

# The Wharfinger

Newsletter of the  
Herefordshire and  
Gloucestershire  
Canal Trust



**Edition 60 • Winter 1998**  
**50p – free to members**

# WHO DOES WHAT...

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*R. E. Barnes TD.*

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David Penny, John Meager

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*Dave Young*, Brian Fox  
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Health & Safety Officer

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David Penny, Cliff Penny  
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Postmasters:- Leader  
Team

Cliff Penny, David Penny  
*B & M Sanderson & family*  
*D & M Gray; I & F Roper*

## TALKS/WALKS

Nigel Jefferies, Mike Potts

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

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*Derek Gray, Derek Weaver, Mike Potts*

## BOATS:-

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Committee

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*Ray & Barbara Moses, Pat Skeet, Derek Gray*

## HONORARY POSTS:-

AUDITOR Davies, Edwards & Co., Leominster.

SOLICITORS Sue Newbould, Gabb & Co., 25 King Street, Hereford.

Jim Chapman, Madge Lloyd & Gibson, 22-24 Church St, Newent, GL18 1PP

ARCHAEOLOGIST

Ron Shoesmith

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING

Penny Environmental & Planning



# Editorial

## NWF WORCESTER '99

As briefly reported in the last edition of *The Wharfinger*, the National Waterways Festival comes to Worcester next August Bank Holiday. All Members should have received a short questionnaire recently - if you have not already done so please spend a few moments to complete and return it NOW!

We are determined that the H&G Canal Trust puts on an excellent display at Worcester - but we need your help to do so! The Council of Management decided to send the questionnaire out as a separate mailing to avoid it getting "lost" inside *The Wharfinger* (it would have taken us into the next postal rate in any case) and in the hope that this would secure the greatest level of responses. *Thank you to those who have already returned the form to Liz Connors.*

## IWAAC REPORT

The Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council (IWAAC) published, in August, their "Priorities for waterway restoration" - an assessment of some 80 restoration projects throughout the UK. This Report was awaited with trepidation in many parts of the country as it was feared that an attempt would be made to rank all the schemes - fine for number one but not so good for number 80! In the end, the Report contains three bandings (with no further ranking) - those projects where it is considered everything is in place for major (multi-million) funding within 5 years; those where they should be ready within the next 5 to 10 years - and those beyond this period.

We did not expect to be listed in the first 2 rankings as to have achieved this it would have been necessary, for example, to have the final versions of the various elements of the Consulting Engineers Reports in place. The H&G Canal is listed as of "Regional Significance" within the third category - not being ready for major (multi-million) funding within 10 years.

As IWAAC freely admitted in their accompanying press release, their assessment was based on questionnaires completed by each restoration body and the final assessment was dependent upon the accuracy of that information and was very subjective. The Inland Waterways Association subsequently issued a press release which culminated with the statement that funding agencies should "...continue to consider all applications, whether for staged or main funding, on their own criteria and on the merits of each individual project as presented to them, and to bear in mind that the single criterion which drives the IWAAC Report's listings does not of itself confer any degree of priority, and may have little or no relevance to the individual applications [for funding] that come before them."

The IWAAC Report contains 5 pages of recommendations relating to good practices for the future to the Government, Heritage Lottery Fund, Local Authorities, Regulatory & Navigation Authorities and restoration organisations such as ourselves. Many of the recommendations are already being followed by the H&G Canal Trust. However, as with everything in life, we are willing to carefully consider all aspects of the Report to ensure

that we 'graduate' to the higher listings as soon as our progress permits. IWAAC will be updating the Report during the summer of 2000.

## FAVOURABLE DECISIONS

Since the last edition of **The Wharfinger** was published there have been two more highly favourable Ministerial decisions relating to the H&G Canal.

The Compulsory Purchase Order initiated by the (former) Hereford City Council, relating to a length of the Canal near Aylestone Hill, has been confirmed and the "called in" Planning Application for the redevelopment of the School of Farriery site has been approved.

Whilst the Canal Trust had excellent relations with the owner of the section of the Canal at Aylestone Hill the Council wished to acquire the adjacent fields for public recreation facilities. This is the first section of the Canal to be acquired by a local authority by the use of a Compulsory Purchase Order and was the subject of a Public Inquiry last year.

The development site at the School of Farriery, also within Hereford City, allows for the restoration of the Canal on an agreed diversion route within the site (the historic route being blocked adjacent to the site by development many years ago).

The Planning Application was the subject of a Public Inquiry earlier this year. As part of the developer's costs a major new highway bridge will be constructed across the diversion as well as a new footbridge - the Canal forming a focal point within the new retail development.

## OVER SOLD

As expected, the Secretary of State for Health has sold the site of the former Over Hospital on the outskirts of Gloucester.


Within days of Swan Hill Homes (formerly part of Higgs & Hill) completing their purchase of the site, Penny Environmental & Planning (acting in a voluntary capacity on behalf of the Canal Trust) had established contact. David Penny successfully negotiated for our preliminary work on the site to continue pending the finalisation of the more formal Licence that forms part of the complex Planning Agreement.

During the planned Canal Camp in September, a small number of our volunteers successfully undertook the first phase of a massive "muck shift" on a scale never before seen in our restoration activities. *[Reports + photo's pages 5 & 12-17.]*

## OXENHALL VISIT

Bad weather didn't stop a large number of visitors to the Oxenhall Open Day at the end of September - those who did brave the elements were taken on conducted tours and many favourable comments were made with regard to progress.

At least parking was easier this year - thanks to the new Parish Car Park - all the earthworks and surfacing being thanks to hard work by H&G Canal Trust volunteers.

Whilst we can't claim the credit, Nigel Freeman's progress with the sympathetic restoration of Lock Cottage was also praised. 



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Please allow up to 5 working days for delivery. Big Blue Advance Ticket offers end at 8.00pm on Monday, 4th January. Any orders accepted after this date will be at full price and may be held for collection at the Earls Court 2 ticket office. Please quote the following reference when booking. XYZ

## New Deal

As briefly mentioned in the last edition, we are delighted to have reached agreement that the Over site be part of the Government's New Deal initiative. Working closely with staff from Young Gloucestershire (who administer this and the Prince's Trust initiatives in the County) the initial workers are established on site under the guidance of Canal Trust volunteers. Steps are in hand for the numbers to increase over the coming months. Just as we were going to press it was agreed to expand the project to include New Deal recruits from Herefordshire.

It is critical that we maintain adequate supervisory cover and make as much progress as possible. Peter Eyres [(01452) 790 653] would greatly appreciate offers of help.

