

The Wharfinger

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



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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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Nigel Jefferies, *Tom Bennett,*

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Plant - Over

Plant - Oxenhall

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Brian Fox

David Penny, *Chris Tothill, Alan Lines*

Tom Bennett

Tony Austin-Bailey

Over SPG:-

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Secretary/CDM Planning Supervisor

PR

Fundraising

Committee

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Nigel Bailey

Nigel Bailey, Jane Jones

Mike Bowden, Nigel Bailey, David Penny

Tony Austin-Bailey, Adrian Fry (WRG),

Paul Brown, Roy Jamieson, Maggie

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Colin Seaton.

**Liaison:- Local Authority/Planning
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Admin

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Dick Skeet

IWA Nominated Member

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Postmasters:- Leader

Team

Cliff Penny

Ian & Frances Roper

D & M Gray; S McManus

Talks/Walks

Nigel Jefferies

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

THE TRADING COMPANY
H & G CANAL [SALES]

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Those in italics are not Directors of the Trading Company although they may be co-opted members

HONORARY POSTS:-

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

ARCHAEOLOGIST Ron Shoesmith

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING Penny Environmental & Planning

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

Over is Over {Phase 1 at least!}

We've done it! Thanks to the tireless combined efforts of H&G Canal Trust, and Waterway Recovery Group volunteers from all over the country, the Over Canal Basin was full of water in mid August. This was 10 days *before* the legal deadline imposed on us by the Planning Obligation that controls Swan Hill Homes (and our own) activities on site. All the Phase 1 works that we were due to complete before the 24th August have been finished - just leaving facilities for water supply to the Canal to be completed later in the year (*these are permitted extra time in the Agreement*).

Restoration Update in this edition of **The Wharfinger** has been especially extended to accommodate reports on the immense amount of voluntary work that was essential to meet this vital objective.

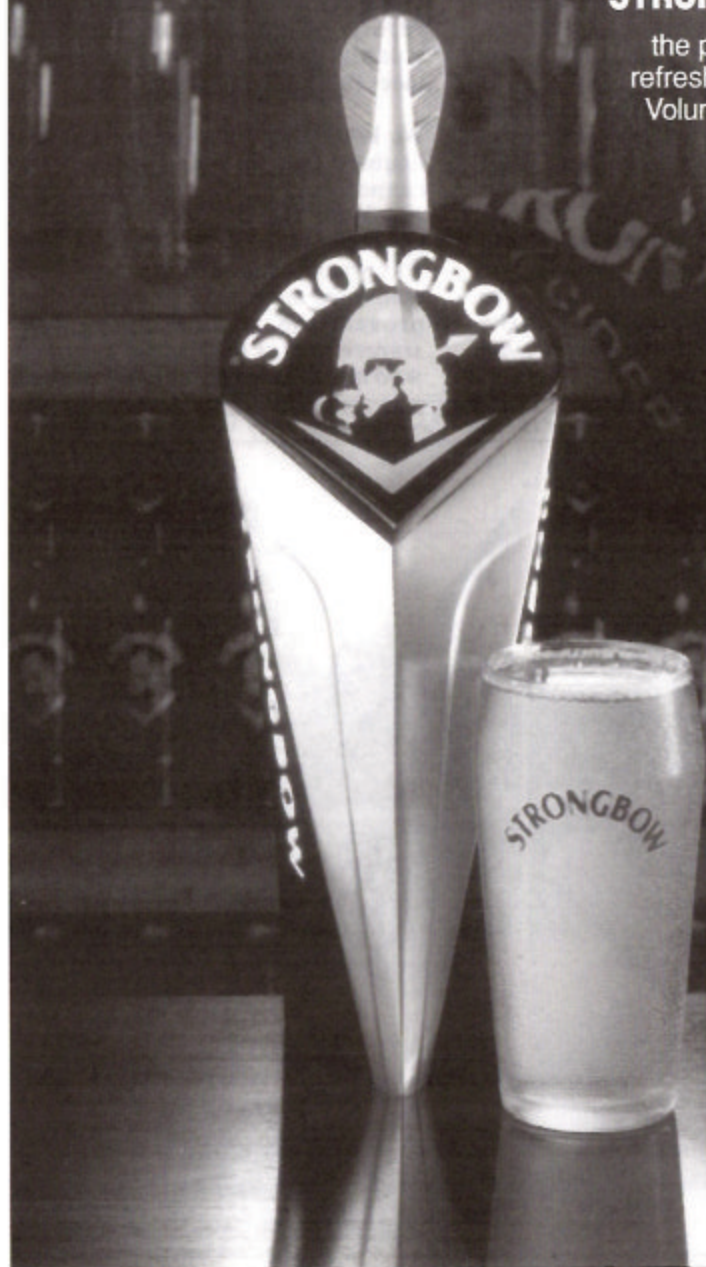
We know that there were those who doubted that we would succeed - we cannot miss another opportunity to thank all the WRGies; our equally appreciated H&G Canal Trust volunteers; and all the businesses who have made this all possible and **proved the cynics wrong**. *Our sincere thanks to each and every one who has ensured the success at Over.*

What a difference water makes! The Over Canal Basin in early August. [David Penny.]



STRONGBOW

the pint to
refresh Canal
Volunteers!



OVER A STAR!

Our voluntary work at Over is all set to star in Carlton TV's *Waterworld* when it returns to the TV screens next January. Transmission covers nearly half of the UK population and the series also sells very well overseas - so Over could well become a star!

Waterworld is hosted by well known actors (and narrow boat owners) Prunella Scales and Timothy West; they have kindly agreed to perform the opening ceremony for the phase 1 works at Over in late September. Carlton's Factual Programmes Producer Keith Wootton has been working closely with our Project Director, David Penny. We greatly appreciate Keith's willingness to adjust his complex and demanding filming schedule to accommodate the opening ceremony.

As reported in the previous edition of *The Wharfinger*, it's not just the first phase of Over that we celebrate - we are also hosting the national 30th Birthday party for *Waterway Recovery Group*. We are delighted to have been given this opportunity as it presents the ideal joint occasion to acknowledge the combined efforts of our own volunteers and those of WRG. There can be no doubt that without their combined fantastic and sustained unpaid efforts the success of Over would not have been achieved.

Further details of the Official First Phase Opening Ceremony, and the subsequent two days of celebrations at Over, are on page 20; meanwhile an especially extended *Restoration Progress*, starting on page 23, brings you full details of the work towards the deadline!

AUCTION OVER

The DETR (Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions) were due to hold a public auction to sell the Newent Nursery site on the 28th June. The historic route of the Canal occupied nearly half of the site. Thanks to hard and persistent work by Brian Fox, and the intervention of local MP Diana Organ, the sale was postponed two hours before the auction! [article on page 35].

OVER NOTHING

In Hereford two new bridges are being built over the line of the *diversion route* for the H&G Canal. The Developers of the former Farriery College site, Grantchester Retail Parks, are paying for a new highway bridge and a footbridge - where no canal previously existed (the historic route nearby having been built upon many years ago). [See page 5].

OVER FOR ANOTHER YEAR

Some 40 Members attended the 8th AGM of the Canal Trust on the 20th June. A very full and interesting evening culminated in a slide presentation of restoration progress - including slides from Over that were only a week old. Reports covering all aspects of our voluntary work indicated a year of immense progress (and, inevitably, expenditure).

