

# THE WHARFINGER



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

**50p  
free to Members**

**Edition 47  
Summer 1995**



# 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
COVENANTS	Liz Connors
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 POSTMASTERS	<i>D &amp; M Gray; I &amp; F Roper; B &amp; M Saunderson &amp; family</i>

Those in italics are not Directors on the Council of Management

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BOATS *Pat & Dick Skeet, Ray Moses, Derek Gray, Joyce Lynham,*  
GROUP *David Penny, Steve Hughes, Ron & Sarah Ashley,*

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

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150

On the 22nd May, 1845, the first narrow boat arrived in Hereford having navigated the full length of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal. As the Canal had been so long in reaching the City the **Hereford Times** devoted more space to reporting the prices in the cattle market than it did to this historical event! Hopefully we will command greater (favourable) coverage 150 years later?

We shall be commemorating the 150th anniversary of this occasion with a **Celebration Weekend**, at our main Herefordshire restoration site at Crews Pitch, Monkhide, over the weekend of the **20th and 21st May**. *You will be made most welcome* - either as a willing volunteer to help run the event - or as a visitor. The event is intended to also celebrate the recent achievements of the Canal Trust and to officially open the short length of the Canal, beyond Middle Court Bridge, which one of our Vice Presidents, Major Robert Barnes, has chosen to restore on his own. Many attractions are planned, details of which are given on page 13; boat trips are planned - *assuming the water isn't "stolen" this year!* We cannot guarantee the weather but we are certain that your visit will be worthwhile.

On the morning of Monday 22nd May - *the precise anniversary of that first boat arriving in Hereford* - we will be entertaining (at a private event) a number of invited guests, representing Local Authorities, landowners and other organisations who have been (and will be) involved in the restoration of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal. We are confident that they will all wish to assist the Canal Trust in building on the success of the past few years and ensure that the restoration of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal continues. This is, after all, for the long term benefit of the community and the local economy - as well as providing a significant addition to the national inland waterways network.

It would be remiss of me to report this celebration without paying great credit to the rather small team who have undertaken all of the hard work in planning, preparing and organising the celebration. It is all too easy to take such voluntary efforts for granted. Our thanks are also extended to each of the landowners involved [*Major Barnes (who has also been heavily involved in the organisation), Mrs Clews, Mrs Muggerridge and Mrs Oram*]. To all concerned - *thank you*.



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

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40+

The last Edition of **The Wharfinger** included a (*rather complicated*) letter to our Members about the revised Membership rates - our first increase for over 5 years. As an afterthought we added a suggestion that it would be a good opportunity, in the few weeks prior to the increase, to transfer to Life Membership in order to save money!

The Canal Trust Council of Management have been heartened to have *OVER FORTY Members transfer to Life Membership* in a little over one month. This solid expression of long term support for our wholly voluntary endeavours has been *greatly* appreciated by all of the Council of Management - *thank you*.

The same letter urged (non Life) Members (*yet again*) to pay by Bankers (Standing Order) or by Continuous Credit Card Authority to save volunteers time and effort (and stamps) in issuing reminders. *Thank you* to the considerable number who now pay by this method - and to those who changed their existing instructions to the revised amount. Another *thank you* to those other Members who either paid in advance or issued post-dated cheques. Two Members took offence (*and, in turn, caused distress to our volunteers*) at this further request to ease our administration. I have to say that we firmly believe that the action was correct - *indeed the results speak for themselves*.

A most sincere *thank you* to the many Members who made a donation when renewing their Membership; whilst down on previous years the amounts remain significant and I should like to stress that your donations *are not taken for granted*.

Just as credit is due to the "behind the scenes" volunteers who have worked so hard to ensure the success of the 150th Anniversary Celebrations our appreciation is also extended to the small team who have expended so many hours of their leisure time to bring our Membership Records up to date - and to process the mass of mail that arose from our renewal initiative.

A small plea after all these sincere expressions of thanks. A number of Members have overlooked to revise their instructions to their banks in respect of Bankers Orders. *Please* save us the time and effort in further reminders by taking action *now* to amend your instructions - we need your money! *Thank you*.

Cliff Penny, Chairman/Liaison Officer



## *The Colwall Park Hotel*

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

**Corporate Members of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust**

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

Situated in the centre of Colwall Village, on the B4218 between Ledbury and Malvern, the Hotel has twenty en suite bedrooms, Conference Rooms, Ballroom, and a Restaurant specialising in English menus.



**Egon Ronay**



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## 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 were no meetings in December or January)...*

### FEBRUARY COMMITTEE

▪ It was agreed that a special meeting be convened to discuss improvements in landowner liaison.

▪ Following a query regarding the distribution of Council of Management papers it was confirmed that these were available to Directors only.

▪ The Finance Committee were asked to consider the most fitting use of the monies donated by Bob Fairclough's family.

▪ Following a favourable response from the Charity Commissioners it was agreed that the next meeting consider the means by which the quorum of our meetings be changed.



▪ Arrangements for the visit by the IWA Region (as part of their AGM weekend in April) were discussed.

▪ A significant area of land, including a short length of the Canal in Gloucestershire, was for sale. The Vice Chairman was liaising with local organisations to see if joint action might be appropriate.

▪ It was agreed that future AGMs be held in September.

▪ Restoration progress in Gloucestershire was literally getting bogged down due to the exceedingly high water level in the tunnel (which was making the approach cutting very wet). A number of dumpers had been inspected for potential purchase but rejected as poor value for money/unsuitable.

▪ In Herefordshire the Restoration Team had been installing gates at Middle Court and either side of the Accommodation Bridge and ditching work parallel to the Canal was continuing in the vicinity of the A4103. It was planned to introduce water into Mrs. Oram's section of the Canal although leakage was anticipated.

