

# The Wharfinger

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



**Edition 64 • Winter 1999/2000  
50p – free to members**



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Working *together*, in the present, to revive the past, and secure a better future ©

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

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

# Editorial

Many people have remarked on the greatly improved image presented by our new all colour leaflet about the Canal and the work of the H&G Canal Trust - a copy having been enclosed - hot off the press - with the last edition of **The Wharfinger**. The need to have it ready for the National Waterways Festival at Worcester, over the August Bank Holiday, concentrated our minds wonderfully and especial thanks are due to Member Dick Skeet who worked deep into the night to produce the final artwork!

Due to very restricted deadlines we had to approach potential sponsors at short notice; at the time of printing the last edition of **The Wharfinger** the future of the leaflet was in some doubt. There was simply no way that the Canal Trust could afford the significant print costs involved. Our thanks to Dr Albert Heijn and the **Left Bank Village**, Bridge Street, Hereford, for so promptly saying "yes" and paying not only for the colour printing but also for the first batch of inserts. If you are a stranger to Hereford then don't assume all of the shops are right in the City centre. A short stroll beyond the Cathedral - towards the River Wye - will bring you to the excellent **Left Bank Village**; once found we can almost guarantee you will want to return!

Our recruitment rate is currently at an all-time high; there can be no doubt that the leaflet represents a major step forward in marketing the voluntary work of the Canal Trust and the future benefits to the community that the restored Canal will bring.

## NWF WORCESTER

Regular readers will have been fully aware of our intention not to waste the opportunity presented by the National Waterways Festival being this year at Worcester - as close as it is likely to get to us until we can offer a site on the H&G Canal! The event was a huge success for all concerned; thousands of visitors to Worcester Racecourse, over the 4 day event, becoming much more aware of the inland waterways network both locally and nationally.

The H&G Canal Trust display was - *without any doubt whatsoever* - our 'best ever'. It was judged to be the best non-commercial display on the site and won the British Marine Industry Federation's award. Equally importantly, we invited nearly 250 'VIP's' to come and see what we were about. To our immense pleasure over 100 said 'yes'; a fantastic response rate by any standards.

Our repeated thanks to Gloucester City Tourism, and Herefordshire Tourism, for sponsoring our marquee and to the IWA for donating the space on site. Also to Bulmers for providing liquid refreshment for our VIP's. Even so, our costs were very considerable as we totally renewed the whole photographic display, the signage and the bunting; but what an effect it had, and it is all available for promotional use in the future.

A huge amount of work was involved in achieving this success - before, during and after the event. Only one of the 25 or so photo display panels was produced



# Editorial

commercially, the rest being put together (to a common format) by our own small team (and then professionally laminated). The co-ordinated photo panel layout, each with a 'you are here' map, was the subject of many compliments.

The immense task of organising no less than 9 volunteers per morning and afternoon shift (that's right, over 70 volunteers - although many did more than a single turn!), complete with 'Team Leader', fell - once more - on Liz Connor's capable shoulders. Meanwhile Cliff Penny co-ordinated virtually every other aspect of our presence.

Whilst it is always tempting providence, in forgetting to mention someone, the following Members, (outside those Council of Management Members who were involved) played a significant role in our success:- Tim Burgin, Barbara & Ray Moses; Janet & Brian Moul; Penny Shetliffe; Pat & Dick Skeet; Derek Weaver.

In addition, other Members played less intense, equally important roles; *to everyone our thanks for helping make our award winning display such a huge success.*

## PANTS OFF - OVER TO H&G

Each year the Waterway Recovery Group has an annual 'Reunion Weekend'. Inland waterway restoration volunteers from all over the country get together at one location to celebrate another year of progress in saving and restoring the inland waterways system for present and future generations to enjoy. Although only for a weekend, the very large numbers involved present both logistical challenges in catering and accommodation terms whilst, at the same time, presenting an opportunity for an intense day and a half of restoration!

This year the proposed site was to have been at Pant, on the Montgomery Canal. However, within a few weeks of the event this site was no longer viable and an urgent search was launched to find an alternative suitable site. It was not long before Over was mentioned and thanks to a great deal of hard work 'behind the scenes', led by local WRGie Adrian Fry, nearly 150 volunteers (from all over the country) descended on Over early in November. A report and photo's will appear in the next edition of **The Wharfinger**.



## BOTTLE DRAW SUCCESS

*Janet & Brian Moul went to considerable efforts to gather bottles from near and far for this major money earner at the NWF.*

"We would like to thank those Members who donated bottles of wine, cider, perry or whatever towards our bottle stall. Your generosity is so much appreciated. A personal letter of thanks has been sent to the donors who gave their names; to those who did not give their names our thanks is no less sincere. We are using **The Wharfinger** to let you know that we appreciate the support and generosity. Thank you."

*Janet & Brian.*



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# The Grand HOLIDAY Draw!

Thank you to all of our Members, and our supporters, who helped to make the 1999 Grand Holiday Draw yet another successful fundraiser for the H&G Canal Trust. Every pound raised will be used to match grant aid ensuring that at least another £3,000 will be available to fund our restoration progress.

As always the Draw would not have been a success without such quality holiday prizes. Our thanks to Ian and Pauline Cundy of Starline Narrowboats for the first prize, Mrs A Wood for donating a week in her holiday bungalow and to Jane and Steve Knowles of the Holdfast Cottage Hotel for their support in donating the two night break at their hotel, in Little Malvern.

Our particular thanks to everyone who bought (and sold!) the tickets, it really is appreciated.

Herefordshire & Gloucestershire  
Canal Trust - H & G C S

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## 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

(All prizes exclude Bank Holidays and are subject to availability.)

Promoter: Mrs E Connors, 18 St. Ethelbert Close, Sutton St. Nicholas, Hereford, HR1 3BF  
Registered with Hereford City Council under Section 5 Lotteries & Amusements Act, 1976  
To be drawn at National Waterways Festival, Worcester, 30/8/99



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

The winners were drawn at the NWF, Worcester, by Richard Drake, National Chairman of the IWA:-

### FIRST PRIZE:

ticket no. 01950

Mrs A Ball, Radstock, Bath.