It is customary for the first CofM following the AGM to elect the Officers of the Council for the following year. Brian Fox confirmed that he was intending to stand down as Chairman although he was willing to remain on the CofM and continue

Editorial

to be a Director. The CofM have decided to completely review the workings of the Council, and the role of the Chairman, as it is accepted that far too much pressure has been placed on this post over many years. Three former Chairmen, who still serve on the Council, wholly endorsed this!

Pending the outcome of this review Will Frecknall has agreed to Chair the CofM. It was also agreed to co-opt Brian Moulton and Dick Skeet to the CofM and this was warmly endorsed. As soon as the review of the workings of the Council has been completed and accepted a further report will appear in *The Wharfinger*.

All Members of the Council of Management have a heavy workload. Members are asked to assist by trying to ensure that they address queries to the most appropriate person - see *Who Does What* and *Contacts* on the inside front and back cover.

OVER 100 LIFE MEMBERS

It is perhaps a reflection on the success of the H&G Canal Trust that so many of our Members have the confidence to join as Life Members. We are delighted to have recently enrolled our 100th Life Member - Mrs Audrey Smith OBE.

Audrey is immediate past National Chairman of the Inland Waterways Association, one of their Vice Presidents, and still holds a number of very important posts including serving on IWAAC.

The Canal Trust have sent Audrey a unique blue H&G CT sweatshirt in recognition of her helping us to pass

this record 100 Life Members landmark.

OVER DONE?

Over has dominated our reports in recent issues. This is inevitable - it is the largest single-site voluntary canal restoration project in the whole country! Add the restricted timescale for the completion of Phase 1, and see what has been achieved (as hundreds have at the recent BBQ and Open Day), and there ought to be little doubt that it deserves to be 'centre stage'. *There's more to come - watch this space!*

OVER CELEBRATIONS

Full details of the Phase 1 Opening Ceremony and three days of Celebrations are on the centre pages.

We are determined to make the Celebrations a great success. In order to achieve this we need YOUR help, please - on site or at home!

Volunteers are needed to help in every way imaginable from catering to running stands; from site set up and take down - from Thursday 28th September through to (and including) Monday 2nd October. Please volunteer for half a day (or more!). Janet Moulton would appreciate a call on (01432) 264 366.

We also need cakes and home-made biscuits etc. for the 5,000 (literally, we hope!) for the three days. Can you do some baking and/or help with catering? Could your Company (or an associate) donate any ingredients for the cakes or the VIP buffet and keep our costs down? Liz Bailey would appreciate a call on (01452) 533 835.

 CRP

Two New Bridges at Hereford!

David Penny has increasing trouble persuading Cliff Penny that his (ever extending) use of office time for voluntary work on behalf of the H&G Canal Trust is all valuable training for the 'day job' with Penny Environmental & Planning. Here David reports on the outcome of more time spent honing his negotiating skills...

Just for a change an article *over* at the other end of the Canal (*excuse yet another Over pun!*). Hereford has also been seeing dramatic progress towards the restoration of the whole Canal during the last month or so.

After several years of negotiation Planning Permission was granted, early last year, for a new 'Retail Park', Canal, and highway and footbridges over the Canal, on the former School of Farriery and Police motor vehicle site at one end of Edgar Street in Hereford. Just as at Over we reached agreement with the Developer and supported them at Appeal. We had also undertaken a very considerable amount of voluntary work 'behind the scenes' to help the Developer and make sure he secured his necessary Consents with bodies other than the Local Planning Authority - and that we got what we wanted as well. Every possible option had been investigated for routing the Canal through the site as the historic line had been blocked (many years ago) on the adjacent site so there was no point in blindly following the historic line through the Farriery site. Eventually, a route placing the Canal right at the front of the site was agreed. This was by far the best route for the Canal and we demonstrated that it was also the best for the development - even though some 10% of the retail floor space (some 7,500 square feet) were 'lost' because of the Canal.

The new alignment for the Canal runs alongside the A49 at the front of the site - and then cuts diagonally across site to rejoin the historic route

parallel to Burcott Road. This permits us to link to the unobstructed historic route at the City end of the site and to our long-standing diversion route along a former railway siding at the other end.

At the point where the new route cuts diagonally across the site the Retail Park's new spine road crosses. This has been raised several metres above ground level so that it could pass over a new highway bridge to accommodate the future Canal.

Early in August the 10 sections of bridge were craned into position. As the bridge is at a skew all the units also had to be especially cast on the skew. Whilst very expensive special moulds were being made the opportunity was taken to make all of them arch topped rather than a plain box section. Within a few weeks the bridge will be completed with brick clad approaches at each end and with a towpath wall passing through it to facilitate completion later. The 6.5 metre span structure is of a very high standard of design and construction. *Everyone involved should be proud of this bold statement of confidence that we will be there in the future!*

The end of August will also see a new footbridge constructed across the new alignment for the Canal some 100m from the road bridge. *Two new bridges - both highly visible from the A49 into Hereford - just crying out for the Canal to be constructed below them.* Although one bank of the future Canal has been created by diverting the Ayles



The ten pre-cast concrete units forming the new highway bridge are craned into position at the former School of Fairtry site in Hereford. (David Penny.)



Two New Bridges at Hereford!

Brook along it, the rest of the Canal Corridor will be grassed over - awaiting our attention in the future. This has been necessary as the section in question overlies gravel; it is not just a question of a simple excavation to create the Canal with an existing clay puddle to make it retain the water.

In addition to constructing the two new bridges the Developer has also ensured that the new services to the Retail Park have been taken below

the bed level of the future Canal. Our thanks to Grantchester Retail Parks; AllenBuild and M F Freeman Contractors for their attention to detail and quality of the significant works that they have undertaken to ensure that the Canal can pass through the site in years to come. This is yet another example of major progress on the Canal as a result of the Developer, the Local Authority (Herefordshire Council) and the Canal Trust working *together*.

URGENT - Plants, Please

Our plea for plants for Over is now urgent, please. Maggie Jones [(01452) 618010] would like to hear from you if you are able to donate some bedding plants, shrubs, hedging or even trees for use at Over.

We are determined to ensure that our site is enhanced now that Swan Hill's show house is open - so come on with your offers, please! Maggie would also like to hear from you if you are able to assist horticulturally on site!

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Trading Company Diary - Year 2000

Our Trading Company Chairman, Brian Moul, summarises the promotional and sales activities to the end of June; a busy year - so far!

Having read in previous issues of **The Wharfinger** the list of venues which the Trading Company plan to attend, Trust members might like to know how things went together with any anecdotes worthy of repetition.

On that basis therefore, we are pleased to report an auspicious start to the trading year by Barbara and Ray Moses, attending the annually run Gloucester Boaters Jumble Sale. Responding to donations of a wide variety of items usable to boaters, they surpassed all previous years results (*see Summer edition of The Wharfinger*).

April 29th - May 1st; Information and Sales Stand was taken to Stoke Prior, venue for the annual Worcester & Birmingham Canal Boat Rally. Not a big event but important for us to wave the flag and bring in some much needed income. The biggest excitement of the weekend was to watch Ray and Barbara's dogs antics. Two dogs, two long ropes and one stake added up to a periodic knotty problem.

May 27th - 29th; Boatshow 2000 at Crick. This new site exposed one or two shortcomings, when faced with bad weather, both before and during the event.

Following a difficult time accessing the site on 26th, our stand personnel got stuck in (no pun intended) and set up, ready for business on the Saturday. Trade was steady over the 3 days of the show, resulting in a reasonable final total.

