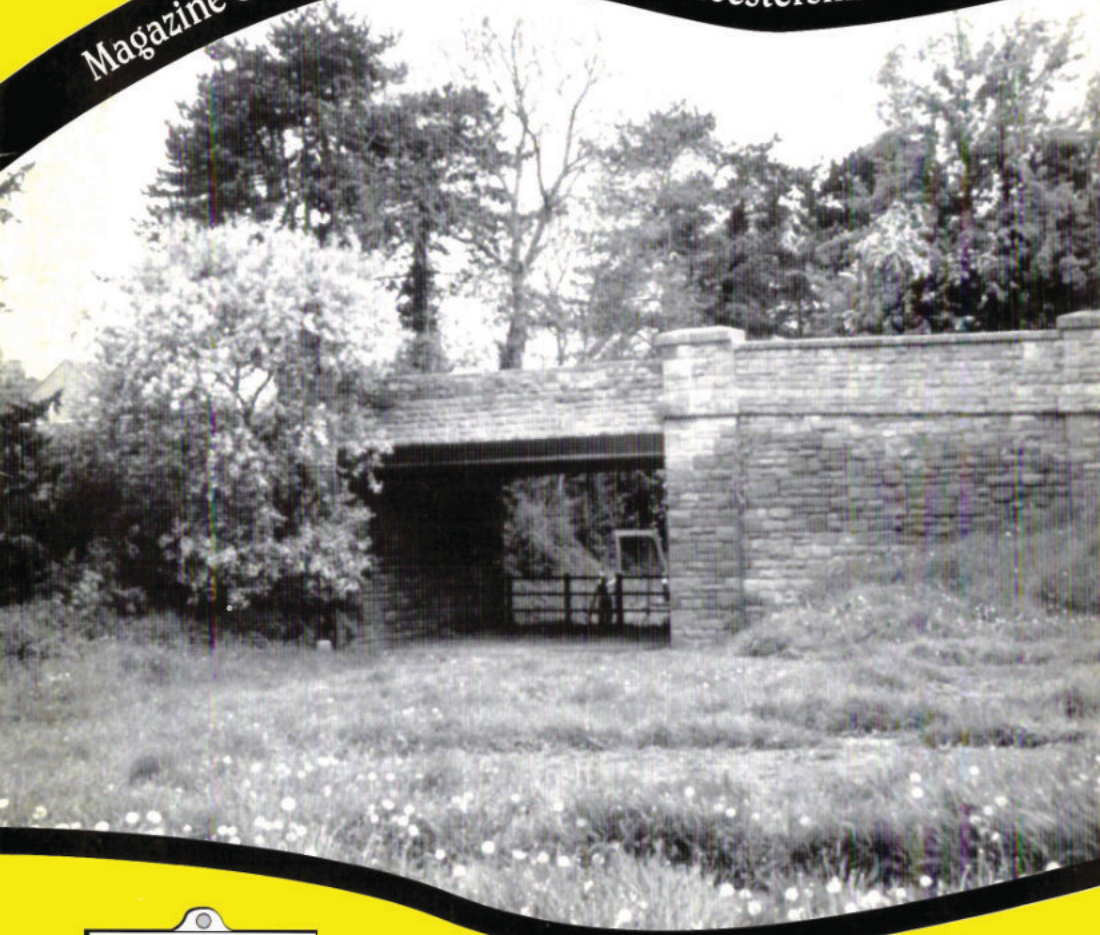


The **Wharfinger**

Magazine of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust



Summer 2004

50p
free to members



WHO DOES WHAT?

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

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Health & Safety Officer: Tony Austin-Bailey

Lengthsman: *Dave Jones*

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Talks and Walks:

Nigel Jefferies, Nigel Bailey

Those in italics are not Directors.

THE TRADING COMPANY

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DONATING ALL PROFITS TO THE CANAL TRUST

Chairman/Manning: Janet Moul

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Liz Connors

Mail order sales/Sales goods:
Heather Worth

Crafts Fairs: *Pat Skeet*

Committee: Tom Bennett, *Simon Dyer, Ray & Barbara Moses, Derek Weaver*

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FRONT COVER: The New Bridge at Dymock - David Penny

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perhaps we should be talking.....