▪ A press release issued to publicise the Bangers & Mash evening at the Colwall Park Hotel [*"Sausages help restore Canal"*] had received wide publicity including an editorial mention in the weekly international magazine of the Institution of Civil Engineers.



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## **COMMITTEE MATTERS . . . (ii)**

- "Mallard" had successfully returned (eventually) to the Canal.
- The Newent Society and Gloucestershire Heritage Trust were joining with the Canal Trust in pressing Forest of Dean District Council to take positive action, without further delays, to force repairs to Lock Cottage and the adjacent lock at Oxenhall.
- Three Family Members had been selected from the eight who applied to assist in the distribution of The Wharfinger. This was greatly appreciated.
- Investigations were to be made in respect of a proposed re-routing of a footpath at Rudford, in Gloucestershire, which appeared to conflict with the line of the Canal.
- Planning permission had been granted in respect of proposals by Hereford City Council for a new public open space between the Canal and Aylestone Hill (to the side of the Swan Public House). There had been detailed liaison with the Canal Trust and the line of the Canal would be respected. A new Canal Bridge would be constructed, at Staniers Way, and the Canal Trust would be fully consulted.
- Forest of Dean District Council were renewing their own planning application on land affecting the Canal at Dymock.



# ROMAN ROAD CANAL BRIDGE

*By Will Trecknall*

As briefly reported in the previous 'Wharfinger, contractors started work shortly before Christmas on the reconstruction of 250 metres of Roman Road immediately West of Aylestone roundabout. This £280,000 contract includes the replacement of the original Canal Bridge with a navigable culvert. I am pleased to have been responsible for the design of the structure, and to have served as Resident Engineer on the Contract.

The original improvement scheme produced in the early '70's extended through to the College Road junction. The current scheme, which includes the provision of traffic lights on the railway bridge, is aimed primarily at improving road safety on a route carrying ever increasing volumes of heavy goods vehicles. Visibility requirements dictated a lowering of the carriageway at the Canal crossing, thus precluding the widening (and strengthening) of the existing structure. The possibility of moving the new road further off line, thereby leaving Ballard's bridge intact but disused, was discounted when it was found to involve the diversion of a high pressure gas main at prohibitive expense.

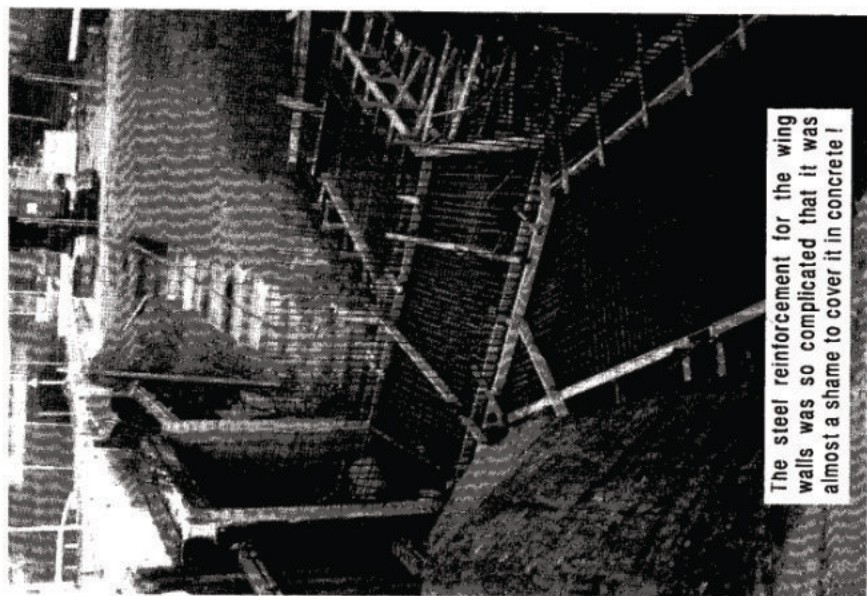
The commitment to provide a navigable structure was made relatively recently by the County Council. Due to the element of speculation involved, it was stressed in the design brief that only the minimum provision required for navigation was to be made. Being necessarily longer (due to greater width of road and

verges) and narrower (in the interests of economy) than its predecessor, the alignment of the culvert was carefully considered. As the Canal curves strongly immediately south of the site, the new opening is offset to the western limit of the former bridge hole. Similarly, considerably effort went into researching the original water level in this pound in order to determine the required level for the new structure.

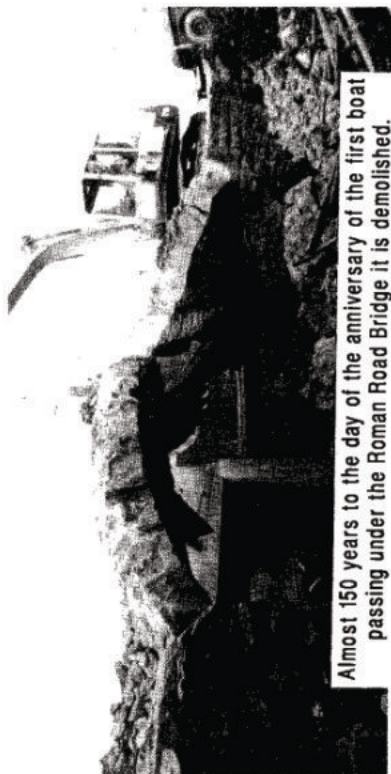
The chosen structure is a reinforced concrete box, cast in-situ to accommodate a 23 degree skew. Four vertically cantilevered wing walls with full parapet provision will allow the structure to remain open during its dormant phase. Cover to the structure has been kept to an absolute minimum in order to maximise water headroom. The northern wing walls are founded very close to the high pressure gas main, which fortunately passes beneath the Canal with sufficient cover for navigation. Wing walls have a plain concrete finish, but provision has been made for the addition of a masonry cladding in future. The structure provides a clear opening 4m (13'2") wide by 3.6m (11'9") high, within which a towpath can be added on restoration. Assuming a water level of 52.7m AOD, headroom for navigation will be 2.3m (7'6"), and that on the towpath 2m (6'6").

