

The Wharfinger

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



**Edition 61 • Spring 1999
50p – free to members**

WHO DOES WHAT...

VICE PRESIDENTS

Viscount Portman
R. E. Barnes TD.

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Brian Fox

VICE CHAIRMAN

Tom Bennett

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Penny, Nigel Jefferies, John Meager
David Penny, John Meager

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Plant & Training Manager
Health & Safety Officer

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Simon Hayward, Mike Potts
Dave Young, Brian Fox
Tom Bennett
Tony Austin-Bailey

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Vice-Chair
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David Penny
Richard Hamblin, Bill Cronin (FoDDC),
Steve Delacourt-Smith, Roger Tutt, Alan
Lines, Simon Hayward, Steve Lambert

[Over Site]

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Secretary
Site Managers
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John Meager
Peter Eyres, Paul Brown
Bob Willis

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Planning
Landowner

David Penny
David Penny, Cliff Penny
Brian Fox

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Elizabeth Lloyd

MEMBERSHIP:- Secretary
Covenants

Nigel Jefferies
Liz Connors

SOCIAL:- Events
Outings

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Mike Potts, Joyce Potts

SUPPORT TO CofM:- Minutes
Admin

Tony Austin-Bailey
Mike Potts, Joyce Potts

IWA NOMINATED MEMBER

Will Frecknall

THE WHARFINGER:- Editor
Postmasters:- Leader
Team

Cliff Penny, David Penny
Ian & Frances Roper
D & M Gray; S McManus

TALKS/WALKS

Nigel Jefferies, Mike Potts

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

THE TRADING COMPANY
H & G CANAL [SALES]

H & G

DONATING ALL PROFITS
TO THE CANAL TRUST

TREASURER/MANNING

Liz Connors

MAIL ORDER SALES/SALES GOODS

Penny Shetliffe

CRAFT FAIRS

Joyce Potts

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Tom Bennett, Ray & Barbara Moses, Dick Skeet,
Derek Gray, Derek Weaver, Mike Potts

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Dick Skeet

Committee

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

ROBBERY

Just as this edition was going to press, thieves broke through two sets of locked gates at the Over Hospital site, broke security locks on one of the Canal Trust's excavators, 'hot wire' started it and then used it to tear off high security padlocks to gain entry to two steel shipping containers. Within these, and other securely locked containers (*seven security grade padlocks were destroyed in the raid*) were virtually all of the Canal Trust's hand tools, a considerable amount of reclaimed materials 'rescued' from the Hospital, a concrete mixer and many other smaller items of value. In all, including the damage caused, first estimates are that the bill could exceed £5,000.

Yes, we are insured. But that does not compensate for the many hours spent by volunteers in removing Victorian doors and other fittings from the Hospital for re-use in the new Interpretive Centre etc. - the majority of which have been stolen. As you will read elsewhere, with the permission of Swan Hill Homes we had to organise the rescue of these materials from within the Hospital at very short notice as thieves had started to systematically strip it bare. Is it the same people who just watched and waited for us to do the hard work of carefully removing the items before bringing in their truck to load up and speed away?

And the insurance does not recompense David Penny and Alan Lines (*who turned out to support David on site once the problem*

was known) who had to await the scenes of crime officer and then work late into the night to try and make what was left secure.

The Insurance will not compensate the many voluntary hours by Liz Connors and others who now have to spend time filling in the insurance claim forms and organising receipts and valuations; or the volunteers who had to rapidly find replacement tools - the robbery taking place only 48 hours prior to the February Canal Camp.

As with all contracting insurance, we do not have 'new for old' cover. Whilst some of the tools were purchased recently, many were older yet in excellent condition but will be marked down in insurance value as we will be replacing them with brand new. All very well, but a significant additional cost to the Canal Trust when added to the inevitable insurance excess.

This all happened in broad daylight in a period of less than 1½ hours. David Penny had spent the morning working with Peter Eyres and the New Deal participants ensuring that everything was ready for the Canal Camp. He left for a late lunch, securing the site behind him. By good fortune, he passed the site later in the afternoon to see the roadside gate open and the security grade padlock lying on the ground smashed to pieces. Unfortunately the thieves immediately spotted him and rapidly made themselves scarce; their vehicle being fitted with false number plates.

What is so annoying is the fact that we had tried to do everything possible to avoid trouble. Our working area is behind a lengthy fence (erected by volunteers) and the entry gate had a high grade padlock fitted; as did the main site gate. The two large shipping containers had been purchased only three weeks earlier at a cost of £2,000 (*our plea in the last edition for cheap containers having been unsuccessful*) and were fitted with strong welded steel 'anti-jemmy' plates above and around the padlock. The padlocks on the containers were of such a high grade that they cost £50 each - but all of this is no match for a heavy excavator bucket!

So what have we learnt? Well, there is, inevitably, a bit of stable door shutting after the horse has bolted. At a cost of hundreds of pounds all our larger dumpers and excavators are being fitted with additional security devices in an effort to minimise the risk of them being used in the future to smash their way through expensive padlocks and we will be working with Swan Hill Homes to greatly reinforce the main site entry gate.

As with everything that we do this set back will not deter us from making progress in a professional manner. At the time of writing the February Canal Camp has got under way and the additional volunteers that this brings (*from all over the country*) will be put to good use in many ways on the Over site. One of the most important operations will be the first pours of concrete to the foundations of the new Wharf Wall.

TIME WASTERS

Even without the robbery, the preparations for the Canal Camp have not been as straight forward as they might have been thanks to the gross incompetence of a major national supplier of Ready Mix Concrete.

The area and regional managers of the firm in question were given a conducted tour of the Over site some months ago by David Penny who took [*yet another - Ed.*] half days leave to show them around. Promises of sponsorship then followed - an account to be opened on highly beneficial terms. The relevant forms were completed, references supplied and we waited.

A week before the Canal Camp reminder 'faxes were sent off and ignored. Last minute 'phone calls produced a quotation for ready mix concrete that was marginally cheaper than their competitors. But when we placed the first order we were told that there was no account in place and would we fill in all the forms again...(*the answer is not printable*)!

