

# The Wharfinger

Newsletter of the  
Herefordshire and  
Gloucestershire  
Canal Trust



**Edition 51 • Autumn 1996**  
**50p – free to members**

# WHO DOES WHAT . . .

VICE PRESIDENTS		<i>R. E. Barnes TD, Sir John Knill Bt.</i>
CHAIRPERSON		Linda Palmer
VICE CHAIRMEN		Brian Fox, Tom Bennett
FINANCE:-	Treasurer/Chairman Committee	Liz Connors Brian Fox, Lesley Lowe, David Penny, Nigel Jefferies
RESTORATION:-	Gloucestershire Herefordshire Plant & Training Manager	Steve Delacourt-Smith, <i>Simon Hayward, Ray Moses</i> Brian Fox, Mike Potts, Tom Bennett Tom Bennett
SPECIAL PROJECTS:- [Oxenhall Locks Site]	Chair Vice-Chair Committee	Linda Palmer, David Penny <i>Roger Tutt, Peter Moore, Richard Hamblyn,</i> Steve Delacourt-Smith, <i>Paul Johnson,</i> <i>Shawn Price, Bill Cronin (FoDDC)</i>
TRUST ADMINISTRATOR		Lesley Lowe
LOCAL AUTHORITY LIAISON		David Penny
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	Steve Delacourt-Smith Mike Potts, <i>Joyce Potts</i>
MINUTES SECRETARY		Tony Austin-Bailey
WHARFINGER:-	Editors Postmasters:- Leader Team	Cliff Penny, David Penny <i>B &amp; M Sanderson &amp; family</i> <i>D &amp; M Gray; I &amp; F Roper;</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]**

*H & G*

**DONATING ALL PROFITS**  
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CHAIRMAN	David Penny
TREASURER/MANNING	Liz Connors
EXHIBITIONS CO-ORDINATOR	Steve Hughes
TRADE LIAISON/MINUTES	Joyce Potts
BOAT GROUP REPRESENTATIVE	<i>Derek Gray</i>

LOGISTICS GROUP Steve Hughes, *Chris & Mark Blunden, Steve Gittins*

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.

## *Straight from the Chair*

I think that most of you were aware that Cliff Penny had decided to stand down as Chairman for the Trust at this year's AGM. Cliff had been in the post for 6 years and I am sure that you will all wish to acknowledge the amount of work that Cliff has done and the progress that he has achieved for the Trust. Under his professional guidance, and with his enthusiasm and commitment, the Trust has well and truly been put on the national map. I am sure that you will understand, therefore, that it was almost an impossible task to find a willing replacement as he is such a hard act to follow.

After much debate (*at least an hour and a half*) and with some reluctance - and, I am sure, against my better judgment, I have agreed and have been duly elected to take over the reins. I must stress that my reluctance is not due to lack of commitment, but I am concerned that I may not be able to give the position all the time that it deserves, particularly (as you will hear shortly), with all the major developments that are about to take place. However, with the support of the rest of the Committee and you the Members I will give it my best shot until a suitable replacement can be found (*anyone out there with a burning ambition please apply forthwith!*).

The other people duly elected include Tom Bennett and Brian Fox as Vice Chairmen (in addition to their other responsibilities as Plant Manager

and Co-ordinator for Hereford end restoration, respectively). Liz Connors as Treasurer, Lesley Lowe as Administrator, Cliff and David Penny as Joint Editors of **The Wharfinger** and Town and Country Planning Liaison, Tony Austin-Bailey as Minutes Secretary, Nigel Jefferies as Membership Secretary, Steve Delacourt-Smith as Social Events Organiser and Co-ordinator for Gloucestershire end restoration, Mike Potts as Trips Organiser and Will Frecknall as IWA representative. Thanks go to them all for agreeing to undertake a further term of office.

The exciting news is that the Trust Council of Management at their meeting on 13th June agreed to proceed with the acquisition of the Oxenhall site including lock cottage, lock and aqueduct and associated stretch of the Canal. This is a major development for the Trust and it is to be supported by a **Waterway Recovery Group Dig Deep Project** later in the year. It is obviously early days yet, but you will all be kept informed of developments as and when they occur (*look out for the next edition of The Wharfinger*).

I would at this point like to acknowledge the work of the **Special Projects Group** who undertook the research necessary to enable the Trust Council to reach an informed decision. The group included: David Penny, Steve Delacourt, Roger Tutt, Peter Moore, Richard Hamblin, Paul Johnson and Shawn Price and Bill Cronin

## *Straight from the Chair . . . continued*

as Liaison Officer for FODDC. The **Special Projects Group** will continue with responsibility for the management of the project. Alan Lines and Tom Bennett have already agreed to join the group; *if there are others of you who would be interested, please let me know.*

With negotiations afoot in respect of another major project the work of the Trust will inevitably need to "move up a gear". In order to spread the workload, greater involvement of more Members would be

appreciated. *If you feel able to contribute, in any way, please contact any member of the Trust Council; we will be pleased to hear from you.*

Well, I must away - I've got a lot to learn and a lot to do. If any of you would like to offer me advice, guidance or suggestions I am willing to listen and, if I can promise you nothing else, I will do my best to represent the best interests of the Trust.

*Linda Palmer*  
*Chairperson*

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## *Editorial*

Any good Editor (*who wants to keep their job !*) will welcome a new Chairperson; but, in this case there are other good reasons to welcome Linda to the "hot seat" - the fact that she so ably "Chaired" the **Special Projects Group** (*a fact that she overlooked in her praise of others !*); it has to be good for the helm to transfer to Gloucestershire for a while (*after 13 years in Herefordshire*) and - I have to be very careful how I say this - it really is good to see a lady "in charge"!

Hopefully the long-running saga of Lock Cottage etc. is at a vital stage in securing sympathetic restoration of the cottage and with the Canal and lock in the ownership of the Canal Trust. However, whilst we always strive to keep our Members and supporters informed there are times when it really does pay not to say too much until the essential legal formalities are

completed [*see "Confidentiality - and Common Sense"; p.8*]. Unfortunately banner headlines in the **Gloucester Citizen** - "**Have my Cottage Offer by Former Canals Boss**" - were somewhat premature and could yet prejudice a successful outcome. At the time of writing (mid July) nothing has been formally signed; hopefully the next edition of **The Wharfinger** will be able to carry full details.