## Safety Matters

Steve Gittins has had to step down from our post of Honorary Safety Officer. With the intensifying pace of restoration this was a post that could not go unfilled; and was one where we required appropriate experience as well!

We are very pleased that Tony Austin-Bailey has volunteered to take over this vital role with immediate effect. David Penny and Tony have already reviewed our formal Risk Assessments for all work at Over and all other aspects of our work are under review from a Health and Safety aspect.

As stated in the last edition, all volunteers (our own and visiting groups) will be expected to have read and understood the Green Book and to wear appropriate safety clothing.

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For further details please  
contact Simon Hayward -  
Tel: 01452 700384  
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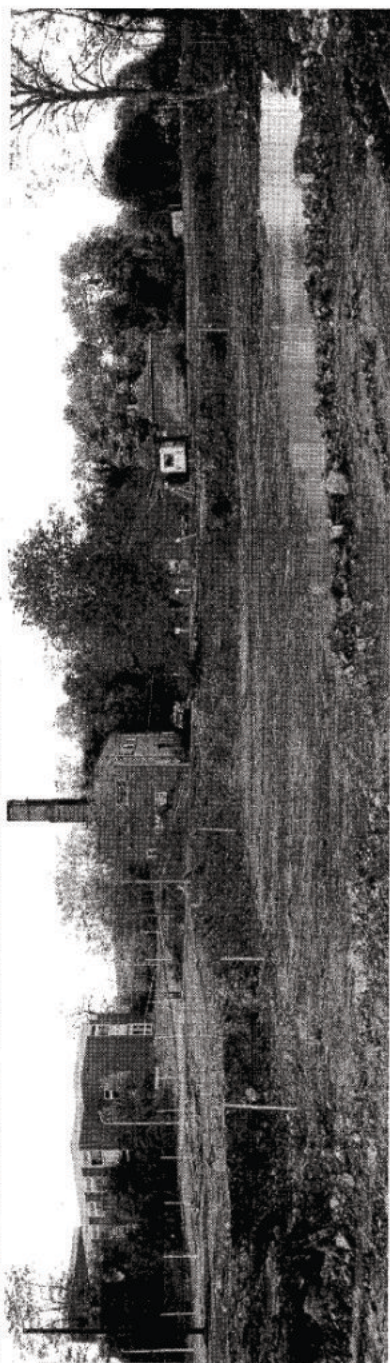
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ABOVE : The fleet of large plant makes steady progress in excavating The Wharf area at Over during our September dig. Much of the excavated material is placed adjacent to the Canal (where the bulldozer is working), with the better material used to create a park for the proposed development. The ash tree on the left marks the far bank – the line of stakes mark the line of The Wharf wall.

BELOW: Viewed at the end of the dig, from the dump truck bonnet position (above), looking back at The Wharf. The line of stakes marks the line of the Wharf wall. The Canal bed is a further 1.5-2 m below the level of the current excavations!





# The Grand HOLIDAY Draw!

Thank you to all of our Members, and our supporters, who helped to make the 1998 Grand Holiday Draw yet another successful fundraiser for the H&G Canal Trust. Every pound raised will be used to match grant aid ensuring that at least another £3,000 will be available to fund our restoration progress.

However, the Draw would not have been a success without the generosity of the prize Sponsors; our thanks 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 Andy Riga who has now taken over the *Trumpet Inn* and agreed to honour the part of the prize donated by his predecessor. [Andy is, of course, well known to the H&G Canal Trust as the previous owner of the *Royal Oak in Ledbury*].

Herefordshire & Gloucestershire  
Canal Trust - H & GCS

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## GRAND HOLIDAY DRAW

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  - 3rd - TWO NIGHTS B&B FOR TWO Nrs. LEDBURY  
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- Promoter: Mrs E Connors, 18 St. Ethelbert's Close, Sutton St. Nicholas, Hereford, HR1 5BP  
Registered with Hereford City Council under Section 5 Lotteries & Amusements Act, 1976  
To be drawn at National Waterways Festival, Manchester, 31/8/98

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Our appreciation would not be complete without saying thank you to Sue Heritage, of **MEB - Midlands Electricity**, for Sponsoring the printing of the Grand Holiday Draw tickets. To all concerned - *thank you*.

The winners were:-

### FIRST PRIZE:

ticket no. 16325  
Peter Eyres, Tibberton, Glocs.

### SECOND PRIZE:

ticket no. 12781  
Mrs P Anthony, Hereford.

### THIRD PRIZE:

ticket no. 17975  
Mr C Archer, Chesterfield.

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[Membership rates are on page 24]



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# Mike & Joyce's Trips & Outings

**Sunday, 25th April, 1999**

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Lunch, and a short talk

*Fare (including lunch and boat trip) £17*

**Weekend break in June, 1999**

**ADVANCE NOTICE**

Following the successful '97 Manchester trip, come and join us again:-  
Worsley Novotel (DBB); conducted cruise on Mersey Ferry from Manchester  
to Liverpool; and (new for '99) - visit the attractions of Wigan Pier.

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# The Oxenhall Great Flood

By Robin Stiles

As regular readers will be aware, the length of Canal at Oxenhall (together with the Cottage, Aqueduct and Lock) were donated to the Canal Trust - subject only to 10% of the proceeds of the sale of the Cottage - by Mr Robin Stiles of Bristol. Robin is now a paid up Life Member and has contributed this intriguing tale ...

The sale of Lock Cottage, Oxenhall, reminded me of an incident affecting this property and area that I thought would be of interest to Members - it has apparently been missed by all the earlier writers of the history of the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal - I refer to the night of the great flood 7th/8th July 1853. [David Bick does refer to it in his book but only briefly.]

Full details are given in the *Hereford Journal* published on Wednesday July 13th 1853. Briefly, a very heavy cloudburst over Dymock, occurring at 3.00 am on the Friday morning, caught a number of boats navigating northwards through Oxenhall Tunnel.

"Mr Goode the lock-keeper at Oxenhall, whose house stands upon an eminence near the Canal, was greatly surprised and alarmed to witness a vast and irresistible body of water flowing along the Canal towards Newent, especially as no rain had fallen in that neighbourhood. He immediately hastened towards Newent with the intention of drawing up the 'lashers', as the boatmen term them, but the water continued pouring down the Canal, which very shortly overflowed its banks on either side and Goode had to wade a considerable distance. Shortly afterwards Goode was as much surprised as he had previously been to see the vast body of water receding, nor could he in any way account for such a phenomenon

until he heard the news that the Canal bank had burst on the other side of the Tunnel. The water was up to the third stair in his house, although it lay so high. Broadmeadow, a large meadow opposite Goodes house, a great part of which lays rather high, was one vast lake of water, and in some parts it was calculated it was eight feet deep. Just above, and nearer Dymock, the site where the vast and noted fishponds of Oxenhall once were, but which have been drained and sown with turnips, was much deluged, the water descending in torrents from the adjacent hills."

