

# THE WHARFINGER



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

**50p  
free to Members**

**Edition 40  
Autumn 1993**



## WHO DOES WHAT . . .

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

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Please see CONTACTS, inside back cover, for addresses/phone numbers.

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STRUCTURAL ENGINEER Ron Munden

SOLICITOR Sue Newbould, GABB & CO., 25 King Street, Hereford.

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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

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### MONEY !

For a number of months our restoration of the Canal has not been as rapid as it might have been due to lack of Grant Aid. This has not been for the lack of trying; Canal Trust Fundraising Officer David Penny has spent a considerable amount of time and effort in approaching our normal funding sources - and a considerable number of new ones as well. A detailed budget and supporting documentation has been provided to a standard that has won a number of compliments but, until recently, only small sums of money ! There is no doubt about it - the recession has taken its toll and the sources of Grant Aid are becoming very limited.

It is with great pleasure that I can now report receipt of the largest single Grant the Trust has ever received - from the Civic Trust Local Projects Fund. The £4,400 grant (which is supported by the Department of the Environment) will ensure that our major restoration project at our new Yarkhill site in September can proceed as planned. *To all involved - thank you.*

The most significant outcome of this Grant is that we will now be able to purchase our own excavator and this should result in a marked increase in progress. It has just not been economical to hire the larger machines that we now require just for weekends (due to high transportation costs) yet we have the growing band of skilled drivers willing to work for us on many weekends - this Grant (and our own funds that have to match it) will result in restoration work that *greatly* exceeds the Grant in value of the work undertaken.

At a time of such financial constraint it is also important to note that a number of the local authorities along the line of the Canal have maintained their previous level of support. Tewkesbury Borough and Hereford and Worcester County Council are to consider our Grant Applications shortly and Malvern Hills and Gloucestershire County Council are at least consistent in their zero contribution to our voluntary work. As usual South Herefordshire District Council are the clear leaders in the level of funding from the Districts (£650); Hereford City £200 and Forest of Dean £100. *Thank you.*

I may as well be honest, the amounts from the local authorities are exceedingly disappointing when you read of the *annual* multi-thousand pound support that a number of other Canal Trusts receive towards their voluntary canal restoration work from their local authorities - *hopefully our time will come ?*

*continued on page 2*



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

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### FOREST OF DEAN LOCAL PLAN

Regular readers of *The Wharfinger* can hardly have failed to see our campaign to get the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal recognised in a *main Policy* within the Local Plan. Following a level of representation that exceeded that received by the Council in respect of almost every other aspect of their Local Plan [*to all concerned - thank you*] the Council Officers recommended to the Planning Committee that the Policy relating to the Canal should be "promoted" to that of a main Policy. Unfortunately they failed to address our other concern adequately - that the words "where feasible" should be deleted from the Policy - the wording has now been changed to read "where possible"; hardly a worthwhile change! The Plan is about to go through the formal "Deposit" stage when there will be a further (very restricted) consultation period. It is essential that we make representations to get the wording of the Policy so that it positively supports the restoration of the Canal without this weak "escape clause". Otherwise it could be used to overturn the Policy whenever there is a developer seeking planning permission on the original line of the Canal!

It is likely that the formal "Deposit" stage will take place whilst this edition of *The Wharfinger* is at the printers. A letter will be sent to all Members (and to those supporters who also objected at the last stage to the Draft Local Plan) seeking *your* support in writing an individual letter seeking revised, more positive, wording. Please don't assume that your letter won't count, or that others will write - *every* letter of support is of immense value in showing that the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal is a major asset to the community that fully warrants a clear and fully supportive main Policy - and not the current ineffectual wording. [*Further details on page 7.*]

### STRATEGY REVIEW

In *Committee Matters* you will see reference to your Council of Management reviewing strategy - a good idea to take a long hard look at how we are organised, and how to achieve our objectives, after our first 10 years. Obviously we will keep our Membership *fully* informed. However, it is an excellent time for *you* to tell us of *anything* that you feel we could do differently - or, even, better! So why not write to me (I promise that all views will be reported to the Managing Council).

Cliff Penny, Chairman/Liaison Officer

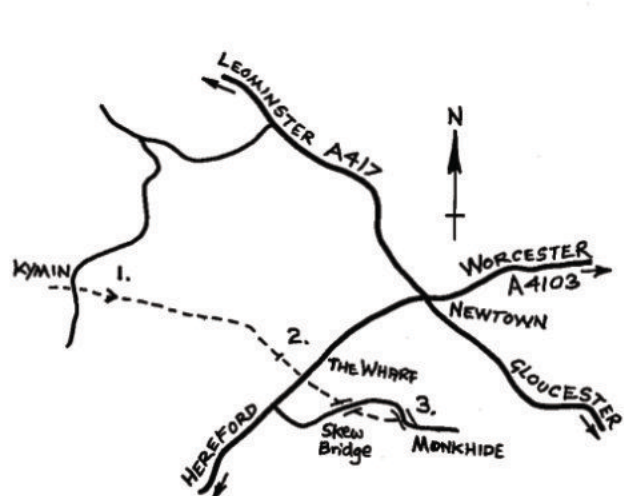


## THE YARKHILL PROJECT SITE

*"Where is the new Herefordshire Restoration site, at Yarkhill?"* That is a recent question from a Member, and as we always try to react to such queries in *The Wharfinger* a map of the main Herefordshire restoration site seemed timely; especially in view of our planned major Canal Camp in September.

As long-standing Members will know the very first restoration work by the former Canal Society centred on the Skew Bridge, at Monkhide, just off the main A 4103 Hereford to Worcester Road. Work was then extended as far as the (culverted) crossing of the main road, to the NW of Skew Bridge, and as far as Middle Court Bridge (to the east). The Canal, and the large "winding hole" at The Wharf, has been dredged to a depth of 6 feet. This is part of the summit pound of the Canal - over 10 miles at the same level - and the extra depth allowed for traffic on the Canal to continue even when the levels were drawn down by the water lost through the locks at either end of the summit. Between Skew and Middle Court Bridges restoration is not finished with the Canal, at present, narrower, and the towpath much higher, than it was originally. The length of Canal from the main Hereford to Worcester road to Middle Court Bridge is referred to as *"The Monkhide Project"*.