Oxenhall is not the only location in the news at present - although it deserves to be with all the efforts currently underway by **Restoration Group** (they are mounting a massive offensive to get all of the silt removed on the approach to the Tunnel Portal) [*see p.14*]. In May we were given the opportunity to have three Post Graduates (from **Birmingham University Civil Engineering Department**) to undertake a five week desk-top water resources study of the

## Editorial . . . continued

whole of the Canal. This was greatly appreciated; as was the extensive co-operation of the **Environment Agency** (West Midlands Region). Further work by the University is now in hand and will be of great assistance in consolidating our case for the independent professional studies for which we hope to raise the balance of funds this year.

A few weeks later the Company that have submitted the Outline Planning Application to develop the Over Hospital site agreed to pay our reasonable costs in undertaking an intense weekend of slit trenches to confirm the (buried) alignment of the Canal on the edge of the site [see "*Restoration Update*" p.14]. Negotiations are continuing

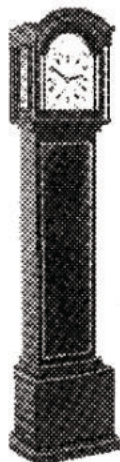
regarding the layout of the development that is proposed adjacent to the Canal; hopefully there will be more details in a future issue of **The Wharfinger**. Meanwhile, at the other end of the Canal, in Hereford, the Developer of an industrial site has agreed to amend the location of two buildings to leave more room for a vital essential diversion route for the Canal.

And that is not all! These are just the *unusual* happenings in the past three months. The more ordinary work of the Canal Trust continues apace - and as our previous Chairman kept on saying in his last few months of office - it is an exciting time - just *be patient*, have confidence, and *watch this space* !

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## "PUT THE CLOCK BACK"

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## NOTICEBOARD



*Restoration volunteers undertaking trial excavations at Over Hospital in June - see Restoration Update*

### 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 Liz Connors to discuss how you can assist us at these key publicity & fundraising opportunities. *Thank you. David R Penny*

### CAKES!

As you will see from the list alongside we have two Canal Trust Craft Fairs this year. Both of these events will feature cream teas and a home made cake/biscuit stall.

As you may have worked out in order to make this a success we need some home made cakes and biscuits, PLEASE! Please speak to either Lesley Lowe or Liz Connors to discuss requirements and collection. Thank you.

*David R Penny*

### PROMOTIONAL/SALES EVENTS

We hope to attend the following:-

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

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

October 26th:  
Craft Fair, Ledbury  
&

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

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

*Liz Connors*

# Committee Matters

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

## MARCH COMMITTEE

- The Special Projects Group had presented a very comprehensive report containing five recommendations to the Finance Committee regarding the Oxenhall Lock Cottage site. Further information had been requested; a special meeting of the Council of Management would consider the report, and the additional information, at a meeting in April.

- The Chairman reported that a landowner was willing to sign a Landowner Agreement with the Canal Trust provided landowners who had not signed a Landowner Agreement were restricted from navigating the restored Canal. It was intended that this would introduce an additional long term benefit to landowners (in addition to routine maintenance, insurance etc.) once their length of the Canal had been restored. After careful consideration it was agreed that all future Agreements should include a clause to ensure that the Canal Trust had proper control over navigation (pending the introduction of Byelaws). This would mean that all the landowners who signed Landowner Agreements would have the benefit of navigation over adjacent restored lengths not in their ownership.

- Arrangements for the AGM were discussed. It was the turn

of Vice President Major Robert Barnes to host the meeting; as he would be on holiday it was agreed that the Chairman would undertake a dual role at this, his last AGM.

- Subject to certain conditions the Canal Trust agreed to donate £250 to the Gloucester Harbour Trustees towards the costs of the feasibility study into the proposed new weir on the River Severn downstream of the "Lower Parting" [see *M. Ayland's article p.16 of Ed. 48*].

- Arrangements for hosting the Southern Canals meeting at the end of March were confirmed [see *"Lots of experience!", p.19 of Ed. 50*].

## APRIL COMMITTEE

- A considerable amount of time was taken in reviewing the duties of the Chairman of the Canal Trust. It was generally agreed that a number of important aspects of the role should remain with whoever was the future postholder whilst some others should be undertaken by others - if they had appropriate experience and were willing! It was considered essential to reduce the load resting on whoever was "at the helm".

- The Special Projects Group was thanked for all of their

## Committee Matters . . . (ii)

detailed work, to restricted timescales, in respect of the Oxenhall Lock Cottage site. After careful consideration the Group was asked to investigate a number of issues and report back to the Council of Management.

- It was reported that the Finance Committee had elected Liz Connors as their Chairman; this was warmly welcomed by everyone *[with the possible exception of Liz herself! - Ed.]*.

- The Restoration Group reported very wet weather (as usual) for the concentrated "muck-shift" on the approach to Oxenhall Tunnel in mid-March. A consequence was that the site and immediate surroundings were rather muddy; including the Right of Way along the towpath. It was agreed that the Restoration Group would arrange a conducted tour of both restoration sites (Gloucestershire and Herefordshire) for the Council of Management so that progress and future objectives could be discussed on site.

- Our total Membership was reported as just having broken the 700 barrier.

- Our discussions with a landowner in Gloucestershire, regarding the diversion of a Right of Way, had culminated in a special Agreement being drafted by the Trust to restrict the need for an additional bridge in the area when the Canal is restored. The objection to the footpath would be withdrawn.

### MAY COMMITTEE

- The Special Projects Group reported that a decision was imminent as to whether or not the Waterway Recovery Group "Dig Deep" initiative would select the Oxenhall Lock Cottage site as one of their projects. A decision would be made later in May and it was agreed that the final recommendations of the Special Projects Group would be tabled at the June Council of Management when a conclusion would be reached. *[See "Straight from the Chair" on p.1; due to the lag in approved minutes you sometimes read it first elsewhere in The Wharfinger!]*

- As this was the last Council of Management with Cliff Penny as Chairman he took the opportunity to thank all of the Council of Management for their support and encouragement over the past 6 years.