### SECOND PRIZE:

ticket no. 08472

Mr Tim Coghlan, Braunston.

### THIRD PRIZE:

ticket no. 21409

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[Membership rates are on page 27]



## Thanks . . . & Wanted!

In recent months we have had a great deal of assistance from businesses large and small in the way of donated items/materials, the loan of plant and with very substantial discounts. Our grateful thanks to:-

Stirling Fluid Systems

Keyway Plant Hire

Laing Civil Engineering, Cardiff

Grahams Builders Merchants

Someone with a telehandler (*name withheld for security reasons!*)

Joseph Rice

In addition, our thanks to the following for significant financial support:-

IWA Lichfield Branch [£300 towards a replacement tyre for our large Volvo dumper]

Forest of Dean District Council [£1,000 grant towards ongoing work on Oxenhall House Lock]

Braunston Boat Show/BW [£2,000 towards the costs of the September Canal Camp at Over]

Our thanks, also, to the IWA for a £10,000 loan to permit the restoration work at Over to continue without our needing to draw on the monies due from the Developer. This is to permit us more time to seek an appropriate partner and utilise the monies due as our contribution towards future funding. Once the money has been paid to the Canal Trust it would be lost for this purpose - so it is vital that we defer taking this money for as long as we can. In this way we hope to multiply its worth to the long-term benefit of restoration progress.

Our 'new' trip boat is currently at Horsefair Wharf, Oxenhall, ready for the hull to be prepared, the stern deck extended to permit disabled use, and the whole boat repainted. Apart from additional volunteers to undertake the painting and carpentry we are also seeking, please, a suitable outboard or inboard motor. Please contact Dick Skeet, 01568 797 032. Thank you.

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## Jumble Time

Once again Barbara and Ray Moses will be organising a stall on behalf of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust at the Gloucester Boat and Watersports Jumble to be held in March/April 2000.

They did very well in 1999, thanks to a number of excellent donations (*thank you to those concerned!*). We would like to be able to repeat the success in Spring 2000. Your help is needed, please. We need items to sell that are boat or watersports connected - no matter

how remote the connection! Please check your cupboards/attic/garage/shed etc. for suitable items. This time we do not need any more magazines; we have enough already thanks to substantial recent donations.

Items to be donated, or sold on commission, can be brought to the Social Evenings or delivered to Barbara and Ray - but please 'phone 01989 780 325 first.

Please support this fund-raising opportunity. *Thank you.*





Clockwise, from top left:-  
NWF, Worcester; Our sales stand, and the bottle draw, did a roaring trade on all 4 days; David Penny shows Lady Knollys (Chair of the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council) our map of the H&G Canal; Carlton TV filming for transmission in January; the Mayor of Gloucester, and Gloucestershire's Deputy Sheriff, are told about the H&G Canal and the work of the Canal Trust. (Cliff Penny)





# *Our Corporate Members*

*WELCOME! As a result of our award winning presence at the National Waterways Festival we welcome three new Corporate Members:-*

Drewe Insurance, Bewdley  
Midland Canal Centre, Stenson Marina, Derby  
Severn Valley Boat Centre, Stourport

They join our existing Corporate Members (listed below) - wherever appropriate, please do support their businesses whenever you can - and say that you are one of our Members/supporters, please!

## OUR CORPORATE MEMBERS

Messrs VE & JE Arnold, Hereford  
Bartestree & Lugwardine Group Parish Council  
The Beeline Company, Wormbridge, Herefordshire  
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Canal Craft (Brokerage) Ltd., Northamptonshire  
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Grist Mill Boatyard, Worcester  
E B Hayward & Co., Ashleworth  
Hereford City Library  
Laing Civil Engineering (Cardiff WWTW Project)  
Left Bank Village, Bridge Street, Hereford  
MEB - Midlands Electricity  
Middlewich Narrowboats, Middlewich  
Morbaine Limited, Widnes  
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Newage Transmissions, Coventry  
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Print Plus, Hereford  
RDD Insurance Brokers, Chelmsford  
Servitune Motors, Ledbury  
The Shambles Museum, Newent  
Starline Narrowboats, Upton upon Severn  
David Stockwell & Company, Coleford  
Michael Stimpson & Associates, Rickmansworth  
The Tewkesbury Marina Ltd., Tewkesbury  
Worcester & Birmingham Canal Society

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## Ballard's Ice Breaker

*The August 1991 edition of Waterways World contained an article about the seemingly never-ending skills of Stephen Ballard - without whose dedication and stamina the H&G Canal might never have been completed.*

*Following the help of one of our Members (Herefordshire County Archivist Sue Hubbard) Geoff Warren told the fascinating story of Ballard's unique ice breaker. With the permission of Hugh Potter, the Editor of Waterways World, we reproduce this story of Stephen Ballard's ingenuity versus nature at a time when ice breaking could well be topical!*

On 24th May, 1838, Stephen Ballard records in his diary: "Received a letter from Mr Webster, Secretary to the Institution of Civil Engineers, stating that he had received the plan of the ice boat and laid it before the Council, and that it was highly approved of and that it would be exhibited at the meeting next Tuesday." Just about a month later, on 22nd June: "Received a letter from Mr Webster ... informing me that the Council had agreed to present me with a Telford Medal as a slight acknowledgement of the value of the communication on the ice boat."

The story starts a little earlier than that, of course. In 1836 Ballard had been allowed by the Hereford & Gloucester Canal Co. of which he had been Secretary since 1827, to take a lot of time away from his post to act as surveyor to the Severn Navigation Co. This scheme intended to turn the Severn into a waterway capable of taking quite large ships, but it failed to get its proposals through the parliamentary procedure and the idea lapsed. However, during this period Ballard organised much of the work on the ground and took the opportunity to meet as many people as possible, including the London based civil engineer Mr Rhodes. On 18th August 1836 he "had some conversation with Mr

Rhodes respecting ice breaking. Asked him if he had ever seen an ice boat to break ice by means of running under instead of upon the ice. He said he had never seen one at work. I explained to him my method of ice breaking, which he appeared to approve of, and said the best shape for the front of the boat would be that of a pig's nose or rather in the shape of a land tortoise, which I made a sketch of."

