

THE WHARFINGER



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

**50p
free to members**

**Edition 37
Winter 1992**

WHO DOES WHAT ...

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THE WHARFINGER

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Ken Goodwin

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

THE TRADING COMPANY
H & G CANAL [SALES]

H & G

DONATING ALL PROFITS
TO THE CANAL TRUST

David Penny; Liz Connors; Karen McKay; Cliff Penny

For addresses and/or telephone numbers please see
CONTACTS on the inside of the back cover.

HONORARY POSTS:-

SOLICITOR Sue Newbould

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER Ron Munden

MEB

Midlands Electricity plc

Printing of **The Wharfinger**
has been kindly sponsored
by **Midlands Electricity plc.**

We greatly appreciate this support for
our voluntary work which is intended to
be for the long-term benefit of the
community - *thank you.*

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

500 PLUS !

By the time that this is in print I am confident that the Canal Trust will have recruited it's 500th Individual/Family Member - to which must be added our Corporate Members ! At a time when much longer established canal related organisations are expressing concern at falling Membership this is a magnificent achievement; to everyone concerned (including the Members themselves !) - *thank you*. [Membership News - page 22.]

38 VOLUNTEERS

Another number! This time it refers to the restoration volunteers who worked so hard, in very wet conditions (at the beginning of August !), to commence the mechanical dredging of the main Gloucestershire restoration site. In nine days they removed a vast amount of material from the Canal - although every single one of our workers was unpaid (including our skilled excavator drivers who take a break from doing it for a living by doing it for us !) the "dig" still cost some £2,300 in plant hire and fuel costs. However, we were so pleased with what was achieved in really nasty conditions that further grant aid was applied for so that another five days work was possible in October - again in rainy conditions. We are thinking of hiring the Restoration Team to the Water Industry as their rain making prowess is beyond doubt!

The rate of progress is yet another significant sign of the change that is taking place within our organisation. It is not a criticism of what has gone on before; just a further illustration that we are acquiring the organisational skills to enable such progress to be made. To every person involved - not forgetting the fund raising and the co-operation of the land owners - well done and (again) *thank you*. [Restoration Report page 14; Adrian's Story page 8.]

NOT 380,000

The National Waterways Festival (held annually each August Bank Holiday) was reputed to have attracted over 380,000 people to the Netherton (Dudley) site last year. Unfortunately for all concerned that was not the figure achieved this year at Wakefield - thanks to the appalling weather conditions - torrential rain and gale force winds before, and for most of, the event.

It looked set to be a particular disaster for us; the 20ft. square marquee, nominal electricity supply and four caravan pitches cost

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CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS . . . (ii)

all but £600 - even after subsidy. The site was a sea of mud and, due to the weather, the number of visitors the lowest for many years. Yet thanks to the hard working team who organised the event (and to the valiant efforts of WRG) plus our own team of volunteers staffing the display; sales stand; Bottle Draw (and *Grand Holiday Prize Draw*) - and the Lucky Dip, we managed to cover our costs. We also all came home smiling due largely to the fact that we had our own catering team; something that made at least one long established Canal Trust very envious! To all concerned; *thank you*.

SALES '93

I was beginning to wonder if my numbers theme was going to run out of ideas! Enclosed with this edition of *The Wharfinger* should be a copy of the annual Sales List. A great deal of effort has gone into selecting quality fund raising items - many of which make ideal presents at this (and any other) time of the year so please support our work and solve your present problems at the same time. I am sure that the recipients will *thank you*!

21

At the risk of being accused of nepotism congratulations to David Penny who is 21 on the 1st December. David has been slowly recovering from an illness, over the past 7 years, that would have caused many a teenager to "opt out". Instead he has taken as active a part as possible in the Canal Trust and Trading Company (of which he is now Chairman). Not only has he turned the annual sales profit of under £25, 3 years ago, into over £2,000 last year (and just wait for the current year's profit at the AGM!) he has obtained most of the grant aid that has funded our greatly increased restoration progress. Many of the improvements in *The Wharfinger* are due to his efforts. From both the Canal Trust and Trading Company - *thank you*. [*When this page was "proofed" by David this paragraph was not present as he would only have deleted it! "the other Ed."*]

The Wharfinger in 1993

As regular readers will know Midlands Electricity plc were kind enough to Sponsor the printing of *The Wharfinger* throughout 1992. I am delighted to report that it has been agreed that this will be extended to cover all of next year as well - to all concerned at the MEB *thank you*. [See also page 24.]

Cliff Penny, Chairman/Liaison Officer

JUST LIKE A MARS BAR

It was about 7.15am on the second morning of the National Waterways Festival at Wakefield. The rain had stopped for a few minutes so I ventured out of the Canal Trust caravan and picked my way carefully through the quagmire that had once been a grassy field. I was wearing my Canal Trust sweatshirt *"Original style black with large yellow print"* and suddenly realised that if I slipped it would not be very presentable for my stint on the Canal Trust display. However it seemed a good idea to head for the shower block before too many others had the same idea so I pressed (even more carefully) on!



☂ About two thirds of the way to my destination a voice called out from under the awning of one of the caravans - *"Good morning to you - I saw you at the last two "Nationals" and have been meaning to say that you look just like a Mars Bar"*. Now what is any self respecting Chairman meant to think when he is addressed like that - especially at 7.15am on a damp and cool August Bank Holiday Sunday morning...?

A brief conversation revealed that the gentleman under the caravan awning had once been responsible for marketing at the Mars confectionery firm. It turned out that his greeting had meant to imply that we had impressed him with our *"House Style"*. He considered that we had adopted an instantly recognisable image with our (*"Original"*) clothing, and our signage for the display, with the distinctive black background and golden yellow lettering. *"I don't have to get close enough to read it - the style and colours are all that I need to see to know that it is the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust"*! He explained that Mars (and their competitors) spent many thousands of pounds each year creating such clearly recognisable images for their products - something that we have achieved at no cost.