The 16 day September Canal Camp aims to commence work close to the site of Barrs Lock (see reports on trial excavations on pages 11 & 14 of the last edition of *The Wharfinger*) proceeding towards the temporary dam to the SE - points 1. to 2. below. This is what we are calling *"The Yarkhill Project"*. Full details of the Canal Camp were given on page 14 of the last edition of *The Wharfinger*.



1. Barrs Lock  
[No trace on surface]
2. Temporary Dam
3. Middle Court Bridge

1-2

*"The Yarkhill Project"*

2-3

*"The Monkhide Project"*

IMPORTANT: There is no public right of way in this area. Whilst the owners do not generally object to walkers on the towpath please do nothing to prejudice our excellent relations.  
*Thank you.*



# COMMITTEE MATTERS

*Two Council of Management meetings are reviewed by our Chairman in order that our Members and supporters are kept up to date [there was no meeting in April] ...*

## MAY COMMITTEE

■ The Gloucestershire Regional Health Authority's Planning Consultants were to be asked to accelerate their planned structural survey of the Lock Keepers Cottage at Over.

■ The Chairman was liaising with a number of Consulting Engineers in respect of a possible independent appraisal of the restoration of the Canal - including a water supply strategy.

- Arrangements were being made for the Canal Trust to obtain a duplicate of Bob Simpsons Oxenhall Tunnel slides so that this historic record was safeguarded - it was also hoped to make a copy of his unique cine film.



■ A Members £400 "Gift Aid" donation and a Grant of £200 from Hereford City Council were warmly welcomed [see Ed. 39 page 23].

■ Arrangements were agreed for the Canal Trust/HGCS presence at Braunston Boat Show and Gloucester Docks "Canals 200".

■ The Boats Group reported progress with the repairs to the hydraulic system on our trip boat "Mallard" - thanks to the co-operation of Ultra Hydraulics [see page 23 of the last edition].

■ The new group reviewing strategy recommended a number of initiatives which were given preliminary consideration. These ranged from the need for a colour promotional/recruitment leaflet to the need for greater promotion in the Gloucester area.

■ Concern was expressed at the continuing vandalism at the Yarkhill Project Site. The plaque secured to the parapet of Middle Court Bridge had been forcibly removed and graffiti sprayed on the underside of the nearby "accommodation" bridge. Major Robert Barnes agreed to seek the views of the Parish Council.

## JUNE COMMITTEE

■ A visual survey had been undertaken by Structural Engineers at the Lock Keepers Cottage at Over. This concluded that the original structure was in fair condition (the obvious exception



## COMMITTEE MATTERS . . . (ii)

being the covering to the roof) but the more recent addition, remote from the River Severn, had experienced a foundation failure. The initial conclusion was that the original structure could be saved but the later addition could more economically be rebuilt. It was agreed to ask our Honorary Structural Engineer to inspect the building and comment on the Report. The continued co-operation of all those involved in this site was again welcomed.

■ Following representations from our Chairman the Ancient Monuments Society in London had accepted our date of 1831 for the original construction of the Lock Keepers Cottage at Over - this followed extensive research by Roger Chandler at the County Records Office [see page 10]. The Ancient Monuments Society had advised Tewkesbury Borough Council that the Cottage was of more recent origin; this had now been corrected.

■ The Inland Waterways Association's National Restoration Committee wished to hold one of their meetings close to the Canal. A mutually convenient date in the Spring of 1994 would be arranged.

■ Planning Permission had been refused for a Gypsy site on the line of the Canal at Rudford. Forest of Dean District Council refused permission on a number of grounds including the adverse

*continued on page 21*



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# **SNIPPETS CORNER**

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## **DROITWICH VISIT GETS LOST**

Vice Chairman Mike Potts had the odds against him when, less than 48 hours before his planned coach and boat tour in mid May, the boat that he had booked for the trip on the Droitwich Canal was reported as out of service. Ever resourceful, Mike managed to arrange places on a Brummagem Boats tour of Birmingham instead; a complete contrast to the morning was the afternoons visit to Stratford on Avon. Our apologies to those who were affected by this last minute change in the plans - it was completely beyond our control.

## **BARRS LOCK AND OVER LOCK**

No further investigation has been undertaken at either site (see pages 11 & 17 of the last edition) but the National Rivers Authority have, very recently, commenced the removal of the very large tree that was growing in the centre of the deep lock at Over and preventing any further work. *Thank you.*

## **SPREADING OUR WINGS**

A small group of our Members have recently twice met with H&G Canal (Sales) Chairman David Penny and our Trade Liaison Officer Joyce Lynham to plan a new campaign to greatly increase the number of retail outlets that sell *The Wharfinger*. As we have explained before, these shops, garages etc. pass *all of the proceeds to us (which is greatly appreciated and, of course, it leads to increased publicity for the Canal Trust)*. If *you* would like to become involved give Joyce Lynham a call (see *Contacts*).

## **BRAINSTORMING**

As reported in *Committee Matters* your Council of Management have taken up the idea of Press and Publicity Officer David Williams that we should review our strategy now that the organisation has been in existence for 10 years. An initial meeting of the sub-committee took place early in May and further meetings are planned. It is already clear that the exercise will lead to some more changes in the way that we do things - further details will appear in a future edition of *The Wharfinger*. However, if you have an ideas or suggestions for improvements in respect of *any* aspect of our work they will be most welcome and carefully evaluated. Please address them to the Chairman, Cliff Penny (see *Contacts*).

## **CUSTOMER CARE**

Every successful organisation these days seems (quite rightly) to place very great emphasis on "customer care" - so it should come as no surprise that your Canal Trust does too! Apart from reviewing virtually everything that we do (see "Brainstorming" above) Mike Potts introduced a brief "customer survey" questionnaire for all Members and guests to complete during the various coach tours that he arranged this year. The idea is to try and tailor such events to the wishes of our Members *and* to show that we really do mean to succeed and excel - in *everything* that we do!