Not being afraid of putting himself forward, or perhaps encouraged by Mr Biddulph, his mentor and a London banker who lived in Ledbury, he wrote to James Walker, the first President of the newly formed Institution of Civil Engineers. Ballard's diary records, on 12th December 1836: "At night wrote a letter to Mr Walker CE and a description of my method for breaking ice."

The following day Ballard was in the company of Walker as they, with Rhodes and Cubitt, surveyed the Severn at Worcester. The opportunity was taken to ask Walker to second Rhodes proposal that Ballard become an Associate of the Institution. Understandably, Walker played for a little time by saying that "they had a rule not to introduce any new members unless they had produced some paper, book or something else to the Institution..."





ABOVE: The long limb of The Wharf takes shape.  
 ABOVE RIGHT: September Canal Camp - checking the shuttering.  
 BELOW RIGHT: Just a part of our award winning NWF team.  
 (1&2 Adrian Fry: NWF winning team - Waterways World.)



## Ballard's Ice Breaker

Fortunately for Stephen Ballard, he had already submitted a paper on the framing of lock gates without iron-work, and one entitled "A Description of the Turnbridges on the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal." At this point Walker seems to have relented and also to have introduced Ballard to Cubitt, who just happened to be the Vice-President of the ICE. Losing no time Ballard "gave him the paper containing the description of my method of breaking ice, which he said he was glad to receive and would look at it when he had time."

Cubitt must have been as good as his word, for on 4th February 1837 Ballard received a letter from the Secretary to the ICE stating that his "paper on breaking ice had been read and had given great satisfaction." The event is duly recorded in the ICE Journal, under the date 31st January 1837, the full title of the paper being: "A Method of breaking ice, by forcing it upwards instead of downwards: practised on the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal in the winters of 1834-35 and 1836." A brief abstract explained that "strong planks, covered on their upper side with sheet iron, . . . so as to form an inclined plane pointing downwards, the lower end projecting under the ice. The boat, drawn by a horse, is steered by a person walking on the shore, with a long shaft attached to a pole projecting over the stem."

It all paints a rather strange picture, and perhaps it did for the gentlemen of the Institute, for on 12th June 1838 that august body heard a "Description and Drawing

of the Ice Boat" by S. Ballard, A.Inst.C.E. The paper describes the construction of the boat by reference to a detailed drawing and section. Alas, the archives of the ICE no longer contain this drawing, so carefully prepared by Stephen's brother Philip in early May, finishing it on the 19th and sending it to London on the 21st.

This was not the first plan that Philip had prepared, as in February 1838 Stephen "Received a letter from Mr Houston of Johnstone Castle, Paisley, desiring me to send him a plan and description of my ice boat that he may have one built for the Paisley and Glasgow canal. Wrote an answer back and to enquire the sizes of the locks and boats in the canal." Interest was also shown by the Droitwich Canal and by W. B. Clegram of the Gloucester & Berkeley. The fact that this information got about fairly rapidly was partly due to Stephen Ballard, who wrote to several newspapers about his ice boat, and to the ICE, who allowed other papers and magazines to publish material from their proceedings. Indeed, *The Engineer & Architects Journal*, founded in 1837, notes "The liberality of this Institution, in allowing their Papers to be published, cannot be too highly commended."

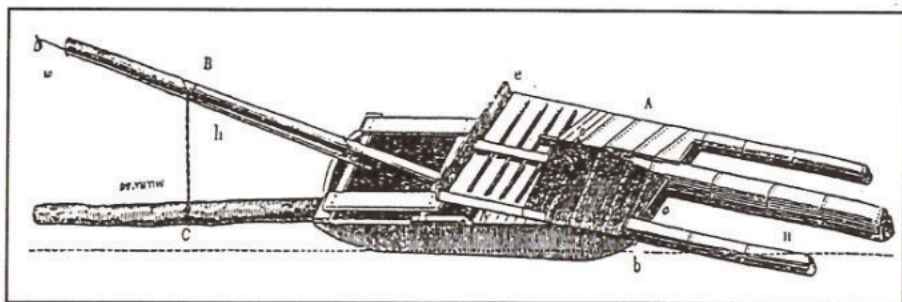
It is fortunate for us that they did. The only surviving illustration of Ballard's novel vessel, of which I am aware, was published in the *E&AJ* in 1843. Quite why it took so long to get printed is a mystery, but it does give a reasonable impression of what the craft looked like. The removable ice breaking frame, or inclined plane, with iron



## Ballard's Ice Breaker

sheeting can clearly be seen. The front end of the boat makes sense, but the arrangement at the stern takes a little study. The spar 'B' projects over the stern of the boat and has the inner end chained to the middle of the boat. The baulk of timber 'C' is about a ton in weight and, by floating in the water, prevents the stern rising when the boat pushes its nose under particularly thick ice, it is attached to the stern of the boat and also to 'B' by a chain. There is a pole or shaft marked 'h' which may just be discerned under the spar 'B', and this is for the purpose of steering the boat from the bank.

The first 2 months of 1838 were the coldest of the century, with  $-14^{\circ}\text{F}$  being recorded in Beckenham, so ice breaking was a matter of great interest as well as economic necessity. On 13th January " ... to meet the ice boat. The ice in some places very thick, near 4 inches, but the boat broke through it with great ease though she was drawn only by 2 weak horses. A great many persons came to see her break the ice in the top pound and they expressed themselves as much pleased and surprised at the easy manner which she broke the ice. One man with a shaft steered her with the greatest precision. After



Of course, most of this arrangement was worked out by experiment during 1834 to 1839. Ballard used it to break quite thick ice, as on 16th January 1838: "Tried to move the ice boat, put 2 horses on and a lot of men. The ice in many parts . . . 6 inches thick. The ice rises up in large pieces and knocked down the mast twice. From this experiment found she would break ice when very thick but found it would be necessary to have some contrivance to turn the ice off on the sides of the boat." Presumably the mast referred to, but not shown in the drawing, was a towing mast to which the horse line was attached.

having performed a journey of 32 miles viz, from Ledbury to Gloucester and back, she on examination was found to be not injured in the least."