It started to rain again. The Mars bar look-alike rushed off to have a chocolate-melting hot shower!

CRP

YOU TOO CAN BE GREETED LIKE THAT!

The Canal Trust has a range of *quality* sweatshirts and tee shirts, in a number of different designs, and covering all sizes!

They are comfortable and wear well.

Some of the more discreet designs should avoid the *"Mars Bar"* instant recognition problem so don't let that be your excuse!

Full details on the *Sales '93* leaflet.

COMMITTEE MATTERS

Three Committee meetings are reviewed by our Chairman in order that our Members and supporters are kept up to date ...

AUGUST COMMITTEE

▪ The Chairman had written to a Gloucestershire land owner (who the Local Authority had instructed to stop work on constructing a golf course across the Canal) pointing out the benefits of a restored Canal and suggesting that it would make an excellent water feature. No reply had been received.

▪ It was agreed to submit a bid, following a request from Waterway Recovery Group, for a Canal Camp in 1993.

▪ The Trust had been alerted to a possible threat from a site being re-introduced at the imminent Public Inquiry into minerals extraction in the County of Hereford and Worcester. The site would badly effect the Canal and the Chairman agreed to investigate.

▪ Draft Land Owners Agreements had been handed to two more land owners.

▪ Concern was expressed at the poor state of Lock Cottage at Oxenhall due to the continued vandalism.



▪ A Bye-law was adopted in order to confirm the current Membership rates with the modification that renewal date would, for new Members, be the 1st of the month following the anniversary of joining (instead of on the 1st April). [See The Wharfinger Edition 36, p.22.]

SEPTEMBER COMMITTEE

▪ It was reported that the Grand Holiday Draw had raised just over £2,000 thanks to the hard work of all who sold the tickets and the generosity of our three prize donors - Black Prince Holidays, British Marine Industries Federation and Colwall Park Hotel plus the substantial donation towards the printing costs from Hoseasons Holidays. [Prize Winners; plus "Second Chance" - p. 11.]

▪ The attendance at the National Waterways Festival had been judged a success (in that we had "broken even" in spite of the appalling weather) but great concern was expressed at the ever increasing costs involved. It was agreed that National Waterways Festivals should be made aware of our concern.

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COMMITTEE MATTERS . . . (ii)

■ The proposals to re-introduce a site for sand and gravel extraction on the line of the Canal at the Public Inquiry had been withdrawn at the last minute.

■ The Chairman had received a copy of the Draft District Plan for the South Herefordshire District Council area and Malvern Hills District both of which contained a very clear "protective" Policy in respect of the line of the Canal. It was noted, with great interest, that the South Herefordshire Policy was contained in the Economic Development section of the Plan clearly demonstrating the Council's appreciation of the long-term economic benefits. This was welcomed although it was thought that essential diversion routes should also be supported in the Plans. [See pages 19 and 20.]

■ The Trust had been invited to mount a display at an Open Day at the Hereford Water Treatment Works, in September. It was considered to be an excellent opportunity to promote our work.

■ It was agreed that a Policy Paper should be produced to govern the financial affairs of the Trust and the Trading Company.

■ It was reported that the question of the Canal Trust registering for VAT purposes was being re-examined.

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MICHAEL STIMPSON and ASSOCIATES



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Perhaps we should be talking !

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149a High Street, Rickmansworth, Herts. WD3 1AR
Tel: (0923) 770425 & 770255 Fax: 721559

OUR FIRST (AND LAST?) VOYAGE

By Tim Ward

Yet another Member picks up the pen! Tim Ward and his Wife had not been on a canal holiday by themselves and they had an appointment...

Along with thousands of other people my son and I visited the National Waterways Festival at Netherton last year. I couldn't help comparing the busy scene with my impressions of a journey through the area three years ago and the memory of the worst day's travel I have ever had anywhere.

The holiday hadn't started at all well. I had a stomach bug on the first day (Saturday) and had found the locks heavy work up the Staffs and Worcs canal to

"Trouble hit us immediately we entered the first lock."

Stourton Junction and the Stourbridge canal. We spent the night at Wordsley Junction. Sunday dawned fine and bright. It was our first canal holiday by ourselves. We aimed at reaching Central Birmingham that night so that we could attend a friend's funeral the next morning. My wife and I ate a good breakfast and we looked forward to an interesting day's voyage. Little did we know what lay ahead.

Trouble hit us immediately we entered the first lock. There was no water in the pound above to lock through. We were a little unsure of ourselves so we went to find a phone to get help. Eventually I did find a phone that

worked and asked for help, which soon appeared. This is like the A.A. I thought. The young man from the Waterways opened a paddle to fill the pound with water. As he did so he said: "You're going to have a job getting past that" and pointed to a heap of brick rubble in the canal in front of the next lock. The local vandals had pushed an entire bridge parapet into the canal. We explained our need to get to

Birmingham - so brute force was the only answer. With the lock paddles open to

give us a few extra inches of water Shirley revved up the motor and with both of us pushing the boat we bumped over the bricks and into the lock.

With profuse thanks to our helper we hurried on to tackle the next 14 locks. We had already lost nearly three hours. These and the Delph flight passed relatively quietly apart from some children wanting to cadge rides. This was a very interesting stretch of canal with the remains of the Round Oak steel works on the left and the new Merry Hill shopping centre in the valley to the right. Past Park Head Junction we were again delayed by having to move some scaffold boards the local

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"WIN"

TWO RAIL TICKETS (from your home station) TO LONDON PLUS
TWO V.I.P. TICKETS TO THE LONDON BOAT SHOW PLUS
TOP LONDON HOTEL (room + breakfast for 1 night) FOR TWO

**SEE
PAGE 11**

OUR FIRST (AND LAST?) VOYAGE ... continued

boys had used to bridge the cut. They were not pleased. We passed the future festival site and then the very impressively engineered Netherton tunnel. It was well worth coming to see.