## TWO WORDS DESTROY THE FUTURE ? . . .

*Your letter by 17th September could secure it . . .*

Members, and many of our supporters, should have received a letter from our Chairman at the end of July/early August regarding the latest stage in the consultation process leading up to the final publication of the Forest of Dean District Council Local Plan. We make no apologies for repeating some of the information here as the Local Plan is now at the, very important, formal "Deposit Stage". *It is your chance to influence how the final document will be worded* - and if the Council cannot satisfactorily meet the various representations made a Public Inquiry will be held (in the Spring of 1994) at which a Department of the Environment Inspector will hear evidence (written or verbal) and then make recommendations before the final document is produced. What is important to appreciate is the fact that only written representations, made within the formal "Deposit" period (26th July to 17th September 1993), can be considered by the DoE Inspector at the subsequent Public Inquiry. If you wrote in support of the Canal Trust at the previous stage that will NOT be taken into account at this stage. *If you didn't write last time that does not prevent you from writing now!*

**FREEPOST**



J A STEWART ESQ., BA., MCD., MRTPL,  
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & LEISURE SERVICES,  
F.O.D. LOCAL PLAN, F.O.D.D.C.,  
FREEPOST (GL 464), HIGH STREET,  
COLEFORD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE, GL16 6BR

Our main Gloucestershire restoration site lies within the Forest of Dean District Council's area (at Oxenhall). The local land owners and the local community can see what we have achieved in a little over two years *and we welcome their encouragement and support for our wholly voluntary efforts*. However, as regular readers of **The Wharfinger** will know, the initial draft Local Plan merely contained a weak "Supplementary" Planning Policy that sought - without any real conviction - to protect the line of the Canal "*where feasible*" from development that might prevent (or severely hinder) restoration of the Canal.

As a direct result of the substantial number of excellent written representations received (from all over the country) the proposed Planning Policy in respect of the Canal has now been "promoted" to a Main Policy - a very significant achievement (*to all concerned - thank you*). Unfortunately the words "*where feasible*" have been replaced with "*where possible*" which leaves us with a weakly worded main Policy that is unlikely to protect the line of the Canal from development pressures. *This could prevent full restoration of the Canal within Gloucestershire and totally frustrate other restoration initiatives in Herefordshire.*

The proposed (amended) main Policy reads:-

**"FTO.8 THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL PROTECT WHERE POSSIBLE THE ROUTE OF THE HEREFORD AND GLOUCESTER CANAL AND ITS ASSOCIATED WORKS, BUILDINGS AND FEATURES WHEN CONSIDERING APPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT."**

"6.31 It will be a major task to fully restore the former Hereford and Gloucester Canal, which runs through the North Forest area along a line from



## TWO WORDS DESTROY THE FUTURE ? ... *continued*

Ledbury to Newent, and thence to Gloucester. Nevertheless, it is an important historical artefact which offers potential for various forms of countryside recreation in addition to its intrinsic historical value. The Council therefore acknowledges the potential for the restoration of this canal and will protect its route where possible when considering applications for development in its vicinity. Wherever possible development should be designed and located in a manner which does not have a damaging effect upon the canal route."

It is very important that we make as many *individual* written representations at this stage as possible. Every letter really does count. This is the first of the Local Plans along the line of the Canal to get to this stage and it is critical that we achieve the best possible Planning Policy to protect the route of the Canal *and essential diversion routes* (where the original route has *already* been built upon). A weak final Policy here could well influence the other four local authorities - three of which already propose more positive Planning Policies than the Forest of Dean (Tewkesbury Borough are at an earlier stage in the Plan process).

PLEASE don't assume that others will write; your letter may be the one that makes the difference - and when we succeed *you* can truly claim to have played a part in achieving success !

Forest of Dean seem concerned at the prospect of protecting the route without a firm deadline for it's restoration [*not exactly helped by their £100 per year Grant Aid. Ed.*]. Perhaps the Council should be reminded of the clear decision that we obtained in respect of the proposed Hereford Bypass - the Secretaries of State for Transport, and the Environment, both accepting their Inspector's recommendation that a navigable culvert be provided for the canal (*if the Bypass is built to the east of Hereford*) even though the Department of Transport raised concerns that we had no current programme of work that involved the section of Canal in question.

When writing don't forget, canals are not just restored for historical reasons; or for boats, they bring *significant* benefits to the community in terms of leisure, recreation, amenity and the rural economy. Surely the local authority should positively support a *registered charity* that has established the credibility of its *voluntary* endeavours (over a short period of time) - when our objective is of such immense benefit to the community ?

*Please* write, before the absolute deadline of the 17th September 1993, 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 464), High Street,  
COLEFORD, Gloucestershire, GL16 8BR

*It won't even cost you a stamp - but it could well save a Canal for future generations.* Please send a copy of your letter to the Chairman (Cliff Penny see *Contacts*). *Thank you.*





**ABOVE:** Brickwork by Ian Reid and his team - with a little help from Shell Better Britain (who paid for the materials) - greatly enhances Cold Harbour Lane Bridge at Oxenhall. [see the "before" photo on this page in the last issue.]

**BELOW:** "Surely I don't have to be in period costume to present this cheque?" Carolyn Kelly of The Civic Trust presents our Fundraising Officer (David Penny) with the last of our grants from the former UK2000 Fund.



## OVER LOCK KEEPERS COTTAGE

In *Restoration Update* in the last edition of *The Wharfinger* Brian Fox briefly mentioned (page 17) the preliminary excavations that had taken place at the site of the lock at Over. There has been some doubt expressed as to the role of the Cottage - had it been associated with the Canal or built later as a "Lodge" for the hospital? Roger Chandler spent some time in the County Records Office researching the history. His preliminary findings were:-

**1793** Lock built.

**1817** The Canal Company rented accommodation locally for the Lock Keeper and Ticket Clerk. This was first a small cottage in the village of Over and later a two room cottage half a mile away at the first swing bridge over the Canal. *[From the maps of the time it would appear to be the bridge at Lassington House near to the original Highnam Church.]*

**1818** The Canal Company decide this was not a satisfactory arrangement and that a house should be built near the lock. Land was purchased from Sir John Guise of Highnam Court.