The Sunday was memorable, in that Brian and Janet, along with other stallholders were called to site very early to cope with a partially flooded venue. Fortunately, only the access to our marquee was flooded, unlike the one next to us, whose stallholders were faced with soggy stock. BW took a decision that, as they believed that they could restore the status quo, they would defer the opening time to 1pm. This decision only applied to the show site, not the car park, which was now a quagmire, completely unrecoverable. Attempts were made to contact our volunteer Sales staff to warn them not to come (Brian and Janet would cope). The delayed opening allowed them to go out and buy some wellies, as Brian did not fancy wading in shoes to our marquee AGAIN.

A small
“the delayed
opening allowed
them to go out
and buy some
wellies...”

As was written (in a letter to BW) The European Scout Federation (British Association - those scouts who try to keep alive Baden Powells original concepts to the extent of continuing to wear the uniform he designed) deserve a medal. They spent all 3 days pushing people onto, and off, the car park, presenting a totally different aspect when viewed from the front as opposed to the rear.

The general opinion is that this would be a good site without the rain!

May 27th- 29th; Trail Boat Rally at Newport. A decision, made before the event, not to attend, proved to be fortuitous, as the site was badly flooded throughout the weekend.

Trading Company Diary - Year 2000

June 10th-11th; Trail Boat Rally at Moira. Weather again, but this time gusty winds accompanying the sun, yes the sun!!

The event was very well attended both days and excellent business was done. Particular thanks to Des and Lesley who brought their gazebo for us to use. Also Des, after a long day at the show, put together a support frame for the display, which admirably prevented it falling over on the second day, notwithstanding the wind being somewhat lighter. Also, our congratulations to Steve, who hereafter, will be known as King of the Cuddly Toy Salesmen.

June 17th; Village Event at Tibberton Court. The village committee invited us to attend this Millennium Venue; we took along a Display and a small Sales Stand. Most of the village attended, arriving in procession from the village school following a jazz band quartet, many people wearing clothes to match previous centuries (our Caroline Jones kindly wore her boatwomans

outfit on a very hot day and took part in the procession).

Both Display and Sales Stand were very busy and our Lucky Dip very nearly sold out. As a result excellent Sales figures were achieved for four hours work. On an equally positive note contact was made with several people who provided cogent information on our canal history in the immediate surrounding area.

June 23rd - 25th; Hop Churches Flower Festival. Here again we were invited to attend with our Sales and Display Stands at Canon Frome Church. This three-day event was very successful financially and our display generated a lot of positive information on the Canal and its associated historical water supplies.

Thanks are due to Tom Bennett, whose gazebo we were able to borrow and the volunteers who helped to make this weekend so worthwhile.

The diary will be completed in a future issue.

Still Time to Help !

The Trading Company are attending a record number of events this year - both close to home and further afield. There are still a number before the year is out!

Help on our Sales/Information stand from any Trust Members would be greatly appreciated. An hour or two would be most welcome.

Please contact Janet Moulton 01432-264366

Oxenhall Open Day Sept 17th:

Liz Connors would be pleased to receive offers of cakes for the Open Day teas.

Please contact Liz on 01432-880155

ADVANCE NOTICE

Our Member David Pollock, of Document Conversion Services [see ad. on p.8] is preparing a CD-ROM containing all the back issues of *The Wharfinger* - plus some bonus colour photos. *Full details in the next edition.*

Committee Matters

Two Council of Management meetings are reviewed by our Editor in order that our Members and supporters are kept up to date [there was no meeting in May]...

APRIL COMMITTEE

■ The DETR were going to auction land that had been purchased at Newent for the cancelled A40 relief highway scheme; this was currently the site of the Nursery. The historic line of the Canal passes along one side of the site. Following an approach from the Chairman they had refused to consider splitting the land that was for sale. It was agreed that the local MP should be asked to intervene, pointing out that Railtrack had been prevented from selling land where there were future transport proposals therefore similar embargoes ought to apply to DETR. *[See latest position Report on p.35].*

■ Our Treasurer reported that it was now essential to obtain further monies due from Swan Hill Homes under the terms of the Planning Obligation as no other funding sources were in prospect.

■ Good progress was reported at Over - with WRG due to be on site for 8 of the next 10 weekends. A formal opening of Phase 1 was planned for late September. Regrettably there had been further robberies on site giving rise to repairs to one of our container doors and the purchase of yet more security grade padlocks *[Reported in the last edition]*. It was agreed that the CofM would formally visit the site at the end of April.

■ Steady progress was also reported at Oxenhall. Member (and neighbour) Nigel Freeman had kindly donated some stone for use in the reconstruction of House Lock;

this was warmly welcomed. The new footbridge had been temporarily placed across the Lock and would not be permanently installed until the necessary Listed Building Consent had been obtained. The date of construction would be carved into the bridge. Following the Chairman's requests for additional assistance a Member had offered to regularly cut the grass at Oxenhall to relieve the regular Tuesday Wrinklies group of this task.

■ Our former compound at Crews Pitch Wharf had now been cleared of virtually all of the Canal Trusts plant and materials. The old site office was to be used by Hereford Model Boat Club who had Major Barnes permission to utilise the adjacent length of the Canal.

■ The syphon carrying a local ditch under the Canal at Yarkhill had partly collapsed causing the partly restored Canal to breach. Permission of the neighbouring landowner had been given to effect repairs when weather conditions permitted.

■ It was reported that further repairs were in hand to one of our two excavators at Over. Our plant was proving to be unreliable, given the tight timescales, and it was agreed that major work activities would have to utilise hired plant.

■ Our Town & Country Planning Team reported that work was well under way at the former School of Farriery site, in Hereford, where two new bridges would be built over the diversion route for the Canal. One would be a full standard

Committee Matters . . . (ii)

highway bridge and the other a footbridge. Mr Nigel Freeman had withdrawn his Planning Application for an equestrian centre - this had been the subject of a formal objection from the Canal Trust. A number of other developments, elsewhere along the line of the Canal, were being monitored. We had attended the launch of the Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Plan (which had been amended following our comments).

■ The Trading Company was seeking volunteers to man our display and sales stand at the various events throughout the year. Photo panels would need to be updated to reflect considerable progress at Over prior to the display at the national Waterways Festival at Waltham Abbey in August.

■ Following comments from a Life Member who had moved house it was agreed to remind Members, via *The Wharfinger*, that critical information such as changes of address were best notified in writing.

■ The CofM endorsed the extensive Health and Safety Plan that had been concluded for Over.

■ There was still no reaction from the Membership regarding the need for a replacement Social Events organiser.

■ The action of one of our Corporate Members, David Dawson (of Canal Craft and Blisworth Tunnel Boats) in naming one of his new boats "Oxenhall Tunnel" was reported with great appreciation [*Story in the last edition of The Wharfinger.*]

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Committee Matters . . . (iii)

JUNE COMMITTEE

■ Final arrangements for the AGM were agreed.

■ The Chairman reported that no application had been made by the Canal Trust to the IWA to be considered for the £100,000 Tom Wilkinson bequest. The criteria were very specific and our current sites would not comply.

■ The proposed sale of the Newent Nursery site was at the end of June. The Chairman was continuing to press the MP, Diana Organ, for support. [See p.35].

■ It was confirmed that a formal application had been made to Swan Hill Homes for a further £12,500 under the terms of the

Planning Obligation. Budgets for July through to August were approved. It was agreed that an article should appear in *The Wharfinger* to explain to Members the new Gift Aid legislation (which replaces Covenants and makes matters far more flexible). [Article on p.8 - also loose insert].

■ After careful consideration it was decided that our current very heavy financial commitments regrettably precluded the Canal Trust making a contribution to the Anderton Boat Lift Appeal.

