

THE WHARFINGER



Newsletter of the Herefordshire &
Gloucestershire Canal Trust

50p
free to Members

Edition 45
Winter 1994/5

WHO DOES WHAT . . .

VICE PRESIDENTS	<i>R. E. Barnes TD, Sir John Knill Bt.</i>
CHAIRMAN	Cliff Penny
VICE CHAIRMAN	Roger Chandler
TREASURER	Liz Connors
RESTORATION GROUP	Roger Chandler, Brian Fox, Simon Hayward, Mike Potts, <i>Ian Reid</i>
PRESS/PUBLICITY OFFICER	Volunteer required !
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	Nigel Jefferies
FUNDRAISING OFFICER	David Penny
SOCIAL EVENTS GROUP	<i>Linda Palmer, Steve Delacourt-Smith</i>
THE WHARFINGER	Cliff Penny, David Penny
MINUTES SECRETARY	Tony Austin-Bailey
TRUST ADMINISTRATOR	Lesley Lowe
TALKS/WALKS	N Jefferies, M Potts
WHARFINGER POSTMASTER	<i>Bob Fairclough</i>

Those in italics are not Directors on the Council of Management

*THE TRADING COMPANY
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H & G

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TO THE CANAL TRUST*

David Penny; Liz Connors; Joyce Lynham; *Steve Hughes*

MALLARD DIVISION *Ron & Sarah Ashley, Derek Gray, Steve Hughes,
Joyce Lynham, Ray Moses, David Penny, Pat Skeet.*

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

HONORARY POSTS:- AUDITOR Davies, Edwards & Co., Leominster.
SOLICITOR Sue Newbould, GABB & CO., 25 King Street, Hereford.

YOUR COMPANY NAME COULD BE HERE

The Print Sponsor for **The Wharfinger** is acknowledged on the inside front cover of *each* edition. 1,000 copies are circulated throughout the Country to our Members, Local Authorities, local and national news media, British Waterways, IWA., Government Departments - as well as being sold in the two Counties.

To discuss this excellent opportunity to support our wholly voluntary work, which is of benefit to the environment and the community, please contact the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

SOME VERY GOOD NEWS ...

In the last Edition of *The Wharfinger* we said that we hoped to bring you "some *very* good news" in this Edition - and I am pleased to say that the prediction has come true !

The very first formal "Landowner Agreement" was duly signed and sealed by the Canal Trust, and the owner of the 1,000 yard length that we refer to as "The Yarkhill Project". This is where the major Herefordshire restoration work has been concentrated over the past two years. The Agreement represents the outcome of many hundreds of hours of work by our own Directors, our Honorary Solicitor and some £700 of work (including VAT) by the landowner's Solicitor - the account being paid by the Canal Trust. This has been money well spent as it has resulted in the Agreement being modified to serve the interests and concerns of a major landowner; we are confident that it now represents a "fair deal" for both parties concerned - which is what we have to achieve in order to get wide acceptance of the Agreement by the other landowners along the length of the Canal.

This represents a major landmark in the restoration of the Canal. The Agreement sets out the relationship between the Canal Trust and the landowner giving the Canal Trust the right to restore the Canal in accordance with an agreed Brief (which will vary slightly from site to site according to what structures exist, the need for access, and other factors). We then have certain rights (*and ongoing liabilities*) in respect of the Canal and towpath that continue until the year 2040. It is intended that all Agreements will expire on the same date; before then the future of the Canal will be reviewed in the light of prevailing conditions.

We have always stressed that we are working on sections of the Canal with the co-operation of the various landowners (and, in many instances, there is no public Right of Way). The Agreement puts things on a more formal footing and it must be understood that, in order to obtain the benefits that the Agreements will bring, we have to ensure that the various terms of the Agreement are fully complied with - otherwise it can be terminated at relatively short notice.

The vast majority of the terms of the Agreement relate to issues that all of our Restoration Group will soon be fully aware of - in almost all cases it is a question of common sense and acting in a responsible and reasonable manner. As far as our other Members

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS . . . (ii)

Members are concerned you will be welcome provided you **ONLY** quietly walk the towpath, don't trespass on to adjacent land and act in a responsible manner - *please!*

Provided the Canal Trust *does* comply with the Agreement we can be assured that our hard voluntary work (and modest grant aid) cannot suddenly be filled in or surrounded with barbed wire and "keep out" notices! Major grant aid has always required that the Canal Trust has a legal "interest" in the land therefore this Agreement has to be the first of many in order that the future restoration of the Canal (by volunteers and/or utilising major grant aid) can be assured.

When I visited the landowner with the Agreement, for final signature, I presented her with a signed copy of David Bick's book about the Canal as a small token of our appreciation for the extensive co-operation and, in particular, for taking the lead in this crucial issue. At the subsequent Canal Trust Council of Management it was unanimously agreed that she should also become our first honorary Life Member - a decision that I am certain will be fully supported by all of our Membership.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Observant Members will have noted (p. 12 of the last Edition) that Roger Morgan resigned as Membership Secretary at the AGM due to pressure of work, family commitments and the inability to attend Council of Management Meetings (due to living in Teddington, not lack of enthusiasm!). We are extremely grateful that Nigel Jefferies has agreed to take over. He will have a significant workload in bringing our 600 Membership records up to date and transferring them on to what we hope will eventually be a reliable data-base. But Nigel, just like the rest of us, has his own "day job" pressures and family commitments. So *please* address ALL Membership enquiries/queries as requested on p. 22. This will harness the hidden efforts of two other volunteers (Jim Dunn in Hereford and Miles Hanwell in Gloucester) and avoid the burden all falling on one person's shoulders.

We are confident that it will lead, over a period of time, to an improvement in our handling of all Membership matters. *Please don't telephone with queries*; a brief note to either of our two main contact addresses (*see p. 22*) will help us to help you. *Thank you.*

Cliff Penny, Chairman/Liaison Officer

Christmas H&GCS Dinner '94

Friday 2nd December, 7.30pm. for 8pm. At The
Colwall Park Hotel, Colwall, Nr. Malvern.

