

# The Wharfinger

Newsletter of the  
Herefordshire and  
Gloucestershire  
Canal Trust



**Edition 50 • Spring/Summer 1996**  
**50p – free to members**

# WHO DOES WHAT . . .

VICE PRESIDENTS	<i>R. E. Barnes TD, Sir John Knill Bt.</i>
CHAIRMAN	Cliff Penny
VICE CHAIRMAN	Roger Chandler
FINANCE:- Treasurer/Chairman Committee	Liz Connors Brian Fox, Lesley Lowe, David Penny
RESTORATION:- Gloucestershire Herefordshire	<i>Steve Delacourt-Smith, Simon Hayward, Ray Moses</i> Brian Fox, Mike Potts, <i>Tom Bennett</i>
SPECIAL PROJECTS:- Chair [Oxenhall Locks Site] Committee	<i>Linda Palmer, David Penny, Roger Tutt, Peter Moore, Steve Delacourt-Smith, Richard Hamblyn</i>
TRUST ADMINISTRATOR	Lesley Lowe
PRESS/PUBLICITY:- Officer Group	<i>Marjorie &amp; Tom Bennett</i> <i>Volunteers required !</i>
MEMBERSHIP:- Secretary Covenants	Nigel Jefferies Liz Connors
FUNDRAISING OFFICER	David Penny
SOCIAL:- Events Outings	<i>Linda Palmer, Steve Delacourt-Smith</i> Mike Potts, <i>Joyce Potts</i>
MINUTES SECRETARY	Tony Austin-Bailey
WHARFINGER:- Editors Postmasters	Cliff Penny, David Penny <i>D &amp; M Gray; I &amp; F Roper; B &amp; M Sanderson &amp; family</i>
TALKS/WALKS	N Jefferies, M Potts

Those in italics are not Directors on the Council of Management, although may be co-opted members

## THE TRADING COMPANY H & G CANAL [SALES]

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BOAT GROUP REPRESENTATIVE	<i>Derek Gray</i>

LOGISTICS GROUP *Steve Hughes, Chris & Mark Blunden*

BOATS:- Chairman *Dick Skeet*  
Committee *J. Potts, Ray & Barbara Moses, Pat Skeet, Derek Gray*

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.



# Chairman's Comments

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## HELPING LOCAL ECONOMY

Page 1 of Edition 49 brought the good news that the Canal, when fully restored, would bring well over £4 million per year of additional income (based on 1994 prices) to the two counties. Correctly promoted, we believe that the impact on tourism and related industries - *so vital to the economy of these rural areas* - will be even greater. Certainly jobs will be created, and existing ones safeguarded, solely as a result of the additional people drawn into the area (*not just on boats!*) by the Canal. Also, (as shown elsewhere) the Canal will encourage passing visitors to stop and explore the area for longer adding to local trade.

A number of people have remarked about these findings (a "desk-top" study kindly undertaken for the Canal Trust by Glenn Millar, the Research Manager of British Waterways). Someone asked when the money would start to flow. *The answer is that it already is - and has been for a number of years!*

Whilst we have got a long way to go before the Canal creates the projected multi-million pounds, *each year* for the local economy, we are *already* creating regular income (and supporting existing jobs) in the area! It is easy to forget that Canal Trust is now spending thousands of pounds each year with an ever increasing number of local businesses - ranging from printing, purchase of materials,

fuel and lubricating oils, the hire of coaches and mini-buses to the hire of village halls.

We also know that more and more people, having heard about the restoration of the Canal, are visiting our two main restoration sites. Some are from other parts of the country and are staying in the area overnight and spending money in local shops and restaurants. The Canal is therefore *already* bringing a small boost to the tourism trade - even though nearly 90% has yet to be restored!

The Economic Development Officers of each of the Local Authorities are taking an increasing interest in the Canal. We firmly believe that their interest is fully justified. It's not just the local economy that benefits, of course, for we are re-creating a valuable amenity for both wildlife and the general public. We are confident that we can work together with the local authorities and the land owners to turn this hidden asset into a significant benefit for the two counties that will be greatly appreciated by present and future generations.

## NATIONAL LOTTERY MILLENNIUM FUND

The Gloucester Citizen telephoned to ask me about our bid for Millennium Lottery funding. They automatically assumed that we would have submitted one by now.

## Chairman's Comments . . . (ii)

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The Millennium Fund (financed from the National Lottery) appears to be the answer to almost everyone's finances! Those who have carefully investigated appreciate it is not a source of "easy money". There are going to be many disappointed people who find the pots are not bottomless! This is not a comment regarding Lottery funds (which are extensive) but of the need to find *matching funding!* Already a number of very large Companies are quoted in the national press as being "fed up" with requests from good causes seeking matching funding.

Some of the other Canal Trusts (most of which have been promoting their restoration schemes for 10-15 years longer than we have) may have a good case for restoration funding - *provided they have the necessary external reports to back up their bid.*

However, it must be appreciated that only the very highest quality submissions realistically stand any chance of success. This is why we are concentrating on making bids *locally* (to the five District Councils, two County Councils and other bodies) to fund the essential Consulting Engineers reports on detailed engineering, water resources and environmental aspects for the *whole* length of the Canal and the Coal Branch. *This time and effort is essential before a high quality bid can be made for major funding from any source.*

If large scale bids for Lottery funds are to be made by the Canal Trust it is likely that they will be to the Heritage Fund rather than to the Millennium Commission (which has its final bidding round later this year). We are not prepared to rush - the major funding only comes to those who get it right!

Due to very hard work in 1995 by our Fundraising Officer (and a number of local authority and other senior staff) we already have some firm funding commitments for these essential studies - about £55,000 so far. We are confident that the first of these studies (relating to water resources) will be commenced later this year.

In the meantime it is appropriate to express sincere appreciation to the local authority senior Officers (and senior staff of a number of other organisations) who are working closely with our own Fundraising Officer to keep everything moving forward. We also greatly appreciate the time and trouble taken by Councillors who have toured the Canal this past winter and are fully supporting us. *Thank you.*

### NOT QUITE GOODBYE

This is my last *Chairman's Comments* - as previously advised I shall be "stepping down" at the AGM in May. After six years it will be good for the Canal Trust to have new blood at the helm.



## Chairman's Comments . . . (iii)

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Time and health permitting I hope to remain on the Council of Management (*if my colleagues agree!*) and to continue to be joint Editor of **The Wharfinger**. The other Editor has allowed me some extra space to briefly comment on the past years.

It is very easy for someone to join an organisation and pick fault in what has been done before. When the organisation is a commercial body, with paid employees, that is one thing - it can be exceedingly difficult (and even unreasonable) when all the hard work is being undertaken by volunteers in their spare time.

I have tried (but not always succeeded) to remember that we are all volunteers - *in particular that people should not be taken for granted*. I have also tried to remember that there may be more than one way of achieving the objective!

Six years ago we were a Canal Society, with a Membership around the one hundred mark, and with a well established restoration site in Herefordshire. **The Wharfinger** was produced on a typewriter, literally cut and pasted together, and "printed" at minimal cost on a resource centre duplicator - with a print run of about 150. The Society had been attending the National Waterways Festival each August Bank Holiday and around £150 profit (excluding any grants and income from Membership) was raised annually to help purchase wheelbarrows, spades etc.

There were three main objectives that I set myself as the new Chairman; to get the line of the Canal "protected" (historic line plus essential diversion routes) in the Local Plans of all five Local Authorities, become far more active in Gloucestershire (and to get representatives from within the county on what was then our only Committee); and improve our external image/promotion of the Canal and of our work.

Together with my colleagues all of this has been fully achieved - *and a lot more!*

Six years later we have a well regarded Charitable Trust (with established credibility at both local and national level), a Membership which has just exceeded 700, an extended restoration site in Herefordshire and a similar length under active restoration in Gloucestershire. Whilst **The Wharfinger** is no longer "printed" by us but we do create the artwork for the 1,000 plus copies (now on the Canal Trust's computer). Our "Trading Company" had a turnover of over £11,000 last year, we attend numerous events (locally and nationally) and the funds support our two tracked excavators, large dumpers and many smaller items.

