

The Wharfinger

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



**Edition 62 • Summer 1999
50p – free to members**

WHO DOES WHAT . . .

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

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R. E. Barnes TD.

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Brian Fox

VICE CHAIRMAN

Tom Bennett

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Committee

Liz Connors
Brian Fox, Tom Bennett, David
Penny, Nigel Jefferies
David Penny

Fundraising

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Plant & Training Manager
Health & Safety Officer

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

SPECIAL PROJECTS:-

[Over Site]

Project Director
Secretary
Site Managers
Committee

David Penny
Nigel Bailey
Peter Eyres, *Paul Brown*
Alan Lines, *Bob Willis*

LIAISON:-

Local Authority
Planning
Landowner

David Penny
David Penny, Cliff Penny
Brian Fox

PUBLICITY:- Social/H&GCS Events

Elizabeth Lloyd

MEMBERSHIP:-

Secretary
Covenants

Nigel Jefferies
Liz Connors

SOCIAL:-

Events
Outings

Barbara & Ray Moses
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

COMMITTEE

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

BOATS:-

Chairman

Dick Skeet

Committee

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

HONORARY POSTS:-

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

FRONT COVER: *Skew Bridge, Monkhide. Transformed by volunteers from a heavily overgrown muddy ditch.*

Editorial

OVER NOT OUT

After the trials and tribulations of our two robberies, reported here in the last edition of **The Wharfinger**, we are very pleased to say that excellent progress is being maintained at Over. This is thanks to very hard work by a small number of our own volunteers, visiting Waterway Recovery Group (WRG) volunteers from all over the country and, more recently, lecturers and students from GLOSCAT. We are indebted to all who, in the spirit of our motto, are working *together* to achieve what many said could not be undertaken by volunteers.

At last the Canal Basin, adjacent to The Wharf, is becoming clearly defined; many thousands of tonnes of infilled material having been excavated and transported within the site to form screening and landscaping bunds between the A40 and the new housing development. We held another highly successful week long 'muck shift' in March. However, there is still a large amount of material to be excavated! We are indebted to our own and WRG volunteers who are organising additional weekend Canal Camps in order to help us achieve our objective. Volunteers are now working on site most weekends.

The concreting for the new Wharf got off to a good start with 5 foundation pours being achieved at the first week-long Canal Camp in mid February - a length of some 38m. Another 47m of foundations to go! During a week in late April, a lecturer and students from

GLOSCAT spent three days with us working on The Wharf in very poor weather conditions. We must maintain progress with these vital concrete pours and since February we have been severely hampered by exceedingly wet weather which has led to appalling ground conditions. [*Rest'n Update - p.16*].

Over is not just about the challenges of restoration, however. Urgent action was required following the robberies to make the site more secure. Thanks to Swan Hill Homes there is now a substantial fence along the A40 frontage, topped with evil looking (but essential) razor wire. We also have very robust gates at the main entrance. But Over is a huge site, with many other points of (illicit) entry on foot, and it was clear that more was needed to greatly reduce the risks of yet further robberies and incidents on the site. One of our long-standing Members knew of a family that he thought might be prepared to move on site so that there was a residential presence to deter our unwelcome visitors. Within a week Swan Hill Homes had given their permission, a legal agreement had been drawn up and a mobile home purchased by the Canal Trust. Our thanks to everyone concerned for helping us to keep a watchful eye on things.

Some of our materials are now being stored off site thanks to another Member suggesting that a relative would be prepared to make some room available. We are grateful to those concerned - more detailed thanks will have to await completion of the project.

Editorial

Apart from restoration, and security, there is a huge amount of behind the scenes activity relating to Over. Plant and equipment has to be serviced, and repaired, and additional plant and equipment hired in when required. Accommodation has to be booked for our more distant volunteers - sleeping on the floor of a village hall somewhere! Fuel, concrete and other materials all have to be ordered at the required time.

Discussions are ongoing with Swan Hill Homes and Tewkesbury Borough Council over the final layout for the development. We are very appreciative of the liaison that we have been afforded with the developer's Architects over points of important detail - and the fact that our suggestions are being taken seriously.

There has been an immense amount of media interest; articles nationally in **Waterways World** and **Canal Boat & Inland Waterways** magazines, as well as in the IWA's **Head Office Bulletin** and the WRG's excellent publication, **Navvies**. Closer to home the **Gloucester Citizen** carried an article which, very unusually for them, was badly researched but, thanks to quick thinking by David Penny, led to a positive piece on **Central TV News** and even **Teletext!** [see story p.24]. Meanwhile, **BBC Radio Gloucester** are carrying regular reports of our progress [see p.19].

Do you remember that we were so bold as to refer to 'time wasters' in the last edition - relating to a well known supplier of ready mix

concrete? What we didn't know was that a long-standing local councillor (a supporter of our voluntary endeavours for many years) used to work for a well known supplier of ready mix concrete before he retired... Thinking that the firm in question might have been one and the same he 'faxed a copy of our editorial to head office - telling them to 'pull their socks up' if it was them. Subsequently, your Editors received a 'phone call from the firm's Regional Director who promised to try and make amends - *we await with interest!*

Then there is money. Progress at Over is generating considerable additional work for our already hard working Treasurer, Liz Connors. Balancing the budgets at present is a very challenging task - hire equipment, maintenance, oils and fuels are not cheap. And our materials costs are also significant! The Over developer's financial contribution towards our restoration costs, contained in the formal Agreement, was never intended to meet all of the costs involved. Therefore, our Fundraising Officer, David Penny, hopes to utilise this money as a catalyst to obtain more significant sums; this liaison and paperwork is a considerable task.

