

The Wharfinger

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



**Edition 57 • Spring 1998
50p – free to members**

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Vacant

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David Penny, Nigel Jefferies

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Brian Fox, Mike Potts, Tom Bennett

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Tom Bennett

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

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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.

Editorial

OVER SUCCESS

Following hard on the heels of David Pennys report of the Public Inquiry in the last Edition of **The Wharfinger**, the decision regarding the fate of the former hospital site at Over has been determined. All the hard work by Penny Environmental and Planning (working in a voluntary capacity on behalf of the Canal Trust) has paid dividends!

Not only has the Secretary of State accepted the findings of his Inspector - that the residential re-development should go ahead - but the Inspector's Report clearly acknowledged the positive influence that the Canal Trust's evidence had on making the decision.

Any developer of the site will be bound by a complex legal Agreement that was thrashed out between PEP, Solicitors acting for the Secretary of State for Health (as current owners of the site) and Tewkesbury Borough Council during a four week adjournment of the Public Inquiry.

This has to be the most significant step forward for the Canal Trust since Hereford and Worcester County Council constructed the new Roman Road Canal Bridge at Hereford in 1995.

The Canal Trust urgently need volunteers to assist with all aspects of this exciting work in Gloucestershire. Further details including the fact that *we will still need to raise funds to complete the work and the sting in the tale that we will have a tight deadline to meet* once the land has been sold to the final developer of the site will be in the next edition - *also see p.4.*

WELCOME

John Meager has volunteered to be co-opted to the Council of Management to assist with our fund raising; John joined us via Reach, which maintains a list of retired businessmen and other professionals who are willing to assist voluntary bodies with their expertise.

We also welcome long-serving volunteer Alan Lines as a another co-opted member of the Council of Management, ensuring that our active volunteers "on the ground" are well represented in the decision-making process.

CHAIRLESS

As readers will know, we recently filled the vacant position of Chairman of the Canal Trust by the appointment of Bryan Heatley.

Unfortunately Bryan resigned following what he regarded as a vote of no confidence at the November Committee Meeting.

The Council of Management consider that it is in the best interests of the Canal Trust that *all* members of the Council of Management are prepared to work together towards our common objective. This means that democratically taken decisions will sometimes go against personal views. Pending the AGM our two Vice Chairmen (Tom Bennett and Brian Fox) will oversee our progress.

LOCK COTTAGE

Preliminary details of the intended sale were given on page 22 of the last edition of **The Wharfinger**. The

Editorial

Canal Trust Council of Management are determined that the immediate surroundings should be as tidy as possible, the Canal upstream of the lock re-watered and the towpath levelled/stoned as well as ensuring that the Cottage ceases its current function of a tools and materials store before the sale is formally advertised.

Delays in obtaining a suitable steel container and in repairing one of the excavators has meant that there is a slippage of a few weeks in our programme.

Whilst the national advertising may be published shortly before our next issue the closing date for receipt of formal tenders will be later. In the meantime expressions of interest can be sent to Julian Phillips [see page 7 for further details].

HELP!

This year, more than ever, we need your help in selling our Grand Holiday Draw tickets, please [full details page 11]. Although most Members sell them to friends, neighbours, or colleagues at work, a few have found (having asked permission) that those in the local pub are willing to partake in a flutter, although we suspect ulterior motives for this sales location!

Never have we achieved so much with pen or spade as in '97, and '98 will see even greater opportunities and challenges - but it all costs money! So whatever your approach, we need your help, please, to rise to the challenge - this really is where every Member can make the difference - *thank you*.

 CRP

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The upstream offside lock entrance, and approach walls, of House Lock at Oxenhall start to take shape. The stop plank channels, fabricated by Simon Hayward, are built in as the work progresses.



Over The Years

By David R Penny

Negotiations at the former Over Hospital site started over 5 years ago. The Trust and Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC) met with the Local Health Authority's advisers as they wished to establish the 'constraints' that the Canal presented to development of their site. This was not a promising start, but within a year we had persuaded them the Canal was a major asset on their site, not a constraint.

The original proposals were for a supermarket, but by the time these were submitted Government Policy had changed to a presumption against development of out of town shopping. Although such a scheme would have been very good for the Trust in the value of 'Planning Gain' I would have extracted, it would not have presented the most desirable start to the Canal!

Having abandoned the supermarket plans, attention turned to developing the site for residential use. Potentially this presented a much better prospect from the visual perspective for this key site on the Canal. It would, however, yield considerably less for the site owners, and hence less of an opportunity for restoring the Canal etc. The original plans for 44 houses were very disappointing in not integrating the Canal into the development so in our normal manner I started redesigning it! The Local Authority also objected to various aspects of the layout, and over many months the plans were constantly revised. In parallel a constant dialogue continued as to the extent and nature of the 'Planning Gain' that would be appropriate in relation to the Canal.

Eventually a revised Application for 33 houses was submitted, which achieved nearly as much as could be expected for a 'boxes off the shelf' development. Although the TBC's Officers supported this Application (as did the Trust - but with reservations on layout, which would be determined later), it was refused by the Planning Committee. In due course an Appeal was lodged.

The site had by now reverted to the Secretary of State for Health and the original layout was replaced with one by landscape consultants to focus on overcoming visual impact objections. This resulted in a new Application for 34 houses that utilised the Canal as a focal point at the heart of the development. It replaced a standard 'boxes off the shelf' development, with one carefully designed to maximise the potential of the Canal and blend the development into the landscape.