Potato and Watercress Soup

or

Duck Liver paté,
flavoured with Brandy & Orange
served with Melba Toast

or

Melon & Orange Segments with Lemon Sorbet

Roast Breast of Pheasant
with Port & Cranberry Sauce

or

Poached Scottish Salmon
with a Dill Cream and Grape Sauce

or

A Vegetarian dish (by prior arrangement)

A selection of Hot and Cold Sweets
and Chefs Homemade Ice-Creams

Coffee & Mince Pies

Our Guest after dinner speaker is the immediate past Chairman of the
IWA, David Stevenson. Not only has he given sterling service to the
waterways in this role, but he and his wife have also enjoyed
many years cruising the inland waterways network
on their narrow boat Black Swan. He
will share with us his

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to arrive by Wednesday 30th November at the latest - early booking advised !

COMMITTEE MATTERS

Two Council of Management meetings are reviewed by our Chairman in order that our Members and supporters are kept up to date . . .

SEPTEMBER COMMITTEE

■ Further arrangements were discussed for the 1994 AGM. An issue relating to the Trading Company's liability for Corporation Tax had been referred back to the Honorary Auditor who had kindly agreed to liaise with the Inland Revenue. Each main Group would present a Report to illustrate to our members that the Council of Management worked as a team.

■ A special meeting was held to discuss celebrations to mark the 150th anniversary (next May) of the first boat arriving in Hereford Canal Basin.



■ When the Roman Road Canal Bridge, in Hereford, was demolished later this year the County Council had agreed to donate the stonework to the Canal Trust for use elsewhere on the Canal. A suitable storage site was being sought.

■ Discussions with Forest of Dean District Council regarding the rapid deterioration of Oxenhall Lock Cottage and Lock were reported. Concern was again expressed at the lack of action on the ground to save these Listed structures.

■ Thanks were expressed to Mrs Sylvia Muggeridge for making "Sunstone Cottage" available for our "Open Day" and to all who assisted, in any way, to make a success out of a very wet day [*see p. 20 of the last Edition*].

■ A colour brochure promoting the Canal had been discussed at several meetings but costs would prevent production unless sponsorship could be obtained.

■ Roger Morgan, our Membership Secretary, intended to stand down at the AGM due to pressure of work and family commitments. Nigel Jefferies agreed to take over subject to suitable software being obtained for his computer and to ongoing support from our two "post boxes" - Miles Hanwell in Gloucester and Jim Dunn in Hereford. Major Robert Barnes also offered to take on the role. [*see p. 22*].

■ New Membership rates were proposed. Whilst the Council of Management had the authority to implement them it was agreed to put the proposals to the Membership at the AGM. A new Life Membership for Corporate Members was also proposed [*see the next Edition*].

THE HEREFORD & GLOUCESTER CANAL

By David E Bick

15 years ago the first book about the Canal was written and published by David Bick.

NEW EDITION NOW AVAILABLE

He wrote "Throughout the length and breadth of England, no major navigation is so lost in obscurity as the Hereford and Gloucester Canal"

AN EXCELLENT CHRISTMAS GIFT

The book contains two new chapters, one of which briefly summarises recent developments involving the Canal Trust. 104 pages, printed on art paper to A5 format with over 30 photographs, plus numerous maps and other documents this is a book no supporter of the Canal Trust should be without. Price £7.95 (inc. P+P) from Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal (Sales), "Coppice", Burley Gate, Hereford, HR1 3QS. Payment by Access, Visa, cheque or postal order.



Credit Card No./expiry date please. Cheques/PO's payable to H&GCS.

COMMITTEE MATTERS . . . (ii)

OCTOBER COMMITTEE

■ Final arrangements for the AGM were agreed. Robert Barnes, Roger Morgan and David Williams had indicated that they wished to stand down at the AGM. The Chairman expressed the thanks of the Council of Management for their support.

■ The basis on which the Canal Trust might hold a 3 day celebration, next May, to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the first boat arriving in the Hereford City Basin was again discussed.

■ There was a further report on the situation relating to the continuing deterioration of the Lock and Lock Cottage at Oxenhall. The Canal Trust would continue to press the District Council for action in view of the lack of action by the owner of the property.

■ The Chairman and the Canal Trust's Company Secretary had signed and sealed the first Land Owner Agreement and this had been passed to Mrs Oram for signature. [see *Chairman's Comments, p.1*].

■ Discussions were continuing with Malvern Hills District Council regarding their Local Plan. A very minor addition had been requested in respect of South Herefordshire District Council's Local Plan (to reflect our progress in their area since the document had been written) and the Canal Trust had been advised that Hereford City

COMMITTEE MATTERS . . . (iii)

Council were prepared to recommend acceptance of the three modifications that we had sought in their Plan.

- The Vice Chairman had initiated discussions with Gloucestershire County Council regarding excessive quantities of silt that were being washed into the Canal at Oxenhall.

- South Herefordshire District Council had made a grant of £1,100 towards the cost of a dumper. Gloucestershire County Council had offered a grant of £500 towards a dumper. These actions were greatly appreciated.

- The Canal Trust Finance Committee had agreed budgets that would be put to the November Council of Management.

- A report recommending means of improving liaison with landowners was received and will be considered at a later meeting.

- Following the notice that Major Robert Barnes intended to resign as he felt there was a conflict in interests if a Director of the Canal Trust was also a Land Owner advice had been received from our Honorary Solicitor. This will be considered at a later meeting.

- The September Canal Camp on the Yarkhill Project site had been a success. With both of our excavators in use the Canal bed was profiled as far as Barrs Lock - achieving the intended target. [see *Restoration Update, Herefordshire, p. 14*].

- Excavation of the Canal at Oxenhall was also proceeding but was still hampered by the lack of large dumpers. For many months we have used a small part of a field on the off side of the Canal as a car park and as a base for our Gloucestershire "site hut". The field has been sold and we have had to vacate it - the Restoration Group hope to make contact with the new owner as soon as possible.

- A report from our new Social Events Group (Linda Palmer and Steve Delacourt-Smith) indicated that we should have a full list for 1995. [see page 12].

NOTE REGARDING *WHO DOES WHAT* (inside front cover).

The first Council of Management Meeting, following the AGM, was not until late November - too late to be reported in this Edition of **The Wharfinger**. This means that some of the Officers of the Canal Trust are subject to confirmation. CRP

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VOLUNTEERS CHRISTMAS PARTY

By Mike Polls

**Sunday 11th December,
Yarkhill Village Hall.**

A repeat of last year's very successful event, with entertainment by various artists including the Great Marvo and his Mind Reading Act. Other turns required please. Bring along a bottle of whatever you like to drink and donations of mince pies for later in the afternoon would be welcome; please let me know in advance!