■ David Penny reported on the achievements of the Over Special Projects Group (SPG). This now had 10 members meeting fortnightly. Apart from planning and co-ordinating the ongoing work at Over

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Committee Matters . . . (iv)

with WRG they were also very active pursuing elements of grant aid. It was agreed to specifically ~~endorse~~ **CountrySide** Application for Countryside Stewardship to MAFF.

■ Once again good progress was reported at Over. The TA had returned at the end of May to finish removing the old sewage treatment works. However, there were serious concerns relating to the delay in Swan Hill Homes constructing their sewer under the Canal close to the entrance to the Lock. This had originally been scheduled for March. It prevented the completion of the foundations for, and the construction of, the lock approaches and the installation of stop planks. This had formally been registered as a 'delay event', beyond the control of the Canal Trust, under the terms of our Agreements with the Developer. Work on the sewer was now planned for late June.

■ Torrential rain had again prevented planned work to the collapsed syphon at Yarkhill.

■ At Oxenhall the remains of one of the original lock quadrants (the paved area under the lock gate beam) had been discovered and

reinstated. Work was underway to extend our Horsefair Wharf depot.

■ Both excavators at Over had been taken out of service as no longer economical to run. Our dumper Dream Machine was performing well.

■ The Membership Secretary reported continuing growth in Membership with the 100th Life Member imminent - it was agreed to mark this in some way, yet to be decided. *[Decision made - see p.4.]*

■ There were delays in constructing the two new bridges in Hereford; the new road approach had been partly constructed.

■ Proposals for the new Interpretative Centre at Over were under discussion with Swan Hill Homes and their Architects and David Penny was liaising with interested parties.

■ The Trading Company reported a hectic time promoting the Canal, and the work of the Canal Trust, at various events. *[Report, p.9.]*

■ There was still no volunteer to take over the management of the monthly Social Events.

CRP

Who ?

"Hello, may I speak to David Pennyfeather please?" said the man on the 'phone from BBC Hereford & Worcester.

Who? "My piece of paper says it's David Pennyfeather that I should speak to ... the Council gave my colleague the name - it's about the two new bridges that are about to be built in Hereford".

Herefordshire Council had told the researcher that they needed to talk to "David Penny or his father"; scribbled down on a notepad this got translated into "Pennyfeather!".

The news bulletins all that day emphasised that two new canal bridges were being built in Hereford - where no canal had ever run before. *[Article on p.5]*

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View towards The Wharf with the Swan Hill Homes development proceeding apace. (David Penny)

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Panorama looking from the steps of our site offices (with the water still a foot to go). (David Penny)

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Our location is central for the Llangollen Canal, Cheshire Ring, 4 Counties Ring, Chester Branch and the Caldon Canal. No previous experience required. Group bookings and pets welcome.

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Trading Company Chairman, Brian Moul, stands alongside part of our display which attracted much interest, earlier in the year, in High Town, Hereford. (Janet Moul.)



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, 19th September

The Kennet & Avon Canal

Larry Crosier will give us an
illustrated talk about this important
inland waterway.

Tuesday, 17th October

The Rochdale Canal

When Brian Holden last came to
talk about this fascinating canal we
doubt that he would have anticipated
the current level of restoration activity!

Tuesday, 21st November

The Lichfield & Hatherton Canals

Closer to home this time - Bob
Williams will update us on the
latest progress on these waterways.

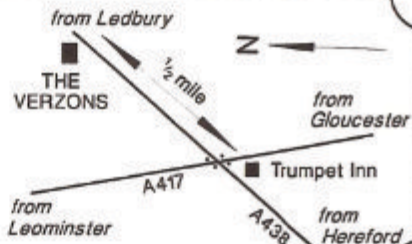
Advance notice: *Tuesday 19th December; Mark Baldwin of
M&M Baldwin, Publishers - a talk on "Canal Books"*

WANTED! We urgently require a new organiser for our monthly Social
Evenings - Barbara and Ray are having to stand down due to pressure
of their other commitments but are willing to assist the new volunteer/s.
Please contact Barbara or Ray on 01989 780 325.

*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*

Our Social Evenings venue is 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).

A warm welcome, plenty of parking
and approximately halfway along the
Canal from Hereford to Gloucester.



GRAND OPENING OF OVER WHARF

First Phase

Friday 29th September

at 1.00pm

by

Prunella Scales & Timothy West

from Carlton TV's *Waterworld*

Site open from 10am. Closes to the public at 5pm.

Admission £1 (Accompanied children 50p)

Many attractions including:-

Live Music

Morris Dancing

Boat Trips/Canoes

Traction Engine

Stalls

Home Made Refreshments

Photo Display of the Work

'Boaters Games' *[Saturday only - 2 to 4pm]*

OPENING CELEBRATIONS

continue on

Saturday 30th September & Sunday 1st October

SATURDAY: Site open from 10am. Closes to the public at 5pm.

SUNDAY: Site open from 11am. Closes to the public at 5pm.

Admission £1 (Accompanied children 50p)

*Attractions subject to change without prior notice - all times are approximate
Our thanks to Swan Hill Homes for their co-operation in staging this event*

Over BBQ

Sunday 3rd September

5.30pm see our progress - guided tours

6.30pm BBQ

£5 per person entry - free BBQ.

All profits to Canal Trust funds.

Advance Bookings ONLY. Please
'phone Liz Bailey (01452) 533 835

Please only park in designated parking areas.

HELP!

We need lots of volunteers to make the Opening Celebrations a success. By baking a cake (or two) and/or helping on site YOU can make the difference! For details of how you can help please see page 4.

Over Canal & River Walk

Sunday 8th October

Now for something completely different!

The weekend *after* the Over opening celebrations our Over correspondent/volunteer Nigel Bailey will lead a walk:

Depart from Over site at 11am prompt.
Follow the line of the H&G Canal as much as possible to Rudford. Continue to Hartpury.

Picnic provided at half-way point. Join

River Severn and walk beside the River, passing Maisemore Lock & weir. Return to Over via Telford's Bridge at about 3.30pm.

[Approximately 8.5 miles]

£5 per adult, £3 children, to include picnic.

All profits to Canal Trust funds.

Advance booking is ESSENTIAL
'phone Liz Bailey (01452) 533 835

*Please only park in designated parking areas.
Please wear suitable footwear and clothing for this walk!*

Sunday, 17th September

Our annual Open Day at Oxenhall - 10.30am to 4.30pm

Come along and see the changes since last year with guided walks along the Canal. See the progress on the restoration of the Listed House Lock and, if you have not been here before, take the opportunity to see the unique by-weir, fully restored thanks to the efforts of WRG and our own volunteers.

Display, sales stand and home made refreshments in the (refurbished) village hall.

Canal Trust Craft Fair

*Please support our very own Craft Fair.
An ideal opportunity to purchase that special gift!*

**Saturday, 18th November
at St. Katherine's Hall**

LEDBURY 10am to 4pm

Apart from a wide variety of crafts on sale there will be our own sales stand and display of restoration photographs.
Home-made cakes, filled rolls and other refreshments.

