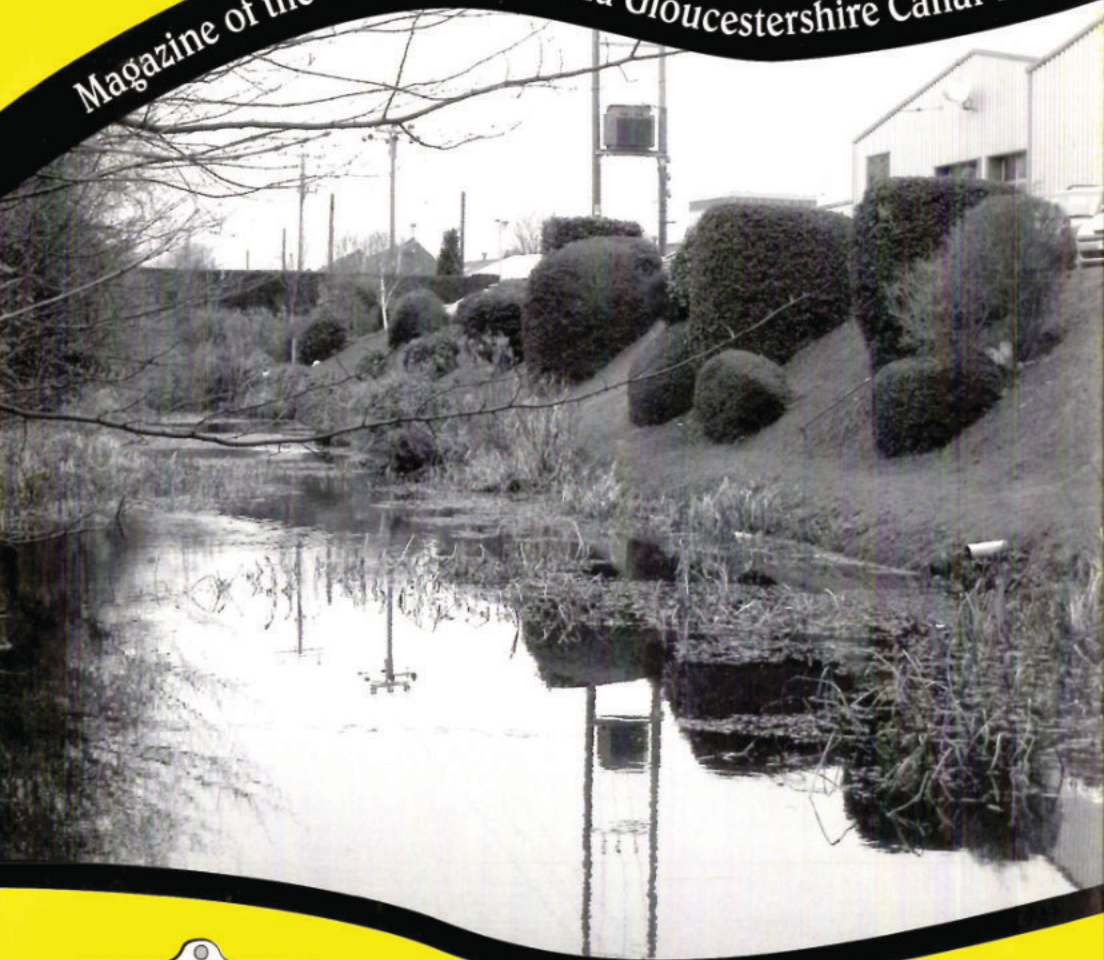


The **Wharfinger**

Magazine of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust



Summer 2003

50p

free to members



WHO DOES WHAT?

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Nigel Jefferies, Nigel Bailey

Those in italics are not Directors.

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Boats Group *Roy Jamieson, Barbara
Moses, Pat Skeet.*

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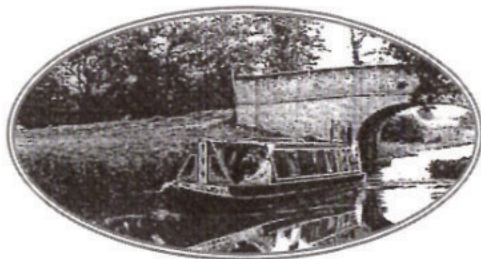
FRONT COVER: Reclaiming the Canal at Aylestone Park – Keith Kitson

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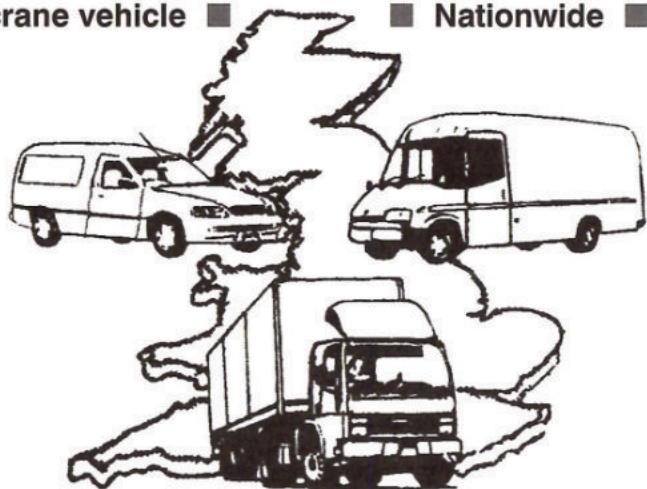
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At the end of May the Canal Trust organised a "Tour of the Canal Day" as part of our celebrations of the founding the former Hereford and Gloucester Canal Society and the 10th anniversary of the founding of the H&G Canal Trust in 1992.