Again, this second Application was supported by TBC's Officers and the Trust, but rejected by the Planning Committee. It was added to the existing Appeal - held in October [see last Edition - Ed]. We were given 4 weeks during the Inquiry to conclude the s.106 Agreement to secure the Planning Gain for the benefit of the Trust. This is where the real negotiating started; although all parties had set out over the years what would/should be on the table, it all had to be re-negotiated in these 4 weeks!

Negotiations were hectic to say the least! What may appear to be the most simple things like the definition of the fill in the Canal, can involve hours of negotiation,

Over The Years... continued

and may not appear important, but is the difference between disposing of all the fill on site or having to take it off site at a cost of tens of thousands of pounds to the Trust.

On the penultimate day the Agreement was finally complete, as a result of both sides working late into many evenings (and some of us working right through the night!). The Agreement had been produced in different parts of the country, and so as the final day (a Wednesday) came, both parts of the Agreement were brought by motor cycle courier to Tewkesbury for the Trust and TBC to sign. Brian Fox was working at Oxenhall, so I collected him from there and we both went to Tewkesbury to sign the Agreement. Whilst we were on

route the Mayor of Tewkesbury was called in from home to sign on behalf of the Council. Once we had all signed, the courier took the Agreement straight back to Bristol for the Secretary of State for Health to sign. Over 5 years of hard work finally complete, now all we had to do was hope the Inspector found in favour of the development so the Agreement would be activated (and binding on all future owners).

Or so we all thought, but upon arriving home disaster had struck. The Secretary of State for Health had refused to sign. Why? Because it was a Wednesday, and he only signed Agreements on Thursdays! A 24 hour extension to the deadline was granted and the signed Agreement delivered the next day.

The Appeal succeeded - what did the Inspector say? What does this significant success mean for the Trust? See part two in the next edition.

DUMPERS!

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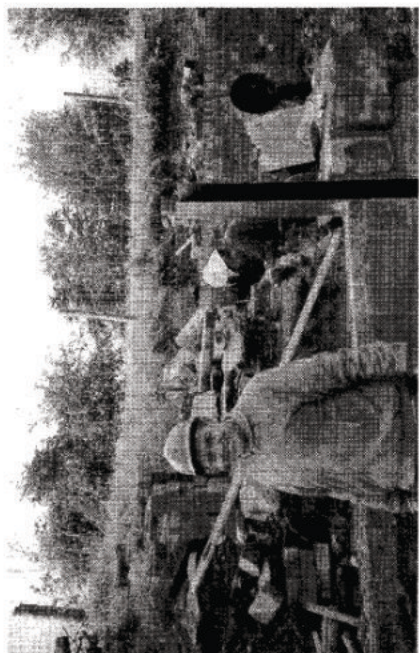
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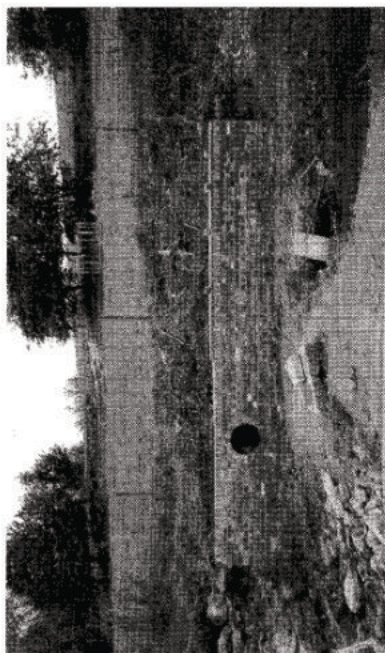
DAVID CORNWALLIS

HAMNISH COURT, HAMNISH
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RING 01568 760243 ANYTIME OR FAX US ON 01568 760465



Dave Young, our volunteer "master brickie" reluctantly poses for the camera and our (hired) stone mason puts his power tools to good use dressing the stone for the lock. The approach wall contains the reconstructed overflow from the Coal Branch.



FOR SALE

Lock Cottage, Oxenhall

During May 1998 the Canal Trust cottage, adjacent to House Lock at Oxenhall, will be formally placed on the market. The property stands on a narrow plot with gardens principally to the sides, and containing a re-constructed outhouse. In addition to overlooking House Lock (which is currently the Trust's primary focus of restoration) the property also enjoys views of the newly restored lock byweir.



The property is sold with the benefit of listed building consent, and building regulations approval, for its restoration, including new windows to the rear and the conversion of the bakehouse.

Upon completion this will provide the restored property with:- Bathroom, kitchen and two reception rooms to the ground floor, and two bedrooms and WC to the first floor. The proposals provide for the unusual feature of both bedrooms having windows to front and rear, this enables the property to fully benefit from the magnificent views afforded over the rolling countryside surrounding it.

To receive full details, when available, write to:-

Julian A Philips Esq.,
(Re. Lock Cottage, Oxenhall),
Philips & Co.,
5 Church Street,
Newent,
Gloucestershire.
GL18 1PU

Consultants Appointed

By David R Penny

During the early 1990's it had become clear in discussions with a number of Local Authorities that various Reports would need to be commissioned. It was also clear that we were heading towards a position where many separate Reports would be secured for specific sections of the Canal with no coordination between them or the parties commissioning them. These Reports were likely to cover some of the most difficult sections but due to the potential piecemeal approach would only cover a fraction of the Canal's length, be of limited value, and cost as much as looking at the whole Canal in one contract!