With the aftermath of the robbery still taking its toll Joan Penny suddenly had a crash course in concrete specifications (*Cliff Penny being too busy trying to earn enough money to pay for all of David's leave!!*) and telephoned the time wasters competitors.

So thank you to Steve Rowlands of Pioneer Concrete for a more advantageous quotation and an offer of express account opening. We hope for a long and (*discounted!*) relationship.

Mike & Joyce's
TRIPS AND TOURS

1999

SUNDAY 25th APRIL
EXPLORE THE HEREFORDSHIRE
& GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL

See and hear about the restoration
of this local waterway.

Guided tour with lunch and
Sharpness Canal Cruise.

£17.00 Inclusive #

Wednesday 19TH May
BOWOOD HOUSE
& GARDENS

"100 ACRES OF Capability
Brown Parkland, Azaleas and
Rhododendron walks etc.

A complete day out with lunch
included.

£25.00 Inclusive

Thursday 8TH July
AFTERNOON

SEVERN CRUISE

Coach to Worcester for a 2½-Hour
cruise to Upton on Severn. Return
by coach.

£14.50 Coach & Cruise

Let us arrange an outing or trip for
your club or organisation. Small or
large groups catered for or join with
another group!

SATURDAY 19th/SUNDAY 20th
JUNE

MANCHESTER SHIP CANAL CRUISE

(Liverpool to Salford Manchester)

And visit to the

WIGAN PIER EXPERIENCE
D/B&B at the Worsley Novotel.

A guided cruise along this
magnificent canal once bustling
with much larger vessels plus a day
out at the historic Wigan pier

£95.00 inclusive #

(Single room £12 extra)

SUNDAY/MONDAY/TUESDAY
12th 13th 14th SEPTEMBER

YORK EXPERIENCE

Guided tour of York Minster
Visit to Yorvik Viking Centre
Visit National Railway Museum
Cruise on a York Boat through this
historic City.

2 nights D/B&B at Lady Anne
Middleton's Hotel.

£149.00 inclusive

(Single room £12 extra per night)

Holiday insurance included in both breaks

For Bookings and more information
s.a.e. please

M & J Potts

8 The Dovecote, Mansell Lacy
Hereford

(01981) 590372

10.00am - 5.00pm please.

In aid of the Herefordshire &
Gloucestershire Canal Trust.

Editorial

NWF WORCESTER '99

Thank you to the many Members who took the time and trouble to return the questionnaire regarding our attendance at the **National Waterways Festival** on Worcester Racecourse this August Bank Holiday. A number of new volunteers have come forward (*thank you*) and Liz Connors will be in touch nearer to the event. Some of our Members will not be available over that Bank Holiday but have volunteered [*one of our favourite words - Ed.*] to assist at other events. Some have offered to assist in other ways - *thank you*.

Please do be patient, where you have offered to assist we will be in touch; we are all volunteers and the 'day job' does have to take precedence now and again!

Thank you to the number of Members for (unsolicited) donations when returning the questionnaire. These were very welcome and more than paid the postage and printing costs of this worthwhile initiative.

GRAND HOLIDAY DRAW

Members, our supporters and interested parties will receive **Grand Holiday Draw** tickets with this edition of **The Wharfinger**. Three really worthwhile holiday prizes (*no bottles of sherry here!*) and every single pound raised genuinely helps to restore the Canal thanks to the generous sponsorship of all prize donors and the support of **Midlands Electricity** who have paid for the printing again this year. Please buy some - *Thank you*.



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[Heading Censored]

Thanks to very hard work by David Penny (*who spent 10 days holiday working very long hours organising all of the work at Over - without any break*), and our visiting **Waterway Recovery Group** volunteers from all over the country, the disaster of the major robbery [*see page 1*] was soon put behind them. Good progress was made during the week-long Canal Camp at Over in mid February. Everybody concerned was determined to make it a success. *And for once the weather was kind to them!*

However, our trials and tribulations were not over. Following the robbery in the week prior to the Canal Camp extra special care was taken each night to disable every single engine on the excavators and large dumpers. This wasted considerable volunteer time each night and then, again, the next morning in getting everything working again. Everyone concerned was determined that the robbers would not use our heavy plant (and that hired in) to raid our secure stores again. Following the damage to our own two secure containers the week before, one was hired in to store the valuable small tools that were on hire for the week.

On Wednesday night the thieves struck again, this time using a portable angle grinder to cut the hinges off the hired secure store. Fortunately, they must have been disturbed as the early bird WRGies arriving on site the next morning found a lot of the hire tools dumped by the main gate. However, the serious damage to the doors of the container will have to

be paid for by the Canal Trust as will an expensive timber saw and other hired items stolen from the container in this second raid.

Whilst it would not be wise to go into too much detail additional security measures are now in place [*440 volts and a machine gun would be high on my list - Ed.*]. A paid guard was on site for the last two nights of the Canal Camp and portable floodlighting hired in and left on all night.

The Canal Trust have always said that there are no problems only *challenges*. However, we simply cannot continue like this! Many hours of volunteer time and effort have already been wasted in the past ten days dealing with the aftermath of these criminals. Many pounds of hard-won funds that should be taking the restoration forward have been (*and no doubt will continue to be*) diverted into security costs - and the costs of repairs and replacement of stolen items.

Inspite of all this, thanks to the fantastic enthusiasm of everyone concerned, a huge amount of work was undertaken. Over the weekend London WRG carefully stripped the slate roof of the barn for re-use; our own volunteers continued muck shifting. The week long Canal Camp manufactured masses of high quality shuttering for the new wharf wall and the first foundations were poured. With a number of trained volunteers on site the opportunity was taken to make considerable progress with muck shifting - *full report and, hopefully, photo's in the next edition.*



Yet Another Winner!

"Two VIP tickets to the London International Boat Show + Top Hotel" was how the 1989 Grand Holiday Draw ticket described the 2nd prize. So how did the winner enjoy this exciting event? Not only did Eileen Warburton send us her story, she also drew the accompanying illustration!