Following our reports of the robberies, in the last edition of **The Wharfinger**, a number of Members and supporters sent donations and/or requests for additional **Grand Holiday Draw** tickets to sell. This additional support, at a time of considerable financial outlay, is greatly appreciated. *Thank you.*

Editorial

NWF WORCESTER 99

Excellent progress is being made planning our presence at this, the largest inland waterways event in the world. Worcester Racecourse is the place and 27, 28, 29 & 30th August the dates.

The H&G Canal is one of only two featured canals this year and we are determined to fully justify this important national recognition for our wholly voluntary efforts. More information (*including details of an exciting initiative!*) in the next edition of *The Wharfinger*.

SOCIAL EVENINGS

Our new venue - the *Verzons Country House Hotel* [map and details on p.15] has proved to be a

big hit with most of our regular attendees. Indeed, our publicity was almost too successful in that the room was a tight squeeze for the March meeting; but the hotel was extra busy because of Cheltenham Gold Cup.

A much larger room was available for our (well attended) April meeting so please do come on the third Tuesday of the month. Interesting speakers and updates on progress. *Everybody welcome!*

AGM

Please support *your* Annual General Meeting, in Ledbury on Thursday 27th May. This is your chance to hear about an exciting year first hand from your Council of Management. *Full details on the centre pages.*

■ CRP

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The Big Breakfast

"Even brewing a cup of tea would be welcome..." has been part of our plea for new volunteers to assist with our mammoth restoration activities. So what happens when one of our Senior Citizen Members takes up the challenge?

Sally McManus tells her own story...

Or, A BIG WEEK AT THE BIG DIG AT OVER CANAL BASIN

Always game for a new adventure in my retirement, I volunteered to be the Big Breakfast cook - a first for me! With my camper, I would be comfortably set up to stay on site for the week.

I arrived with some trepidation! And rightly so. After the initial shock of finding no facilities, no water, no electricity, no *NOWT*, I had no choice but to get myself organised and make the most of what I had on board and had brought with me. Thankfully, I'm a car boot and charity shop moocher, so was reasonably well equipped with some cutlery, crockery, and a few pots and pans. One of the old hospital rooms soon became set up as the "EXECUTIVE" dining room - had it been the old mortuary I wondered? UGH!

The volunteers. Well what can I say, what a lovely bunch they were, and *WORK*, how they worked. They were just terrific. Some starting from dawn and working through till dusk and beyond. Each and everyone gave their *ALL*. With all the heavy plant machinery, it was essential to keep it on the move for as many hours as possible.

A couple of wet weather days made it even more hard going, but still they battled on looking like Cadbury chocolate soldiers covered in mud. I had to admire

them and their dedication to shifting tons and tons of fill from out of the old basin. It seemed a never-ending job. I even had a go myself with some supervised training on both small and the large dumper trucks. *BRILLIANT*. I can't wait to try the big excavators!

As the week progressed, I really began to enjoy being on site and part of the Restoration Team. I think everyone did a brilliant job. Between 6 and 8 volunteers stayed on site, but with others coming in on a daily basis I catered for up to 15 Big Breakfasts - and with tea and sandwiches in the afternoons. The shopping was a task that David took on board amongst the many other jobs he was doing, Bless him - and dashing about as ever.

I must say I was sorry I was unable to provide an evening meal for those staying on site. They deserved it. Next time, hopefully we will be even better organised on the catering front! I hope I shall meet you all again in the future.

Many thanks to all for the courtesy extended to me and also for the surprise gifts you gave me, I really didn't expect it, it was a most kind gesture, and very much appreciated.

*ANY skill is valuable to us!
YOU will be made just as welcome -
please pick up the 'phone
[all the contacts are on p.19].*



ABOVE: Part of the barn is carefully moved for later re-construction. Our mobile home, providing a residential presence, is adjacent to the river.

RIGHT & BELOW: Volunteers pour the first foundations for The Wharf.



A Good Day!

Sunday 28th March was a good day for our voluntary fund-raising efforts. Thanks to Ray and Barbara Moses, our attendance at the Gloucester Boat Jumble raised £200; the best ever! Our appreciation to them for attending and obtaining the goods to sell; also to those who donated items both large and small.

Saturday 10th April saw the first of a number of 'official' visits to the Over site - delegates to the Inland Waterways Association's Regional AGM in Cheltenham were given a guided tour of the site by David Penny in the afternoon - and he then (after a swift wash and brush up!) gave an after dinner progress report on the Canal in general. We understand that they returned home suitably impressed!

Little over a week later, on Sunday 18th April, over 20 representatives from other Canal Trusts and Societies were our guests for one of the occasional meetings of the Southern Canals Association.

After tea and coffee at Dymock Village Hall and a warm welcome from our Chairman, Brian Fox, there was a guided tour to see our restoration progress at Oxenhall. Then it was off to Over where David Penny was once again in residence to explain everything. We were very pleased indeed to be able to welcome Richard Drake, the newly elected National Chairman of the IWA as one of our guests for the day. Everyone returned to a (planned) late lunch at Dymock (thanks to Liz Connors and her able band of helpers) after which there were the usual progress reports from other inland waterways around the southern part of the country.



MICHAEL STIMPSON and ASSOCIATES

*Corporate Members of the
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Canal Trust, and IWA*

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Committee Matters

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

JANUARY COMMITTEE

- Mike Potts was finding different venues for the monthly Council of Management meeting in order to be fairer to those who were regularly travelling longer distances to a single venue.