It seemed most fitting to celebrate in this way because an event like this includes so many of the Canal Trust's activities of the past, the present and the future as in our motto "Working *together* in the present, to revive the past, and secure a better future".

The tour began in Hereford, visiting the two attractive new bridges built over the yet to be built diversion of the canal at the top of Edgar Street. This certainly represents the Trust working *together* with commercial developers to provide for the future. Moving to the outskirts of the City our latest restoration site at Aylestone Park was inspected. Here the Trust is working in partnership with the Herefordshire Council and Aylestone Park Association.

Back in the minibuses, the tour moved on to Monkhide, the site of much of the early work of the Canal Society. Here the first attempts at restoration were seen and Stephen Ballard's magnificent Skew Bridge admired. Plenty of the past around here!

The lunch venue was at Dymock Village Hall and another wonderful example of people working together as some 85 excellent hot lunches were served by Trust Volunteers.

Next stop was Oxenhall to see how work on House Lock was progressing. Here the past is being revived before our very eyes, the lock's better future already secured.

The tour ended at Over where the restored basin and ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE together spectacularly combine past, present and future.

The day brought all the activities of the Trust and its Trading Companies together. What better way could there be of celebrating the achievements?

These things don't just happen, of course. Our thanks are due to Mike and Joyce Potts for organising the tour itself and to Liz Connors and Liz Bailey for organising the refreshments. Then there were the drivers, the catering assistants and the washer-uppers. Thanks to you all.

"It's all very highly organised, isn't it?" someone said to me at lunchtime. And so it was. I would like to think that is one of the hallmarks of the Trust. *It will be essential to meet the challenges of the future.*

◆ Dick Skeet, Chairman

[Member Mike Davis also reports on the tour on page 12]

Heritage Lottery Fund Grant!



As we go to press, I am pleased to announce that the Canal Trust has been awarded its largest grant ever.

The **Heritage Lottery Fund** has awarded the Trust £50,000 to be spent on the first phase of the fitting out of **The WHARF HOUSE** at Over.

This will enable the work on **The WHARF HOUSE** to proceed much more quickly than would otherwise be the case. We hope that, subject to other grant aid bids, this will ensure we are able to be "*open for business*" by Easter 2005. However, there is a great deal to be done!

As well as the obvious financial benefit that will be obtained, there are more subtle gains here too. This represents a significant vote of confidence, by an important public body, in the H&G Canal Trust in general, and in our work at Over in particular. This is something we can not only *build with* but also *build on*.

Lottery funding of this magnitude is not obtained easily, competition for funds is fierce and the application process extremely complex. It is a huge tribute to the Over Team who have worked incredibly hard to achieve this award. *Our congratulations and thanks to them!* ♦ **DS**

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SECRETS OF SUCCESS



by Cliff Penny

Over the years we have frequently been asked "why don't you apply for Lottery money, Landfill Tax grants" etc. Our reply has always been that when we considered there was an appropriate project we would! It is not just a question of filling in all the forms and waiting for a favourable outcome. Far better to be patient and await a project that we considered fulfilled all of the grant objectives and then to make a strong and well-reasoned bid.

Regular readers might well have considered the Over site to perhaps be that 'appropriate project' – especially ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE? Well, so did our Over Team and your Council of Management. Some 18 months ago the decision was made and all of the form filling commenced – largely falling on the shoulders of Nigel Bailey, ably supported by David Penny and the rest of the Over Team. Slowly but steadily the various approvals were reached, and passed, each requiring additional information to be provided to be assessed at the following stage. As is reported elsewhere in this edition the final outcome has been a huge success with both bids – *well done and congratulations to all concerned.*

A small number of people, outside the Canal Trust's Council of Management, have been aware (on a 'need to know' basis) of the sure but steady progress of our bids but have suppressed the understandable desire to tell everyone as

each stage was approved. We have seen interim reports of other bids nationally that have raised readers hopes only for them to be dashed at the final stage. *Only now that we have the letters of approval is the time to celebrate!*

So next time you wonder what is going on please don't assume that someone, somewhere, is not actively pursuing the next bid on behalf of the H&G Canal Trust - they are!

OWNERSHIP TRANSFER

Although the public relations ceremony to transfer the shell of ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE and the 'Canal Land' at Over took place last November it was early May before the necessary legal title to the freehold of the land and property was concluded. Our thanks to **Le Brasseurs**, Solicitors of Newport, South Wales for undertaking the final stage legal services for us without charge.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 17th June is the date for your diary, 7.30pm the time and The Verzons is the venue – *full details are on the centre pages.* Please come and support your Canal Trust; you will be made most welcome. *Thank you.*

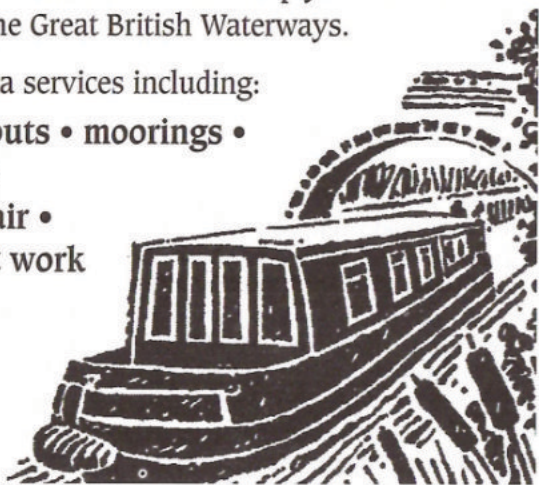
◆ CRP

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RESTORATION

Update!