When we reached the junction at the end of the tunnel branch we

intended to turn right, but to our dismay there was a temporary sign that proclaimed the canal closed

**"A temporary sign
proclaimed the canal
closed for repairs"**

for urgent repairs. So we had no option but to turn towards Tipton. It would be very late before we got to Birmingham!

At Tipton Factory locks the next pound was also empty. Now that we knew the drill I opened a paddle and we soon had enough water to proceed. At the next lock there was a more awkward problem. A large armchair was jammed behind a lock gate. It had to be removed before we could enter the lock but I could only just reach it with the boat-hook. It seemed to take forever before I managed to prise it free and work it away from the gate to give my wife room to manoeuvre the boat into the lock. Time really was slipping away from us.

We pushed on towards central Birmingham as fast as we dared - always remembering the speed limit. Two girls and two boys of about 18 watched us approach Tipton Green bridge with much interest. As we passed beneath they showered us with handfuls of stones and gravel. By the time we had stopped the boat and found

that neither of us was hurt they had disappeared laughing.

My temper was now as foul as the murky water we floated on. We restarted with my wife steering when she yelled: "I can't steer the boat." It was no wonder she couldn't. A baby buggy was well

and truly hooked on the rudder. Another twenty minutes work to free it and we decided we had

had enough. It was ten o'clock. We moored behind a factory and fell asleep. We never got to the funeral and Shirley now insists on holidays on dry land.

[Before all of our boat building, and hiring, Corporate Members resign in protest at this account of a less than perfect boating holiday I think it is time for an editorial comment! When we come across disgruntled boating holidaymakers on our travels the fact that they have tried to do too much in a day (or, more often, too much in a week - or two!) is usually what has caused them to say "*never again*".

From Wordsley Junction to the centre of Birmingham (Tim's journey on the Sunday) would take two experienced boaters around 8 to 9 hours - *without any problems or diversions*! Now it depends on what you call a holiday; but our family consider 9 hours boating in a day to be an endurance test - better to plan on 4-6 hours which allows time to enjoy the journey *and* gives you some allowance if you should meet the unexpected. And the unexpected can often be met - as Tim found out - on the BCN! Ed.]

WHAT DID YOU DO ON YOUR HOLIDAY ?

By Adrian Graves

Ever thought of a canal holiday ?
With a bit of a difference !

We left Swindon on a bright and cheerful August day, yes it was raining but soon the sun came out and the weather stayed bright for the rest of the day. We finally arrived at our destination, parked our vehicle and unloaded it, and found the rest of the crew whom we would be spending the next 6 days with. A motley lot, they were, Mike, Tom, Alan, Brian, Simon, Ian, Chris 1, & 2, Don, John & jolly Roger (the Captain) & us. We started straight after lunch scrubbin' the decks (no! no! that's another story) we mounted our trusty steeds, 4 wheels & a mind of their own (dumpers).

OH ! didn't I tell you, before you can take a ride on the canal you have to DIG IT first ! So onward at full pace to the work site, 20 miles per hour over a muddy field on a dumper truck without suspension is quite fast enough ! Having arrived where the action was taking place it came as a bit of a surprise to find that the canal still had water in it, no problem with a water supply here (for those of you who don't know where the work camp was, it was held on the Newent side of Oxenhall Tunnel). Whilst the pump was valiantly striving to stem the flow of water & empty the canal we set to work, with Tom plying his expert hand to the levers of the digger, and we were soon shifting tons of sloppy wet & smelly mud ! By night fall the canal was almost dry, it looked like we might have a successful week.

At the end of the day we topped up all the vehicles with fuel, it was nearly 9pm and we were almost finished for

the day as we sat down & put the kettle on & set the tea cooking when we were asked if, as we were camping over night, we would check the pump at 5 am each morning - 5 AM!!!

Sunday dawned clear & fine and at long last summer had arrived, all be it very short lived, as it started to rain again in the afternoon. This caused a muddy field to turn into an excellent skid pan ! After another successful day we were drafted for the early shift again, so down to the local for a few drinks to fortify us for this task (the best part of the holiday getting wet on the inside *after* the hard work).

5 am came & we walked the quarter of a mile to the pump to find that it had all been too much for it and it had died during the night. The canal was full of water again - all stop. Having sent Simon to obtain a second pump we set to clearing & tidying the under growth, we are a resourceful lot. At last the pump arrived & it was like watching old faithful as it proceeded to quickly empty the canal. We could now continue muck shifting, unfortunately due to the extra water the dumpers kept getting stuck. Something drastic had to be done, so 20 tons of stone was purchased to help give the dumpers a grip on the slippery slope to the canal bed. (Master Penny did suggest that we might like to dig it up again and wash it for future use !)

Wednesday we were let out for the day a bit like parole, DON'T TELL THE CHAIRMAN WE HAD A DAY OFF !! We visited the local town of Newent & explored the local museum (THE SHAMBLES) well worth a visit, we



VOLUNTEERS & MACHINERY work in harmony most of the time !



WHAT DID YOU DO ON YOUR HOLIDAY ?... continued

also went to the butterfly farm though this was shutting early, so we made our way to ST ANNE's. No not a convent but a (winery), a vine-yard to those who know, here they let you sample the wine before you buy. Great I said (watch out men they produce a nice little wine called STRAWBERRY & most women love it). So only go there with a few pennies in your pocket. When I left, I was carrying 5 or 6 of *her* bottles which I ended up paying for because ANGIE - bless her cotton socks (mine really plus tee shirt, jumper & coat; is nothing sacred anymore ?) - had forgotten to bring her purse with her. Don't you just love 'em when that happens