Tickets are £5 for adults and £3 for children under 14. The menu is:-



*Soup with a roll
Roast Turkey Christmas dinner
Sherry Trifle*



Coffee and Tea (with new tea bags!)

All welcome - volunteers new and old and even those who are just thinking of helping! See you soon. Please contact me for your tickets by December 1st,

Mike Polls [see Contacts].



IWA

The Inland
Waterways
Association

GLoucestershire & Herefordshire Branch

An Invitation

Sunday, 8th January,

Our local Branch of the IWA are running a coach to the Earls Court Boat Show. Coach Tickets are £13 each. All inclusive. To book please telephone Charlie or Mary Phelps (01452) 863437 by the beginning of December.

Sunday, 12th February, 10.30am,

Wye Valley Walk, led by Will Frecknell. The walk starts at Biggs Weir Bridge, which is 7 miles downstream from Monmouth and will proceed back upstream towards Monmouth. A hostelry just happens to be about half way, for a convenient break.

Tuesday, 14th March, 7.30pm,

The IWA Branch AGM, followed by a Members meeting. To be held at The Tewkesbury Marina Yacht Club, Bredon Road, Tewkesbury.

AGM REPORT - 1994

Thursday 27th October heralded the 1994 AGM, held, once again, at the Burgage Hall, Church Street, Ledbury. Chosen because Ledbury is roughly half way along the Canal, the Hall is a converted chapel, which offers a warm (*once we found out how to light the overhead gas heaters*) venue for this annual event. One of our two Vice Presidents, Major Robert Barnes, chaired the meeting.

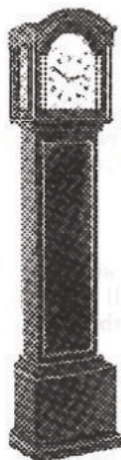
Before the evening got fully under way our Chairman led what must have looked like an aerobics class - "please put up one hand if you are a single Member, two if you are a family Member here on your own ..." to determine the total number of votes represented - once again (as last year) some half dozen below our legal limit for a quorum. However, in fairness to the 50 plus present we continued as if we had the required number, with the Council of Management having to go

through it all again a week later to comply with the Articles of Association. The Chairman explained that we had been waiting months for a Charity Commission dispensation so we could modify the requirements to an achievable level and assured everyone that he intended to get our current 10% of total Membership requirement changed prior to the 1995 AGM. So no free keep fit next year!

Major Barnes opened by explaining that he was standing down as a Director because he considered that his family land ownership (part of the main Herefordshire Restoration site) could lead to a conflict of interests. [*We have obtained an opinion from our Honorary Solicitor which will be the subject of further discussion within the Council of Management in the near future - Ed.*] He went on to say that the year under review had, in many ways, been very successful. *continued on p. 10*

"PUT THE CLOCK BACK"

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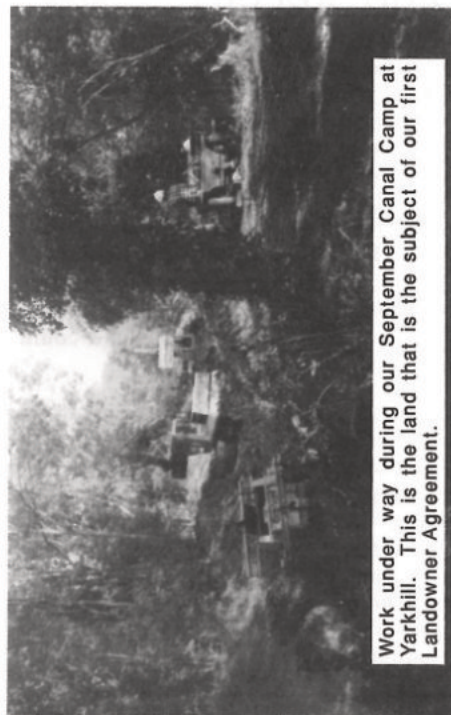
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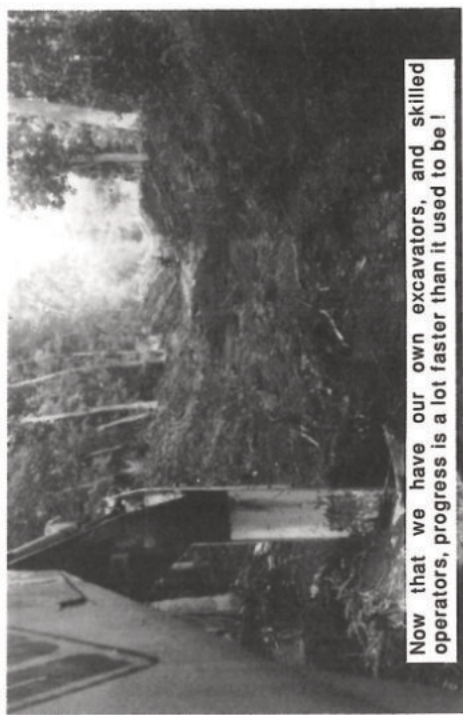
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Our Massey Fergusson excavator gets some running repairs during our Canal Camp in September at Yarkhill. Our JCB excavator (brought over from Gloucestershire) is in the background.



Work under way during our September Canal Camp at Yarkhill. This is the land that is the subject of our first Landowner Agreement.



Now that we have our own excavators, and skilled operators, progress is a lot faster than it used to be!

**IWA**

MICHAEL STIMPSON and ASSOCIATES

*Corporate Members of the
Herefordshire & Gloucestershire
Canal Trust, and IWA*

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AGM REPORT ... continued

Chairman Cliff Penny briefly outlined the events of the 12 months ending 28th February 1994. "Another year building firm foundations" with a number of notable successes. Brian Fox and Roger Chandler then gave details of the Canal Trust's restoration progress followed by the now legendary full colour overhead projector display of our finances in graphics by Treasurer Liz Connors. Cliff remarked that at last he could understand all the figures!

Each of the Agenda items was swiftly despatched under the Chairmanship of Major Barnes (including the recommended increase in the Membership Subscriptions, as from next April, and the proposal to only circulate abridged Accounts in future - although a full copy will be readily available for any Member who requests one).