In order to maintain at least one-way working for traffic on Roman Road, the structure is being built in two halves. While the northern half was built off line alternate one-way working was imposed





The steel reinforcement for the wing walls was so complicated that it was almost a shame to cover it in concrete !



Almost 150 years to the day of the anniversary of the first boat passing under the Roman Road Bridge it is demolished.  
[Photographs - Hereford and Worcester County Council.]



## ROMAN ROAD CANAL BRIDGE . . . *continued*

over the old bridge. East bound traffic was then switched to the new structure, while west bound traffic was diverted to allow reconstruction of the west bound lane between the bridge and the roundabout. Work is proceeding apace on the southern half of the structure, which lies on the site of the former arch.

The contract provided for dismantling rather than demolition of the old bridge. Recovered stone was carefully transported to store off site for reuse by the Canal Trust. Wing walls were known to be faced with fine ashlar, but it was a surprise to find this backed with a very tough coarse lime concrete, giving an overall thickness of nearly a metre (3'3"). The old abutments were founded

on mudstone, as is the new structure. This material is very hard to dig, but becomes crumbly after a few days exposure to the atmosphere. Excavation revealed a well preserved timber cill which served as a cut off to stop planks at the north end of the bridge hole. At some 1.1m (3'7") below assumed water level, this was found a little higher than might have been expected.

Despite two months of seemingly endless rain, Droicon Contractors, are meeting their programme and it is hoped the road will be reopened to West bound traffic before the end of April. Let us hope an announcement of the reopening of the water highway beneath is not too many years distant.

---

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The old masonry bridge frames these views of the first stage  
in the construction of the modern concrete structure.  
Will it be demolished in 150 years - or less ?



Shuttering for the roof pour in place inside the new structure.



## MICHAEL STIMPSON and ASSOCIATES

*Corporate Members of the  
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Canal Trust, and IWA*

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## SAUSAGES HELP RESTORE CANAL!

Our Press Release headline certainly brought results, with excellent coverage both locally and nationally (although, as far as we know, no editor used our heading - but it did obviously catch their eye!).

Corporate Members Basil and Elizabeth Frost, Proprietors of the Colwall Park Hotel, were delighted (as were the Canal Trust!) to have a "full house" for this unusual fund raising event. Each year they donate the proceeds to a local charity; this year was our turn and we exceeded all previous records - *with over £600 being donated to the Canal Trust.*

Our sincere thanks to Basil and Elizabeth, and everyone else involved [see p. 23], for such an enjoyable and successful evening.

## SALES ON DEMAND

Regular visitors to our Social Evenings [the 3rd Tuesday of every month, at the Cavern Bar of the Royal Oak, The Southend, Ledbury] will know that a cut down version of our Sales Stand has attended to tempt you.

Unfortunately the time and effort in transporting even a reduced level of stock is not proving to be worthwhile. It is appreciated that many are regular "attendees" and cannot be expected to purchase something every month! [no comment - Ed.] The Sales Stand will be there from time to time (especially when you might need that Christmas present!) but the regular presence of the Sales Stand will be no more.

Members are welcome to telephone David Penny [see *Contacts*] in advance and specific items will be brought on a "sale or return" basis.



# Mike's Trips & Outings

By Mike Potts

## Saturday, 17th June

### "Kennet & Avon Canal Cruise"

A coach tour of the Kennet and Avon Canal, with a visit to Devizes (Caen Hill flight of locks) and 2 hour cruise from Bradford-on-Avon Coach from Hereford, picking up at Dymock, Newent, & Gloucester.

Tickets £9.50 each

## Sunday, 9th July

### "Coach, rail, and cruise extravaganza"

Coach to Welshpool, 2 hour cruise on the Montgomery Canal and trip on light railway to Llanfair Caereinion.

Coach from Hfd. bus station 9am. (Leominster/Ludlow if requested)

Tickets £13.50 each

TICKETS FROM:- Mike Potts [see *CONTACTS*] or,  
Hereford Camera Centre, The Atrium, Maylord Orchards.

*Please book early, payment must be received with bookings.*

## BAKING TIME?

Liz Connors, her Mother and Lesley Lowe have taken up the challenge of organising all of the catering for the 150th Anniversary Celebration Weekend on the 20/21st May (and for the "VIP" visits on the Monday morning). *Time is very short* but they would still like your help with some baking, please.

If you are willing to bake a cake (or two!) and/or some biscuits then please telephone Liz or Lesley FIRST [see *Contacts*] to see what would fill the largest gap in their food portfolio! Mike Potts has kindly volunteered his shop [Hereford Camera Centre, Maylord Orchards, Hereford] as a collection centre - but *please* discuss all arrangements with Liz or Lesley. All assistance will be most welcome and add to the success of the event. *Thank you.*

## A LOAD OF FRESH AIR?

As you may have gathered by now Liz Connors is a very busy lady. Not only does she undertake a major role as the Treasurer of the Canal Trust, she is also a Director of the Trading Company - and undertakes other "temporary" roles as well (see alongside regarding the catering)! In addition to all this Liz organises all the "manning" for the various events that we attend throughout the country - and for our own events (such as the May Celebrations) as well!