Wednesday night we had a major thunder storm (I hope you now have some pity for us while you were tucked up in your beds). Thursday was wet, raining like a monsoon, with the dumpers slipping sideways every time they moved forwards. The only way to move was to point the dumper to the top of the field & steer in a crab like way while you were sliding along the bottom of the field ! Even with so much rain there were plenty of volunteers, so I volunteered for other duties. I was given my 4th favourite toy to work with - a chain saw, my new job was to pollard the willow trees to make way for the diggers to get down the towpath. *[Adrian has been fully trained by WRG to use his "toy" ! Ed.]*

The only thing that kept us going that day was that it was Bar-B-Q night. Early evening we set about putting up an extension on to the extension on the caravan. By party time we had

another extension on to the existing extensions in a bid to keep the rain off. Luckily the rain eased enough for us to light the Bar-B-Q & many people were invited (some of whom decided that the Bar-B-Q was bound to be cancelled due to the weather & unfortunately missed a brilliant evening). Most of us had managed to change into clean & dry clothes...what's this Angela turns up wearing MY tee shirt, jumper, socks (again) my shoes and my coat 'cos she's cold. Still after consuming half a large bottle of Lambrusco, several large glasses of home made cider I really didn't care, I was ready to walk on water ! The party was in full swing with a lot of merry making into the wee small hours.



Friday was very BRIGHT ! Too much sun light, especially at 8am, I awoke to the chorus of Tom winding up the digger - it was being an awkward cuss (we had already had several break-downs during the week) and Tom was calling it names that aren't fit to be repeated; this had the desired effect & it started. By 10 am we were called to a full cooked breakfast thanks to Mike, our head chef for the day. After a full mornings work we unfortunately had to leave to return to Swindon leaving the rest of the crew hard at it. Having since visited the site we are pleased with the progress made considering the weather was against us. We are now looking forward to another week in October to clear even further towards the bridge. *[The next issue will have a report on October's work, as well as details of where all the money has come from ! Ed.]*

The BIG prize DRAW!

As reported in Committee Matters, thanks to the hard work of our ticket sellers at various promotional events (and welcome support from a number of our Members who also bought tickets/sold some on our behalf) about 8,000 tickets were sold and we raised just over £2,000 towards restoration of the Canal. This has been used to "match" Grant Aid - so the amount available for restoration from the Draw should be doubled. *Thank you.*

The prize winners were drawn at the National Waterways Festival by Mr Denzil Lee, the Marketing Manager of British Marine Industries Federation. The winners were:-



FIRST PRIZE - Narrow boat holiday for four people for one week;

026544: Mrs M Rodell, Three Cocks, Brecon

SECOND PRIZE - Two VIP tickets to the London International Boat Show + Top London Hotel;

002521: Mr R Wood, London

THIRD PRIZE - Two day break at the award winning Colwall Park Hotel;

024593: Mr Sankey, Leominster

We should also like to thank - once again - *Black Prince Holidays; British Marine Industries Federation; Colwall Park Hotel and Hoseasons Holidays* for their very substantial support in donating all of the prizes/defraying the greater part of the printing costs. *Thank you.*

A SECOND CHANCE!

Our second Grand Holiday Draw prize winner, by amazing coincidence, lives in London and has very kindly returned the prize in order that we can raise further funds - thank you, very much indeed, Mr Wood.

Would you like to visit the London International Boat Show at Earls Court, London, between the 7th and 17th January 1993? Two VIP tickets plus one nights bed and breakfast for two in a top London Hotel are on offer! Also, the prize has now been made even more attractive as British Rail have kindly donated two rail tickets to get you from your nearest BR station to London. *Thank you, British Rail.*

WHY NOT HAVE A GO? All you have to do to stand a very good chance of "winning" this excellent mini break for two is to make a written bid of the amount that you are prepared to donate to Canal Trust funds *if your bid is the highest*. Just send your name address and (preferably) telephone number together with your bid (please write all details clearly) to arrive no later than *first post on Saturday 19th December* to:-

C R Penny, Chairman, H&G Canal Trust, "Coppice", Burley Gate, Hereford, HR1 3QS. Please mark the envelope "Boat Show".

Please post early to allow for Christmas postal delays.

Travel vouchers, hotel confirmation and the Boat Show VIP tickets will then be dispatched *to the highest bidder* on receipt of the donation.

Dates For Your Diary

★ **Friday 4th December - 7.30pm**

CHRISTMAS DINNER: *See enclosed menu.*

Colwall Park Hotel, Colwall. £15.95 per head to David Penny (see contacts), by 1st December, please - payable to H&GCS

★ **Tues 12th January - 7.30pm**

TEWKESBURY: *"A Video evening", by Graham Ettles*

A selection of waterways captured from film, T.V., and video.

Tewkesbury Marina Yacht Club

★ **Thurs 21st January - 7.30pm**

LEDDBURY: *"Tunnel Talk" by Bob Simpson*

Explorer Bob Simpson gives his renowned talk on Oxenhall Tunnel with a brief history of the Canal from Author David Bick and a synopsis of the Trust's past, and an update of its current restoration work, from Vice-Chairman Mike Potts.

*Ledbury Community Centre (to the rear of Fire Station),
Bye Street, Ledbury*

CONTACT:- Chris Clark (0531) 890204

★ **Tues 16th February - 7.30pm**

GLOUCESTER: *"Clyde Puffers"*

*An illustrated talk by Hamish Dawson. Schools Room,
National Waterways Museum, Gloucester Docks.*

★ **Friday 5th March - 7.30pm**

GLOUCESTER: *"Canal Boat Art"*

*A talk by Tony Lewery. Schools Room,
National Waterways Museum, Gloucester Docks.*

★ *A Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Event*

Christmas

**H&G
C&S**

Dinner 92

Oop's

Several Members noticed the mistake in the last issue - I was thinking a little ahead of myself - the Christmas Dinner is of course on **4th December 1992** not 1993! *See enclosed menu for full details.*



Egon Ronay



JOHANSENS

Corporate Members of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust

An independent family run Hotel offering special discounts to Members of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust and IWA.