### *It's a Gift !*

*One (or more !) may solve your gift problem AND help our sales figures to climb:-*



Brass plaque of Skew Bridge: £5.95 + 80p

The Hereford and Gloucester Canal - illustrated book of the Canal - updated 1994: £6.95 + £1



Car sticker: 45p + stamp

*H&GCS, "Coppice", Burley Gate, Hereford, HR1 3QS*

# DIRECTOR'S SPOTLIGHT

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

*Liz Connors, Trust Treasurer and ...*

Hello, my name is Liz Connors and I am going to try and give you a brief outline of my involvement in the Trust and the Trading Company.

I am married to Roger and we have a Golden Retriever called Oliver. Between them, Roger and Oliver help out; particularly when I'm not there - they manage to answer the phone, take messages, pass them on (usually), bark at the postman when he staggers up the drive with all the H&GCT letters. (*I'm still not sure which of them does what as I'm not there to watch!*). And even when I am there I get lots of help - Oliver plays quite a large part in any meetings we have at home - allowing any member of Council to play with his squeaky toys and usually ending up by sitting on someone's feet!

How did I get involved? I've always been interested in canals and all of the family enjoy holidays on a boat (I enjoy the scenery and the history, Roger enjoys the pubs, and *Ollie just loves all of it*). So we joined the Society as it was then, in 1990, and I made the mistake of saying that I wouldn't mind getting a little bit more involved - *and all the rest is history as they say*.

So what does being Treasurer involve? I guess in broad terms it

means knowing how much money the Trust has *and making sure we don't spend something we haven't got!* At the beginning of each year - our financial year runs from March to February - the Finance Committee (of which I am the Chairman) agrees with the Council Members responsible for Restoration, Social Events, Tours and Outings, Press and Publicity, Membership and The Wharfinger, their budgets

for expenditure and, *most important*, forecasts for income from Membership, Social Events, Tours and Outings and the Fundraising Officer.

We review the income and expenditure to make sure it is in balance, and that the planned activity fits in with the overall strategy for the Trust. Once it is all agreed then it is down to me to make sure the Accounts balance on a monthly basis and that the information is summarised for the Council of Management. Also that the Accounts are in a format which I hope makes the life of our Honorary Auditor reasonably easy. Of course, once a year it's time to present the Accounts to the AGM.

Part of the role of the Treasurer is also dealing with anything to do with insurance for the Trust.

I am also a member of the Trading Company which means I am part of the team which plans



## Director's Spotlight . . . continued

the sales events that we are going to attend. We try and come up with a good mix of local events, and events which are waterways related. My particular role is co-ordinating the helpers who are going to run the stand - *and we're always happy to have any offers of help.* The function of the Trading Company is to raise funds for the Trust and we are constantly reviewing our stock and our sales to make sure we're doing the best job possible. Of course, there are the **Grand Holiday Draw** Tickets which start to arrive through the post-box in early March right up until the last minute - *no wonder we see the postman every day!* I've even been known to turn my hand to a bit of catering (with a lot of help from the Team).

I have a bit to do with Membership. When I get the

bank statements, I check all the standing orders - 5 pages of them in April! Then I pass all the details to Nigel Jefferies, the Membership Secretary, so that he can update the records, and get in touch with anyone where there is a query - *thank you again to those who have overpaid by mistake and then said keep it as a donation!* Lastly I look after the Covenants.

*So what else do I do?* I work in the Sales and Marketing Department at **Sun Valley Foods Ltd.** as Business Planning Manager. In any spare time that I get I enjoy reading and gardening and walking with Oliver and I also have two 1/12 scale dolls houses which I am busy decorating and furnishing.

*And no, I don't have much spare time at all!*

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## Confidentiality - and Common Sense

With more and more going on within the Canal Trust (and Trading Company) it is good to see a number of new people becoming involved; not just within the Council of Management but within the various Committees and Sub Committees that are becoming essential to our work.

This means that more and more people are becoming actively involved in the "behind the scenes" work - again a good thing! However, *three times within three weeks*, outwardly innocent remarks (*by three different people*) led to details

of delicate negotiations being discussed in public places with potentially disastrous results.

It is absolutely essential, please, that anybody involved in our work stops to think - "is the matter being discussed public knowledge"? *If there is ANY doubt then it should ONLY be discussed with other members of your committee IN PRIVATE.*

There are a number of exciting developments in prospect - any of them could be prejudiced by premature public release. To ensure their success, it is **NOT** "good to talk!"



## 50 Editions On . . .

We continue our review of the earlier Editions of **The Wharfinger**. [Editions 1-15 were covered in Edition 50.]

**Edition 16**, Summer 1987, was an "Open Day Special Edition" published to celebrate an Open Day on the 28th June at Crews Pitch. A small steam launch was the pride of the day and for many it was the first opportunity to see trailable boats afloat on the Canal. The account of recent restoration activity referred to local Plant Hire Contractor Peter Ball's excavator "sinking" in the Canal - even he had not appreciated just how deep the mud and silt was! Four days later (amid much cursing) it was eventually recovered. This was the first edition to bear the title **The Wharfinger** - the first 15 being titled the **Hereford Wharfinger** - to reflect the fact that the Canal spans two counties not one.

Autumn 1987 edition, **number 17**, contained plans for our first visit to the annual National Waterways Festival - that year to be at Hawkesbury Junction. The (then) Secretary of the Canal Society, Richard Morley, published his views against total restoration of the Canal suggesting that "some relics" of the Canal might be retained near all of the main towns and villages and that restoration funds would be better directed to Bob Geldorf and Oxfam.

**Edition 18** saw Mike Potts respond positively to Richard Morley making his opposition known to such negative views; Mike pointed out that even short stretches were likely to be lost to future generations if there was not good reason for their retention. *"The leisure industry is the fastest growing industry in the country and we have a potential source of employment, not only in restoring the Canal but in the maintenance of it, canal side trade and on the Canal itself"* he wrote.