**1830** On the 7th October the stables under the house were completed for the mules. These were required as sail barges were used on the River Severn at the time and the Canal was detached from the remainder of the canal network. *[It would appear that a separate company existed to supply 'horse power' to the boat owners.]* Several of these stables were built on the Canal between Over and Ledbury:-

Over; Near a mill at Newent; Oxenhall; and Ledbury

**1831** On the 4th November the Lock House was completed. This fronted the river and had 3 rooms upstairs and 2 down with a back kitchen with a pump (luxury at the time!), presumably taking water from a well. The house was built under the direction of Ballard who built the other houses associated with the Canal. Mr. John Haskins was the first Lock Keeper and Ticket Clerk who also looked after the weighing machine and the wharf.

**1847** The Rentcharge and Tythe Map for the Hamlets of Highnam, Over and Churcham dated 6th September stated that in the Parish of Churcham the Canal Company owned the Canal and the Lock House. No rents were payable on this land.

**1876** Records show that, on the 30th July, Mr. M Bayliss was the Lock Keeper and Ticket Clerk who paid the Canal Company six shillings for 2 weeks rent on the Lock House.

nb. The back of the house was rebuilt by the Canal Company at a later date.

**THANKS TO:-** Michael Handford Esq., Gloucestershire Records Office, David Bick Esq.

This information was submitted to the Ancient Monuments Society, in London, as they had dated the building to 1897; however, after consulting the Royal Commission (who had provided the Ancient Monuments Society with the original date) they have now accepted our earlier date of 1831 and the link with the Canal.

In July a temporary covering was placed over the roof of the cottage to prevent any further deterioration of the building. *We are grateful that this action has been taken.*

No decision has yet been taken by Tewkesbury Borough Council in respect of the planning application for the re-development of the hospital site. We are being kept fully informed and discussions continue.



## THE CANAL TRUST IN '92/3 - AGM

The first AGM of the Canal Trust (and Trading Company) will be held at the Burgage Hall, Church Lane, Ledbury on Thursday 21st October 1993 commencing at 7.30pm. Last year we received many compliments on our AGM - "*I have actually enjoyed an AGM for the first time in my life*" said one Member; we aim to keep our reputation! So please do come along to see the lively mix of slides, overhead projections, and commentary explaining how we are progressing - you won't be disappointed.

Members will be sent the "Report" and accounts of the Canal Trust and Trading Company within the next few weeks. Questions will be welcomed on any aspect of our work - advance notice would be appreciated and should result in a more comprehensive response!

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## TUNNEL TALK No. 4 - SAPPERTON TUNNEL

Following the fantastic success of the 3 talks on Oxenhall Tunnel, which attracted over 500 people, we have another Tunnel Talk by our intrepid explorer Bob Simpson. Bob has a great knowledge of many abandoned canal tunnels and was feeling a little restricted telling us only about Oxenhall. So to make a change this Tunnel Talk will be on Sapperton Tunnel. It looks set to be a fantastic evening if the previous Talks are anything to go by. So don't miss it! - on Wednesday 17th, November, at 7.30pm, at the Wheatstone Hall, Gloucester. Parking is reputed to be difficult for the venue, so please allow extra time so that you don't miss the start of the show!

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# *Dates For Your Diary*

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## **Thursday 16th September - 8pm**

Dymock:- *"Fisheries & Conservation"*

*Paul Hilder, Fisheries, Conservation, & Recreation Officer for the National Rivers Authority, Welsh Region, gives us a fascinating insight into his work. Dymock Village Hall, behind the Beauchamp Arms PH.*

## **Saturday 9th October**

*"Coach Trip and Canal Cruise"*

*Coach trip to the Caen Hill flight of locks, and the Devizes Centre, on the Kennet and Avon Canal. Then on to Bradford on Avon for a 2 hour return boat trip to Avoncliffe. Please bring a picnic. Tickets £7.50. Picking up at Burley Gate, Hereford, Dymock, Gloucester.*

## **Thursday 21st October - 7.30pm**

Ledbury:- *"The Canal Trust in '92/3 - AGM"*

*Last years AGM was acclaimed by one guest as "the most interesting and colourful I have ever attended". We shall be trying to live up to this again in October, with a lively mix of slides, overhead projections, and commentary to take you through the successes of 1992/3. Burgage Hall, Church Street, Ledbury. [See page 11.]*

## **Wednesday 17th November - 7.30pm**

Gloucester:- *"Tunnel talk No. 4 - Sapperton Tunnel"*

*Following 3 talks on Oxenhall Tunnel, which attracted over 500 people, we have another Tunnel Talk by our intrepid explorer Bob Simpson - this time on Sapperton Tunnel [see page 11]. At Wheatstone Hall, Gloucester.*

## **Sunday 5th December**

Dymock:- *"Restoration Group Christmas Party"*

*Dymock Village Hall, behind the Beauchamp Arms PH.*

Information & tickets from:- Tony Austin-Bailey - see *Contacts*

**Christmas**

*H & G  
C & S*

**Dinner 93**

**At the Colwall Park Hotel, Colwall, Nr. Malvern, early in December.  
Full details in the next Wharfinger - contact David Penny.**





**Egon Ronay**



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# RESTORATION UPDATE

*By Brian Fox*

By the time you read this we shall probably be hard at work on this years major restoration project, at Yarkhill. At the moment we are well into the planning stages and if all goes well the only thing left to worry about will be the weather!

The site is barely recognisable as a dried up canal in the middle of July, with a luxuriant growth of nettles, brambles and more seriously a number of large willow and ash trees growing in the bed which unfortunately we shall have to remove. We do make every effort to leave all those on the banks [the opposite bank from the towpath is virtually untouched] and seek advice from the Nature Trust on vegetation clearance so that we have as little effect on the environment as possible. Efforts will be made to move some interesting plants from the bed to the canal banks as the excavation progresses.