I am delighted to report that my **Grand Holiday Draw** prize, to the **London International Boat Show**, was a great success and a much enjoyed break for my husband and I.

Arrangements had been made by the organisers of the Show, the **British Marine Industries Federation**, for us to stay at the **Stakis St.Ermins Hotel** in Caxton Street for Bed & Breakfast. It was a delightful hotel, with quite an interesting history, with a chapel first standing on the site dedicated to St. Ermin by King Henry VII. After gradual deterioration of the area St. Ermins was opened as a block of mansion flats in 1887 and before 1897 had become an hotel.

We arrived in London a little later than expected - an hour and a half to be precise - having taken over the duties of a previously failed train. As we were plied twice with free tea and eats by embarrassed attendants, we just relaxed and enjoyed the prolonged wait.

When we eventually arrived at the hotel, it was a quick wash and brush up and back on the tube straight to Earls Court where the tickets for 2 days entry were awaiting, together with our show guides, at the Press Office. We were just in time to see the **Suzuki Futuristic Show** on the Centre Stage with marvellous dancers and acrobats; a good start to the afternoon. Although wearing flat comfortable shoes to circumnavigate

the show, I ended up removing them; as I glanced around I saw that I was not on my own in this!

We saw many beautiful boats, including a narrowboat on the **Blakes Holidays** stand, which was so beautiful fitted out it did not in the least resemble the old narrowboats of the past - it was just "pure luxury".

The **British Waterways** stand was very interesting with its display of photographs and many informative leaflets. There was also some wonderful painted canal ware.

As we continued around, I admit to coveting a large **Princess yacht**, the lines of which were beautiful, but I fear for the present I will have to continue to make do with a plastic boat in the bath!

Weighed down with carrier bags full of brochures, we returned to the hotel and abandoned the idea of eating out and had a meal in the hotel's **Cloisters Brasserie**, which was excellent and in delightful surroundings.

Next morning, after indulging in a large breakfast, we renewed our acquaintance with **Buckingham Palace** and the changing of the Guards. Then it was back on the tube to Earls Court to explore the first floor trade stands after first making ourselves known to the Organisers to thank them for donating the prize. Indeed may I say, again, thank you to the **H&G Canal Trust**, and **BMIF**, for a very enjoyable weekend.



Grand HOLIDAY Draw!

It's that time of year again, when we ask all Members to assist the Canal Trust with its most important fund-raising initiative of the year the Grand Holiday Draw. The draw tickets also help to raise awareness about the work of the Canal Trust.

As always, we have three really excellent *quality* holiday prizes to be won. We hope that Members will be prepared, please, to buy and/or sell the enclosed Grand Holiday Draw tickets*.

When buying or selling the tickets, please remember that all of the holidays have been donated (and the cost of printing the tickets paid for) so every pound raised genuinely goes towards the restoration of the Canal. As we use the money to match grant aid, and all of the restoration work is undertaken by our volunteers, each Grand Holiday Draw £1 represents about £20 of restoration work at contractors prices!

Our sincere thanks to Pauline and Ian Cundy of Starline Narrowboats for donating the first prize once again; to Mrs A Wood for the weeks self-catering prize in her holiday bungalow in Almley; and to Jane and Steve Knowles of the Holdfast Cottage Hotel, at Little Malvern, for the midweek

break in their lovely country house hotel. Special thanks to Sue Heritage, of MEB (Midlands Electricity) for sponsoring all of print costs for the Grand Holiday Draw tickets.

We are determined to make the 1999 Grand Holiday Draw the most successful to date but we need YOUR help, please, to achieve this. The winning tickets will be drawn at the 4 day long National Waterways

Festival (to be held this year on the Racecourse at Worcester) on the last day - August Bank Holiday Monday, so there is plenty of time for you to go out and

persuade friends and colleagues that this is a really worthwhile draw to support. Please show our prize donors that we really can bring in the pounds thanks to our combined efforts!

If you know and are able to arrange with a shopkeeper, publican or other retail outlet to sell the tickets on our behalf, or if you require additional tickets, please contact Liz Connors on 01432 880 155. *Thank you.*

**We appreciate that a small number of recipients are not prepared to sell draw tickets - we apologise but we do not have the resources to be selective in who receives tickets. There is no obligation to return unsold tickets.*

Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust - H & GCS	00000
GRAND HOLIDAY DRAW	
* 1st Prize - NARROW BOAT HOLIDAY FOR 3/5 ONE WEEK (April/May 2000). Donated by STARLINE NARROWBOATS	
2nd - ONE WEEK SELF CATERING FOR FOUR private bungalow in quiet west Herefordshire village near Welsh border March - May 2000. Donated by Mrs. A WOOD	
3rd - TWO NIGHTS B&B FOR TWO IN MALVERN at the award winning HOLDFAST COTTAGE HOTEL Midweek February - May 2000; Donated by Mr. STEVE KNOWLES	
<small>[All prizes exclude Bank Holidays and are subject to availability.] (Prizes: Mrs S. Cundy, 16 St. Elizabeth Close, Bishops St. Mildred, Hereford, HR1 3PF Registered with Hereford City Council under Section 5 Lotteries & Amusements Act, 1976 To be drawn at National Waterways Festival, Worcester, 30/8/99)</small>	
MEB Midlands Electricity	Sponsored by TICKETS 25p EACH -



As reported on page 13 we have a new venue for our third Tuesday of the month social evenings. Why not make a date to join us at The Verzons Country House Hotel? Everybody welcome.

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FIRST TIME BUYERS GUIDE AVAILABLE FREE ON REQUEST

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WE WILL MEET YOU AT YOUR BOAT

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Did You Know?

STAMPS & THINGS

Used postage stamps (*please carefully tear off the corner of the envelope with the stamp on it, don't steam it off!*); fuel coupons; trading stamps; used telephone cards - *all of these can be used to raise money for the inland waterways.* The Canal Trust collect these and pass them on to the IWA/WRG Stamp Bank nationally - and they have arrangements to turn them into cash!