Following the close of formal business there was the usual opportunity for Members to raise any questions - prior to which the very good news that the first Landowner Agreement had just been signed was announced. One question (a repeat of last year) was a complaint that *The Wharfinger* was published too infrequently and there was a need for greater contact/information for our Members. This clearly was not a majority view but the Chairman explained that the planned programme of Social Events would, hopefully go some way to improve matters. [Restoration volunteers have 5 'phone numbers where greater restoration information is available. Also everyone who helps to "man" our promotional display/sales stands receives a letter after each Event where they have helped to say how we got on - not bad for a voluntary organisation - Ed.] CRP

DIRECTOR'S SPOTLIGHT

A new occasional series to introduce you to some of the "behind the scenes" roles, and people, that enable the Trust to move forward efficiently.

Lesley Lowe, Trust Administrator

I am living proof that advertising in **The Wharfinger** does pay, as I answered a request for help in collating the **Directors' Notes**, and my job has grown from there!

My main task is still the printing, collating, and circulation of the **Directors' Notes** 10 - 14 days before each Council of Management meeting. They consist of the minutes of the last meeting and any sundry meetings such as those of the Finance Committee, or Sales Company, reports from the various Groups in the Trust (Restoration, Membership for instance), sometimes correspondence, budgets for the coming year, suggestions, copies of any circulars that are going out to Canal Trust Members and anything that a Council of Management Member wants to put before the Council in fact. As the last Notes consisted of 34 A4 sheets, and were fastened together with the help of a Black and Decker drill, you can appreciate the time that is saved at a meeting, when all the Council of Management Members have had time to read them beforehand.

As we strive to run the Trust in an open and efficient way, the circulation of the **Directors' Notes** every four to six weeks to all the Directors of the Trust, ensures that they are always aware of what is going on, what is being discussed, and what will be voted on, so even if they are unable to make the meeting through illness, holidays, or other commitments, they

are able to make their feelings known beforehand for consideration at the meeting.

Specific tasks I am engaged on at the moment include corresponding with the Charity Commissioners about reducing the number required for a quorum at AGMs, preparing the annual paperwork for Companies House, and in my capacity as a member of the Finance Committee preparing budgets for next year. I also book meeting rooms, deal with general correspondence and requests from other Trusts for help, and keep the Minute Book, files and archives for the **H&GCT** up-to-date. I am in the process of setting up a data base of volunteers.



In our other life, Andrew and I live on a top of a hill between Hereford and Ross on Wye, I work for the **Hereford Times** and I am in the second year of a two year part-time Business and Finance Course at Gloscat. We spend most holidays afloat, although, I have to admit, not always on the canals, as we love the Greek Isles too.

I am available to any Member of the Trust if they need assistance with the work they do for the Trust. As my knowledge of dumpers and water levels is rather restricted I am delighted to have found this niche to enable me to support and further the work of the Trust. If I can be of help to you in your work for the **H&GCT** I will be delighted to hear from you; my details are on the **Contacts** page.

Dates For Your Diary

By Linda Palmer & Steve Delacourt-Smith

Social evenings in 1995 will be held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at the
Cavern Bar of the Royal Oak, The Southend, Ledbury.

There will be a raffle, sales stand, and plenty of time for a chat. We hope that these Social Events will also provide a time and place for the dissemination of the latest news from the Trust. Please contact either of us if you have any queries, or ideas for Social Events [see **Contacts**].

Tuesday 17th January - 7.30pm
"Surprise speaker"

Tuesday 21st February - 7.30pm
"Severn and Canal Boatmen"

Mr Hugh Conway-Jones, of the Friends of the National Waterways Museum, will give an illustrated talk about the lives of the boatmen who worked barges from Bristol to Gloucester and the canal boats from Gloucester to Birmingham.

Tuesday 21st March - 7.30pm
"Quiz night"

Fun for everyone - why not join us ?

Tuesday 18th April - 7.30pm
"Erewash Canal and Langley Mill"

Mick and Carole Golds will talk and show slides of 25 years of restoration of this canal near Nottingham. Mick is known nationally as "Mick the Brick" and the Golds have recently built a lock on the Chesterfield Canal (page 35, October '94, *Waterways World*). They are coming a long way so please give them a good turn out to show our appreciation.

Tuesday 16th May - 7.30pm
"Cotswold Canals Trust"

By Richard Attwood who is the Field Officer of this organisation which is actively restoring these two local canals. These were on the "pipedream and impossible" list a few years ago. Very few would have them on this list now as great progress is being made, with 32 current work sites in operation.

Bangers *H&G* & Mash

A fundraising event in support of
the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire
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The Colwall Park Hotel

with Disco (free by courtesy of Partyman)

Very informal dress + a raffle prize please.

£5 each (£3.50 donated to Trust) + that raffle prize !

[By advance ticket only]

Star raffle prize of 2 nights free accommodation for
two in a small country hotel in Rutland.

At 7.30pm for 8pm - 'till midnight

To be held in February - date and tickets

available from the Hotel or David Penny (see

Contacts) [date will be known in early January]

- tickets ready now so please book early !



Egon Ronay

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RESTORATION UPDATE HEREFORDSHIRE

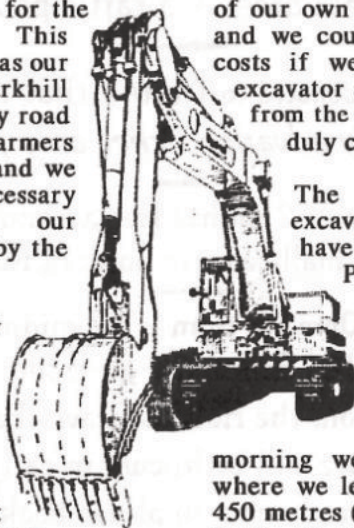
By Brian Fox

Anyone who reads the restoration reports will be aware that late summer has been the time when we have our "big dig". I think if we had the choice it would be in June when the days are longer and there is less rain but we have been constrained by the need to gain access to the work site across fields which contain crops and they are not harvested until July/August. So we have a "window of opportunity" from then until late September/October before the farmer starts preparing the ground for the next season's crop. This year was no exception as our current work site at Yarkhill is a good way from any road but all of the local farmers are very cooperative and we had all the necessary permissions, and our "window" was open, by the middle of August!

Our fuel tank (*kindly donated, last year, by British Waterways*) was full of diesel, a few last minute repairs to the Trust's excavator, the mobile cabin in position at Barrs Lock, and we were ready to go with an eye on the weather *looking for the rain!*

Sure enough it came - 2 days of almost continuous rain which only stopped about 36 hours before we were due to start. The restored section of Canal at Monkhide was now almost full of water - frustratingly a week too late for the Open Day when, as you may have read, we most unfortunately had insufficient water for boat trips.