- Preliminary arrangements for the AGM (Thursday, 27th May) were agreed. It was also agreed that the formal notices in *The Wharfinger* should encourage new Council Members. There should be a review of procedures relating to such elections, and the conduct of the meeting, which would be strictly in accordance with our Articles of Memorandum.

- Another Canal Trust wished to use our Land Owner Agreement; it was agreed that a donation would be requested prior to reflect the considerable time and legal expense in its initial drafting. This followed the recommendation of the IWA prior to the original presentation of the document to the Southern Canals Association some years ago.

- Restoration Group reported that work at Oxenhall had been suspended over the winter months as frost was adversely affecting the mortar. However, some jungle bashing had taken place on the non-towpath side of the Canal from Ell Brook Aqueduct towards House Lock.

- There was ongoing liaison with Nigel Freeman (the new owner

of Oxenhall Lock Cottage) including agreement to the routing of an electricity cable to the Cottage.

- The Boats Group were to investigate the offer of purchasing a 25' steel trip boat, which had been offered by a Branch of the IWA to the H&G Canal Trust.

- Our Plant & Training Manager reported on progress on re-building dumpers ready for use at Over.

- Our voluntary Health & Safety Officer, Tony Austin-Bailey, was preparing Health and Safety reports relating to restoration at Over. All volunteers would be required to have their own safety boots (which the Canal Trust would purchase at a significant discount and sell at cost) but stocks of safety helmets could be shared.

- Mike and Joyce Potts announced that they would be undertaking a number of social outings during 1999 including some in aid of the H&G Canal Trust. This was greatly appreciated.

- The Membership Secretary reported that a Corporate Member had complained that our subscription was too cheap! Bearing in mind the difficulty in attracting new Corporate Members, it was recommended that the Corporate Member in question be invited to make an additional voluntary donation.

Committee Matters . . . (ii)

- Cliff Penny was attempting to obtain prizes for the **Grand Holiday Draw** and pointed out that, with the **National Waterways Festival** at Worcester this year, there was added opportunity with our normal standard of good holiday prizes to raise significant funds.

- Concern had been expressed that a volunteer at Over had removed amounts of firewood for personal use on a very regular basis. It was agreed that whilst small amounts for personal use was a reasonable compromise larger amounts should only be removed subject to payment.

FEBRUARY COMMITTEE

- It was reported that the **National Restoration Committee** of the IWA would visit the Canal, after a business meeting in the morning, in October. This was warmly welcomed.

- The **Regional Annual General Meeting** of the IWA was to be held near Cheltenham in April. David Penny would give delegates a guided tour of the Over site and had been invited to give a short after dinner presentation, on the same day, on the restoration of the H&G Canal.

- The next **Southern Canals** meeting would also be in April at a venue to be arranged on the H&G Canal and would include delegates visiting Oxenhall and Over. Liz Connors agreed to arrange volunteers to prepare lunch. The Council of Management appreciated the increasing

national interest in the Canal, largely as a result of the high profile of the work at Over, although it was emphasised that there was no intention of allowing Oxenhall to become overlooked.

- Concern was expressed at the lack of grant aid income. There were significant opportunities to utilise funds from the sale of Lock Cottage and, in particular, arising out of the Over Planning Agreement, as a catalyst for far more significant funding. There was a discussion regarding employing a professional fundraiser, on a commission basis, however this was not well supported. It was agreed that significant time must be found or hopefully someone with suitable experience and time to pursue this vital aspect of our work.

- Restoration Group reported that further preparatory work was ongoing at House Lock, Oxenhall, with the removal of some substantial tree roots. However, the lower levels of the railway bridge abutment were proving very difficult in respect of stone recovery. This was due to the immense strength of the mortar and it was agreed that, in any event, the lowest level should remain to act as a retaining wall to prevent scour by the Ell Brook when in flood.

- Plant and equipment was beginning to be transferred to Over, ready for regular use. Messrs Stocksigns, of Redhill, had agreed to give a very generous discount for the various health and safety signs required for Over. This was welcomed. 

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WRG National Training Weekend at Over 28 - 31 May (second May Bank Holiday)



Waterway Recovery Group are organising this, their annual National Training Weekend, at Over. There will be training on various categories of plant & equipment including dumpers and excavators of all types and sizes as well as more unusual bits of kit such as pneumatic breakers (*come and help to demolish some concrete that's in the way at Over!*), etc. First aid training is also on offer.

Most training will be available at two levels - basic and advanced. Some 60 to 100 participants, from all over the country, are expected. H&G Canal Trust Members are welcome but you **MUST** pre-book. There is a nominal charge of £15 for the weekend for accommodation and food (*with a free T shirt to wear with pride!*).

Contact Mick Beattie immediately to register for the above on 01253 864034

Mike & Joyce's **TRIPS AND TOURS**

1999

Thursday 8TH July
AFTERNOON

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£14.50 Coach & Cruise

Let us arrange an outing or trip for
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large groups catered for or join with
another group!

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

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2 nights D/B&B at Lady Anne
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For Bookings and more information

s.a.c. please

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10.00am - 5.00pm please.

HEREFORDSHIRE AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST

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

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1999

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

Annual Report and Accounts for Year Ended 28th February 1999

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

Light refreshments will be available.

Members and friends will be made very welcome.

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

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 are available from Liz Connors. The forms must be completed, signed and returned to her so that they are received at least 48 hours prior to the commencement of the AGM.

We aim to allow ample time for general questions after the close of formal business. Prior notice of questions should ensure a comprehensive response and would be greatly appreciated.