Back at the start of 1995 I formed the Steering Committee of all the

Local Authorities, the Environment Agency, Rural Development Commission, Heart of England Tourist Board, and others to assist in a unified approach to the Canal and encourage a two way dialogue between all the organisations concerned. A primary objective, however, was to gain support for detailed Consultants Reports into the whole 34 miles of the Canal in one unified, co-ordinated contract.

Within less than a year this approach had been agreed - but that was the easy bit! To follow would be the challenge of securing the required funding. This proceeded slowly, and in some case, painfully slowly. Presentations to Council committee's had to be made and

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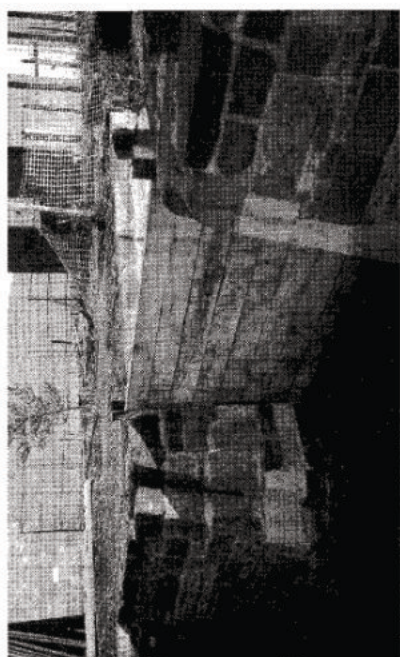
We have a wide client base with particular involvement in the hydraulic press, concrete, materials handling, feed and flour milling industries.

It has been our pleasure to support the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust for over 4 years, and we will continue to *work together in the present, to revive the past, and secure a better future.*

For further details please
contact Simon Hayward -
Tel: 01452 700384
Fax: 01452 700740



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GL19 4JJ



Tim Coghlan of Braunston Marina and Mike West of the IWA, both representing Braunston Boat Show, undertake the "topping out" ceremony at the head of the lock with Brian Fox and David Penny. The stop planks were inserted a few days later.



Consultants Appointed . . . (ii)

tours of the Canal conducted for their Members. Queries were raised over water supply by one Authority, which had to be resolved before they would commit funds. This delayed the whole process by over 6 months while a partnership of the Canal Trust, Environment Agency, and Birmingham University conducted various initial studies to prove that water was indeed available. Following a subsequent presentation that I made to the relevant committee (with a question and answer session which was supported by representatives from the Environment Agency and others) to promote the proposal, the relevant funding was committed.

Not surprisingly, some bodies who committed funds when first asked began to wonder why nothing was happening, resulting in the need for further rounds of diplomacy! However, by the end of 1996 the funding was beginning to look as if it was falling into place, and our attentions could finally turn to selecting Consultants.

In the first few months of 1997 five firms of Consultants were given tours of the Canal and invited to tender for a fixed price contract of £50,000 to cover Engineering, Environmental, Water Resources and Economic Studies of the whole 34 miles. This was shortlisted to 3 firms who were invited to make a presentation to a working party of the Steering Committee. Following a very close, but unanimous, decision between the final two firms, Parkman were selected.

Parkman had been invited to tender because we had been impressed when we had 'done battle' with them over the (now abandoned) A40

improvement scheme which would have destroyed a significant length of Canal in Gloucestershire. Now they would be engaged to make the case for restoring the Canal!

So the story should end in the spring of '97? Well, securing commitments of finance and actually achieving the transfer of those funds into a central account are not quite the same thing! Eventually Hereford City was asked to act as Budget Holder after we had been let down by another organisation, and invoices quickly went out to secure the transfer of funds - followed by more diplomacy to ensure the money flowed into the account.

However, there were two development related projects that could not await these delays, and so Parkman undertook advance works at the Farriery College site in Hereford, and at another site, so that opportunities were not lost. This proved critical at both sites.

By the autumn of '97 we finally had sufficient funds in the Budget Holders account to let the £33,250 Phase 1 contract which formally commenced on 8th December 1997. This will cover the initial Engineering & Environmental Reports - which will be finalised, along with the Water Resources & Economic Reports, in Phase 2.

The Reports are now well under way, and I am sure this will go down in the Canal Trust's history as yet another crucial milestone. With the progress at Oxenhall, yet further planning success at Withington, and the massive opportunities at Over, the last few months must represent the most important period in the Trust's history - so far.

The Grand HOLIDAY Draw!

Members and Supporters will receive 5 books of Grand Holiday Draw tickets with this edition of **The Wharfinger**. This is your annual opportunity, please, to assist the Canal Trust *and* have a really good chance of a holiday prize! We hope that you will be prepared to sell some to your friends,

neighbours and work colleagues as well; it really is our most important fund-raising initiative of the year and we cannot succeed without your help. So if you can sell the enclosed tickets (more available from Liz Connors if required!) then you really will be helping the Trust to move forward in 1998 - *thank you*.