By the 31st of that month things were worse: "This morning began to break the ice in the top pound, had 4 horses. The ice in some places 9 inches thick, could not move but very slowly for fear of drawing the boat under the water, which we were very near doing in the Hazle Orchard. Two pieces of iron fixed on the front of the boat for the purpose of turning the ice off sideways were bended and forced off. We took the boat a little way

## *Ballard's Ice Breaker*

down the Leathermill pound and I did not procede further as it appeared a great improvement might be made by decking the boat further from the front to prevent the water running into her when the ice is very thick."

It was this very thick ice which made the boat tend to go too far under the ice, even to the point of hitting the bottom of the canal with the longer middle timber. To counteract this, Ballard experimented with additions: "A piece of baulk timber was put in the water behind the boat, one end of it tied to the boat and the middle attached to the steering pole. The object was to keep the front part of the boat from sinking when under the thick ice and the plan appeared to answer very well. The baulk was too light, it was sometimes lifted out of the water." He continued adding bigger and bigger baulks until "therefore ordered one oak stick 22ft long and weighing about 1 ton to be put in place."

After this entry on 19th February no further entries mention the timber beam so it is reasonable to assume that 1 ton was enough. During February, Ballard learned that his relatively near neighbours, the "Worcester Company had tried to break ice, that they had 12 horses and that they were frequently brought to a standstill. They broke

about 12 miles and it was said that this cost them £40. They kept on till they tore their ice boats to pieces."

All the comments recorded so far relate to Ballard's first attempts, and these seem to have been made with one, or more, wooden vessels. By 1st February 1845 an iron ice breaker had been made and used for the first time. By the 12th, "it answers very well, very much better than the first I had made ... in some places the old ice was 4 inches thick and the boat broke it up very well."

Not long after this, on 22nd May, the canal was finally opened to Hereford and Ballard left to take up a position with Walker & Burges, draining the Fens, and there is no further mention of ice breaking. It was James Walker, as President of the Institution, that had presented him with his Telford Medal on the evening of 15th January 1839, during which he complimented Stephen "very much on account of the superior way in which he had seen the work on the H&G canal conducted." Since then, all canal ice boats seem to have been those of the 'standard' BCN pattern, which work on an up-and-over principle, and Stephen Ballard's radically different approach has remained an obscure backwater, much like the canal he did so much to complete.

For an equally fascinating insight into the past the book about the history of the H&G Canal is an excellent buy - either for yourself or as a much appreciated gift. **The Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal**, second edition, by Member David Bick, is just £7.95 (inc. p+p). from:-

Penny Shetliffe, H&G Canal (Sales), Little Lugg,  
Cross Keys, Hereford, HR1 3NP.

*Stocks are limited and the book is about to go out of print.*



# 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  
*everyone welcome, held at The Verzons Country  
House Hotel, Trumpet, nr. Ledbury - see map below.*

*All meetings are 7.30 for 8pm.*

## Tuesday, 21st December

### *"Christmas Special"*

No formal speaker, so close to Christmas, but see some historic waterways slides, enjoy a mince pie (or two!) and get the latest news on restoration progress.

## Tuesday, 18th January

### *"The life of the Badger"*

Our annual wildlife evening. Hazel Nock, of the Hereford Badger Group, will be telling us all about badgers - and the work of her Group.

## Tuesday, 15th February

### *"The Leominster Canal"*

Member Martin Hudson has been undertaking further research into this nearby waterway and has a lot of new material to show us.

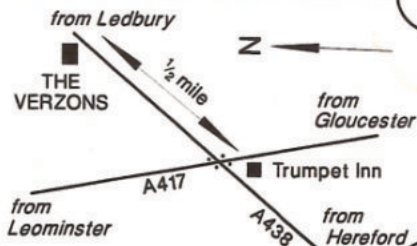
### **Advance notice:**

Our March evening will be a Picture Quiz organised by Janet and Brian Moulton. Come along for a Social Evening with a difference!

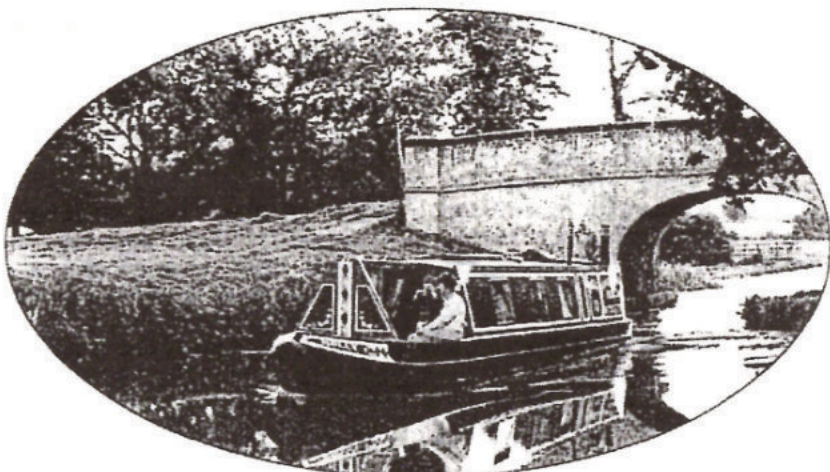
*Ray & Barbara have gone to a lot of trouble to organise a superb range of Social Evenings - please support them - everyone welcome!*  
*Any queries, or ideas for speakers, to Ray & Barbara on 01989 780 325*

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# RESTORATION UPDATE

*By Brian Fox & Nigel Bailey*

Our four regulars at Oxenhall have been joined by Elizabeth and David Williams who helped on the stall at the National Waterways Festival and then recklessly asked if they could get involved in other ways! Painting our new boat was their first choice but in the meantime have been assisting us when they can in maintaining the towpath by cutting grass and larger stuff which has accumulated over the last few months.