I do not claim to have been responsible for all this, just part of a team that has achieved much - and has much yet to achieve! To all concerned - *good luck!*

*Cliff Penny,*  
*Chairman/Liaison Officer.*

# The BIG prize DRAW!

Members will have received 5 books of *Grand Holiday Draw* tickets with the special "News Sheet" that we published in March. A number of complimentary copies of the *Wharfinger* are sent to influential people and their tickets should be included in this Edition of *The Wharfinger*. In each of the past four years we have raised over £2,000 thanks to the generosity of

our prize donors *and* the efforts of many of our Members and supporters who bought (and sold) tickets. Every pound raised is critical to us as this is one of our largest sources of regular income. [For more tickets please write to our Treasurer Liz Connors, whose address is on the tickets. A self addressed envelope would be greatly appreciated.] *Thank you.*

H&GCS <i>Grand Holiday Draw</i> (Stubs and money to be returned to Promoter by 17th August 1996) [ No coins sent by post please ]	Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust - H & G C S	00000
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Telephone	★ 1st Prize - NARROW BOAT HOLIDAY FOR 4 ★ ONE WEEK (prior to 5/5/97) Donated by BLACK PRINCE HOLIDAYS	
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	To be drawn at National Waterways Festival, Dudley, 26/8/96	
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Thank you, *most sincerely*, to **Tim Parker of Black Prince Holidays; Denzil Lee of the British Marine Industries Federation; and Andy Riga of The Royal Oak Hotel, Ledbury** for their very substantial support in donating the prizes.

Without their generous actions we would not be able to proceed with this, one of our major fund raising activities. Please do support their businesses in any way that you can. Thank you, to all concerned; *your support is not taken for granted.*

[We appreciate that some Members may, as a matter of principle, not buy (or sell) draw tickets. If this applies to you then we apologise for troubling you - please do not feel obliged to return the small number of tickets enclosed.]

## Congratulations !

Two lots of congratulations! Our first to Joyce Lynham and Mike Potts; having announced their engagement in the last issue we are pleased to record that their wedding took place over Easter.

The wedding was even used as a reason for Joyce not being available to help "man" the display and sales stand at **Maylords Orchards**

**Shopping Centre** (in Hereford) over the Easter Holiday!

Our other good wishes are to Jayne and Steve Hughes. Jayne gave birth to their first child, William, in March and all are doing well. Each Christmas Steve has been our "champion" seller of cuddly toys to his colleagues - we suspect some will be bought for home in future!



## NOTICEBOARD

### WANTED

*Would you like an enjoyable day out that helps the Trust at the same time?*

Why not join our team of volunteers who assist us in a morning or afternoon session at one of the Events listed below? Please ring (or write to) Liz Connors, indicating which Events you can assist at. Liz will be more than happy to discuss how you can assist us at these key publicity & fundraising opportunities. We hope we can look forward to seeing some more new faces in '96.

Our regular volunteers received the 1996 Events Programme, some weeks ago. If you have not already responded to indicate which Events you could assist us at, then please contact Liz Connors as soon as possible - your action now really does help to reduce the massive workload placed on Liz in having to ring around to see who can attend, *thank you.*

*David R Penny*

### PROMOTIONAL/SALES EVENTS

We hope to attend the following:-

May 5th:  
North Herefordshire Country Fair,  
Stoke Prior, Near Leominster.

August 4th:  
Herefordshire Country Fair,  
Much Marcle.

May 25th to 27th:  
Braunston Boat Show,  
Northamptonshire.

August 24th to 26th:  
National Waterways Festival,  
Dudley.

June 1st and 2nd:  
IWA Trailboat Rally,  
Welshpool.

September 29th:  
Oxenhall Open Day  
Teas, and guided walks

July 6th and 7th:  
Bromyard Gala.

October 26th:  
Craft Fair, Ledbury  
&

July 13th and 14th:  
Evesham River Festival.

November 2nd:  
Craft Fair, Newent  
Our own Craft Fairs/sales/teas

July 27th and 28th:  
Upton on Severn Steam Fair.

*Please give me a call if you are able to assist with any of the above.*

*Liz Connors*

# Committee Matters

*No less than four more Council of Management meetings are reviewed by our Chairman in order that our Members and supporters are kept up to date...*

## OCTOBER COMMITTEE

- All the Officers of the Canal Trust were willing to continue in post.

- The Canal Trust were now formally registered under the data Protection legislation - at a cost of £75 for three years.

- The Fundraising Officer reported continuing progress with all of the Local Authorities, National Rivers Authority and other potential "Partners", in respect of the funding for the independent Consulting Engineers reports on water resources, detailed engineering feasibility, environmental and economic benefits for the whole Canal. *[See Chairman's Comments (p.1) and report on p.27.]*

- The Trading Company were planning a full programme of attendances at promotional events in 1996.

- A programme of Social Events and Outings, for the earlier part of 1996, was received and welcomed.

- If satisfactory assurances were not received in the very near future from the Forest of Dean District Council regarding Lock Cottage, and the other structures at Oxenhall, further action was delegated to the

Finance Committee who would be meeting at the end of the month. It was considered essential to press for much faster progress in view of the continued deterioration of the structures. *[See Special Projects Group report on p.27]*

- A favourable report of financial performance over the period March to August was received from the Treasurer.

- The formal Trust Financial Procedures document was presented and approved.

- The Restoration Group reported that work was under way to seal leaks in the Canal on the Yarkhill Project site.

- In Gloucestershire repairs were in hand to the dumpers.

- Options for dealing with the essential Press and Publicity role were discussed.

- Budgets relating to future expenditure were approved.

## NOVEMBER COMMITTEE

- Proposals to improve signage at all restoration sites were discussed.

- The outcome of the High Court action by the National Rivers Authority (Welsh Region) against persons claiming to



## Committee Matters . . . (ii)

represent an ancient Company controlling navigation on the Rivers Wye and Lugg was reported [see p.19 of the last Edition.] Judgement had been in favour of the NRA but an Appeal had been lodged and was likely to be heard in February.

- The Chairman stressed that, contrary to the wishes of the Council of Management, he did intend to step down from the Chair at the 1996 AGM. Whilst a "figure-head" Chairman was discussed he was firmly of the opinion that the role - especially in the next few years - would be very demanding and required active and detailed input from the postholder.

- The National Rivers Authority (Severn-Trent Region) had just published their "Action Plan" for the lower reaches of the River Severn. Following earlier consultations a number of points made by the Canal Trust had been included and this was greatly appreciated.

- Preliminary arrangements for the 1996 AGM were discussed; it was to be brought forward in the year to May.

- Brian Fox's wife, Shirley, had volunteered to maintain a press cutting "scrap book", this was warmly welcomed. [see cutting request p.15]

- The Fundraising Officer reported on further promising progress regarding the funding of independent Consulting

Engineers Reports in respect of the whole of the Canal. [See Chairman's Comments (p.1) and report on p.27.]

- In Herefordshire the Restoration Team had tidied the towpath prior to a number of visits in connection with the funding bids and the planned second stage cutting of a drainage ditch at the edge of fields running parallel to the Canal had been completed.

- A letter had been received from the Director of Planning at Forest of Dean District Council regarding Lock Cottage etc. at Oxenhall. A Structural Survey (that had been commissioned by the Council) found that the three structures (the Cottage, Lock and Aqueduct) were all capable of restoration. A special meeting of the Canal Trust Council of Management was convened for December to consider the Structural Report and to decide on further action to safeguard these important structures. [Report on p.27.]

- Both of the two large dumpers in Gloucestershire were being repaired. [as reported in the "Thanks" column of the last Edition parts had been supplied free of charge by companies who had requested no publicity - they don't want to be repairing every restoration scheme dumper in the whole country!]. In the meantime the excavator had been utilised to undertake work for one of the local landowners to further good relations.

