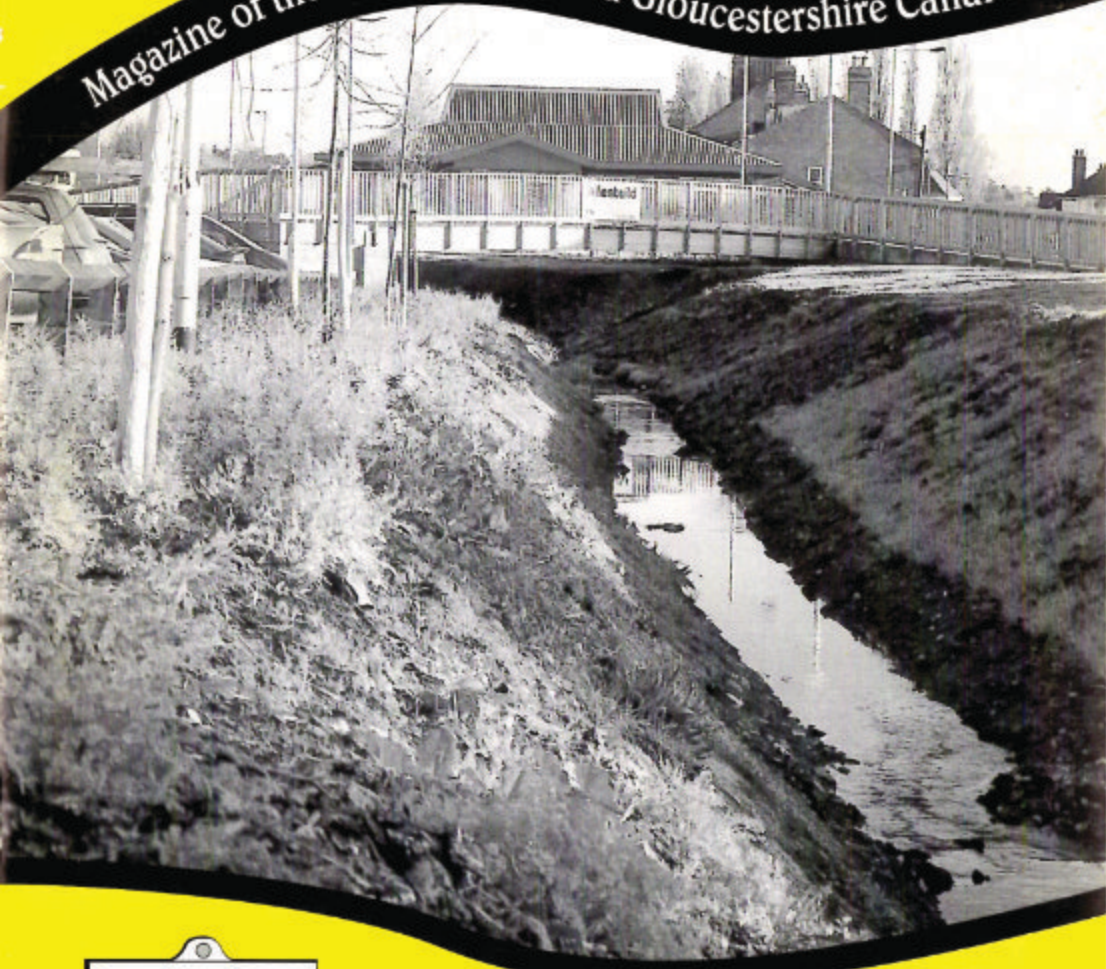


The **Wharfinger**

Magazine of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust



Autumn 2001

50p
free to members



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FRONT COVER: The new 13m span footbridge at Hereford Retail Park over the future Canal corridor.

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AN EXCELLENT START

by Cliff Penny

Our new H&G Restoration Fund, first mentioned in the last edition of **The Wharfinger** has got off to an excellent start. By making a regular payment to this dedicated fund our Members will enable our volunteers to continue to achieve very significant amounts of restoration at a fraction of the commercial cost. The maintenance of physical progress is vital to our ongoing discussions with external bodies regarding the restoration of the whole Canal.

Despite a great deal of hard work 'behind the scenes' by our Treasurer, and our fund-raising team, budgets are exceedingly restricted at present. The continuing growth in commitment to the Restoration Fund is a real encouragement to those volunteers toiling away with both pen and spade! If you have not already supported us in this manner further details are on page 10.

Meanwhile, our sincere thanks to the founding contributors to the **H&G Restoration Fund**.

A GOOD CHANGE?

Thank you to the many Members and supporters who have made very favourable comments on the new look for **The Wharfinger**. Your team worked hard to meet the print deadline and are

striving for even higher standards as the issues go by! Our particular thanks to one Member, who also is the Editor of another inland waterway organisation's magazine, who promptly sent an e-mail saying

"Cliff,

You certainly know how to make a chap miserable. I have recently taken over the editorship of the quarterly magazine of our Canal Society. I have revamped it, added pictures, colour on the front, produce it with the latest technology and even sent it to the printers by wire. I then allowed myself a moment of self-satisfaction before beginning the next edition.

*But as I am starting, what comes through the letterbox but the summer edition of **The Wharfinger**. What brilliance, what imagination in design, what typographical artistry, what compositional genius, what good reading! What is this? Are they trying to put the rest of us out of business?*

My heartiest congratulations on a stunning publication. Let the IWA give you the prize for the best society magazine and let the rest of us return to our misery!"

SNAIL MAIL

We are currently liaising with Royal Mail over the appalling service that we received when the last edition of **The Wharfinger** was posted. Our postal team take the enveloped copies, all neatly boxed, to the main sorting office

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in Hereford where we pay for them to be franked – by, according to the receipt, 'Royal Mail Priority Services'. Perhaps we should be talking to Trading Standards in respect of misrepresentation. We know that some took a week to arrive – *priority* indeed!

Talking of the post, Dr Ian Roper (leader of our postal Team) is anxious to expand the list of volunteers who assist with the quarterly task of 'stuffing' **The Wharfinger** into the envelopes to cope with the ever-increasing numbers! This vital 'behind the scenes' role is one where the saying "*many hands make light work*" definitely applies – and a few more names on his list would assist at times of holiday or illness. Anyone living in, or within a few miles of Hereford, (as that's where it is printed and despatched) who would be willing to assist from time to time – just a couple of days 4 times a year – is asked to contact Heather Worth on 01432 270 552.

CANAL CAMP SUCCESS

Our very own Canal Camp made excellent progress on the first stage of constructing the new pumping station wet well shaft, at Over, in June. As reported on page 20, this was made possible by generous assistance from a number of organisations and (as always) the dedicated efforts of our own volunteers. As with so much of our work at Over, the scale and complexity of this construction would be a challenge for a professional construction firm so our congratulations to everyone involved.

A vital piece of plant in use during the Canal Camp was our own 18 tonne Volvo articulated dumper – which last saw (very active) service during the excavation of Over Basin – and just managed

to last out until the job was finished! Thanks to the staff and apprentices at the Defence Storage and Distribution Depot at Ashchurch (some 14 miles from Over) this has been virtually totally rebuilt - a fantastic achievement for which we are very grateful. The full story is on page 26.