PROGRESS AT OXENHALL

Reconstruction of the non-towpath Rwall is proceeding in leaps and bounds now that we have some decent weather and a regular turn out of at least 6 every Tuesday. Dave Jones is now on light duties having been diagnosed with high blood pressure but he can still manage to operate the tractor when necessary. Geoff and Richard have both recently joined and have quickly been taught skills in stone dressing and laying as well as taking a turn at mortar and concrete mixing. The remainder of the stone from the old bridge in Hereford has now been cut at the saw mill and is stacked and ready next to the lock. It makes such a difference working with stone that only needs a final shaping with a disc cutter and a record number of 24 stones was laid one day so that it is now possible to give an estimate of when the lock will be finished - the end of the year. It is not planned that gates will be erected just yet as no boats are

anticipated for a few years but the lower pound will be excavated and dammed so that water can be held in the lock at the bottom level.

There has even been sufficient manpower to tidy old and fallen trees along the canal bank above the lock and plant about 50 trees and shrubs to fill in the gaps created. Grass has been given the first cut of the year and potholes filled along the track to the cottage. And we mustn't forget David and Elizabeth who have been beavering away on the painting of the bailey bridge which is now just about finished - even the bits underneath which are not normally visible. Fortunately it is not another Forth bridge and it won't be necessary to start it again immediately so we now have to find something else for them to do. I believe there is a similar bridge at Over which is looking a bit tatty but I daren't mention that!

◆ **BF**

[Too late - we've already half painted it and will probably have finished it by the time this is published - DRP]



Unusual view of the rear of Lock Cottage, Oxenhall with the church in the background.

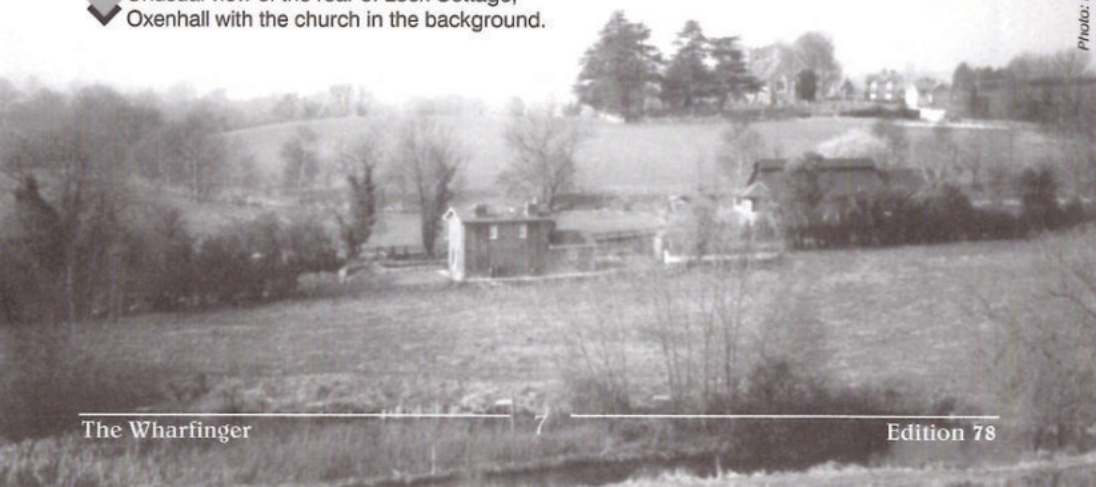


Photo: Brian Fox

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PROGRESS AT OVER

During the Spring we have completed the felling of unsafe trees in the woodland at the rear of the site. Those we could fell with our own resources we did. Those, which were too large for amateurs to tackle, were felled by a qualified tree surgeon. One very large tree especially posed a threat to the new houses: if it had fallen in a gale it would certainly have caused property damaged.

With the problem trees felled we had some spaces needing replanting. The wood is predominantly Ash, Sycamore, Quickthorn and Elders and we were keen to increase the range of native species growing there. For this we turned to a new source of saplings for us: the Cheltenham Tree Group. Since 1987 this group of tree enthusiasts has been growing young saplings of native trees on a number of small nurseries in and around Cheltenham. Once they are more than a metre high the trees are given to local schools, community projects and conservation groups.

Now comes the interesting bit. The Group do not charge for their trees but they ask for a donation. The funds they raise in this way are given to SOS Sahel which funds villagers in sub-Saharan Africa, enabling them to plant and manage shelter belts which both hold back the encroaching desert and provide, when properly managed, a sustainable source of food and fuel.

This year we have planted about 60 native trees obtained from this source. The panel shows just how diverse this planting has been. Many hundreds of trees and shrubs have also been bought elsewhere and planted around and

Photo: Ted Boughey



The car park being put to good use during the April Open Day.


between the parking bays and the rest of the site and to the woodland we added a few Yew and Holly as well.




Whitebeam
Holly
Buckthorn
Walnut
Wayfarer
Spindle
Wild Pear
Wild Cherry
Lime
Alder-Buckthorn
Field Maple
Alder
Rowan

It probably won't surprise you to see me writing again about the car park – it's because we are very proud of what we have created. After many months of pushing concrete railway sleepers around in treacle and seeming to get nowhere, the project has finally come together over the last few months. There are surfaced spaces now for 35 cars and only the last few yards at the top of the site need completing. The drainage seems to work very well and we have again added to the number of trees planted in and around the bays. The planting of the mature trees last year has paid off because the site looks remarkably mature now that they are coming into leaf.

A recent boost to our funds has come from **The Gloucestershire Community Foundation** who have awarded us £250 towards the cost of a strimmer. We have used it to obtain two brand new strimmers, one conventional one and the other on wheels, which will make site maintenance a much more efficient and pleasant task this summer.



 Trip boat, *Mister Maysey*, was very busy during the Open Day giving our visitors trips around the basin.