H&GCS Grand Holiday Draw (Stubs and money to be returned to Promoter by 22nd August 1998) [No coins sent by post please]	Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust - H & G C S	00000
	GRAND HOLIDAY DRAW	
Name	★ 1st Prize - NARROW BOAT HOLIDAY FOR 4 ★ ONE WEEK (prior to 31/5/99) Donated by BLACK PRINCE HOLIDAYS	
Telephone	2nd - TWO VIP TICKETS TO THE LONDON INTERNATIONAL BOAT SHOW 1999 + TOP HOTEL Donated by BRITISH MARINE INDUSTRIES FEDERATION	
	3rd - TWO NIGHTS B&B FOR TWO N ^r . LEDBURY IN CONVERTED OAST HOUSE (Prior to 1/4/99) - donated by Mrs. GILL STAMP plus a dinner for two (exc. Sundays) donated by Sheila at the TRUMPET INN	
	[First and third prizes exclude Bank Holidays and are subject to availability.] Promoter: Mrs E Connors, 18 St. Ethelbert's Close, Sutton St. Nicholas, Hereford, HR1 3BP Registered with Hereford City Council under Section 5 Lotteries & Amusements Act, 1976 To be drawn at National Waterways Festival, Manchester, 31/8/98	
	MEB Supported by MEB - TICKETS 25p EACH - <small>Midlands Electricity plc</small>	
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Thank you, *most sincerely*, to Tim Parker of *Black Prince Holidays*; Denzil Lee of *British Marine Industries Federation*; Gill Stamp from *The Oast House B&B* and her near neighbour Sheila Collett, the Landlady at the *Trumpet Inn*, for their very substantial support in donating the holiday prizes - their support is not taken for granted.

In addition, we are very grateful to **MEB - Midlands Electricity** for their generous support in sponsoring the cost of printing the Draw tickets. This means that every penny raised can support the work of the Trust. Without all our sponsors generous actions we would not be able to proceed with this, one of our major fund raising activities.

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.]

Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the AGM of the Canal Trust (and our associated company, *H&G Canal (Sales) Ltd.*) will take place at the Burgage Hall, Church Street, Ledbury on **Thursday 21st May** commencing at 7.30pm. As always, both Members and non-members are welcome.

Apart from the formal business that is required of a Registered Charity (which we try to keep as short and informative as possible!) you will be brought right up to date with our exciting progress. Full details (plus abridged accounts for Members) will appear in the next edition of *The Wharfinger*.

Dates For Your Diary

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, 17th March

"In Cressy's Wake - Following the voyages of Tom Rolt"

By Tony Conder - the Curator of the
National Waterways Museum, Gloucester

Tuesday, 21st April

"Canal Films Evening"

Bob Paget entertains us with his collection of Canal films

Tuesday, 19th May

"With 'Heritage' to France & Inland Waterways International"

A double bill from former Chairman of the IWA
and Canal Trust Member, David Stevenson

Tuesday, 16th June

"Looking at things naturally"

By Les Kedward - our annual wildlife evening.

Tuesday, 21st July

"Noggin Natter & News"

No formal Speaker, but please come along for a chat
and an update of what the Trust is doing

Tuesday, 18th August

"Noggin Natter & News"

No formal Speaker, but please come along for a chat
and an update of what the Trust is doing

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].

Mike & Joyce's Outings

By Mike & Joyce Potts

For 1998 we have two magnificent trips lined up for Members and friends of the Canal Trust. These are a great way to get to know one another, whilst raising money for the Trust, and having a very enjoyable break away from it all. We do hope you will join us on one of the two trips below - or even both - they really are great value for money. Please do not leave your booking to the last moment - the sooner you book the better, we only require a small deposit to secure your place.

Weekend Tour - 13th & 14th June

LLANGOLLEN CANAL CRUISE & RAILWAY

Cruise the beautiful Llangollen Canal, including across the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, and a trip on the Llangollen Railway - with the opportunity to visit other attractions in Llangollen.

All fares, evening meal, bed & breakfast plus insurance included £85 per person (single room extra).

£10 non-refundable deposit - balance to be paid by 10th April 1998.

Advance notice:-

Sunday, 13th September, 1998

DAY OUT AT THE NATIONAL TRAMWAY MUSEUM CRICH, Derbyshire

A fascinating "living museum", step back in time and travel on magnificently restored trams at this beautifully located museum - a day out with a difference!

Fare (including admission) £16.50

Tickets and further information from:-

M&J Potts, 8 The Dovecote, Mansell Lacy, Hereford, HR4 7HQ, or
Hereford Camera Centre, The Atrium, Maylord Orchards, Hereford.
Cheques payable to H&G Canal Trust, please.

RESTORATION UPDATE

By Brian Fox

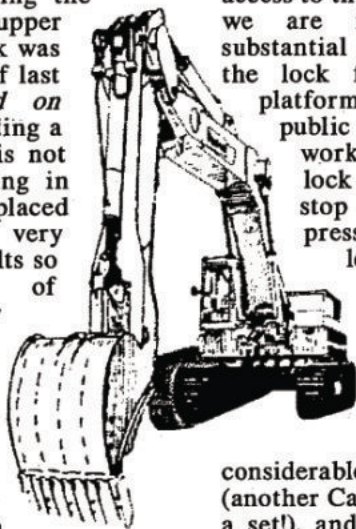
The Christmas party organised by Mike and Joyce went with its usual swing despite there being fewer guests, and it never ceases to amaze me how the standard of food and entertainment improves every year. A few were heard reminiscing about the old days when we were expected to work in the morning clearing trees and shovelling mud by hand before being summoned to lunch in the barn or even the leggers rest one year. We didn't seem to be bothered with budgets or targets then but things got done - eventually.