This was particularly useful in preparation for our Open Day, in September, when our efforts at restoration of the Canal and House Lock were on display for all to see. The newly refurbished hall was being used for the first time to provide teas and a sales stand and the car park (constructed by the Trust volunteers last summer) was put to good use.

Everyone was very keen to see what progress had been made on the lock, where someone was on hand to answer all the questions, and they were also invited to take a walk along the towpath up to the tunnel portal which, by now, was cleared and not too wet underfoot.

It was most encouraging to see about 100 people turn up during the day which remained dry until about 3 o'clock when the heavens opened and the tea room suddenly became very busy. The plan had been to stop at about 4 o'clock but people were still coming in at 4.30 for a cup of tea!

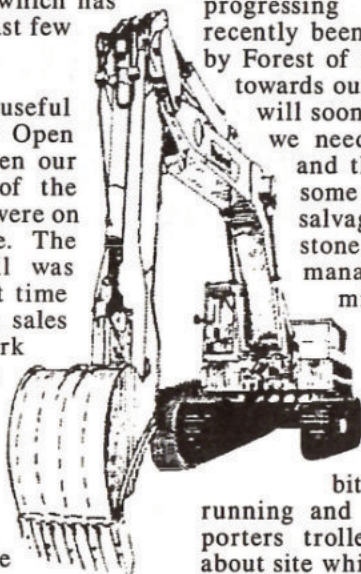
£100 was taken on refreshments and over £200 on sales due largely to some skillfully crafted tables made by Dave Mordaunt from timber salvaged from the lock and Canal. Thanks to those in the tearoom, manning the stall, and guiding for a most successful day.

Work in the lock chamber is progressing well and we have recently been given another £1,000 by Forest of Dean District Council towards our continuing costs. We

will soon be at the stage where we need more suitable stone and this grant will pay for some of the recently salvaged large blocks of stone to be cut into manageable sizes at the saw mill down in the Forest, at Parkend. The disc stone cutter, which we purchased last year, has proved its worth but regularly needs new discs and other

bits and pieces to keep it running and we now have a new porters trolley for moving stone about site which will hopefully save anyone straining long disused muscles. A pulley hoist, donated to the Canal Trust some years ago, has finally been put to good use in lifting the stones into position on the lock wall.

Work is expected to continue through the winter months as we have now established a mortar mix which is workable in cold weather and we shall only be forced to stop if the frost is severe. There will be maintenance work done along the towpath through the winter to level places where the soil has been



## RESTORATION UPDATE . . . continued

eroded and to generally tidy up fallen timber. Bonfire parties will be popular on cold days but only when work is not possible on the lock.

If you don't fancy any of the above work then what about helping David and Elizabeth as they paint the boat at Oxenhall and generally get it ready for launch next Spring down at Over? We are hoping to erect a canvas cover over the top so that the timbers can dry out and work can continue underneath if the weather is inclement. By the way, we are still looking for an inboard or outboard motor to propel our refurbished boat as it takes visitors around the basin at Over. Suitable credits could no doubt be agreed if someone was prepared to sponsor us!

Our thanks to the following for their help over the past few months:-

Richard Emery of M.J.S. Associates Ltd. who donated over 50 pallets for Over and several loads of hardcore for surfacing our compound.  
Les Lane of Brick House Garage for the free loan of a generator.  
Nigel Freeman for supplying a free outside power point at the cottage so we no longer need the above.  
Sean Phillips of Newent for the loan of a large drill for fixing tie rods in place. We have now purchased our own; to all concerned, *thank you*.

The last three months have seen intensive activity at Over, both from our small regular band of helpers and from Waterway Recovery Group.

Leominster Demolition have been gradually dismantling the hospital buildings so we have been able to

salvage more bricks from the older wards. We have had to pallet them quickly without time to clean them so there is plenty of work to be done cleaning them ready for use (*strong hint*). For a week there was a giant crusher on site, pulverising the waste brick and concrete. Some of this hardcore we have been able to lay as a road to give us lorry access to the wharf walls for future concrete pouring.

*“ We have continued to scrounge pallets from all around Gloucester . . . ”*

We have continued to scrounge pallets from all around Gloucester and were very grateful to Dave Mordaunt, Timberland, Alibert and Grahams, the builders merchants, who even delivered theirs to the site for us. I've discovered that you can fit 18 pallets into a Ford

Transit as long as you don't close the back doors! Hoping to get a few more, I approached the warehouse manager at one of our suppliers:-

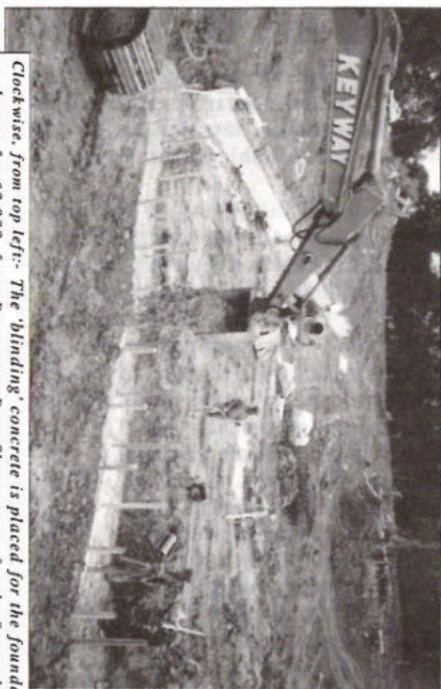
Q. Do you have any old or damaged pallets you'd like to get rid of?