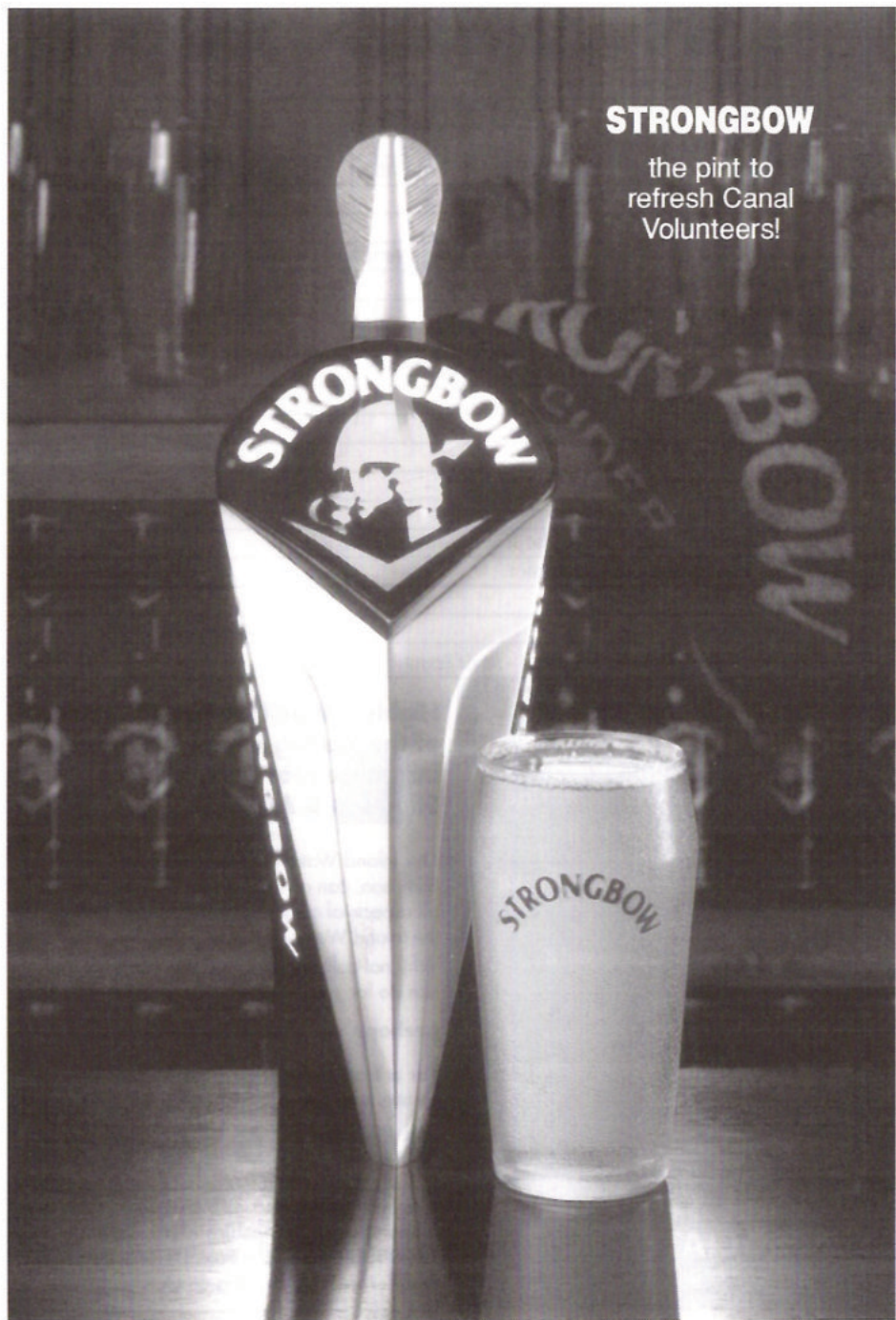
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STRONGBOW

the pint to
refresh Canal
Volunteers!





Regular readers of this column will know that I usually like to take an upbeat tone, generally being optimistic and encouraging, but the news this time is a bit mixed.

The last edition of **The Wharfinger** was 'an Aylestone Park Special' with reports of great progress and even greater expectations. You might well have anticipated photographs of the newly dredged canal in Hereford in this edition, but that is not to be, not yet anyway.

Preliminary tests on the canal at Aylestone Park indicated no untoward problems with most of the silt which was to be excavated in April, but further testing shortly before work was to begin revealed unacceptably high levels of pollution of all the silt and we had no alternative but to cancel that part of the proposed work. Fortunately we were able to divert **Waterway Recovery Group** and our own volunteers onto other work in the Park, but it is very disappointing not to see a new length of restored canal.

Health and safety is always our overriding consideration and, together with Herefordshire Council, the Trust is seeking advice as to how we may best deal with the situation. *The solution may not be straightforward, and may take a while, but I am confident that we will move forward again as soon as possible.*

But all the news is not bad! In June we shall be celebrating the completion of the restoration of the masonry at House Lock, near Oxenhall. This is the first lock we have restored, a major undertaking, since this is a stone Grade II Listed structure which was in exceedingly poor condition and had to be restored to very exacting requirements. We still have to add the gates and paddle gear to the lock, but we shall not do this until it is ready to be put into use.

Since the last edition of **The Wharfinger** we have achieved our largest Grant Aid award yet - £186,000 from **DEFRA** to finance the next phase of the fitting out of **THE WHARF HOUSE**. This, too, is a terrific achievement. Awards of this size are not made easily and it is a real tribute to the Over team in securing this grant.

In a venture as large and complex as restoring 34 miles of very derelict canal there are going to be both high spots and low. We will take each in our stride and learn from them all. *This is all part of making progress.*

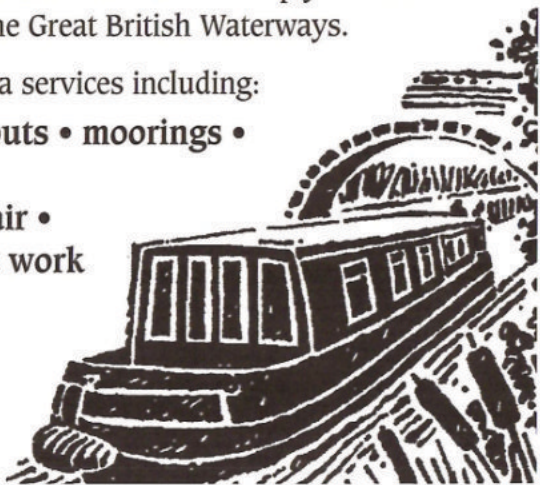
◆ Dick Skeet, Chairman

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CO-OPERATION & MONEY!