The section which we are proposing to commence work on is about 1000 yards in length and looks very daunting at the moment but a start has been made on the vegetation clearance and a good profile is emerging which has allowed us to make rough calculations on the amount of accumulated soil to be dug out. At least 5250 cubic yards will need to be shifted and spread on adjacent fields with the kind permission of the farmers concerned. We have persuaded the driver of the little bulldozer who did such a wonderful job at Oxenhall to come

and do the same at Yarkhill and level the soil as we dump it. *[How do you tell if someone is a member of the Restoration Group? Mention the little bulldozer used at Oxenhall and their eyes light up! Ed.]*

Vegetation clearance is the primary task at the moment and we are extremely lucky in having the assistance of two volunteer groups in this task. A team of about 15 from the Princes Trust, based in Gloucester, will be giving us 5 days of their time at the end of July and another team of about 12 from RAF Credenhill have promised us a Sunday in August. By then we should be able to see where we are going and it will certainly make the task of muck shifting a lot quicker.

You may recall that back in our Summer '92 issue of The Wharfinger a case was put for hiring large items of equipment like excavators as opposed to buying. We were concerned about the high costs of maintenance should there be a breakdown apart from the initial cost of purchase. Since then we have had a review of planned expenditure on equipment over the next 2 years or so and also taken into account the fact that we now have our own expert drivers as well as qualified mechanics to assist. *[We have been very frustrated at having skilled volunteers willing to work many weekends, but us not being able to supply them with the equipment they need to do the job as it is not economic to hire it in for less than 5 days. Ed.]* It also became obvious





## RESTORATION UPDATE continued

that the purchasing of a second hand excavator in the current economic climate was an extremely good proposition. Comparison of costings revealed that we could recover our potential hire and maintenance costs within 2 years if we had our own excavator, so the decision was made to go ahead and purchase!

There was just one small problem - lack of hard cash in the kitty! Purchase means money and that is not something we have loads of. The regular income from subscriptions, sales, raffles etc. keeps us going in a small way but when we start talking about buying excavators we rely on Grant Aid. Unfortunately the Grant Aid process is a lengthy business. From the applications for aid which

David Penny submits it can be a year or more before we know whether our bids have been successful. This year was no exception; our plans for the September dig have been very tentative due to the uncertainty of what we could afford should we not get sufficient grants approved. But, as I write this in mid July, I hear that we have just been informed of a 50% grant from the Local Projects Fund (which is administered by the Civic Trust and supported by the Department of the Environment) of £4,400. What great news! Our largest grant to date and sufficient for us to purchase not only a 360 degree, tracked, long reach, excavator, for some £6,000, but also to go ahead with our 16 day dig at Yarkhill. Grant Aid so far this year

### A DAY OUT WITH A DIFFERENCE !

The first weekend, both Saturday and Sunday, of each month the Restoration Group are to be found hard at work. In addition, there are also frequently workparties on other weekends, and even the occasional evening workparty now that the longer evenings are here again! You can now find the Restoration Group actively engaged at either Oxenhall or the new Yarkhill Project sites on several days each month, and *frequently working on both sites simultaneously!* Will you be joining the many volunteers who said they would just come to try it the once? You will probably meet some of them, as many found it so rewarding that they now come regularly. *It can't hurt to try one day, can it?*

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 (or even making the tea!) - 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, please].

*Roger Chandler on Dymock (0531) 890671*  
*Brian Fox on Hereford (0432) 358628*  
**CONTACTS:** *Mike Potts on Hereford (0432) 356392*  
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*Simon Hayward on Glouc. (0452) 305572*





**ABOVE:** Over Lock Keepers Cottage (18 months ago). In recent months the roof has deteriorated even further and, in July, (following our request) the Regional Health Authority owners have put a temporary covering in place.

**BELOW:** The Gloucester end of 2,109 yard long Oxenhall Tunnel. The depth of silt at the entrance (at least 8ft. to Canal bed) gives an indication of the considerable amount of (*very dirty*) hard work yet to come !





# RESTORATION

is now in excess of what we received for the whole of last year and will hopefully increase still further. With planned expenditure doubling each year, however, it is increasingly an uphill task, and money always remains very tight as our ability to spend it increases each month!

In case anyone is wondering what is happening at Oxenhall, our volunteers have been working quietly away on the usual weekends plus a few evenings thrown in for good measure. The Cold Harbour Lane Bridge now looks impressive with new brickwork up to towpath level on both banks and a new towpath edging. The new brickwork has taken a considerable number of hours of work to complete as most of our work, including many tonnes of concrete and replacement drainage to Cold Harbour Lane, is buried underground. This should make the lower part of the Bridge good for another 100 years. A commemorative plaque has now been fixed to the Bridge and it is hoped that there will be an opening ceremony for this in late September, including someone from Shell Better Britain who paid for the bricks.

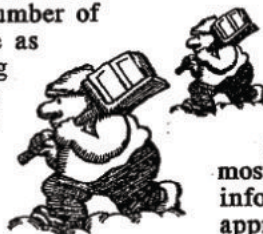
The nettles and thistles which used to grow in profusion along the towpath have now returned despite all our earth moving efforts and much time has been spent recently on cutting them down in an effort to maintain the right of way along the towpath. This has been made easier in recent weeks by the completion of the overhaul and restoration of a mower to fit behind the tractor. This cuts the path well, but is not designed to cut the banks or hedges which at present still have to be

# UPDATE continued

done by hand until funds allow the purchase of a flail cutter for the tractor. The canal maintenance problem won't go away! During the last few months the Oxenhall team have also been busy servicing the dumpers, completely overhauling one of the Trust's rowing boats and creating a new trailer from the two existing ones (which were both seen better days) as part of our continuing maintenance programme. [If anyone has any spare oars we could give them a very good home]

An Oxenhall Church fundraising weekend in July in conjunction with the Canal Trust attracted a lot of interest from people who hadn't realised that the Canal was there. The people who came seemed to appreciate what we are trying to achieve at Oxenhall and most wanted further information. They also really appreciated the tea and cakes, which were excellent. From the interest aroused perhaps a slightly larger event could be staged next year. Suggestions so far include boat trips or canoeing on the restored section of Canal and guided walks along the Canal to help explain the fascinating history, restoration and remains of the canal in the area.