AGENDA

1. Welcome and formal opening of the meeting.
2. Chairman's Report.
3. Group Reports.
4. To receive and approve the Report of Council, the Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet of the Trust (and associated Company) for the year ended 28th February 1999, the Report of the Honorary Auditor thereon, and the Report of the Honorary Treasurer.
5. To appoint Auditors for the Trust (and associated Company).
6. To note that **Steve Gittins** and **John Meager** are standing down from the Council and do not offer themselves for re-election. To re-appoint those Council Members retiring by rotation who offer themselves for re-election:-

Tom Bennett; Cliff Penny; Mike Potts

7. Close of formal business.

An illustrated review of progress will follow the formal business.

NOTE REGARDING AGENDA ITEM 6. One third of the Members of the Managing Council are required to stand down each year. All those standing down (listed at 6. above) are offering themselves for re-election unless stated otherwise. New volunteers to serve on the Council of Management are welcome; as reported on p.12 of the last edition of *The Wharfinger* formal Nominations (*on forms obtainable from the Treasurer*) have to be received between 30th April and 20th May. The maximum size of the Council of Management is 18 and, unless new nominations bring the total in excess of this number, the above stated Members will be returned un-opposed. The Council of Management are also empowered to co-opt Members during the year (subject to the maximum size not being exceeded).

ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 28th FEBRUARY, 1999

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

The *Canal Trust* is indebted to its *Council of Management*, and to the *Trading Company Board*; during the period under review [*year ended 28th February 1999*] those listed on page 13 have been Members:-

CANAL TRUST COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT *(12 months to 28-2-99)*

Tony Austin-Bailey; Tom Bennett; Liz Connors; Brian Fox;
Will Frecknall *[IWA nominee]*; Steve Gittins; Nigel Jefferies;
Alan Lines; John Meager; Cliff Penny;
David Penny; Mike Potts.

TRADING COMPANY *[H&GC (Sales) Ltd.] (12 months to 28-2-99)*

Tom Bennett; Liz Connors; *Derek Gray [Boats Group Nominee]*;
Ray[c] & Barbara Moses; *Mike[c]* & *Joyce Potts[c]*; *Penny Shetliffe[c]*;
Dick Skeet[c]; Derek Weaver.

[c] indicates co-opted to the Board during the year. Italics indicates not a formal Director

This has proved to be a very exciting, demanding *(and expensive)* year! We got off to a tremendous start with the sale of Lock Cottage at Oxenhall. The **Wharfinger**, throughout the year in question *(year ended 28th February, 1999)*, was packed with photographs and reports of an exceedingly busy year, unparalleled in the history of the former Canal Society and the Canal Trust.

Last year, at the AGM, it was announced, with regret, that Bryan Heatley had resigned. We ran for some months under the leadership of our two vice Chairman. However, later in the year, Brian Fox was appointed as our new Chairman. As The **Wharfinger** reported, Brian Fox has been increasingly active on our behalf over a number of years. His proven voluntary efforts, with both pen and spade, made him an ideal candidate for this key post at such an important time in the life of the H&G Canal Trust.

Restoration concentrated at Oxenhall for most of the earlier part of the year. Brickwork to the tunnel portal was completed and the hidden byweir to House Lock was fully restored. This (unique?) byweir was the subject of a formal opening ceremony by local Council Officials, and Councillors. It illustrates what our volunteers can achieve (with help from visiting WRG members) with modest grant aid and a great deal of voluntary effort.

Sir John Knill Bt., Vice President, a long-standing supporter, very sadly passed away during the year.

Our Planning Team's negotiations, over a number of years, resulted in a complex legal Agreement at Over Hospital, Gloucester. This key section of the Canal is being restored as part of a deal with the landowners. Restoration activity, by our own and WRG volunteers from all over the country, is on an unprecedented scale, but there is much to do! They will soon exceed the total number of "person hours" spent on restoration on the whole Canal to date! The enthusiastic and capable organisation and management of the site by David Penny, the Project Director, has placed this project on target for a successful outcome.

Development on the Farriery College site, in Hereford, was approved following an Inquiry. The essential diversion corridor for the Canal is protected and a new highway bridge and footbridge will be built.

We don't forget the ongoing restoration work at Oxenhall House Lock. Steady progress is being made by our own "Tuesday Wrinklies". They are being regularly assisted by WRG volunteers; this project being part of the national "Dig Deep" initiative with only three or four projects supported each year.

In addition to all this, the *(extensive)* other work of our volunteers continues - much of it without great publicity or acknowledgement. *We try not to take anything for granted and are indebted to each and everyone who has enabled us to continue to build on the solid foundations of the past.*



THERE'S STILL PLENTY OF TIME TO SUPPORT OUR MAJOR FUND-RAISING INITIATIVE

The major restoration activities on the H&G Canal cost money! Please enter our Grand Holiday Draw.
YOU could win a superb holiday whilst supporting us!

Herefordshire & Gloucestershire
Canal Trust - H & G C S

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
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[All prizes exclude Bank Holidays and are subject to availability.]

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monthly Social
Evenings.

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The Membership Secretary, H & G C T, 6 Castle Street, Hereford, HR1 2NL

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, 18th May "Canal Tokens & Medals"

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

Tuesday, 15th June "The Anderton Lift"

William Rowley will tell us all about this wonder of the inland waterways - and bring us up to date with the exciting restoration proposals - come early to ensure a seat!

Tuesday, 20th July "Noggin & Natter"

With summer hopefully well and truly with us no speaker but an excellent opportunity to get up to date with progress and possibly a few surprises as well ...