A. Yes. And I've got a wood-burning stove at home.

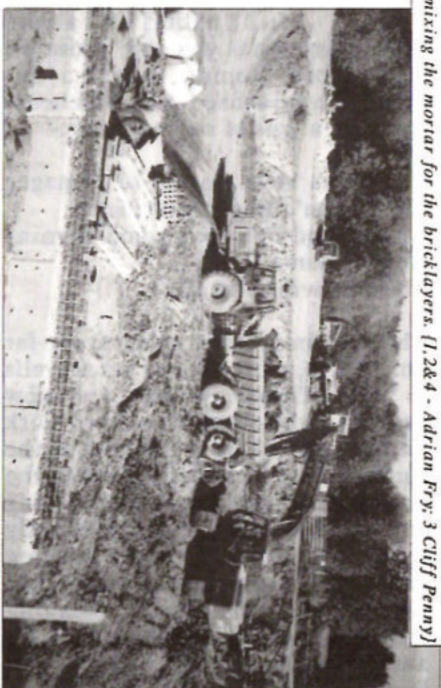
You can't win them all!

The most impressive structure so far on the site is the curved brick walls to the slipway which are now nearing completion. We started work on the slipway in the height of the summer and, ironically, it was the only part of the canal bed holding any water. A large pond lay exactly where we needed to begin pouring concrete. To the rescue came Paul Brown and his spade, digging channels to allow the water to drain away. His efforts did the trick and Paul enjoyed it so much he asked if





Clockwise, from top left:- The 'blinding' concrete is placed for the foundations of the short limb of The Wharf during the September Canal Camp; a cheque for £2,000, from Braunston Boat Show to pay for the September Canal Camp, is presented by representatives from British Waterways; the Keyway excavator and our Volvo dumper in the depths of the basin; mixing the mortar for the bricklayers. (1, 2&4 - Adrian Fry; 3 Cliff Penny)



## RESTORATION UPDATE... continued

he could be appointed "Puddling Master".

Mike Bowden, an engineer recently retired from Nuclear Electric, joined the team earlier this year. His expertise is proving invaluable on the detailed design of the walls we are building. I was amused to notice that his drawings for the detail of the slipway really were on the back of an envelope! I watched Mike as he recalculated angles and heights above sea level, concerned to ensure that the proposed concrete for the slipway did not lie too high in the water. I suggested that he need not worry - if we had got it wrong we could always build a lighthouse to mark the hazard to shipping.

Amongst the materials we have salvaged is a collection of steel girders which range from extremely heavy to ridiculously heavy. One way or another we have moved them out of the way of the demolition team for future use. They may form the basis of a giant meccano set from which Mike will design the swing bridge. This will enable our slipway service road to cross the basin just above the lock. At present we don't know much about the original bridge but Brian Moulton has been sleuthing in various archives and believes he has located the original drawings. We already have a Bailey Bridge over the Ell Brook at Oxenhall so perhaps this one will be a 'Bowden Bridge'?

Twice during the summer we held very successful barbecues at the site. The first was for those of you who don't normally get the chance

to follow our progress. David Penny gave a comprehensive guided tour to about 30 Members. The other was for a WRG group who were not able to use their lodgings for the evening the hall had a prior booking from the WI. We were very grateful to Liz Bailey and Sharon Bowden for preparing and cooking the food and even making a profit from a very challenging budget. Whilst talking of cooks, our sincere thanks to Sally McManus, and her friend Helen, who have been catering for our WRG Canal Camps to great appreciation from the workers!

As well as progress with bricks, the mid-September WRG Canal Camp re-graded the bank above the short arm, re-profiled the noise bund and at last we began to pour concrete for building the short arm of The Wharf.

In late September, with the Severn expected to flood and the likelihood of high spring tides, we decided we must urgently move the salvaged timber from the floodplain.

As we set off to fetch a tractor and trailer I noticed a few people standing on Telford's bridge waiting to watch the bore. When we got back to the site ready to start a hard days timber shifting, we found we were too late. The bore had arrived, the Severn and the Leadon were both flowing fast up stream and a new branch of the river had appeared - flowing through our storage area. Our timber was now stranded on a temporary island. It was more than an hour before the water subsided enough for us to start work. It was a salutary lesson about the power of the river in flood.

*“ we could  
always build a  
lighthouse  
to mark the  
hazard to  
shipping ... ”*



## *UPDATE . . . continued*

Paul Brown's liaison work with the Territorial Army has been rewarded. They have transported (from the Bridgewater Canal) our 'new' boat, the 'Ruby II', to "dry dock" at Horsefair Wharf, Oxenhall, ready for some restoration. It will then be moved for use at Over.

Through the summer we have had some interesting wildlife on the site - a fox that stopped and watched us for fully half a minute, bats flitting along the hedge, a heron fishing in the Leaddon and a green woodpecker. At dusk one evening we saw a tawny owl and heard another. Most graceful of all are the buzzards, two or three of them, gliding on the thermals above the Vineyard. I think they provide a glimpse of what a tremendous site Over will be when its finished.

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

*please call:-*

**Oxenhall:-** Brian Fox (01432) 358 628

**Over:-** Paul Brown (01386) 443 826  
Nigel Bailey (01452) 533 835

★ Brian Moulton (01432) 264 366

★ NEW! Wednesday Group

**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.

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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...*

## JULY COMMITTEE

■ Dick Skeet attended the meeting to present a draft of the new colour leaflet that he had prepared about the Canal and the work of the Canal Trust. This was received with great enthusiasm and there were a number of constructive suggestions. Dick would incorporate these into a final draft to be checked by the Chairman and Cliff Penny prior to going to the printers. Cliff reported that he was continuing to seek sponsorship of the leaflet.

■ The Treasurer reported that it would be necessary to formally approach the Inland Waterways Association with a view to taking up their offer of a loan if the Canal Trust were to delay taking monies from Swan Hill Homes in respect of the Over site. It was agreed that, although there was no immediate possibility of income from Landfill Tax Credit sources, the position should be kept open as long as possible. This meant delaying taking monies due from Swan Hill Homes for the time being. The Finance Committee would obtain details of the terms of the IWA loan.