*"Four days later  
(amid much  
cursing) it  
was eventually  
recovered."*

The first edition of 1988, **number 19**, reported the first (of many) visits by the Waterway Recovery Group to the Canal; Sykes Pumps were helping out with water removal at Skew Bridge; Hereford and

Worcester County Council were undertaking parapet repairs to the bridge and the IWA presented the Canal Society with its (then) largest ever donation of £2,000.

**Edition 20** contained a very interesting map of transport routes in Herefordshire through the ages - tramways, rivers and (of course) the Canal. Editor Mike Potts tried to drop a large hint to missing contributors by leaving the restoration page blank. He was also planning yet more coach trips!

**Edition 20A [OOPS!]**, in the Summer of 1988, saw the Canal

## 50 Editions On . . . continued

Society attending (for the first time) a Southern Canals Association meeting and observing that most of the other restoration groups appeared to have been at it for a lot longer than we had *[it doesn't change - Ed.]* The first donations from Hereford City and South Herefordshire District Council were gratefully recorded. Amongst other things Richard Morley pointed out just how difficult restoration of the Canal immediately beyond Middle Court Bridge would be *[see Edition 48 for photographs of the opening ceremony - Ed.]*

Winter 1988 reported restoration continuing under Skew Bridge with a list of dates for future work plus proposals for a "work camp" the following Easter. Reference was made to the huge drain on finances that the hire of plant was causing; *if only we could get some of our own...*

The Spring edition in 1989 reported on preliminary clearance work that had been undertaken on the Canal behind what is now "Staniers Way" in Hereford. Proposals to restore the "Daffodil Line" railway (Ledbury to Gloucester), as a tramway, by the Leaden Valley Electric Railway Association, would be on the same alignment for much of the way and a meeting had been arranged to discuss the potential conflict. *[This proposal faded away*

*after a couple of years and the route is now protected for Canal reinstatement in the Local Plans - Ed.]* Mike Potts launched a Canal Society sweatshirt.

Edition 23 reported encouraging progress with restoration; the towpath had been completely reinstated beneath Skew Bridge, the Canal was apparently fully navigable from the main Worcester/Hereford road to Skew Bridge and initial dredging had just been completed as far as Middle Court Bridge. The new landing stage and slipway had also been completed at Crews

Pitch. Chairman Tony Austin-Bailey reported on a highly successful "Local Authority Promotions Day" when officials had been taken on a coach tour of the Canal followed by an afternoon of presentations at the

National Waterways Museum, Gloucester Docks. *The idea of forming a Charitable Trust was first discussed.*

The Canal Society's caravan had attended the National Waterways Festival at Waltham Abbey (near London) reported the Autumn 1989 edition of *The Wharfinger* - unfortunately profits were severely reduced due to the need to hire a van to transport promotional material and sales stock *[some things don't change! - Ed.]* There was a heart-felt plea for more people to become actively involved; £100 was donated by the Canal Society

*"the towpath  
had been  
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## 50 Editions On . . . continued

to the Inland Waterways Association's special "Derwent Appeal"; discussions were in hand with the Department of Transport's Consultants regarding the lack of provision for the Canal where it was to be crossed by the proposed Hereford Bypass.

The Winter edition (number 25) reported on the very successful "follow-up" meeting that had been held with representatives of all of the local authorities following the special "Promotions Day" earlier in the year. This meeting had been attended by at least one representative of each Council plus British Waterways and the (then) NRA. Representatives identified a number of action areas including *the creation of a Charitable Trust; the need for Landowner Agreements; protective and supportive Policies in the Local Plans; independent Consulting Engineers reports into various aspects of the proposed full restoration of the Canal.* Arrangements for the Society to mount a major display at the National Waterways Festival (to be held at Gloucester in 1990) were also announced.

*"the external image of the organisation was very important."*

Edition 26, Spring 1990, contained the first report on what was going on in the Committee - "Committee Matters" - since much copied by the newsletters of other Canal Societies and Trusts throughout the country! The edition also contained many pleas for assistance in organising the proposed major display at the forthcoming National Waterways

Festival at Gloucester and, in the best tradition, a sub-committee was promptly established for this very purpose. The Inland Waterways Association's offer to pay the legal costs of the creation of the Charitable Trust was

warmly welcomed. It was agreed that the external image of the organisation was very important and that the print quality of **The Wharfinger** should be improved; thanks were expressed to Mike Potts who had *"valiantly produced each issue for just a few pounds"*. Hereford City Council and Gloucester City Council had each pledged £500 to a *"Plant and Equipment Fund"* that Chairman Tony Austin-Bailey had launched a few months earlier.

■ CRP

TO BE CONTINUED...

### BACK ISSUES FOR SALE

We have a very limited number of back issues of **The Wharfinger** for sale (some of the earlier issues are photo-copies):-

Editions 1 to 10; 11 to 20 } Each set of 10 £5 + p+p\*

21 to 30; and 31 to 40 } \*p+p £1.50 set, max. £3 per order

Editions 41 to date, available individually at 50p a copy inc. p+p.

H&GCS, "Coppice", Burley Gate, Hereford, HR1 3QS

# *Dates For Your Diary*

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*By 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, 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.

## **Tuesday, 17th September**

*"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, 15th October**

*"Hatton Locks"*

Our Member Peter Ballard, who is British Waterways' Lock Keeper at Hatton, will give an illustrated talk on what is one of the most well known flights of locks in the country.

## **Tuesday, 19th November**

*"The Rideau Canal"*

Our Member Graham Ettles, will give our first illustrated talk on an "overseas canal".

## **Tuesday, 17th December**

*"Gloucester Barrage & The Stroudwater Navigation Co."*

By Member Mike Ayland - more details later.

 **THE SALES STAND WILL BE AT THE EVENTS MARKED** 

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 Steve 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].

# Mike & Joyce's Outings

By Mike & Joyce Potts

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

**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.

**Sunday, 8th September**

*"Coach Tour and Cruise - Shropshire Union Canal"*

By coach to the Shropshire Union Canal at Norbury Junction for a cruise and cream tea on the canal.

Fare £10.50

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

Please book early, payment must be received with bookings.