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

Mention the word restoration and something goes wrong with the weather. Digging out the old canals is best tackled when the ground is as dry as possible and a few weeks of the "greenhouse effect" would always be welcome prior to a dig. We knew we had a surplus of water at our Oxenhall Project site and we could have done without the extra rain the night before we started.

Everything was meticulously planned for the big day (Saturday 8th August).

One large digger, 5 dumpers, plus our own 2, and a small pump to get rid of any surplus water, and lots of volunteers. During July we had cut a channel through the side of the Canal to drain out all water, and the level had certainly dropped so that the bed of the Canal was quite dry in places - until the rain. The plan was to cut a way through the bank of the Canal at a point where the Canal bed was only slightly lower than the field. The dumpers would drive through and then follow the excavator along the Canal bed as it cleared the accumulated spoil. The dump site was next to the access in to the Canal and involved filling in a low spot in a farmer's field.

The first job was for the excavator to remove about 10ft of bank so that the dumpers could drive through into the Canal bed to be loaded. This would have worked fine if it wasn't for the rain, but the pump we had hired wasn't coping with the water.

There was now a deep hole in the Canal bed full of mud and water, where we had removed spoil, and there was no way the dumpers could get through. Go to plan B.

The next idea was to start clearing the Canal from the Oxenhall village end by constructing a ramp down from the adjacent orchard for the dumpers to go in and out. It was

very slippery getting up the ramp with a skip full of wet silt but we were

making progress. By 6 o'clock we could

see how the cleared Canal should look but

then a problem arose. The dumpers had been

driving around the edge of Mr. Elgie's orchard

to get to the dump site. He realised that

we would make ruts in the grass if we

continued any longer, so we changed to plan C.



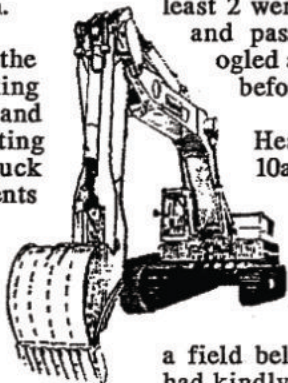
It was obvious we weren't going to do anything below Cold Harbour Bridge as it was too wet but access was possible immediately above the bridge and in order to get full use of all the machines it was resolved to start there on Sunday morning. The weather was fine but near the end of the day the digger started playing up due to air in the fuel system. The following morning a fractured fuel pipe was diagnosed. A quick trip to Mr. Prout in Dymock produced a replacement and for the rest of the week our digger went well.

Monday morning, a search of Gloucester produced a pump big enough to cope with all the water in

RESTORATION UPDATE continued

the hole and the bed of the Canal was soon visible. It was obvious we would need a layer of stone in the accessway for the dumpers to get a firm grip. By lunchtime 4 lorry loads of stone had filled the hole - we were in business again.

In the meantime the excavator had been working just above the bridge and despite the dumpers getting bogged down a lot of muck was shifted. The abutments of the bridge were now visible. There were always more volunteers than were needed on the dumpers and work was found for them above the bridge clearing undergrowth and generally lowering water levels so that when we clear the section up to the Tunnel next year it will be simply a matter of muck shifting, with us hopefully able to remove surplus water more easily. I'm sure it won't be simple but at least that's the theory!



Back to the main site and by Tuesday pm the dumpers are in and out of the Canal bed without too much trouble and good progress is being made. As a matter of interest we discovered that we have eels in our Canal - at least 2 were sucked up by the pump and passed clean through to be ogled at by disbelieving navvies, before being put safely back.

Heavy overnight rain until 10am again. The digger has no problems coping with the mud and continues to work at the south end of the Canal dumping soil directly over the hedge and into a field belonging to Mr. Davies who had kindly given his permission. We now had a second digger which had been given to us for two days free of charge, and luckily a second driver had become a Member only days before, and he joined our other driver down in the Canal working as a team - one in the bed and one on the towpath. The system worked

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



OXENHALL PROJECT: Before, during and after the August dig.



RESTORATION

well and good progress was made. The same system was used on Thursday, and despite torrential rain all day, the 2 diggers made good progress along the Canal. At least the two drivers were in the dry. The rest of us were soaked through but no-one stopped. The locals probably thought we were all mad! *[I thought that was a pre requisite of being a Member! Ed.]*

We had planned a barbecue on Thursday evening and by some amazing foresight had put up an awning next to our caravan on the previous day. By 7pm that evening it was still raining but we weren't going to let a bit of rain stop us now. The barbecue was lit but unfortunately the wind was blowing in the wrong direction and the awning was filling with smoke. Hasty adjustments were made to counteract the effect of smoke inhalation - the barbecue was moved, the awning rebuilt, the smoke cleared and we suddenly realised it had stopped raining. From then on the evening went according to plan with about 20 people enjoying a feast of sausages, beefburgers, jacket potatoes, rolls etc and liberal supplies of drinks. I was told afterwards that there were still a few left chatting around the warm embers at midnight.

Friday morning saw an early start, despite any hangovers, and still with 2 diggers. Cold Harbour Bridge now getting closer, the pump is moved to a site just below the bridge and a temporary ditch is dug down the field to take the water away. It is no longer possible to use the 2 diggers together as the Canal is now entering a cutting and the towpath is not wide enough. Good timing as our period of free hire is up and so the second

UPDATE continued

digger is taken away Friday pm. The weather is fine and a fair amount of soil is taken away by dumpers from adjacent to the bridge, leaving the abutments on the south side of the bridge visible.

By Saturday we were thinking of clearing things up. Our remaining digger finally fills the hole cut in the bank. All the fences which were removed were reinstated and the towpath was generally smoothed to make it passable. The final task for the digger was to tidy up the area which was worked on above the bridge but unfortunately a hydraulic hose broke and we had to leave it a bit untidy although still recognisable as a Canal. By Sunday there seemed 1001 things to do but we finally called it a day (or should it be a week) by mid afternoon.