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## ***Committee Matters . . . (iii)***

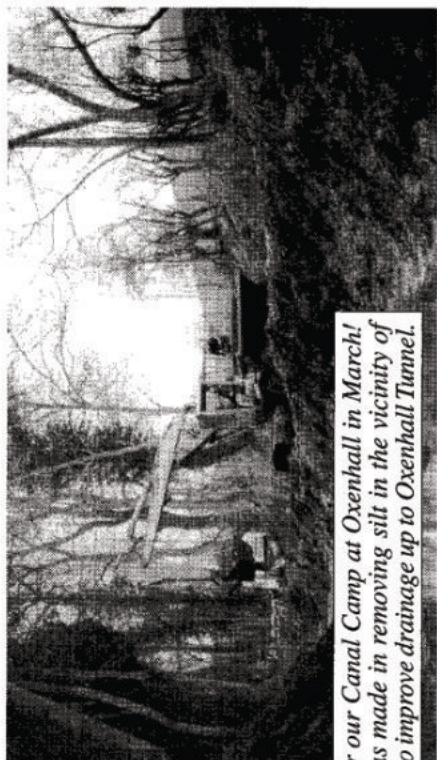
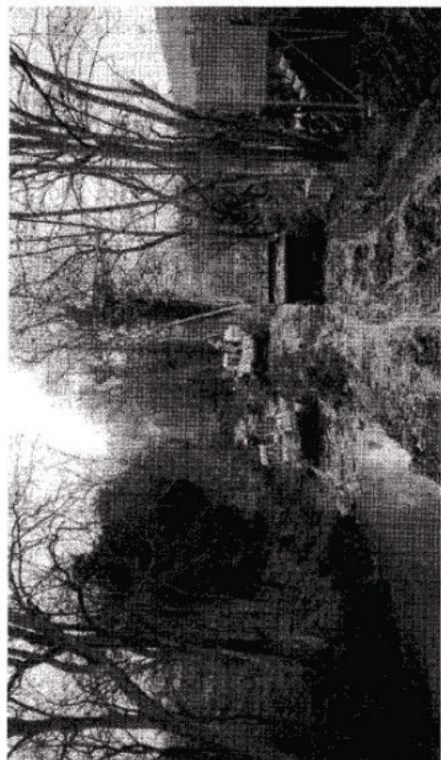
• Notice of the intention to make formal Orders had been published by Gloucestershire County Council for the diversion of a footpath that affected the line of the Canal. This was without further reference to the Canal Trust (even though there had been a productive site meeting with the County Council and the landowner earlier in the year). Under the circumstances the Canal Trust had to lodge a "holding" objection to the making of the Order. This was pending the outcome of negotiations with the landowner regarding the point at which the path would cross the line of the Canal and the bridge that would be necessary in the future.

• Brian Fox reported that he now had preliminary land ownership details for over two thirds of the Canal. He was slowly visiting known landowners and they were automatically added to the "complimentary copy" list to receive regular copies of **The Wharfinger**. This continued initiative and progress was welcomed.

• The Trading Company reported that a number of new volunteers had offered to assist in "setting up (and down)" our display at various events. This additional assistance was most welcome. They would be known as the H&GCS "logistics" team, led by Steve Hughes (Exhibitions Co-ordinator).







*As usual, the rains came for our Canal Camp at Oxenhall in March! However, good progress was made in removing silt in the vicinity of Cold Harbour Lane Bridge to improve drainage up to Oxenhall Tunnel.*





## 50 Editions On . . .

The very first Edition of **The Hereford Wharfinger**, eight pages long, was produced in June 1983 - although the first issue had no name; a bottle of whisky was offered for suggestions! *[The title was to change to **The Wharfinger** as from Edition 16, in the Summer of 1987, to reflect the fact that the Canal spanned two counties.]* The original Editor was Janet White, Dr. Robin Andrews was Chairman and Jim Dunn, Nigel Jefferies and Mike Potts were actively involved with the Society in those early days. It was reported that over 60 people had attended a guided walk along the line of the Canal near Canon Frome.

**Edition no. 2** carried a plea for more volunteers to help dig out the Canal beneath Skew Bridge. There was a report that the County Council intended to lower Roman Road "... and destroy the headroom and with it any hopes of eventually restoring the Canal." The Canal Society was to try and secure a footpath in the area but there was no suggestion that the line of the Canal (and the vital headroom) be saved.

Will Frecknall (who has recently joined the Council of Management as the IWA nominated representative) was serving on the Committee of the Canal Society by the time **Edition 3** was produced. This issue also carried a tribute to his Father Frank, who had just passed away, as he had chaired the "Standing Committee" which

eventually led to the formation of the Canal Society. Just before he died, Frank Frecknall was reported in **The Hereford Wharfinger** as saying "A thought that few of us have the courage to express is that the time must eventually come when we will state our aim to be restoration of the entire Canal."

In June of 1984 **Edition 4** was four pages of A4 paper; an odd one out - all other Editions being A5. Will Frecknall was reporting on initial restoration progress under Skew Bridge - and on the unauthorised filling of the Canal adjacent to Aylestone Tunnel (near Hereford). The Mayor of Hereford had unveiled the first of many plaques (cast by Nigel Jefferies) on Widemarsh Bridge, Hereford. The original Canal Office, in what is now Jewson's Builders Merchants yard, was demolished - and the rubble delivered a day or so later as hardcore to the canal towpath at Monkhide!

The **5th Edition** saw the first use of the former Canal Company Crest. Michael Handford had led a walk along the line of the Canal at Ledbury. Nigel Jefferies was concerned at the JCB parked next to the "Navvies Barracks" (or was it just a cider store?) close to the line of the Canal. A few days later the building was reduced to rubble. Robin Andrews said "We must make owners and the Local Authorities more aware of the significance of these remaining structures..."



## 50 Editions On . . . (ii)

In the Winter of 1984/85 (Edition 6) Nigel Jefferies reported on research into the painted signs on the gable wall of the Canal side cottage at Withington which proclaims - "*William Bird, Wharfinger*". The following advertisement appeared in the "*Lascelles and Company Directory and Gazetteer of Herefordshire 1851*". This was the inspiration for the name of our newsletter. Mike

Potts took over as Editor; funds were being raised for a dumper (the first bit of motorised kit?); Richard Morley took his canoe into Ashperton Tunnel ...

The first Open Day was planned for June 1985 and the 7th Edition (Spring 1985) carried details. Restoration continued under Skew Bridge. The first display in Hereford Library was reported - as was the first increase in Membership Subscriptions!

Edition 8 reported the delivery of a "Smalley Digger" that was to be on loan from the Waterway Recovery Group. The Inland Waterways Association presented a cheque for £500 towards the work at Monkhide and a "*second grant from Welsh Water*" was reported. After two years in the Chair Robin Andrews stepped down - *stressing the need to build and maintain credibility.*

The Autumn of 1985 saw Will Frecknall as Chairman. This Edition (No. 9) carried an interesting historical article on the cast iron railings on Widemarsh Canal Bridge, Hereford - it also reported the unveiling of a plaque on Skew Bridge. The memories of a resident who had lived close to the Canal for 74 years were also captured in print!

**WILLIAM BIRD,**  
**TIMBER & COAL MERCHANT,**  
Commission Agent,  
GENERAL WHARFINGER,  
BROMYARD AND LEOMINSTER WHARFS,  
WITHINGTON.

*N.B.—Goods forwarded to all parts of the Kingdom.*

Mike Potts was already well into organising coach and boat trips by the time Edition 10 reached the Membership - this Winter 1985 newsletter contained an account of a visit to the

"*Mon. and Brec.*" Canal. The restoration report made interesting reading and included a diagram of an elaborate dragline system used for clearance of mud from beneath Skew Bridge.

In the 11th Edition (Spring 1986) Nigel Jefferies produced a brief history of the Canal; over 200 years ago many of the problems (*sorry - challenges*) seemed much as they are today! We started to "advertise" IWA Branch meetings. Advance notice was given of the plans for the National Waterways Festival to be held at Gloucester the following year [*to be later postponed until August 1990*].

## 50 Editions On . . . (iii)

Tony Austin-Bailey became Chairman by the time Edition 12 was published; there were plans for a 4 day restoration camp in August at Skew Bridge and a plaque was unveiled on the wall of Tunnel Cottage, Ashperton.

The Autumn of 1986 (Edition 13) issue carried an amusing report by Dr Robin Andrews of a "narrow boat handling course" run by a Mr Cliff Penny and his Wife Joan. The August Canal Camp was dogged by wet weather [a standard requirement of all of our major "digs"?]

Edition 14 carried an interesting article regarding Ashperton Tunnel and on the original ceremony marking the first opening of the Canal first to

Withington and subsequently to Hereford. Poor attendances were reported at work parties - "the same few faces each time"...

The Spring of 1987 brought Edition 15 into print. The late Alan Simpson was one of our guest speakers giving his nationally famous talk about abandoned canal tunnels. [His son Bob, one of our Members, has since shown his Father's slides and cine film about Oxenhall Tunnel to some 600 people.] On the 28th June there was to be the first ceremony to mark completion of initial restoration at Crews Pitch/Skew Bridge. Volunteers for this Open Day were requested... 

TO BE CONTINUED...

## A Big Puzzle ?

The Inland Waterways Association is celebrating its Golden Jubilee this year. Part of the celebrations involves the creation of a large piece of a jigsaw by each Branch of the IWA (which will eventually fit together to produce a giant map of the whole of the inland waterways network).

The Gloucestershire and Herefordshire Branch of the IWA have plans well in hand for the part of the national puzzle that includes the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal. The idea is that each piece shall be transported by water along at least part of every one of the

waterways depicted on each piece of the puzzle. "Our" piece of the puzzle will be passing along part of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal some time in May. We hope to carry a photograph in the next Edition of The Wharfinger.