It is planned that we should recommence large scale restoration work at Oxenhall next year when we are planning to reach the Tunnel. However, we hope some excavation may be done later this year towards this goal. In the meantime work will continue on the stable and Tunnel portal. So if you want some fresh air and exercise please come and join us. The numbers to ring to check on dates are on page 15.





# MEMORIES OF GRANDAD . . . part 2

*By Bill Inave*

At Tewkesbury in the year 1190 the winding muddy ditch of the Avon was replaced by a straight canal which supplied the Monastery Mill and also formed a good supply route from the meadows upstream. But it was 1636 when the Avon was made navigable up to Fladbury Mill and the lock was built with the connecting cut from the Severn.

A lot of things were happening in Grandfathers early years. The Gloucester Docks were in operation and being extended and it became ever more important to improve the navigation up from Tewkesbury to Worcester. The year that Grandfather got married (1858) the Upper Lode lock was opened, which was large enough to take one steam tug and six Severn Trows.

Larger boats could now reach the Tewkesbury Quay. The Avon Lock was re-built to take larger boats, but cargoes still had to be off loaded from the Trows and re-loaded onto the narrow boats on the Avon. For a time a short tramway helped in this transfer, and there was a hand operated jib

crane on the Quay to lift cargoes from low level to high level.

Healings Mill was now being built to replace the many local Water Mills. Everything looked good for Grandad and his contemporaries, but there was a dark cloud on the horizon. For when the Borough Flour Mills (Healings) were opened in 1865 the Quay wall was re-built much higher and the railway line came through the town and the Mill and along the Quay wall. The Mill was only geared to elevating the grain

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**"Everything looked good for Grandad and his contemporaries, but. . ."**

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from the Trows and then loading the flour directly on to the railway wagons, so barge traffic started to decline rapidly. Grandad had to diversify by steering the pleasure steam launches taking parties up to Evesham, Upton-upon-Severn, or Worcester.

He retired and became lock-keeper and his sons worked at the Mill. On one occasion he even took on work building the railway tunnel at the Mythe. The hoped for expansion of waterways traffic did not materialise in Grandad's lifetime; only many years after post-war with the pleasure crafts.

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## MONMOUTH & BRECON A SELLOUT SUCCESS

We warned you to book early ! Our master coach and boat trip organiser, Vice Chairman Mike Potts, really excelled himself with his June trip - coach, boat and railway all fully booked weeks in advance. All concerned voted the trip on the Monmouth and Brecon Canal, and the Brecon Mountain Railway, a huge success - *thank you, Mike*. Rumour has it that plans are already in hand for a return visit with TWO coaches next year. . .



## ROWING HOLIDAY BY CANAL IN 1873

*"Rowing holiday by Canals from Oxford to Wye Valley and back to Oxford ..."* This was the title of the log of a journey by water made by "A Farrant", and three others, during three weeks originally dated no more precisely than *"some time between 1869 and 1875"*.

The standard of accuracy, as reflected in such details as descriptions of locks and tunnels, is very high. The historian who has published the log spent some time in dating the journey. One of only two precise dates traced back from the log - to confirm that the journey was made in 1873 - was the "Grand Wedding" at Dymock, between Charles Palairot Esq., late Captain of 9th Royal Lancers, and Emily, daughter to William Henry Esq., of Hatfield, Ledbury which was celebrated on Tuesday, 19th August 1873.

Part of the three week journey (as you may have realised from the reference to the wedding) was along the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal, including passage through our 2,109 yard long Oxenhall Tunnel - *"two knelt in the front of the boat to keep her 'in the centre' while the other two, 'one either side of the stern', paddled"*.

As well as the few pages graphically describing the journey along the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal this intriguing little book contains 16 pages of photographs - nearly a third of which relate to the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal.

Available from H&GCS for only £2.40 (including P&P) no Member's bookshelf is complete without a copy! (David Penny see *Contacts*.)

*One of our display posters often makes people stop and think ...*

### WHAT IS A RESTORED CANAL ?

IT'S NOT JUST FOR BOATS ...

#### A RESTORED CANAL IS

- An informal recreation facility for the community\*
- A "green corridor", whether in City, Town, Village or the countryside
- A significant tourist attraction - on foot, by car and (eventually) boat
- A haven for wildlife, fauna and flora
- An important land drainage facility for adjoining land owners
- A traffic-free link between established footpaths and highways\*
- An immediately available emergency water supply for fire-fighting
- A (restricted) irrigation asset for adjacent land owners
- An important "living museum" of our industrial heritage

\*subject to access agreements where existing rights of way do not exist

A restored Canal is an asset to the community through which it passes and to the area in general. A restored Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal would link Hereford City, Ledbury, and the towns and villages of the two counties, to the national Inland Waterways Network at Gloucester - giving access to over 2,500 miles of navigable waterways.

# HEALTH & SAFETY - FOR ALL

*Based upon an article in WRG Navvies*

Waterway Recovery Group have reminded *all* groups involved in canal restoration of the *stringent* requirements that have to be met for our comprehensive insurance to remain in force. In common with virtually all other groups (and WRG themselves) we belong to a nationally organised insurance scheme (organised by the Inland Waterways Association) that is tailored to our specific requirements through a leading company at what are - for the extensive cover provided - very reasonable premiums. This can only continue if the Health and Safety record remains uppermost in all our minds and WRG have considered it timely to remind *everyone* of a few basic (*and mandatory*) requirements that apply *at all times* when any restoration work is being undertaken:-

Our/WRG/IWA's is the *only* insurance in force on the site - so if someone comes along and says that they don't have to abide by our requirements because they have their own insurance - sorry, that's not acceptable.

The insurance *only* applies to people aged 16 to 75 working on the site *or passing/standing within injury distance*.

*Anyone* on the site - or within injury distance - *must* be wearing appropriate safety equipment.

*Any* driver/operator of *any* plant or equipment *must* possess a WRG permit to drive/operate that specific item of plant/equipment (or be under the *close* supervision of a *WRG authorised instructor*), and carry this and their driving licence at all times.

The driver/operator of *any* item of plant/equipment *must not operate it* if any person within injury distance is under (or over) age or is not wearing appropriate safety equipment.