NO ENTRY!

Hardly a week goes by without someone visiting the Over site and being disappointed that they are unable to see what progress has been made. As we have stressed in every issue since work started *there is no public access to the towpath at present* other than on one of the (now very regular) **Open Days** [for details see page 19].

We have an active construction site where Health & Safety considerations are paramount. When work is not under way the access is locked for safety and security reasons. Your understanding and co-operation is greatly appreciated, *thank you*.

GRAND HOLIDAY DRAW

As Members and supporters know, this is one of our major fund-raising initiatives each year. The winning tickets will be drawn at the National Waterways Festival, Milton Keynes, on August Bank Holiday Monday. If you have not already done so please return sold ticket stubs and money to our Treasurer, Liz Connors (*address on inside back cover*), without delay.

To everyone who has bought (and sold!) tickets - and to the holiday prize donors and **nPower** our print sponsors - our sincere thanks.  **CRP**

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COMMITTEE *matters*



Tony Austin-Bailey reviews three Council of Management meetings so that our Members and supporters are kept up to date...

APRIL COMMITTEE

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Dr Robin Andrews. Robin was the catalyst for the formation of the original H&G Canal Society, and he was one of its founder members as well as its first Chairman. It was fitting, therefore, that three more of our earliest Members, Nigel Jefferies, Mike Potts and John Startin, should represent the Trust at his funeral. *[There was a tribute to Robin in the last edition.]*

Council decided that the Highways Agency should be reminded that the local Planning Authority had designated land at 'The Willows' for canal purposes and should be informed that we felt that the price they were asking was excessive. They would also be advised that we would resist any plans for developing the site if they incorporated the 'canal land', or involved obtaining Change of Use approval. The Agency would be advised that the Forest of Dean District Council had written to the Canal Trust to confirm that the route of the Canal was protected through the site. Also that we would monitor to ensure full disclosure of planning constraints if any attempt was made at resale.

Despite missing the Tractor Show at Malvern, and possibly other events if the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak

continued, we anticipated that we would end the financial year in the planned position.

The Over Business Plan was expected to be before Council in May. Tewkesbury BC are expected to approve plans for the lock cottage replacement (Highways Agency objections had been withdrawn, withdrawal by Environment Agency was likely in the near future).

Will Frecknall, as Chairman of Council, reiterated the need for a chairman of the Canal Trust; it was agreed, however, that experience had shown that such a person should come from within Council, if possible. Accordingly, it was decided that every effort should be made to interest new Members in the work of Council, including contacts at our social evenings.

New Trading Company products aimed at Over were introduced. Until Boats Group can undertake work on the trip boat it will be used in the form adopted for the Over reopening.

The 3rd edition of David Bick's book hopefully to be published next year will include a section on restoration progress.

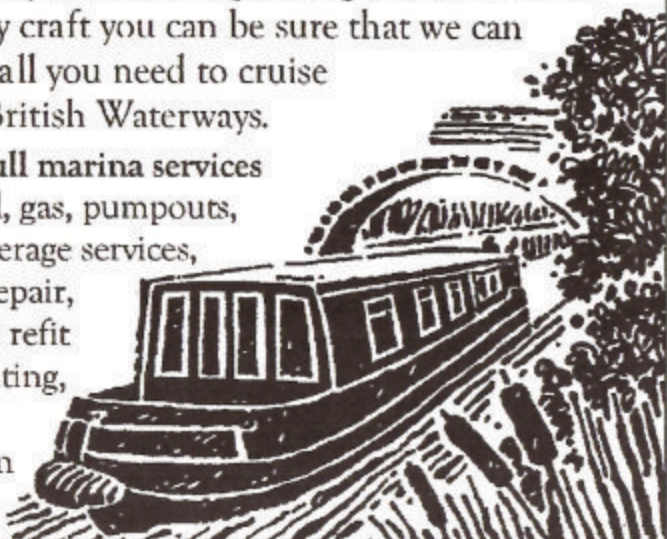
MAY COMMITTEE

'The Willows' - Excellent letter from Diana Organ MP to Lord Whitty. Highways Agency to be chased for a

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reply to our letter.

Will Frecknall to chair the AGM because our Vice President, Robert Barnes, will be unable attend.

The Treasurer stressed the importance of her being notified of any work site or venue injury, in order that the Canal Trust be protected in the event of a claim. Injuries to now not only be entered in the statutory accident report book but also reported to the Treasurer.

Two trading events have been cancelled owing to the foot and mouth disease outbreak, two more are likely. Efforts are being made to find alternative venues; so far two have been found.

A volunteer has been approached to replace Elizabeth Lloyd, who is relinquishing publicity work. Brian Fox was asked to co-ordinate all publicity.

JUNE COMMITTEE

This was a special meeting called to discuss the Over Business Plan prepared by David Penny, Nigel Bailey and Philip Marshall.

Subject to the Environment Agency withdrawing their objection (which is anticipated shortly) Tewkesbury Borough Council Officers had delegated authority to grant Planning Permission for the new building, The Wharf House.

In principle, Council of Management approved the concept of the uses within the proposed building.

David Penny and Nigel Bailey were authorised to continue external discussions in order to seek further advice and assistance for the Canal Trust.

◆ **TA-B**

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RESTORATION



fund

For 18 years the Trust has been restoring this historic canal at Monkhide in Herefordshire, at Oxenhall and, most recently, at Over just west of Gloucester. About four miles of the original 34 are now back "in water".

Our ultimate aim is to recreate the canal between the two cities, providing new opportunities for walkers, cyclists, boaters and all lovers of the countryside, as well as boosting tourist income along the route.

Over the next few years we have very ambitious plans for restoration which will require money as well as volunteers' time. Currently we are dependent on income from Trust membership and donations and from fundraising events. We are seeking grant funding but the uncertainty of successfully winning any bids makes budgeting and planning extremely difficult.

For the equivalent of half a pint of beer a week or a Sunday paper, you could help progress projects such as:



Restoring the lock and historic stone barn at Over



Completing the restoration of House Lock at Oxenhall



Purchasing land to enable restoration of further sections of canal.



We have therefore introduced the **Restoration Fund**. We invite members and supporters to contribute a small, regular payment each month which will help finance specific projects.

HOW IT WORKS:

- ◆ Contributors pay a minimum of £3 per month by Standing Order. Gift Aid can enhance this at no cost to the contributor
- ◆ Annually, The Wharfinger will report how the money has been spent
- ◆ Annually, we will invite contributors to an exclusive social event at an H&G restoration venue that has progressed during the previous year for a talk and/or tour and a buffet meal.



***Thank you
for your
support***

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We are very busy drumming up support for the Restoration Fund (details of how YOU can help are on previous page). We've had lots of positive response about displaying the leaflets from several sources, including the Worcester and Birmingham Canal Society, The Droitwich Canal Trust, The National Waterways Museum, and Maisemore Parish Magazine. Other sources of help are actively being pursued. We are particularly grateful for the support of other Canal Societies, and hope that our getting together will be of mutual benefit.