Dick Skeet quite rightly reports on the additional challenges of the Aylestone Park Canal in this issue; this is compensated by two bits of really good news – one of great co-operation and understanding, and the other (one of our favourite topics) – money!

by Cliff Penny

The co-operation and understanding bit is, at times, almost as important as money; this time it was really important to the H&G CT. Our national volunteer friends from **Waterway Recovery Group** are well known to our regular readers and we were delighted when they agreed to visit us to help with the work at Aylestone Park. Earlier editions (including the last one) have already reported on their help with preliminary work on the Canal and works compound at Aylestone Park.

It is very important that we continue the good work that has commenced at Aylestone in conjunction with Community Service teams and the Council. Brian Fox (see *Contacts* - inside back page) would be pleased to hear of more local volunteers to help during regular work at weekends over the coming months. *We assure you this is a very important part of successfully delivering the Canal into the City, and without it we would have lost the funding secured to date ...*

NOW FOR THE MONEY!

Months ago a significant WRG presence at Aylestone Park had been planned for Easter. Then, at short notice, we had to explain that no work would now be possible on the Canal. What would be the reaction of WRG – after all, they are *Waterway Recovery Group* – not '*Parks and Leisure Enterprises R Us*'. Our philosophy of embracing more than just the canal corridor was explained and, in particular, the commitment that we had given to work with the **Aylestone Park Association** and **Herefordshire Council** to deliver the 'linking infrastructure' (footpaths/cycleways etc), plus conservation areas, as well as the restored section of the Canal itself. WRG understood the approach and how all the work related to the wider Canal 'corridor' and agreed to come for a shorter period and helped strengthen the Partnership.

As Dick has reported, **DEFRA** have awarded £186,000 towards the internal fit out costs of **THE WHARF HOUSE**. This is in addition to the £50,000 **Heritage Lottery Fund** grant (specifically for the interpretative centre element) and to £7,000 Landfill Tax money.

Having secured this essential funding (*our thanks to Nigel Bailey and THE WHARF HOUSE team for successfully dealing with so much paperwork!*) **THE WHARF HOUSE** Company are now accelerating their efforts to complete the ground floor (and manager's flat) by next April - with the rest to follow 12 months later. Continued voluntary efforts are very much required in order to deliver the fit out within what is a very tight budget. If you were still *thinking* about volunteering to help with the fit out please get in touch with Wilf Jones NOW as all volunteers can be gainfully employed. *Act NOW to be a part of our next success!*

◆ CRP

RESTORATION

at Oxenhall

By the time you read this the lock will be virtually complete and we shall be working 200 yards down the canal on the Ell Brook Aqueduct. The champagne hasn't been cracked open yet as we all have to drive home at the end of the day but there may be a little celebration at the official completion ceremony on June 22nd. The public Open Day at Oxenhall has been brought forward this year to Sunday June 27th so why not come along and inspect our handiwork.

The heavy replacement cill beam has been lowered into place using our trusty tractor and small lengths were carefully sawn off until it eventually slid into the slot provided. There is a further beam behind it to provide extra strength and also to help anchor in the gate when it is fitted. The gate stop beam sits on top of the main beam but has only been secured temporarily as it may need adjusting to fit snugly against the gate. Further timbers are fitted under the beam to act as a buffer to boats entering the lock. All the brickwork has been replaced around the cill and final repointing completed to some of the larger stones near water level that were missed before.

The towpath and bridge approach have now been rebuilt and graded using the surviving design on the other side as a model. Hundreds of pebbles have been collected from various

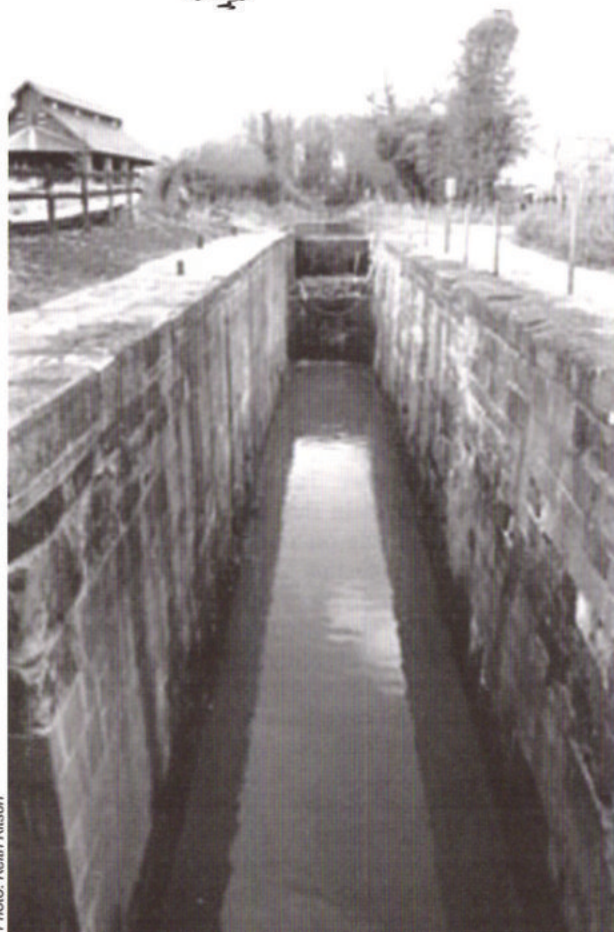


Photo: Keith Klison

◆ The completed lock chamber at Oxenhall with its stonework lovingly restored is once more in water.