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Offers of home-made cakes, please, to Liz Connors, 01432 880 155

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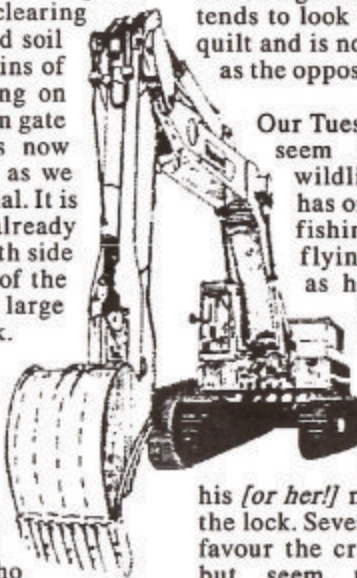
RESTORATION UPDATE

By Brian Fox, Nigel Bailey & David Penny

Brian Fox brings us up to date with progress at Oxenhall. As reported in the last edition we have completed the non towpath wall as far as the first ladder recess and to my eye it looks pretty tidy for a bunch of volunteers. The top has been finished with a random selection of flat stones for a width of about 3 feet which appears to be how the original lock was finished. On clearing some of the accumulated soil from this area the remains of the quadrant for walking on when opening the bottom gate were found and it has now been reinstated as near as we could guess to the original. It is similar to the quadrant already uncovered on the towpath side for the opening/closing of the top gate and consists of large pebbles edged with brick.

Work is once again continuing where we left off some months ago at the base of the towpath wall and this is now almost complete for about half its length. Those of you who have seen the lock will recall that the non towpath wall is virtually destroyed and we are rebuilding the whole thing almost from the base. We have a free hand when deciding the depth for each course of stone, within certain limits, and it is relatively easy to build and keep to a regular profile as we progress into the lock. But the towpath side is a different story, there being about 50% of the original stonework still in place, and we must fit all our new stonework in with the original. Each of the old stones has to be individually checked

to make sure that it is solid and not about to fall out as we endeavour to build up around it. Those stones which we leave are invariably eroded with often an inch or more of the original face missing and it becomes very difficult to determine the profile which we must work to if the lock is to be the same width as when built originally. The completed wall tends to look a bit like a patchwork quilt and is not such a satisfying job as the opposite wall.



Our Tuesday work parties don't seem to bother the local wildlife and a kingfisher has once again been spotted fishing in the lock and flying under the new bridge as he goes in and out. A grey wagtail is nesting in the wall of the lock just along from where we are working and our resident moorhen has once again built his [or her!] nest on the canal above the lock. Several bumblebees seem to favour the cracks in the lock walls but seem unconcerned at our presence and down by the Ell Brook a profusion of butterflies are clearly attracted by the growth of thistles, nettles etc in the area.

All in all a very pleasant environment and one which we are hopefully improving as we endeavour to restore further stretches of the canal and the lock. I hope those working down at Over stop to consider sometimes that they are not only moving earth and building walls to construct a haven for boats but are also creating a wonderful environment for all sorts

RESTORATION UPDATE . . . continued

of wildlife. Hopefully one day they will find the time to sit down and actually enjoy the benefits of their hard work!

Long weekends at Over are blurring into weeks so that we are working on site more days than not (*writes Nigel Bailey*).

Despite the soggy April weather we completed the brickwork on The Wharf's long arm and the straight section of the short arm. I did wonder if the top course of bricks on a wharf wall ought to be called the summit level! The main run of gabions has been completed and clay has been compacted behind them in the time-honoured way by having lots of people stamp about on it. The 20 tonne Keyway excavator, hired for 10 days (driven by our volunteers), did a sterling job clearing and profiling the canal at the back of the site and building the temporary dam which will mark the end of the canal for the time being.

Swan Hill's groundwork contractors suffered another break-in and suffered significant losses - the second time in 6 weeks. As a result a security firm is now on site which will also help protect our tools and materials.

Back in 1903 the architect of the Over hospital had a brilliant idea: to site the hospital's sewage works in the abandoned canal so that it would be cunningly hidden from view. His massive concrete sewage works has proved a stubborn obstacle. A few bits were nibbled off it during the Training Weekend last year. The Territorial Army had a bash at it, Jen

Leigh attacked it for a day with an excavator and Mr Hewden spent an evening lopping off more bits. Marcus Jones made great inroads despite a poorly pecker [*a 'Kango Hammer' type attachment for an excavator*] that insisted on leaking its hydraulic fluid. Finally, the TA returned and completed the job.

For the first weekend in May we expected a dozen members of Essex WRG to join us. London WRG topped up the numbers and 28 volunteers appeared - and in 56 "person days" you can get a lot done. During the weekend a milestone was achieved: the topsoil was put in place and levelled above the gabions so that grass seed could be planted along with a symbolic tree - it's a maple which I always thought was symbolic of Canada. Never mind. It's very rewarding every time something is actually finished.

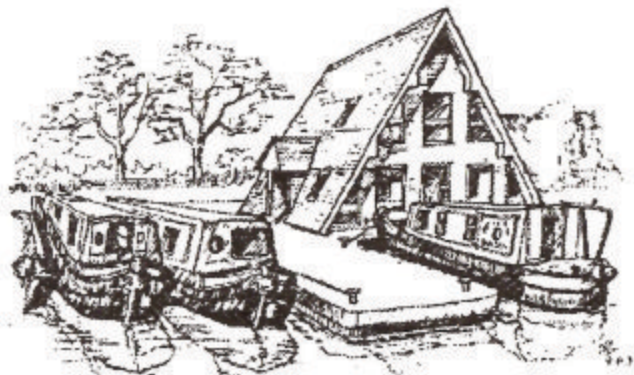
We held another successful Open Day in May and I think only one visitor was disappointed with her visit. She had misheard the announcement on Radio Gloucestershire and thought she was coming to a tour of the Isolation Hospital! The BBQ in June, and the Open Day in July, were also a huge success.

After one false start (because a few lazy bats were found still hibernating in the roof) the last of the ward blocks was about to be demolished. Cue: David Penny's latest cunning plan. If we could obtain some apple or potato boxes, the demolition contractors would be able to load the roof tiles, needed for

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RESTORATION UPDATE... continued

our restoration of the barn, straight into the boxes without us having to waste time handling the tiles at all.

Challenge: find 20 suitable boxes, dirt cheap

Result: Rob Keane at the Over Farm Market was happy to sell us some old ones for about a tenth of their price new.

Lesson learnt: it's much easier watching a man use a forklift to load potato boxes on to a lorry than it is to unload them by hand!

Subsidiary challenge: using the 8 potatoes found in the boxes, grow sufficient to feed the 100+ VIP visitors on Opening Day in September. We'll update you on Maggie's progress.

Before May was out, 40 mooring rings were concreted into place. Having backfilled behind the walls with crusher and spent many hours compacting it with a whacker, we were issued with shovels and told to dig it up! If anyone ever asks you to dig two-foot cubic holes in compacted rubble - refuse. It's not to be recommended. The holes were for setting the mooring rings in concrete and now, with the rings in place, the wharf walls look much more like wharf walls. We don't know the original design of rings so this design is unique to the H&G.