The last weekend in April saw an unusual number of visitors to site. The IWA's South West Region were holding their weekend AGM and on the Saturday Caroline Jones (the IWA's official Nominee on our Council of Management) hosted a visit from about 30 IWA Branch and Region representatives - which included a conducted tour of *THE WHARF HOUSE*. Sunday was not only the first Open Day of the year but also heralded the arrival of the 5 minibuses carrying the 70 plus group on completion of the day-long tour of the H&G Canal.

Careful logistical arrangements ensured that, split into 5 groups, they all had a brief tour of the site, a guided tour of *THE WHARF HOUSE*, a trip on *Mister Maysey* and a cup of tea + home-made cake. Dozens of people helped with arrangements for the day but the H&G Special Service Award should really go to John Wood and Robin Pollock who got up early enough (on a Sunday) to collect six of the tour party at 7.30 AM from Over and ferry them over to Hereford to start their tour.

◆ NB

New volunteers please contact ...

OVER (Gloucester)
 Wednesdays - Ted Beagles (01452 522648)
 Saturdays (and some Sundays)
 - Maggie Jones (01452 618010)
THE WHARF HOUSE - Wif Jones (01452 413888)
 Duke of Edinburgh volunteers
 - Nigel Bailey (01452 533835)
OXENHALL (Newent)
 Tuesdays - Brian Fox (01432 358628)
AYLESTONE (Hereford)
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- Huddersfield Broad and Narrow Canals £4.00
- Inland Waterways of Britain (GB route planner) £5.75
- Kennet and Avon Canal £4.75
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TradingCompany Outings in 2003

Likely outings for the Sales team 2003

June 7-8	Gloucester Model Boat Show
Jun 7	Hartpury College Open Day
June 21-22	Hereford Society Model Engineers Broomy Hill
Jul 6-7	Saul Boat Gathering
Jul 12	Evesham Water Festival
Jul 19	All Saints Hereford display and Book Sale
Jul 19-20	Marcle Steam Fair
Aug 16	Tibberton Flower Show
Aug 22-25	National Waterways Festival near Reading
Sep 28	Oxenhall Open Day
Nov 15	Ledbury Craft Fair

Any offers of help gratefully received – expressions of interest not firm commitment accepted! Members who have not volunteered before and live close to these locations will be especially very welcome. But wherever you live, why not join us for a day out – free entry to the event and good company in exchange for your assistance.

Please contact Janet Moulton (see inside back cover).

♦ JM



H & G CANAL TOUR 2003

Member Mike Davis acts as official reporter on the highly successful Canal tour in April. As well as the four mini-buses hired for the H&G our friends from the Wilts & Berks Canal also hired one – making over 80 taking the official tour of the H&G Canal. Thanks to the hard work of all concerned, after the deduction of expenses over £700 was added to Canal Trust funds.

The anticipated day arrived. I had been looking forward to being able to compare progress since my last trip, when we went on Major Barnes' narrowboat on the restored Monkhide section of the canal. We knew Mike and Joyce would have planned the trip down to the last detail, except of course for the weather! As we set out from home at 7.00am the sky was black with heavy continuous rain. We needn't have worried, as we arrived at the first stop in Staniers Way off Roman Road, Hereford, the sky cleared and the comparison was amazing.

On previous tours we had made this stop and an arm had been vaguely waved in the direction of some dense undergrowth with the advice that *"the route of the canal's over there"*. But this time there was the canal! An amazing amount

of clearance had been completed and the canal and towpath could be seen for as far as the eye could see in both directions. Future developments here seem very exciting and, together with the two new bridges at the Hereford Retail Park (the former School of Farriery site), will provide a real "Hereford" focus for the restoration.

Our convoy of four minibuses proceeded cautiously around the lanes following the course of the canal, fortunately encountering few vehicles. Our knowledgeable driver, Tom, was able to point out features such as depressions or embankments related to the canal as we proceeded, which added much interest.

The next stop, skew bridge at Monkhide, was an opportunity to stretch our legs and admire the fantastic brickwork on this tribute to Victorian engineering. Slightly ahead of schedule we made an unplanned short stop in Ledbury to sample the delights of Ledbury's first "English Festival" with vintage vehicles, stalls etc along the main street. We then resumed the route arriving at Dymock village hall for sustenance at 1.00pm. Liz and her colleagues had excelled themselves



Above: Over volunteer, 'Arty', draws characters for our visitors.

Left: Some of the tour at Over at the slipway watching the model boats.



The Lock Cottage at Oxenhall, Newent

producing such a choice and quality of food that it was hard to decide! They all deserve a big thank you.

A brief look at Dymock church then back on route. As we turned into Coldharbour Lane with the hedges brushing against the bus Tom explains, *"this is why we've got four mini - buses and not one big coach!"* We admire progress on Oxenhall Lock, the by weir is quite special and go on to look at the aqueduct over the Ell Brook which is now in very poor condition. Then on route to Over (o v e r) to join the Open Day.

We commenced with a trip on Mr Maysey followed by cake and tea. The coffee cake was delicious! We then joined a tour of the site to hear some of the story of how the targets have been achieved.

Finally a visit to ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE. This is a real achievement for the Canal Trust and David Penny was able to explain how it would work and provide a real focus for Canal Trust activities - we perhaps need another one in Hereford! Everyone had really enjoyed the day. Our thanks to Mike and Joyce, the drivers and all those involved in catering and at the Over Open Day.

◆ MD



Undergrowth clearance at Aylestone, Hereford



Skew Bridge, at Monkhide.

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, 7.30pm for 8pm start.