Photos: Lucien Perring



sources to fill the brick edged quadrant and the towpath has been raised by up to 2ft in places to take account of the new profile. The finest soil was used to grade the banks and the whole area seeded with grass. Seed has also been spread on the non towpath side of the lock and in Nigel Freeman's field where accumulations of sand, gravel and concrete have been removed from our old mixing site.

The tractor has been put to good use ferrying all scaffolding poles, planks and clips plus any unused stone and bricks down to the yard by the aqueduct. A small hiccup occurred when the tractor suddenly stopped and refused to start again. Fortunately, Steve, who is one of our newer members, and his dad diagnosed a clogged fuel filter and soon had it going again.

The temporary dam which has been built about 60 yards below the lock to create a pound has now been fitted with an overflow pipe ready for the imminent filling with water and a channel down the far slope to take the overspill. Some work still needs to be done to dredge the spoil barrowed out of the lock at considerable effort and to complete the banks of the pound but we are awaiting the WRG excavator, "blue", which is still at Hereford working in the Park at the time of writing. That just leaves the lock ladders which are being fabricated at this



The 'Wrinklies' position the cill in the chamber of the Lock.

moment and it is hoped they will be ready for June.

Our yard at Oxenhall has been a dumper graveyard for the last few years but this is now changing. There has been very little work for them lately although two of the dumpers were in running order but new legislation and insurance requirements mean that roll bars have to be fitted in future if they are to be used. The costs are considered excessive and it was decided to sell them if a buyer could be found. It seemed unlikely that anyone would be interested as they are both fairly old but we were approached by a gentleman who wanted dumpers, and after inspection was very happy to take ours. A deal was done and they were driven away the next day. That leaves 2 others which are both in need of some mechanical attention but there have been enquiries and we are hopeful of selling them for a reasonable sum. That will leave the yard looking tidy but no doubt something will turn up to fill the gaps!

◆ BF

Oxenhall Lock COMPLETION CERMONY



Tuesday, 22nd June, 2004 at 5 pm

A formal ceremony to commemorate the completion of over five years of restoration of the Lock structure by the Trust and its volunteers; supported by Forest of Dean District Council.

Photo: Keith Kilson



I wish to contribute to the
H&GCT Restoration Fund:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Tel: _____

I wish The Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust to treat all subscriptions/donations that I make from April 6 2000 until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please return to:

Liz Connors, 18 St Ethelbert Close,
Sutton St Nicholas, Hereford, HR1 3BF

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To: *(name and address of your bank)*

Please pay to account No. 11600694, sorting code No. 16-21-20 of the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust at the Royal Bank of Scotland, 21, Broad St, Hereford, HR4 9AP, the sum of **£**_____ on this day and thereafter monthly on the 1st of the month until further notice.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

My Account No: _____

Sort Code: _____

RESTORATION *fund*



Over the next few years we have very ambitious plans for restoration of 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.

All this, of course, requires money as well as volunteers' time. We have sought grant funding and have had some success – winning specific bids for projects at THE WHARF HOUSE and Aylestone Park, but apart from this, we are dependent on income from Trust membership and donations and from fundraising events.

The Restoration Fund has been running now for three years and it has supported some very good projects at Over. This year it was the turn of Oxenhall.

HOW IT WORKS:

We invite members and supporters to contribute a small, regular payment each month which will help finance specific projects.

- ◆ 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 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 / BBQ.

Thank you for your support

Restoration Fund BBQ

TUESDAY, 22ND JUNE, '04, AT OXENHALL LOCK

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

2001



2002



2003



The Restoration Fund has helped us with work on specific projects over the last three years:

- In 2001, the Extraction Channel at Over
- In 2002, THE WHARF HOUSE car park
- In 2003, the completion of the Lock at Oxenhall.



AYLESTONE PARK CANAL PROJECT



Well there might be a lack of Canal photographs on this page but you can see from what there is that the Canal Trust and Waterway Recovery Group can not be deterred by a few last minute changes of plan - even if they are major ones.

As reported elsewhere, at the very last minute all the Canal silt was declared as polluted with heavy metals and therefore, merely days before excavation was due to take place, we had to cancel all the work on the Canal itself. Never ones to be stopped by such 'challenges' we merely altered the focus of the major work planned at Easter and over a 5 day Bank Holiday 'weekend' (rather than the originally planned 10 day WRG Camp) focussed on other elements of the Park - namely the footpaths connecting the Canal out into the local community. There was certainly no shortage of work for the team, as that network extends to some 2.5km, and about a third of that length had been built by the end of April thanks to a further London WRG visit the weekend after Easter, and quite a lot of input from the 'local' team.



The Park now boasts a meandering footpath circuit across the hill overlooking the Canal and already the spoil that has been graded into the downhill side of the paths is greening up. Some of the paths take what look like the most circuitous route imaginable - this is so that they are all accessible by the disabled even though they are in fact climbing up a very steep hill. Up at the top of the hill there will be view points constructed later in the year from which you can see the Canal line disappearing into the distance from both sides



With a variety of large machines, huge heaps of graded stone and some rolls of membrane, WRG and our own Aylestone volunteers landscaped the zig-zag paths around Aylestone Hill.



From the top of Aylestone Hill the graded paths zig-zag down to the East and to the West.

of the Park site.

Specialist advice is now being sought by our bulk excavation and plant hire partner, Keyway, prior to detailed proposals and costs being produced for the removal of the silt from the Canal. The Trust, in partnership with Herefordshire Council, will then seek additional funding to complete the restoration of the Canal within the site. Inevitably this process takes some time and so there will be some delay before the Canal can be brought back into water - but we are all working very closely together to see the restoration completed at the very earliest opportunity.

