lathes turned and corn dollies were given life from dexterous hands. Delicate bedroom accessories were hand sewn from pretty cottons trimmed with lace, whilst more robust items of furniture for the home were shaped from scratch.

## **"Crews Pitch had undergone a most intensive facelift"**

Horse shoes were given a new lease of life with brightly painted colours and pressed flowers harvested from the Canalside itself were arranged to pattern greetings cards and more. The Good Old Days could be seen and purchased in the form of a sepia photograph cleverly mounted on a plate. Further along, there was more to view where a display of Fire Brigade memorabilia, an amazing array of badges and buttons, was laid out for inspection. Next to this, at the darkest end of the barn, the

## ENTICING EXTRAVAGANZA *continued*

temporary cinema screened Mike Potts' latest Canal spectacular against the white wall of the end of the "Barracks" at frequent intervals.

Music from the cinema drifted outside the barn, or from the general loud speaker between showings. Here, old bottles in a large cluster dredged from the Canal caught the eye in the sunlight, whilst helpers caught passers-by and talked them politely into buying draw tickets. Many had already been caught at the relentless Bottle Draw, where newer bottles, and full with fluid more thirst-quenching than canal water, gave many visitors instant gratification for their generosity. However, most selling, and the music from the cinema, ceased temporarily when the welcome distraction of the Morris Dancers took the floor.

**"finely restored  
bridges displayed  
in full splendour to  
an admiring public"**

Aptly named the Phoenix Morris on this flaming day, the dancers, male and female, clashed their sticks and jangled bells to their own accompaniment. All the way from Rickmansworth, they performed with an eager step and keen flourish of fiery ribbons. Rushing with equal vigour at the end of each performance to the Hospitality Tent, they guzzled much fluid to replace that shed in the sweating of the dance. It seemed much of this liquid had come via the cider van on site, but, though ever a merry crowd, they seemed to remain admirably sober!

Round the corner, behind the barn in the field, teetotal cuppas were being dispensed by the kindly crew from St. John's Ambulance. More wares were being sold here outside: A

market stall with everything from books to keyrings had a pitch and railway fans from the Worcester Locomotive Society were selling bits and pieces alongside their display. A wide variety of plants were on offer and also a selection of antiquities in brass, such as old Primus stoves and Tilley lamps. Not for sale, but standing proudly on display, a row of vintage cars glistened brightly polished in the sunshine.

Meanwhile, certain young humans kept themselves cool in the waters of the star attraction, the Canal. They offered sessions in canoes for a trifling sum and most of the helpers

here spent more time alongside the canoes in the swirling muddy water than in the vessels themselves. Adults and more staid youngsters took trips along the Canal for an

equally modest fee, cruising on the fine boats Mallard and Brindley. Trips on dry land were also offered by pony and trap.

Everyone was entertained by something amongst the diverse attractions on offer. The Mayor was escorted with particular attention and stayed for a considerable time. Officials from the Inland Waterways Association also appeared. And making its first official appearance was a specially commissioned plaque declaring the formation of the Trust, unveiled with pride during the event by Chairman Cliff Penny, and IWA Chief Executive, Frances Hart.

Most things ran as smoothly as the unflustered Canal herself. It was a proud day for her, finely restored

## ENTICING EXTRAVAGANZA *continued*

bridges displayed in full splendour to an admiring public, viewed from the very best angle, just as they were intended, from the water itself. An instant newspaper report appeared the following Thursday, proclaiming the success of the event to the county.

Celebrations were called for. At the end of the first day, the entire team of helpers, once the admiring public had trickled away for its tea, gathered for a barbecue to satisfy its own work-induced hunger. The heavens, it seems, disapproved of this festivity and frowned unexpected torrential rain on the struggling coals of the

barbecue, whilst the timid mortals, dressed for nothing but fine weather, cowered under cover in the barn.