All of the pieces will eventually arrive in Birmingham in time for assembly at the International Convention Centre (which lies alongside the heart of the Birmingham Canal Navigation). This is planned to coincide with the World Canals Conference which is being held at the Convention Centre from the 26th to the 28th June.





## Active Planning

As regular readers will appreciate the Canal Trust has to be ever vigilant to all development that is being proposed anywhere near the line of the Canal. In a small number of locations this also extends to the essential diversion routes where the historic line has already been obstructed by permanent development.

Even though we now have the benefit of Planning Policies that "protect" the line of the Canal (*and agreed diversion routes*) we have to respond to every consultation - and ensure that we are consulted - regarding all such proposed development. After a lull in activity this is an area where our wholly voluntary resources are (*once again*) being stretched as there have been a number of development proposals that affect the line of the Canal in recent months.

In Hereford City we have no less than four Planning Applications under discussion with another about to be submitted - and a Planning Appeal to be heard in October (following the City

Council refusing permission for development on the line of the Canal and diversion route).

Right at the other end of the Canal, in Tewkesbury Borough Council's area, the Secretary of State for Health is (once more) seeking Planning Permission to re-develop the former Over Hospital site. A previous application for a supermarket development has just been withdrawn and the latest proposals involve 44 houses.

Whilst at Over the actual line of the Canal is respected we have major concerns regarding the impact on the setting of the Canal and the deep lock into the River Severn as some of the housing is illustrated very close to the Canal. There are a number of other issues to be resolved including the future of the Lock Keepers "Cottage" and the lock itself. The Agent acting for the hospital Authority has now promised detailed discussions with the Canal Trust. Pending a satisfactory outcome we have had no alternative other than to formally object.

CRP

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

#### SELF CATERING ACCOMMODATION:-

Self-contained south facing apartment in large gardens in our rambling bungalow in the village of Little Birch. Bedroom sleeps 4 with double bed & bunks. Large sitting room with panoramic views 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 see in this undiscovered part of England. Ideal for holidays or your overflow visitors - do come!

For further details 'phone H&G Canal Trust Members,  
**Lesley & Andrew Lowe, 01981 540366**

# Dates For Your Diary

By Linda Palmer & Steve Delacourt-Smith

Social evenings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at the Acorn Suite of the Royal Oak Hotel, The Southend, Ledbury.

All meetings are 7.30 for 8pm.

## Tuesday, 21st May

### "Commercial Shipping on the G & S"

Peter Evans will be giving a fascinating insight into the past glories of the movement of heavy freight on the Gloucester and Sharpness Ship Canal.

## Tuesday, 18th June

### "Bat man"

David Priddis, from the Forest of Dean, will give an illustrated talk on bats.

THE SALES  
STAND

WILL BE  
HERE!

## Tuesday 16th July & 20th August

### "pint and a natter"

No formal speakers over the summer months; please do come for a chat and an update on what is going on within the Canal Trust.

Members and non-members welcome. There will be a raffle, and plenty of time for a chat. These Social Events 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 [01452 501372]. Items from *SALES '96* - see centre pages of *The Wharfinger*, Edition 49, Winter 1995/6 can be brought to ANY of the Social Events (and you will be under no obligation to buy) if you give 2 days notice of your interests to David Penny [01432 820420].

This is the Inland Waterways Association's Golden Jubilee year. In order to raise funds for the National Waterways

Restoration and Development Fund IWA have decided to organise a national sponsored walk - IWALK - over the weekend of 5th/6th October.

THE INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION

# IWALK

5th/6th October 1996



GOLDEN JUBILEE NATIONAL TOWPATH SPONSORED WALK

The Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust have been invited to "do our bit"; 50% of the funds raised on our walk being retained for restoration expenditure on the H&G Canal. All that we need is a willing volunteer to organise our IWALK. The IWA have published a booklet that is virtually a step by step guide! So this is *your* chance to "mastermind" a single event for us and help the national cause as well. *Lesley Lowe has all the details.*



# HEREFORDSHIRE AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST

WORKING TOGETHER IN THE PRESENT. TO REVIVE THE PAST, AND SECURE A BETTER FUTURE

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1996**

to be held on Thursday, 23rd May, 1996  
at the Burgage Hall, Church Street, Ledbury  
commencing at 7.30pm.

## **Annual Report and Accounts\* for Year Ended 28th February 1996**

*\*[Summary (abridged) Accounts will be included as a loose insert (for Members only). Members may obtain a full set of Accounts by sending a large SAE to the Treasurer; full sets of Accounts will also be freely available at the AGM.]*

*Apart from the formal business there will be a lively mix of slides, overhead projections and commentary on the successes of the year.*

*Light refreshments will be available.*

*Members and friends will be made very welcome.*

*There will be ample opportunities for general questions after the close of formal business. Prior notice of questions should ensure a comprehensive response and would be greatly appreciated.*

## AGENDA

1. Welcome and formal opening of the meeting.
2. Chairman's Report.
3. Group Reports.
4. To receive and approve the Report of Council, the Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet of the Trust (and associated Company) for the year ended 28th February 1996, the Report of the Honorary Auditor thereon, and the Report of the Honorary Treasurer.
5. To re-appoint R W Davies Esq., of Davies Edwards and Company, as Honorary Auditor of the Trust (and associated Company).
6. To note that Roger Chandler and Simon Hayward are standing down due to pressure of work and do not offer themselves for re-election. To re-appoint those Council Members retiring by rotation who offer themselves for re-election:-

Nigel Jefferies; Cliff Penny and Mike Potts.

7. To accept the IWA Nominee (Will Frecknall).
8. To appoint to the Council of Management those who were co-opted during the year:-

Linda Palmer and Steve Delacourt-Smith.

9. Close of formal business.

*Following the close of the meeting there will be ample opportunities for general questions and a slide review of the work of the Canal Trust.*

NOTE REGARDING AGENDA ITEM 6. One third of the Members of the Managing Council are required to stand down each year. All those standing down (listed at 6. above) are offering themselves for re-election. Unless Nominations are received for new Members to join the Council of Management, and the total exceeds 18, they will be returned un-opposed.

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## ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 28th FEBRUARY, 1996

This is the fourth Annual Report of The Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust Limited [a non profit distributing Company (formed in April 1992, No. 2704407), which is a Registered Charity (1010721) and of the wholly owned Trading Company - Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal (Sales) Ltd (2710215)]. They replaced the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Society which was launched in 1983.

The *Canal Trust* is indebted to its *Council of Management*, and to the *Trading Company Board*; during the period under review [year ended 28th February 1996] those listed on page (iii) have been Members:-



## CANAL TRUST COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT:

Tony Austin-Bailey; Roger Chandler; Liz Connors; Brian Fox; Will Frecknall *[IWA Nominee]*; Simon Hayward; Chris Hille*[c]* [From Oct. - resigned Dec.'95]; Nigel Jefferies; Lesley Lowe; Linda Palmer*[c]* [from Nov.'95]; Cliff Penny; David Penny; Mike Potts; Steve Delacourt-Smith*[c]* [from Nov.'95].  
*[c] indicates co-opted during the year.*

## TRADING COMPANY *[H&GC (Sales) Ltd.]*:

Liz Connors; Derek Gray*[c]* *[Boats Group Nominee - from Nov.'95]*;  
Steve Hughes; Joyce Lynham; David Penny;  
*[c] indicates co-opted on to the Board during the year.*

Cliff Penny's very successful six year period as Chairman finishes after the AGM and in the re-allocation of some of his duties the Annual Report of the Council of Management is now compiled by the Trust Administrator; Lesley Lowe. All Members and supporters of the Canal Trust have been kept fully informed of our progress, over the year in question, by way of our quarterly newsletter *The Wharfinger*. *Some of the more significant points were:-*

**RESTORATION:** To start where we finished last year, the new Roman Road Canal 'bridge' (on the outskirts of Hereford) was completed, with a navigable culvert underneath and the road reopened, and restoration work continues in both counties, with the arrival of another second-hand 4 ton articulated dumper assisting work with the massive "muck shifting" operations taking us towards Oxenhall Tunnel in Gloucestershire.

**CO-OPERATION:** Improved methods of liaison with owners of sections of the Canal were implemented and landowner agreements actively pursued. A steering committee with senior officers of all district and county councils, the NRA and other bodies has met on several occasions under the leadership of the Fundraising Officer [David Penny] with significant progress, and local council planning committees have considered, and upheld the Canal line, in all applications; a welcome sign. The report of the Inspector relating to the Forest of Dean local plan was also welcomed. The Trust appeared to be getting nowhere with Lock Cottage and lock at Oxenhall and a newly established Special Projects Group, reporting back to the Council of Management, will oversee the situation. A BWB desk-top benefit analysis of the Hereford and Gloucester Canal indicated finance and new jobs at £4.3m (per annum) and 160 respectively.