Deep in the Tunnel centre was Mr Georges boat "it now lies, laden with lath, slate and timber in the middle of the Tunnel, three quarters of a mile at least from either side. An empty boat followed Mr Georges boat into the Tunnel for the purpose of shipping part of the cargo and lightening the load, by means of which a man and his wife who were on board Mr Georges boat made their escape."

Just emerging from the northern end were two boats, one belonging to Messrs Gibson, with a general cargo, and the other, immediately following, belonging to a man named Hodgetts, laden with corn for Mr George Bateman. "Messrs Gibsons men had nearly arrived at its mouth on the Hereford side, when they found themselves suddenly lifted up by the rising of the water, so much so as to render it

## *The Oxenhall Great Flood ... continued*

necessary to cut down the short mast to which the lines by which the boat is drawn are attached. Having effected this with a hatchet, and also cut away the side-strings which are tied over the cargo, they were again as much astonished as before by the sudden falling of the water." The two boats ended up wedged together, stuck in the side of the embankment a short way clear of the Tunnel. A third boat following closely behind, belonging to a Mr Holloway, got stuck on a mud bar at the Tunnel portal.

*"One belonging to R.T. Smith & Co. with a general cargo, being slightly in advance and the men in charge*

*came to Hereford in utter ignorance."*

All very informative, but what I find the most interesting about all this is that there were at least six boats travelling through Oxenhall Tunnel at or before first light in high summer of 1853 - presumably they had moored overnight at Oxenhall or Newent in order to catch the first northbound flow permitted through the Tunnel (it operated a timed one-way system to avoid collisions). The boats can hardly, I would imagine, have started from Gloucester to get to Newent in the very early hours of the morning? ■ RS

*[Before Nigel Freeman (the new owner of Oxenhall Lock Cottage) checks his insurance flood damage clauses we think it wise to point out that the historical report may greatly exaggerate the situation at the Cottage! It is difficult to imagine this depth of water building up in the immediate vicinity of the Cottage as the fields to the rear fall away so rapidly. - Ed.]*

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# Dates For Your Diary

*By Barbara & Ray Moses*

Meetings hosted by our "Master of Ceremonies" Lloyd Jones

Social evenings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at the  
**Down Under Bar of the Royal Oak Hotel, The Southend, Ledbury.**

*[\*Formerly known as The Acorn Suite]*

*All meetings are 7.30 for 8pm.*

## **Tuesday, 15th December**

*"The Wilts & Berks Canal"*

By Henry Smith of the Wilts & Berks Canal Amenity Group  
who will bring us up to date with their restoration activities.

## **Tuesday, 19th January**

*"Stroudwater through the seasons"*

By Dave Gaunt (one of our regular attenders at the Social evenings)  
who will give us a colourful guide to a nearby canal.

## **Tuesday, 16th February**

*"The Gloucester & Sharpness Canal"*

By Huw Conway-Jones. Huw is a popular speaker who will be  
telling us about this ship canal both in the past and present.

Yet again we have a full set of interesting speakers for our Members and friends - on p. 11 just for this issue *(in order to permit our special centre-page spread - Ed)*. However, Barbara & Ray Moses are now responsible for arranging this part of our activities.

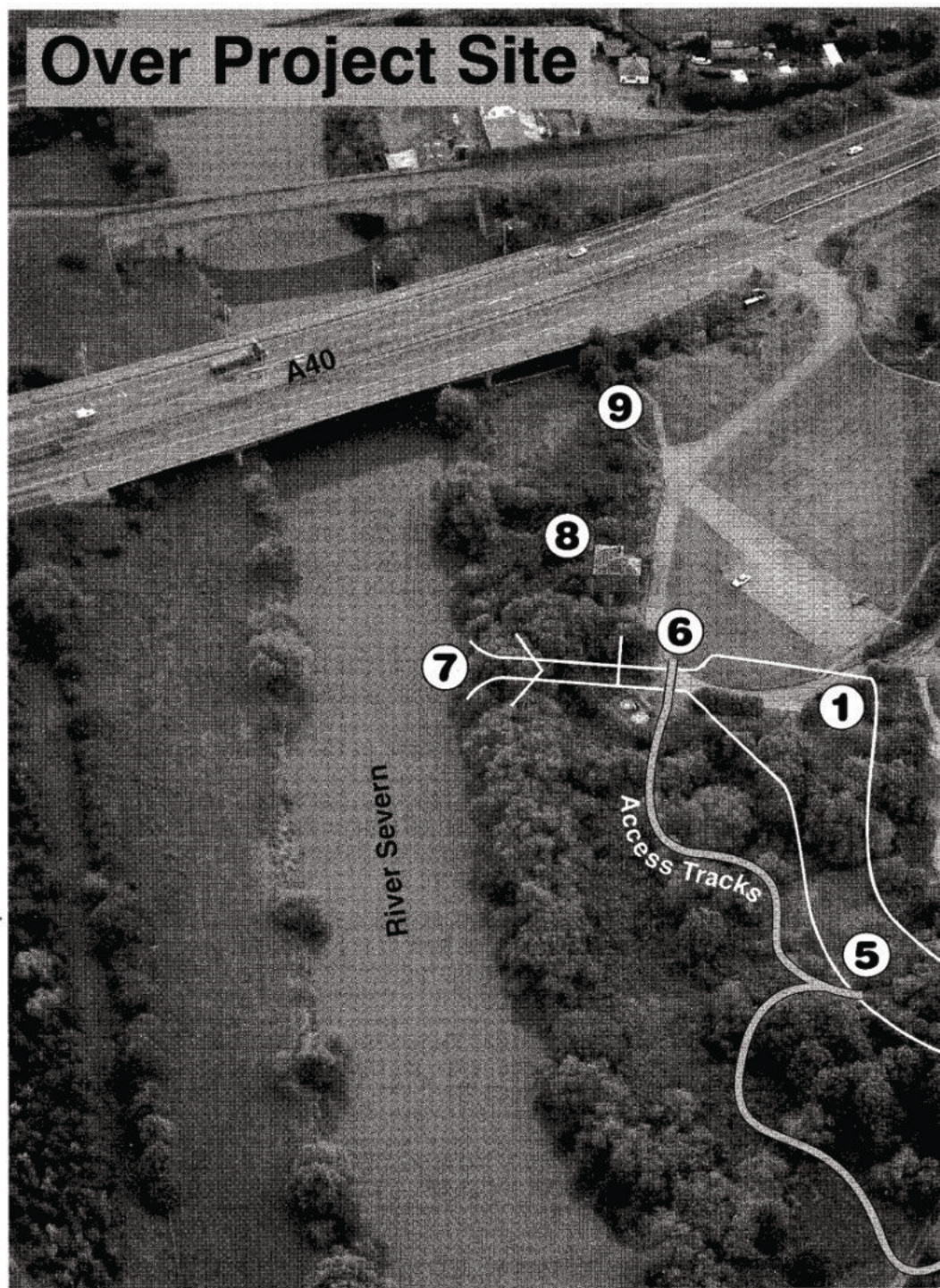
Our thanks to Steve Delacourt-Smith for arranging our speakers over the past few years - and, especially, to Barbara & Ray for stepping into the breach. Lloyd Jones continues as our popular Master of Ceremonies - please support their efforts on the third Tuesday of each month.