JUNE 17TH

Annual General Meeting – Please note 7.30 Start

JULY 15TH

The Canal du Midi – *Don Gaunt*

We travel to warmer climes with a journey on the Canal du Midi from Somail to Sete and include a visit to the famous 3 way lock at Adge.

AUGUST 19TH

Natter and Noggin

No speaker this evening but a chance to chat and get to know other members and share our interest in canals.

SEPT 16TH

Lydney Docks – *Neil Parkhouse*

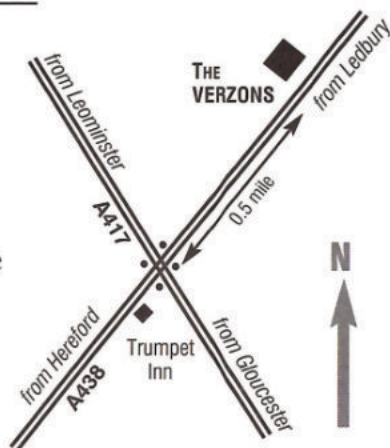
Author of a recent book on Lydney Docks, Neil will tell us of the exciting plans for the restoration of another canal in Gloucestershire and the associated docks

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).

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of the

HEREFORDSHIRE AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST

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

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at the **VERZONS COUNTRY INN,**

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ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDING 28TH FEBRUARY 2003

AGENDA

1. Welcome and formal opening of the meeting
2. Chairman's Report
3. Group Reports
4. To receive and approve the report of Council, the Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet of the Trust (and associated Company) for the year ended 28th February 2003, Report of the Honorary Auditor thereon, and the Report of the Honorary Treasurer
5. To Appoint the Auditors of the Trust (and associated Company)
6. To Re-appoint those Council Members retiring by rotation who offer themselves for re-election:—

Nigel Bailey; Dick Skeet; Heather Worth

7. Close of Formal Business

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR YEAR ENDED 8TH FEBRUARY, 2003

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

The Canal Trust is indebted to its *Council of Management*, and to the *Trading Company Board*; during the period under review [year ended 28th February 2003] those listed below have been members:-

COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT OF THE CANAL TRUST

(12 MONTHS TO 28-2-03)

Nigel Bailey; Tony Austin-Bailey; Liz Connors; Brian Fox; Nigel Jefferies; Caroline Jones (IWA Nominee); Brian Moulton (d); Cliff Penny; David Penny; Dick Skeet; Heather Worth

TRADING COMPANY H&GC (SALES) LTD

(12 MONTHS TO 28-2-03)

Tom Bennet; Liz Connors; *Simon Dyer*; *Ray Moses*; Barbara Moses; Brian Moulton (d); Janet Moulton; Joyce Potts (r); Penny Shetliffe; *Pat Skeet*; Derek Weaver

(d) Deceased during the year

(r) Resigned during the year

Italics indicates not a Director.

It is all too easy for a committee to be so concerned with the necessary and often urgent business of the day, that long term strategic thinking and planning is relegated to the bottom of the agenda or

is lost sight of altogether. To avoid this, during 2002-3 Council of Management has focussed its meetings alternatively between routine business and long term strategy to ensure that this does not happen. Council of Management developed its first draft of a High Level Restoration Strategy which was circulated for consultation with a number of external bodies including the Waterways Trust, the Inland Waterways Association the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council and British Waterways. The draft was generally well received and a number of helpful comments received. After further drafting, the final version of the strategy will be published in 2003.

On the ground, progress at our major restoration sites at Oxenhall and Over have continued steadily, with regular monthly Open Days at the latter from March to October. The painstaking task of rebuilding the stone lock at Oxenhall has accelerated this year - one side is now complete and the other nearly so.

Work at our first restoration site in Hereford City has begun, restoring a section of the Canal at Aylestone Park. This is a project where the Canal Trust is working jointly with the Herefordshire Council, the canal restoration being part of a major recreation project on the northern edge of the city.

In November 2002 the formal transfer of the shell of ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE from Swan Hill Homes to the Canal Trust took place at Over, perhaps one of the most significant developments in the Trust's history. This major asset, clearly visible from the A40 trunk road at Over, now has to be fitted out by the Trust to provide for

a visitor centre, shop, tea rooms/restaurant and seven luxury letting bedrooms which will provide a major income stream for the Trust for years to come. To manage the affairs of ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE, a new trading company "The Wharf House Company Ltd." has been formed. This offers tax and other advantages and provides a better focus for developing and managing this very significant asset.

The Canal Trust has spent much effort in this period in planning and negotiations for the acquisition of land, in particular in the area between Newent and Oxenhall. As at 28th February 2003 these negotiations were incomplete but we anticipate significant progress will be announced in the future.

In both financial and promotional terms, the Canal Trust's first trading company *H & G Canal Sales* has had another remarkably successful year with new venues being added to the promotional itinerary and new product lines for sale. Sadly, though, we must

report the death in November of its Chairman, Brian Moul. Tributes to Brian have been made elsewhere, but it is right that the passing of such a hard-working member of the Trust and of its Council of Management is recorded here. He is, and will continue to be, greatly missed.

During the year covered by this Report the Trust's membership exceeded one thousand for the first time. This is a great achievement and is perhaps the most tangible evidence for the widespread and increasing public support for restoration of the canal.

The amount of volunteer effort which is being put into the Trust continues to increase year on year. Every single day - and frequently half the night(!), there are people somewhere working to further the cause of the Trust and its Trading Companies. The Council of Management does not take the work of its volunteers for granted and expresses its great debt of gratitude to all those who give so freely of their expertise, effort, time and money.

◆ *Dick Skeet, Chairman, May, 2003*

Apart from the formal business there will be a lively mix of overhead projections and commentary on the successes of the year. Light refreshments will be available. Members and friends will be made very welcome.