So please help Liz with the latter she would still like to hear from any Member who can offer to assist for half a day (or more!) over the weekend of 19/20/21/22nd May. You will be made most welcome, not forced to do anything that you don't want to - *and there will be plenty of fresh air!*

# *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 [see p. 10], 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 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.

**20th & 21st May**

*"Open Weekend '95"*

At Crews Pitch, Monkhide [see facing page].

A 150th anniversary celebration of the Canal reaching Hereford.

**Tuesday 20th June - 7.30pm**

*"The River Wye"*

Will Frecknall will give an illustrated talk on the River Wye.

**Tuesday 18th July - 7.30pm**

*"Pint & a Natter"*

A chance for us to all get together and have a chat.

**Tuesday 15th August - 7.30pm**

*"Pint & a Natter"*

Another chance for us to all get together and have a chat!

**Tuesday 19th September - 7.30pm**

*"Canals in Cine film"*

50's & 60's Cine film of the waterways presented by Keith Christie from Bournville in Birmingham.



# JOIN US IN OUR CELEBRATIONS

BANDS  
REFRESHMENTS

FUN FOR ALL

CRAFTS

HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE  
**CANAL**  
150

ANNIVERSARY

20/21 May 1995

to be held at Crews Pitch, Monkhide  
off A4103, 7 miles east of Hereford.

*See Britain's skewest canal bridge and the Trust's restoration work.*

## \* BOAT TRIPS

\* TRAIL BOAT RALLY [entry fee for boats - slipway available \*]

\* CANAL TRUST DISPLAY & SALES STAND

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\* FULL PROGRAMME OF ENTERTAINMENTS

\* BEST VICTORIAN COSTUME PRIZES

\* CHILDREN'S CANAL QUIZ

Saturday

10am - 6pm

\* TRY A CANOE

\* HOLIDAY PRIZE DRAW

Sunday

10am - 5pm

\* CANAL SLIDE SHOW

\* REFRESHMENTS

\* CREAM TEAS

Admission:-

Adults £2

Children £1

\* CRAFT FAIR

\* SIDE SHOWS

Barbecue from 6pm. Sunday

\* BAR

\* Trail Boats £10: Telephone Mike Potts for details on 01432 356392

All events subject to change in the event of circumstances beyond our control.

By kind permission of Major Robert Barnes, Mrs Juliet Oram, Mrs Sylvia Muggeridge and Mrs Patricia Clews.

# RESTORATION UPDATE HEREFORDSHIRE

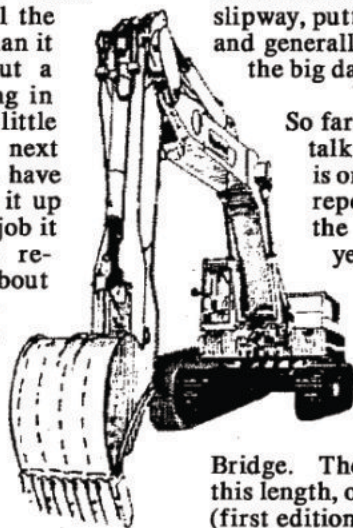
*By Brian Fox*

I left you last time feeling a little dejected having just filled our latest section of restored canal at Yarkhill with water only to see it all disappear within a few days. Nobody has come up with a magic solution for retaining the water and it appears that my theory that the puddle clay has lost its consistency after being dry for so many years is partly true but there are also a few small holes caused by rabbits, moles, and tree roots which are causing it to leak away. We have made further attempts to fill the canal and it is better than it was, there being about a foot of water remaining in the bottom, but there is little that we can do until next Autumn when we will have plenty of water to fill it up again. To do a proper job it may be necessary to re-puddle this length of about half a mile and the traditional way of doing that was to drive a herd of cows up and down the wet clay bed to make into the correct consistency, but a book I have been reading recently shows the job being done by a gang of navvies, so we may be asking for volunteers soon! Bring your own wellies or do it in bare feet. We'll let you know.

All the water that we have at present in the section through Monkhide village is being carefully preserved so that we have enough for the Open Weekend in May; we do not want a repetition of last September's Open

Day when the Canal was not deep enough to run boat trips! At the time of writing (early April) there is still a supply of water coming into the Canal from land drains, but we shall need more rain before May 20th.

The efforts of our volunteers are now being taken up in preparations for the Open Weekend. A list of tasks has been compiled including tidying the Wharf and towpath area, cutting grass and nettles, construction of an access road to the slipway, putting up advertising signs and generally preparing the site for the big day.



So far there hasn't been much talk of restoration, but there is one bit of exciting news to report. You may recall in the autumn Edition last year there was mention of activity on a new stretch of Canal continuing on from where the restored Canal finished in Monkhide village, at Middle Court

Bridge. There are photographs of this length, one in David Bick's book (first edition), showing an attractive length of water less than 20 years ago, which in the meantime has degenerated into a bog full of reeds and encroaching undergrowth. It lies in a shallow cutting and is a collecting area for much of the water and silt from the surrounding fields. The work has not been undertaken by the Canal Trust but is obviously of interest to us all, and so it is only appropriate that I devote some of my report to it. Attempts had been made in the last few months to dig