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 Barbara or Ray if you have any queries, or ideas for Social Events [01989 780 325].

**IMPORTANT:** Please note that the small Hotel car park is for residents of the Hotel. Our members and guests are requested to park either in the street or in the (free) public car parks nearby.



# Over Project Site

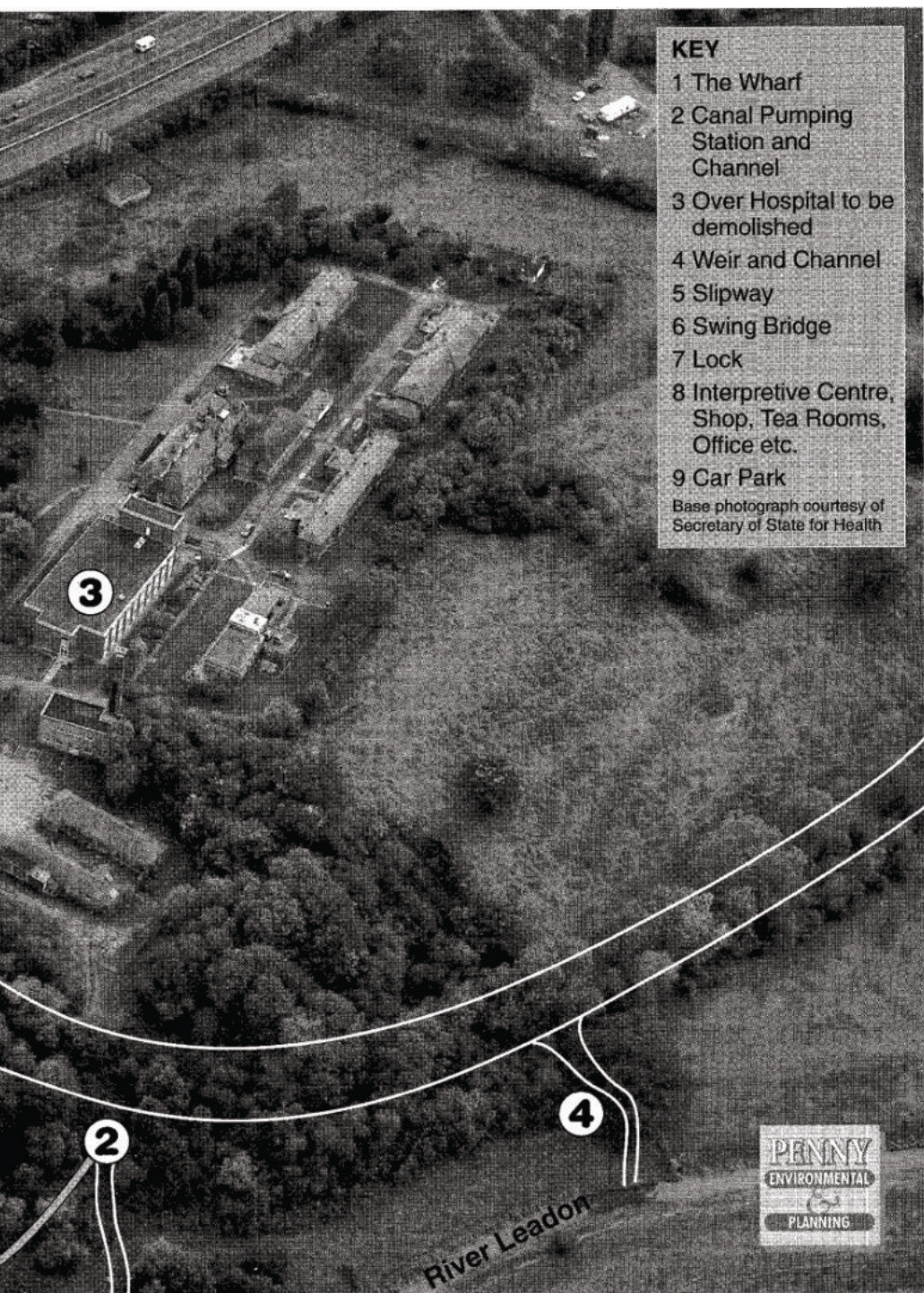




## KEY

- 1 The Wharf
- 2 Canal Pumping Station and Channel
- 3 Over Hospital to be demolished
- 4 Weir and Channel
- 5 Slipway
- 6 Swing Bridge
- 7 Lock
- 8 Interpretive Centre, Shop, Tea Rooms, Office etc.
- 9 Car Park

Base photograph courtesy of  
Secretary of State for Health





# RESTORATION UPDATE

*By Brian Fox*

This will probably be the first report of many where our new site at Over takes centre stage and should be the scene of frenzied activity for the next year or more. As reported in the last edition, we made a start in the early Spring in clearing trees and undergrowth. This was with a primary purpose of clearing what has become known as The Wharf area of obstructions so that excavation of the soil filling the old canal could commence for one week in September at our annual canal camp with clear ground to work on.

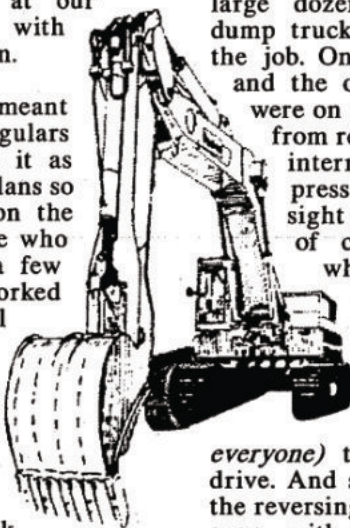
Last minute planning meant that many of our regulars were unable to make it as they had made other plans so we were a bit thin on the ground at times. Those who did manage to give a few hours or days were worked to their full potential so as not to waste valuable time and were not allowed to sit around except in the recognised tea breaks!