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

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

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

Note regarding Agenda item No.6: one third of the Members of the Managing Council are required to stand down each year. All those standing down (listed at 6. on p.15) are offering themselves for re-election unless otherwise stated. New volunteers to serve on the Council of Management are welcome; as reported on p.13 of the last edition of **The Wharfinger** formal Nominations (on forms obtainable from the Treasurer) have to be received between 20th May and 10th June. The maximum size of the CofM is 18 and, unless new nominations bring the total in excess of this number, the above stated Members will be returned un-opposed. The CofM is also empowered to Co-opt Members during the year (subject to the maximum size not being exceeded).

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OVER OPEN DAYS

Now the new season of Open Days is underway, come and join us on one or more of our increasingly popular events during 2003. The Sales Stand, Display and Refreshments are present at each Open Day and you can see the latest progress on site. At 12.30 pm each Open Day there is a conducted tour of ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE. Alternatively, you can watch the escapades of the Gloucester Model Boat Club or take a free ride on our trip boat and see the increasing range of wildlife, such as the resident pair of kingfishers, and other wildlife that is increasingly making our site their own.

*Note revised
date for event* →

SATURDAY 21ST JUNE

Alney Island Walk and BBQ

See page 7 for details

SATURDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER

Restoration Fund BBQ

[by invitation only – annual gathering of contributors to the Restoration Fund to hear what their contributions have funded over the previous 12 months.]

Open Days are the last Sunday of each month, from 10am – 5pm on the following dates:

SUNDAY 25TH MAY

SUNDAY 29TH JUNE

SUNDAY 27TH JULY

SUNDAY 24TH AUGUST

SUNDAY 28TH SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY 26TH OCTOBER





THE WHARF HOUSE

Restaurant, Tea Rooms, Superior B&B,
Visitor Centre overlooking Over Waterside
— donating all profits to canal restoration.

Another momentous day was reached in ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE when on 22nd May the screed was at last laid on the ground floor. Prior to this we had installed the plastic radon barrier and set out the line of the walls in engineering brick. A 1" layer of insulation was installed under the 50mm layer of fibre reinforced screed as part of our ongoing objective to achieve the highest insulation standards possible within the building and so reduce its long term running costs.

The following Wednesday we commenced a 6 day period of work up to the bank holiday. With the screed down and the consent to start work from the Lottery Heritage Fund we could at last

start some major work. By 26th May more than half the walls on the ground floor were complete - with the rest very close to completion. Photographs of the completed walls and ground floor layout plan will be in a future edition of **The Wharfinger**.

Whilst we awaited the screed and the agreement to commence work from HLF, we were able to continue work on the top floor, and the photos alongside show the stud work taking shape - about 50% complete.

Another important task before the screed was laid was to test the drainage system for leaks. Luckily there were none within the building - but there were 3 outside which were all repaired with the help of Blue (WRG's 3 ton excavator) in late May. Over the bank holiday weekend we were able to use Blue and CJL's dumper to remove the poor soil/rubble from the front of ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE and replace it with good topsoil - so the outside and inside are progressing with renewed vigour.

The major stimulus to that vigour if of course the £50,000 Heritage Lottery Fund grant and some £7,000 from CSJ under the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme. We have also received £1,000 from IWA Region towards security of the building - all of these are critical to us being able to make progress and the volunteers can now move forward at a sensible pace both inside and outside - our thanks to all our supporters.

The ground floor walls are being built from materials donated to the Canal Trust by Swan Hill, that were left over





◆ Above and below – Top floor looking towards Over Wharf – doorway to bedroom in centre shot; doorway to staffroom left of centre; staircase hard left; landing area in foreground with dormer window overlooking river to right.



from the housing development, and reclaimed bricks from the hospital.

Support comes in all forms, and Wilf has been relying on the assistance and facilities of Microcore Computers, and we have received considerable support and advice from Rockwool for the heat and sound insulation of the building - thank you.

We welcome any volunteers to come and join us in ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE - you do not have to have any particular skill as a pair of hands is always useful and we can probably train you to do things you did not know you could do! However, anyone with trades is also extremely welcome! Contact Wilf Jones, or Maggie Jones - see Contacts.

◆ **DRP**



Photos: Ted Beagles and Mike Hunt

◆ Ground floor takes shape.



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Member Mark Bailey explains his ongoing voluntary fund raising for the H&G Canal Trust which may just suggest a way in which almost everyone could assist.

For the last few years, I've been collecting empty aluminium drinks cans, selling them to a scrap metal dealer and donating the cash to the Trust. Whilst I must confess that I haven't exactly raised a huge sum so far, there are obvious environmental benefits to this recycling activity, which I feel makes the process worthwhile in its own right anyway.

Some time ago, in a letter thanking me for a donation as a result of having just sold some cans, Cliff Penny suggested that I write a short article for **The Wharfinger**, encouraging other Canal Trust members to join me in raising funds in this way. He wondered if I might be willing to offer to act as a central point of contact to co-ordinate other Members' can recycling efforts. Unfortunately, I just don't have the space to store the potentially huge amount of cans, which could build up, so I was unable to respond (*you'd be surprised how much space gets taken up in my garage with just the cans I collect myself!*).

I did, however, agree to write the article in case anyone was also inspired to start recycling aluminium cans or even to take up the challenge of co-ordinating can recycling on behalf of the H&G Canal Trust. A recent visit to the Over site to see ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE (very impressive it is too) finally inspired me to get around to doing just that!