Good Fortune, however, forgave the frivolities where Strict Sobriety had frowned and allowed the sun to return in all its brilliance for Day Two of the Extravaganza. With equal enthusiasm, adults toured, children sank their arms into the lucky dip and pet dogs sniffed their way along the towpath. It was the same restful, yet active scene as Day One, except that there were more people and an even longer string of vintage cars in all their glory on the grass.

~~~~~

Peter actually came home after the event, bringing tent and sleeping bag with him. I had him back again from the lure of the temptress. However, she being a fine and enticing entity, I do not doubt that for the next Extravaganza, and indeed all the while in-between, the Canal will remain the mistress of many a man or even woman, such is the irresistible nature of her charm. Judging by the membership forms completed during this marvellous publicity venture, the Canal continues to attract many more devoted admirers.

*[Ed. Our thanks to Mr & Dr Richards, who live at the Wharf, for giving us a number of pints of beer and lager for the thirsty workers when we were setting up on the Saturday - a very kind and appreciated gesture, thank you.]*

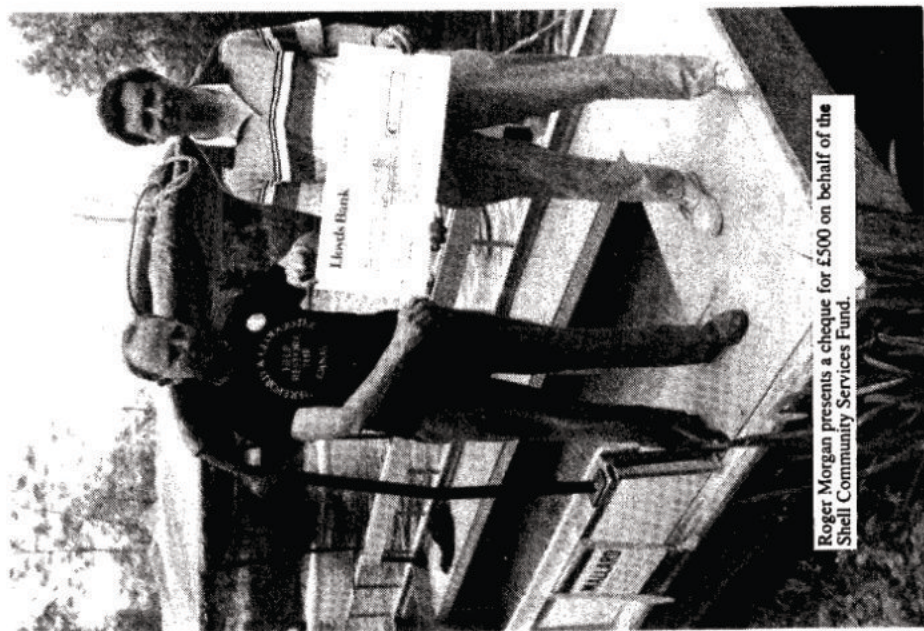
## H&GCS SAYS THANK YOU

As Chairman of the Trading Co. of the Canal Trust one of my more pleasant duties is to thank Robert Barnes and his family for not only allowing and putting up with us holding the Open Weekend on his land, but also for putting more hours into making the Weekend a success than anyone else. His dedication was greatly appreciated by us all - thank you.

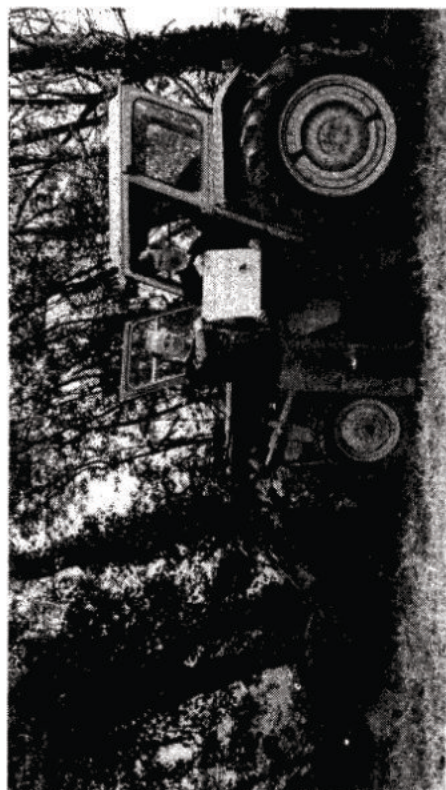
The Open Weekend made a profit of some £1,000 - but equally important for the Trust, resulted in excellent publicity and the recruitment of some 61 new Members. For our first Open Weekend it was a fantastic success, with some 1,500 seeing the fruits of many years voluntary labour.

The Weekend would not have been possible, however, if it were not for the dedication of all the volunteers - from both counties - who worked tirelessly before and during the Weekend. All the hard work proved worthwhile, but we hope that next year, with the lessons we have learnt, that we can have an even bigger and better event with a little less effort!

*David R Penny*



Roger Morgan presents a cheque for £500 on behalf of the Shell Community Services Fund.



ABOVE: UK 2000 £2800 cheque in front of the Trusts tractor. BELOW: Once a muddy ditch, now a shimmering canal.



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## SUPERMAN TO THE RESCUE!

"We haven't a hope of getting it clear for the weekend" - not just one person; most were saying it! The chance of running boat trips over the Open Weekend looked very slim indeed. The problem was all down to nature; a clear six foot depth of water, unseasonal sun and warm temperatures = lots of weed growth! "The boats won't get through that!"

Superman to the rescue in the form of Jeff Kitch of Water Sweeper Ltd [(0792) 652424]. All the way from Swansea came the state of the art (recently on Tomorrows World) outboard diesel powered trailable weed cutter (and collector). A 5am start and a 8pm finish on site were all taken in his stride by our Superman Jeff.

Other Canal Societies/Trusts (and British Waterways) read **The Wharfinger**. If you have a water weed problem then our Superman (and his super boat) is your man! CRP

## MEMORIES OF GRANDAD

His narrow boats did not disturb the waters of the Hereford and Gloucester Canal, it was not his patch and in any case it was rather in the wrong direction.

Born in 1826 Philip Jesse Gregory was of a well known Worcester family of that time. Indeed the family name is perpetuated in Gregory's Mill Street and on the opposite side of the canal, Gregory's Bank. I have always been led to believe my Grandad was involved in boat building, but reliable information always seemed impossible.

Being the youngest of my family and my mother the youngest but one, it made Grandad rather remote, but even so I remember him because he lived actively till 94 years, and his snuff-stained beard, waistcoat, the ebony snuff box and red bandanna handkerchief were the things a young boy noticed while rocking in the rocking-chair opposite him.

It is certain that he came to Tewkesbury before 1858 and was married in that year to a girl with connections with the Rhondda Valley, and set up home in a small cottage by the Nail Square and Slip-way in the Back of Avon. Here the family of eight were born and brought up, while he worked the barges up the Severn and up the canal to the Black Country, off-loading fodder and mill products and bringing back loads of coal to Tewkesbury Quay by Friday. There was the story that while on the Worcester-Birmingham canal, the horse Dolly knew when to tread lightly past the sleeping barges at night. There were occasions when the barges would go up the Avon to Pershore and Evesham, where there was another well known boating family by the name of Cox, where the yard was at the bottom of Port Street, but how there was a loose family connection I cannot work out.

The Severn Water Board eventually draw Philip Jesse to the Avon Lock where he became the Keeper until retirement, when he gave up to let his son Harry carry on. By this time the railway had taken over and the river traffic declined.

*Bill Snave*

## CORPORATE MEMBERS (as at July, 1992)

We would like to remind all of our Members, and the many other supporters who read *The Wharfinger*, of our (*ever growing!*) list of Corporate Members. We do not take for granted - especially during difficult trading times - this continued support for our work; *thank you*.