Our target of finishing the reconstruction of the upper wing walls of the lock was achieved by the end of last year *[on time and on budget - Ed]*. Rebuilding a grade II listed lock is not straightforward bearing in mind the restrictions placed on us but we are very pleased with the results so far and a bit of landscaping will now top it off nicely. Some of the stone recovered from the old railway abutment has already been used, including several coping stones to replace those missing. It may look a bit odd being about 60% stone and 40% brick but that is the way it was as far as we could tell from what was left and being a listed structure it has been rebuilt to the original specifications. It looks good again and all the positive comments from the many passing walkers really makes all the hard work worthwhile.

Waterway Recovery Group have been of great assistance in our efforts, particularly with the original clearance work at their camp in August. They will be with us again this year starting in February, with the first of seven weekends promised, and we look forward to renewing acquaintances. Their dedication together with a lighthearted approach and an unintelligible line in banter is an example to all of us.

A temporary bridge was constructed for the winter months to give easy access to the far side of the lock and we are investigating a more substantial structure for the top of the lock for use as a viewing platform for members of the public who want to watch the work as it proceeds in the lock chamber. Those who stop long enough may be press ganged into work or at least persuaded to become a member or make a donation!

Stop planks have been cut from timber felled in the area of the aqueduct, saving a considerable amount of money (another Canal Trust paid £1,500 for a set!), and are now in place. The temporary dam will soon be removed, spare soil being spread on the towpath and around the new walls, while most of the rubble remaining from the original lock demolition will be used for hard core on the new road to be laid down to the cottage. We don't waste anything if it can be used elsewhere, especially if it will save us money. By the time the cottage goes on the



market in May, with its access road complete and canal filled, it will look at its best and should benefit the sale considerably and perhaps add a few thousand to the value.

Down by the aqueduct the area has been tidied and most of our plant is safely locked away in the new compound. Our plant maintenance group will soon be starting on the essential maintenance of most of the plant to be ready for the spring when hopefully the ground will be a little drier.

We are often asked why the Trust have not applied for lottery money and the simple answer is that we are not in a position to put a sensible bid together at the moment. There have been two major obstacles to putting together a successful bid, one being the lack of an independent feasibility study and the other being our inability to provide matching funds for more sizable grants.

The first phase of a feasibility study has now commenced *[see page 8]* so one major obstacle to larger funding is being actively tackled. Many other canal restoration projects have gone down the same road before us, accepting that feasibility studies are a necessary evil. The Canal Trust know that it is perfectly feasible to restore the Canal but we are obviously biased and an independent assessment is absolutely vital if we are to succeed.

The question of matching funding has now been clarified by the Heritage Lottery Fund who have recently issued guidance to help voluntary organisations calculate the value of voluntary services in assessing their partnership funding

contribution when applying for grants. These figures are likely to be accepted by other bodies as well, and indeed they have just been used by our Fundraising Officer in a successful bid to Forest of Dean District Council. They suggest figures to be used for voluntary use of Professional Services, Skilled labour and Unskilled labour. This means that we can now put a figure on hours of work done at Oxenhall in restoring the lock and cottage and translate that into hard cash. It would be possible to calculate rough figures in retrospect for last year *[c.£33k+ in 9 months to December at Oxenhall - not fully allowing for the 'pyramid effect' - Ed]* but from the beginning of January a detailed log will be started on site so that we can come up with some more accurate figures for 1998.

It has already been calculated by the IWA that a week long canal camp with 20 volunteers from WRG could be worth £7,000 and that doesn't take account of any local volunteer labour which would amount to considerably more over a year. The calculation does not end with volunteers who are physically restoring the canal but must take into account the many hours of work which go on behind the scenes. What about our Treasurer, Liaison Officer, and Special Project Group who are all directly concerned with what goes on at Oxenhall. In fact the whole of the Canal Trust is like a pyramid with the actual restoration being at the tip and everything else done by other volunteers being in support of their efforts. It may be difficult to quantify but it would be worth the effort because a very rough estimate suggests that for every hour spent on actual restoration there are at

RESTORATION UPDATE (iii)

least 5 hours put in elsewhere in support. It is not clear in the guidance notes issued exactly how far down the pyramid we can go in our calculations but perhaps in future guidance it will become clearer.

Account must also be taken of the cost of running our own plant in restoration of the canal. Rates of hire for an excavator for a week come to about £1000 if the cost of a driver and delivery are taken into account and a dumper would be at least £500. Fuel would be on top of that. In short, every £1000 contributed by the Trust in cash *and labour/other resources* can release matching funds.

There is currently much going on behind the scenes in support of the work at Oxenhall but also on other sites which could become active this year. We will undoubtedly be looking for more support, particularly from the Gloucester end, so watch this space for developments.

WANT TO GET INVOLVED ?