I collect cans in all sizes ranging from the small 'mixer' types up to the larger one-pint beer and lager types and they come from colleagues at work, friends and

neighbours, but I always seem to manage to end up with a large amount of 'Scrumpy Jack' cans. I guess this must be something to do with my fondness for one of Herefordshire's finest products! The first thing I do is to ensure that all the cans collected are indeed aluminium, as many drinks cans are actually made of steel and the recyclers pay nothing for these. The easiest way to check is with a magnet; steel attracts a magnet, whilst aluminium doesn't. I usually try to flatten the cans after checking them as it saves storage space and enables me to take more of them when I make the trip to my nearest dealer (Hayes Metals, near Gloucester Docks). I take any rejected steel cans to the local household waste recycling site.

SOME FACTS AND FIGURES:

- ◆ Currently dealers pay around 35 pence per kilo for aluminium drinks cans
- ◆ Recycling aluminium cans saves 95% of the energy needed to produce aluminium from raw bauxite
- ◆ 5 billion aluminium cans are sold in the UK every year
- ◆ Currently 42% of the cans sold are recycled

For those with access to the internet, there is more information on aluminium can recycling at www.cashforcans.co.uk.

*[We welcome Mark's initiative. Are YOU willing to follow his example and send the proceeds annually to our Treasurer – collectively this all mounts up! Lakeland Plastics sell a can crushing device that greatly reduces the amount of room needed to store the cans. If any Member is willing to act as a collecting point for their area then please let me know and we will publish details in **The Wharfinger** – Ed.]*

AYLESTONE PARK CANAL PROJECT



Trust volunteers and London WRG take a lunch break. Time to relax and read the latest **Wharfinger!**

Hereford now at last has something resembling a canal within the city boundary. It is about a quarter of a mile long and still full of mud but there is some water which our boat has been able to navigate. It is a wonder that anything is left as about 120 years have passed since a boat last plied these waters. About half a dozen new recruits joined the teams and with a few old hands along with 2 weekends of help from the Waterways Recovery Group have completed just about everything that was planned. A halt has now been called to leave the wildlife in peace before a start is made on excavating the mud- hopefully within the next 12 months.

Top left: Alan Flexman gets to the root of the problem with an axe. Bottom left: the foundations for a culvert headwall are begun. Below: Tree roots are winched out of the deep mud.



Photos: Brian Fox and Maggie Jones

The assistance that the Trust had from the WRGies at Over is already legendary and we were only too pleased to welcome them again at the Hereford end when they offered. Not only do they bring along a dozen or more fit and willing volunteers but they bring much of their own kit including winches and chainsaws which were invaluable on this site to clear the vegetation. The Canal Trust were more than willing to donate a large sum when a fund was recently set up to purchase new kit for use on canal restoration around the country.

The local community seem to appreciate the opening up of a new walk on their doorsteps and many questions are being asked about future plans for the Canal in the Hereford area. It is intended that this quarter mile of restored Canal will become a showpiece to promote its extension for the mile which will take it into the city terminus and eventually in the other direction to Gloucester.

◆ **BF**



◆ *Above and below: The main task is removing tree roots from the Canal channel and clearing the tow path in preparation for pedestrians and cyclists.*



1ST MARCH – the start of the new financial year and the Trading Company are on the road again. Our first outing was to Tractor World at Malvern Showground.

Tractors of all shapes and sizes are on display with their ancillary stalls – just like the National without the water, that is apart from the frequent downpours.

This show incorporates an auction of amazing items from tractors to helicopter engines to rusty bits of metal (which must have some purpose!). It attracts people from all

over the country and there was great interest in our Canal. Sales were quite brisk and good contacts made.



This brass plaque of the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal is now available again.

Price £6 (incl. P+P) Mail
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1ST APRIL - A new venture and not an April Fool in sight. We attended the Herefordshire Tourism

Forum and Leaflet Swap at the Chase Hotel in Ross. Our leaflets will now appear in many tourist attractions and B & B's in and around Herefordshire. A very good way of spreading the word of the canal's existence

6TH APRIL – Gloucester Boat Jumble. Ray Moses reports that this year was, thankfully, blessed with good weather, which helped to ensure a good public attendance. Thanks to the generous donations of both members and non-members we once again had a full stall of items to sell. There was a steady flow of buyers and a good profit was made for the Trust.

Barbara and I would like to thank all who donated items for sale, the Gloucester and Hereford Branch of the IWA for loan of the stall and Derek and Taryna Weaver for their help on the stall.

Once May is here events come thick and fast so we will report on them in the next issue of **The Wharfinger**.

◆ JM

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2003 MODEL BOAT FESTIVAL

SAT 7TH & SUN 8TH JUNE 10 AM - 4:30 PM

The National Waterways Museum, Gloucester Docks



Last year saw the club promote its 4th successful Model Boat Show in the historic docks at Gloucester. With various boat clubs from around the country attending, in excess of 200 models were on display. Last year club members collected money for local and national charities. In total the club raised £770, in addition to that raised by the visiting charity exhibition stands.

This year, the robot 'Pluggy' will be in attendance. Pluggy is a full size American fire hydrant, bright red, three feet tall, fully animated and interactive with the younger and older visitors alike. Pluggy will insist on collecting money for charity.

A change of venue, sees the club hosting the festival with the full co-operation and support of 'The National Waterways Museum' at Gloucester Docks. Special rates for the period of the festival

have been negotiated, and entrance to the show will cost £2 for adults and £1 for children. This is a substantial saving on normal admission charges. Admission will include entrance to the 'Model Boat Festival' and 'The National Waterways Museum'.

The festival site covers a much larger floor area than that of previous years, and it is envisaged that the show will have more varied exhibitions than just model boats. There will be model steam locomotives, and /or model traction engines.