**BACK-UP:** Our Trading Company took the award winning stand to many events and destinations. The Finance Committee holds regular meetings and is finding the budget approval system working well. The Trust's membership records have been put onto a new computer and updated by Nigel Jefferies, and with an increase in life members, their membership permanently identified as a separate investment. The Trust is registered under the Data Protection Act, a declaration of interests form is regularly included in Directors' Notes; Will Frecknall joined the Council of Management as the IWA's nominee; the Boats' Group is well established chaired by Dick Skeet with Derek Gray sitting on the Trading Company Board; the new distribution team for *The Wharfinger* is working well, and some directors expressed concern at the increasing workload! The AGM has sprung forward to May and comes with a more feasible quorum count following favourable communications with the Charity Commissioners.

**SOCIAL:** In May a well attended open weekend celebrated the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Canal with the third day successfully devoted to invitation only guests. With some people only just sampling the ever-growing monthly gatherings in Ledbury, the reputation of Mike Potts' trips go before him and are often oversubscribed, while new fund raising events included a Christmas Craft Fair in Newent.



## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

For each of my six years as Chairman I have looked back and said that *we have been building firm foundations for the future!* In many ways the past twelve months have been particularly successful as they include a number of very important achievements. Perhaps the most significant was the very positive DoE Inspector's recommendation regarding the changes we had requested in the Forest of Dean Local Plan - and, most importantly, *the willing acceptance of this by the Officers and Members of the Forest of Dean District Council.*

The BWB report that the restored Canal would bring £4.3m per annum (including 160 jobs) into the two counties added conviction to what we have been saying for years - *the*

*Canal is a hidden asset to the community!* Towards the end of the period under review the fact that some of the Local Authorities (and the former NRA) had committed some £55,000 towards the essential independent studies relating to the restoration of the Canal indicates that the importance of our objective is becoming increasingly recognised - and, *most importantly,* supported by these bodies.

When these independent studies are completed the Canal Trust will be in an excellent position to submit major funding bids - *based on the firmest of foundations!* My best wishes to the next Chairman; it will be an exciting time.

Cliff Penny, C.Eng., FICE., MIMgt.

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME ..... PLEASE

ADDRESS ..... PRINT

*Thank you*

POST CODE ..... TEL. .... NEW MEMBER ☐ RENEWAL ☐ GIFT ☐

Details, please, of any skills that might assist us in our work? .....

Please indicate where you obtained this form *The Wharfinger, Edition 50* .....

**Subscription rates :-** INDIVIDUAL £ 7.50 ☐ JOINT/FAMILY £ 10 ☐

SENIOR CITIZEN £ 5 ☐ JOINT SEN'R CIT'N £ 7 ☐ CORPORATE £ 20 ☐

**LIFE MEMBERSHIP :-** INDIVIDUAL £ 150 ☐ JOINT/FAMILY £ 200 ☐

SENIOR CITIZEN £ 80 ☐ JOINT SEN'R CIT'N £ 110 ☐ CORPORATE £ 400 ☐

PLEASE help us to keep our Subscriptions low AND to accelerate our restoration progress by making a DONATION £ ..... TOTAL payment £ .....

**BANKERS ORDER** \* Please insert the amount of your Subscription + any voluntary donation. Thank you.

(Do not detach). To (name & address of your bank) .....

Please pay to account No. 11600694, sorting code No. 16-21-20 of The Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust at the Royal Bank of Scotland, 21 Broad Street, Hereford, HR4 9AP

The sum of £ ..... on this day and thereafter, *annually* (on the anniversary) until further notice.

SIGNED ..... MY A/C No. .... DATE .....

[YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS

TO BE AS GIVEN ABOVE.]

[This instruction CANCELS any previous Bankers Order in favour of the Trust or the former Society.]

PLEASE SEND ME A COVENANT FORM ☐ A CREDIT CARD MANDATE ☐

REV 03/96

The Membership Secretary, H & G C T, 6 Castle Street, Hereford, HRI 2NL



# *Mike & Joyce's Outings*

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*By Mike & Joyce Potts*

*Further details (including possible pick up locations/times) available from Mike or Joyce.*

## **Sunday, 9th June**

### *"The Black Country Museum"*

By coach from Hereford

*Coach and admission; Adults £10.50*

*Senior Citizens and Children: £9.50*

## **Sunday, 14th July**

### *"The Birmingham Canal Navigations"*

Coach from Hereford to Birmingham;  
cruise on the BCN; with optional walks to  
Gas Street and Newall Street Science  
Museum (time to explore).

*Coach and cruise; £10.50*

## **Sunday, 25th August**

### *"The IWA National Waterways Festival"*

Come with us to the Black Country at Dudley  
and Sandwell to see the biggest inland waterways  
event of its type in the world.

Coach from Hereford (+ pick up at Ledbury).

*Coach fare £5.00 + admission to Festival.*

TICKETS FROM:- Mike Potts [01432 279123 - daytime] or,  
Hereford Camera Centre, The Atrium, Maylord Orchards.

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

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All Members, especially those living in Gloucestershire and Herefordshire, can assist - *please* - by being "press spotters" for the Canal Trust. If you see the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal (and/or the Canal Trust!) mentioned in print please cut the article out (or photocopy it) *ensuring that the date and newspaper/magazine details are included.*

Please send the extract to Tom and Marjorie Bennett - so they can note their successes as part of our Press and Publicity Team; the cuttings will be passed on to Shirley Fox who is maintaining a press cuttings scrapbook for the Canal Trust.

# RESTORATION UPDATE & HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE

*By Brian Fox*

Another year gone and we are still moving slowly towards the restoration of the full 34 miles of the Canal. You might have thought it was not a good year for visible signs of restoration work in Herefordshire or Gloucestershire, but much of it involved non Canal features, such as the drainage ditches on either side of the Canal at Yarkhill (1300 yards of which are now completely recut and taking away the winter water very well). We have also spent a lot of time looking for leaks in the Yarkhill section and plugging up old breaches in the banks - there are now no obvious holes except for one found along the section owned by our vice president. Maintenance of those sections already completed seems to be taking up more of our precious time, and so we need more volunteers just to maintain the same progress.

I think, on reflection, you could say it was a year of consolidation. We have learned from past experience that it is no good attempting to do too much at once and it is much more important to get one job finished completely before moving onto the next one. We are in the business of selling ourselves to many people who are still sceptical of the Trust and doubt we are capable of achieving our target of complete restoration of the Canal. All the work which we do has to be seen to be done in a professional manner and only then will the sceptics come

round to our way of thinking. We have only comparatively recently obtained the full support of the 5 District and 2 County Councils on the route of the Canal which was won through a concerted effort by many people in the background, and included conducted tours of restored sections of Canal to show what we can do.

This effort is continuing behind the scenes as we prepare the way before any muck shifting or jungle bashing can begin. In the past our restoration work has all been done with purely the goodwill and cooperation of many landowners, but we cannot continue in this manner. The Trust must, in future, have at least a Landowner Agreement on the Canal, signed by both parties, before any work can commence. This form of approach is demanded by District and County Councils, the Lottery Funds, DOE, etc.; in fact any body which we approach for support, or make a request to for Grant Aid, will insist that the Trust have some form of legal interest in the land in question, whether it be a Landowner Agreement or actual ownership, before they will consider giving us the large sums of money which we need if we are to progress at a quicker rate than at present.