The Canal Trust always needs new volunteers. You do not need to have any skills as we can always make use of someone who is just willing to help - every skilled worker needs one or two 'mates' for them to operate efficiently. So if you would like to help in our restoration (and maintenance) work please telephone:

Steve Delacourt-Smith (01452) 501372

Brian Fox (01432) 358628

Simon Hayward (01452) 534232

Tom Bennett (01981) 500258

MID WEEK GROUP CO-ORDINATOR

Dave Young (01531) 635321



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The head of House Lock, Oxenhall, from start to finish - see this section in water in the next edition.



Committee Matters

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

OCTOBER COMMITTEE

- Arrangements to support the Trading Company in respect of the setting up and down of the two Canal Trust Craft Fairs were agreed. In the absence of a suitable replacement Exhibitions Co-ordinator the number of events attended in 1998 would have to be prioritised.

- The Chairman had attended a meeting of the Steering Committee with David Penny and had been impressed by his handling of the meeting and the high level of co-operation exhibited by the Local Authority, Environment Agency and the other representatives who were present.

- The publication of a further Report into the proposed New Weir on the River Severn near Gloucester was of concern; the Canal Trust had contributed towards the original feasibility study but there had been no liaison in respect of this latest Report. An appropriate letter would be sent to Gloucester Harbour Trustees.

- Restoration Group reported progress at Oxenhall. A professional stone mason would be employed to oversee the volunteers work on the Lock. Major cutting of stone recovered from the railway abutment would be undertaken off-site by specialists in the Forest of Dean to minimise wastage and maintain standards.

Council of Management were very pleased to note that work was now taking place during the week - thanks to the new Mid Week Group formed thanks to the initiative of Dave Young and Brian Fox.

- A number of sites were noted to be on the market that might affect the Canal and steps were in hand to monitor the situation.

- Budgets were approved subject to revisions proposed by the Finance Committee.

- The Environment Agency (Welsh Region) had objected to the proposed diversion of the Canal route around the Farriery College site in Hereford. Our Planning Team had travelled to Cardiff and resolved the matter. The developer of this site proposed to construct a number of structures directly related to the Canal, including retaining walls, as part of the development.

- Another Planning Appeal had been determined in favour of the Canal [see page 1 of the last edition].

- Phase 1 of the Feasibility Studies had been formally awarded to Messrs Parkman and the commencement date would be confirmed shortly.

- Steve Gittings was reviewing Health and Safety issues on behalf of the Canal

Committee Matters . . . (ii)

Trust. A Policy Statement would be drafted.

NOVEMBER COMMITTEE

- The treasurer reported that a minor query had been raised by the Charity Commissioners. Although our accounts conformed to the requirements of Companies House they required to know if donations were for a specific purpose. This had always been recorded and reported internally but not in the annual accounts, and would be rectified for the 1997/8 financial year.

- Insurance premiums were to be based on the estimated value of the work in hand (at contractor's rates) thus creating more work for the Treasurer and other volunteers. The change was not expected to greatly increase premiums.

- Bryan Heatley regarded a vote as a vote of no confidence in him, and resigned. Will Frecknall, as our IWA Nominee, took the chair for the rest of the meeting.

- Further progress at Oxenhall was reported by the Special Projects Group and the latest proposed schedule of work - with target dates, was presented.

- The former railway siding in Hereford had been sold at auction. *[Report on page 22]*

- The Canal Trust would enter into an Agreement with the Environment Agency (Welsh Region) regarding water

resources issues relating to the Farriery College site in Hereford - this would overcome their objection to the revised alignment for the Canal at this point.

- David Penny reported on the Inquiry relating to the proposed compulsory purchase of a section of the Canal in Hereford by the City Council as part of their Order to try and acquire the adjacent fields for public recreation.

- Discussions were ongoing with Hereford City Council regarding the Underwoods site in Hereford.

- Concern was expressed about the safety of one of our excavators which would be taken out of service and immediate arrangements were put in hand to review such matters.

DECEMBER COMMITTEE

- Pending the appointment of a new Chairman (or lady) it was agreed that the two Vice Chairmen would steer our progress. Brian Fox was liaising with an organisation called Reach in the hope that their list of retired managerial and professional staff would present some potential new Members for the Council of Management. However, it was agreed that there would not be a direct appointment to the Chairman's role from outside the Canal Trust in the light of past experience.

- The Finance Committee had reviewed the Trust's

Committee Matters . . . (iii)

position in the light of heavy expenditure and limited income. A list of authorised expenditure was tabled and agreed.

- Stop planks, for use in the newly constructed grooves at the head of the Lock at Oxenhall, had been cut from timber felled from the Canal at a cost of c.£40 thereby saving a number of hundreds of pounds.

- Action would be taken to prevent deterioration of the trip boat and move it to another location for storage pending a suitable site for its operation.

- Tim Coghlan, the proprietor of Braunston Marina and Mike West of the IWA, as representatives of the Braunston

Boat Show, were to undertake a "topping out" ceremony on the stonework to the head of the Lock. Braunston Boat Show had kindly provided £1,000 of sponsorship for the work on the lock in 1997 [photo page 9].

- Most of the information required by Messrs Parkman had been passed to them by Brian Fox and David Penny. [Subsequently we learnt that an important package had been lost by the Post Office in the period leading up to Christmas leading to significant additional work and costs for the Canal Trust - Ed.]