Even expired fuel coupon/collector offers can be put to good use thanks to special arrangements with many of the companies concerned. The H&G Canal Trust has benefited from this national fund on a number of occasions so it is very important, please, that we are seen to do our bit.

Our 'Master of Ceremonies' Lloyd Jones will gladly pass on anything that you take to the third Tuesday of the month social evenings at the Verzons Country House Hotel [*see p. 13*]. Alternatively, your collections can be handed to anyone listed on the *Contacts* page [*inside back cover*] or posted direct to:-

IWA/WRG Stamp Bank, 33, Emerson Grove, Embleton Valley, Milton Keynes, MK4 2JS - please make it clear that you are a Member/supporter of the H&G Canal Trust when sending your collection direct to Milton Keynes. *Thank you.*

MONEY FOR NOTHING!

Provided you are a tax payer you can covenant your subscription so that the Canal Trust (a Registered Charity) can reclaim the income tax from the Inland Revenue. *Under no circumstances does this affect your*

tax affairs - a simple form [obtainable from Liz Connors - 01432 880 155] needs completion and the Canal Trust does the rest. Why let the Government have all your taxes - a few moments of your time and the H&G Canal Trust can benefit instead?

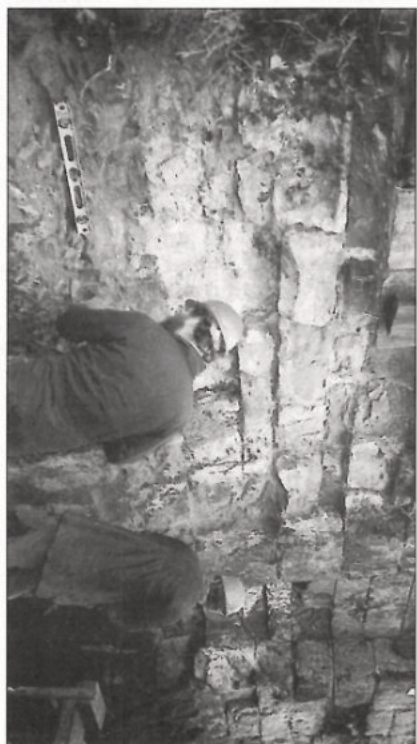
There is also the Gift Aid scheme which enables the Canal Trust to recover tax in respect of donations (of £250 or more) to the H&G Canal Trust *thus increasing the value of the gift by at least the standard rate of income tax at no cost to you!*

It is possible for Companies as well as individuals to utilise the Gift Aid scheme; not only does this enable the Canal Trust to reclaim the tax, but the Company may well be able to set the whole sum against profits! Liz Connors would be happy to assist you, or your business, to help the Canal Trust in this manner.

WE CAN HELP...

to solve your birthday or other gift dilemma by giving a H&G Canal Trust Gift Membership? An increasing number are given each year and are well received! Just tick the relevant box on a Membership Application Form and make sure, please, that you enclose your own name and address (*plus any message and details of the date of the birthday - if relevant*) with the appropriate payment.

A Gift Membership Certificate will be sent inside a canal scene card direct to the new Gift Member. Our Mail Order team, Penny & George Shetliffe [01432 820 623], will do their best to help *but please give them lots of notice.*



Work on the downstream end of House Lock. Oxenhill is beginning to turn a crumbling ruin into a very attractive – and soundly built – lock. Before long the lock chamber itself will become the focus of attention.



GLOUCESTER BOAT JUMBLE

Gloucester Docks,
Sunday 28th March

This is a marvellous family day out. 100's of stalls selling all types of sea, river and canal items - new and secondhand.

Open: 10.00am. - 4.00pm.

Adults ONLY £2.50

Accompanied children - free

Admission includes FREE entry to National Waterways Museum.

Free car parking in special areas just outside the docks.

Ray and Barbara Moses will be manning a stall on behalf of the H&G Canal Trust. They still require, please, anything at all waterway related to sell in order to raise funds for the Canal Trust. Offers to them on 01989 780 325.

Thank you.

DO YOU RUN A BUSINESS OR HAVE A FRIEND WHO DOES?

There are many rewarding ways to help the Trust.

Corporate Membership is just £20 per annum (£400 life). Membership is our strength, every single Member really counts and the support of more Corporate members near and far, is welcomed.

Or why not advertise in **The Wharfinger?** With rates starting at £9 for a quarter page (*with pro-rata reductions for larger advertisements*) this is an excellent way to show that your Company supports our voluntary efforts.

Full details from Cliff or David Penny on 01432 820 420.

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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 in supporting the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust for over 5 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



SHEETMETAL WORKS
ASHLEWORTH
GLOUCESTER
GL19 4JJ

AGM - 1999

FORMAL NOTICE OF 1999 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

To be held on Thursday 27th May, 1999 at the Burgage Hall,
Church Street, Ledbury, commencing at 7.30pm.

This is the formal Notice of the 1999 AGM in order to give Members the opportunity to make a note in their diary. The Agenda and the Annual Report will be in the next Edition of *The Wharfinger*.

In accordance with the H&G Canal Trust's Articles and Memorandum of Association those members of the Council of Management who are retiring on rotation but offering themselves for re-election do not require to be formally nominated to serve an additional term. However, new nominations to serve on the Council of Management are welcomed and have to be made in writing, in a prescribed form.

Nominations must be submitted not less than 7 days nor more than 28 days prior to the AGM. The form is available from Liz Connors [*see Contacts on the inside rear cover*] to whom it should be returned *to arrive between 30th April and 20th May*.

Every Member who is entitled to vote at an AGM may appoint a proxy to vote in his/her stead. A proxy must be someone entitled to vote at the meeting. Proxy forms will be available from Liz Connors from the 30th April and must be completed, signed and returned to her *at least 48 hours prior to the commencement of the AGM*.

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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
our NEW venue, The Verzons Country House Hotel,
Trumpet, nr. Ledbury - see map below.

All meetings are 7.30 for 8pm.

Tuesday, 16th March

"The Industrial History of the Lower Wye Valley"

Come and hear Stan Coates tell the fascinating history of this area of outstanding natural beauty.