## WALKIES !

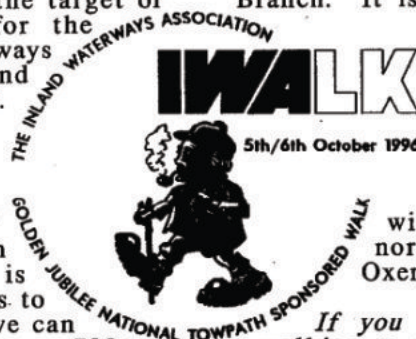
By Steve Gittins

1996 is the Golden Jubilee year for the Inland Waterways Association. To celebrate they are asking waterway groups to hold sponsored walks throughout the country with the target of raising £50,000 for the National Waterways Restoration and Development Fund.

There are 50 groups taking part nationally and we will keep half of what we raise in sponsorship, so it is in all our interests to raise as much as we can manage from our 700+ members, friends, and the local community!

Our walk is to be in the Newent/Oxenhall area - an opportunity for you to visit a

restored section of Canal and also to see the Lock Cottage that you have heard so much about recently. The return route will pass near to the line of the Coal Branch. It is hoped to offer a choice of 2 routes, one of 4 (ish) miles and one of 8 (ish) miles for the more energetic walkers. The second route will also take in the northern end of Oxenhall Tunnel.



If you are interested in walking to raise funds please contact Steve Gittins on (01432) 263931. If you don't fancy the walk we will also need marshals and people to help with refreshments. Please help - we need the money!

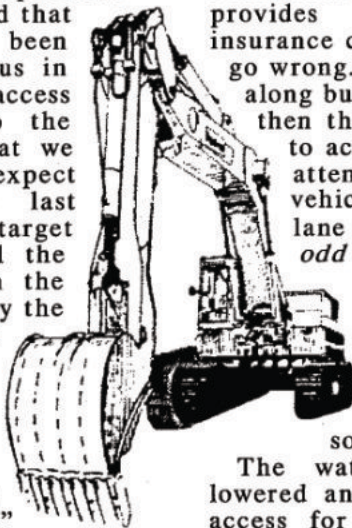
# RESTORATION UPDATE **HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

*By Brian Fox*

At a meeting of restoration volunteers from both camps it was decided to commit the majority of our efforts to the section at Oxenhall leading up to the Tunnel which was started some 4 years ago, and needs finishing quickly. We are not being put under any pressure but it was considered that Mr. Goulding had been very tolerant with us in keeping open an access down his field to the tipping site and that we couldn't reasonably expect this situation to last indefinitely. The target now is to clear all the remaining silt from the Canal and towpath by the end of the year then level the deposited material ready for sowing soon after. There is an old saying "you will never do it in a month of Sundays" but we reckon that we can do it in less than that given good weather, no major mechanical breakdowns, and enough of our volunteers to drive the three dumpers and an excavator.

Steve Delacourt, who recently took over the organising at the Gloucestershire end, is now compiling a rota of weekend work, Saturdays and Sundays where possible, until the end of the year *and is waiting for all our usual volunteers plus other interested persons to contact him with their available dates.*

There may be some who wish to help but cannot drive a dumper or are not insured through a WRG certificate - do not let that put you off - we can arrange the necessary tuition so that you can obtain a certificate which entitles you to drive on any restoration work site and provides all the required insurance cover should anything go wrong. If you wish to come along but do not wish to drive then there are opportunities to act as lookout and gate attendant where our vehicles cross a country lane - *and also make the odd cup of tea!*



A start has been made by cutting a ramp down from the towpath to the Canal bed, which is solid rock at this point.

The water level has been lowered and overall this makes access for the dumpers a lot easier and safer by allowing them to drive along the bed of the Canal instead of a risky manoeuvre along the narrow towpath. The excavator can also reach across the full width of the towpath and to the far bank which will need tidying before we can say we are finished.

At the same meeting we also identified three other tasks in Gloucestershire which need urgent attention:-

1. The Tunnel portal itself which is being rebuilt and needs to be

finished urgently again allowing Mr. Goulding full access to his fields.

2. The area above the portal which needs landscaping and more importantly a sand trap which needs to be built to stop sand from being washed off the adjacent fields, into a ditch, and down into the Canal.

3. The Lock, Lock Cottage, aqueduct, and adjoining Canal which, if all goes well, will take up a lot of our efforts over the next few months and years. [see pages 1 & 2].

Tasks 1 and 2 will be dependent on transporting the necessary bricks, sand, cement, etc. to the site which is not easily accessible and then organising enough volunteers to get the jobs done - perhaps during a long weekend canal camp in July/August. We do have our own cement mixer but there will necessarily be a lot of other manual work in moving the materials about the site. *Again, please keep in touch with Steve if you are interested.*

It is quite obvious that we will need to complete the first two tasks before starting on the third or our resources will be stretched to the limit.

There is one other task to report which was requested in the middle of May; planned and completed on the 12th June - a series of trial excavations to locate the route of the Canal at Over where the Canal began

with a deep lock to lift it out of the River Severn. There are plans to build houses adjacent to the Canal on the site of the Over Hospital which closed 3 years ago and the site owner needs to know the exact line of the Canal in order to locate the houses far enough away.

The ground contours had been significantly changed when the hospital was built in 1911 and it was calculated that any remains would be buried up to 4 metres deep. We were hoping to find traces of the aqueduct which took the Canal from the lock and over a mill stream, but it must have been totally demolished when a new approach road was built to the hospital. The top 4 ft. of the lock has been demolished but the rest is still intact under river silt with a massive willow, diameter about 6 ft., growing in the lock chamber.