- Our appraisal of Health and Safety issues had identified a problem with nationally issued

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Committee Matters . . . (iv)

Permits to operate plant and machinery - this was being actively pursued. Our Plant Manager, Tom Bennett, reported that the cost of repairs to one of our excavators could be some £2,500 to £3,000 [*subsequently, thankfully, reduced to c.£800 - Ed*]; it was agreed that safety issues had to take precedence.

JANUARY COMMITTEE

- John Meager was introduced to the Council of Management, having been approached by Brian Fox as a result of a listing in the Reach Directory. John would be co-opted to the Council, to assist primarily with fund-raising issues. This was welcomed.

- It was agreed that the AGM would be held at the usual Ledbury venue on Thursday 21st May [*see page 11*].

- Correspondence with Gloucester Harbour Trustees, including a cheque, had been lost by the Post Office. This appeared to explain their lack of liaison regarding the New Weir on the River Severn.

- Restoration Group were awaiting the repair of the excavator before they could complete the works to the towpath at Oxenhall that were essential prior to the Cottage being placed on the market. A steel container was urgently required so that materials and

other items currently stored in the Cottage could be safely stored in the dry.

- By careful re-design of the submitted proposals our Planning Team had greatly reduced the length of retaining wall that would be required to permit the latest proposals for the Underwoods site in Hereford to proceed.

- A book was to be introduced at Oxenhall to enable volunteers to book in and out so that the voluntary hours worked could be accurately assessed for future grant aid purposes.

- The Canal Trust Craft Fairs at Hereford and Ledbury had been a great success in promoting the work of the Canal Trust and raising funds. The hard work of those concerned was greatly appreciated.

- Details of the first and second prize for the 1998 Grand Holiday Draw were reported by Cliff Penny - colleagues were challenged to find the third prize [*see page 11*].

- There had been a most co-operative meeting between Newent Town Council representatives and the Canal Trust regarding the coordination of both bodies ideas within the future Canal corridor.

■ CRP

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION ?

Well, not quite - but we did have to get your attention! You can "star" - or take an equally important supporting role, in one or more of our promotional/sales events. From Ledbury to Manchester, Hereford to Braunston, come see the world (a bit over the top! - Ed.) with the Canal Trust. Please contact Liz Connors (01432 880155).

Off The Rails

We reported, in the last edition of **The Wharfinger**, that a length of former railway siding in Hereford was for sale. The narrow strip of land forms part of the essential diversion route for the Canal around the Painter Brothers Factory.

Rail Property Limited were promptly advised of the situation by the Canal Trust. Hereford City Council also wrote an excellent letter clearly setting out the position. We both pointed out that the diversion route for the Canal had been known for some years and stressed the fact that the route had been successfully protected at Planning Appeal, and by negotiation, in the close vicinity of the land. The Canal Trust letter made it very clear that any proposals for development of the land will meet with an outright objection and the Council left little doubt in the mind of prospective purchasers of the likely outcome of any Appeal.

Rail Property Limited ensured the facts relating to the Canal use were very clearly known. Apart from an addendum to the sale particulars (including our letter and the City Council's) there was an announcement prior to the bidding for this lot.

It was a great surprise that the bidding, after some initial hesitation, soon exceeded what was clearly the "reserve price". A representative for a local businessman successfully bid £22,000 for the land - 99% of which will be utilised for the Canal route! Any future valuation for compensation, when the Canal is taken along this route, will take account of the clear facts that the land was purchased with no development potential whatsoever.

March Jumble

Sunday, 29th March is the date of the annual Gloucester Boat & Watersports Jumble at Gloucester Docks. Held from 10am to 4pm there are literally thousands of new and used bargains! With adult admission at only £2.50 - including FREE admission to the National Waterway Museum - it really is a good day out.

Ray and Barbara Moses will be there raising funds for the H&G again. They would welcome the donation of anything related to boating, caravanning, fishing, canoeing, or any water related activity.

From magazines to knitted hats, boats to spanners they usually manage to turn your unwanted items into cash! Please bring items to the Social evenings or call - 01989 780325. *Thank you.*

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Membership Matters

This is a very important announcement that applies to ALL our Members except Life Members. **PLEASE** help the Canal Trust by checking that both our records and your Membership payment is in order - **however you pay** the current status can be readily checked by referring to the label on the envelope which contains your copy of **The Wharfinger**.

The bottom line of your label contains all the information that you need to check what our records are indicating for your Membership. The italic letter/s show your **class** of Membership as follows:-

I = Individual

F = Family/Joint Membership

SC = Senior Citizen

JSC = Joint Senior Citizen

An additional *G* indicates that your subscription has been a gift and expires as indicated below.

(the system is not yet in use for Corporate Membership)

After your class of Membership your **method** of payment can be identified:-

Life = "thank you" - paid up!

SO = Standing Order

(if none of the above you pay by cheque or cash)

The final sequence of italic numbers indicates **when your next payment is due**:-

98.5 =

payment due on the 1st May 1998.

97.11 =

payment overdue (due 1/11/97).

99.8 =

advance payment made,
next payment due 1/8/99.

Even when you pay by standing order please check the payment date - if it is more than a month overdue this means that your payment has not reached the Canal Trust's bank - please check that the payment has left your account!

Corporate Members

We greatly appreciate the support of our Corporate Members - a full list will appear in the next edition of **The Wharfinger**.

Corporate Membership is just £20 for 12 months - or why not become our first Corporate Life Member at £400; we guarantee good coverage in **The Wharfinger**!