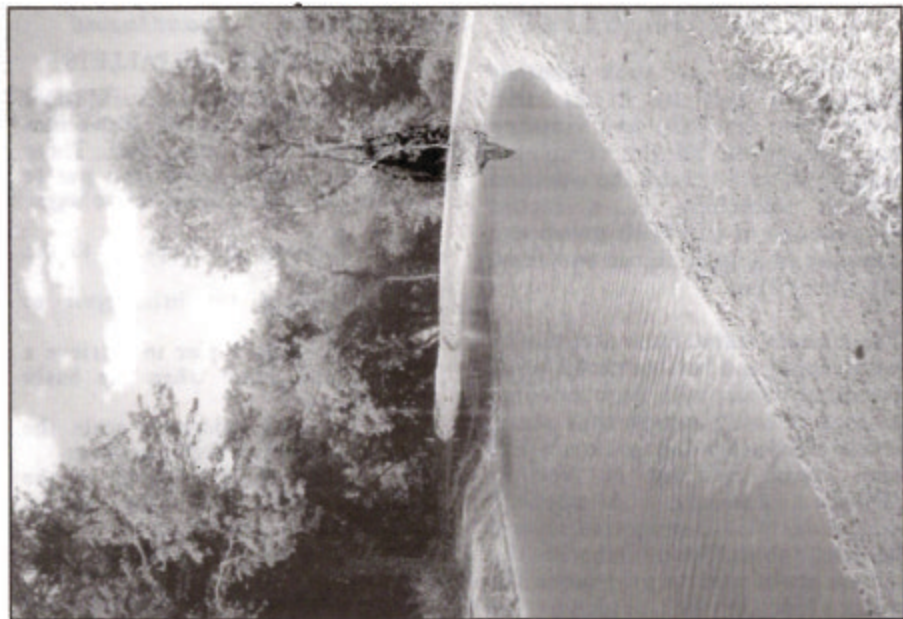
In early June Essex WRG completed the concrete pour on Panel 3, that's an extension to the short arm as it advances towards the lock. The grass planted over the gabions was looking very grass-

like, much to the approval of the local rabbits. In the middle of the month we started laying blue bull-nose bricks on the wharf walls and laying wood chippings on the towpath. The footings were also laid for the Feature Wall which will stand in front of the large chestnut tree we've been carefully working around since work on the site began. As well as acting as a retaining wall for the tree, this wall will display the opening day plaque and credits.

We've provided guided tours to groups as diverse as the Maisemore Local History Group and the Canal Postcard Collectors' Circle - and many more people have viewed progress on site on the Open Days and at the Barbecue.

We've built a brick bund for the diesel tank and as it grew in height it came to be called The Castle. Its design is based on principles first described in the Nineteenth Century by Charles Darwin: evolution. First it was to be four simple pillars to support the diesel tank over a bund which could contain any spilled fuel. It then sprouted four brick walls to hide the pillars. On its way it developed an arch to allow access (or possibly to allow the bricklayers to practise building arches). Finally, inspired by the gift of several thousand second-hand tiles, it developed a neat roof to keep out the rain. If we hadn't restrained our creative urges, it could easily have become the lighthouse suggested in *The Wharfinger*, Winter 1999. In 200 years time people will probably speculate about its function just as we have done with the "leggers' rest" at Oxenhall.

*“ if anyone
ever asks you
to dig two-foot
cubic holes in
compacted rubble
- refuse! ”*



ABOVE: Looking down the completed granite set slipway.
 BELOW: Looking towards the slipway - water levels still a foot to go.
 RIGHT: View from the far end of the towpath seen in the photo* above. (Davis Penny)



RESTORATION UPDATE... continued

In early July we took another delivery of bullnose bricks, still warm from the kiln and finished the copings on all the completed lengths of wall. I think the weekend marked something of a record because one of the WRG group had travelled to help us all the way from the Isle of Man.

There's been tremendous progress on landscaping and further profiling of the canal banks, with huge amounts of topsoil being moved into place, levelled and seeded. Anyone who has seen recent editions of *Navvies [WRG's national, bi-monthly, magazine]* will have spotted several limericks about Over, furthering the debate about how to pronounce the word. Not to be outdone, the following shows which way my vote goes:-

There was a young foreman at Over

Who decreed that the banks must be smoother.

"So pick them and spade them

And fork them and grade them,

Then finish them off with the Hoover."

David Penny now brings the report right up to date. By mid July Swan Hill had completed their new sewer under the corner by the lock so that we could complete the concrete foundations for the walls either side of the lock entrance. In late July/early August there were three week long WRG Camps in a four week period - with Canal Trust volunteers working all bar one evening in the intervening week! The first two weeks saw yet another excavator on site (at highly

WHAT USE ARE PALLETS?

I've mentioned pallets several times before in these reports. We've now scrounged more than 600. These versatile objects have been put to use in all sorts of imaginative ways:-

1. forming the steps up to the new site hut
2. decking for bricklayers to work from
3. building a pier to retrieve a submerged pump when the basin was flooded
4. a mini ladder to scale the wharf wall when laying copings
5. improvised steps up to the diesel tank after the ladder disappeared many times
6. additional supports for shuttering
7. platforms for painting the site hut
8. platforms for pointing the inside of The Castle
9. a table for the salads at the barbecue
10. stacked to form seating for outdoor lunch breaks
11. for elver fishermen to build their tumps - the platforms from which they fish
12. one of the more enterprising fisherman used them to build himself a shelter
13. dismantled, to provide timber for jobs such as packing gaps in the shuttering and filling expansion joints
14. handy surface for keeping open cement bags clear of the mud
15. stepping stones for crossing the basin when flooded
16. climbing in and out of The Castle
17. to protect a particularly dangerous drop into the water in the aqueduct
18. to keep the door of the old site hut closed
19. ... oh, and for stacking our reclaimed bricks.

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RESTORATION UPDATE... continued

discounted rates from Keyway Plant - *thank you*) and this enabled us to complete all the works to the Canal, its banks and the rest of the land bar the flood plain. On the last weekend, the Canal Trust team completed the re-profiling of the banks down to the flood plain to prepare the bank for woodland planting in the future and the flood plain for the recreation of a water meadow. The area also provided a copious supply of fertile topsoil for the banks of the Canal and the rear of the towpath. The excavation of the topsoil provides the essential additional flood storage to balance that lost in the areas that we have filled.

The other substantial task of the first week camp was to construct the 24 cubic metre reinforced concrete slab which spans the former aqueduct abutments above the line of Swan Hill's new sewer on the approach to the lock. On this first of the week-long WRG Canal Camps WRG's cook was prevented from coming by family illness so Liz Bailey and Sharon Bowden stepped in to provide evening meals - *thank you*.

The second week saw the curved brickwork for the lock approach reach half height on this slab, with the stop plank grooves inserted at the start of the lock narrows. *[Stop planks are heavy timbers placed*

vertically at a narrow point on a canal to act as a dam - Ed.] The feature wall brickwork (a retaining wall at the rear of the long limb of The Wharf) was started (and finished!) during the week - utilising some 6,500 bricks which had been immaculately cleaned by the Wednesday 'Chain Gang' over many previous weeks. This wall is everything that we hoped for and really sets off the horse chestnut tree (that we have worked so hard to retain at high level behind it) and the basin. One end of the wall has H & G and the other WRG in blue bricks. By the time of the opening of the first phase in September the middle section will have the formal plaques on it.

In the last edition, Brian Fox suggested The Chain Gang might be referred to as "The Wendy's"...



*Me - I'm pro FOX hunting.
Now, who is calling me
a Wendy?*

Week three saw the towpath side approach wall to the lock almost completed by the H&G brickies and the timber/concrete block back shuttering to the rear half built ready for the first backfill concrete pour, as well as many hundreds more bricks cleaned. For a change the 'Chain Gang' deserted brick cleaning

on the Wednesday and honed their landscaping skills in topsoiling the sides of the woodchip to the towpath through the wooded section at the far end of the site - another section then declared finished.