The most important thing this spring is that, despite the challenge of the Canal, both the Canal Trust and WRG volunteers continued to work at the Park site and kept the Project as a whole alive. If we had not continued and all pulled together then we would have lost the £100,000 funding from the Living Spaces Fund and there would have been very serious consequences for the Project as a whole as the volunteers labour was the key element of 'match funding'.

Work will continue over the summer with both the Canal Trust team on a Saturday and the Community Service team on a Sunday. These teams will carry on with the paths, including the path taking the Canal towpath over the top of Aylestone Tunnel. In addition the first of the viewpoints will be created and

extensive fencing erected around the site. Whilst the volunteers continue with these works, Herefordshire Council will be constructing the entrance into the site, and placing the electricity cables across the site underground. At the same time they will be installing the drainage on the lower part of the site.

Although not part of the Aylestone site, whilst reporting on Hereford we should also say that the Harpers site in the centre of the City has now been cleared of its buildings prior to its development for 14 houses this summer. This will see the back half of the site given to the Canal Trust, and all the properties paying an annual sum towards the management and maintenance of the Canal, just like at Over. This is very important as it is crucial that we develop long term income streams to support the running costs and management of the Canal so that our hard won funds can go towards continued restoration and do not, in years to come, merely get swallowed up by the costs of maintaining and managing the lengths we have restored.

Back at Aylestone there will be much to do over the summer so new volunteers would be very welcome. ◆ **DRP**

*Aylestone Park (Hereford)
new volunteers please contact ...*

Saturdays: Brian Fox (01452 358628)
Martin Danks (01452 344488)

Our year started, **FEBRUARY 28TH AND 29TH**, with our visit to **Tractor World** at Malvern Showground. This has now grown to be a major event in the vintage tractor calendar and consequently the numbers attending has risen. Tom and Derek set up the stand and were helped over the weekend by Ray and Barbara, Pat, Janet and Becca and Charlie. A good start to the year and plenty of interest in the Canal.

4TH APRIL and it was the **Gloucester Boat Jumble**, Ray Moses sent the following report: –

Having received no less than two car boot loads of goodies from Tim Burgin from Walsall and other items from members nearer home – especially Alan Keef and Cliff Penny – we found ourselves with an estate car and trailer loaded to capacity.

We left home at 6.30 a.m. muffled up with warm clothes and waterproofs and armed with flasks of coffee and soup. Thankfully, the weather stayed mainly

dry, but very windy. The gusts were so strong that stock and leaflets went flying and at times we were afraid the whole stall might take off.

We sold steadily throughout the day and received further donations (which we sold also) from members and well wishers who did not leave their names. This year we had help from Jenny Williams and it was just as well as we were very busy at times. The final take was £330 and a new membership.

Barbara and I must thank all who donated items, Jenny Williams for her invaluable help and cheerful company, and also Mike Wood and the Friends of the National Waterways Museum for a an excellently organised event.

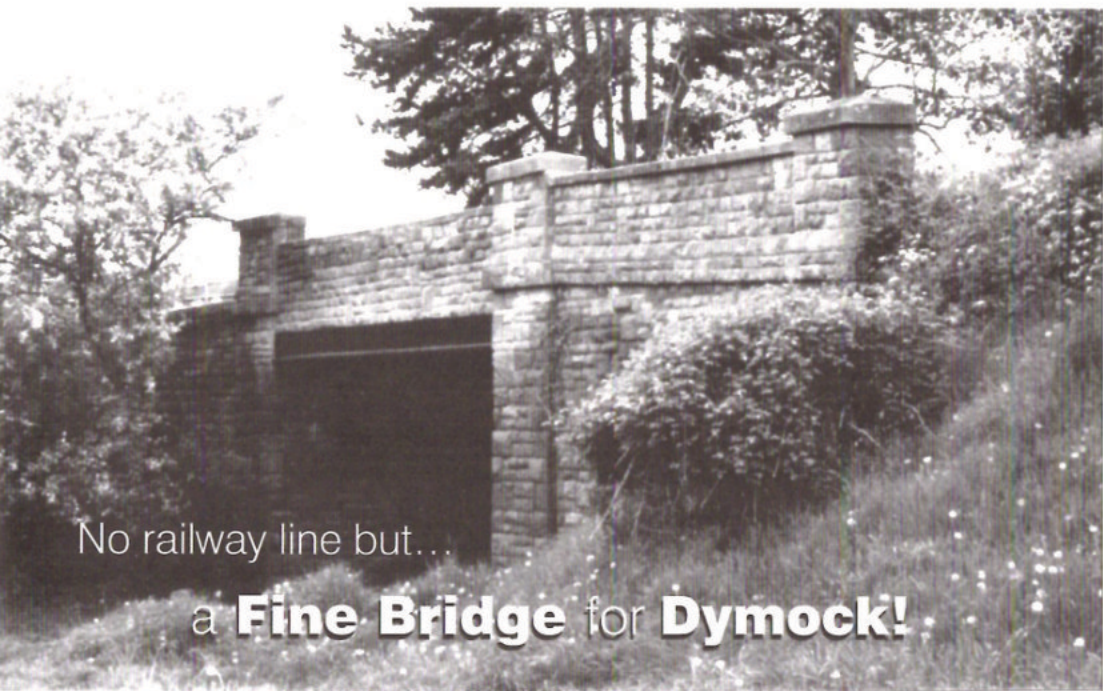
Our thanks to Ray, Barbara and everyone else for yet another very successful Jumble

By the time you read this we shall be into the swing of the summer season – so any offers of help gratefully received.