We (and the Waterway Recovery Group and the Inland Waterways Association) appreciate that the above may seem rather harsh and dictatorial - after all we are all volunteers - do we really want to treat everything quite so seriously? Well, the simple answer is yes, we do have to take all aspects of Health and Safety very seriously. All our sites are, effectively, construction sites and there is a need to ensure - as our own Restoration Team already does - that the risk of accidents are kept to the absolute minimum by approaching our voluntary work in a professional manner.

So please, whether you are a restoration volunteer (including the "tea boy" or girl) - or just a visitor - don't be offended when you are asked to comply. And don't be surprised at the action that will be taken if you don't - *all work will have to stop*. Nationally and locally there is an excellent safety record; we all have a part to play in keeping it that way, *thank you*.



## COMMITTEE MATTERS . . . (iii)

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### JUNE COMMITTEE . . . *continued*

effect on the restoration of the Canal. Subsequently the Applicants Agents had written to the Canal Trust seeking a compromise; due to the narrow nature of the site this was not possible.

- Land Owner Agreement negotiations were continuing and many of the outstanding issues had been resolved. Our Insurers observations were being sought in respect of certain aspects.

- For 5 days in late July 15 young people from the Prince's Trust would be assisting clearance work on the Yarkhill Project Site.

- An article in Navvies magazine, regarding insurance and safe working on restoration sites, was drawn to the attention of the Restoration Group. Whilst good practice was already being followed it was agreed that the matter deserved publicity [*see page 20*].

- It was agreed that our main restoration sites needed formal arrangements, and a budget, for their day-to-day maintenance.

- Further arrangements for the major work in September, at Yarkhill, were discussed. Two shifts would be working a total of 12 hours a day to obtain maximum value for money [*see page 14*].

- The Vice Chairman was investigating the offer of a pair of lock gates that were no longer required on the River Avon.

- Arrangements were agreed for attending Tewkesbury Water Festival and Oxenhall Church fundraising weekend. The latter deliberately coincided with our "guided tour" of the Canal.

- The Membership Secretary reported 6 conversions to Life Membership at renewal - this was warmly welcomed.

- Further discussions regarding strategy included comments from another Canal Trust emphasising the difficulties experienced following the formation of Branches. It was agreed to seek a Member with a suitable address in Gloucester to mirror that kindly made available to us by James Dunn in Hereford [*see page 23*].

- Following many representations received in support of the Canal Trust, Forest of Dean District Council had modified their proposed Local Plan. The Policy relating to the Canal would now be (as requested) a "main Policy". This was a major achievement. The other request, to delete the words "where feasible" had resulted in the substitution of the words "where possible" - regrettably of little benefit. The "Deposit" period of 6 weeks would give the opportunity for further representations to be made. In view of its importance it was agreed to send a letter to all Canal Trust Members and supporters as soon as the formal "Deposit" period was known [*see page 7*].

CRP

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

### WELCOME TO OUR NEW CORPORATE MEMBER

G & J Reeves, Boatbuilders, Napton

*We greatly appreciate their support - thank you.*

### ADDRESSING THE ADDRESS ?

A small number of Members have queried where they should write regarding Membership Matters - one pointed out that he had joined by writing to Gwyn Stephens (our retired Membership Secretary); received a "welcome letter" from an address in Teddington, Middlesex (where our current Membership Secretary Roger Morgan lives) then heard the Chairman quote the 6 Castle Street, Hereford address for Membership enquiries on local radio ... *"where do I send my renewal he asked ?"* - slightly confused !

There are a number of reasons for their being quite so many addresses about; as reported elsewhere our recruitment material is about to undergo a (much needed) "facelift"; in the meantime we have been copying the more ancient leaflets and in most cases the address quoted has been updated to 6 Castle Street. However some of the earlier versions do surface from time to time ! For a short while the Membership renewal form had the Teddington address on it but then this got on to the sales stand and caused confusion so all future renewal forms should have the Castle Street address on them - probably accompanied by a letter from Teddington ! *No doubt this is all getting about as clear as the silt dredged from the Canal ?* So to try and clarify the position *existing* Members can write to the Membership Secretary either at 6 Castle Street, Hereford, HR1 2NL or direct to Roger Morgan at 59, Elmfield Avenue, Teddington, Middlesex, TW11 8BX. However, when recruiting new Members we use only the Hereford address - until we get a "mirror" address in Gloucestershire [see HELP! plea on page 23] - when we will use whichever is the most appropriate. When our new recruitment and promotional material is printed we hope to be able to include an address in each county as we feel that it is *exceedingly* important that our work is seen to be equally promoted in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire.

Any queries please write to - er, um ...

CRP

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Please renew your Membership as soon as possible after you receive a "reminder" letter - included (to save postage) with the nearest mailing of *The Wharfinger* to your renewal date. A number of Members are putting the letter on one side and forgetting it - putting the Trust to the expense and unnecessary voluntary effort of a further reminder. In a small number of cases reminders have been sent out recently when the payment was secured by a Standing Order - *sorry* - our records are being improved to reduce a repetition. Of course, if *everybody* paid by Standing Order [or became *Life Members* ! Ed.], there would be no need for any reminders. So, please, pay by Standing Order, it is a *great* assistance to us - *thank you*.

CRP



## THANKS...

to the following for their greatly appreciated support:-

**CIVIC TRUST LOCAL PROJECTS FUND,**  
[Supported by the DoE]

for a grant of £4,400 towards 50% of the cost of purchasing a second hand, 360°, long reach, tracked excavator and our major work at the new Yarkhill site.

**SOUTH HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL,**

for a grant of £650 towards our work in Herefordshire.

**FOREST OF DEAN DISTRICT COUNCIL,**  
for a grant of £100 towards our work in Gloucestershire.

**DWR CYMRU - WELSH WATER,**  
who have donated some more safety helmets to our Restoration Group.

**BASIL FROST ESQ., (COLWALL PARK HOTEL),**  
for the offer of typing assistance in the production of *The Wharfinger*.

**Mr GILES BULMER, H P BULMER,**  
for donating two cases of Pomagne for our "bottle stall" to raise funds at the National Waterways Festival.