The prime obstacle to major progress at the moment is the lack of a complete Feasibility Study on the full 34 miles of the



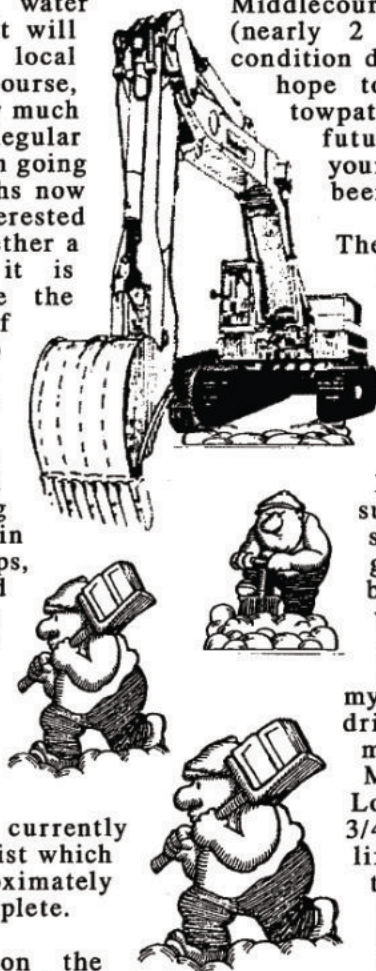
# RESTORATION UPDATE & HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE ... continued

Canal. It is no good for the Trust itself to say that restoration is possible. We need an independent survey to confirm that it is not only technically possible to restore the Canal but also what impact it will have on the environment, where will the water come from, how it will benefit the local economy and, of course, an estimate of how much it might cost. Regular meetings have been going on for some months now with all the interested parties to put together a package which, it is hoped, will raise the multi thousands of pounds required to pay for the production of the Feasibility Study. The Trust will be able to assist in this by providing data on the Canal in the form of maps, old levels, and perhaps just as importantly a full register of all the owners of the Canal for the entire 34 miles which it appears would be almost 100. We are currently compiling such a list which is now approximately three quarters complete.

A brief word on the current state of the Canal and towpath which I mentioned last time and apparently has prompted some comment [see

letters - page 24]. Our efforts last summer to alleviate the drainage problem on the towpath at Middlecourt appear to have been successful and it is now possible to walk this section without wellington boots. In fact the whole towpath from Middlecourt to Barrs Lock (nearly 2 miles) is in good condition despite all the rain. I hope to write more about towpath restoration in a future Edition when all your comments will have been analysed.

The Canal is now full once more and the Yarkhill Project Site has just recently seen water going over the spillway we made at Barrs Lock. Unfortunately this level cannot be sustained as there are still leaks but it was great to see the Canal brim full. We couldn't wait for a full Canal so, on 16th January, Mike Potts and myself in a small boat driven by an outboard motor navigated from Monkhide to Barrs Lock (a distance of 1 3/4 miles) and only lifted the boat out once to carry it over the temporary dam. This included going through the culvert under the main road and between some trees which are still left on one section. As the water was at this point still very





## RESTORATION UPDATE **HEREFORDSHIRE** & GLOUCESTERSHIRE ... continued

low, it was too shallow for an outboard in places and we had to row, but most of the way was a delight - especially along the Yarkhill section where we were the first boat for over 100 years. If we can get the water to stay without too much leakage it is hoped that there could be an official opening with boats and press coverage later this year!

The ground has been too wet to move any spoil during the winter - the problem is not in digging it out but transport to the dumping areas is impossible without churning farmers fields into seas of mud. Some tree felling has been undertaken at both sites prior to the nesting season and machinery has been serviced by our own volunteers. Now that the Spring is here (at last) the Herefordshire gang have been down to Oxenhall to assist in a long weekend of much shifting, which was very successful despite heavy rain and snow on two of the three days. Another excavator was hired which meant that we could put one in the bed of the Canal (which is in a cutting at this point) lifting soil out onto the towpath, and the

other in the field on top of the bank reaching down to lift it up into the dumpers in the field. We have found in the past that it is not practical to run dumpers along the towpath because they churn it up so much and there is always a danger that they could slide into the Canal bed. Unfortunately, at the end of our efforts it didn't look as though we had done much as most of our time was spent in cleaning out soil which has been washed in to the section we cleared two years ago. Much of it is washed off Cold Harbour Lane during rain storms but we are talking with the County Council to try and rectify this problem - we don't want to be going back into the Canal every two or three years to clean it out again.

It looks as though 1996 could be the year when things really get moving. The Feasibility Study, a new site to work on in Herefordshire, the beginning of the end for completion of the Oxenhall Project Site, some new blood assisting those already hard pressed Trust Council members and hopefully some new faces at our work weekends.

### 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:-

Steve Delacourt-Smith, Gloucester (01452) 501372;

Tom Bennett, Golden Valley, (01981) 500258;

Brian Fox, Hereford (01432) 358628;

Mike Potts, Hereford (01432) 266931;

or Simon Hayward, Gloucs. (01452) 305572



## *Lots of Experience !*

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The last Sunday in March saw over 30 "canal experts" descend on Dymock Village Hall for a meeting of the **Southern Canals Association**. This body has (for many years) arranged three meetings each year, all over the southern part of the country, where the experiences of a large number of restoration groups is interchanged. Many of us support the view that there is no point in "*reinventing the wheel*", and that we can all learn from the others who are also actively engaged in the restoration and promotion of the inland waterways, and **Southern Canals** (*there is now a Northern Canals group as well*) presents the ideal forum for this.

Representatives of other canal societies and trusts, and the **Inland Waterways Association**, travelled very considerable distances to spend a day with us. We were delighted that Mrs Audrey Smith, National Chairman of the **Inland Waterways Association** was able to attend - *involving a round trip of nearly 400 miles.*

The attendance list for these meetings invites delegates to state how long they have been actively involved in the restoration of inland waterways. *Those attending our meeting totalled over 500 years of experience between them!*

Our guests started their day with coffee and home made biscuits before Chairman Cliff Penny briefly (*ten minutes is brief by*

*Cliff's standards!*) welcomed everyone to Gloucestershire. A coach then took us to the old Council Yard at Newent where we all donned wellingtons (and a few - whose experience of restoration sites must have been desert based - improvised wellingtons [carrier bags!]). A hundred yards and the rapidly deteriorating **Ell Brook aqueduct** was reached; our first stop for a detailed explanation of what was going on. The locks and **Oxenhall Lock Cottage** were then inspected as was the junction with the **Coal Branch**.

The walk continued along the restored section of the Canal - not looking its best due to the essential lowering of water levels to permit work to proceed closer to the Tunnel mouth. At **Cold Harbour Lane Bridge** a small number of our guests turned along the road to the waiting coach but the brave majority ventured through the deep mud to see the "**Leggers Rest**" and the **Oxenhall Tunnel portal**. Then back to the coach and, *within 4 minutes of the intended time*, to Dymock Village Hall where a choice of no less than 5 hot meals was awaiting us!

After lunch our guests were taken across the fields (on the footpaths forming part of the famous **Dymock "Daffodil Walk"**) to the other end of **Oxenhall Tunnel** and then returned to the Village Hall for copious amounts of home-made cakes and tea before their homeward journey.

## *Lots of Experience !*

**Southern Canals Chairman Robin Higgs** (who is also *Chairman of the National Restoration Committee of the IWA*) thanked everyone involved for a very well organised day and stressed that he continued to be impressed by our professional approach and attention to all aspects of restoration - the paperwork and politics as well as the work on the ground.

*[As with everything that we do this day represented a lot of hard work "behind the scenes" by a number of our Members; to all concerned thank you.]*



## *Jumble Money ?*

Members Ray and Barbara Moses came up with the idea that money could be raised for the Canal Trust by having a stall at the annual **Gloucester Boat Jumble**. Having "cleared" the idea with the Canal Trust Trading Company they then set about organising the whole thing - even advising your Editors of the publicity they needed in **The Wharfinger** (to add to the list of jumble items their own efforts had already secured).

The **Gloucester Boat Jumble** is an established annual event, with stalls and visitors from all over the country. *Over £100 was raised on "our" stall* - manned by Ray and Barbara - and they might just be persuaded to have another go next year! *Our thanks for thinking of an idea and then following it through.*



### **MICHAEL STIMPSON and ASSOCIATES**

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

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## Committee Matters . . . (iv)

8<III ■ • Most disappointingly there was still no volunteer to co-ordinate retail sales of **The Wharfinger** [p.24 of the last Edition.]

• The Trading Company reported a most enjoyable Christmas Dinner at "The Barnhouse", Ledbury where the guest after dinner speaker had been Mr Tim Parker, the Managing Director of Black Prince Holidays - an excellent choice! [see p.22].

### JANUARY COMMITTEE

• Linda Palmer and Steve Delacourt-Smith both agreed to be co-opted onto the Council of Management as did Tom Bennett. They were made very welcome.

• Arrangements were in hand for the Southern Canals Association who were to visit the Canal for their meeting at the end of March. [Report; p.19]

• Hereford and Worcester County Council had made a grant of £500 which was greatly appreciated.

• Tom and Marjorie Bennett had agreed to share Press and Publicity duties with another couple - the latter yet to be found. This was welcomed.

• A special meeting of the Council of Management had agreed to establish a "Special Projects Group" to examine all options relating to Oxenhall Cottage, Lock and Aqueduct.

Linda Palmer agreed to draft terms of reference which would then be considered at the next meeting of the Council of Management.