A & H Narrowboats, Chester; VE & JE Arnold, Hereford; Black Prince Holidays, Stoke Prior; Blue Haven Marine, Stockton, Warwickshire; Bridgewater Boatbuilders, Manchester; British Marine Industries Federation, Egham; British School of Conservation, Leominster; Bromsgrove Boatbuilders, Bromsgrove; P M Buckle Narrowboats, Peterborough; H P Bulmer and Co Ltd., Hereford; R W Collins Stainless Steel Equipment, Ledbury; Colwall Park Hotel, Malvern; Cristie Electronics Ltd., Stonehouse, Gloucestershire; R W Davies, Saul Junction, Gloucestershire; Delph Marine, Brierley Hill, West Midlands; Derby Narrowboats, (Fabrication Services), Derby; Dowty Group, Cheltenham; Grist Mill Boatyard, Worcester; E B Hayward & Co., Ashleworth, Gloucestershire; Hoseasons Holidays, Lowestoft; Lister Petter Marine, Gloucester; Michael Stimpson Insurance Underwriters, Rickmansworth; Midlands Electricity plc.; Morbaine Ltd., Widnes, Cheshire; OwnerShips, London; Pearce Developments, Cheltenham; J L Pinder, Boatbuilder, Stoke Prior; Saraband, Droitwich; Springer (UK) Ltd., Market Harborough; Staniland and Co., Doncaster; Starline Narrowboats, Upton on Severn; Thames Barge Olive May (Lady Dockers Restaurant) Gloucester; Ward Marine, Boston, Lincolnshire; Willow Wren Cruising Holidays, Rugby; Worcester and Birmingham Canal Society; Worcester Locomotive Society; Wychwood Narrow Boat Co Ltd., Milton-under-Wychwood.

***The BIG prize DRAW!*** Please remember that the last date for the return of the counterfoils (and the money!) is 22nd August.

## WHAT IS A "GROUP"?

In our Committee Matters pages (and the Chairman's Comments) you will have read about the proposed formation of specialist "Groups". The intention is for each Group to have it's own terms of reference, and approved budget, with at least one member of each Group serving as a Director of the Trust and holding a seat on the Managing Council. Each Group will be less formal than the Council but will still have to keep brief minutes and account for their expenditure/budgets in a proper manner.

A number of our active Members have said that they are not prepared to serve on Committees - our main "committee" (now called the Managing Council to tie in with our Company Memorandum and Articles of Association) has to be more formal. We hope that some of you will try out a Group meeting; *we promise that it will be quite informal!* Please 'phone one of the Group Members to obtain details of their next meeting - *you will be made most welcome*. CRP

# *Dates For Your Diary*

## ★ Sun 20th September

GLOUCESTER & SHARPNESS CANAL: Boat and coach trip  
Coach to collect from Hereford (9am), Dymock (9.30am),  
and Newent (9.40am), to arrive Gloucester 10am. Narrowboat  
"Lyn" (with bar) will take us along the canal from Gloucester  
to Sharpness, stopping at Purton for lunch (please bring own  
lunch or use pub at Purton). Return by coach.

Cost:- Adult £9.50; Senior Citizen £8.50; Child £7.50. Deposit  
£5 per head by 31st August, cheques to H&GC TRUST

CONTACT:- Tony Austin-Bailey (0432) 269704 for full details.

## Tues 13th October - 7.30pm

GLOUCESTER: "London River" by Brian Cornell  
ex Thames Waterman & Lighterman

Schools room, National Waterways Museum, Gloucester Docks

CONTACT:- Graham Ettles (0242) 512802

## ★ Thurs 22nd October - 7.30pm

DYMOCK: "Canal restoration and nature conservation"  
Dr Colin Studholme, Conservation Officer, Gloucestershire  
Trust for Nature Conservation. Dymock Village Hall

## Sat 24th October - 6.30 for 7.30pm

LEDDBURY: "An evening with steam", by Worcester Locomotive  
Society. Admission on the door: Adults £2; Juniors/Senior Citizens £1.50  
St. Kathrine's Hall, Ledbury

## ★ Thurs 26th November - 7.30pm

CANON PYON: Social evening and Buffet.

at The Barn Restaurant, Bush Bank:- £3 per head,

payable to H&GC TRUST by 10th November please. CONTACT:-  
Peter Miles, 24 Manor Fields, Burghill, Hfd., HR4 7RR; Tel (0432) 761131

★ A Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust Event

**Christmas**

**H & G**

**Dinner 93**

To be held at the Colwall Park Hotel, Colwall, Nr. Malvern, on  
4th December. Full menu (including vegetarian) in the next  
issue of The Wharfinger. £15.95 per head, payable H&GCS,  
to David Penny (see Contacts), by 1st December, please.



**Egon Ronay**



**JOHANSENS**

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*Basil and Elizabeth Frost, owners of the narrow boat "Jersey Girl", are the proprietors of the Colwall Park Hotel, and are pleased to offer free facilities for meetings and fund raising activities to the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust and IWA.*

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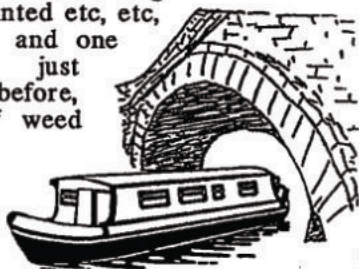
# RESTORATION UPDATE

*By Brian Fox*

The heading of this article is not particularly appropriate at present because virtually all restoration work has ceased over the last 3 months and efforts have been geared towards preparation for the Open Weekend. The restoration group and a few others were working like Trojans right up until the day before to ensure that all would be right on the day. Grass had to be cut, hedges trimmed, stones laid at strategic points, the barn was cleared, a flag pole erected, signs painted etc, etc, but the biggest task, and one which was only just completed the day before, was the clearance of weed from the Canal.