The final week saw a large turn-out from WRG with an equally large jobs list! To start (and finish) the slope of the slipway; to finish the



ABOVE: The entrance to the lock at the end of the short limb of The Wharf. Note the outfall for surface water from the Swan Hill site (close-up below). (Adapted by RIGHT: Maggie Jones holds up one of our mooring rings - see p.38. (David Pears)



RESTORATION UPDATE... continued

brickwork to the lock approach; to shutter the rear and concrete backfill the feature wall and install a land drain behind it; to complete all the topsoiling on site; to complete the laying of the woodchip towpath back to the slipway - and to generally make the site look shipshape and looking finished.

In the meantime Swan Hill's site is also advancing rapidly with the construction of the houses moving on apace and the Show House and gardens almost finished (it should be open by the time you read this). By some miracle Swan Hill and the Canal Trust have actually managed to co-ordinate the opening of the Show House and the completion of the Canal and we have delivered to Swan Hill everything that we promised by the legal deadline!

The next opportunity to visit the Over site is a BBQ on Sunday 3rd September - advance booking ESSENTIAL, please - see p.21. Of course there is also the formal opening ceremony on Friday 29th September - which continues with celebrations on the Saturday and Sunday [details on p.20.]. On the Friday night there is a BBQ/party on site for WRG/H&G - Members and supporters are welcome BUT advance booking is again ESSENTIAL; Liz Bailey [(01452) 533 835] (£5 per head).

Please do not come to the Over site at any other time; there is no public access to the Canal at present. Visitors disrupt work as they have to be escorted off the site. Please attend one of the publicised events.
Thank you.



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RESTORATION UPDATE... continued

We have successfully completed the First Phase at Over but there is plenty more to do! *To volunteer please 'phone for details.*

New volunteers: It is ESSENTIAL to 'phone BEFORE arriving on site. *Thank you.*

please call:-

Oxenhall:- Brian Fox (01432) 358 628

Over:- Paul Brown (01386) 443 826

Nigel Bailey (01452) 533 835

Brian Moulton (01432) 264 366

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. Permits must be available for inspection at any time. Failure to observe this invalidates insurance cover.

Our Corporate Members

We are very pleased to welcome our first ever Life Corporate Member:-

Eign Enterprises, Bridge Street, Hereford.

They join our existing Corporate Members whose continued support is appreciated:-

Messrs VE & JE Arnold, Hereford
Bartestree & Lugwardine Group Parish Council, Herefordshire
The Beeline Company, Wormbridge, Herefordshire
Black Prince Holidays, Stoke Prior
Blue Haven Marine, Rugby
Britannia Construction Ltd., Cheltenham
British Marine Industries Federation
H P Bulmer Limited, Hereford
Canal Craft (Brokerage) Ltd., Northamptonshire
Chicory Crops Ltd, Longhope
Drewe Insurance, Bewdley
Grist Mill Boatyard, Worcester
E B Hayward & Co., Ashleworth
Hereford City Library
MEB n'power
Michael Stimpson & Associates, Rickmansworth
Middlewich Narrowboats, Middlewich
Morbaine Limited, Widnes
Newage Transmissions Ltd
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Severn Valley Boat Centre
Starline Narrowboats, Upton upon Severn
Midland Canal Centre, Stenson
The Tewkesbury Marina Ltd., Tewkesbury
Worcester & Birmingham Canal Society

Please support the businesses of our Corporate Members whenever you can (*and, where appropriate, let them know that you are a Member*).

They're a Gift

Our Trading Company have commissioned well known waterways artist Garth Allan to paint Oxenhall Lock Cottage and House Lock to create a magnificent set of coasters and a scenic Christmas Card...

Of course, those of you who know the site will realise that we have not yet finished our work there. The Wrinklies (our regular Tuesday working party at Oxenhall) are pressing on with the reconstruction of the lock chamber before paddle gear and lock gates would even be contemplated. Hence the title of Garth Allan's watercolour is



"Oxenhall Lock, past, present and future". Coasters are £1.25 each (£1 for 6 or more); Christmas Cards cost £3 for a pack of 5 cards [Discounts available for large orders]. Mail order please add 10% to cover p&p. Penny Shetliffe would be pleased to receive your order - see 'Contacts' on inside back cover.



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Mr Prescott Saves The Day

Our Chairman, Brian Fox, reports on his valiant (and successful) efforts to persuade the Government of the error of their ways...

Those of you who are familiar with the Oxenhall site will no doubt have noticed the horticultural nursery immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary of the land which the Canal Trust owns. This is of considerable importance when considering future restoration of the canal as it would enable us to continue for some 250 metres beyond the Ell Brook aqueduct and link through to land owned by the County Council who support our restoration plans. Our medium term plans include extension of the restored canal across land which is under private ownership and any chance to acquire such land has to be seriously considered. It is the policy of the Trust that we will either own or have some sort of legalised access to any land which we are to work on - we will no longer work on land in private ownership as we have done in the past.

The strip of land in question follows the route of the old railway line, which was built over the top of the canal, and nowhere impinges onto the area of glasshouses. So it could be quite easily separated with no detriment to the operation of the nursery. The whole lot was purchased by the Department of Transport in 1992 as part of a corridor of land required for the proposed A40 trunk road improvements to bring the road up past Newent to an improved junction on the M50 at Gorsley.

In 1994 the plans were scrapped and a start was made selling all the land acquired for the road improvements back to the original owners. As a result of talks with the tenant, Mr. Sinclair, over the intervening years

he had verbally agreed to sell the land required for the canal restoration to the Canal Trust at a price to be negotiated. I don't know the reason but it has taken 6 years to offer it to the original owner who did not want the land back and it was then offered to Mr. Sinclair. However, in March this year it was decided to put the whole plot on the open market and, as Chairman, I felt I had to write immediately to the Highways Agency (part of the DETR) to register our interest and asking if they would be prepared to split it and sell us the land required for the canal restoration.

On April 3rd I received a terse reply saying that they were not prepared to split the the plot and the whole lot would be sold by auction. There didn't seem to be much more we could do but as a last resort I felt I should write to the MP for the Newent area, Diana Organ, outlining our case and asking if she could help.

Early in May the property was advertised for sale at auction by Smiths of Newent on June 28th. In mid May, I received a letter from Diana who I then 'phoned to discuss the latest developments - and she went away promising she would "see what she could do".

Upon scrutinising the glossy brochure advertising the sale it became clear that there was no mention whatsoever of the canal and that the line was protected through the nursery from any development (remember all those letters that were sent to the Forest of Dean DC in 1994?). Smiths said they were unaware of any canal restoration

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Mr Prescott Saves The Day

proposals and that they were only acting on their clients instructions - but they did promise to check with the FODDC.

Mid June and still no news from Diana's office - the prospects of the Trust acquiring the land did not look good and then, on June 26th (2 days before the sale), I rang Smiths to be told that the plan from FODDC showed that the canal was not protected at this point! What chance had we got now? I rang Diana but she was not available.

On Tuesday 27th our Oxenhall work party continued as usual - there didn't seem to be much more to be done anyway, but then up steps our saviour, Mr. Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister, who announced in Parliament that *"it's a scandal that canals are seen as a liability and not an asset."* This was as a result of the White Paper recently published by the Department of the Environment entitled **Waterways For Tomorrow** which outlines the case for integrated transport. This just happened to be featured on the national news that evening and in the press the next day (June 28th).

It immediately raised the question in my mind - how can he make such a statement and then permit one of his own departments to sell off a piece of land which is essential for canal restoration? At about 10.00am that day I rang Diana's office stating my grievance, particularly in view of what Mr. Prescott had said the day before - and pointed out that the sale was that evening at 6.30pm. I had made my point and didn't really expect too much but it seems that I had finally found some ammunition which positively fortified our case.