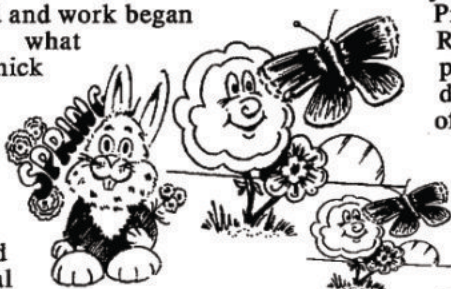
## RESTORATION UPDATE HEREFORDSHIRE . . . continued

drainage channels (with a spade), in order to get some of the water away but the ground remained boggy and it was impossible to walk on, never mind get any machinery in to start excavation. The winter was very wet and it was useless to contemplate any action until the end of March. But then it all came right. The ground was drying out fast so an excavator and two large four wheel drive dumpers were hired and work began on digging out what turned out to be thick black mud varying in consistency from porridge to plasticine. It was over 6ft. (1.8m) thick in places and the whole lot stood on the original bright red puddle

clay so there was no doubt when the bottom was reached. This clay was so hard that it was possible to run the dumpers along the bed with no danger of getting stuck and the mud was quickly removed and dumped in a field conveniently situated alongside the Canal. A pump kept the water level down as work was progressing but before commencing every day it was necessary to pump out the accumulated water for a couple of hours before further

excavations could continue. Within about two weeks the channel was clear ready for a grand opening ceremony during the first day of the Open Weekend on 20th May. Come along and witness the event, I am informed it will be quite spectacular! I would love to report that the Trust has been involved in this work, but it has been undertaken

by one of our Vice Presidents, Major Robert Barnes, who purchased this derelict, swampy bit of land and has now restored it to its former glory, another 150 yds of Canal open to navigation.



Finally, a word about our future programme. After the Open Weekend the restoration team will move back to Mrs. Oram's stretch at Yarkhill, where there are still three small breeches in the bank to repair and also investigate ways of making the section watertight as described above. Negotiations are under way with two more Landowners to start restoration on new sections of Canal but hopefully more about that in the next Edition of *The Wharfinger*.

### WANT TO GET INVOLVED ?

Volunteers to assist in our restoration (and maintenance) work are always welcome. Now the longer evenings are here again work is frequently taking place on one, or both, sites on several weekday evenings each month (or sometimes each week!). Our regular first weekend of the month workparties continue to be a focal point for work on both sites although work is also progressing on many other weekends. For details of what is happening when, and how you may be able to assist, please telephone:-

Roger Chandler, Dymock (01531) 890671;

Brian Fox, Hereford (01432) 358628;

Mike Potts, Hereford (01432) 356392;

Simon Hayward, Glocs. (01452) 305572

or Ian Reid, Ledbury (01531) 635877.



**ABOVE:** Members of the South West Region of the Inland Waterways Association visited the Canal during their AGM Weekend in April. One of our skilled plant operators, Chris Hill, explains why our excavator is deep in Gloucestershire mud !

**BELOW:** The short length of the Canal, beyond Middle Court Bridge, showing progress at the middle of April. One of our Vice Presidents, Major Robert Barnes, purchased this section last year and has chosen to restore it on his own.





## **COMMITTEE MATTERS . . . (iii)**

### **MARCH COMMITTEE**

▪ Regular meetings were taking place with Major Barnes regarding the 150th Anniversary Celebration Weekend on 20th/21st May.

▪ Discussions regarding the special meeting relating to improved liaison with land owners were deferred to the next meeting.

▪ A draft of a Directors' "Declaration of Interests" form would be submitted to the next meeting.

▪ As anticipated, water was leaking from the newly restored length of Canal at Yarkhill and investigations were continuing as to the source/s of the problem.

▪ Liaison was continuing with Malvern Hills District Council in respect of their local plan following a very small number of objections to the inclusion of a draft essential diversion route around Ledbury.

▪ It was agreed that the proposed change in quorum be placed as a formal item on the Agenda of the AGM in September.

▪ Concern was expressed that, following a very satisfactory start, the Contractor working on the replacement Roman Road bridge at Hereford had not complied with the requirements to carefully demolish and take to store the remainder of the masonry. The County Council had accepted our complaint and were pursuing the Contractor to remedy the situation. Thanks were expressed to Dwr Cymru-Welsh Water for agreeing to store the masonry.

▪ The Chairman and Vice Chairman had been invited to an informal meeting with the Directors of the Rivers Wye and Lugg Towpath and Navigation Company. It was reported that this body remained in existence as did relatives of the original shareholders who now hoped to use it as a vehicle to promote the restoration of navigation on the River Wye (and possibly on the River Lugg). The Council of Management decided to remain neutral to the proposals unless there was a conflict at the point where the Canal crossed the River Lugg in which case an objection would be necessary.

▪ Proposals for a possible new road crossing of the River Severn to Alney Island downstream of Gloucester Dock Lock had been the subject of recent consultations. The Canal Trust had pointed out that whilst there was no historical link via that route it might prove advantageous to maintain full navigable head room. This should be easily accommodated due to the flood requirements.

▪ A meeting had taken place with the Divisional Surveyor of Gloucestershire County Council regarding the excessive amounts of silt washing from Cold Harbour Lane into the Canal in Gloucestershire.

## COMMITTEE MATTERS . . . (iv)

■ Finance Committee had reviewed the Canal Trust's Accounts in respect of long term investments and considered existing arrangements were satisfactory. Life membership receipts would be clearly identified.

■ South Herefordshire District Council had made a Grant towards our large dumper of £1,100; Gloucestershire County Council £500, Hereford and Worcester Rural Development Area £1,000, and the Bangers and Mash raised £605. This was greatly appreciated.

■ Gloucestershire Restoration team reported that they had at last found a suitable second hand 4 ton articulated dumper which was already proving highly successful in removing accumulated spoil on the approach to the Tunnel portal. The cost had been £4,400. In order to improve drainage of the temporarily lowered Canal pipes had been inserted at the site of the top lock alongside the Coal Branch junction.

■ In Herefordshire work was concentrating on a multitude of small tasks associated with the proposed celebration weekend the most significant being the construction of an access road to the slipway at Crews Pitch.