Tuesday, 20th April

"Navigation on Norfolk's Rivers & Broad's"

John Foley will introduce us to the delights of these distant waterways with a colourful history.

Tuesday, 18th May

"Canal Tokens & Medals"

Canal & Riverboat Magazine's regular contributor Stanley Holland will talk about another lost part of our heritage.

Forthcoming attractions:-

Tuesday 15th June: "The Anderton Lift" with William Rowley

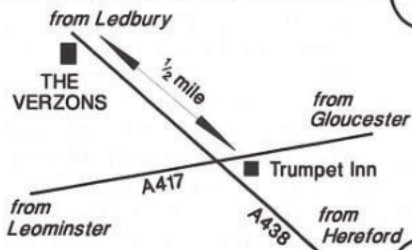
July & August will be our regular "noggin & natter" evenings - but with a difference - entertainment by our own Members!

plus a continuing line-up of interesting speakers for the Autumn...

Ray & Barbara have gone to a lot of trouble to find a new venue and a really superb list of speakers - please support them - everybody welcome! Any queries, or ideas for speakers, to Ray & Barbara on 01989 780 325

About our NEW Social Evenings venue - the Verzons Country House Hotel ... situated on the A438 Hereford to Ledbury road, half a mile on the Ledbury side of Trumpet crossroads (junction of the A438 with the A417).

Plenty of parking, a much larger private room and still *roughly* halfway along the Canal from Hereford to Gloucester.



RESTORATION UPDATE

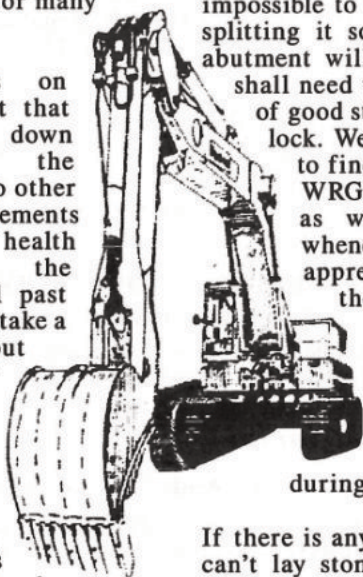
By Brian Fox & Nigel Bailey

In the autumn issue of *The Wharfinger* I commented about a lack of journalists among you which I am pleased to report did not fall on stony ground. You will see that the report on Over is now being written by Nigel Bailey who lives in Gloucester and has been spending some of his weekends down there. Thank you Nigel, I hope you enjoy compiling your report for many editions to come.

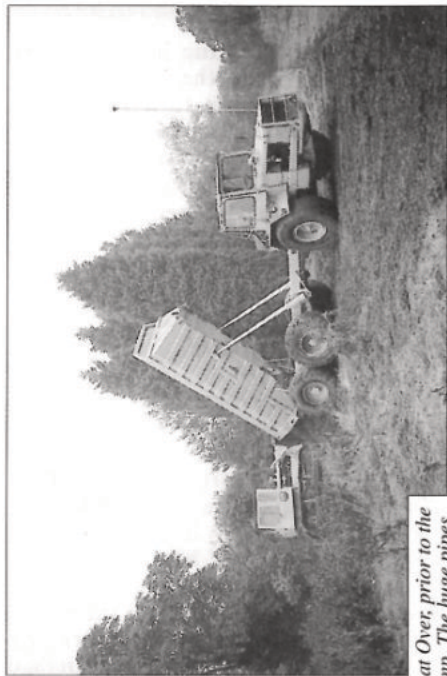
Oxenhall still goes on although I must admit that work has slowed down considerably over the Christmas period due to other more pressing engagements and also to various health problems among the Wrinklies who are all past their prime and need to take a breather more often but should be fully recovered by the time you read this.

The first programmed group of WRGies descended on us in January from the wilds of Kent and East Sussex and once again settled for accommodation at Dymock village hall where they seem to have everything they want close at hand. Their main task for the weekend was the removal of a large tree which had grown into the masonry of the lock with roots crawling everywhere to gain a hold. Some very large coping stones needed moving and were slowly pulled out with the help of their Tirfor winch attached to a large tree close by - definitely a job for specialist equipment with skilled operators and it was consequently

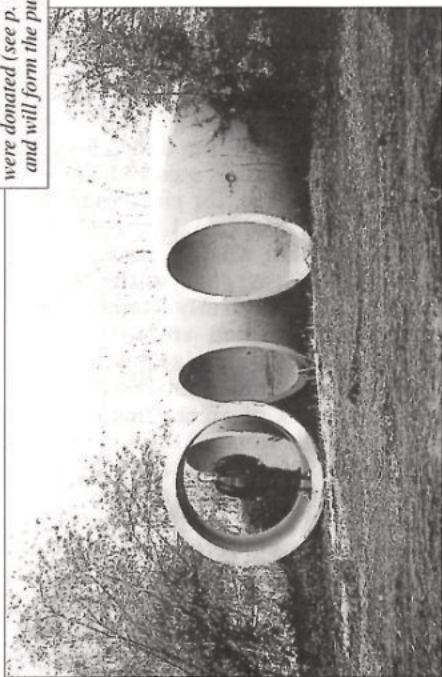
out by the end of the first day. More surplus roots then had to be found to make use of their winch - there are plenty of them along the side of the Canal. Another gang set to work on the old railway abutment with a Hilti breaker in an attempt to retrieve more stone to use in the lock reconstruction. Unfortunately it was so well built that it proved virtually impossible to reclaim stone without splitting it so the remains of the abutment will now be left and we shall need to find another source of good stone for rebuilding the lock. We rise to the challenge to find enough work for the WRGies as they work hard as well as playing hard whenever they come. We appreciate the fact that they come long distances to help us out. We are confident that we will have plenty of rewarding work for our visitors, both at Oxenhall and Over, during the coming months!