If you have not already done so please consider supporting the Restoration Fund - a regular income to the H&G Canal Trust will mean so much more can be planned and we will be able to take advantage of various grant opportunities that require reciprocal funding.

If you know of any organisation that would be willing to circulate leaflets to their supporters/members please let me know - by phone 01452 713 280 or, preferably, by email: janegreeneyes99@aol.com

◆ *Jane Jones*

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RESTORATION

Update!



Photo: Brian Fox

▲ The Coal Branch now rewatered by Nigel Freeman of the Lock Cottage at Oxenhall.

PROGRESS AT OXENHALL

I was accused of being depressed in the last edition of *The Wharfinger*, which made me sit back and think, and I suppose it is true to a certain extent. It is now about 9 months since we did any substantial work on the lock and it is difficult to keep the enthusiasm going and find useful work to do in the meantime. However, our team is itching to get on with it again now that some decent weather is here and they are still rolling up on Tuesday mornings pointing trowels at the ready! We actually got a chance to use them one week when we went down to Over where they are still finding plenty to do including walls that aren't finished.

Progress has however been made in other areas and we now have stockpiles of stone coming out of our ears including the load from Over. This has been under water for much of the winter but was

duly delivered by Nigel Bailey with the help, once again, of Simon Hayward's truck. The stone was a swap for all of the unused sections of our 'Bailey' bridge which had been stored at Oxenhall plus a couple of bits which were purloined from the existing bridge. The bridge over the lock at Over is now complete so we now have two complete and functioning bridges made from our original acquisition of one. If you can't work that out then ask David Penny how he did it!

We do have other progress to report on canal restoration and that is about 400 metres which has now been rewatered. I am cheating a bit here because about 300 metres of it is the Coal Branch at Oxenhall which has been restored by Nigel Freeman who lives in Lock Cottage and also owns that bit of the Coal Branch. I reported in edition 69 that a start had been made but that excess water was overflowing the bank and running away down the field. This has

now been rectified and a further length recut so that the Branch is now complete to within 100metres of the road below the church. It is filling with water naturally from springs in the bank and by mid July had made it to the top of the newly constructed spillweir.

The other 100 metres of rewatered canal is the length which was cleaned out by Tom Bennett back in the winter just above the aqueduct where the Bailey bridge is at Oxenhall. The dredged soil was used to build up the towpath bank to original level but the non towpath bank was just cleared of vegetation and not rebuilt to full height. With the onset of summer it was thought advisable to put some water back in which would serve to keep the puddle clay wet and stop growth of unwanted vegetation on the banks and bed. This has now been done so that water level reaches to the top of the non towpath bank which means that it is about half the original depth - but it looks more like a canal and is some reward for the efforts on this section.

Excavations have also been taking place to trace any remains of the lock below the one we are restoring and on the same level as the pound mentioned above. We already knew that the walls had been totally demolished by the Railway Company when they closed the canal and built the railway in 1882 but it was possible that the bottom of the lock was untouched. If it was of the same construction as the one we are rebuilding then the bottom was made from bricks laid on end but so far we have found absolutely nothing but a few loose stones. We have determined that the top sill is almost certainly destroyed and we are now working down towards the bed of the main chamber but finding it hard going just with shovels!

The prospects of the public footpath through the site opening again soon are not good but we have been informed by the County Council that they have no objection to us working on the lock as we own the land and it is part of an ongoing project. The local farmers are quite happy that we do the work, in fact Nigel Freeman can't wait for us to get back to make some progress and move our lifting tripod from his view out of the lounge window. His dog Jack will also be overjoyed at the thought of all those titbits every Tuesday for lunch. I hope that those members of the Wrinklies team who have taken time off over the last few months will now show their faces again and report for duty, trowels and hard hats at the ready.

The circumstances at Yarkhill are quite different and we shall have to wait until all F & M restrictions are lifted before going in again.

I must record our thanks to Colin/Charlie Cavanagh for the work he has done over the winter in making a new trailer for the ride-on mower. This means that it can be stored at his house where it should be safer and he can hook it on the back of his car to go to Oxenhall or Over as necessary. Colin answered one of our pleas for volunteers last year and, although he has severe arthritis, he found that grass cutting, plus maintenance of the mower, suited him down to the ground - literally! Why not volunteer yourself- we may have just the job for you?

I have nothing I can report on the sale of the Newent nursery site except to say that events are now moving towards a climax and there should be something to report next time.

◆ BF



Photo: Mike Hunt

Charlie Cavanagh cuts the grass along the towpath at Over

OVER UPDATE

As we moved into summer the grass sown around the Basin grew at amazing speed, outpacing the appetites of the normally voracious local rabbits. By May we were facing the serious problem of how to keep it in check. Charlie Cavanagh has been mowing the more accessible parts with his "sit-upon" mower, a donated petrol strimmer came into its own on the steep bank above the feature wall, and most recently, a donated Flymo (thank you, very much indeed, Member Tim Boddington) has also played its part.

The Gloucester and District Model Boat Club have continued to join us on open days, providing an interesting extra attraction for our visitors. On a series of Thursday evenings the Basin was put to another use; training youngsters to handle canoes. The ADJ Canoe Club trained a dozen scouts from Newent to attain their British Canoe Union One Star Awards. The lads clearly had great fun and learnt how to behave safely on the water.

The Club also joined us on an open day to offer free "taster" lessons although

this arrangement nearly went wrong. Due to a mix-up in dates, the Club had arranged a day out canoeing on the Grand Union Canal. Jim Duck luckily spotted our advert for the lessons in The Gloucester Citizen and phoned to ask "Is that our Club you're expecting?" Fortunately, he was able to persuade two instructors to forego their day out and join us - so thanks very much Brian and John.

A lot of time has been taken up preparing for our June Canal Camp. At the back of the site we completed the clearance of the Mill Race. At the front we had to remove about 40 substantial blocks of red sandstone from around the Lock Keeper's cottage. These were probably part of the original lock but had been removed many years ago to block up the entrance to the cellar (or, more accurately, mule stables). This was an

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Photo: Mike Hunt

Wednesday volunteers inspect the "Wendy House" (top) and work on the "Rabbit Hutch" (bottom).



Photo: Mike Hunt

instantly think of a way to make money out of the situation and simply blurted out "Yes".

Knowing how we like to build unusual brick structures you will not be surprised to learn that we are nearing the completion of two more: 'The Wendy House' and 'The Rabbit Hutch'. These are actually service huts hiding access to the ducting that will carry services around the wharf. Built with re-cycled red bricks, with arched wooden doors and blue brick roofs, they look very attractive. You'll know which one is The Wendy House - it's the one which will eventually feature the plaque thanking all those who have sponsored mooring rings, benches, corner stones and trees.

attempt by the last occupant, David Davies, to prevent the cellar from flooding. We shipped the stone to Oxenhall where Brian Fox's team will use it in the lock restoration.