In 84 days we have restored about 500 yards of Canal to its original width and depth. The towpath is now easily walkable up to and under Cold Harbour Lane bridge. Another 400 yards, up to the Tunnel, are now clear of undergrowth and ready for a final effort. By the time you read this we should have cleared the last 100 yards up to the bridge during a 4 day dig in early October. A head count at the end of the week revealed that we had been helped, at various times, by 38 different people - a wonderful effort and thanks once again to everyone concerned.

Thanks to Mr. Elgie & Mr. Goulding for their permission and support; to Hill Fuels of Ledbury & UK Petroleum for donations of diesel; to G. Jones for stone in the hole and others whose names I forget for cider *[Hic! This has of course nothing to do with the product! Ed.]* and other goodies for the B-B-Q.

COMMITTEE MATTERS . . . (iii)

■ In view of the exceedingly poor financial support gained from the Local Authorities in respect of the bid to appoint a Technical Liaison Officer it was reluctantly agreed to advise the Inland Waterways Association that the Canal Trust was unable, at present, to take up their contribution of £3,000 per year (for 3 years).

■ The appointment of Roger Chandler and Roger Morgan as Directors of the Canal Trust was confirmed and the appropriate forms would be sent to Companies House in due course.

■ A Member who renewed his subscription after a "final reminder" had enclosed a donation of £100 - a gesture that was greatly appreciated.



■ The Chairman reported on a presentation that he had made to staff of the Planning Department of the Forest of Dean District Council on the work of the Trust.

■ The taxation of our dumpers to travel on the highway was being investigated as was the case for possible formal exemption.

■ South Herefordshire District Council had donated £650 to the Canal Trust and the Chairman had responded thanking the Council for their continued support.

■ The Restoration Group reported on the August Canal Camp and expressed the wish to undertake further work at the end of September. This was agreed in principle. The Council thanked the Group, and all the volunteers involved, for the work that had been undertaken in August in appalling conditions.

■ Offers of assistance from a Member with an Allen Scythe and another with a wood chipping machine were welcomed.

OCTOBER COMMITTEE

■ The Draft Forest of Dean District Plan had been received. It was reported, with great concern and regret, that the Plan only contained a Secondary Policy in respect of the Canal and this was not as positively worded as those Main Policies contained in the Draft Plans for the Malvern Hills and South Herefordshire District Council areas. It was agreed that strong representations should be made on behalf of the Trust. [See pages 19 and 20.]

■ The Restoration Group reported on the second major Work Camp this year at Oxenhall. In spite of (yet again) appalling weather good progress had been made.

continued on page 21

PLANNING - OUR FUTURE

The Local Authority Planning Departments are all very busy preparing their District Local Plan that will largely regulate the manner in which each area is developed over the next ten years or so. It is vital that the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal is included as a **MAIN** Policy in each of the five District Plans in respect of those areas through which it passes. The current position for each area (working from Gloucester towards Hereford) is:-

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Local Plan not yet at the consultation stage.

FOREST OF DEAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Comments deadline 30th November. THERE IS NO **MAIN** POLICY IN SUPPORT OF CANAL RESTORATION even though this Council has the main Gloucestershire restoration site within it, has made (very) modest grant aid available in support of our work, and recently invited our Chairman to talk to senior Officers of the Planning Department on the work of the Canal Trust. *Supplementary* Tourism Policy FTO.(S)i states *"The District Council will have regard to the intention to restore the Hereford and Gloucester Canal and will seek to protect the route and associated works, buildings and features where feasible when considering applications for development."* The document goes on to state that the Canal is *"an important artefact which offers potential for various forms of countryside recreation in addition to its intrinsic value."* The large Proposals Map for the District contains no reference to the Canal. *As written, the "Supplementary Policy" only protects the route of the Canal "where feasible"*. The Trust will be making very strong representations to the Forest of Dean Council and seeking the inclusion of a positively worded **main** Policy in the Local Plan similar to that contained within the Malvern Hills and South Herefordshire District Plans (as we hope they will read after amendment). PLEASE SUPPORT US AND WRITE TO THE PLANNING OFFICER **NOW** - address and details are at the end of this article [p.20].

MALVERN HILLS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Comments deadline 13th November. Proposed Recreation Policy 8. states *"The District Council would like to see the restoration of the Hereford and Gloucester Canal. They will protect the line of the disused canal, together with associated works, buildings or features, from development which would render the eventual restoration impossible. In areas where such development has already taken place an alternative route could be identified."* The document goes on to say that opportunities will be sought to link the canal, disused railway lines and other industrial/archaeological attractions by tourist trails. The large Proposals Map for the District clearly identifies the Canal route. We have responded saying that, whilst the Trust welcomes the clearly stated support, we consider that the Canal has much wider benefits than just recreation (as implied in the Plan Policy).

continued on page 20

SOUTH HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Comments deadline 30th October. Proposed Economic Development Policy ED.16 states *"The District Council will safeguard the line of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal and associated works, buildings or features from development which would prevent restoration"*. The introduction to the proposed Policy states that the restored Canal could provide a future tourist attraction as well as other possible economic benefits. The large Proposals Map of the District clearly identifies the route of the Canal *"to be safeguarded"*. We have responded saying that the inclusion of the Policy in the Economic Section of the Plan is welcomed by the Trust. We have requested that a length of the Canal that is right on the boundary with Malvern Hills District be added to the Proposals Map and that the Policy be extended to apply to essential diversion routes.

HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL

Comments deadline 17th December. Proposed Recreation, Leisure and Tourism Policy R16 states *"The City Council will encourage the improvement and restoration where feasible of the former Herefordshire to Gloucestershire Canal within the City boundary, and will seek to ensure that original canal features are retained. Where full restoration is not feasible the City Council will encourage improvement schemes which serve to mark the canal line, and will assess development proposals on or along the original route of the canal on this basis. Alternative routes or terminus locations which may be proposed by the Canal Trust in conjunction with landowners will be supported by the City Council provided that such proposals are consistent with other planning policies."* The introduction to this Policy is quite lengthy and acknowledges the recreation and tourism benefits of a restored Canal. The large Proposals Map for the City contains no reference to the Canal/Canal line. The Trust is considering its response.