If there is any chance of a frost we can't lay stone so the opportunity has been taken to clear vegetation between the aqueduct and House Lock. It is now possible to see the profile of the old Canal minus the water. A drainage ditch has been dug to dry out the silt, as we aim to be ready to dredge this section when we have an excavator spare. Some levels have been taken to establish heights for the Canal bed and adjacent banks. Assuming the Canal was originally 4½ft deep we have found that the towpath and opposite banks have both sunk by over a foot and will need restoring to their original height if we are to have sufficient



Our work continuing at Over, prior to the February Canal Camp. The huge pipes were donated (see p. 17 of the last edition) and will form the pumping station sump.



depth of water for navigation. Initial calculations suggest that this can be achieved by simply transferring the surplus silt in the bed to the banks but there will probably be a need for some more puddle if the banks are to be watertight. The settlement of the banks over the years has also been found at Over and was suspected at Yarkhill but I suppose is to be expected when there are tree roots and rabbits etc burrowing through!

Now over to our new contributor, Nigel Bailey -

For the last five years I have been a member of the Trust and each time I received my copy of *The Wharfinger* I would say "I really must do something to help... sometime." When restoration began last year at Over, I really had no excuse - I live in Gloucester so it couldn't be more convenient.

Up to the autumn it was all about clearing the ground along the canal route and around The Wharf area. This was easier said than done because some of the undergrowth had been growing steadily, more dense and tangled, for more than 110 years since the Canal closed. An Indian elephant would have come in handy for shifting some of the larger trunks. We carefully taped the mature trees which are to remain and set to work on the rest with bow saws, hooks and occasionally a chain saw. The trunk of an enormous self-seeded willow stood in the lock itself like a giant bonsai in a red brick pot. Brambles an inch thick, and ivy even thicker, had climbed the trees and made progress pretty slow. Trees that had fallen years ago complicated the task. A mature ash which would have been an attractive towpath feature was badly damaged in a storm and also had to be felled.

Most of this clearing has now been done and given the excavators a chance to work on the site of The Wharf. A good start has been made in removing the infilled soil but much more is left before we will be right down to the bed level. It is crucial that we have The Wharf site ready for the Waterway Recovery Group to move in during the February half term to commence pouring the concrete.

On weekdays Peter Eyres has been supervising youngsters from New Deal and other agencies who have worked on all sorts of tasks. Paul Brown now ably oversees our Sunday activities. Recently they have been lifting hundreds of blue bricks from a courtyard near the Mortuary building and stacking them on pallets (scrounged by Paul Brown). The bricks will be re-used to surface the top of the wall forming The Wharf. We also rescued a couple of hundred granite cobblestones which will be used as a decorative feature around the mooring rings.

With the demolition of most of the hospital buildings due to start soon, and with increasing security problems, it has become urgent to rescue anything useful from the buildings before it is damaged or stolen. We found that an enterprising local thief had been using a wheeled hospital bed as a trolley to cart materials to the footpath leading out to the main road thereby leaving the locked gates intact. David Penny's definition of "useful" is pretty wide ranging and we have been reluctant to miss anything that we can make use of in our future restoration and building work.

As soon as it was clear that the contents of the buildings were at

RESTORATION UPDATE... continued

risk, with the approval of owners Swan Hill Homes, we worked swiftly to try and beat the thieves. With help from Chris Clark and a borrowed trailer we stored away some of the materials off site at a location kindly temporarily given to us by a friend of a Member of the Canal Trust. More recently Victorian doors and frames, and other materials destined for the interpretive centre, have been carefully stored in our newly acquired shipping containers. *[Contents stolen - see p.1 & 5 - Ed.]*

Meanwhile, Dick Skeet has located a boat which we will hope to be able

to base at Over to keep the weeds in check. Its currently at Taunton so, Dick, why don't you try the River Tone to Bridgwater, the Parrett to the coast, turn right up the Severn, taking the western channel at Lower Parting and then turn left into the first lock on the Hereford and Gloucester Canal. Doesn't that sound great?

Changes during the next nine months will be dramatic - and with so much to be done we still need all the help we can get. After so many months of clearing and dismantling things I'm really looking forward to the construction stage.

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]

Our volunteers are active at Over on other days of the week too - and with the longer days swiftly approaching some evening work may soon be under way; please pick up the 'phone and check just how you can get involved in assisting with our restoration progress.

The HEAVY gang need you - see p. 22



As reported on page 13 we have a new venue for our third Tuesday of the month social evenings. Why not make a date to join us at **The Verzons Country House Hotel?**
Everybody welcome.

Committee Matters

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

OCTOBER COMMITTEE

- A new Life Family Membership from a prominent local businessman had included a £300 donation. This was warmly welcomed by the Council of Management.

- Revised budgets, including those relating to work at Over, were agreed as were financial projections for the period March 1999 to February 2000. Following the agreed revue of the reimbursement of mileage expenses to an individual, the Council of Management endorsed the recommendation from the Finance Committee that the existing arrangements continue - with a further review in 6 months.

- It was reported that grant aid and sponsorship activities were not producing any positive results to date although a number of avenues were being pursued.

- Appreciation was expressed to the Chelmsford Branch of the IWA who had donated £250 towards the costs of the Acrow Bridge launch nose. This would enable the Canal Trust to erect our temporary bridge, currently spanning the Ell Brook at Oxenhall, at other sites without the need for cranes. The donation followed a talk to the Branch by Cliff Penny earlier in the year.

- A masonry saw had been purchased to assist with the ongoing restoration of House Lock

at Oxenhall. The work was proceeding on the downstream faces of the Lock entrance walls.

- The Restoration Group reported on the first Canal Camp at Over which had taken place in late September. A considerable amount of preliminary muck shifting had been achieved by a small team utilising largely hired in equipment to gain advantages of scale over the Canal Trust's own excavators and dumpers. However, a great deal more was left to be moved. A new mobile Canal Trust office was on site [*formerly a mobile dental surgery Ed.*]. Thanks to hard bargaining by David Penny, Midlands Electricity had moved a high voltage underground cable out of the way and British Telecom had moved an overhead telemetry cable; both without charge this was greatly appreciated.