The planned task involved moving several thousand tons of canal infill material and depositing it all at various points around the site, agreed with the developer, depending on the quality of infill encountered once we started digging. Good topsoil was no problem as the developer could use as much of that as we could give him but heavy clay would need to be broken down and mixed with better soil. Any rubbish like old bricks/concrete etc would be buried under new access roads to be built

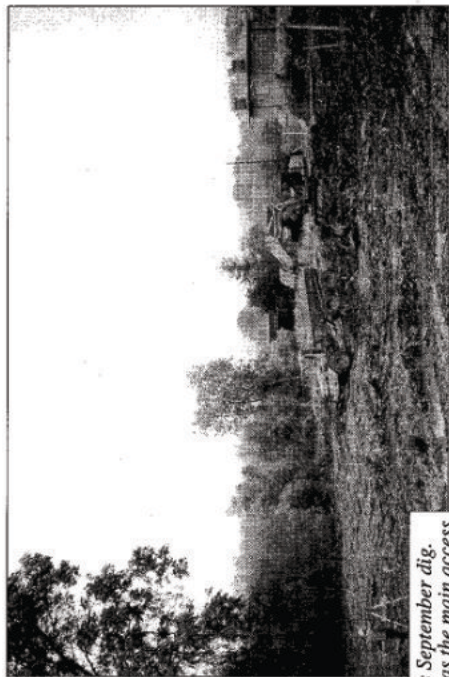
for pumping stations. We had a vague idea of what we might find from trial trenches dug last year but we were pleasantly surprised that the majority of infill material was reasonable quality topsoil with some clay which was readily disposed of.

Tom Bennett, our Plant Manager, had decided that to move muck in large quantities we would need large machines and our own plant would not be suitable so one excavator, one large dozer, and two enormous dump trucks were hired to tackle the job. One truck carried 18 tons and the other 25 tons and they were on the go all the time apart from refuelling, tea breaks and interruptions to talk to the press and visitors. The first sight of a dump truck capable of carrying 25 tons with wheels 6ft. high and a ladder to climb up to the cab is a bit daunting but Tom reassured anyone who had any doubts (*which was just about everyone*) that it was a doddle to drive. And so it proved apart from the reversing which proved difficult even with mirrors. Nobody hit anything which they shouldn't - apart from a lamp-post which was nudged (*well I knew it had to come down later anyway!*).

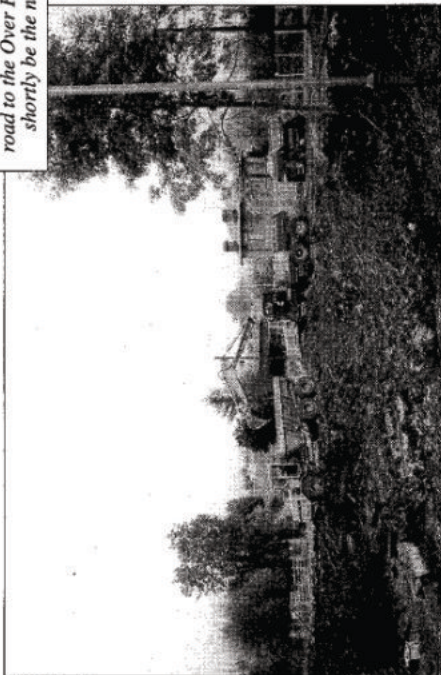
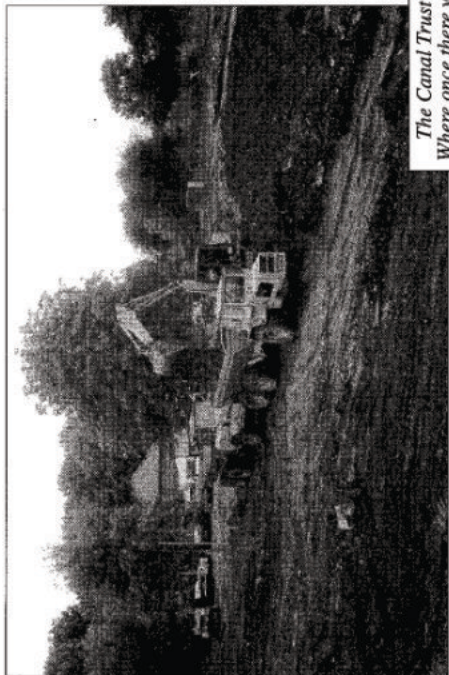
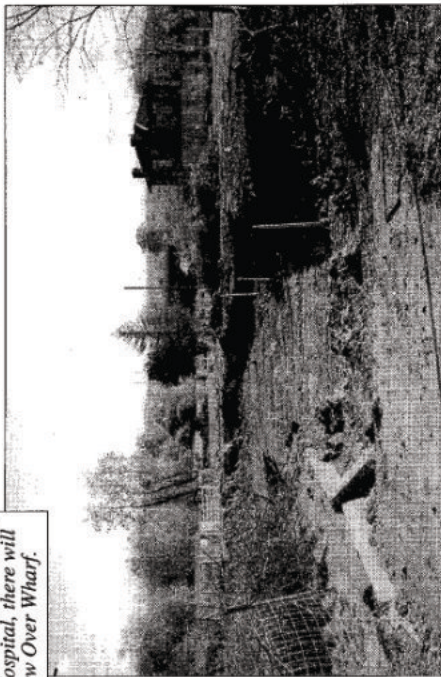
Tom and Alan Lines (*and Sally his dog*) even slept on site so that they could be up at first light to get the machines ready for those of us who didn't make it until 9 o'clock, and come evening we didn't stop either, having hired floodlights so that work continued until 10 o'clock some nights. Nobody had time to sit







*The Canal Trust's September dig. Where once there was the main access road to the Over Hospital, there will shortly be the new Over Wharf.*



## RESTORATION UPDATE... continued

back and count the loads of soil going out to the tipping areas but when everything was working well it was taking about 5 minutes to load a dumper and the other one was waiting to be loaded as the first drove off.

Surprisingly enough the job went according to plan for most of the time. It did rain a bit but these big trucks will go through mud - no problem. There were minor breakdowns, including a puncture, and at times we were down to the bare minimum of drivers so someone had to jump off and go to make the tea!