Tuesday, 17th August "Noggin & Natter"

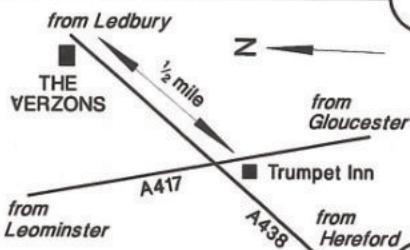
The second opportunity to come and get bang up to date - and to learn of our plans to make the National Waterways Festival at Worcester a "best ever" event for the H&G.

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

I reported last time that some of our Wrinklies had reported sick during the colder winter months and progress at Oxenhall had slowed, but with a bit of spring sunshine on our backs, we are now continuing the task of rebuilding the lock. Unfortunately, one of our stalwarts, Dave Young, has been advised by his doctor to take on lighter duties and can no longer help with the stone laying.

Dave has been with us now for 5 years or more and was largely responsible for finishing the brickwork on the tunnel portal, the spill weir and the top end of House Lock. In that time he also passed on some of his expertise to the rest of us so we shall be able to continue. We are hoping to persuade him to attend our Tuesday sessions in an advisory capacity, tell us a few jokes and, perhaps, find him some less strenuous work to keep him happy - we can't afford to lose good workers.

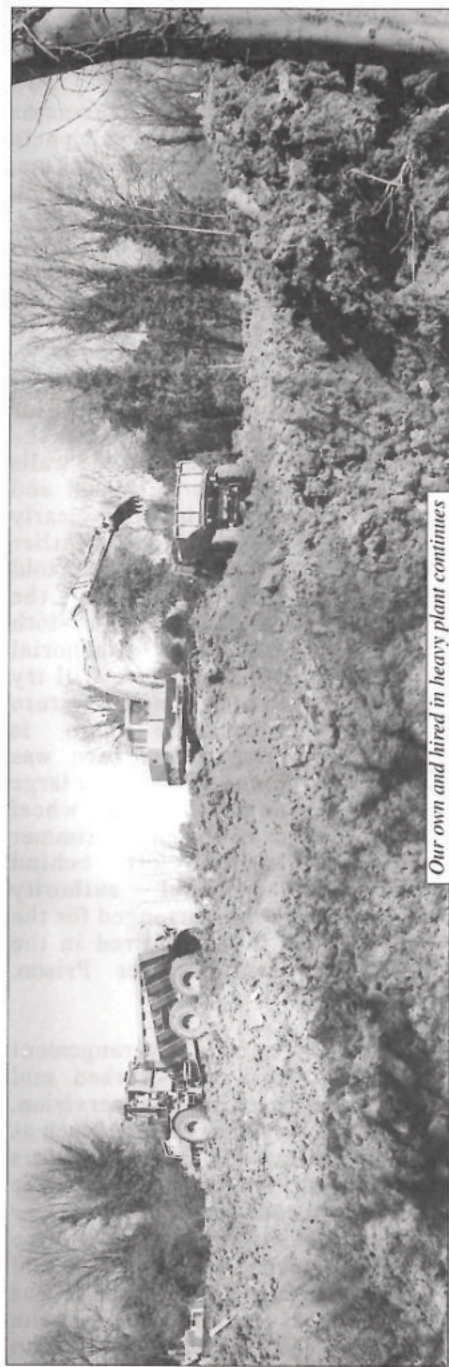
The lock area is now looking very attractive with all the new spring growth. Primrose plants are now in full bloom on the canal bank, the cottage garden has been landscaped with new rose bushes and the cottage itself is about finished and ready to live in once more. Daffodil bulbs have been planted ready for next year - any spare bulbs you have will be welcome. A pair of moorhens has taken up residence on the canal above the lock and a pair of mallards has also been seen.

An old gentleman in his 90's was at Oxenhall last week and told us of his younger days, about 1920, when he used to play on an old boat that had been abandoned in the pool below the lock. If the remains are still there it could provide an exciting opportunity to conduct a careful excavation to discover something about the construction of the old H&G narrowboats. If we had more volunteers *[subtle plea - Ed!]* there is no reason why a trial excavation couldn't start now - this is definitely a job for spades and wheelbarrows - so anyone interested please give me *[Brian Fox]* a call.

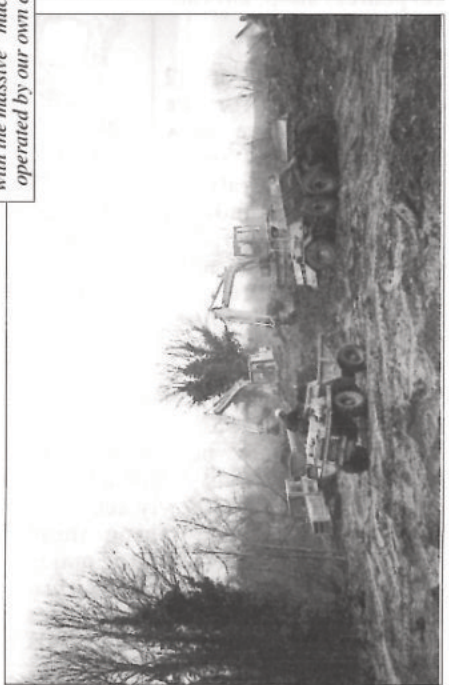
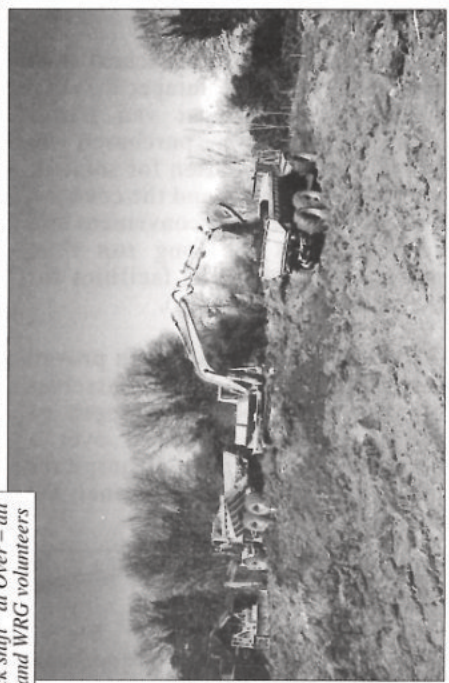
So much has happened since the last Over update that it is hard to know where to begin. As well as our own Canal Camp in March, we have had tremendous help from WRG with Camps in February, March and April.