Saturday 17th September was the day and turned out fine and dry although it was still very wet underfoot. The first job was to erect the portable toilets (ladies and gents), kindly loaned by the scouts. Gas bottles for cooking plus all necessary provisions were checked into the cabin. We even persuaded Mike Potts to buy some new tea bags this year - although we can't seem to get him out of the habit of hanging them out to dry when the tea is finished! We had sufficient Plant of our own this year to do the job and we could save money on hire costs if we transported our JCB excavator and one of our dumpers from the Oxenhall site, which was duly completed (at a fair rate).



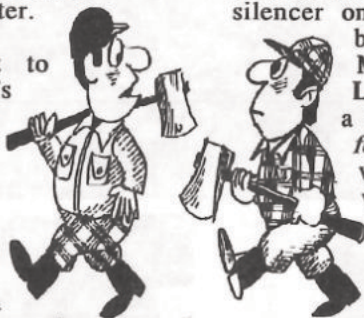
The Massey Ferguson excavator, (which the Trust have now bought from Mike Potts following his 12 month interest free loan), together with the little dozer, little dumper, tractor and trailer were moved on to the site and by mid morning we were ready to start where we left off last year. Only 450 metres (500 yds) to go to Barrs Lock. It was amazing how much vegetation had grown since last year but it proved to be just superficial weeds, brambles and nettles as most of the trees had been felled and removed and much of the accumulated soil taken away during last year's dig. This meant that the small amount of soil remaining in the Canal bed could easily be spread on the far bank and a small amount on the towpath to fill in a few depressions. This was most fortunate as the towpath was still

RESTORATION UPDATE HEREFORDSHIRE . . . continued

too wet to drive along and the tractor and dumpers were having to go the long way round in order to transport logs, fuel and general supplies between the camp site and the main road.

Those who weren't driving were generally employed in cutting and burning the few remaining trees and bushes that had to be removed plus a few left over from last year. Any large pieces of timber were cut up by our expert chainsaw operator to be used for fence and gate posts and the remainder was saved for log fires this winter.

I must not forget to mention the cook's duties. Last year we initiated the idea of having a cup of tea when we start at about 8 o'clock and then all working on through until about 11 o'clock when everyone stops for brunch, and a further stop for sandwiches about 4 o'clock. It seemed to work well so this year it was decided to repeat this strategy despite having no "official" cooks to do the job. Those who eventually volunteered did a pretty good job, although the timing of meals was a bit erratic, and much good humoured banter was bandied around during the breaks. The cabin had been conveniently placed as close to the work as possible with a grass patio facing south and a stream running beyond. Most meals were taken "al fresco" and the navvies had their every need catered for by the volunteer cooks. Don't you wish you had come now? *[We'll be in the "Good Food Guide" next year by the sound of things - Ed.]*



The rain, as we expected, duly obliged every now and then, although not as much as last year, but sufficient to keep the ground soggy and make driving along the towpath a hazardous business - which was only attempted on a few occasions. Fortunately the Canal bed at this point is dry, being on an embankment above the surrounding land, and the excavators and dozer working in the bed were not troubled by the conditions at all. A few mechanical problems arose but we are lucky enough to have expert help on site to attend to them. The silencer on the Massey excavator blew on the Sunday but Moss Engineering of Ledbury kindly donated a new silencer (*intended for an XJ6 Jaguar !*) which fitted perfectly with a few slight modifications. *It doesn't go any faster but it sounds great !*

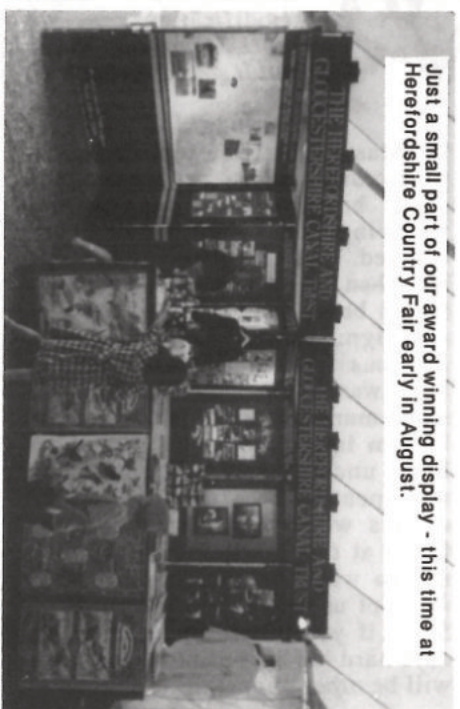
A dislodged track from the Massey was soon replaced and a fuel pump had to be reassembled after breaking up but by the following Friday the Lock had been reached. The site of the Lock itself was then tidied and levelled, a few stones being found, but nothing of any significance. We know from previous trial excavations that the Lock was "robbed" of its brick and stone many years ago and only the bottom layers are still there, about 10 ft underground. The Saturday was spent in recutting one of the ditches which run parallel to the Canal at this point and we decided not to work on the Sunday as so many of us were otherwise engaged. Sorry if you turned up expecting a days hard labour but no doubt there will be other opportunities.



The view from Barr's Lock looking along what is the start of the 10 miles summit pound, - after all the hard work of our September Canal Camp. Final grading of banks yet to be completed.



You may have read about "the small dozer" - here it is!

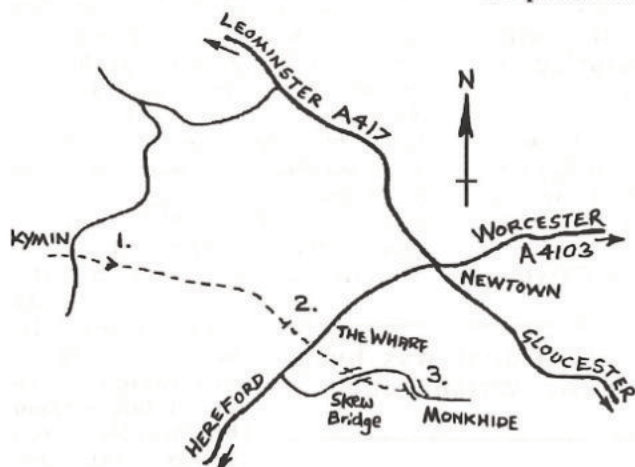


Just a small part of our award winning display - this time at Herefordshire County Fair early in August.