We did eat as well and in accordance with the tradition of canal camps everyone stopped at about 11 o'clock for brunch consisting of all the basics of a fried breakfast plus whatever the cook of the day could find in the 'fridge. Afternoon tea consisted of a sandwich (if you were lucky), another compulsory cup of tea, and after that you were on your own making time to go for an evening meal to the pub - or home to the understanding wife for those who couldn't stand the pace. At the end of nine days slog it was possible to see the wharf area taking shape

and we have marked out where the retaining walls will need to be built, but that will be another story. For those expressing an interest in restoration work at Over we shall be circulating a newsletter about once a month detailing dates for work parties at Over as well as Oxenhall. I should say at this point that the government New Deal recruits are now working at Over for 3 days a week (Wed/Thur/Fri) under the supervision of a Canal Trust volunteer and any further assistance would be most welcome if you have a few hours to spare.

Over may be making the headlines but lets not forget Oxenhall where work is continuing on rebuilding the lock now that the tunnel portal is finished. By the time you read this the lower lock entry walls will be complete up to the gate recesses including the laying of some particularly heavy coping stones to top it off. Accept for some assistance by WRG, most of the work is being done by the Wrinklies Tuesday group which now numbers about 7, at least one of whom doesn't exactly qualify being in his 20's [*just a mere Wrinkle? - Ed!*] The standard of the finished stonework is improving all the time

### WANT TO GET INVOLVED ?

If ever there was a time when volunteers were required THIS IS IT! No ifs, no buts, we HAVE to complete the Over Project to the agreed specification and the agreed deadline. We would not have agreed to it if we didn't think it could be done. However, as our new Chairman says it is a "daunting task"! Or, put another way - IT IS A CHALLENGE!

No matter what your skills are, the Team need your support. As there is no public access to the Over site the only way to be part of the action (even brewing a cup of tea would be welcome!) is to telephone FIRST. Please don't hesitate until tomorrow, become part of the exciting action at Over NOW! It's not just Over, there is still plenty going on at Oxenhall. Please call:-

**Oxenhall:-** Brian Fox (01432) 358 628  
[Tuesdays] Dave Young (01531) 635 321

**Over:-** Peter Eyres (01452) 790 653  
[Wednesday; Thursday; Friday]  
Paul Brown (01386) 443 826  
[2nd + 4th Sunday of month]



## RESTORATION UPDATE... continued

and a visiting representative from English Heritage was suitably impressed with the work so far completed. We are also hoping to start a regular weekend group to speed the work up so be prepared for a phone call requesting the pleasure of your company.

Whilst at Oxenhall I mustn't forget to report the construction of a new car park adjacent to the Church which the Canal Trust were asked to undertake with our plant in August. It involved the excavation of a considerable amount of soil to create a graded cutting off the lane, and up into the corner of a field, where the

soil was spread to create a level area which was then covered with stone and rolled. Everyone seems suitably impressed with the finished article and I am told it held 38 cars during a wedding held at the Church in October. This will be a very useful asset for the whole community, as well as the Canal Trust.

For those of you who read Ray Allsop's letter last time, and are itching to have your day restoring the Canal, please call one of the contact numbers in **The Wharfinger** now - *we need you more than ever both at Oxenhall and Over.*

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### *5 Days a Week Working on Canal!*

---

The way the Canal Trust works really is beginning to change. Never before have we worked the hours that we are now - we are quite literally working 5 days a week on the restoration of the Canal. At Oxenhall you can now join our ever growing team rebuilding the lock every Tuesday, whilst at Over we are working Wednesday, Thursday, and

Friday every week, and have just expanded this to also work on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month. For details of how to assist in any way with this work, please contact the people listed on the adjacent page - *thank you*. Any assistance would be greatly appreciated, we can utilise virtually any offer of help - even making the tea!

### *Rest'n Roundup*

**Restoration Roundup** is the title of a new *colour* newsletter, edited by CofM Member Alan Lines, to be circulated to all volunteers who are regularly involved in the restoration of the Canal. Active restoration volunteers will be kept abreast of intended canal camp/other key dates. It is one of a number of initiatives being implemented following suggestions from our Members. Armchair Members can receive copies for 12 months by sending £2.50 to the Membership Secretary.

### *Pipe Thanks*

Our thanks to Hyder (via its subsidiary Dwr Cymru-Welsh Water) for donating 4 large pipes that were surplus on their major Cardiff Treatment Works project for use at Over. Each weighing some 10 tonnes, they were craned onto 2 lorries courtesy of Byzac (Cardiff Project tunnelling contractor). Especial thanks to Midwinter Transport for bringing them to Over (involving a short closure of the A40 by the Police) - all without charge. *Our sincere thanks to all concerned.*

# Committee Matters

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

## JULY COMMITTEE

- Recommendations from the Finance Committee with regard to the investment of proceeds from the sale of Oxenhall Lock Cottage were approved.

- The Restoration Group reported that the concreting behind the restored Oxenhall Tunnel Portal was complete - local land owner Mr Goulding was going to utilise his own plant to restore the earth above the portal to assist the Canal Trust. This co-operation was greatly appreciated.

- Ongoing maintenance work, including grass cutting, was in hand in both counties.

- One of our excavators was to be moved to Over to undertake preliminary clearance of tree stumps and a small dumper would be left on site for general tasks.

- Following a (further) request at the AGM for more information, it was agreed that a trial should be undertaken for a news-sheet that would be circulated to those who regularly attended site to keep them abreast of progress/requirements.

- Arrangements for the Trading Company to attend Marcle Steam Fair (a new venue for us) and the Hereford Country Fair were reported.

- The H&G Canal Trust has been registered with Entrust (the

Regulator of Environmental Bodies under the Landfill Tax Regulations) as an "Environmental Body". We are now urgently seeking a Landfill Operator so that we may work in partnership and gain the very considerable financial benefits from Landfill Tax Credits.

- The deliberations of a special meeting of the Council of Management, held earlier in the month to review strategy, were reported. This identified a number of key elements around which the strategy needed to be formulated:- Politics/Membership; Fund Raising; Promotion; Restoration; Ownership of the Canal. Each was discussed in detail as was the identification of target lengths of the Canal. It was agreed that certain criteria ought to be met in respect of each future length of Canal on which restoration was undertaken. Further dedicated strategy meetings were planned.

- Council of Management had also met, at the end of June, to consider matters arising from the AGM. *[The first part of a Report was on pages 4&5 of the last edition; the concluding Report is on page 23 of this edition.]*

## AUGUST COMMITTEE

- It was reported, with regret, that Bill Rudd was no longer able to assist in managing the work at the Over Hospital site. Alternative arrangements were discussed and subsequently



## Committee Matters . . . (ii)

implemented. Although a further dedicated strategy meeting of the Council of Management had taken place it had been utilised to review all of the ongoing and planned activity at Over. Following this the Over Special Projects Group were asked to submit to the Council of Management more detailed proposals for the phased implementation of the essential work at Over. Following approval, the SPG would be left to implement the agreed works without the detailed involvement of the Council of Management. Subsequently, the routine CofM in August received a detailed Report from the Over SPG which was endorsed.