The last-Sunday-in-the-month open days have proved successful. The continuing surprise is the number of local Gloucester people who look around with interest and then say that they did not know anything was here. If anyone is able to help us with publicity, especially as we plan next year's activities, please get in touch. Another surprise occurred on a sunny Sunday, which was not at the end of the month. An elderly couple approached and asked if they could have their picnic on the towpath. I was too taken aback to

The Wednesday Crew have spent a lot of time improving the entrance to the site. They have extended both ends of the 'Bailey' bridge with additional steel sections, improved the profile of the slopes of the bridge approach and neatened the shape of the bank by the notice board. They've also continued the seemingly endless job of picking & palleting bricks from the heaps temporarily stored on the floodplain. They've also serviced many of our items of plant such as the cement mixer and the dumper known as 'Dream Machine'. Jim Duck has worked on yet another donated small generator - thank you, very much indeed, Member John Jones.

◆ NB

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OVER

Strawberry Fair

Thanks to a dedicated band of volunteers, the Canal has been open to the public on the last Sunday of the month since March - and will be on Sunday 26th August and Sunday 30th September - from 10am-5pm.

Good weather contributed to the success of the July Open Day at which we served Over Farm strawberries with ice-cream (which was truly soft scoop by the end of the day)! As usual the model boat club was out in force and a local canoe club, offering taster sessions for both adults and children, proved popular. One of our site huts now looks very smart containing (for each Open Day) sales items, refreshments and displays of the Canal at Over from 1998 to the present day.

Mister Maysey, our trip boat, with Maggie Jones and Roy Jamieson at the helm, provided a tour of the Canal from a different perspective and our knowledgeable guides ensured that no questions were left unanswered.

If you would like to see the latest developments at Over please pop in on the last Sunday at the end of August or September. If you can help, by donating a cake or helping on the day with refreshments or sales, we would be very pleased to hear from you. Please do remember, however, that due to safety and security requirements access is NOT possible at other times.

Many thanks to everyone who has supported us and helped to raise a little more money for the Canal Trust. ♦ **EB**

NEW from THE TRADING COMPANY

NEW PRODUCTS FROM OUR SALES COUNTER



STATIONERY

Tastefully designed writing paper, A4 size, showing in the top left hand corner, a "dream view" of the lock approach at Over Basin. Each pack contains 10 sheets as above, plus 10 envelopes. **Price per pack £2.50 plus postage and packing** (if sent by mail) Quotations can be supplied for larger quantities of the letter paper. Available from Penny Shetliffe.

FRAMED PRINTS OF OVER BASIN

We have been given permission by the owner, to reproduce Edward Smith's oil painting of Over Basin in the mid 19th century. The artist shows a view of the wharf and lock, with the Cathedral Tower in the distance.



The print is available in either mounted form or framed at: -
Print £12 (36 X 28 mm), Mounted £18 (50 X 40 mm) or Framed £35

Meet the H&G Bears



Harry from
Hereford

George from
Gloucester



Oliver from
Over

What should we
call our brother
from Oxenhall?

These bears, each kitted out with a smart H&G CT sash (in Trust colours) are available from our travelling sales stand, Over Days, or directly from our Stock Controller, Penny Shetliffe (see Contacts - inside back cover).

Price each £1.80 plus postage and packing (if sent by mail).

**WIN one of the
H&G Bears**

— see page 29

CARRIED AWAY!

By the time this edition of The Wharfinger goes to press The Trading Company will be able to provide customers at our Sales Stand with smart plastic carrier bags in which to take away their purchases. This has been made possible thanks to the generosity of River Canal Rescue who are supporting the H&G Canal Trust by sponsoring this marketing aspect. The carrier bags will be printed in our house colours (black printing on yellow bags) "River Canal Rescue Ltd support The Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust". Under this statement will be our copyright motto "Working together in the present, to revive the past and secure a better future"



Stephanie from River Canal Rescue hands over the cheque for the sponsored carrier bags to Penny Shetliffe at The Boat Show at Crick

SOCIAL EVENINGS

Monthly Gatherings at The Verzons

by Janet Moulton

EVERYONE IS WELCOME to our monthly meetings held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month and hosted by our "Master of Ceremonies" Lloyd Jones.

SEPTEMBER 18TH 7.30pm for 8pm start

Monmouthshire & Brecknockshire Canal

After the Llangollen Canal the Mon & Breck must be one of the most picturesque in the country – **Larry Crosier is our guide.**

OCTOBER 16TH 7.30pm for 8pm start

Watercolour painting of the canals

With **Garth Allan** – You've bought our Christmas/greetings cards and coasters (*we hope!*) – come and meet the artist!

NOVEMBER 20TH 7.30pm for 8pm start

Herefordshire Nature Trust

Our annual nature evening. Paul Weir brings the fascinating world of nature to the comfortable surroundings of The Verzons.

DECEMBER 18TH 7.30pm for 8pm start

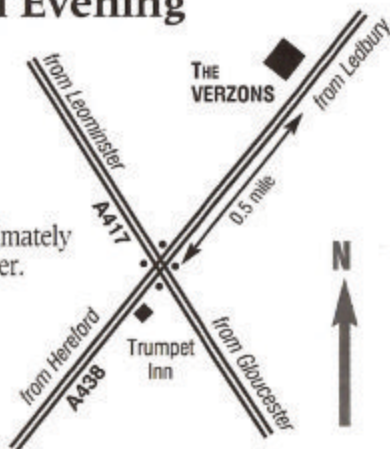
Christmas Social Evening

Meetings are held at **The Verzons Inn**, Trumpet, nr. Ledbury 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.

Janet has gone to a lot of trouble to organise a superb range of social evenings – please support them – everyone is welcome!

Any queries, or ideas for speakers, to Janet on 01432 264366



OVER OPEN DAYS

SUNDAY, 30TH SEPTEMBER, 10AM – 5PM

One year since the Over Basin was reopened
we invite you to join us on the

First Anniversary!

An opportunity to have a guided tour of Over Basin to see
this years progress. Enjoy some home made refreshments.

Rides aboard Mister Maysey • Meet the Model Boat Club

Learn to canoe
qualified instructors will be offering free taster canoe lessons

Hot Dogs & Burgers (12-2pm)

Other Attractions

Car Parking at Over

IMPORTANT PLEASE!

The Canal Trust Car Park is not yet ready for visitors to the Over site. Until it has been completed later this year, please do not park on the Over site (*disabled excepted*).

We have made arrangements with the nearby **Over Farm Market** (*thank you yet again Rob*) for our visitors to park there. Please park on the extremities of the car park, leaving plenty of room for customers to park closer to the shop. Your custom at the shop would also be appreciated! *Thank you.*

*All profits to the
Canal Trust Funds.*

LAST OPEN DAY THIS YEAR

FREE ENTRY

SUNDAY, 9TH DECEMBER, 11AM – 4PM

Boat trips to Santa's Grotto

£2 per child to take the trip boat to meet Santa (*parents free*).

Gifts for sale • Guided Tours • Refreshments.

Moving a



HOLE!

PART TWO

The June dig was a great success, with work focussed on constructing the water supply facility from the Leaddon; the restoration of the Mill Race; and the creation of the landform for The Wharf House Car Park. Over the next couple of editions of **The Wharfinger** David Penny will guide us through each of these projects, starting with the Over Water Supply Project.