RESTORATION UPDATE HEREFORDSHIRE ... continued

The successful completion of the restoration as far as Barrs Lock was largely due to last year's efforts and the soil which we shifted then. There was less than expected to be shifted from the canal bed over much of the length restored this year, but 5 breaches were found in the non towpath bank of which we have filled 2 with puddle clay and the remainder are still to be filled.

Some parts of the far bank still require tidying and sections of the towpath need hollows filled in, roots covering so that our mower is not damaged, and a final levelling, but we are hoping to complete all the outstanding work before this winter's rain comes. Then it will be fingers crossed that all the holes have been found, and blocked, and the puddle clay is still watertight!



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.

A DAY OUT WITH A DIFFERENCE !

The first weekend, both Saturday and Sunday, of each month both Restoration Groups are normally to be found hard at work. In addition, there are also workparties on other weekends, and now even the odd weekday one. You can find the volunteers actively engaged at either Oxenhall, Monkhide, or Yarkhill Project sites on several days each month, and frequently working on two sites simultaneously! *Why not join us, 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 contact a member of the Restoration Group [during the evening, please].

Roger Chandler on Dymock (01531) 890671
Brian Fox on Hereford (01432) 358628
CONTACTS: *Mike Potts on Hereford (01432) 356392*
Ian Reid on Ledbury (01531) 635877
Simon Hayward on Gloc. (01452) 305572

SIZING UP THE LOCKS

A personal view, by David Williams

One of the very unique features of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal must be the fact that it was not built to the same 7' narrow "standard" of much of the rest of the canal system. Now, anyone who knows canals will know that variation and variety is more the rule, but generally a 7' x 70' size was accepted for much of the early "narrow" system constructed in the eighteenth century.

This 7' x 70' standard fairly well persisted during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries up to the Second World War, although by this time principal carriers like Fellows, Morton & Clayton had already "stretched" their newer boats to 72', acceptable to most narrow locks although there were notable exceptions, individual locks that would accept 70' boats but not the longer FMC boats.

The maximum size of boat able to use most of the narrow and wide canal system is now officially 72' x 6'-10". However, the 6'-10" is a comparatively recent post war standard set by British Waterways to increase clearance and dictated very much by experience. Lock walls have a tendency to move inwards under the pressure of soil, backfilling and water behind them. (It did not help that the sides of working narrow boats had a similar tendency to spread outwards through carrying heavy bulk cargoes). Jamming

incidents were thus becoming much more commonplace and the extra 2" of clearance could give a number of locks a few more years of life before having to be totally rebuilt.

Against this background, locks on the Hereford and Gloucester Canal were specified at the outset to be built to a nominal size of 70' x 8' *[the author is confusing the size of locks and the size of boats, the locks being built to a width of 8'-6" to accommodate boats of 8', this is repeated throughout the article - Ed]*. This size is comparable to the 70' x 7' standard of the rest of the

" the Canal was built to the Welsh gauge "

system and indicates that the locks were to be constructed to accept boats from the narrow canal system, but also boats of greater width. As with the remainder of the canal system, extra length was to be allowed in the lock construction for the closing arcs of the lower gates.

The Hereford and Gloucester Canal was not specifically constructed to take boats measuring 70' x 8'. No boats of this size actually existed at the time *[was this not the standard for the Welsh canals? - Ed]*. However, there were two sizes of trow in common use in the Bristol and Gloucester area on the Rivers Wye and Severn.

The popular Severn Sailing Trow was far too large to use on the

-sizing UP THE LOCKS . . . continued

Canal even with its masts down. Whilst measuring about 70' long, they had a beam of anything between 14' and 17'.

However, a smaller trow was also in very common use on the Severn and Wye, and measured about 45' by 8' beam. As with the larger trows, with river craft of this period there was always variation in size, boats being more individually built to suit the requirements of the carrier. The smaller trow had to be small and light enough to be bow-hauled against the fast flow of the river, particularly on the Wye. Was it this local craft that the Canal was designed to accommodate? The Canal was built at the outset to compete for and to attract the traffic then using the River Wye, providing for that traffic an easier route to Hereford.

None of the forgoing should suggest to readers that boats measuring 70' by 8' were never used on the Hereford and Gloucester Canal. Any new boats built specifically for use on the Canal and the River Severn, particularly for movement of coal from Newent to Ledbury, and later to Hereford, or from Newent to Gloucester, would probably have been constructed to take full advantage of the lock dimensions, with a full 35 ton carrying capacity. Indeed Stephen Ballard specifically proposed in 1829 accommodating 70' x 8' boats in his plans for extending the Canal from

Ledbury to Hereford. However, this is fully forty years after the original proposals for the Canal were put forward by Richard Hall, ample time to construct boats to the size of the locks and for carriers to convert to larger craft to maximise efficiency.

Today the original lock chambers are in a very poor state right along the length of the Canal [*Maismore Lock, on the River Severn, is intact - Ed.*]. In places it is even difficult to establish their exact position, let alone the sizing. [*In fact, at every lock where the Canal Trust have carried out trial excavations (at Over in Gloucestershire and Barr's Lock in Herefordshire) there were signs that the lower part of the structure was intact despite nothing being visible on the surface - is this repeated elsewhere? - Ed.*] However, one or two locks do remain in a condition to enable accurate measurements to be taken of the lock chambers.

At House Lock, Oxenhall, alongside the Lock Cottage, I braved the nettles and thorns and set forth with a long measuring tape to establish exactly what boats could use our Canal once restored. The overall internal chamber length "gate to gate" is a generous 81'-6". Double 6' mitred gates were fitted to the bottom of the lock with a single 10' gate at the top end. Allowing for the closing arc of the bottom gates, the lock

**" I braved the
nettles and thorns
and set forth "**

SIZING UP THE LOCKS . . . *continued*

could easily have accommodated boats measuring up to 75' *[does this allow for the top sill? Experienced boaters will know forgetting this is rather fatal! - Ed.]*. The width of the lock at entry level is 8'-8", rather as one would have expected, giving an 8" clearance similar to the narrow canal system, but the lock is wider at the top, the lock walls angling back slightly, a feature which would have assisted the stability of the structure and contributed to its survival to today.