We knew we had a large problem, but did not appreciate the vast magnitude of the task. Many hours were spent clearing the weed by various means, including raking from the bank and trawling from a rowing boat but no sooner had we apparently cleared a stretch than it all grew back within a day or two. Here we were advertising boats with passengers passing under Skew Bridge for the first time in 100 years and we couldn't maintain a clear passage for the boats even up to the bridge, never mind underneath it and up to Middle Court. There appeared to be two distinct types of weed - one is an oxygenating type which roots in the mud on the bottom and helps to keep the water clear, and the other was what is known as blanket weed and this just floats on the surface growing like mad in the warm sun. It is easy enough to grab handfuls of the stuff and toss it on to the banks but the

sheer amount was defeating us. Cliff Penny, on seeing our plight, finally located a firm in Swansea who specialise in weed clearance and they arrived with a specially built boat at 8.00am on the Saturday and got stuck in to the weed. It was well after 6 o'clock that they finally announced that the job was done, with the assistance of a few of our volunteers, and the Canal was clear as far as Middle Court Bridge. The



two smaller boats still had problems with the weed that was left and had to unclog propellers after each trip but the "Brindley" and "Mallard" sailed on having no problems with the weeds although mechanically we struggled to keep

them going. Those who attended our weekend all seemed to agree that it was a great success, not the least attraction being the boat trips for those who managed to get one. For those who didn't manage a trip we are hoping to run trips, perhaps on a Saturday or Sunday later in the year, but first we have to get the boats' engines overhauled and the weed is growing again! If anyone has any ideas on how to control the weed growth then please contact me!

You will gather that the main task of the team lately has been maintenance. I said in the last magazine that the more Canal we restore then the more we have to maintain. Oxenhall has been neglected for a couple of months because of the Monkhide commitment and also because we prefer not to do any major works

## RESTORATION UPDATE continued

during the nesting season. When the Dymock Members went back on the first Sunday in June they spent most of the time clearing nettles, brambles etc which had overgrown their previous efforts. We have to keep at it as we are now planning major earth removal from the Canal bed between Oxenhall and the Tunnel, starting August 8th for 7 days. Plans are being made to hire the necessary equipment which we don't already own, the local farmer/owners have agreed to our plans and we are drawing up a rota for drivers and volunteers in general to assist us in this massive task. If sufficient Grant Aid is forthcoming we are hoping to continue this work in October / November. [By mid September I should be able to give you the date for the October / November work (if it can go ahead), if you give me a ring.] Anyone interested in driving a dumper



should contact me as soon as possible so that we can arrange insurance cover with WRG. Those of you who have not visited the Oxenhall site, but do not wish to get involved, will be most welcome to come and see what we are doing sometime during the week. There will always be someone free to talk and explain what we are doing and it is a very pretty stretch of Canal too. We think that what we are doing there should meet with general approval. Not only are we restoring the Canal in line with the Trust motto but we are creating a very pleasant environment for the community and wildlife at the same time.

Finally, our thanks are extended to all those who helped in the preparations for the Open Weekend. We made a few mistakes on the way but in the end it was a very successful event and the next one will be even better.

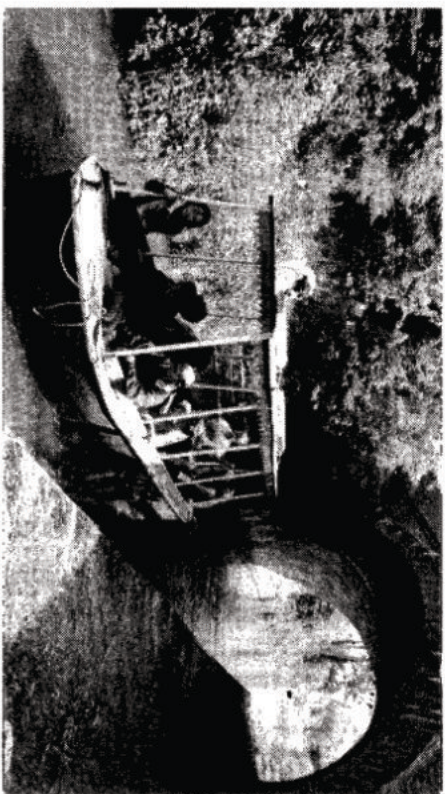
### RESTORATION VOLUNTEERS APPLY HERE!

In addition to the traditional first Sunday in the month workparty in recent months there have also been workparties on other Sundays, and Saturdays, in addition to the occasional evening workparty! So you can now find the Restoration Group actively engaged *somewhere* on the Canal on several days each month. There is a very wide range of work to be done, from the very heavy, dirtiest digging out wet silt by hand, the more sedately reconstruction of brickwork structures, the clearance of general undergrowth (out of nesting season), to the "manning" of bonfires for a few hours - so if you feel like a day out with a difference why don't you find out WHEN, WHERE, and WHAT the Restoration Group are doing? If you are interested in helping, in any way, then please contact a member of the Restoration Group [during the evening].

**CONTACTS:** Roger Chandler on Dymock (0531) 890671  
Brian Fox on Hereford (0432) 358628  
Mike Potts on Hereford (0432) 356392  
Ian Reid on Ledbury (0531) 5877



Chris Clark Captains the Trust's boat "Mallard"



ABOVE: Neil supervises Brindley from the roof while, BELOW, the Mayor of Hereford and his son enjoy their trip.



## COMMITTEE MATTERS (iii)

▪ The bid for inclusion in the WRG "Dig Deep" scheme had not been accepted but there were other prospects of assistance in the near future.

▪ Final arrangements for the Open Weekend were discussed.

▪ It was noted that many other Canal Societies/Trusts (and the IWA) counted Family and Corporate Members as two Members whereas we have always counted them as a single Membership - significantly understating our support. It was agreed to change our counting method. It was also agreed to consider a Life Membership.