A number of long and deep exploratory trenches were dug and the only remains of the bank walls, which were thought to have edged the Canal at this point, were traces of the old wharf wall foundations. The grey puddle clay lining the bottom was detected and followed to its limits so that we have now been able to produce a map showing the original line of the Canal with reasonable accuracy. We now await further developments and look forward to opening a new section of Canal in this most strategic position. *[This site is certain to feature in a future edition of The Wharfinger - Ed.]*

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

The only report on the Herefordshire section concerns maintenance of the towpath (i.e. mowing the grass)! We have now bought a secondhand sit-on mower to do the job and it is planned that it should be used to keep towpaths at Oxenhall as well as Monkhide/Yarkhill tidy. We do have a trailer to transport the mower between sites but we don't all have towing hitches so we are now looking for volunteers to move the machine between sites and do a bit of grass cutting now and then. It requires one man for one day *[our new Chairperson obviously has a long way to go in her political correctness campaign! - Ed.]* to complete the cut at Monkhide/Yarkhill and a bit less for Oxenhall, and it needs doing regularly to keep on top of it. *If anyone fancies a spell of grass cutting now and again then please contact me.*

Towpaths are the subject of some debate in **The Wharfinger** at the moment and I do not propose to summarise all the comments just yet but while on the subject of maintenance it is worth pointing out the difficulty that

can arise where the path is a bit soft and horses make impressions 3 - 5 inches deep in winter which dry out in summer and cause terrible problems to a mower trying to cut the grass. I am even more against horses on the towpath at the moment!

Herefordshire has not been totally ignored as far as restoration is concerned - we are hoping to have a long weekend canal camp at the end of September/beginning of October to make some finishing touches to the Yarkhill Project Site. This will involve widening the Canal in places, raising the towpath a few inches and levelling off, grading the far bank, trimming some of the larger trees which have become unsafe, and once again trying to sort out the elusive leak.

### — WANT TO GET INVOLVED ? —

Volunteers to assist in our restoration (and maintenance) work are always welcome. Please telephone:-

Steve Delacourt-Smith (01452) 501372

Brian Fox (01432) 358628

Simon Hayward (01452) 534232

Tom Bennett (01981) 500258

## RESTORATION UPDATE **GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

*By Steve Delacourt-Smith*

Brian's restoration report brings you up to date on most of what is happening at Oxenhall and the good news that the excavator is in sight of the Tunnel.

A bit of late news, however, is that the **London Waterway Recovery Group** are due to stay

with us (*sleeping on the floor of Oxenhall Church Hall*) for the last weekend in July. *[If it pours with rain you know who to blame! -Ed.]*

There will be a report on their voluntary efforts in the next edition of **The Wharfinger**.

# Memories

*We promised you some repeats of the interesting stories that were carried in the early days of The Wharfinger; this is adapted from Issues numbers 9 & 10 (published in the autumn and winter of 1985):-*

74 year old Bill Stinton lived all of his life in Newtown Road, Hereford, in a house backing on to the line of the Canal. The resourceful sub Editor/reporter for The Wharfinger who interviewed Bill in 1985 was our Member Dr Robin Andrews.

*Ed: You can't actually remember the Canal in use yourself?*

Bill: No, but my Dad could. It was open when he first came to live in Hereford.

*Ed: And he used to talk to you about it?*

Bill: Aye - about how the boys used to go skating on the old canal. I can remember it open as far as just above the old Gas Works. It was clear right out to Withington then, of course.

*Ed: What about this side of the Gas Works?*

Bill: Most of it had been filled in along here when the railways took over. They made short work of it.

*Ed: When did your father come here?*

Bill: My Dad came to live here about 1890 but he lived next to the Hearts of Oak pub for some years before that - in Mary Jane's Cottage - and that's going back a day or two!

*Ed: What did your father do?*

Bill: He was a lamplighter. He started when he was 16 and kept it up till 1913. He worked for the Gas Works for 49 years. The

Canal was working then, of course, in those days. I can remember when there was a footpath from the little bridge outside Painters factory - you can still see the hump in the roadway, there's a bridge there underneath all that tarmac - the Canal must have been pretty deep there. [In 1995 Midlands Electricity dug a deep trench for a new cable at this spot and the trench actually revealed part of the buried bridge - Ed.] I can remember the Canal being open and there were many allotments along in front of it between there and the Gas Works. Then there was a big embankment of stonework all the way right down to the water. It was open from there on up to the [Aylestone] Tunnel. It was a very steep embankment and you could walk on over the top of the tunnel.

*Ed: There was a towpath through the tunnel wasn't there - was it closed or could you walk through it?*

Bill: You could walk along if you could get down to it, it was sure to be 60 foot deep and you had a job to get down. My Dad said that he had walked through it once. He could remember when the barges used to come down, there was a dumping-place where the Technical College Annex is now. There was a bit of a quay where they could unload timber and things like that. They used to supply Groom's the Timber Merchants in Burcott Road. And of course the barges used to come on down here under the bridge [Widemarsh Bridge] at the back here and into the Essex Arms Meadow - that was the big basin where they used to pull up. I can

## Memories... continued

remember it open at the back of the Tile Works because I used to work there around 1932 when trade was so bad I couldn't get a job as a carpenter so I worked there making fireplaces. During the war I had the job of taking a fire pump down there. With the College Estate nearby they thought it a good idea to have a fire pump handy because there was always a constant supply of water fed off springs. Trouble was the pump could only pick up 22 foot and it was deeper than that so we had to make a roadway down to it, cut some trees down and put a barricade of the trees across some more trees to make a landing-place to put the pump on.

*Ed: That was at the Tile Works?*  
Bill: Yes, within 20 yards of the tunnel mouth.

*Ed: Do you have any particular stories about the Canal?*

Bill: Just after the first World War, about 1921, they started tipping a load of broken jam jars in the Canal - from the jam factory that was in Widemarsh Street. They were taking them down to the Canal by the ton. On this particular Friday night they got this wagon and got a bit too near the edge and the horse and

the wagon went over, and fell amongst all this glass. They had to destroy the horse down there. Then the question was how to get the horse and wagon back out. Now the only thing that they could get in those days was a traction engine belonging to Groom's the timber merchants; it had a crane on the back. So they had to bring the traction engine all the way around from Burcott Road, around this way, and down Mortimer Road just to get within 50 yards from where they started! They pulled the horse and cart out, no trouble at all, and it's sure to have been 40 or 50 foot deep where it was.

*Ed: We've talked about walking the canal from your home to the Tile Works. What about the other way - to where the Station is now? Was there anything left?*

Bill: Just meadows. It had been filled in - there was no water there. Except when the floods came, of course, then it flooded. Then there was always plenty of water about there, and in the old Canal itself.

*Ed: Where the Basin was - was there nothing left at all?*

Bill: That had been filled in by then. George and Tudor's [now

## The BIG prize DRAW!

We've gone to great lengths to get this Edition of *The Wharfinger* to you in order to remind you that there is just time to buy some (more?) **Grand Holiday Draw** tickets!