So what are the ramifications for us in restoring the Canal? Our Canal was built to a unique width

[within England - Ed.] and it will be strongly argued the Trust must restore locks to the dimensions of the original. However, when it comes to lock reconstruction, it is debatable whether many of the locks can in fact be legitimately restored in the true meaning of the word ie: putting back into the original state, use or condition. Restoration usually implies first having a sufficiently clear indication of the original materials, size and design. In most cases, we may have little more than the base of the lock chambers left. It must also be borne in mind that comparison with eighteenth century prints reminds us that no locks on the inland waterways are in their original state or condition. Nothing stands still. They have been progressively repaired, improved and modernised over the last two

centuries, but essentially retain their "character" and "colour".

And what of the craft to use our restored Canal? As mentioned earlier most craft built for canal use are now constructed to a 6'-10" beam. Larger river cruisers are normally a generous beam well over 10'. So in reinstating the 8' nominal width in our locks, we will not be facilitating use of the Canal by a significant number of additional craft with beams of between 6'-10" and 8'.

More of a problem, we will be committing ourselves to using 15% additional water with every

**" an 8' width has
considerable
possibilities "**

single locking of narrow beam boats, greatly exacerbating the water supply problem in much the same way as was experienced

two hundred years before. We also condemn ourselves in perpetuity to use of larger (and heavier) non-standard lock gates, no doubt manufactured at greater cost than gates for 7' locks *[there is no such thing as a standard lock gate - they are all individually made - Ed.]*.

But despite the problems, many in the Trust will argue that the 8' so-called "Welsh Gauge" encapsulates the charm, individuality and history of the Hereford and Gloucester Canal and should be retained in the restoration.

I share this sentiment but feel that perhaps the only ultimate justification for this slightly wider 8' canal is to ensure that

-sizing up the locks . . . continued

corresponding wider boats are again used on it, either as trip boats or as part of its own "residential" holiday hire fleet. Indeed, an 8' width has considerable possibilities in boat design, giving greater internal width but otherwise retaining the character of the traditional narrowboat familiar to the rest of the system. There is also better scope for "special needs" provision on boats with wider passageways allowing wheelchair use on board. Conversely, if boats over 7' were never to be used on the Canal, it would be difficult to justify the additional water usage and expense.

All decisions regarding locks and boats may appear to be a long way down the restoration road. In fact, the Trust will

need to restate and agree the working gauge of the restored Canal with the very first lock the Trust rebuilds, and whether at Oxenhall or Yarkhill [or another site -Ed], this may only be now a year or two away.

WHAT IS YOUR VIEW ?

We would welcome letters from our Members on the subject of how we should rebuild structures on the Canal - this is your Trust and we need to know your views on the important decisions that will have to be made in the near future. We are always happy to have letters on any subject relating to the Canal or the Trust, or to have articles for possible publication.

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MEMBERSHIP MATTERS



As Members will have read Nigel Jefferies has kindly volunteered to take over the role of Membership Secretary. With over 600 Members, at home and abroad, this is a major task; especially as there is a need to get all of our records transferred to a reliable database. So we are asking you all NOT to contact Nigel!

Will ALL Members PLEASE note that, with immediate effect, the ONLY address for ANY Membership query, payment, notification of the change of your address etc. is to either of our published Membership addresses:-

H&G Canal Trust,
8, Bloomfield Road,
GLOUCESTER,
GL1 5BL

OR

H & G Canal Trust,
6, Castle Street,
HEREFORD,
HR1 2NL

By directing ALL Membership correspondence and payments to one of these addresses you will greatly assist us in the improvements that we are introducing to the level of service that we give to our Members. *Please* remember that we are all unpaid volunteers; we will do our best to handle any queries as promptly as possible but with over 600 Members there can at times be some errors or delays. *Thank you.*

WELCOME TO OUR NEW CORPORATE MEMBERS

Alvechurch Boat Centres Limited
The Bee-line Company, Silk Screen Printers, Hereford
Moss Engineering Limited, Ledbury
Tewkesbury Marina

We greatly appreciate their support - thank you.

PLEASE REMEMBER . . .

You can help - a great deal, please - by ensuring that your Membership is renewed *promptly*. Whilst an increasing number of Members are paying by Bankers (Standing) Order (*thank you*) there are still hundreds who pay by cheque annually; this is appreciated *provided the payment is made on time*, please!

THANKS...

to the following for their greatly appreciated support:-

SOUTH HEREFORDSHIRE D. COUNCIL,
for donating the sum of £1,100 towards the cost of purchasing a 5 ton dumper which is now so essential to our continued progress.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL,
for agreeing to contribute £500 towards our restoration work, which will be put towards the cost of a 5 ton dumper.

MOSS ENGINEERING, LEDBURY,
For the donation of an exhaust system and injector pipes for our MF excavator.

WELSH WATER,
who donated a lateral filing cabinet.

PRINT PLUS, HEREFORD,
for sponsoring over a 1/3 of the cost of printing the accounts for the AGM.

JIM HACKETT, of CHECKPOINT COMPUTING, LAMBOURNE, Berkshire,
who supplied a £300 database for our membership records for only £15.

BASIL FROST ESQ., of COLWALL PARK HOTEL,
*for arranging a fundraising event in aid of the Trust to be held in February and paying to advertise it in *The Wharfinger*.*

ALL OUR SUPPORTERS...
who have supported the Sales Stand during the year. We have many items ideal for Christmas (and as a gift at any time of the year) on the enclosed list - so please support us by buying something!

... AND OUR ADVERTISERS,
*whose regular financial contributions pay (almost) for the cost of printing one Edition per year of *The Wharfinger*.*

**OUR SINCERE THANKS
TO EVERYONE**

HELP!

SUCCESS! In the last Edition we appealed for help with a Membership database. As you will see from the *Thanks* column opposite we think *[I detect a note of caution! - Ed.]* we have solved this, but unfortunately not as a result of this column. The offer came as a result of hard work by the Chairman and rather a lot of telephone calls - *following a deathly silence from the Membership.*

Unfortunately we cannot report a queue of low-loaders at Oxenhall waiting to off load dumpers - *in fact not a single lead* as a result of our plea in the last *Help!* column. Surely one of our Members/supporters must know of someone with a dumper we could borrow (or for sale at a good price)? As we have been reporting for far too long we are being severely hampered by the lack of adequate earth moving equipment, especially in Gloucestershire. Roger Chandler *[see Contacts]* is the person to speak to. *This is very urgent - access to the spoil site will soon be lost.*

A deathly hush was also the response to the plea for a work boat or pontoon - anyone have any ideas? *Please contact Roger Chandler.*

Our "World beating" *[see p. 3 of the last Edition]* display panels are in need of some minor repairs and refurbishment - basic carpentry plus some painting is all that is required. Before the exhibitions season is with us once again a couple of volunteers are required to spend a few hours so that we remain "award winning" in 1995. We would also greatly appreciate a Member with basic electrical skills who could spare an evening to rewire our Event display lights? Please contact David Penny *[see Contacts]*.