Apart from appearing in the list of Corporate supporters in the next edition, the Corporate Members are listed as part of our award-winning display that travels all over the country promoting the work of the Canal Trust. All Corporate Members receive two copies of **The Wharfinger** and two votes in the affairs of the Canal Trust.

Please do your bit . . .

We urgently need to recruit NEW Members. Every time we fill in a grant-aid application form we have to give details of the strength of our Membership.

It is important to keep the Membership numbers rising - **PLEASE** don't leave it to "someone else" - do your bit for the Canal Trust and recruit today! *Thank you.*

The Last Page

COVERED UP

As long-standing Members will know, the colour of the front cover for **The Wharfinger** changes colour according to the season in which it is published - following an idea from Mike Potts when he was Editor some years ago. Green for Spring, blue for Summer, our "house colour" of golden yellow for Autumn and red for Winter. So why an orange cover for the last edition!?

Since the introduction of our greatly improved front cover with edition 50, we have been seeking to use less of a solid colour so that the photograph of Skew Bridge stands out to best effect when for sale in the shops or just lying on your coffee table. We are confident that we have got all the colours right *except* for the Winter one which is proving to be more of a challenge - one year we had a shocking pink, another a very dense red, and the most recent a not-quite-right pale orange!

ON SALE


No, not Lock Cottage, Oxenhall [see p.7 for that!]. Over 1,000 copies of **The Wharfinger** are printed each quarter; apart from copies to Members and our Corporate Members, many others go to Local Authority Officers and Councillors as well as to other important bodies such as The Environment

Agency. For many years we have placed some copies in a number of shops around the area and a number of new Members (including Life Members) have joined us as a result of this initiative.

There is great scope for the significant extension of this important promotional aspect of our work. To see **The Wharfinger** regularly on sale in as many shops (and pubs?) as possible, within a reasonable distance of the Canal, has to be a worthwhile objective.

We need a volunteer to organise this across the area, hopefully building up a band of local volunteers who could compete to beat sales targets each quarter! This really is an exciting opportunity to undertake a worthwhile role within the Canal Trust with a burst of activity four times a year. Just imagine how a well organised distribution team might be performing in a year or so. Please contact Penny Shetliffe on 01432 820623.

SPONSORSHIP

Our thanks to the major Hereford office and stationery suppliers who have sponsored all the envelopes that the Canal Trust use for 1998 and to Sue Heritage from MEB - Midlands Electricity - for agreeing to pay for the Grand Holiday Draw ticket printing. 

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WANT TO HELP ?

The Canal Trust is always in need of new volunteers as our activities continue to expand. We can normally find a use for any skill from chefs to first aiders, brickies to those willing to help with shovel or pen.

PLEASE CONTACT ANYONE
ON THIS PAGE

T O D A Y !

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

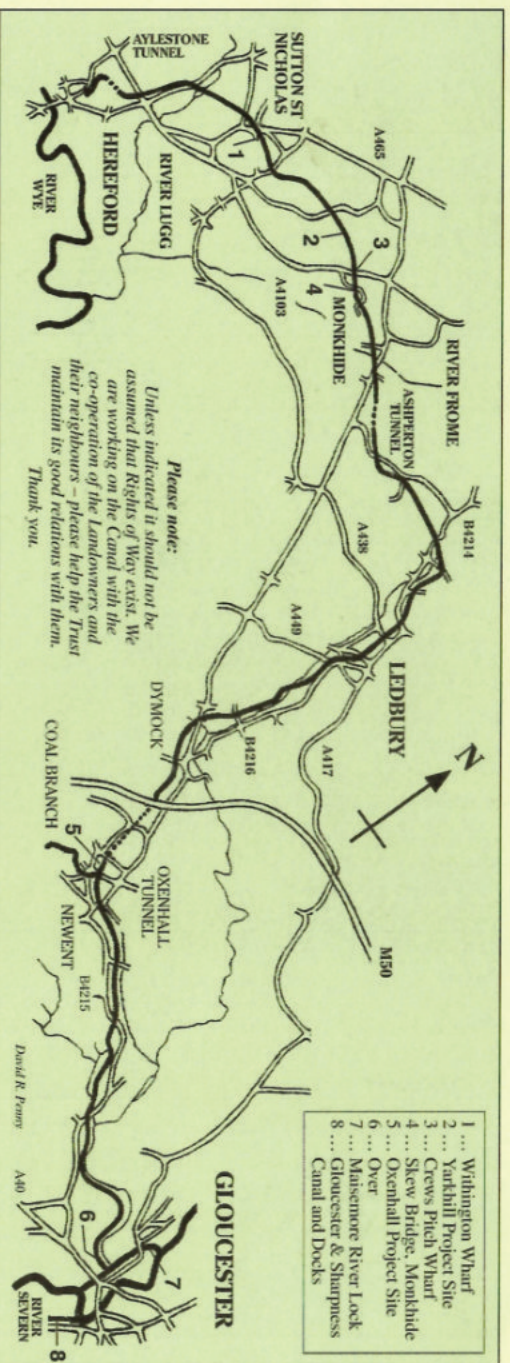
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The Canal Society was formed in 1983 and replaced in 1992 by the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust, a registered charity. The Trust has an ordinary and corporate membership exceeding 700 from all over the county – and abroad! Our objective 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.