### JUNE COMMITTEE

▪ It was agreed that three new members of the Council of Management [Roger Chandler, Chris Clark and Roger Morgan] be put forward as Directors of the Trust at the September meeting.

▪ There were further discussions regarding the formation of specialist Groups and the need for all Directors to be playing an active, clearly defined role in the administration of the Trust.

▪ The Open Weekend was judged to have been a great success although there was some disappointment at the level of attendance. There was some debate about the merits of holding the event on a Bank Holiday when there were so many competing events. A "de-briefing" meeting had been held and a number of points noted for future reference. A vote of thanks was recorded to Major Robert Barnes and his family and everyone else who had assisted.

▪ Member Mr. Brian Stevens had donated a small 6 seat boat, outboard motor, and trailer to the Canal Trust following his involvement at the Open Weekend. The Council expressed their thanks to Mr Stevens for this generous gesture.

▪ Concern had been expressed to Forest of Dean District Council over unauthorised development, at two locations, that affected the line of the Canal in their District.

▪ The credit card company had advised the Trust that separate authorisation was needed to handle mail order transactions. The Treasurer reported that this had lead to significant delays in processing a small number of Membership renewals. The Chairman had written to the company and the matter was now resolved.

▪ Plans for a major Summer Canal Camp, organised and run entirely by the Restoration Group, were discussed and agreed. It would run from the 8th to 16th August, and be the largest "dig" that we had undertaken [see report in next issue].

*continued on page 18*

## COMMITTEE MATTERS (iv)

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- There were further discussions in respect of specific draft Land Owner Agreements.

- Nearly £400 had been donated (to date) by Members when renewing their Membership - this was greatly appreciated.

### JULY COMMITTEE

- There were further discussions regarding the creation of strong sub-committees (to be called "Groups") each of which would have at least one Director on the Council. [See page 11.]

- This would greatly increase the amount of reports and minutes to be circulated - revised arrangements for this were agreed.

- Following the suggested "Parish Watch" concept [see page 8 of the last issue] the Chairman had been alerted to two unauthorised developments, on the line of the Canal, in Gloucestershire. Thanks to the new system a letter had been promptly sent to the local Planning Authority and discussions were ongoing.

- Thanks was expressed for the support of Phoenix Morris at the Open Weekend. A letter had been sent to Michael Stimpson.

- Licensing of Canal Trust Plant for use on the public highway, and related insurance matters, were under review by the Treasurer and the Restoration Group.

- The Restoration Group budget for the next six months; and for the August Work Camp in Gloucestershire, were agreed.

- The hire of a shredder so that scrub could be used on the towpath, to suppress weed growth, was to be investigated.

- The planting of suitable trees at the main Herefordshire restoration site, to reduce sunlight on the Canal to minimise weed growth, was to be investigated.

- Life Membership rates were agreed [see page 22].

- Charging entry to some Social Events was discussed, and it was agreed that this should be resisted at the Trust's normal talks as, if a good attendance could be achieved, income from tea/coffee and donations, could cover our costs. However, this was not always achieved, and overall "Social Events" must, by charity law, break even.

- A donation to the Ashby Canal Association of £20 was agreed to thank them for allowing the Trust to share their marquee at the Dudley Tunnel reopening event.

CRP

# JUMP ON BOARD

*By Velda West*

I had a friend who had a boat  
A narrowboat moored miles away  
I'd never seen this boat of his  
Until he took me there one day

We drove for miles down country lanes  
Whilst he told me all his stories  
Of journeys on his narrowboat  
Past all of England's glories:

The rounded hills, the patchwork fields  
The hedgerow and its creatures  
The woods, the farms, the cottages  
And all such country features

The cities too he'd voyaged through  
By warehouse, wharf and work yard  
And been through many flights of locks  
Which really made him work hard

I chuckled too at all the tales  
He'd gathered through the years  
And noticed as we drove along  
His eyes were full of tears

He stopped the car soon on a bridge  
And asked me to look out  
At what, I could not understand  
There were no boats about

Please take a walk he said to me  
And led the way below  
Until we stood beneath the bridge  
That arched under the road

Well, here she is he said and pointed  
Somewhere in the dark  
But there's no water here I said  
Is this some kind of lark?

This is the canal, he said  
This ditch by which we're stood  
It once was full of water  
Bearing vessels with their goods

I looked at him in disbelief  
Then at the bridge a second time  
And sure enough saw in the dark  
A shape of black and grime

This was his precious narrowboat  
The one he'd bragged to me about  
A framework grounded in the mud  
That had not sailed for years, no doubt