SUMMARY

To many of our readers this may have been a boring contribution to The Wharfinger - however it is absolutely crucial that we have clear supportive Planning Policies in each of the five local authority planning areas. Ideally the Policies should be very similar in wording and intent. The Forest of Dean Draft Plan is particularly disappointing - please write NOW (a little beyond the deadline does not matter) urging the Planning Officer to include a *main* Planning Policy in the Plan - similar to that proposed in the Malvern Hills and South Herefordshire areas - and to recognise the significant, proven, economic benefits (as well as recreation and amenity) that will be gained from the voluntary efforts of our Trust. URGENT; PLEASE WRITE NOW to:- J A Stewart Esq., BA.,MCD.,MRTPI., Director of Planning and Leisure Services, Forest of Dean Local Plan, Forest of Dean District Council, FREEPOST (GL 1605), High Street, COLEFORD, Gloucestershire, GL16 8BR. *You don't have to live in the area to comment !*

VACANCIES . . .

It is with regret that we report that two of our more recent active Members are having to step down from their detailed involvement with the Managing Council of the Trust. It has been made very clear that the decision has not been because of a clash of personalities - or disagreement on matters of Policy - it is simply that our colleagues have reluctantly concluded that they cannot spare enough time to take an active (and effective) part in our day-to-day affairs.

Graham Ettles had master-minded a new "Directors Notes" booklet that included minutes and other items for circulation to Directors. One person acting as a paper-work co-ordinator can greatly reduce the workload of others, and substantially improve our internal communications, paving the way for shorter and less frequent meetings. His role was really becoming partly that of Secretary; a post that was not filled in recent years within the Canal Society, yet is one that is becoming increasingly required in the Trust.

Chris Clark told you, in the last edition of *The Wharfinger*, how he was press-ganged into the post of Press and Publicity Officer after the success of his promotion of our first "Tunnel Talks"! However Chris has two businesses to run and is writing a book; the additional (recently more hectic than usual) demands of the Trust were greater than anticipated. Being a person who would rather not do a task than do it badly, he feels that, most reluctantly, he should step down from the post as soon as an able replacement is found.

VACANCIES - PLEASE SEE THE HELP! SECTION ON PAGE 23.

COMMITTEE MATTERS . . . (iv)

■ With great sadness it was reported that Mr Archie Ballard had died. Major Robert Barnes had attended the funeral.

■ Careful consideration would be given to the Trust participating in the annual "Canal Clean-Up Campaign" in 1993.

■ The Managing Council were delighted to hear that, following a request from our Chairman, Midlands Electricity plc. had agreed to continue to print *The Wharfinger* throughout 1993.

■ Twice this year WRG had listed a weekend Camp on the Canal without the Trust's knowledge. A Member of the WRG Council said that it was hoped future listings would be "real" Camps!

■ It was agreed to end Junior Membership (no demand). A new rate of £5 Senior Citizen joint Membership was endorsed.

■ The draft booklet "What Is ...?" was approved subject to some minor amendments. [See *Sales '93* - books section.]

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

WELCOME TO OUR NEW CORPORATE MEMBER

Sagar Marine, Brighouse, West Yorkshire

We greatly appreciate their support - thank you.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS in the next Wharfinger

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

By Roger Morgan

The Trust continues to grow in leaps and bounds passing the milestone of 500 Members during the Summer. Over a third of Members reading this copy of *The Wharfinger* have joined in the last 12 months. Welcome to all of you. A list will appear in the next *Wharfinger*.

If you are not a Member and are reading a copy that you have bought or even someone else's copy - why not consider joining the fastest growing canal trust in the country yourself? Membership is very reasonable at only £5 for 12 months for individual Members, £7 for families, £3 for Senior Citizens, and £5 joint Senior Citizens. Please contact me (my address is on the back cover) for a Membership Form. As a Member you will receive 4 free copies of *The Wharfinger* a year and many other advantages - such as a warm feeling that you have contributed to the cost of another restored length of Canal!

Although we have said it before, you should be aware that less than a third of Members are covenanting their subscriptions at present. If you are one of those who have not covenanted their subscriptions yet, please contact me for a form. It is painless and costs you only 18p (for the second class stamp to return the form). However, it has great advantages for the Trust as it enables us to use our charitable status to increase the value of your subscription by 33%. This is due to the generosity of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and there is no sleight of hand that will affect you in any way! Finally, to Dawn, Dave and Martin.... keep up the good work! [*We don't know what he's on about either! - we're promised an explanation - watch this space! Ed.*]

WAKEFIELD COMMEMORATIVE FESTIVAL PLATE

If you were unable to obtain your Wakefield Festival Commemorative Ribbon Plate at the Festival at the end of August, now is your chance to buy one by post. The porcelain plate measures 8" across, the design is in black, yellow and blue, and there is a choice of yellow or blue ribbon. It costs £12.50, including postage and packing, £1 of which will be donated to your canal group/society. IWA will also receive a donation from the sale of each one. Please state which Canal you support when ordering, and make your cheque payable to Muttelbury Enterprises, Trent Lock, Long Eaton, Nottingham, NG10 2FY. Please allow 21 days for delivery.



THANKS...

to the following for their greatly appreciated support:-

BRITISH RAIL,
for donating two tickets to enable our highest bidder to travel FREE to the London International Boat Show [see p. 11]

SOUTH HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL,
for a grant of £650.

FOREST OF DEAN DISTRICT COUNCIL,
who donated £100.

L D A MEATS of LEDBURY,
for the supply of meat for the B-B-Q at the Open Weekend at a very substantial discount.