OVER WATER SUPPLY PROJECT

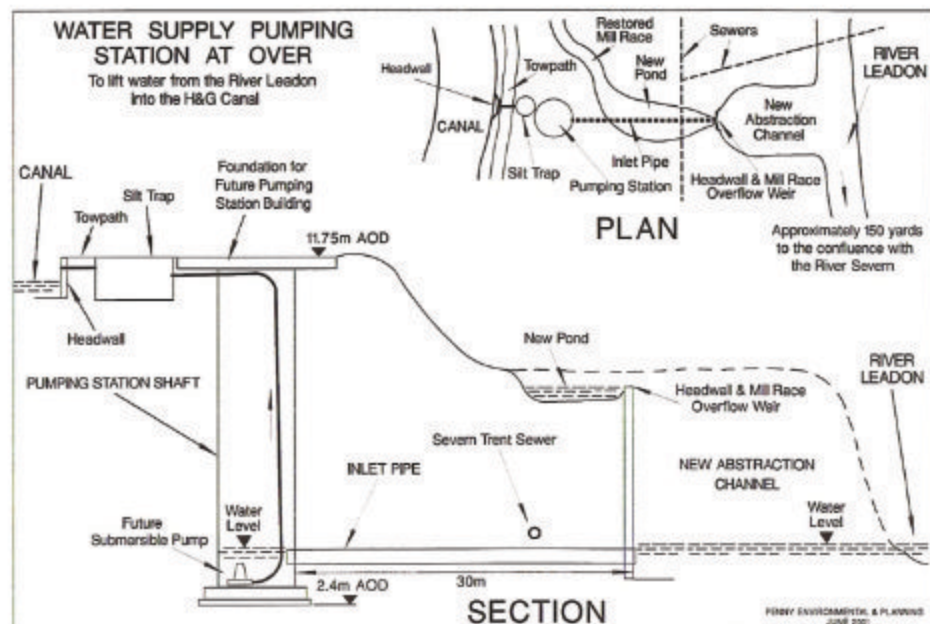
A major aspect of our work in June was to install a massive pump shaft, inlet pipe and abstraction channel to supply water to the Canal. Why? Well the Trust cannot simply go along and take water where the original Canal Company did 200 years ago. Many of these sources are already over abstracted and it would be irresponsible to put the environment of these sources under threat.

A critical part of our water resources strategy is the abstraction at Over. Where the River Leaddon enters the River Severn there are a set of flap gates. These close at every high tide and impound all the flows of the Leaddon creating a massive reservoir of fresh water, and it is this impounded source of water that will be abstracted to supply the Canal. Why not just take it from the Severn? Apart from it being saline on a regular basis at this point, it



The excavator sits on a ledge half way down the massive hole for the pump shaft.

Photo: David Penny



also has an horrendously high silt load which would quickly choke up the restored Canal. Unlike abstracted supplies further up the Canal, which would be subject to bans on abstraction from the Environment Agency in times of drought, the supply at Over can be relied on even in the most severe drought, as it cannot have any negative environmental impact, as effectively there is nothing downstream of our point of abstraction.

Unfortunately, at Over the River Leadon is some 6m below the level of the Canal. We therefore have to pump water, rather than relying on gravity feeds as are available elsewhere. To do this we are constructing an abstraction channel from the River Leadon towards the Canal. This terminates at a headwall and then carries on as a pipe to the base of a shaft, the bottom of which is nearly 10m below the level of the towpath. The shaft will contain submersible pumps to lift water up to the Canal where it will discharge through a new headwall.

The primary focus of our work in June was to construct the massive 2.5m diameter pump shaft, and start the tunnel leading from this to the Leadon. To do this required a 10m deep hole – the largest ever dug by canal restoration volunteers. To put it into scale that's a double decker bus stood vertically! Having spent a week digging our massive hole, it rained – not just ordinary rain but that very, very hard rain we had in the middle of June. Luckily we had already placed the 200mm thick blinding layer of concrete in the base of the hole, and two days later we were ready to build the shaft itself.

You cannot just drop the rings into the hole, however. A dense grid of 20mm diameter reinforcing bar had to be constructed in and around the base of the bottom ring. This involved drilling twenty 25mm diameter holes right through the 200mm thick ring walls. Each of these had specially bent L-shaped bars grouted into them to form a ring of reinforcing around the outside of the bottom ring.



Above and right: The 50 ton crane lifts the rings at the pump shaft into place.

We must have liked drilling holes in our rings! Next came the need for a hole to let the water in to the bottom of the shaft. To meet the long term needs we need a large supply of water into the shaft so that there is no lack of water getting to the pumps. So the team valiantly cut a 700mm square hole in the ring – sounds easy? Well in 200mm thick reinforced concrete ... well lets just say it took 4 days!

And still more holes were needed! Locating plates had to be attached to guide the rings to their correct resting place when they were craned in. Then of course you cannot just push 11 ton rings into place – yes each weighed in at between 10 and 11 ton! They had originally been designed as weight rings for Cardiff Waste Water Treatment Works long sea outfall. At the end of that job they had four rings left that were going to be crushed and Welsh Water



Photos: David Penny

had kindly donated them to us for the pump shaft some 3 years ago.

You may recall that at the end of last year Hewden Crane Hire in Bristol had helped us out by providing a crane to move our trip boat from Horsfair Wharf to Over free of charge for the Opening Ceremony. So guess who got a phone call! Twice they came out to advise on the crane required and what we needed to do on site to prepare for it. Well a dozen concrete railway sleepers and twenty Volvo loads of

The pipeline from the base of the shaft towards the River Leaden

brick rubble waste later we had transformed an area of ground lovingly described as 'blancmange' by one of our excavation team, into an area fit for a 50 ton crane to sit on.

You may have spotted a little feature of the Over site – a nice Bailey Bridge at its entrance. In fact the only way you can bring any vehicle into site is over the bridge. Width is not a problem, at 3.5m wide the bridge can take most things. But what weight can it take? Some very earnest discussion took place with our bridge's engineer. We can now declare that it takes 50 tons with ease!

So now all we needed was a crane. Time to get back to that London bus analogy, when you want one ... well yes by the end of the second Monday of our dig we had had 3 on offer. Our thanks to Sparrow Crane Hire who pulled out all the stops to get the shaft in place by the end of Monday.

The Tuesday saw another lorry load of concrete go into the bottom of our hole to cover all the reinforcing steel in and around the bottom ring – how do you get it inside the ring? Easy, that big hole cut in the side to let the water in could also be used to shoot the concrete through.

So not only had we now dug the deepest hole by volunteers in canal restoration history, we had also built the deepest and tallest structures ever completed by canal restoration volunteers! What's more, the blinding layer was exactly level side to side – but was a little less accurate front to back, its very difficult when your dangling your vibrating poker off an excavator bucket at such depth – so I'm afraid the back was 1mm lower than the front! Must try harder ...