But all those tales, I said to him  
Of boating, locks and open skies  
This ditch is not a waterway  
So all your tales are merely lies

Not lies, he said and shook his head  
It's not as it might seem  
This ditch may look like nothing now  
But I've a vision, I've a dream:

To clear this length of waterway  
Preserve the locks and bridges  
Clear out all the leaves and silt  
Remake towpaths from these ridges

There's many a mile of old canal  
On which I've based my stories  
I'll fix this boat and paint her bright  
To sail past England's glories

For many share this dream of mine  
And struggle to restore  
The waterways which we have lost  
From centuries before

## *Prompt Payers Draw*

At the AGM our new Membership Secretary took us into the technological age and used his portable Computer to allocate a unique number to all of our paid up Members. Three different members of the audience then selected a single digit each to give a three digit number which Roger then matched to the lucky Member - Mr. K J Jefferies from Bristol who won a sweatshirt of his choice from our extensive range.

*Our thanks to our suppliers, the BeeLine Company, for donating the prize.*

## JUMP ON BOARD *continued*

The navvies strove to carve the way  
Their work is nearly lost  
But we will clear the way again  
Never minding toil or cost

For leisure and for industry  
A waterway could save the day  
As peaceful, slow and beautiful  
It carries traffic on its way

Today our life is all too fast  
Polluted, noisy too  
Restoring old canals could save  
The countryside we knew....

I had a friend who had a boat  
A narrowboat moored miles away  
Much water's passed beneath the bridge  
And now we cruise it every day

This is one of a selection of poems on various themes recently published by Velda, whose reports on Canal activities feature regularly in *The Wharfinger*. Her collection of poems is entitled: "Humorous Poems of Everyday Life (The joys and the pleasures, the stresses and strife)". It makes excellent bedtime or recreational reading and is sure to entertain if read aloud to any audience, young or old.

Copies are available for £2.50 + A5 size SAE.

Cheques payable to Velda West please:

24 Manor Fields, Burghill, Hereford, HR4 7RR.

**QUOTE H&GCT AND A 10% DONATION WILL BE MADE TO TRUST FUNDS.**

## ONE VOLUNTEER IS WORTH TWO PRESSED MEN

*By Chris Clark*

I was warned about volunteering, but this was different. It was one of those volunteering jobs that the volunteer knew nothing about! Apparently I shot myself in the foot when, through some frantic advertising, I was lucky enough to attract some 400 people to the Dymock and Newent film talks. As a result it seems I may have to limp for a few years! Our revered Chairman was the perpetrator, volunteering me in his own inimitable manner, and the deed was done.

The job? Why, it has the grand title of Press and Publicity Officer. As I see it, it means the promotion of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust to those people, both locally and nationally, who are unfortunate enough not to know of us! I shall be informing the media of our events and activities, and providing photos, articles etc. By this process, we should attract more Members, so producing more money, so producing more useable canal, so producing more events, so producing more Members.....

'How can I help?', I hear you all cry! [*Ed. I didn't hear anyone!*] It is now my turn to volunteer all of you to send me information on any happenings, historical items points of interest etc. which crop up. I can then publicise them, thus putting our Canal even more firmly on the map. I would also like to receive the resultant newspaper cuttings, so that we can keep a record of our progress. Thanks for your anticipated support.

P.S. Whilst I was still recovering from my new appointment, I was hit by the follow-up, with the casual announcement that the job actually went hand in hand with being a Director of the Trust ..... Oh! the life of a volunteer!

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

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*By Roger Morgan*

There have been a number of recent developments in the way that the Trust administers its Membership records. As reported in the last edition of *The Wharfinger*, Gwyn ("Steve") Stephens has passed his mantle of Membership Secretary to me after a number of years of sterling service. Many thanks for all your hard work, Steve!

Secondly, the Membership records have been computerised. However, some errors may well have occurred in preparing these records. Please let me know if the printed label on the envelope contains any mistakes and if you move address, please make sure the Trust is on your list to inform of the change as well as the bank, milkman, gas board.....

The Data Protection Act means that any Member has the right to ask to see a copy of their record and/or ask to have their name removed. If you would like to have a copy of your record, please let me know.

As you will be aware, we are now a charitable Trust. One of the advantages of being a Trust is that Members can covenant their subscription. This enables the Trust to recover the income tax, that the Member paid on that earned income, from the Inland Revenue. This increases the value of the subscription to the Trust by 33% - at no extra cost to the Member! If you pay income tax, but have yet to complete a covenant form, please do so. It's very painless! I have plenty of copies of the form and would be delighted to send you one.