The Canal Basin is now basin-shaped rather than mountain-shaped and the excavated line of the Canal now extends nearly as far as Penstocks Road, i.e. the track that leads down to the confluence of the Leaddon and the Severn. *[Between points 5 & 2 on the centre page map in edition 60 of The Wharfinger - Ed.]* When I dropped in to see how the March week-long camp had been going I was astonished to see ten items of plant all in use simultaneously. When I looked around to see who was driving what, I found that Sally McManus (one of our Senior Citizen Members camped for the week to produce mid-morning breakfasts





Our own and hired in heavy plant continues with the massive "muck shift" at Over - all operated by our own and WRG volunteers



RESTORATION UPDATE . . . continued

and supplies of sandwiches) had mastered the art of dumper driving! Alongside her camper van was a caravan we have purchased to provide accommodation for some of our helpers from around the country. This may prove more convenient and economical in the long run than relying on village hall facilities for the smaller Canal Camps.

Excavating beyond the Basin proved interesting when we found ourselves digging through a great depth of ash, presumably produced over a period of years from the hospital's boiler and dumped in the Canal. We also dug up an entire car!

The mortuary buildings have proved very useful during the winter with part as a very efficient carpenters shop; another as a "mess room".

5 of the total of 12 concrete pours for the foundations have now been completed - so we now have almost completed the foundation of the long arm of The Wharf. The next steps will involve our new GLOSCAT partnership with six or so students and their tutor helping us with the building of The Wharf.

Since the two break-ins security has improved enormously thanks to Swan Hill Homes' new razor wire fence and Mike and Caroline now living on site (in our newly acquired mobile home). Since taking these measures we have had no major problems although pilfering within the hospital buildings continues with persons stripping materials overnight and, recently, stealing some of our shuttering timber.

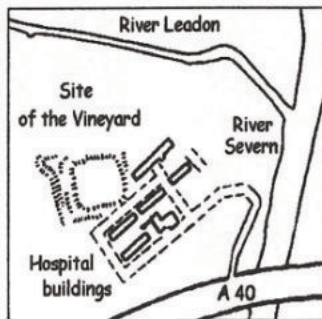
Excavations on the short arm of The Wharf have produced two interesting finds. One is the remains of the original lock gates, which help confirm the locks size and position. The other is the aqueduct, which carried the Canal over the mill race. This seems in good condition and we will have to consider carefully what to do with it now that there is no mill race to cross!

The stone barn has been demolished and all the materials stored for eventual rebuilding. Amongst the rough Cotswold stone from the walls we have found several shaped and carved stones which were clearly

recycled from an earlier structure. We are told they are from the windows of a 16th century manorial building so we will try to use them as a feature when the barn is rebuilt. The barn was found to contain a large number of old wheel chairs and zimmer frames, left behind

when the hospital authority decamped. We have arranged for the best of them to be repaired in the workshops at Gloucester Prison. [See p.24]

We have now ended the arrangement with New Deal who worked mid week under Peter Eyres' supervision. They have helped us on tasks such as lifting and moving railway sleepers and raising the bricks from the mortuary courtyard. The larger number of workers that we were promised never did materialise and it was mutually agreed that it was not viable to continue with just the couple of New Deal participants who were present on many of the days.



RESTORATION *UPDATE... continued*

Peter deserves a big "thank you" for harnessing the efforts of the New Deal lads over many months. This means that our weekend working is even more important than ever - our thanks to Paul Brown for co-ordinating this.

Brian Bailey of BBC Radio Gloucestershire visited during one of the concrete pours and recorded the first of a series of reports he will make on our progress during the year. Listen out for them on the Sunday morning "Country Matters" programme on 104.7FM or 1413MW.

Despite the rapid progress of the last three months we are currently running behind our original work schedule but the planned additional Canal Camps (and some good weather) should overcome this.

The H&G Canal Trust will be hosting WRG's annual national training week-end at Over during the last week-end in May. This provides an opportunity to be trained by some of the most experienced voluntary group leaders in the country to operate any of the plant on site. First Aid training will also be available. Why not join us? Pre-booking is essential[see p.10]

Unfortunately, as explained on p.24 of the last edition of *The Wharfinger*, it is not possible to pay a casual visit to the site. However, a number of guided inspection visits have taken place, including Mike Potts' tour of the Canal at the end of April. We hope to be able to announce further opportunities for such escorted visits as the work proceeds - *watch this space!*

WANT TO GET INVOLVED ?

As there is no public access to the Over site the only way to be part of the action is to volunteer to assist on this exciting project - please don't just turn up - the gates could well be locked! The recent national publicity makes our successful completion all the more important; the credibility of the H&G Canal Trust is at stake.