Before we could start backfilling we had to install the 600mm diameter supply pipe



Photo: Cliff Perry

that would link from the hole in the side of the bottom ring to the abstraction channel (and thence the River Leaden). Unlike our normal work at Over - where we typically run on a budget of 10% of contractors price – we had less than 5%! So no option to buy things like pipes. After lots of time spent searching around Gloucestershire (and wider afield) we came to the conclusion that we could not identify anywhere with a hopeful looking heap of spare pipe that we could suggest that the owners might like to donate. So the little black book of contacts came out (well its orange actually). It just so happens that one of our Members works for Transco. He knocked on the MD's door, and then the various Directors were asked to arrange the supply of some £3,000 of high-pressure gas pipe. 3 days later it arrived on site direct from the manufacturer, with the National Logistics Manager ringing up as it arrived on the Saturday morning to make sure everything had gone to plan. Without Transco's help the whole job would have come to a halt, so thank you to all concerned.

During the second week the first sections of pipe out from the shaft were installed 6m below the level of the flood plain and backfilled. This meant that all

the area around the shaft could also be backfilled back up to the level of the flood plain. Unfortunately, we did not have the time to complete the pipe right the way to the abstraction channel, as this involved crossing under the live sewer taking the entire flow from Highnam and Maisemore – not a job you rush in the last two days!

The abstraction channel was excavated down to almost summer river level, which happened to be the level where the topsoil changed to clay. The excavated top soil was of course put to good use, and provided a generous layer of top soil to all the slopes of the car park . . . more of which next time . . .

Over the coming months we will be carrying on with the work towards completion for the project including:- Construction of the canalside headwall for the discharge of the pumped water into the Canal; the installation of the pipe linking this to the top of the shaft; cutting

the remaining shaft ring in half; and installing one half on top of the shaft to bring it up to full height; and installing the other half on the discharge pipeline as a silt trap. Still a lot of work to do, and we will also at some point be tackling the crossing under the sewer for the inlet pipe, as well as taking the last couple of metres out of the bottom of the abstraction channel, and building the inlet headwall/mill race overflow weir.

Our thanks to all the Trust Members who gave up their time to make the fortnight possible, in particular Marcus, Matt and Adrian. We could not have achieved what we did without the help of many companies and organisations large and small. Our thanks to:- Transco; Keyway; Environment Agency; Tewkesbury Borough Council; Welsh Water; Midwinters Transport; Swan Hill Homes; CJL Construction; Sterling Fluid Systems; E B Hayward, and many others. ♦ DRP

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Over & Over again! ...and again! ...and again!



Published to coincide with the opening of Over Basin last September, Nigel Bailey's book has sold sufficient copies to cover its printing costs and is now in profit.

Most purchasers buy the book to learn more about the original building of the canal in the 1790s. A few, though, are buying for different reasons. Several former nurses who worked at Over in the 1970s and 80s are keen to find out more about the hospital and a number of people are particularly interested in the early history of the Over site. A lot of people are intrigued by the book's account of the Abbot's Lodging which stood on Vineyard Hill till the 1680s and which has never been excavated.

Probably the most unusual reason for buying the book was to learn more about the River Leaddon. One of the members of the canoe club that has been training scouts at Over has plans to canoe up the river as far as it is possible to navigate.

REMEMBER, ALL OF THE £6 COVER PRICE IS NOW DONATED TO THE TRUST.

“The Cake Fairy”

Some readers of *The Wharfinger* will have heard stories of a mystical figure who materialises at Over with homemade cakes for the volunteers. This figure has been fondly named the ‘Cake Fairy’. She is by far the most popular member of the Canal Trust, and for obvious reasons.

Not everyone has spotted the ‘Cake Fairy’. Sometimes, at Over, she has been and gone while we are toiling, without even a glimpse of her cake tin, but by mid afternoon, you can be sure the goodies are waiting on the table in the site hut. Rumour has it that she has an accomplice, who sometimes places it there! She is an obvious hit with the Wrgies, who last year would not turn up unless they could be sure of a visit from the ‘Cake Fairy’.

More recently, her banana loaves, flapjacks and coffee and walnut gâteau have kept volunteers happy during the June Dig. Some younger members of the teams (who will remain anonymous) have stooped so low as to use the cakes to barter for vital equipment to complete work on site!

I have attempted to emulate her skills by equating the cake mixing to the mixing of mortar, and the icing to laying mortar between the bricks - but I have learnt that there is a lot more to it than that, as I'm sure all cake-making readers could tell me.

Talking of which, if you are a cake-making reader, I'm sure the ‘Cake Fairy’ would appreciate some assistance on open days and other events.

By now I'm sure you are asking yourself, “So who is the cake—fairy?” If I was to reveal my thoughts on this, it may mean she would take fright and the goodies would stop coming. However if you are a volunteer, working on site, you could become one of those who spot her, and even taste one of those chocolate sponges to dig for!

Thank you, ‘Cake Fairy’ ♦ MJ





The Army deliver the 18 ton Volvo back to site after its refit.

Thirty years **Young!**

Many of you will remember our 30-year-old, 18 ton Volvo articulated dumper which played such an important part in the excavation of Over Basin. About 18 months ago it was declared to be "in no fit state to continue".

Fortunately the Defence Storage and Distribution Depot (DSDC) at Ashchurch offered to take on the task of bringing it back to full fitness. Their apprentices relished the challenge of taking apart an unusual vehicle and putting it back together!

Before they could start they had to clean off the accumulation of mud built up during a couple of years on site. This alone took them three days! Then began

the re-fit which was pretty thorough:-

- ◆ The entire electrical system was stripped out and rewired
- ◆ The engine was stripped to cure both fuel and oil leaks
- ◆ The gear box was stripped and fully rebuilt
- ◆ The exhaust was rebuilt and fitted back onto new mountings
- ◆ The parts of the window housings in the cab which were rotting were taken out and replaced – almost the entire cab being rebuilt
- ◆ The wheel arches on both sides were totally rebuilt
- ◆ Its 6 giant tyres were all replaced with new ones (worth £12,000)

◆ It was given new lights and mirrors (and anyone who has tried reversing it will know how crucial they are)

◆ Parts of the tipper body had developed holes over the years so these sections were patched or re-plated

The above is just part of the huge list of works undertaken for us at Ashchurch - I think you will agree that it is pretty thorough!

The Volvo always was painted yellow but now it is, you guessed it, bright yellow and black with four name plates showing H&GCT and two recording its restoration by the DSDC.

For the final stage, and to make sure the Volvo was ready for service during the June camp, the apprentices were joined by our own Tim Norman, Chris Tothill and David Penny. Over several days they stripped the brakes, fitted new seals and

linings and completely rebuilt them.

Finally, in the week prior to the camp, the Volvo was brought back to Over on a low-loader supplied by the Army, its size and shiny appearance surprising everyone on site when it arrived.

We are very grateful to DSDC for the very considerable work put in to this rather special restoration project. Our thanks also to Volvo Construction UK who supplied essential Volvo parts at half price - even so the total bill for Volvo spares was some £1,800. We are particularly grateful to Keyway for donating £235 towards the cost of these parts.

This dumper is a unique asset amongst the country's canal restoration groups and will play an important role in restoring more sections of the H&G. Let's hope it's now good for another 30 years.