• Following a request from a local resident the excavator and dumpers, previously parked in the field opposite the cottages at Oxenhall, would be parked elsewhere.

• The co-ordination of restoration activities within Gloucestershire was, in future, to be undertaken by Steve Delacourt-Smith.

• In Herefordshire the Restoration Group were still searching for leaks on the Yarkhill Project Site.

• Discussions were ongoing with a landowner regarding the proposed footpath diversion in Gloucestershire.

• The Monthly Social Events were proving to be a great success; the programme through to May was endorsed. The use of a regular day and venue was considered to be a major benefit.

• After some delay the Data Protection Registrar had now issued our registration number.

### FEBRUARY COMMITTEE

• Detailed budgets for the next Financial Year (prepared by the Finance Committee) were considered and agreed by the Council of Management.

## Committee Matters . . . (v)

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- In Gloucestershire the restoration Group had reached agreement with the relevant landowner to remove a small number of trees before the nesting season.

- A long weekend of muck shifting was agreed in Gloucestershire for mid-March.

- The Restoration Group reported a joint meeting where progress was reviewed.

- A varied programme of coach trips for Members and friends was put forward by Mike Potts and Joyce Lynham.

- Council agreed that memorials to Members would only be placed on land that was subject to a formal landowner Agreement. It was hoped that the first suitable site could be agreed later in the year.

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- The Special Projects Group [see last months Council of Management report] were pressing Forest of Dean District Council for costings relating to the repair of the various structures. These had been promised but not yet received. The terms of reference for the Group were agreed.

- The Canal Trust had been consulted on a number of Planning Applications; instead of the supermarket development at the Over Hospital site 44 houses were now the subject of a Planning Application; in Hereford City five Planning Applications were under discussion with the City Council - in all cases the line of the Canal was being respected although the Gloucestershire proposals were considered to require further negotiation. Liaison was continuing.

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## Christmas Dinner

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The log fire at **The Barnhouse** gave out a welcoming heat on the 1st December when some 20 Members and friends gathered for our Christmas Dinner.

The Barnhouse has been the venue for a number of very important meetings with local authorities and other bodies in 1995. This was our first social visit - by the comments made it will not be our last!

Whilst enjoying coffee and mince pies at the end of the meal

Tim Parker, Managing Director of **Black Prince Holidays** gave an entertaining insight into one of the leading inland waterways holiday operations.

As we enjoy ongoing support [see p.4 for details of the *Grand Holiday Draw*; the first prize kindly donated by **Black Prince**] we shouldn't repeat many of the stories - such as the comment made by a potential hirer who described a rival firms tongue and grooved cabin lining as "*just like my garden shed*"!

 CRP




## Committee Matters . . . (vi)

- Our Member who had been kindly providing an address in Gloucestershire for the Canal Trust was moving and the address was no longer available. The use of a consistent PO Box number had been considered but it was not possible to have one in each county (with re-direction to a single address) and the annual costs were high. For the time being only the Herefordshire address would be publicised as it was considered unwise to keep changing the address on all of our promotional material, membership application forms and in *The Wharfinger*.

- The wording of a sign to be erected on the Herefordshire restoration sites was discussed.

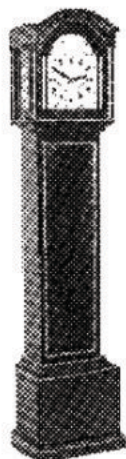
- The Trading Company was finalising an ambitious list of promotional/sales events for the year. A number of new venues were included. [see p.5].

- A request had been made for a contribution towards the costs of a study to be undertaken by the Gloucester Harbour Trustees into the proposals for a new weir on the River Severn. A location downstream of the "Lower Parting" would bring substantial benefits to the Canal by providing a safer access from the River Severn [see article by Mike Ayland on p.16-17 of Edition 48]. Whilst supported in principle by the Canal Trust additional information was required. 

---

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# 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,*

I am writing in response to your request in the winter edition for members' views on towpath restoration. Whilst it would be 'nice' to be able to accommodate other potential users of the towpath it appears to me that common use would give rise to more than one conflict of interests. I would certainly not want cyclists and am not sure about horse riders because of the damage which horse riding could cause.

I would have thought that the Trust would chose to be single minded in pursuit of restoring the Canal, to the exclusion of anything else which may add to the cost.

Can the Trust afford anything other than a basic towpath?

*Clifford N. Burken, Hereford*

*Dear Editor,*

Nice to see that the towpath is receiving some coverage in *The Wharfing*, even if its only because its causing problems! There is no easy answer of course to the question of which users you should accommodate - even BW haven't worked it out yet. Before I continue, I have to confess to a lamentable lack of firsthand knowledge of the H&G, particularly on the various land ownership issues.

By discouraging horses and cyclists (with gates, stiles, etc.), you can also discourage motorbikes, though you will probably find you are also deterring wheelchairs. Is there

sufficient demand, especially outside the main four towns, for disabled access at this relatively early stage in the restoration? Consider how difficult it will be to deter horses, cycles, motorbikes if you make the towpath wheelchair friendly.

If you have long sections with a free rein of who to admit, then you should consider all potential users. If you deter cycles you are bucking a trend, though even BW will admit there remain problems with allowing them on the towpath. My feeling is that while you are still working on restoration you may be inviting accidents and litigation. Walkers are generally adept at avoiding obstacles, plant, holes, etc. but cyclists and horses may not be. By all means reconsider when the restoration is done, where it may be practical to allow them.

Horses are generally person non grata (or is that equina non grata) on towpaths and I personally go along with Brian Fox's view that a suitable surface for horses is unsuitable for other users, particularly those with two wheels (cyclists) or four (disabled). If you are lumbered with a public bridleway on any section there is not much you can do about it (it also of course gives a right of passage to cyclists as well as horses) but otherwise I would follow BF's line and say no. Reconsider when you get the horse-drawn trip-boat! From the point of view of what you are trying to achieve by allowing Joe Public on the towpath (support, interest, appreciation, potential work-party members, justification



# Letters to the Editor

for public funding) my guess is that you would get precious little from equestrian users, whereas the other categories *should* yield you a return.

Regarding the various practical issues, I'm not sure that I would reduce the width of the navigation just to allow a cyclepath to run along the towpath, but that is up to you - from our point of view the wider the path the better. I would personally go for stiles to deter all but walkers while you are restoring sections, possibly replacing with gates once restoration is complete, to allow cycles you can get lockable ones that would allow you to admit wheelchairs (if the user had a key). As I would discourage horses (assuming you are not lumbered with a public bridleway or an equestrian landowner you want to suck up to!) then your chippings are probably an option. You can always go for something more heavy duty if cycling takes off at some point in the future. Cost-wise we are not exactly taking irreversible decisions, in the context of restoration as a whole.

*Andy Screen,  
Towpath Action Group*

*Dear Editor,*

I refer to the article entitled "the Towpath - Chip or Chop" in the Edition 49 of *The Wharfinger* and as requested I am writing to express my views on the matter.

I do not have a technical mind but, to me, David Penny's article and the points he makes are most convincing. We appear to have a heaven-sent opportunity to advance the restoration of the Canal (or, at

least, the towpath) at absolutely no cost and this should be seized with open arms.

The very material needed for the job is available in unlimited quantities as a by-product of our activities. If there is any surplus this can probably be bagged and sold at open days. It is only a pity the idea was not thought of years ago.

It seems to me that here we have a "no-lose" situation with all "pros" and no "cons". What a wonderful idea - I suggest it be put into practice immediately!

*J.A. Owen, Hereford*

*Thank you very much for the above letters - I am sure we will have more to say on the subject in the next edition of **The Wharfinger**, please keep your letters flowing!*

A couple of comments on the above letters. Contrary to Andy Screen's comments a woodchip surface is actually ideal for not just walkers and cyclist but also for horses, and serves to prevent damage from all users. We must not lose track of the potential damage from motorbikes, but we are very lucky in being so rural and, in general, this is hopefully not a major problem. There is probably no single answer for the whole towpath - after all the user base in the centre of Hereford and in Monkhide village is probable going to be rather different in what they want from the Canal and in their numbers.

We must remember, however that we are restoring the Canal and its towpath for the benefit of the whole community not just the largest group or the one that we think will benefit us the most.

 **DRP**

# Membership Matters

## 700 PLUS !

The Spring of 1996 saw our paid up Membership cross the 700 level; an excellent achievement that is a great encouragement to all of the volunteers who put so much time and effort into the Canal Trust. Thanks are also due to those (increasing) number of Members who have become Life Members, those who pay by Standing Order or Continuous Credit Card Authority - and those who pay by cheque *on time* - this greatly reduces the work of our team.