■ Shell Better Britain had made an award of £450 towards the costs of bricks and materials to restore the Oxenhall Tunnel portal.

■ Concern was expressed at the nature of recent television, radio and newspaper publicity in respect of the Canal which did not acknowledge the work of the Canal Trust.

■ A large number of Members had converted to Life Members [*see Chairman's Comments, p.2*] following the Membership renewal letter in the last edition of *The Wharfinger*. This strong gesture of support was warmly welcomed.

■ Malvern Hills District Council were investigating what appeared to be limited unauthorised engineering operations on the line of the Canal within their District.

■ The winner of the Grand Holiday Draw narrowboat holiday in 1994 had sent a letter of appreciation together with a £50 donation. This was greatly appreciated. [*See page 21.*]

CRP



HELP RESTORE THE  
**HEREFORD & GLOUCESTER CANAL**

In response to requests from Members we now have this smart Car Sticker - black text/crest on a golden yellow background. Only 45p each [+ a stamp for postage] from H&G Canal Sales, "Coppice", Burley Gate, Hereford, HR1 3QS.



# LETTERS to the Editor . . .

*[Whilst we welcome letters on any topic relating to our work and the Inland Waterways System any opinions expressed do not represent the policy of the Canal Trust unless specifically stated.]*

*Dear Editor,*

My good friend Michael Ayland and I both serve on the Board of Directors of the Company of Proprietors of the Stroudwater Navigation and work happily together even though we disagree fundamentally about the dimensions to which the Cotswold Canals should be restored.

So it will come as no surprise to hear I disagree with his recommendation on the size to which your own Canal locks should be rebuilt! Let us agree on one point. If you are restoring only for narrow boats, you can rebuild for a 7' beam. It is also cheaper. There are several reasons why you should rebuild as near as possible to your original gauge even though it will cost more.

Firstly because you are restoring an historic feature and common-sense dictates you should therefore rebuild to these dimensions.

Secondly you are not just rebuilding for narrow boat owners but all users of the Canal (of which narrow boat owners are a small minority) *[the majority being walkers etc. - Ed.]* and you should therefore take account of their wishes as well. They won't use the locks but a proper restoration will look right, a cheap job may not. Thirdly, and most importantly, restorations which try and cut corners, (I do not mean sensible economies) get a bad name. I can think of a number in the restoration field. They invariably find it more difficult to raise funds from external sources. Restorations which are not authentic but cheaper move slower than restorations which are very well done but more expensive.

Most important of all, though, is benefits. The cost of your restoration is not really important provided you can show that there are ample benefits. Narrow canals are more difficult to justify on economic grounds because one of the big income earners are trip boats. Narrow trip boats are not good economics. Broader trip boats are much better. They take more passengers and create much more public interest and benefit. Now your locks are not broad locks but they are not narrow either. Replacing your original locks will create more benefit than narrow locks.

*For years I have argued the maxim that authentic, excellent quality restoration brings support, interest, and money. Any other option frightens it away. The guiding rule is Sam Goldwyn's instructions to his directors and actors at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studio. "It's got to be Goldwyn". It was. And it worked.*

*Michael Handford, Hinckley*

## More *LETTERS* to the Editor . . .

---

Dear Editor,

As one of the very new members of the H&GCT, although not totally ignorant of the Canal system and the restoration projects south of the border I hesitated to reply to your invitation to respond to David William's article. However, Michael Ayland's riposte in the latest Wharfinger compels me to reply.

I cannot believe that Michael Ayland is serious in proposing that the H&G should be rebuilt to Midlands Canal gauge. I am naive enough to think he is merely "flying a kite" to concentrate the minds of our Council of Management upon the Welsh gauge.

If, however, this is a serious proposal I make the following observations: 1) Much depends upon the price which one is prepared to pay for Canal restoration. In a recent editorial in "Broadsheet", I responded to articles which had appeared in recent numbers of "Navvies", written by Mike Palmer and by Alan Jervis, bemoaning the shortcomings of the reconstruction of the Frankton - Perry Aqueduct section of the Montgomery Canal. I suggested that, while it was probably idealistic to insist on 18th and 19th century materials and methods for each and every yard of Canal there was an irreducible minimum. However, Michael Ayland's proposal of a reconstructed Canal, largely on the site of the old, but with locks of new dimensions, strikes me as environmental philistinism of the worst sort and not worthy to be considered by our Council of Management. If he is merely seeking to ensure a "tourist" waterway to Hereford, so be it, but this would surely be contrary to one of the Trust's aims; namely "to revive the past";

2) The question of finance has also been raised, with the assertion that restoration to the Welsh gauge will cost an extra £41500,000 [*These were Michael Ayland's figures which have not been subject to any detailed assessment by the Canal Trust-Ed*].

This is peanuts in comparison with some of the sums now being considered for restoration schemes elsewhere in the U.K. What is far more important, if past experience is anything to go by, is to be able to convince local politicians, the Department of Environment, and latterly Brussels, that the scheme to restore the H&G makes sense in terms of the local economy; tourism and job creation. It took the Montgomery Canal Trust upwards of ten years, plus the set back occasioned by a former Welsh Secretary to convince Shropshire and Powys County Councils that restoration of the "Monty" made sense! From comments made in the last Wharfinger, it may be that the H&G Canal is only just beginning to enter this phase of political acceptance.

I would ask the Council of Management to reject Michael Ayland's proposition on the grounds that H&G MkII would be an unacceptable offspring and certainly a most unfitting monument to the memory of Stephen Ballard.

Dr. Alan J. Hayes, Edinburgh.