◆ JM

Trading Company Outings in 2004

May 29–31	Crick Boat Show, Northamptonshire
June 5	Hartpury College Open Day, Gloucestershire
June 26–27	Braunston Working Boats Show, Northamptonshire
June 27	Oxenhall Open Day
July 3-4	Saul Canal Festival
July 17-18	Marcle Steam Fair
July 31	All Saints, Hereford
Aug 28-30	National Waterways Festival, Burton-on-Trent



No railway line but...

a **Fine Bridge** for **Dymock!**

Those passing through Dymock in recent years will have seen that the road off in the centre of the village, over the former railway bridge, boasted a weight limit sign. If you had ever wandered under the bridge and looked up you would have seen holes in the steel beams of the bridge deck and had no doubt as to why the signs were there!

But why is news of a railway bridge appearing here? Well a year or so ago Gloucestershire County Council decided that the time had come to bring the bridge back up to specification. Their first option was to put in a much smaller culvert just for pedestrians and then fill the rest of the void with foamed concrete. Nothing to do with us you might think, as the Canal never went on this line. Well, yes, the rail bridge is off the historic line of the Canal but only by about 50 yards and for many years the railway has been protected through Dymock as the future line of the Canal –

one of the main attractions being the intact bridge under the road.

A quick phone call to the County Council's team lead to a realisation that the structure was protected for the Canal and the option of merely replacing the original steel and brick deck with a concrete one came back to the fore. Before we knew it we were being consulted on the colour for the concrete - which in the end is black to match the steel which was there before.

So thanks to the support of Gloucestershire County Council and the Policies of Forest of Dean District Council, another structure for the Canal has been restored, and is now sat in resplendent glory just waiting for the Canal to be restored underneath it in due time.

We must of course apologise to the people of Dymock, and those who regularly pass over the bridge, for delaying their journeys for several months – but hopefully the finished structure is worth the wait. ◆ *DRP*

SOCIAL EVENINGS

Monthly Gatherings at The Verzon by Janet Moulton

EVERYONE IS WELCOME to our monthly meetings held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month, 7.30pm for 8pm start.

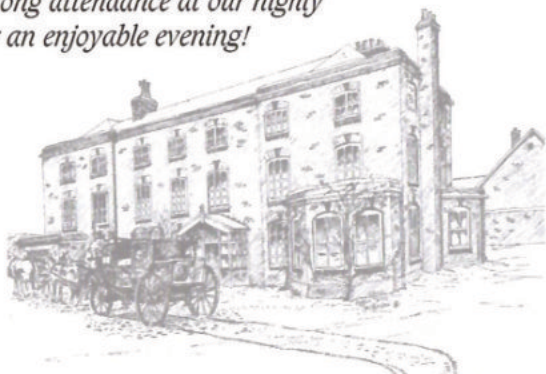
Why not join the 50-60 strong attendance at our highly successful socials for an enjoyable evening!

JUN 15TH

Annual General Meeting

7.30 p.m. start

After the business of the evening, Nigel Bailey will give us a slide presentation of current progress along the length of the Canal



JULY 20TH

Slides from the 70's

Janet has been given a large collection of slides to use for fund raising – so she thought it would be good to look at some of them this evening before she sells them.

The meetings are held at **The Verzon**, 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).

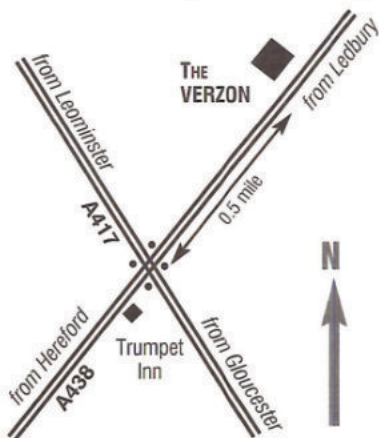
PARKING AT THE VERZON

Please park in the overflow car park – inside the entrance on the right – for all meetings.

AUGUST 17TH

Natter and Noggin

An informal gathering to catch up on news and happenings within the Trust. Everyone welcome.



SEPTEMBER 14TH

Details of Speaker to be confirmed in the next edition.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of the

HEREFORDSHIRE AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST

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

to be held on **TUESDAY, 15TH JUNE, 2004**

at the **THE VERZON, TRUMPET,**

NEAR LEDBURY, COMMENCING AT 7.30PM.



ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDING 28TH FEBRUARY 2004

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 2004, Report of the Honorary Auditor thereon, and the Report of the Honorary Treasurer
5. To Appoint the Auditors of the Trust (and associated Companies)
6. To Re-appoint those Council Members retiring by rotation who offer themselves for re-election:-

Liz Connors; Brian Fox; Nigel Jefferies

7. Close of Formal Business

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR YEAR ENDED 28TH FEBRUARY, 2004

This is the twelfth **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. It is also the first report of **The Wharf House Company Ltd.** [4627931], the wholly owned subsidiary of the Canal Trust, donating all profits to canal restoration. 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 2004] those listed below have been members:-

COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT OF THE CANAL TRUST

(12 MONTHS TO 28-2-04)

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

TRADING COMPANY H&G (SALES) LTD

(12 MONTHS TO 28-2-04)

Tom Bennet; Liz Connors; *Simon Dyer*; *Ray Moses*; Barbara Moses; Janet Moulton; Penny Shetliffe; *Pat Skeet*; Derek Weaver

THE WHARF HOUSE COMPANY

(14 MONTHS TO 28-2-04)

Caroline Jones; Wilf Jones; Liz Connors; Nigel Bailey; David Penny; *Paul Brown*; *Mark Davies*; *Adrian Fry*; *Roy Jamieson*; *Maggie Jones*.