MIDLANDS ELECTRICITY plc.,
who have agreed to Sponsor the printing of The Wharfinger throughout 1993. [see p.2 and p.24]

ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS,
who work in all weathers (usually rain) to achieve so much from our own & hired plant; the Landowners for their extensive co-operation and the neighbours for their support.

A NUMBER OF LOCAL FIRMS (AND ONE MULTINATIONAL)
who have either donated fuel and/or materials (or made very substantial discounts) to assist our restoration work but requested no publicity.

**OUR SINCERE THANKS
TO EVERYONE**

HELP!

On page 21 we told you that, unfortunately, we are losing two of our active Council of Management Members. This is *your* chance to take a small but active part in securing our future success. *Please* don't just read on rapidly - the voluntary work is very interesting and we do live in very interesting times (*although that is also a Chinese curse* !)

Are you able to assist the canal Trust with its administration? Someone with a few spare hours most weeks, access to a small photocopier (and, possibly, a computer - but that is not absolutely essential) and with a reasonably good organisational head is what is required. There is great potential for lots of "job satisfaction" in streamlining our administration !

Our other plea is for a new Press and Publicity Officer - a team of two would be ideal to share the highly variable workload! A word-processor is virtually essential (to make the job much easier). There is a record of the various local and national press (and radio etc.) contacts and we have established a format for Press Releases so a lot of the initial organisational work has been done. There is a great deal of satisfaction in seeing your handiwork in print - locally and nationally.

For further details do not hesitate to contact either Graham Ettles or Chris Clark (who will reassure you that there is no sinister background to their stepping down from Office!) and then, please, contact the Chairman to volunteer; you will be made most welcome.

THE WHARFINGER

We start with an apology to each of the *four* entrants for the photographic competition. Pressure of work has meant that the "messing about" with the front cover has become a New Year resolution (along with quite a few other things) so please bear with us - *watch this space*.

For the first time for quite a few issues we have not had to carry anything over to the next issue; whilst it is nice to get everything into the issue (just!) it does mean that we will be more than happy to receive *your contribution - in good time please* - for Spring 1993; light hearted or serious, letter or article, all contributions are most welcome. As we keep on saying, The Wharfinger is *your* newsletter so please let us have a few new (or old!) contributors to set us off well in 1993.

As reported in Chairman's Comments we are very pleased, and most grateful, that Midlands Electricity plc. have agreed to continue to assist us by printing The Wharfinger throughout 1993. Many people help us to get The Wharfinger into print; our contacts at the MEB head office in Halesowen, staff at the Hereford Depot who get our "copy" speedily (and safely) to the Print Department in Halesowen (and back again!) and, especially, Mr Norman Handley and his staff who actually print, collate fold and staple it for us. It is so easy to underestimate what goes on "behind the scenes" - or to take it for granted - to *everybody concerned thank you*.

Our thanks to Brian Fox who regularly sends in the Restoration Group's contribution (and for it always being *ON TIME*); to Velda West for typing it; and to Angela Jones for sending Adrian Graves' article in on "floppy disk" all the way from Swindon - it's all getting very "high tech.!"

The sales of The Wharfinger in various "retail outlets" is continuing to grow thanks to the consistent (and persistent) efforts of Joyce Lynham - *thank you Joyce* - and to all those who sell The Wharfinger for us.

If you are reading this before Christmas, then the Trust (and Trading Company) Council of Management would like to take the opportunity to wish all Members - and those who have supported us in any way over the past year

A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS

However, if you are reading this in 1993 then we wish you

A HAPPY NEW YEAR !

In the next edition of The Wharfinger we hope to include further reports on the excellent progress that is being made on the restoration front (in spite of the rain); details of our 500th Member; the name of our highest bidder for the VIP tickets etc. to the London International Boat Show...

COPY DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT EDITION IS SATURDAY 9th JANUARY

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

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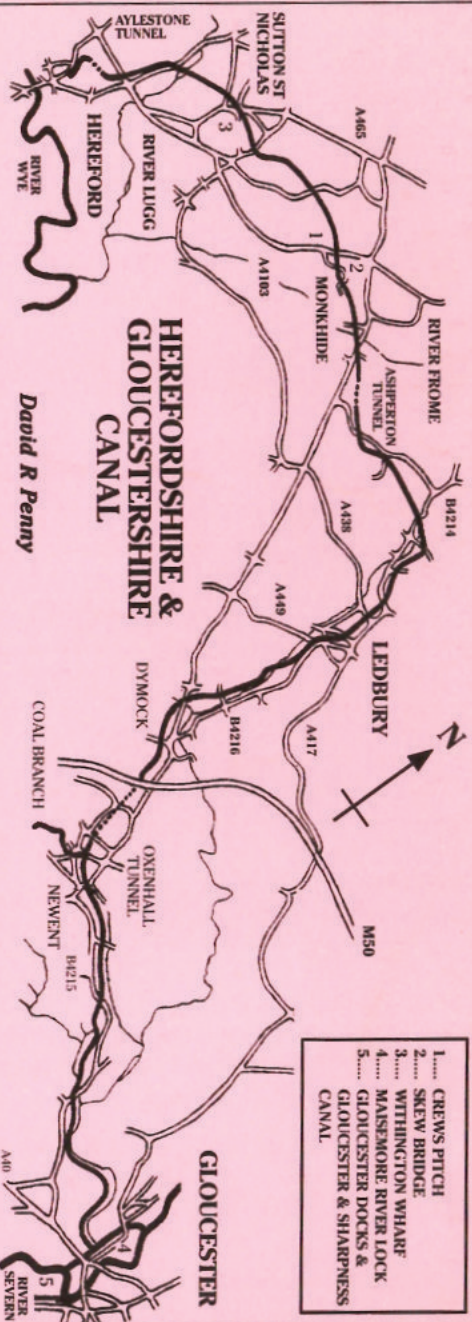
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Whilst we try to ensure that dates are correct please
verify specific arrangements with the relevant Organiser.

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.