Since the start of the year over 90 new Members have joined the Trust, including 61 who joined at the Open Weekend in May. We now have approaching 450 Members, this represents treble the number of Members in 1989. The Trust begins and ends with the Members - they are its lifeblood. If you know of anyone, a friend, a relative, a colleague at work who you can encourage to join the Trust, please do so. The major progress in the restoration of the Canal in the last few years is not unconnected with the rapid increase in Members!

Over 60 Members have kindly given a donation in addition to their Membership subscription. In particular, special thanks are due to Mr. Jefferies of Bristol, Lt. Col. Cameron of Bromyard, Mr. Chandler of Dymock, Mr. Pinnock of Churchdown, Mr. & Mrs. Ballard of Sherborne, Mr. Orrell of Bristol, Mr. Wall of Haverfordwest and Mr. Hale of Coleford who have been particularly generous. Our thanks also to the many who gave smaller but equally appreciated donations.

In order to avoid unnecessary costs we have decided to send out receipts for Membership contributions on request only. If you have received *The Wharfinger* - we've received your subscription!

If you have any thoughts or good ideas on how to improve the service we give Members or to increase our Membership, please let me know.

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

### **WELCOME TO OUR NEW CORPORATE MEMBERS**

R W Collins Stainless Steel Equipment  
Staplow, Nr Ledbury  
Morbaine Limited, Cheshire  
Willow Wren Cruising Holidays, Rugby  
Worcester Locomotive Society Limited

*We greatly appreciate their support - thank you.*

### **WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS** *who joined since late January*

Mr. & Mrs. N. Alder, Ross-on-Wye; Mr. & Mrs. D. Andrews, Waverton; Mr. & Mrs. R. Ashley, Hereford; Mr. M. A. Bailey, Cheltenham; Mr. & Mrs. K. Baker, Churchdown; Ms. P. Barbrook, Bodenham; Mr. & Mrs. Baseley, Whitbourne; Mr. & Mrs. Bashall, Marlborough; Mr. & Mrs. Bennett, Almeley; Mr. & Mrs. Bennett, Staunton-on-Wye; R. M. Blanchard-Smith, Boston, Lincs; P. Burton, Great Barr; Mr. R.S. Byard, Croydon; Mr. J. Chandler, Ledbury; Mr. M.J. Chandler, Newent; Mrs. Clegg, Ledbury; Mr. Cole, Hereford; Mr. & Mrs. Day, Hunderton, Hereford; Mr. C. Deft, Keynsham; Mr. & Mrs. J. Dixon, Kington; Mr. M. Dowding, Ledbury; Mr. J.B. Earl, Hereford; Ms. A. Easthope, Shrewsbury; T.D. Exell, Ledbury; Mr. A. Gohar, Whitechurch; Mr. & Mrs. R. Hamblin, Ledbury; Mr. G.D. Hancock, Tupsley, Hereford; Mr. R. Hancox, Compton; Miss V. Hardy, Chichester; Miss J. Hart, Stratton-St-Magrets; Mr. G. Hart, Ruislip; Miss I. Heywood, Canon Pyon; Mr. & Mrs. A. Hoida, Portishead; Mr. C. Hook, Malvern; Mr. & Mrs. M.J. Huck, Bishops Frome; Mr. & Mrs. S.J. Hughes, Hereford; Mr. J.M. Jones, Bromyard; Mr. P.G. Jones, Ledbury; Mr. & Mrs. T.H. Jordan, Monmouth; Mr. & Mrs. M. Kidd, Ledbury; Mr. & Mrs. J. Koenigsbeck, Hereford; Mr. K. Lambert, Leominster; Mrs. V. Landray, Lucton; Mr. & Mrs. Lesser, Abbeydore; Mr. G. Lewis, Gloucester; Mr. K.W. Ludford, Bournville; Mr. T. Mason, Bolton; Mr. & Mrs. J.D. McDermott, Withington; Mr. R.P. McEniff, Watford; Mr. S.J. Morgan, Hereford; Mr. & Mrs. C. Morgan, Marden; Mrs. A. Murphy, Newent; Mr. & Mrs. R.A. Morgate, Hereford; Mr. & Mrs. W.J.S. Parry, Longhope; Mr. J. Preston, Watford; Mr. P.J. Prior, Sutton-St-Nicholas; Dr. & Mrs. J. Raine, Malvern; Mr. & Mrs. E.G. Rees, Credenhill; Mr. N. Ritchie, Cheltenham; Mr. & Mrs. J.T. Sanders, Mansel Lacy; Mr. D. Slight, & Mrs. R. Harding, Whittington; Mr. C.E. Smith, Dursley; Mr. M. Smith, Ross-on-Wye; Mr. M.F. Southall, Ledbury; Ms. F. Stansbury, Hereford; Mr. C.A. Stedman, Burghill; Mr. R.W. Stokes, Canon Pyon; Mr. J.A. Taylor, Ledbury; Mr. T. Thorne, Huntley; Mr. P.J. Turner, Stretton Grandison; Mr. N.D. Twigg, Hereford; Mrs. S. Valters, Burghill; Mr. A. Weale, Ross-on-Wye; Mr. D. Weir, Eardisland; Mr. R.T. Willbie, Painswick; Mr. & Mrs. P. Wilson, Hereford

*Members joining after early July will appear in a future edition.*

### **LIFE MEMBERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL DATE**

Following a request from a Member the Managing Council have agreed that there will be two Life Membership rates - Individual at £100 and Individual & Spouse at £140. It was also agreed that all other classes of Membership should become due for renewal 12 months from the first day of the month following the date of initial Membership - not the 1st April as at present.

## THANKS...

to the following for their greatly appreciated support:-

**H P BULMER; DAVIES BROOK & CO.,**  
and **E B HAYWARD & CO.**

For the donation of bottles for the *Bottle Draw* - also Members who gave on a smaller scale!

**BRIAN STEVENS of HEREFORD.**  
Who donated a 6 seater boat and outboard, with trailer.

**JEFF KITCH-WATER SWEEPER LTD.**  
Without whose help there would have been no boat trips at our Open Weekend - see page 10.

**J L PINDER & SON, BOATBUILDER.**  
For carrying out the initial fitting-out of the Trust's boat "Mallard".

**DAVE WEIR (MULTI-LOADER LTD).**  
For transporting the boat to and from John Pinder.

**ARC (Mr D HARDING).**  
Donated 3 tons of aggregate.

**DOUG DAWE (HAULAGE CONT'R).**  
For collecting the aggregate.

**JEWSON'S / SHARPE & FISHER.**  
For supplying 200 metres of water pipe + fittings at cost.

**DWR CYMRU - WELSH WATER.**  
For supplying drinking water for the Open Weekend and donating some safety helmets.

**SHELL COMMUNITY SERVICES FUND**  
Who, in recognition of the community benefit of our work, donated £500.

**OUR SINCERE THANKS  
TO EVERYONE**