## *Even more LETTERS to the Editor . . .*

*Dear Editor,*

I was interested to see in the Spring Edition the old photograph of a canal lock, bridge, and buildings. It was in fact brought to my notice some years ago and would have been included in my revised history but for the following reasons, the towpath being the key.

From Gloucester to Ledbury, the towpath was on the right hand side. This agrees with the picture; but unfortunately it also clearly shows the Canal descending beyond the lock, whereas in reality the whole distance to Ledbury is uphill. Thus the Scene could not be on this section.

As for the Ledbury - Hereford section there are again insuperable objections, since for this stretch the towpath is on the left. The illustration certainly has a fairly local feel about it; was it perhaps of the Leominster Canal?

*David Bick, Newent*

*We have had a couple of other comments on this; both are confident of the location - unfortunately they are in rather different places! Roger Hatchard, of British Waterways at Diglis Basin, Worcester, thinks it is lock 18 on the South Stratford, and Michael Jones of Malvern was confident that it was at Coneybury (about half way between Newent and Gloucester). It does appear unlikely that it is on the H & G. We shall try and track it down and let you know if we are successful - Ed.*

*Dear Editor,*

I would like on behalf of my parents and brother Robert to thank you for a most enjoyable holiday last October on the Llangollen Canal which I fortunately won after buying a Grand Holiday Draw ticket.

The Black Prince holiday boat was very comfortable and homely with good cooking and bathroom facilities and the central heating was most welcome in the cooler October evenings. Everyone we met on the other boats were very courteous and helpful and as beginners we were grateful for their assistance especially at the first lock we came across.

We started our week from Chirk and cruised to Llangollen on the first leg of our journey via the Pontcysyllte aqueduct (we were all rather quiet as it was a scary crossing). The second leg of our journey took us to Ellesmere and the furthest point was Whixall.

Thank you once again for the opportunity of going on a boating holiday as it came at the right time for a family break as we are so busy during the Summer. I am enclosing a cheque for £50 towards your Canal appeal on behalf of my parents in appreciation of a most enjoyable holiday.

*D. Arwyn Parry Jones, Talybont*

*Yet another happy winner! The donation of £50 is greatly appreciated - Ed.*

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

### LIFE MEMBERS

As reported in Chairman's Comments, on page 2, we have been heartened by the large number of members who have transferred to Life Membership. *This significant gesture of long term support is greatly appreciated.*

### LABEL CHECK

We hope that our label code system (*explained in the letter which accompanied the last Edition*) is now fully implemented. So please check to see that you agree with our records; if you don't a note to either of our Membership Addresses (*see inside back cover*) would be appreciated so that we can put things right.

To remind you the code is quite simple; on the lower part of the label there should be a line in italics - the letters show your class of Membership [*I=individual; F or J=family or joint; SC=Senior Citizen - with a F or J as well if appropriate; and L=Life - again with a F or J if needed*]. The numbers that follow are the *year* in which your Subscription is due for renewal and the last number is the *month* that renewal is due.

### PLEASE REMEMBER

A large number of our annual payment Members are paid up to date (*thank you*); unfortunately (*again as mentioned by the Chairman on page 2*) some are not! If your label contains a month and date code that is prior to 95.4 then your Subscription (*according to our records*) is overdue. Please, *please*, help us by paying without the need for our hard working volunteers having to issue any more reminders. *Thank you.*

### HALF AN APOLOGY

Our Chairman has received information that a *very* small number of Members are disgruntled about the repeated requests to pay their Subscriptions. It is only fair to the vast majority who have paid on time that we do "chase" those who don't. *Sorry if you don't agree.*

#### BETWIXT HEREFORD & ROSS-ON-WYE IN BEAUTIFUL H & G CANAL COUNTRY

##### SELF CATERING ACCOMMODATION:-

Self-contained south facing apartment in large gardens in Little Birch village. Bedroom sleeps 4 with double bed & bunks. Large sitting room with panoramic views over the border into Wales. Small fitted kitchen + bathroom with bath & shower. Fully equipped, set well back from road with good parking. Sorry, no animals & non-smokers preferred. Easy access to all parts of Canal route. Lots to do and sights to see in this undiscovered part of England. Ideal for holidays or your overflow visitors!

For further details 'phone H&G Canal Trust Members,

*Lesley & Andrew Lowe, 01981 540366*



# THANKS...

to the following for their greatly appreciated support:-

**BILL LIMB** of  
**SERVITUNE MOTORS, LEDBURY,**  
*for donating a new alternator for our Massey Ferguson excavator.*

**MOTECH AUTO-CENTRE, LEDBURY,**  
*for TIG welding the fuel filter housing on the Massey Ferguson excavator.*

**MR & MRS CURTIS, DYMOCK,**  
*for the donation of a rowing boat.*

**BASIL & ELIZABETH FROST**  
of the **COLWALL PARK HOTEL,**  
*for donating £ 605 as a result of the Bangers & Mash evening.*

**KEN MORGAN ESQ., COLWALL,**  
*for his skill at extracting money at the Bangers & Mash.*

**JIM LUTHER ESQ., of**  
**GREENWOOD TIMBER, GORSLEY,**  
*Gorsley's answer to Arthur Dailey! and brother of Johny (of little bulldozer fame), for providing a storage site for a quantity of stone at short notice.*

**TO ALL WHO ...**  
*answered our request for old Texaco Stars.*

**HFD. & WORCS. RURAL DEVELOPMENT AREA, DELEGATED FUND,**  
*for a Grant of £1,000 towards the cost of purchasing a 4 ton dumper.*

**DŴR CYMRU - WELSH WATER,**  
*for providing a storage site for all the stone from Roman Road Bridge at short notice, and agreeing to continue sponsoring the envelopes for The Wharfinger.*

**SHELL BETTER BRITAIN,**  
*for supporting the restoration of Oxenhall Tunnel Portal with a grant of £450.*

**OUR SINCERE THANKS  
TO EVERYONE**

# HELP!

Our major annual fund-raising effort centres on our **Grand Holiday Draw**. For each of the past three years some £2,000 has been raised thanks to the generosity of the holiday prize Sponsors and the hard work of our Members in selling tickets.