I have since learned that Diana's office immediately rang the office of the DOT and got hold of a fairly senior official who was persuaded to give serious thought to the implications of JP's speech and its effect on our particular case. The end result was that at about 11.00am he instructed the Highways Agency to withdraw the nursery from the sale that evening pending investigation into the Canal Trust's case. After going through all the necessary channels the news finally got to Smiths Auctioneers at 3.30pm who, to put it mildly, were not too pleased. I was finally informed on my callminder of the decision just before 6.00pm by which time I had already left to observe the sale in Newent.

You will not be surprised to learn that there were also a few prospective bidders in the saleroom who were none too pleased. The representative from the Highways Agency, together with the Auctioneer, briefly explained the situation. After beating a dignified retreat I was asked if I would take the representative from the Highways Agency, and their property consultant, for a tour of the nursery site and our adjacent land which I duly did, presenting our case and hopefully demonstrating how crucial the nursery site is to our future restoration plans.

The Canal Trust cannot thank Diana Organ's office enough for their support in this matter - and my faith in our political system has been restored. We now have a short time to catch our breath while we wait for the next move by the DETR who will hopefully offer the canal land to the Trust once a price has been decided.

Mr Prescott Saves The Day

But this, of course, is not the end of the story. It does leave us with some unanswered questions and crucial decisions to make if we are to bring this story to a successful conclusion.

We are already in consultation with the FODDC to correct the formal Proposals Map which omitted this short (but important) section of the Canal despite the protection that we successfully obtained for the route of the Canal in their Local Plan. But

more importantly we must be ready, should the canal be offered to the Trust, to come up with the finance required to purchase as well as paying legal fees etc.

We understand that there are proposals to put the nursery back on the market in the autumn, hopefully without the bit we need attached. We have won the first battle but that is not the end of it - we need to be ever vigilant.

PLEASE SPONSOR A MOORING RING AT OVER

As reported in *Restoration Update*, volunteers have installed over 30 mooring rings around The Wharf at Over. As with everything at Over high standards have been maintained. The mooring rings were especially forged for us to a unique robust design to give many years of use! Unfortunately they cost £25 each. *[Photo p. 31]*

One of our visitors to the site shortly after installation immediately paid for one - and suggested that we get the rest sponsored. Each donors name will be recorded on site (maximum 30 characters).

OR A TREE

Alternatively, if you would prefer to support us with this autumn's tree planting programme then why not sponsor a specimen tree to be planted opposite The Wharf?
Each tree, stake and tie costs £75.

Each donors name will be recorded on site (max. 30 characters).

OR A BENCH!

If a mooring ring, or a tree is not attractive then why not a bench? £150 buys a bench complete with a plaque on it to record the donors name plus a short dedication (if required) - 100 characters maximum.

Please send a cheque for the appropriate amount to our Treasurer Liz Connors, 18 St. Ethelbert Close, Sutton St. Nicholas, Hereford, HR1 3BF. Unless you state that you are not a tax payer, or that you do not wish us to do so, each donation will be accepted under the new Gift Aid rules *[see page 8.]* Please also enclose your full name and address (and telephone number in case of queries) together with details of how you wish your donation to be recorded. *Thank you.*

[not quite] The Last Page


The next edition of **The Wharfinger** will contain a report and photographs of the official opening ceremony to mark the successful completion of Phase 1 of the Over Project. This marks the culmination of a great deal of hard work by many people within and outside the H&G Canal Trust and is a major step in our work towards the complete restoration/reconstruction of the Canal. If you are not a Member then please do join us - you will be most welcome and your support is of great importance to us. If you are already a Member then our repeated thanks for your support - *it is not taken for granted!*

A (repeated) plea for help. We are still looking for a volunteer (or a couple) who would take over the role of Social Secretary from Barbara and Ray Moses. As stated on the Social Events page [p.19] Barbara and Ray are more than willing to assist - in fact we know that they have gone some way towards arranging yet more speakers. Please give them a call to discuss what is involved; as with everything that we do it requires some effort for it to happen - please don't assume that it will continue without any volunteer effort 'behind the scenes'!

Our repeated thanks to our advertisers for their ongoing support - which means more of our funds go towards restoration. Please do support them whenever you can - *and where appropriate, please do let them know that you are a Member!*

Our great appreciation to Paddy Roach, the Regional Director of **RMC Aggregates Western**, for the recent delivery to Over of a considerable number of free loads of sand and gravel (*just when our budget ran out!*). It enabled the completion of a very significant quantity of hand mixed concrete for the backing to the lock approaches, and the feature wall; provided the bedding to the cobbles to the slipway; and the surface to The Wharf. *Our sincere thanks.*

Forest of Dean pump manufacturers **Stirling Fluid Systems** loaned us one of their eight inch 'research & development' pumps to fill the Canal at Over; *once again, many thanks!* At the time of writing the Canal is a quarter full and rising!

Please complete the Gift Aid form (loose insert) - a few moments (and a stamp) is of considerable assistance to our finances. *Thank you.* 

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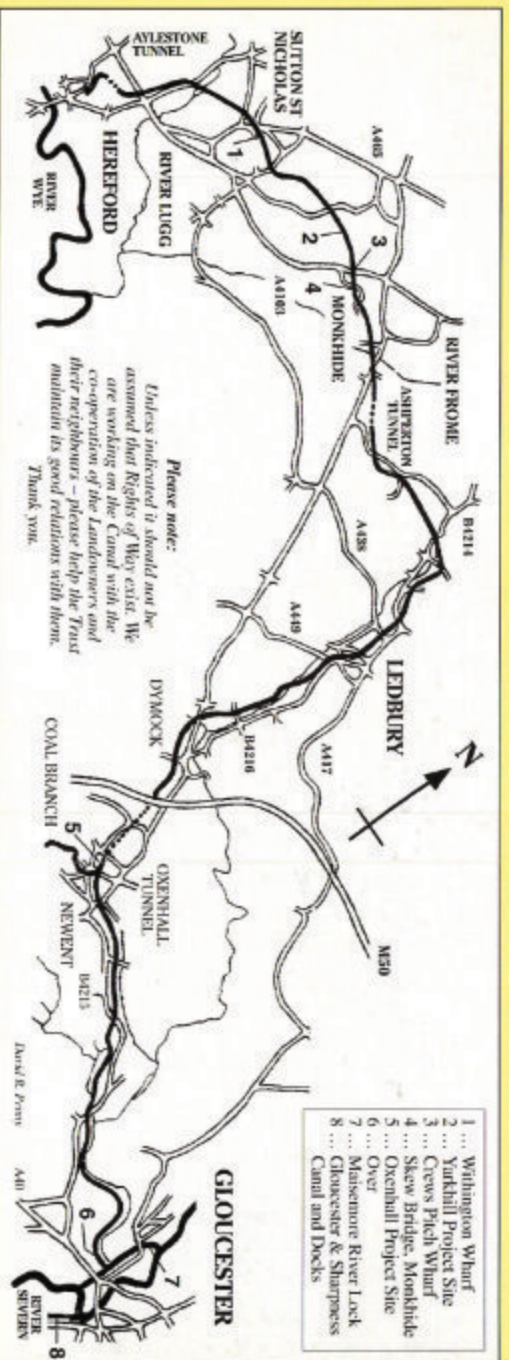
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The Canal Society was formed in 1983 and replaced in 1992 by the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust, a registered charity. The Trust has an ordinary and corporate membership exceeding 700 from all over the country – and abroad! Our objective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