- It was agreed that the H&G Canal Trust should be represented at the Inland Waterway Association's full day seminar on "Engineering Aspects of Canal Restoration" to be held in Dudley in October.

- The Braunston Boat Show had agreed to make a donation of £1,000, from the proceeds of the 1998 event, specifically towards the costs of the slipway that will be constructed as part of the work at Over. This was the second year that a donation had been made (last year to Phase 1 of the Oxenhall Lock restoration) and was greatly appreciated.

- We had been invited to nominate representatives to serve on the Yarkhill (Herefordshire) and Oxenhall (Gloucestershire) Village Hall Committees - to reflect our regular use of the facilities. This was welcomed.

- There had been "teething problems" [*"teething challenges!"* - Ed.] relating to both Princes Trust and New Deal placements at Over. Additional liaison was in hand to resolve this and place matters on a more orderly footing for the future.

- The hours worked by all voluntary labour was being recorded to ensure that the total man/personpower was available for future grant aid applications.

- London Waterway Recovery Group had been active at Oxenhall early in August; our own volunteers had also tidied Horsefair Wharf.

- The Plant Group reported on the status of our various assets. The excavator used at Over had to be returned to Oxenhall in order to undertake work that we had offered to do in creating a new car park for the Church and Village Hall. The Parish paid for the fuel and consumables.

- A barbecue for restoration volunteers, and local landowners at Oxenhall, has been a success.

- Slow but sure progress by Messrs Parkman was reported in respect of the various studies that they were undertaking.

- The Town & Country Planning Team reported ongoing activity to try and ensure a satisfactory outcome to the saga of the Underwood's development in Hereford. A detailed case had been made to the Government Office for the West Midlands who had yet to make a decision as to whether to

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

"call it in". Following our request, Paul Keetch MP had written to Mr Underwood urging him to make the small adjustment to his proposals that would resolve the issue.

- The Planning Team had also made comments to the new Herefordshire Council regarding their proposed Unitary Development Plan. At short notice we had been invited to attend the Examination in Public relating to the Gloucestershire County Structure Plan with specific reference to a potential conflict between one Policy relating to the retention of historical transport routes and the established Policy that protects the line of the Canal. Cliff Penny's detailed Evidence was tabled and endorsed.

- A rates demand had been received from the Forest of Dean District Council in respect of our plant and materials compound, Horsefair Wharf, at Oxenhall. We had applied for 80% Charity exemption and 20% discretionary Charity reduction on behalf of the Canal Trust.

- Mike and Joyce Potts reported on their proposals for the Canal Trust's Llangollen weekend.

- A detailed report from the Over Special Projects Group was received and approved.

### SEPTEMBER COMMITTEE

- Work on the Oxenhall Church Car Park had gone well - it was agreed that a sign should be

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## Committee Matters . . . (iv)

requested from the Parish indicating that the Canal Trust had undertaken the vast majority of the construction work.

- Swan Hill Homes had purchased the Over Hospital site and David Penny had established contact and negotiated for our preliminary work on the site to continue. He was also undertaking extensive liaison with the Environment Agency, Tewkesbury Borough Council, Midlands Electricity, and British Telecom. There was ongoing liaison with New Deal regarding their involvement at Over. A major "muck shift" was planned later in the month - hopefully before the bad weather set in.

- A new contractor had been identified to undertake casual grass cutting on the Canal in Herefordshire.

- Arrangements for first aid training were reviewed - it was likely to cost at least £20+VAT per head for a minimum of 10 volunteers.

- The formal Risk Assessments for each element of the Over Project had been undertaken by David Penny and agreed by the Vice Chairman as the Safety Officer had been unable to undertake this essential work. Those for Oxenhall needed to be checked and updated.

- Regrettably Members had not been supportive of Mike & Joyce Potts planned trip to Crich Tramway Museum in spite of the "use it or lose it" publicity in the last edition of *The Wharfinger*. A

mini bus would be used for the 14 who had booked in good time - at the last minute a number of enquiries were received; frustratingly these Members did not appreciate that coaches have to be booked well in advance!

- Plans were being formulated for a mini-bus tour of the H&G Canal in 1999. Mike & Joyce were also planning another weekend trip for 1999 - a visit to Wigan Pier, with overnight accommodation in Worsley and a repeat of the very popular trip on the Manchester Ship Canal.

- The Social evenings team made a request for ideas for future speakers for the regular "3rd Tuesday of the month" social evenings in Ledbury.

- It was agreed that all Members should be specifically asked to assist the Canal Trust in making an extra special effort at the National Waterways Festival at Worcester next August Bank Holiday.

- Forest of Dean District Council had notified the Canal Trust that the application for rate relief had been accepted in respect of Horsefair Wharf - this was welcomed.

- The first edition of the news-sheet for regular restoration volunteers was ready for circulation; it had been delayed for confirmation that the Over Canal Camp had been authorised. Some volunteers would remain on site overnight to ensure maximum utilisation of plant/to minimise travelling.

CRP

## Any Old . . .

Barbara and Ray Moses will once again organise and man a stall for the H&G Canal Trust at the Gloucester Boat and Watersports Jumble next year. The final date has not been received as yet, but it usually takes place in late March. As in previous years we require donations, please, of items to sell to raise money for the H&G Canal Trust. We can also sell items on commission if required.

Any items with a waterways link will do, no matter how tenuous the connection, from books, magazines, fishing kit, boat parts etc., to knitted hats to keep your head warm when boating. All will be gratefully received. Please turn out your sheds, lofts etc. and bring your items to a social meeting, or contact Barbara or Ray on 01989 780 325.

## Stop Press !

Back in November '97 I asked Jude Moore (Waterway Recovery Group leading light & star of the WRG panto) if she would help build our Wharf wall for us at Over. Foolishly she said "yes, if you give us a few months notice". So on 8th November Jude, and WRG Chairman Mike Palmer, came to Over to see the **challenge** for themselves! Ten days later, as this edition goes to press, it is confirmed that a WRG camp will commence construction of The Wharf wall during half term week in mid February. A trial pour will be done 3 weeks earlier, and there will be a second WRG camp from 24th - 31st July building another structure at Over.



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## AGM Report *part two*

*The concluding part of our Report [Part 1 on p. 4/5 of the last edition]:-*

Major Robert Barnes queried maintenance of the Canal, availability of information, the need for a paid Officer and a reference to the local hunt in *The Wharfinger*.