THE WHARFINGER

You might think that this Edition of **The Wharfinger** has arrived rather closer on the heels of the last Edition than expected. It has! All year we have been saying that we have been running behind our normal publication schedule, and with the last Edition we caught up a week or two - thanks partly to the efficiency of **Print Plus** in printing the last one in under a week. We have caught up nearly a month with this Edition - yippee!

We thanked the team who distribute **The Wharfinger** to our various retail outlets in the last Edition. We also greatly appreciate the shops that so kindly agree to stock **The Wharfinger** - all of them donate the entire cover price to us. They are:-

Ashleworth Post Office, (summer only); Beddards Newsagents, Hereford, (summer only); Brampton Road Post Office, Hereford; Cross Hands Garage, Hartpury; Eign Road Post Office, Hereford; Fromes Hill Restaurant & Garage; Gregsons Newsagents, Newent; Hilbury Garage, Ocle Pychard; J. B. Gaynons & Son (Jewellers), Ledbury; Kestral Carpets, Rockfield Road, Hereford; Peterstow Village Stores; Put The Clock Back, Lost Street Museum, Ross-on-Wye; Queenswood Trove, Dinmore Hill; Staunton Post Office; Ledbury Road Service Station (Texaco), Hereford; Three Counties Bookshop, Ledbury; Upper Wyche Post Office, Malvern. *Thank you.*

One very popular feature of **The Wharfinger** is the photographs that we have tended to publish in recent Editions. It is an uphill struggle, however, as virtually no one sends us any photographs. Please will someone send us some, especially of restoration work actually in progress - ones taken by Restoration Group members tend to be during tea breaks (sorry strategy meetings!) as they are working the rest of the time. No money. No prizes.

Just the glory of having one of your photo's in print! Please send us all you can, we will then be able to whittle them down to ones which will actually reproduce. All photographs will of course be returned if requested. Our thanks to Mike Potts for the ones in this Edition.

If you are reading this before Christmas, then the Trust (and Trading Company) Directors would like 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 1995

A HAPPY NEW YEAR !



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CONTACTS

Liz Connors,

18, St. Ethelbert's Close,
SUTTON St. NICHOLAS,
Hereford, HR1 3BF
[Tel/Fax:- Hereford (01432) 880155]

Lesley Lowe,

"Chevin", Little Birch,
HEREFORD, HR2 8AZ
[Golden Valley (01981) 540366]

Mike Potts,

3, Cranstone, UPPER BREINTON,
Hereford, HR4 7PL
[Hereford (01432) 356392]

Linda Palmer/Steve Delacourt-Smith

172, Stroud Road,
GLOUCESTER, GL1 5JX
[Tel:- (01452) 501372]

Press/Publicity volunteer required

Please contact Lesley Lowe if
you could help in any way.

Joyce Lynham,

Trade Liaison,
55 Sherborne Close,
Newton Farm,
HEREFORD, HR2 7EU
[Hereford (01432) 266931]

Cliff Penny/David Penny,

"Coppice", BURLEY GATE,
Hereford, HR1 3QS
[Hereford (01432) 820420]

Roger Chandler,

"Grove Bank", Marcle Road,
DYMCK, Glocs, GL18 2AR
[Dymock (01531) 890671]

Simon Hayward,

[Gloucester (01452) 305572]

Ian Reid,

[Ledbury (01531) 635877]

Brian Fox,

1, Holmer Hall Cottages,
Roman Road,
HEREFORD, HR4 9QH
[Hereford (01432) 358628]

Nigel Jefferies,

[Hereford (01432) 850661]

Steve Hughes,

Exhibitions Co-ordinator,
62 Northend Lane,
Madresfield, MALVERN,
Worcestershire, WR14 2EX
[Malvern (01684) 892428]

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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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ALL MEMBERSHIP QUERIES

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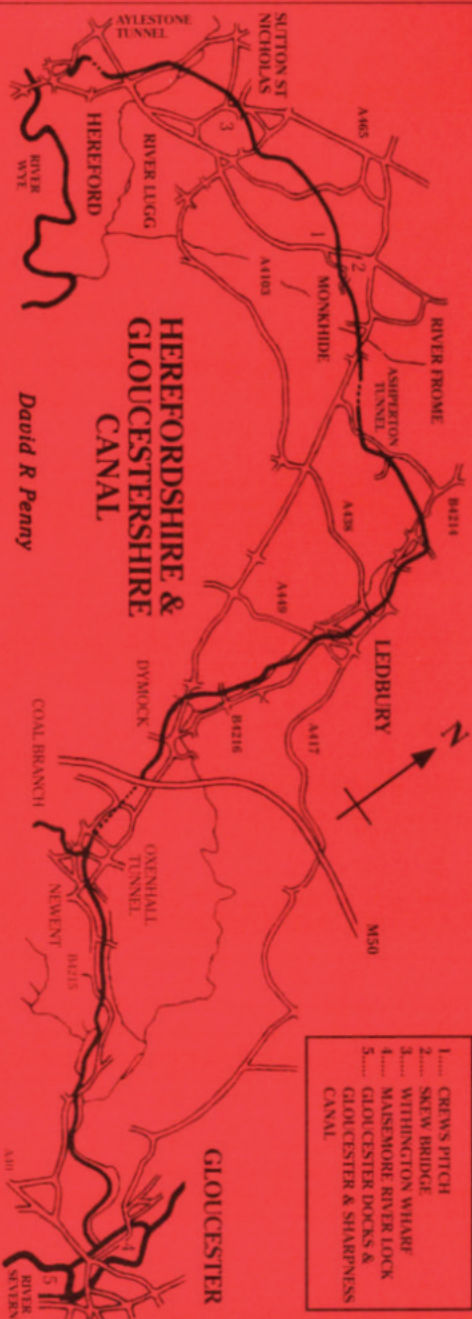
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Contact The H&G Canal Trust,

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HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL

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.