■ The Town and Country Planning team had been in liaison with the developer of the School of Farriery site in Hereford following the receipt of details relating to the new bridge. Comments had been made in respect of the Environment Agencies Lower Severn Environment Action Plan. There were a number of concerns including the fact that the Agency had

completely overlooked the H&G Canal Steering Committee on which it is represented.

■ Steady progress at Oxenhall House Lock was reported although there were continuing difficulties with the lime mortar mix. Specialist advice would be obtained. So many volunteers from London Waterway Recovery Group attended the Dig Deep Canal Camp at Oxenhall early in July that half travelled to Over to assist there.

■ At Over bad weather continued to hinder progress as did the continued absence of crusher run that had been promised from the demolition of the hospital since February. The WRG skid steer loader was proving to be invaluable in moving palletted bricks. Further concrete pours were planned during the 10 day Canal Camp the end of the month.

■ One of our excavator engines had seized. Repairs were estimated to cost about £800. The Plant Manager had inspected a D4 dozer, although over 30 years old he considered it to be in good order. It was agreed that it should be accepted on a trial basis with the hire fees during the trial set against the purchase price of £3,000 +VAT if it was to be subsequently purchased.

■ Mike Potts reported on the social trip to Manchester; due to coach difficulties they had almost missed the boat on the Manchester Ship Canal - the highlight of the weekend. Thanks to quick thinking,



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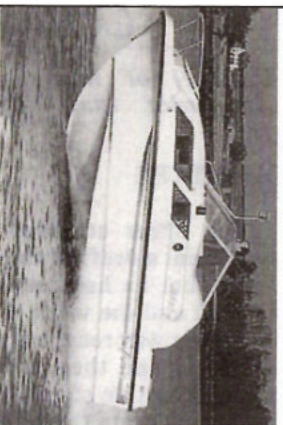
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## *Committee Matters . . . (ii)*

and an unscheduled stop by the vessel, all worked out well in the end. It was disappointing that more Members and friends did not support the trip. CofM thanked Mike and Joyce for their hard work.

■ The Trading Company were continuing with preparations for attendance at the National Waterways Festival at Worcester.

■ Member Nigel Bailey was well advanced with his work in creating a web site for the Canal Trust on the internet. He had offered to pay for the first year costs relating to domain registration and hosting the site. This was warmly welcomed. It was confirmed that the site would be officially launched at the National Waterways Festival.

### AUGUST COMMITTEE

■ Due to 5 CofM Members having given apologies for absence the meeting was re-arranged for later in the month.

■ It was regretted that, due to the lack of a formal letter of complaint, it had been necessary for the Canal Trust to pay £180 for repairs to the protruding hinges of the hired in secure container that had been the subject of the second robbery. It was agreed that budget holders had to be responsible for promptly and formally drawing any problems to the attention of our suppliers, not the Treasurer.

■ The IWA had been formally approached regarding a loan to enable work at Over to continue pending the call in of monies due from the developer under the terms of the Planning

Agreement. A decision was due from the IWA in September.

■ There were detailed discussions regarding progress at Over. Due to an oversight the minutes of the twice-monthly Over Special Projects Group had not been circulated to the CofM. This would be corrected. The 10 day Canal Camp at the end of July had achieved a great deal although the lack of excavator drivers had initially hindered matters. For once potential heat stroke was the greater fear rather than getting soaking wet! Some of the recent brickwork was not to standard and, even though it was below water line, it would be taken down. The required standards were now being achieved. David Penny, the Over Project Director, had not been able to attend some CofM and Finance Committee meetings; CofM considered it vital that someone attend with a detailed knowledge to facilitate decision making. In turn, he recommended that the CofM visit the Over site. The Plant Manager requested that he be kept in touch more; it was confirmed that, in addition to Alan Lines, he was also welcome to attend any Over SPG meeting and there was no reason for him to be unaware of what was going on.

■ Arrangements for hosting a meeting of the Inland Waterway Associations national Restoration Committee in October were confirmed. They would visit Over, after their formal business, in the afternoon.

■ It was suggested that the Canal Trust should investigate if it was possible to register the Over Project Site for VAT purposes.



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

■ Final arrangements of the National Waterways Festival were discussed.

■ Concern was raised with regard to the condition of the D4 dozer that was on trial. It had shed a track during the trials. The Chairman agreed to discuss the matter with Tom Bennett, our Plant Manager (who was unable to be present at the meeting) as it was considered that this might affect the decision to purchase the machine.

■ Following an initiative of the Over Special Projects Group, Health and Safety matters at Over were to be appraised by a volunteer from outside the membership of the Canal Trust. This was welcomed. A small stock of safety wellingtons and helmets would be retained on site for visitors.

■ Mike Potts reported that he and Joyce had decided to suspend their tours and weekend breaks next year. They thought it would be a good idea to give it a rest for a year in the hope that re-vitalised interest would be shown in the future. CofM regretted but fully understood this decision and thanked them both for their very considerable efforts over the past years.

■ It was reported that the Left Bank Village would be sponsoring the costs of the new colour leaflet and copies were circulated hot off the press. This generous support was greatly appreciated. The leaflet had been included with The Wharfinger that had just been mailed and would be utilised for the first time at the National Waterways Festival.

■ The Trading Company reported successful attendances at Tewkesbury Water Festival and Herefordshire Country Fair. Arrangements were being made to attend the annual Newent Onion Fair and for the open day at Oxenhall. The Ledbury Canal Trust Craft Fair was booking well but there was concern due to lack of trader support for the one in Hereford.

### SEPTEMBER COMMITTEE

■ The quorum for the CofM was reviewed as currently worded this was one fifth of the Council; as the number of members of the CofM had to be between 5 and 18 that meant that a quorum could be 1! It was agreed that this was not satisfactory and that meetings would only proceed if a minimum of 5 Members were present. Our Honorary Solicitor would also be asked to comment on the wording of the Articles and Memorandum to see if any formal action was necessary at the next AGM.

■ The IWA were likely to approve a loan of £10,000 in respect of the Over Project Site at their meeting a few days later. This was welcomed. David Penny was pursuing a number of grant aid initiatives when time allowed.