As you know this is our biggest single fund-raising effort of each year so please sell as many as you can!



The deadline for the return of ticket stubs (and the money!) to Liz Connors is **Saturday 17th**

**August** - so please do hurry, every pound really does count and, as the prizes have all been donated [see p.24], the maximum possible goes towards "matching funding" for grant aid.

## Memories . . . continued

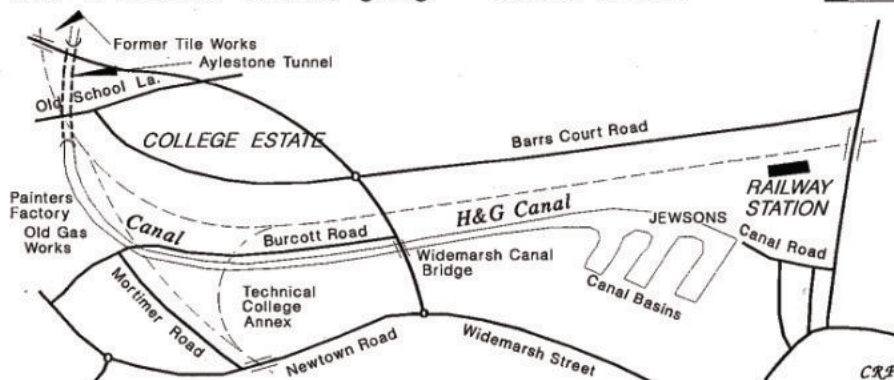
Jewson's] sheds used to come down to where the Basin was. Surplus water from the Canal passed into the brook to the Skinyards. As they wanted the water they opened the sluices and the water would go down into the tanks for treating the skins.

*Ed: Your father must have seen a lot of changes?*

*Bill:* The thing is, in Dad's day they used to do it all on foot. He used to be off by 4 o'clock in the morning for doubling - to put the lamps out. He was out again about 4 o'clock in the afternoon to put them back on again. In the daytime, when they had time to spare, they used to go around cleaning. Cleaning the lamps with a chamois leather, going

around with a ladder. The worst time of the year was the winter, the lamps didn't have trap doors in them and the regulators didn't turn on automatically, they used to have to get up there and light them themselves. In the bottom of the lamp it tapered down, so a 2 inch glass ball could run down and cover the hole at the bottom. Well, in the winter when the condensation got bad, it would freeze this ball in the hole, and they had to thaw it out. They might be there two hours trying to get this ball free before they could get the light on! Dad saw a good many changes - he saw the bicycles come in, the motor cars come into operation and the wireless as well!

• RA



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# Bits 'n Pieces

## BATS

Steve Delacourt-Smith reports that what is becoming our "annual wildlife" Social Evening [deer last year - bats this] was a huge success. David Priddis, from the Forest of Dean, is clearly a man who is not only fascinated by his chosen hobby but also has the rare gift of very quickly enthraling those present. Many probably hesitated about attending the meeting; those who decided to "give it a miss" certainly missed one of the highlights of our Social Events year.

Lesser speakers may have been daunted by having to compete with the England v. Holland football match and the enthusiastic cheers from the bar above our heads; but not David! Everyone who came appeared to enjoy his humour - a typical example being the slide of some modern houses described as "excellent bat boxes".

Some of us were lucky enough to see a bat in the car park afterwards; David produced a device that reduced the frequency of its call to human aural ranges and we watched and listened to it for several minutes.

## ALL MAPPED OUT

What do you do when, the day before your Social Evening, your guest speaker's wife has a serious car accident? Ever-resourceful our organisers showed a waterways video and we thought that it would be a short evening; however, we should not have underestimated the talents of our audience. "Would you like us to talk to you about our work - we Edit the *Nicholson's Ordnance Survey Guides to the Waterways*" said Members Jane and Jonathan Mosse.

As with many things in life it is all too easy to take for granted just how something like a specialist guidebook appears in print. There is far more to it than you think, and it certainly is a mammoth task, with many pitfalls, and amusing incidents, all in a days work. Thank you both for an impromptu and very interesting (fully unscripted!) "second half".

Our thanks, also, to Jane and Jonathan for donating a set of the three current "*Nicholson's Guides*" for us to use as a fund-raising item [see below for details - Ed].

## NICHOLSON'S ORDNANCE SURVEY GUIDE TO THE WATERWAYS

You don't have to be a boater to get full advantage from these detailed guides to the waterways! We have a copy of the latest (7th) edition (1995) volumes 1 (South); 2 (Central) & 3 (North) donated to us to raise funds. The three would cost you all but £30 in the shops. We are open to WRITTEN OFFERS for the set of 3, offers to be received by Saturday 14th September, please. Send to:-

H&GCS, "Coppice", Burley Gate, Hereford, HR1 3QS  
Please do NOT send any money - just your bid for the set of three.

## *Membership Matters*

We are very pleased to welcome two new Corporate Members;

**Withington Primary School  
Droitwich Boat Centre**


This brings our Corporate Membership to 26 in total.

Headmaster Nigel Topley fully appreciates that (due to Health and Safety as well as insurance restrictions) the School cannot become actively involved in the physical restoration of the Canal. However he feels that the children can gain considerably from the historical as well as the environmental aspects of the Canal and we welcome him, the staff and the pupils as our first educational Corporate Member.

For many years we enjoyed the Corporate support of what was Saraband at Droitwich. This has now become the Droitwich Boat Centre and we are very pleased that new owners Chris Hill and family have agreed to join us.

## *APH*

For once the Canal Trust are joining other organisations! We were approached by **The Association for the Promotion of Herefordshire** to join and willingly did so as they reflect our strongly held view that tourism is a vital part of the local economy.

APH is the coordinating body for the promotion of tourism in Herefordshire and this is an important alliance of which we are pleased to be a part. 



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## Committee Matters . . . (iii)

6<III ■ • Final arrangements were agreed for the AGM the following week. It was noted that the circulated papers should have included Tom Bennett under Agenda item 8 (*those co-opted during the year who are to be appointed as Directors of the Canal Trust*).