Italics indicates not a Director.

This has been another highly successful year for the Trust in all areas of its activity. Membership has risen steadily throughout the period and the financial position has remained sound.

This has been the first full year of operation of the Trust's second Trading Company, **The Wharf House Company**. Monthly open days have been held at Over Basin and have included tours of the Wharf House itself. The fitting out of the building has proceeded apace assisted by a significant grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Company remains on target for opening Phase One of its operation in Spring 2005.

The Trust's original trading company **H&G Canal Sales** has also had a highly successful year, providing a steady income stream for the Trust and promoting restoration of the canal at both local and national events. The Crick Boat Show and National Waterways Festival at Pangbourne were both highly rewarding venues.

On the canal itself, this year has seen the completion of the restoration of House Lock, Oxenhall, a Grade II listed building, which had deteriorated to a very poor state of repair requiring the replacement of almost all of the existing visible stonework. Steady work over several years supported financially by the Forest of Dean District Council now means that the lock requires little more than gates and paddle gear to be fully operational. These items will be fitted in due course when a sufficient length of canal is open for navigation to warrant it. A further section of the canal towards the Ell Brook aqueduct has been excavated and attention has been turned to the aqueduct itself. Further towards Newent, preliminary restoration work has begun

on the site of the former Railway station – once the canal wharf.

In Herefordshire work has concentrated on a new restoration site on the outskirts of Hereford itself. This work is being carried out in association with the Aylestone Park Association, in partnership with Herefordshire Council. Funding for the canal restoration has been secured as part of an award of £100,000 from the Living Spaces Fund – the largest grant yet to be made under this scheme and one singled out by the Deputy Prime Minister in the House with praise for the high level of partnership demonstrated by the Project. Undergrowth clearance of the canal corridor through this section has now been completed.


In the City itself a Section 106 Planning Agreement has been concluded with the developer of the Newtown Road-Burcott Road site such that half the site, the original line of the canal, will be transferred to Trust ownership and each of the 14 new properties will make an annual financial contribution, in perpetuity, towards the maintenance of

the canal in Hereford.


In the long term, perhaps the most significant development of all has been the publication of the Herefordshire Council's plans for the redevelopment of the Edgar Street - Widemarsh Street area of the City – the Edgar St. Grid. Under these proposals the northern half of the grid will be centred around a fully restored canal basin with housing, shops, restaurants, a hotel and Canal Visitor Centre, the latter along the lines of The Wharf House, but very much larger. The proposals also include arrangements for the canal corridor from the City Centre to beyond the Roman Road. Taken as a whole, these developments confirm the strong support of the Herefordshire Council for the restoration of the canal.

Canal Restoration is notoriously slow, but we are pleased to report signs of steady progress. We are confident that momentum is building in both Gloucestershire and Herefordshire and that further evidence of this will be shown in coming years.

◆ *Dick Skeet, Chairman, May, 2004*



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.23 of the last edition of **The Wharfinger** formal Nominations (on forms obtainable from the Treasurer) have to be received between 18th May and 8th June. The maximum size of the CoM is 18 and, unless new nominations bring the total in excess of this number, the above stated Members will be returned un-opposed. The CoM 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

We wondered if March was a little early in the year for our first Open Day of the year but we were pleasantly surprised by the numbers who attended. As usual there was a mixture of people returning to see our progress and others visiting for the first time. If you have not been to visit us yet this year, remember it is the last Sunday of every month through to October. ◆ NB



Gloucester Model Boat Club display their craft



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THE WHARF HOUSE



If anyone would like to help with Open Days (or just for half the day), either with the Refreshments or Sales, you would be welcomed by the team.

Any donated home-made cakes would also be gratefully received. Please contact Liz Bailey. (see inside back cover)

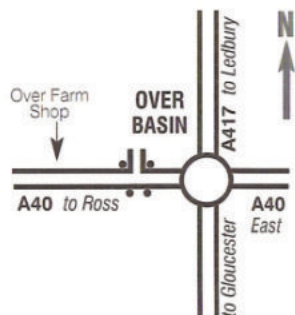
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The winter months have provided an opportunity for maintenance work on *Mister Maysey*. **Ron Mogg** of **Joseph Rice** kindly lifted the boat out of the water to enable us to work on the hull. This has now been scraped and re-surfaced with a coat of black protective paint – the last time we did this was in 2000 when we first acquired the boat. We have also fitted new oak rubbing strips. These were cut from some 8-foot timber we had on site by **Rooksmoor Timber** at **Brimcombe** who specialise in oak products and their bandsaw made light work of the job of cutting and shaping the strips. *Mister Maysey* is now afloat once again and the strips are being painted.

Talking of painting, the site hut and shipping containers have been painted on their lock ends to make them look rather less conspicuous. The colour is

◆ No, this isn't one of our volunteers sleeping rough, it's Roy Jamieson painting the underside of *Mister Maysey*!

"clay brown" which seemed entirely appropriate for a canal site.