■ It was agreed that the current workload of some members of the CofM was untenable and that action had to be taken to share the essential tasks more widely and to expand membership of the CofM.

■ Work at Oxenhall had been concentrated on tidying our land prior to the Open Day. There had been some criticism of our

## *Committee . . . (iv)*

apparent lack of maintenance of the adjacent sections of the Canal. It was considered essential that all volunteers concerned fully understood our agreed policy that we can no longer be expected to maintain sites unless we own them or have a legal agreement in place. Newent Onion Fair will be utilised to try and attract some new local volunteers.

■ At Over the Project Architects had changed and there had been no contact by the newly appointed team prior to the submission of revised drawings to Tewkesbury Borough Council. David Penny was liaising with Swan Hill Homes over this and was confident that the previous good working relationship would be restored in the near future. Pending this there had been no alternative but to lodge a formal objection to the Tewkesbury Council as a number of the changes were, regrettably, prejudicial to the Canal. An additional WRG Canal Camp was to be hosted on the Over site in October and this was welcomed.

■ Tom Bennett, our Plant and Training Manager, explained the reasons for the delays in completing the repairs to one of our excavator engines at Over and why it had not been possible to bring it back into service. He was concerned at the implied criticisms relating to his recommended purchase of the D4 dozer following the machine shedding a track during the trials and in respect of the likely costs of repairing the associated broken track tensioner. Following a heated debate he tendered his resignation from the post and as a Director of the Canal Trust.



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# [not quite] The Last Page

## A SORE POINT?

During our 'set down' operations, immediately following the National Waterways Festival, Brian Moulton unfortunately cut his finger rather badly and had to be taken to hospital by friendly [aren't they all? - Ed.] WRGies. This was reported in the NWF Canal Camp newsletter later that evening:-

*"Sorry to hear that Brian from the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust hurt his finger today and had to be carted off to hospital. Apparently the first hospital they tried was being demolished as part of a canal restoration project."*

## DON'T FORGET

A Gift Membership makes a very unusual and appreciated gift at any time of year - full details are on page 4.

## SUPPORT OUR SUPPORTERS

We've said it before but it warrants repeating; please support our Corporate Members [there is a full list on page 7], and our advertisers, whenever you can. Please also let them know that you are a Member when doing so, in that way they can see that their support is giving a positive return to their businesses.

This 'feed back' is really important - for example we know of at least two recent cases where Members have enjoyed a boating holiday with one of our Corporate Members but have not thought to say that they were H&G Canal Trust Members!

## CARLTON/CENTRAL TV

There's a feature on Canals early in the new year; hopefully it will include material shot on our stand at Worcester.



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

## A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS

*However, if you are reading this in 2000*

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### **Nigel Bailey,**

Tel:- (01452) 533 835

### **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 !**

**VISIT OUR WEB SITE: - [www.h-g-canal.org.uk](http://www.h-g-canal.org.uk)**

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

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

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**ALL MEMBERSHIP CORRESPONDENCE TO:- (sae appreciated, please)**

**H & G CANAL TRUST, 6 Castle Street, Hereford, HR1 2NL**

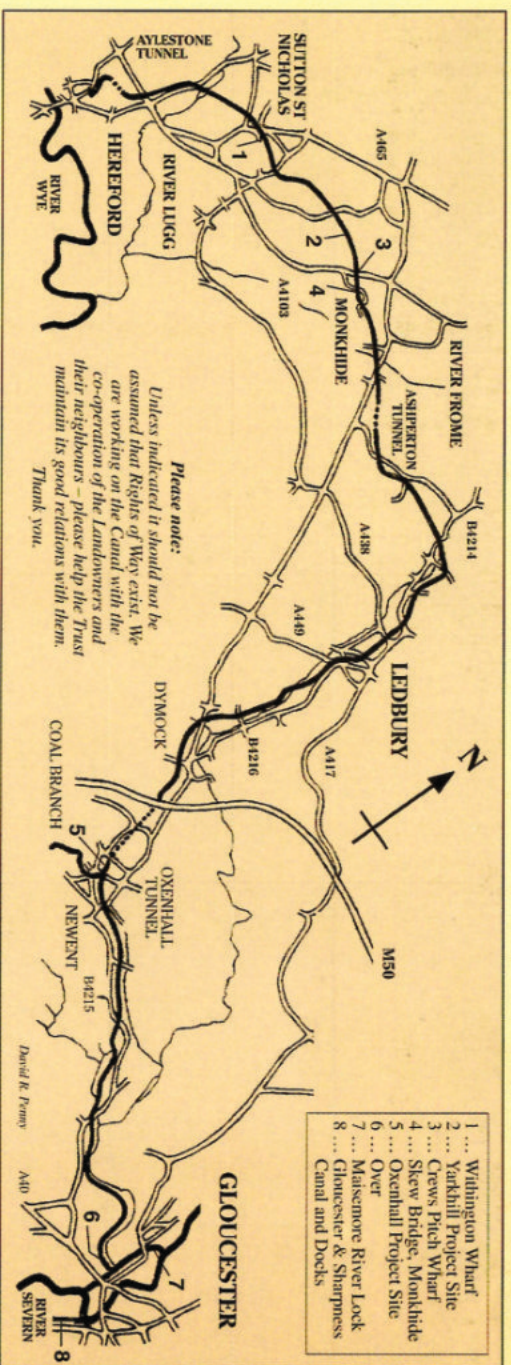
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# THE HERFORDSHIRE AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL



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

The Canal Society was formed in 1983 and replaced in 1992 by the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust, a registered charity. The Trust has an ordinary and corporate membership exceeding 700 from all over the county – and abroad! Our objective is to fully restore the 34 mile Canal, from its connection with the 2,500 mile inland waterways network at Gloucester to the centre of Hereford. A Steering Committee of the Local Authorities, Environment Agency, etc. has been formed by the Trust to assist in progressing this objective. We have a major restoration site in each county, which together extend to some 3 miles.