By far the greater number of our annual renewals of Membership still fall due in and around April. If you pay annually by cheque or Postal Order *please* check your label to see if your Membership is due for renewal; it will save us the time, effort and cost of issuing a reminder!

## LABEL CODE

The label "code" is quite simple - the bottom line of italic numbers show the year *when renewal is due* followed by the month. For example 96.4 indicates that renewal is due this April; 97.3 paid up until March of 1997. The amount due depends on your category of Membership; the italic letters before the renewal date give this information:- SC=Senior Citizen; JSC=Joint Senior Citizen; I=Individual Member; F=Family/Joint M'ship.

[The code is not (yet) in use for Corporate Memberships.] To make your life simpler a Renewal form is on the back of the AGM Report (page iv).


## COVENANTS

Please remember that, as a Registered Charity, we can recover tax that you have already paid and increase the value of your subscription if you sign a Covenant Form [available from the Hereford address]. To those who already do so, *thank you*.

## DONATIONS

Thank you, most sincerely, to those Members (a high proportion) who enclose a donation with their subscription; this is greatly appreciated and assists us in continuing with our restoration and promotion work at a time when our grant aid bids are largely directed towards the essential independent Consulting Engineers Reports.

## CONTACT ADDRESS

As noted in *Committee Matters* we no longer have a contact address for the Canal Trust in Gloucestershire. *Please* send all Membership correspondence to H&G Canal Trust, 6, Castle Street, Hereford, HR1 2NL. This is an ideal opportunity to thank Jim Dunn for continuing to give us the benefit of his letterbox in Hereford. 





## S.P.G.

The Special Projects Group was formed in January to investigate future options for the 'Oxenhall Locks Site', which includes the Lock Cottage, and rapidly deteriorating Aqueduct. It was formed with a target of 9 months to report back to the Council of Management - now it is that number of weeks! Following recent action by Forest of Dean D. C., the Landowner, and the Canal Trust matters have taken a faster pace than anyone could have imagined. Hopefully this spirit of co-operation of all parties will lead to a solution to the long saga of this site.

A very great deal is happening 'behind the scenes' and we hope to report fully in the next edition of **The Wharfinger**.

The committee is in the capable stewardship of Linda Palmer, and in addition to myself, includes 3 new faces to the organisational side of the Trust in Roger Tutt, Richard Hamblin, and Peter Moore.



## Next Step

During 1995 there were a number of meetings with the Local Authorities, NRA, and others. This Steering Committee has now met on 6 occasions and in the middle of last year concluded it was essential that detailed Consultants Reports were commissioned, covering the whole Canal, and encompassing a detailed Engineering Study; Water Resources Study; limited Environmental Assessments; and a detailed Cost Benefit Analysis.

Members of the Steering Committee reported in January that some £55,000 was now committed. A very major step forward - but with a considerable amount left to secure. The next step is to commission the first element of the reports, the Water Resources Study, this will then be utilised to secure the remaining funding for the other Studies. After the Studies ? Large scale Grant Aid bids...

To all who have supported this, *our thanks*



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YOUR chance to own a H & G Canal sweatshirt at a bargain price!  
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Please contact David Penny [01432 820420] to secure your bargain!

last few

hurry!

# The Wharfinger

## 50 PLUS

This is the 50th Edition of **The Wharfinger** - or is it? Strictly speaking it's the 51st as there were two issues bearing the number 20 (Summer and Autumn 1988)! We thought that Members old and new would appreciate a brief look back over these past issues [*commencing on p.10 and to be continued in future Editions*]; we also hope to occasionally reprint some of the previous items which deserve a wider audience.

## POSTMASTER THANKS

Many Canal Trust tasks "behind the scenes" can so easily be taken for granted. Our "Wharfinger Postmasters" are typical of this as they spring into action four times a year (*usually at short notice*) and do their utmost to get everything in the envelopes, and to the Sorting Office, with minimal delay. So thank you to Derek & Margaret Gray; Ian & Francis Roper; and Brian & Margaret Sanderson and family.

## STILL LOOKING !

To quote a well known television personality we "*don't believe it!*". No less than three pleas for a volunteer to co-ordinate retail sales of **The Wharfinger** have left this relatively simple task unfilled. What is more it has

great potential for a volunteer (perhaps a couple?) to expand this important side of our promotional work, *at their convenience*. We know that a number of important contacts have been established as a result of casual purchases of **The Wharfinger** from a local shop/garage etc. and *it is important that we maintain and develop these outlets*. The main activity is just a few days four times a year. Further details from either Joyce Potts or Lesley Lowe.

## ENVELOPES DONATED

Our thanks are also due to Tony Ducroq, Dwr Cymru-Welsh Water's Office and Public Relations Manager (SE) for agreeing to Sponsor (*once more*) all of the envelopes used to dispatch **The Wharfinger** throughout 1996. This helps us to reduce our administration overheads and to concentrate funds on other aspects of our work and is greatly appreciated.

## PRINT PLUS

The last 7 Editions of **The Wharfinger** (plus our **Grand Holiday Draw** tickets, etc.) have been printed by **Print Plus** in Hereford; our thanks to everyone at **Print Plus** for always achieving our deadlines and for working to a high standard at a very competitive price.

<b>COPY DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT EDITION IS SATURDAY, 15th JUNE</b>
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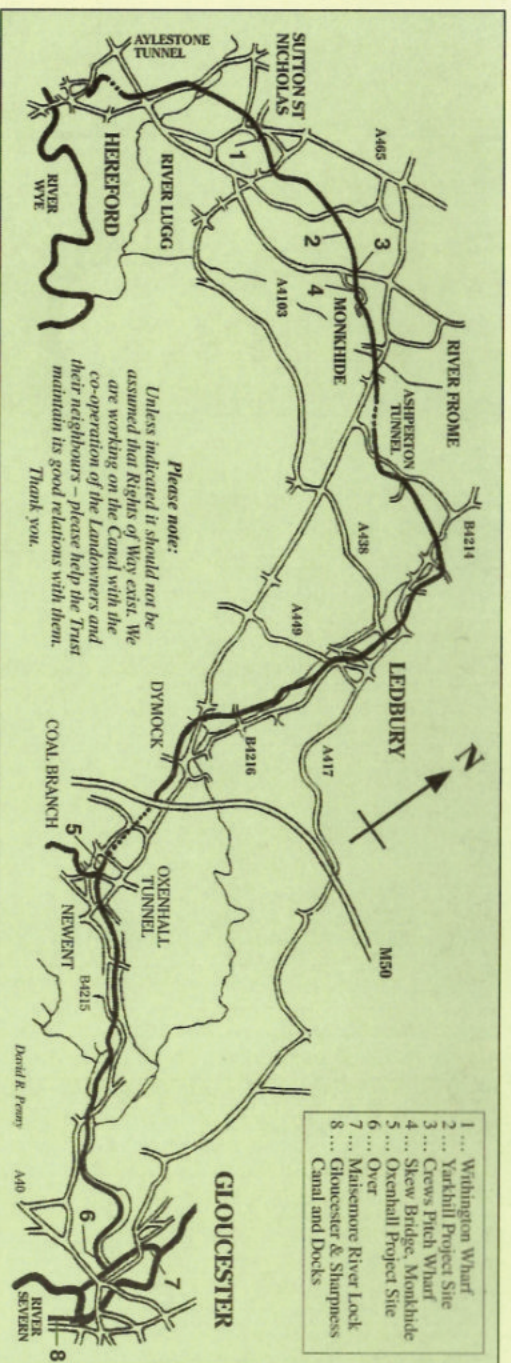
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# THE HEREFORDSHIRE AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL



Work started in 1792 but was not completed until 1845, making this the last major route built in Britain, but for the navigations of Birmingham and the Manchester Ship Canal. The Canal stretched for 34 miles from the River Severn at Gloucester, via Newent, Dymock and Ledbury to the City of Hereford utilising some 22 locks and 3 tunnels. The Canal was formally closed in 1881 to allow construction of the Ledbury to Gloucester railway and this in its turn was closed by Dr Beeching in 1964.

The Canal Society was formed in 1983 and replaced in 1992 by the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust, a registered charity. The Trust has an ordinary and corporate membership exceeding 700 from all over the country – and abroad! Our objective is to fully restore the 34 mile Canal, from its connection with the 2,500 mile inland waterways network at Gloucester to the centre of Hereford. A Steering Committee of the Local Authorities, Environment Agency, etc. has been formed by the Trust to assist in progressing this objective. We have a major restoration site in each county, which together extend to some 3 miles.