◆ NB

◆ David Penny drives the restored Volvo over the Bailey Bridge at Over



THE TRADING COMPANY

H & G Canal Sales

2001 DIARY

As usual, The Trading Company have been preparing themselves for the 2001 list of venues, already somewhat curtailed due to the foot and mouth epidemic. However, most of the lost venues have been replaced and we have some brand new places to which we are going this year.

As will be seen elsewhere in *The Wharfinger*, over the winter and early spring we have been busy acquiring new products for our Sales Stand, tidying up stand fittings, designing new displays etc and acquiring new sales stand equipment.

Our first venue of the year was, as usual, Gloucester Boat Jumble, held in The Docks, undertaken once again for us by Ray & Barbara Moses. Over the winter period, they had been collecting nautical bits and pieces from far and wide. They and we were pleased with the financial return and they were grateful for the weather.

Ray, Barbara, with Derek and Taryna Weaver also represented us at Tardebigge, at The Worcester and Birmingham Boat Rally. Being at a different site from usual, a different mix of visitors were present. Even so, an improved bottom line figure on Sales resulted, compared with last year, which was very welcome. The same weekend Over Special Projects Group Sales took a display to Eastgate Shopping Centre in Gloucester to remind the good citizens of what was being achieved by the H&G Canal Trust.

At the end of May, we attended the first of our major events, The Boat Show at Crick. Last year, it may be remembered, there were some weather problems. This year British Waterways, learning from the last year, totally re-organised the site, considerably improving it in the process. Trading results were quite good and we showed an overall improvement on last year.

During the show we were happy to receive two cheques; one from the Boat Show organisers, the other for some urgently sought after sponsorship. This latter benefactor has enabled us to provide our own plastic bags, suitably printed with both The Trust and our sponsor's name. For the future, we expect to co-operate with them further to our mutual advantage. Thank you, River Canal Rescue.

Early June saw the first of our double booking weekends (so now you know why we need more volunteers for the sales and information stand!!!) Derek and Taryna took a small display and sales stand to support our friends of Worcester and Birmingham Canal Society. The weather was not too kind and some sales made the day satisfactory. The second venue was in Gloucester Docks, over two days, as guests of one of our most recent Corporate Members, Gloucester & District Model Boat Club, who liked the look of Over Basin so much that they joined the H&G Canal Trust. This proved to be an excellent venue, with hordes of people arriving to view the superbly made and often very intricate boats of all types and sizes, plus a very amusing people-friendly interactive model of a public fire hydrant (I think!). The outcome was very remunerative from our point of view and altogether a pleasant weekend.

The weekend of Father's Day saw another double booking, OSPG Sales taking a pitch at Highnam Village Picnic. After a modicum of confusion, Nigel and Liz Bailey were able to set up the stall and display to do business! The results were pleasing, with future offers of help made and a good bottom line achieved, making the day worthwhile. The Trading Company attended the canal event at Droitwich, courtesy of the local Canal Trust. They made us very welcome and once we had erected the gazebo (for the first time with its sides up due to the chilly north wind), the display and Sales Stand were soon ready for business. Sales and people were very slow until lunch time, after which matters improved to the point where even Max, the English Setter, who owns Judy and Nigel Street, was drawing in the customers.

Apart from the breeze blowing off the basin, the stand volunteers enjoyed themselves and took advantage of the produce of the Farmers' Market, which

WIN one of the H&G Bears

From Trading Company News you will note the appearance of **The H&G Bears** - together with the request for a name for the Oxenhall Bear. All suggested names to Janet Moulton [see *Contacts - inside back cover*]. If one of the suggestions is used the first person making that suggestion will win a free H&G Bear!



**CLOSING DATE
DECEMBER 31ST**

REMAINING OUTINGS FOR 2001

SEP 8 Newent Onion Fair

SEP 23 Oxenhall Open Day

Nov 17 Our own Ledbury
Craft Fair

If anyone would like to come and help, please contact Janet Moulton [01432 264 366]. If you cannot help do please come and visit the stand and see our new sales lines. Some sales items will also be available at the Over Open Days.

was also occupying the same site. The bottom line was good by the finish and everybody packed and returned home, tired but satisfied.

The weekend of 23rd/24th June (with glorious weather) was spent at Broomy Hill, Hereford, with our friends from Hereford Society of Model Engineers, who had invited us to share their celebrations for the opening of their new clubhouse. The club grounds, just below the Waterworks Museum, is a very well laid out model railway system, combining two gauges, 7 and 5 inches with members' engines and carriages offering rides to all and sundry - all this in a field big enough for trade stands, refreshments and the like. One could even learn to drive and operate a scale model engine (under tuition of course). We took a display and sales stand to the venue and were rewarded with good sales figures and some good contacts for future events. Simon and Kelly, Heather and Penny shared the hours of opening with Brian and Janet, so that everybody got a chance to look round the show.

◆ JM



Photo: Mike Davis

An Adventure on the **Llangollen Canal**

Every year there are three lucky holiday winners in our Grand Holiday Draw. The first prize last year was a week on one of Black Prince Holidays narrowboats (with a choice of bases throughout the country). We thank Member Mike Davis, who bought the winning ticket, for these edited highlights of what clearly was a much enjoyed holiday – and Black Prince Holidays for making it possible!

WINNING the H&G C T Grand Holiday Draw was a big surprise (a pleasant one), and I looked forward with a mixture of excitement and trepidation to our narrowboat holiday. Excitement because it was something we'd always wanted to try, trepidation because I'd never steered a boat before. Eventually we were on our own, and the 62 foot of the hull seemed really long. After our pub meal it was now starting to get dark and a mooring site was required. We came across a site near Saint Martin's Moor and moored opposite a field with several ponds – we wished we'd bought our bird identification books – a lapwing

was in evidence and some 'little brown wading things'! It was an idyllic spot.

Eventually we came to our first challenge, "the New Marton Locks". We had been warned about a certain lock keeper who didn't suffer fools gladly and so it was with some trepidation that we approached New Marton. We needn't have worried, as elsewhere, canal folk were more than willing to lend a hand, and offer advice. We decided we quite liked locks, and the lock keeper only appeared in view as we chugged quietly away towards Elmsmere!

Past the junction of the Montgomery

Canal at Frankton Locks we headed for Ellesmere hoping for a pub and a shop. The main canal bent round to the right just past the British Waterways wharf, with the Elsemere Branch going off on the outside of the bend. We moored and set off to explore Elsemere – an interesting little town, the best bit being the “Mere”.

The next day we decided to head back towards Llangollen to give us plenty of time to explore Llangollen and the Montgomery Canal. The wind had got up by the time we left and not being an experienced canal-farer I didn't register the potential hazard! The Llangollen Canal is unusual in that it has a current, being used to transport water from the river Dee at Llangollen into a reservoir at Hurleston (to supply Chester with water). The combination of the flow and wind meant that there was a considerable force pushing our boat downstream as we tried to turn right (to starboard!). I was at the bow when I realised that something was wrong and we weren't going to make the turn, the bow being forced into the bank. The stern then started to move round with the combination of flow and wind, pivoting about the bow fixed on the bank. I raced down the boat sensing disaster, arriving at the stern as it approached the opposite bank. I realised that if the stern got stuck against the bank, we would be well and truly stuck, effectively blocking the canal, wedged there by the flow and wind. The stern gradually came round and I couldn't tell whether it would clear the bank. I got the pole and pushed against the bank, the stern clearing the bank with inches to spare! As the stern gradually swung round we were nicely lined up to pull into the British Waterways wharf for water!