**IWA STAMP BANK,**  
who have promised us a donation of £250 from their funds.

**OUR SINCERE THANKS  
TO EVERYONE**

## HELP!

For a number of years we have been fortunate to have the use of Jim and Eileen Dunn's home at 6 Castle Street, Hereford [*thank you*] as the mailing address that appears on our recruitment literature and that is quoted in Press Releases, radio interviews etc. We wish to establish a "mirror" postal address in Gloucestershire so that it is very clear that both counties figure equally in all our endeavours! The use of a common PO box number has been discounted due to the £200 per year costs involved. For further details of what is involved please telephone Lesley Lowe. The address is urgently needed so that it can be incorporated in our new promotional and recruitment literature (which is currently being drafted). *Thank you.*

A popular, but fairly recent, feature in the *Wharfinger* are the photographs that have appeared on pages 9 and 16 of the more recent editions. Why "HELP!" you may ask? [*on the other hand they may not ask! Ed.*] Well, to be quite honest we have been rather concerned that most of the photographs - apart from the (welcome) cheque presentation ones - tend to be just photographs of the Canal and related buildings. We would like to include more "action" shots from all these weekends of work by our restoration volunteers; the trouble is nobody appears to be taking photographs? If you pay a visit [*following the safety requirements, please*] and take some photographs please remember that your newsletter would like a copy print - those we don't use here may well be included in our roving display panels. *Thank you.*

## THE WHARFINGER

On page 2 (*Chairman's Comments*) there is reference to our ongoing "Strategy Review". We are examining everything that we do and seeing if anything should be done differently - and that includes **The Wharfinger**. So if you have any views on *your* newsletter please let us know them in the next month or so. Every comment will be carefully considered.

One of the ideas that we introduced, a number of issues ago, was the *Committee Matters* pages - giving you a brief summary of what is going on within the Managing Council. We exchange newsletters with a number of other Canal Societies and Trusts, Waterway Recovery Group (and IWA Branches) and it is very interesting to note that, almost without exception, our idea has been adopted elsewhere. We believe that it is *very* important that our Members and supporters are aware of what is going on in respect of almost everything - the only exception being that certain matters are not released prematurely (such as legal aspects of land owner agreements) where to do so might prejudice the outcome.

Our thanks to Basil Frost, the Proprietor of the Colwall Park Hotel, for offering his Hotel secretarial facilities in answer to our plea for a skilled typist to input the text for **The Wharfinger** - subject to compatibility of computers we hope that this will be of significant assistance in the compilation of future editions.

We shouldn't have implied that we were overrun with contributions a couple of editions ago (we were; we even had to hold some articles back for an edition or two as we couldn't find room) - it seems to have stopped nearly all the articles; so *please* put pen to paper (or finger to keyboard) and keep the copy coming!

"Why is the newsletter called **The Wharfinger**" is a question that we have been asked a few times recently. Originally it was called **The Hereford Wharfinger** but, regular readers will know that we are equally active in Gloucestershire so the title was suitably abbreviated! A Wharfinger, in the days of canal carrying, was the equivalent of the man in the British Rail "Red Star" parcels office - sorting out loads for the boats and arranging collection etc. A Canal side cottage (currently minus Canal) at Withington (for a while the terminus of the Canal) still bears the faint painted legend on the gable wall - "Wharfinger".

It's hard to believe that the next edition of **The Wharfinger** will be the Winter edition. So you can be sure that, apart from details of how restoration progressed at Yarkhill, it will contain quite a few Christmas present ideas from the Trading Company as well as all the usual reports, news and views; and lots, lots more...

**COPY DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT EDITION IS SATURDAY 25th SEPTEMBER**

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



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Whilst we try to ensure dates are correct please verify them with a relevant Organiser.

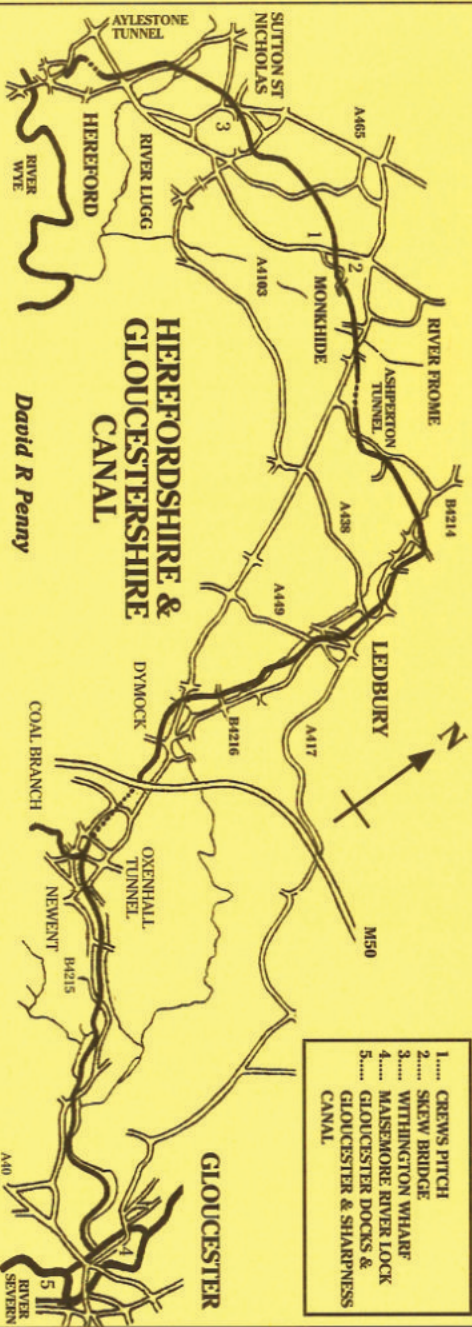
Cover:- Thanks to Sandy Wooldridge, Creative Labels Ltd., Rotherwas, Hereford.

Membership records are computerised. In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1984, your entry is available for inspection if you send a SAE to the Membership Secretary.

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<p><b>NOT A MEMBER ?</b> Details from The H&amp;G Canal Trust, 6, Castle Street, Hereford, HR1 2NL (<i>sae please</i>).</p>
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*David R Penny*

*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.