- The Plant & Training Manager reported that a number of our 4 tonne dumpers were currently stripped for major repairs/rebuilding. The Canal Trust had been offered one of the large Volvo dump trucks that had been hired for the Canal Camp at an attractive price. The CofM agreed to give serious consideration to the economics of purchasing this machine. Tom Bennett was thanked for his efforts in obtaining appropriate plant for the recent Canal Camp at Over.

- It was confirmed that, following a favourable Ministerial

Committee Matters . . . (ii)

decision, the length of the Canal close to Stanier Way was now owned by Herefordshire Council.

- Due to work pressures, Steve Gittins had been unable to undertake Health and Safety duties relating to the work at Over. David Penny and Tom Bennett had ensured that the Canal Camp was compliant with the legislation. It was agreed that all Canal Trust restoration sites would be declared hard hat & safety footwear areas as from 1st January 1999 regardless of the nature of the work in hand. Appropriate signage was to be obtained for all sites.

- The new IWA head office address was noted [see p. 24 of the last edition.]

- Our Trading Company reported two successful recent events. A donation of £25 had been received from one of the Grand Holiday Draw prize winners as a token of their appreciation for the holiday. There were queries with regard to the need to licence the bottle draw that the Canal Trust ran at some events.

- The Canal Trust were now members of the Parliamentary Waterways Group.

- It was reported that a gentlemen enquired how to make the bed of a canal watertight at the Open Day at Oxenhall, at the end of September - and promptly gave a £5 donation for the information!

- Two representatives from English Heritage had been taken on a tour of the Oxenhall site by David Penny. They were impressed by our

restoration work so far on House Lock (a Listed structure).

NOVEMBER COMMITTEE

- The Chairman reported on a useful meeting with Dianne Organ, MP for the Forest of Dean, and on routine discussions with landowners in the Oxenhall area. There was ongoing liaison regarding the proposals for an arboretum at Newent. An article by the Chairman would appear in the December edition of the national publication **Canal Boat & Inland Waterways**.

- Following a request to exchange Membership lists with the IWA, to permit joint recruitment, the Honorary Treasurer pointed out that we were precluded from doing so by the Data Protection Act. It was agreed that we would be willing to include an IWA recruitment leaflet in **The Wharfinger** if the IWA reciprocated in **IWA Waterways**.

- It was agreed to purchase the 18 tonne Volvo dump truck following a report which indicated a very short pay-back period compared to hire costs. The hire costs already incurred in respect of the September Canal Camp at Over would be set against the purchase price.

- Grant aid was again discussed and it was agreed that there was a need for negotiating impetus to be increased and for more people to be involved in this activity.

- It was reported that the Dig Deep initiative, bringing a number

Committee Matters . . . (iii)

of WRG groups (from all over the country) regularly to the H&G Canal, had been approved for another year. This was welcomed.

- The restoration of the downstream approach walls to Oxenhall House Lock was now almost complete to the start of the gate recesses. The New Deal initiative at Over was slowly beginning to get results. The CofM expressed thanks to Paul Brown and Peter Eyres for their extensive voluntary supervision on this site.

- Three dumper axles had been removed for rebuilding; unfortunately they were not of a make whereby arrangements could be made to take up an offer of free refurbishment. This was regretted and, in view of the high costs

involved, the Plant & Training Manager was asked to consider this when purchasing dumpers in the future.

- The Town & Country Planning Team reported that the proposed re-development of the School of Farriery site, in Hereford, had been granted permission following it being called in by the Secretary of State. This meant that the diversion route for the Canal was protected and the developer would undertake major civil engineering works as part of the development of the site including the construction of a new highway bridge and footbridge over the route of the Canal.

- The CofM thanked Tony Austin-Bailey for agreeing to take

DUMPERS!

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HAMNISH COURT, HAMNISH
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Committee Matters . . . (iv)

over the vital post of Health & Safety Officer. The review of the existing Risk Assessments was already in hand.

- Preliminary arrangements for the proposed tour of the H&G Canal were discussed [details on p.3]. Steve Delacourt-Smith was unable to continue to arrange the third Tuesday of the month social evenings. Ray & Barbara Moses had agreed, at short notice, to take over this important role. It was agreed that a new venue would be preferable and Ray & Barbara's suggestion of the Verzons Hotel was welcomed [see p.13].

- The Trading Company's Craft Fair, at Hereford Shirehall, had been a success but attendances were down on last year due to appalling weather. A letter and questionnaire had been sent out to Members regarding our intended 'best ever' presence at the National Waterways Festival at Worcester. Other initiatives were also in hand including regular meetings to review and plan our display.

- We would be hosting the Spring meeting of Southern Canals at a venue near the H&G Canal in April.

DECEMBER COMMITTEE

- The Chairman reported receipt of the Environment Agency's consultation LEAP {Local Environment Agency Plan} for the Wye area and it was agreed that the Town & Country Planning Team would review and comment on relevant parts of this important document in liaison with the IWA.

- Work that was in hand to develop a high standard site on the Internet for the H&G Canal was welcomed. It was agreed that this needed to represent the policies and views of the Canal Trust.

- Project Approval was reported to have been gained from ENTRUST for the Over site but there was no progress with grant aid from any source.

- The first of the New Deal volunteers from outside of Gloucestershire had attended site at Over. It was agreed that there was a need for improved liaison between the Plant Group and the Over SPG. Arrangements for the movement of our own plant to OVER was in hand as were the necessary structural checks on the design of the new Wharf Wall.

- The IWA National Restoration Committee had requested that one of their regular Committee Meetings be held close to the H&G Canal with an appropriate site visit. This was warmly welcomed and would be in the Autumn of 1999.

- The Plant Group reported they had managed to upgrade one of our two 360° tracked excavators so that both were now six cylinder engined machines at no cost!

- The Town & Country Planning Team reported that the developer of the Farriery College site in Hereford had applied to delete one of the Conditions relating to the restoration of the Canal through the site. They would be dealing with the matter urgently and would be seeking no relaxation

Committee Matters . . . (v)

of what had previously been agreed with regard to the route. However, they understood the reason behind the developers request.