We really can utilise any skill (*and don't worry if you consider that you don't have a relevant skill, we will train you*). All that we ask for is your time, and to be prepared to comply with site Health and Safety requirements at all times.

And don't forget, we've a Listed lock at Oxenhall to restore as well ...

We **URGENTLY** require anyone with site supervisory skills and volunteers who are regularly available to help with our restoration programme during the week, evenings and weekends.

please call:-

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

Over:- Paul Brown (01386) 443 826
[Most weekends*]

* Our volunteers are active at Over on other days of the week too - further Canal Camps and some evening work will soon be under way; please pick up the 'phone and check.

HEALTH & SAFETY: All of our restoration sites are subject to detailed safety policies. ALL persons working on these sites are required to comply with these policies at all times - for their own safety and for the safety of others. Safety footwear and safety helmets are mandatory. Motorised plant and equipment may only be operated by holders of current H&G CT or WRG permits relating to the plant/equipment in question.

WRG National Training Weekend - see p.10

Committee Matters . . . (iii)

◀ 8 ◻ • There was a detailed report relating to discussions with Tewkesbury Planners and the developers of the site at Over Swan Hill Homes. There would be a revised planning application, as the layout agreed at Appeal was not acceptable to the developer; however, full liaison with the Canal Trust was promised (and ongoing). The Council of Management was reassured that the terms of the Planning Undertaking would preserve the line of the Canal and the Agreement was a commitment in respect of other matters.

• It was reported that three holiday prizes had been donated for the Grand Holiday Draw and that MEB (Midlands Electricity) had agreed to sponsor

the cost of printing the tickets for another year. This meant that all monies raised would be available as "matching funding" thus greatly increasing the benefits from the Draw. The generosity of all concerned was greatly appreciated.

• GLOSCAT had agreed to assist with the design and construction of the Wharf Wall and this was greatly appreciated.

• It was reported, with regret, that the Sanderson Family would be moving out of the area and therefore would be unable to mastermind the co-ordination of the distribution of each issue of *The Wharfinger*. However, following a plea in *The Wharfinger*, Sally McManus had volunteered to assist and, part of

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Committee Matters . . . (iv)

our existing team, Ian and Francis Roper, had agreed to continue assisting with distribution whilst also taking on responsibility for overall management of this vital quarterly task. This was welcomed, as was the ongoing assistance of Margaret and Derek Gray.

MARCH COMMITTEE

- Further arrangements relating to the AGM at Ledbury on 27th May were agreed.

- John Meager, part of our fund raising team, had tendered his resignation.

- Great concern was expressed at the lack of support from Council of Management, and the Membership, to David Penny who had, single handedly, managed the first WRG week long Canal Camp at Over in February. It was agreed that, in future, that when non Trust volunteers were on site every effort must be made to ensure that there were at least two Trust members available every day, present on site, to oversee progress and deal promptly with any queries. It was also agreed that greater care needed to be taken in finding suitable accommodation for visiting groups with adequate sleeping areas and kitchen facilities. However, this had initially proved exceedingly difficult due to existing mid week bookings of many of the village halls in close proximity to the site.

- The CofM re-affirmed Insurers requirements that all motorised plant and equipment was to be operated ONLY by persons

actually able to show a relevant and valid H&G Canal Trust or WRG Operators Certificate. The only exception being persons under formal training under the close supervision of an authorised instructor. This applied to our own Members and to visiting groups - *this was to apply without exception.*

- Improved co-ordination between the respective Special Projects Group and our Plant Group was considered essential. The Council of Management agreed that it was essential to maximise progress by utilising to the full the abilities of visiting WRG Members and that without external help our own volunteers, in isolation, could not hope to complete the work at Over within the required time scale.

- Details of additional security measures to isolate heavy plant and equipment were discussed and agreed as was the purchase of a mobile home to enable residential occupation for security purposes Over. This had been agreed, at short notice, by Swan Hill Homes and the Planning Authority for which the CofM recorded their appreciation.

- The Treasurer reported that our two insurance claims in respect of the Over site will both be subject to a £500 excess. The first claim had now been submitted.

- Our Plant and Training Manager, Tom Bennett, reported that the forthcoming week-long H&G organised "muck shift" Canal Camp had sufficient trained operators, thanks to our own

Committee Matters . . . (v)

Members and those from WRG, to operate shifts from 7am to 10pm. for the full week. This was warmly welcomed.

- It was reported, with regret, that Dave Young would no longer be able to undertake heavy physical work. [See p.16] His masonry and scaffolding skills would, hopefully, be available to us in an advisory capacity.

- All relevant health and safety signs were now in place at Over. This was fortunate as our resident observers had reported an unannounced visit to the site by an H&SE Official.

- The Membership Secretary reported that one of our Corporate Members had sent a £100 donation

with his renewal - this was greatly appreciated. The lack of interest in our "Corporate Spotlight" initiative was regretted.

- The revised location for social evenings (Verzons Country House Hotel) was proving to be highly successful. The ongoing programme of interesting speakers arranged by Ray and Barbara Moses was greatly appreciated. Mike Potts reported that the planned tour of the H&G Canal, at the end of April, would require at least two mini buses, possibly three.

- The Planning Team, in liaison with IWA HQ., had responded to the Environment Agency (Wales) Wye Area Local Environment Agency Plan. There was ongoing correspondence with

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Local Planning Authorities regarding a number of smaller scale developments.

- Good progress was being made with the creation of a 'web site' to promote the H&G Canal Trust on the Internet. Research was ongoing to ensure that the relevant address was as short as possible and to minimise ongoing costs. Thanks were expressed to Nigel Bailey for his very considerable time and effort.