On behalf of the Council of Management, Cliff Penny explained that the Trust undertook regular maintenance wherever appropriate Agreements were in place with landowners. Certain issues would need to remain initially confidential to the CofM if the overall interests of the Canal Trust were not to be prejudiced; the successes at Hereford and Over were good examples of this - such "commercial confidentiality" was no different to the manner in which larger businesses acted every day - as soon as something could be published it was. We would welcome funding for at least a part-time paid Officer. The necessary correction relating to the hunt would be made.

Major Bryan Heatley raised issues relating to the actions of the CofM during the short period he was Chairman. He considered it had been irresponsible to defer the sale of Lock Cottage and it had taken too

long to utilise a secure compound for plant/materials. He was firmly of the opinion that no "Trustee" should receive financial reward.

It was explained that the Cottage sale was timed to permit the area to be tidied and the upper length of the Canal returned to water. This work, and the timing of the sale, had been on the advice of our Estate Agent and Honorary Solicitor and was agreed by a clear vote of the CofM. These works had nearly doubled the valuation on the property. Maximum possible use was now being made of Horsefair Wharf and a clear policy developed of either returning plant to the compound or making it secure at the work site. *The Wharfinger* had already fully (and accurately) reported the issue relating to the reimbursement of expenditure and expenses which fully complied with the requirements of the Charity Commission and was not "financial reward". This was subject to six monthly review by the CofM.

Regular Strategy meetings of the full CofM continue and a report will be published in due course.

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## Membership Matters

---

We are very pleased to welcome the following new Corporate Members -

**Canal Craft (Brokerage) Ltd.,  
Bugbrooke, Northampton.**

**Servitune Motors,  
Ledbury, Herefordshire.**

**David Stockwell & Co.,  
Heron Lodge Funeral Home,  
Gloucester.**

Please remember that Membership strength is very important to us. Recruitment is a vital task where *everyone* can play their part. Don't throw your copy of *The Wharfinger* in the bin; please use it to recruit a new Member! Unable to actively recruit for us? Just ensuring that each copy is placed in a public place - *such as the Doctor or Dentist's waiting room* - is a step in the right direction. *Thank you.*

# The Last Page

## POSTAL OFFICE?

We are losing a family that has been very active "behind the scenes" - and we are assured that it is not our fault! Maggie and Bryan Sanderson, and family, have been the leaders of our "Postmaster" team for the past few years - ensuring that each edition of **The Wharfinger** is safely enveloped, labelled and stamped on its way four times a year. Unfortunately for us Bryan's new job is in Lancashire; however, Maggie and family will be around to see the next edition dispatched and are very willing to undertake the training of their successor/s!

From time to time we hear of Members who would like to help but really don't want to be involved in committees, are unable to assist with restoration etc. This role would be ideal and preferably suit someone living near Hereford (where the other members of the Team live and

**The Wharfinger** is printed) and only involves a few hours of work concentrated into four periods each year. The whole idea of the Team is to provide flexibility with holiday and sickness cover. This is a vital post within the Canal Trust - please contact Cliff Penny to discuss.

## GONE AWAY

Another item on our postal theme - the **Inland Waterways Association** have moved (from their long-standing 114 Regent's Park Road, London address) to PO Box 114, Rickmansworth, WD3 1ZY.

Tel: 01923 711 114

fax: 01923 897 000

e'mail:

iwa@waterway.demon.co.uk

Web site:

<http://waterway.demon.co.uk>

Post and telephone calls to the old address will be re-directed to the new address for some time.



*The Canal Trust (& Trading Company) wish all Members - and supporters*

**A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS**

*However, if you are reading this in 1999*

**A HAPPY NEW YEAR !**

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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.

CONTACT ANYONE ABOVE

**T O D A Y !**

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Membership records are computerised. In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1984 [Licence No. A3099046], your entry is available for inspection if you send a SAE to the Membership Secretary.

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

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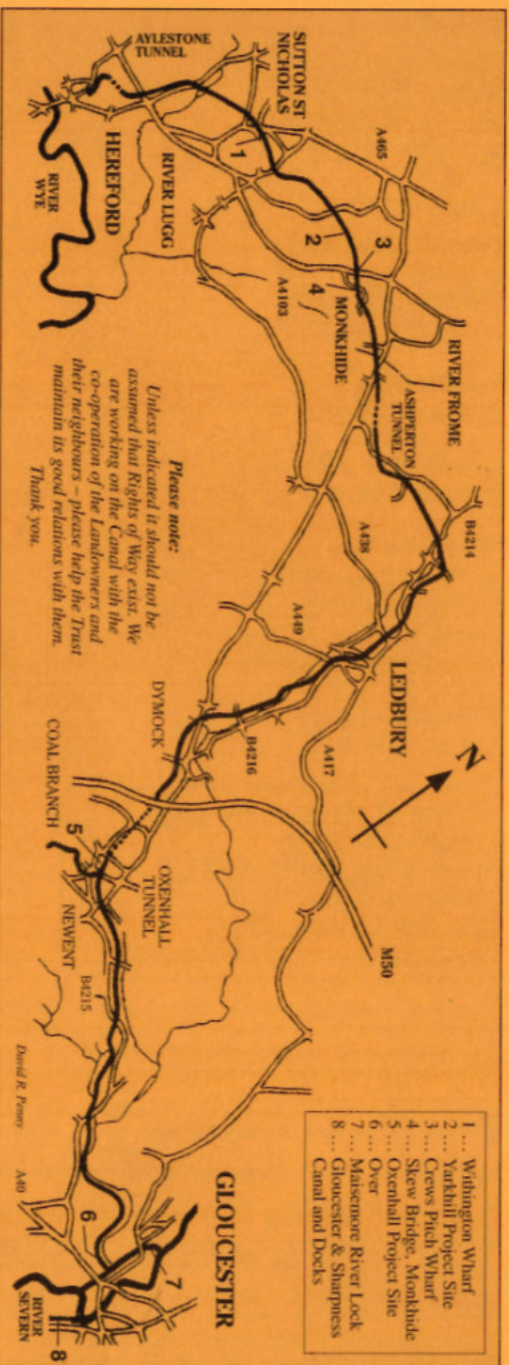
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# THE HEREFORDSHIRE AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL



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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 country – and abroad! Our objective is to fully restore the 34 mile Canal, from its connection with the 2,500 mile inland waterways network at Gloucester to the centre of Hereford. A Steering Committee of the Local Authorities, Environment Agency, etc. has been formed by the Trust to assist in progressing this objective. We have a major restoration site in each county, which together extend to some 3 miles.