- The Canal Trust noted proposals by the Herefordshire Council to reinforce the underside of Widemarsh Canal Bridge and requested further details. This revealed that the initial proposals would obstruct the line of the Canal and would, therefore, be the subject of an objection. Amicable negotiations were continuing.

- There had been a good response to the Questionnaire regarding our planned attendance at the National Waterways Festival, at Worcester, in August. A number of new volunteers had come forward (*thank you!*). Unsolicited donations had more than paid the costs of printing and mailing the questionnaire. This was greatly appreciated.

- A further CofM Strategy meeting would be convened in January.

■ CRP

HEAVY PLANT *is not a large shrub from the garden centre . . .*

EARTH MOVING MACHINES *could be wheelbarrows - but we are past that stage . . .*

It doesn't matter if you don't know your geraniums from your begonias, we **URGENTLY** need operators and helpers for our ongoing work at Over - *full training given provided you are prepared to help regularly at weekends or assist at one (or more) of our week long Canal Camps.*

Come and learn a new skill with the Canal Trust.

Full safety footwear and helmets at reduced prices.
Also the chance to attend free first aid courses.

**Please contact our Plant and Training Manager
Tom Bennett on 01981 500 258 NOW!**

Strategy

At the last Annual General Meeting the Council of Management undertook to review strategy. Following a number of meetings, when all potential aspects have been thoroughly debated, the CofM have determined criteria that will *normally* be utilised to assist in the selection of future lengths of the Canal for restoration.

- The Canal Trust own the land or have a Landowner Agreement in place (mandatory).

- Lengths adjacent to, or in the vicinity of, an existing site will be preferred.

- Water resources to be available.

- Public access/trailboat access/trip boat to be feasible.

- To be economically viable with funds available and subject to cost benefit analysis.

- Community benefits and amenity value to be apparent.

The general policy is to develop significant showpiece lengths of the Canal in each county, working towards the full restoration of the Canal. However, the opportunity to work with developers or landowners on other lengths will not be ignored.

In addition to restoration priorities, it was decided that the first of the above criteria should also apply in future prior to the Canal Trust undertaking regular maintenance of a restored/partially restored section of the Canal. Strategy meetings of the full CofM are continuing in order that wider issues are addressed.



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The Last Page

URGENT!

That was the cry as soon as it was apparent that there was "looting" of the building materials destined for the Canal Trust from within Over Hospital. Our thanks to the small team who were rapidly assembled to remove internal doors and other materials into what we thought was safe storage, shipping containers complete with substantial steel anti-jemmy devices and high grade security padlocks - *but see pages 1 & 5.*

URGENT!

We've been robbed! An even smaller team (*David Penny and Alan Lines to be precise*) had the job of liaising with the Police following the robbery and then the challenge of making the site secure late at night without any padlocks. Even if they had padlocks there was nothing left to secure them to on the doors of the shipping containers. Obtaining the services of a welder was not feasible so a large dumper and one of the excavators were driven tight up to the closed doors and both engines disabled. *Another challenge solved...*

URGENT!

The "heavy gang" need more volunteers to assist with the ongoing "muck shift" at Over - *please see page 22* - ladies or gentlemen welcome and full training will be given!

IMPORTANT!

[A change from urgent! - Ed.] The Over site has NO PUBLIC ACCESS. It is a construction site subject to full health and safety regulations. We regret that there are no facilities for visitors *at this stage of the project*. There are ONLY four ways to see our progress:-

- 1) Become an active volunteer on the site (*we appreciate that for many of our armchair Members that is not possible*);
- 2) Join Mike Potts on the conducted tour of the Canal on Sunday 25th April *[details p.3.]*;
- 3) See the Photo's in **The Wharfinger**;
- 4) Charter a helicopter!

■ CRP

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

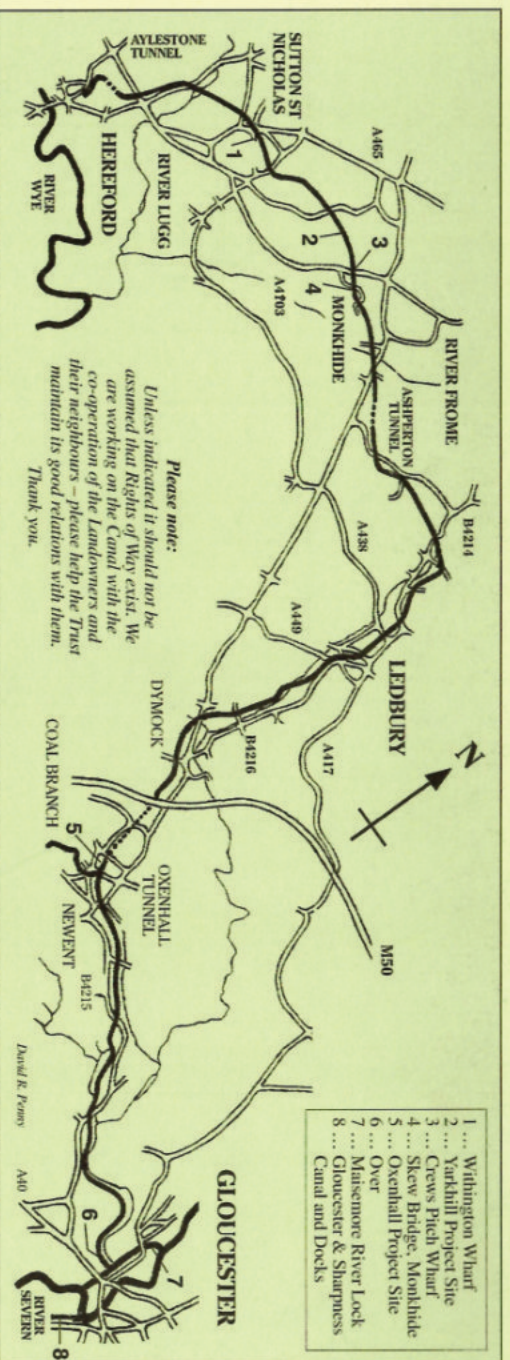
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THE HEREFORDSHIRE AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL



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

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