- It was noted from reports in the press that Forest of Dean District Council apparently intended to establish a gypsy site on the line of the Canal at Malswick. The proposals also affected the use of sites at Station Yard and Horsefair Lane (both with implications for the Canal). Contact with the Council revealed that the suggestions had not been discussed with the Planning Department - the situation will be monitored.

- Having very carefully considered the matter the Council of Management accepted a recommendation from the Finance Committee that the Canal Trust should register for VAT purposes.

- It was noted that the relevant Annual Accounts had been approved and recommended budgets were also endorsed.

- Restoration Group reported that substantial work on the ditches adjacent to the Canal at Yarkhill had been completed; a "new" ride-on mower had been put through its paces on the Herefordshire towpaths as had a "new" strimmer. Once again

heavy weed growth was a problem on the Canal in Herefordshire. A special meeting had been arranged for restoration volunteers, in Ledbury, at the end of May to discuss past and future work.

- A donation of £35 had been made by the Canal Trust to Southern Canals Association following their successful visit; this was to cover administrative expenses as the Association did not charge us a membership fee.

- Member Steve Gittins had responded to the request in the last Edition of **The Wharfinger** and was arranging the IWALK in October [see p.13] - this assistance was welcomed.

- The Council of Management complimented the Editors of **The Wharfinger** on the 50th Edition [thank you, also, to the Members who have expressed similar comments - Ed's.].

- It was reported that three Postgraduates from Birmingham University School of Civil Engineering were undertaking a "desk-top" water resources study for the Canal Trust. A preliminary report was expected within a few weeks. Further work by the University was anticipated. This initiative was greatly appreciated.

- The sign acknowledging the work of the Canal Trust at Crews Pitch Wharf had been removed by a person or persons unknown and could not be found.



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Joyce Potts, H&GCS Trade Liaison, tel. 01981 590372

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# The Last Page

## A NEW LOOK

As a number of Members and supporters have remarked, the last edition of **The Wharfinger** benefited from a new cover design (*thanks to John at Print Plus for exceeding our expectations*), and from some subtle internal changes as well. We try to remember that **The Wharfinger** is the only benefit that many of our Members receive for their subscription; and that it is our "ambassador" promoting the work of the Canal Trust to our supporters both locally and further afield.

A great deal of work goes into each issue and we try to include something for everyone. Over the years we know that we cannot please everybody - *but we do try!* If you consider a factual report rather "dry", please remember that a local Councillor may find it to be just the background information that they require in order to support us - and if something appears rather light-hearted then remember that one of our loyal "armchair Members" may want to raise a smile!

We welcome articles, letters and photographs - we don't guarantee to use every one but we will do our best. To those who have said that they liked the new look - *thank you.*

## THANK YOU

Our sincere thanks to the following for their *greatly appreciated* support:-

Dr J R West, The University of Birmingham School of Civil Engineering, for his help (and that of everyone else involved at the University) with the "desktop" water resources study that they are undertaking on our behalf. Thanks also Glen Millar and Rob Arrowsmith of **British Waterways**; Dr Roger Wade, Susannah Solway, John Arrowsmith and Rob Etheridge of the **Environment Agency** for their assistance to the University. *[More details in a future issue.]*

**Hereford City Council** for a grant of £300; **Hereford and Worcester County** for £500.

To all of our Members and Supporters who have bought and/or sold **Grand Holiday Draw** tickets; our thanks, also, to **Black Prince Holidays**; **British Marine Federation** and the **Royal Oak Hotel** for generously donating the holiday prizes.

Belated thanks to Member **Chris Clark** for making his driveway available as an overflow car park, and his Aga cooker to assist our catering team, for the Southern Canals meeting earlier this year.

**COPY DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT EDITION IS SATURDAY, 14th SEPTEMBER**

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

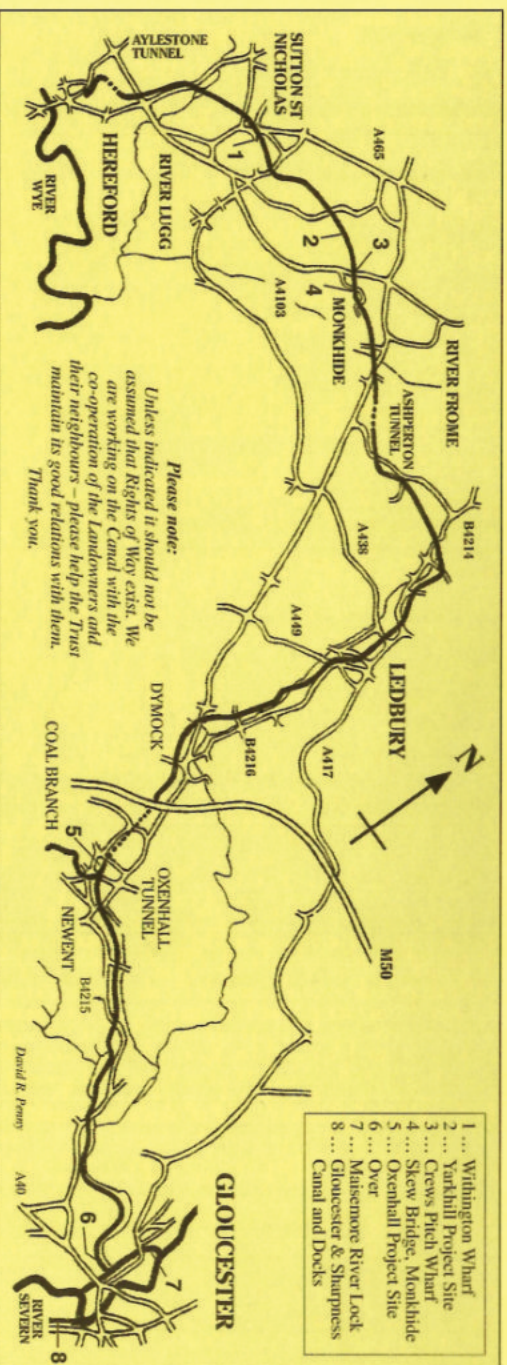
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# THE HEREFORDSHIRE AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL



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 county – 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.