This is the first year that the Gloucester and District Model Boat Club have worked so closely with The National Waterways Museum. It is envisaged that this festival will become a permanent fixture on Gloucesters' calendar of 'Festivals and Events'.



Quick **Strim** and **Brushcut**,

Sir?



Go and learn all about strimming and brushcutting at Hatton, they said at a January OSPG meeting.

First question, where's Hatton? Well, it's a few miles north west of Warwick on the Grand Union Canal and is now home to British Waterways Skills Heritage Training Centre. Courses for volunteers are run by The Waterways Trust and range from hands-on ironwork, brickwork and woodwork through to fundraising, conservation and volunteer recruitment.

The day I attended in early February was bright and sunny and I was expecting a large crowd of fellow strimming students, but there turned out to be only two others and even these were fellow H&G'ers; John Morgan who is an Oxenhall regular and Alan Adams from the Aylestone Park scrub bashers. There were a few others on a two-day stone masonry course, including WRG Chairman Mike Palmer.

We were joined by Mike Woodhead who is volunteer co-ordinator for the Waterways Trust and introduced us to our trainer for the day.

Several hours were spent in the morning in the classroom covering health and safety aspects of using and maintaining strimming machines.

The theory session was followed by an excellent and filling buffet lunch, ready for an afternoon practical session. Fortunately the fog had cleared during the morning and the winter sun was out to smile on our efforts.

We had two machines to work with,

one we equipped with thick nylon strim line. The nylon line comes on a large reel and it is quite a fiddly job to threadle it into the cutting head spool, a job that requires some practice. The second machine we equipped with a metal cutting blade, hence making it a brush cutter. The cutters are usually three, four or eight bladed, and the latter looks like a circular rip saw. Blades and strim heads are usually inter-changeable making the machines multi-purpose. Strim line is usually used on soft low herbage and the blades on taller woodier material. We took it in turns to practice with the two machines on a large area of very uneven, tussocky, weather flattened weeds and grass. We soon worked up a sweat trying to get a smooth scythe action and quickly found that the brush cutter blade gave the best results on this particular foliage.

With winter daylight rapidly waning it was time to pack up the equipment and say farewells. Unfortunately I had to be back to Gloucester promptly and had no time to explore the towpaths near the Hatton flight of locks. But, if anyone is in the Warwick vicinity it seems a very pleasant spot and looks well worth a detour.

Thus the H&G now has three trained trimmers raring to go, all they need now are some nice new (or any) machines to work with! Are there any kindly sponsors out there?

◆ **MJB**



◀ Tony Boonham demonstrates our two new strimmers for controlling the ever-increasing areas of grass and undergrowth around the Basin and carpark at Over.

Well, no sooner had Mike completed his training course than the old strimmer at Over finally came to the end of its life and the one at Oxenhall was stolen.

So lots of trained strimmer operators but only one strimmer left for the whole canal (and a sit-on mower rapidly dying)! Over Plant Manager, Tony Boonham, drew up a 'wish list' of items for his tool store many months ago – including a strimmer, a wheeled strimmer, and a ride-on mower. Nigel Bailey's valliant efforts have secured a grant from **The Gloucestershire Community Foundation** for most of the cost of the strimmer in April and so a new strimmer has at last been purchased.



The wheeled strimmer (*alongside*) is for longer undergrowth and still has to be paid for, as does a new sit-on mower which will arrive shortly.

If anyone would like to sponsor either of these critical items of equipment then the mower cost £400 and the wheeled strimmer will be aquired at £200 (*half normal price*) – Liz Connors would be delighted to hear from you.

◆ **DRP**

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Not Quite ... THE LAST PAGE

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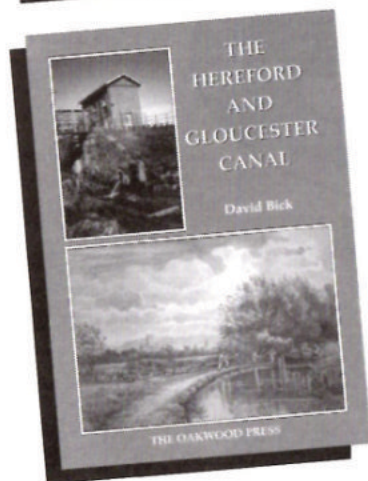
THE HEREFORD AND GLOUCESTER CANAL

by David Bick

The long awaited new edition of David's detailed history of our Canal is once more available. It plots the route of the canal and the rise and fall of the navigation ...

It includes updated sections on the restoration that is taking place and the work of the Trust at Over and Oxenhall.

Copies can be obtained from our regular Trading Company sales stands at Over Open Days, price £8.95. Alternatively, contact Penny Shetliffe, Mail Order Sales, details inside back cover.



SATURDAY, JUNE 21ST

Stride out with Nigel Bailey once more for the ...

Alney Island Walk & BBQ

If you missed this event last year, then here is another chance. Nigel will lead the circular walk of about 4 miles, which will leave the Over site at 4 pm. We will return at 6 pm for a Barbeque at Over. *Please note this is a revised date from that advertised in **The Wharfinger 77***

Tickets: Walk and BBQ £10.
BBQ only £6.50.

To reserve a place please send a SAE with payment to - Liz Bailey, 30, Fieldfare, Abbeydale, Glos. GL4 4WF. Please make cheques payable to 'The Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust'.

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18TH JULY, 2003



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Visit our Website ...

www.h-g-canal.org.uk

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!**

UK SUBSCRIPTION RATES

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

Individual	£7.50	Joint/Family	£10
Senior Citizen	£5	Joint Senior Citizen	£7
Corporate	£20		

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Whilst we try to ensure dates are correct please verify them with a relevant Organiser.
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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 1,100 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, 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 3.5 miles.