We know that it is sometimes hard to compete with other fund-raising activities - and now we have the **National Lottery** to contend with as well - but (as our Chairman keeps telling people when he sells tickets) *"the odds are MUCH better"*! The prizes are really worth winning (see page 21 for a letter from another satisfied winner).

So please do your utmost to sell as many tickets as possible; apart from the print costs every pound raised goes towards the restoration of the Canal. For more tickets please send a SAE to Liz Connors (see **Contacts**). Thank you.

Our other significant money earner is the **Bottle Draw** that we mount at the larger events that we attend. Member Mrs Elizabeth Lloyd, from Colwall, never fails to amaze us at the bottles she manages to produce from all sorts of sources - our sincere thanks.

If you have any bottles to donate (all shapes and sizes but, please, only wine, spirits, beer, and the like - no tomato sauce!) then the monthly **Social Evening** is a good time to deliver them; they will be gratefully received. We make over £4 per bottle so it is an effective way of raising funds.

## THE WHARFINGER

The inside front cover now carries a multitude of names under the **Wharfinger Postmaster** heading - so to be democratic we have added an "s" to the end! It was a hard task rejecting willing volunteers (*as explained in the last Edition we had seven Members volunteer to take on the quarterly task of speeding The Wharfinger on its way to you*). Derek and Margaret Gray have teamed up with Ian and Francis Roper (they live fairly close to each other which was an important factor!). They will jointly handle the main mailing to our Members. Brian and Maggie Saunderson (and their willing Son and Daughter) will be undertaking our equally important "Complimentary Copies" mailings to Local and other Authorities far and wide, press copies etc. With so many willing volunteers, all living in Hereford (for once a vital requirement), we also have flexibility for holiday and sickness cover.

We decided that to involve any more Members was going to make things very complicated and all of our remaining volunteers are being asked to take on other important tasks for the Canal Trust. To all concerned a very big "thank you" from the Canal Trust Council of Management. It is a task that can so easily be taken for granted yet it is absolutely vital that **The Wharfinger** is promptly and efficiently dispatched.

Regular readers will know that **The Wharfinger** is on sale at a number of "retail outlets" throughout the two counties. Once again the task of distributing the copies, collecting the money and thanking the owners for selling the newsletter doesn't just happen by magic! Masterminded by Joyce Lynham, the behind the scenes team includes Pat Skeet, Sue Hopkinson and Steve Hughes to whom we extend our appreciation. Not only does the sale of **The Wharfinger** in this way raise awareness of the Canal (*and the voluntary work of the Canal Trust*) it also brings new Members - the most recent being one of our new Life Members.

The next Edition of **The Wharfinger** could well contain the *verified* answer to the mystery lock photograph [*p.9 of the Spring Edition*] together with a report on our 150th **Celebration Weekend** together with photographs of the completed works at **Roman Road Bridge**, Hereford. Plus all the usual views, news and restoration update ...

**COPY DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT EDITION IS SATURDAY 1st JULY**

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

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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**

*Contact The H&G Canal Trust,*

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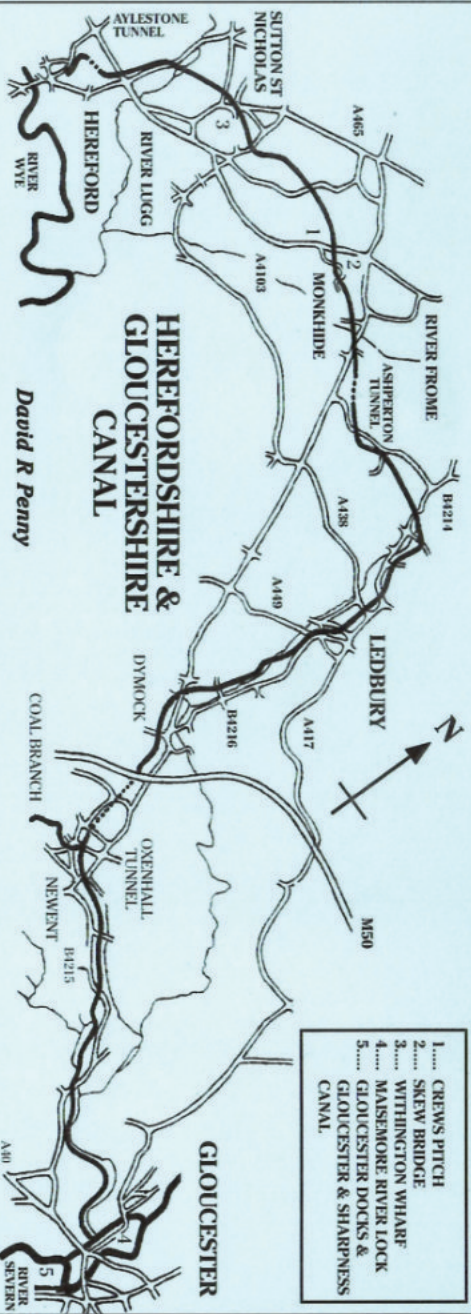
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*Please Note: We are working on the Canal with the permission and co-operation of the land owners. Unless specifically indicated it should not be assumed that there is any public right of way along the Canal towpath. Please help the Society to maintain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

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