We moored and decided to wait until

the wind dropped and then try and make it to the Montgomery Canal at Frankton Locks. However the locks were only open from 2.30pm to 3.30pm and in the conditions it was doubtful if we would make it. However only one boat was waiting to go through and the helpful lock keeper confirmed that we could proceed – the last boat that day!

The staircase lock was fun, under the keepers watchful eye, followed by the Graham Palmer lock which seemed pointless as there was only a difference of about 18" in water level, but the keeper later advised us this was because the ground had shrunk since the canal was originally built. After the Llangollen, this canal was heaven, beautiful rural scenery, nice straight bits – and we didn't see another boat. We moored at the Queen's Head (end of navigation) and dined and slept well.

We left about 8am aiming to be at Frankton Locks for 9.30am when they opened, so that we could get as far as possible that day towards Llangollen. We were the first boat there and the keeper told us to come up through the bottom lock and then wait for the first boat to come down through the staircase lock. We had soon left the calm and tranquillity of the Montgomery and were back on the busy Llangollen!

Through New Marton locks and we moored near the 'Poachers Pocket' at Chirk. The next morning we set off early, wanting to arrive in Llangollen as soon as possible because we heard it got very congested later on. The Chirk Aqueduct and tunnel heralded our home base Chirk Marina, and we got a cheery wave from a member of staff as we chugged past. Whitehouses Tunnel, then a relatively straight bit of canal, round the corner and through a tree lined section

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ask for RICHARD, ALISON, HELEN, OR DAVID

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and the Dee Valley appeared with the Pontcysyllte aqueduct ahead. (pronounced "Pont-ker-sulth-tee"). This was something really special and we savoured the views. The railway viaduct in the distance, the river and valley floor 120 feet below was truly spectacular. My fear of heights seemed to have vanished!

Trevor wharf appeared ahead and I new we had to go to port for Llangollen but where? There was a really narrow opening under a bridge and the only thing that persuaded me to take it was a finger post on the far bank indicating "Llangollen". If I thought that was narrow, I was in for a surprise! We knew there were several "one way" sections before Llangollen, and sent the children ahead to stop anything coming the other way. Nothing came fortunately, but the current in the narrow channel was noticeable. We eventually arrived where we'd hoped to moor at about 2.00pm. No spaces and people were even moored across the water points! No choice but to carry on and see what we found. We passed through some really narrow sections, one in particular by a pseudo-gothic house right by the bank. We were getting close to the end of navigation with the wharf for the horse drawn boats. Indeed a horse drawn boat was approaching and with the current and the shallows, I started to drift towards it. The boatmen didn't seem worried but the thought that I could sink this boat with about 60 people aboard crossed my mind. We managed to manoeuvre past with some of the passengers looking a trifle concerned! "Where's the winding hole," I shouted to the boatman. "Just up there," he replied. The thought of having to turn round and make our way back to Pontcysyllte because we couldn't find a mooring filled me with apprehension. However, as we approached the water

point we decided to ask if we could moor alongside a boat to fill up and during this process we persuaded some people to move their boats up so we could moor. It was around 4.30pm and relief at being safely moored became overtaken by hunger as in our eagerness to get to Llangollen we'd missed lunch!

The next morning we caught the steam train up the Dee valley, which was beautiful. We had lunch on the boat and then caught the horse drawn boat to see the horseshoe falls. It was very pleasant but we felt disappointed when the boat turned round, obviously nowhere near the falls. We returned to the boat, and while the rest decided to stay on board, I walked up to see the falls, the source of the canal. The wharf was a welcome sight and I walked into Llangollen to meet the family at the restaurant for our meal. We all had a good appetite.

As the boat had to be vacated by 9.30 on Saturday morning we'd decided to return it Friday morning so that we could have a leisurely meal at the Poacher's and get back that afternoon. The remaining narrow sections were largely uneventful and the Pontcysyllte aqueduct soon arrived. We had it to ourselves again, and savoured every moment. The remaining section to Chirk passed quickly and about 10.30am we arrived at the marina. I was so busy looking across from the canal into the marina to decide where we ought to moor, that I realised we were on the wrong side of the canal to swing in, and had to do several back and forward shuffles to get in. The guy from the marina who had taken us out appeared on the bank and hopped on the boat and took control. "You were coming in nicely there", he said. That was the nicest thing anyone had said to me all week! ♦ MD

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◆ Not Quite ... THE LAST PAGE ◆

Thanks from the Over catering team ...

We would like to say thank you to Derek Gray from Hereford who answered our plea on the last, "Not Quite The Last Page", for a "small gas refrigerator" for our refreshments on Open Days at Over.

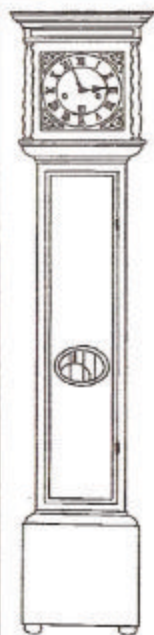
Thanks also to Pearl Bailey, who has donated china plates to display our cakes.

SPONSORSHIP OF THE TREES AT OVER BASIN



We have an additional sponsorship of the trees around Over Basin from Juliet Dixon of Hereford.

thank you



**Grandfather
and
antique clocks
repaired and
restored by
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clockmaker.**

**Telephone
David Heath
on
01600 890662**

More plants please!

Last issue I asked for plants for our new formal bed at the entrance to Over Basin. Thank you to those readers who were able to help us with this list:

Buxus Sempervirens (Box)
Geranium: X magnificum or
himalayense as Johnson's blue
Lavender Hidcote or similar dwarf blue
Alchemilla mollis
Enchinops ritro 'Veitch's Blue'
Nepeta (Catmint)

The Area we are planting is quite large, so if anyone else has any on the list we could put them to good use.



We are also planting the new car park area and looking for hedging plants such as:

laurels, yew, and beech

Can any one help us with these, please?

◆ *thank you, Maggie Jones*

W A N T E D

We desperately need some 110v power tools for our work at Over.

Drills; Jigsaws; Chopsaws;
Nail Guns etc.

Can you help us with any of these please?

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FOR THE NEXT
ISSUE IS:**

6TH OCTOBER, 2001



*At the heart
of England's waterways*

Braunston Marina are
proud to support
the restoration of the
Herefordshire & Gloucestershire
Canal

Working together, in the present, to revive the
past, and secure a better future. © H&G
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Want to help? ...

The Canal Trust is always in need of new volunteers as our activities continue to expand. We can normally find a use for any skill from chefs to first aiders, brickies to those willing to help with a shovel or pen.

◀ **Contact any of these names TODAY!**

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The Wharfinger

The Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal

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

The Canal Society was formed in 1983 and replaced in 1992 by Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust, a registered charity. The Trust has an ordinary and corporate membership exceeding 900 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 waterway network at Gloucester to the centre of Hereford. A steering Committee of 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.