## HELP!

The name of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust is spreading far and wide. One of the (rapidly expanding) activities that achieves this is our promotional and sales stand. We have attended more events than ever before this year - and we are not finished yet!

We have to transport our sales and display material to and from each of these events. Whilst we have a very sturdy trailer of our own (converted from an old caravan which was donated to us) this has two major drawbacks. Firstly, it is an open trailer so we have to "sheet up" the contents to keep them secure and (reasonably) dry: Secondly, as the Restoration Group are more active than ever before, the trailer is often in use for their purposes and not available to the Events Group - *a spot of friendly rivalry as towing hitches do battle for the same piece of equipment!*

Do you know of someone who has a "tow-a-van" (or similar) lightweight box trailer that they would sell cheaply to the Canal Trust, please? If it needs some TLC we have the volunteers with the skills to repair it. The trailer would be fitted out so that the display material could be permanently stored inside (we have a secure home for it) greatly reducing the "double handling" that has to be undertaken at present. This will enable us to get off to an event more quickly, and, more importantly, greatly reduce wear and tear on the display panels.

ALL (Ed. *that's confidence for you!*) offers to the Chairman, please. *Thank you.*

## THE WHARFINGER

Photographers where are you? In the last edition of *The Wharfinger* we asked for photographs of Skew Bridge so that Sandy Wooldridge of Creative Labels could produce an even better cover for your newsletter. So far we have received TWO entries! Yes, we know the prize was not specified; we did not say who was judging; we did not offer amazing runners up prizes or a free film for every entrant...

We have decided to have another go - by the time you read this the original deadline will have been and gone - so, by popular request (?) the closing date has been extended to Saturday 19th September. The details in edition 35 still apply (except for the closing date), the winner will be the person whose photograph is selected by Sandy for use on the cover. He will not know who sent what - we have a team of volunteers standing by to obliterate names and addresses from the rear of those prints and to substitute a secret reference number! If we don't use any of the entries submitted then the prize will be withheld. The prize is a selection of real leather items from our sales stand - leather notepad, bookmark, keyring and a Trust pen and pencil; but the main reward is seeing your handiwork in print. So *please* don't let us down, *get snapping now!*

Our apologies to some of our expanding list (please keep those names coming) of "retail outlets" who so kindly sell *The Wharfinger* for us - we had to limit the number of copies last time. So many were being bought at the various promotional events we were in danger of running right out. We have asked Midlands Electricity (our print Sponsor) to increase the print run for this edition.

Thank you to Joan and "Steve" Stephens for continuing to act as our postal dispatch team for *The Wharfinger*- an *ever increasing* number of stamps, labels and envelopes are involved in a frenzy of activity four times a year - *thank you*. Also our thanks, yet again, to Velda West for typing some of the copy for this edition of *The Wharfinger*.

What do you do with your copy of *The Wharfinger* when you have finished reading it? *Please* don't throw it away! Help us to promote the Canal Trust by putting it on the table in your Doctor or Dentist's waiting room, or some other place where it will be read. If you think of an unusual - but effective (and legal!) place - please tell us ... *Thank you*.

In the next edition of *The Wharfinger* we hope to include graphic descriptions of the August Canal Work Camp in Gloucestershire, further details of the annual Christmas Dinner, with a bit of luck details of our photographic competition winner, some ideas of attractive gifts for Christmas plus all the usual news, views and what have you...

**COPY DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT EDITION IS SATURDAY 19th SEPTEMBER**

This edition of *The Wharfinger* was compiled by Cliff and David Penny using *JetSetter* software.

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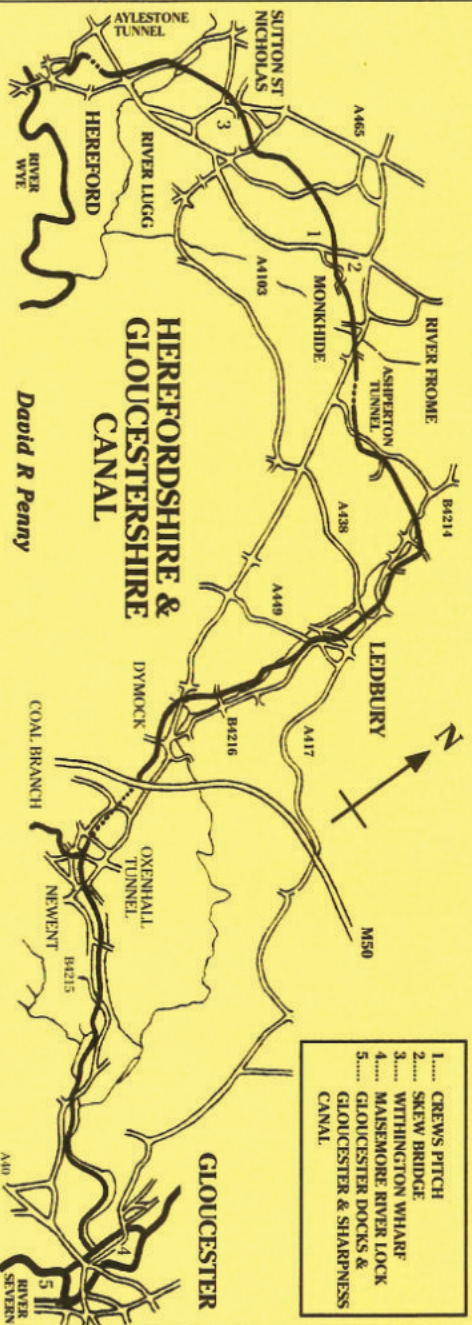
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Whilst we try to ensure that dates are correct please  
verify specific arrangements with the relevant organiser.

Front and back covers; our thanks for the design and artwork to Sandy  
Wooldridge of Creative Labels Ltd., Netherwood Road, Rotherwas, Hereford.

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*Please Note: We are working on the Canal with the permission and co-operation of the land owners. Unless specifically indicated it should not be assumed that there is any public right of way along the Canal towpath. Please help the Society to maintain its good relationships with the local land owners.*

Work began on the Canal in 1792 but there were many problems which meant that it was not completed until 1845 making it the last major route to be built in Britain but for the Canals of Birmingham and the Manchester Ship Canal. The Canal stretched for 34 miles and utilised 22 locks and 3 tunnels to overcome the problems posed by the undulating fields of Herefordshire and Gloucestershire.