- The CofM's Strategy Review Group had met at the end of January. It had agreed that there should be a statement in **The Wharfinger** regarding Strategy [see p.23 of the last edition]. It was also agreed that **The Wharfinger** should go to all known landowners - whether they were supportive or not. Currently the newsletter goes to a significant number but it was

agreed that this should be extended as rapidly as possible. The initial copy would be sent under a covering letter from the Chairman. There would be further meeting of the Strategy Review Group (the whole Council of Management) in mid March.

- The Trading Company sub-committee who are planning our attendance at the **National Waterways Festival** (at Worcester Race Course for 4 days over August Bank Holiday) were meeting regularly. As one of only two featured canals at this years event, the CofM reaffirmed their support for the Trading Company in trying to ensure that this was our "best ever" attendance in view of the proximity of this years Festival to the Canal. Cliff Penny was pursuing a number of initiatives to ensure that this was achieved. [Full details in the next edition]. 

The Last Page

ZIMMERED?

"Excuse me, what are you doing" was David Penny's query of the cameraman filming through the fence of Over Hospital. "I'm from Central TV - we're following up the story in the Gloucester Citizen about the scandalous waste of all of these zimmer frames and wheel chairs that were dumped in this old barn when the hospital closed."

Aware of the incorrect story in the local paper the night before (*very unusually, The Citizen did not contact the Canal Trust before running it even though our sign is on the gate*) David sensed that this filming was not good news! In fact it was a very critical story with the large main photograph of the many zimmer frames and wheelchairs in front of the barn inset (*most unfairly*) with a small photograph of the developer's signboard.

"We are about to take them all to Gloucester Prison to be refurbished for use in the third world" said David. Cameraman stops filming. Hasty chat with office on mobile 'phone!

That evening the main Central TV News carried an interview with David explaining how the contents of the barn, hidden for years by dense undergrowth, would create work for the prisoners and then provide much needed mobility aids in some deprived country. Just to ensure there were no further criticisms, a Regional Hospital spokesman explained that they were all of a very dated design and did not meet current safety requirements for use in this country!

Readers of Teletext that evening would have been very confused, however. Due to the very limited space available on a page they simply reported that the Canal Trust had arranged for Gloucester Prison to refurbish the equipment for use overseas - with no explanation as to how a Canal Trust came into possession of all these zimmer frames and wheelchairs in the first place!

Our thanks to Tony Condor, Curator of the National Waterways Museum at Gloucester Docks, for the loan of their lorry at short notice to transport the first load to the prison.



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COPY DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT EDITION IS SATURDAY, 19th JUNE

Printed by Print Plus, 126 Widemarsh Street, Hereford, HR4 9HN (01432) 272025
The Wharfinger was compiled by Cliff Penny using **JetSetter** British software.

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Tel:- (01981) 590 372

Paul Brown,

Tel:- (01386) 443 826

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.

We URGENTLY require anyone with site supervisory skills who can assist with our expanding restoration programme and volunteers who are free to assist regularly during the week and early evening - or at weekends.

**CONTACT ANYONE ABOVE
T O D A Y !**

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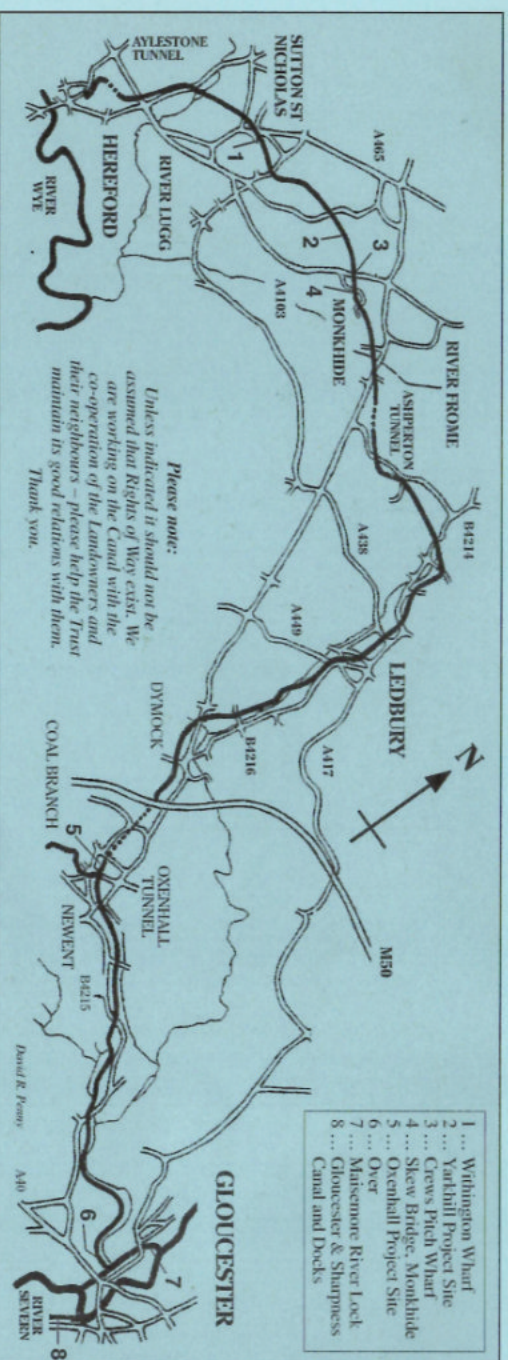
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The Canal Society was formed in 1983 and replaced in 1992 by the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust, a registered charity. The Trust has an ordinary and corporate membership exceeding 700 from all over the country – and abroad! Our objective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