Believe it or not, a good number more bricks have been picked out from the remains of the cottage and these have been palletted. A lot of effort has also gone into moving and tidying the pallets and other building materials, around the whole of the site. A hired telehandler made the job a manageable one.

We have continued to transplant trees from the nursery bed. Hazels have been planted to form an under-storey to Ash near the osier bed, hollies have moved to shady parts of the wood and alders have found new homes on the canal edge of the wood. The snowdrops planted in both the wood and hedgelines over the last 2 years are now looking impressive.

We have now collected the purpose made blue bullnose bricks needed for the final course on the silt trap. These were made for us by Ibstock so that each brick tapers a little. This is necessary for laying them effectively in a tight circle. Without the taper they would have had to be laid with a very wide mortar joint on the outside which would weaken the top of the structure and not have looked very professional

◆ NB

◆ Roy fits new rubbing strips to the sides of *Mister Maysey*.



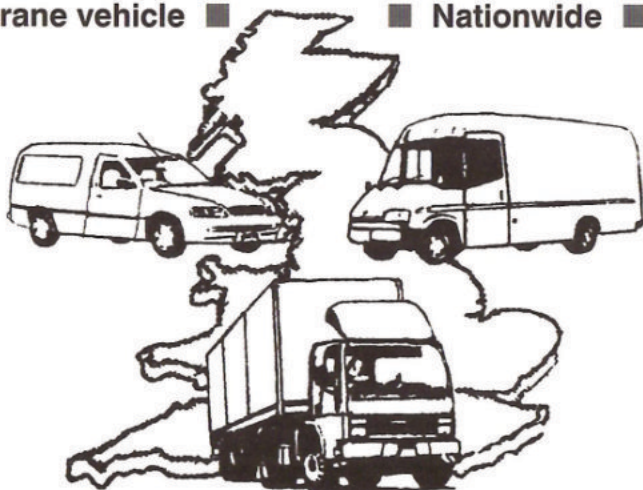
Photos: Nigel Bailey

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THE WHARF HOUSE

Well, I think earlier pages have somewhat stolen our thunder this edition, but 18 months of protracted negotiations we have at last got the 'big grant' that we have been working on. That £186,000 from DEFRA is the largest grant we have ever received, and follows on from the £50,000 from the Lottery Heritage Fund for THE WHARF HOUSE which was the previous largest grant - which must show the support the funding bodies have for our concept of making the Canal as financially self-sustainable as possible, as demonstrated at THE WHARF HOUSE.

At last it also means that we can now make more rapid progress and by the time you read this we will be letting contracts with the electricians and the plasterers for the ground floor of the building - which will open on 16th April next year. To achieve that opening we will also need the manager's flat,



The Wharf House Weekend Work-ins

Dates for the next Weekend Work-in are: -
May 22/23, June 25/26/27/28 (4 days),
July 24/25

Lunches will be provided at the weekends.

The tasks are varied and experience is either gained or shared between volunteers. If you are able to join us in these work-ins, or on our regular Saturdays and Wednesday teams, please contact us (*details are also below*).

Over Volunteers please contact ...

THE WHARF HOUSE - Wilf Jones (01452 413 888)
 Wednesdays - Ted Beagles (01452 522 648)
 Weekends/work-ins - Maggie Jones (01452 618 010)

stairwell, corridors, office and staff room completed as well, in addition to all the external areas. It's a big task for volunteers, but at least we now have the resources to make it happen (and to open the B+B element in 2006 as well) so long as we follow our normal procedures of securing as much 'in kind', or discounted, as possible. We can really now make progress and there is lots for volunteers of any ability to do, so please come and join us, even if only for a few hours. (*Details below left*)

◆ **DRP**



Above: The walls at the top of the stairs are built.



Below: The ceilings of the of the tea room and visitor centre are plaster-boarded.



Photos: Keith Kilson

A Lengthsman's Report

Having successfully organised Over toolstore and associated matters, Member Tony Boonham was also asked to take on our new role of Lengthsman for the Over section of the Canal. Here is his first report...

During my working life I have had a number of very interesting jobs; I was an RAF aircraft engineer, a garage proprietor, a county beekeeper and now the crowning glory, a canal lengthsman – what an achievement!

When this job was first announced it sounded right up my street and I was keen to volunteer, however when I read the job description, I suddenly realised that I was responsible for just about anything to do with the canal and its surrounds bar actually digging it. Fortunately though, the final para said, *'I was not actually expected to do any work, merely observe and report any problems to my line manager'* (who has yet to be designated, but I think it's Wilf).

A stroll round the site with our old Cavalier King Charles spaniel, Rupert, seemed a good way to fill in a couple of hours every week and Rupert was very keen. Now although I am reasonably observant I don't think that I would have made a detective, although I did apprehend a person trying to make off with the Boat Club's dinghy (though he denied all knowledge of it) and I am very suspicious as to why the dumper truck had run out of diesel fuel last month when we came to move it off the flood plain. Those incidents aside the job has not taxed me too much, although the

pheasants think they are seeing rather too much of Rupert.

Many of you will know that some of the land which we own at Over is a small nature reserve, and that we have done (and are still carrying out) a lot of work to ensure that it is as wildlife friendly as possible. Some large and dangerous trees have been felled; to help balance that we have planted hundreds to replace them. This of course provides shelter and food for many species of wildlife and in particular, 'birds'.

As a fellow of the RSPB I thought it incumbent on me to help our feathered friends as much as possible. Last year you may recall we had a blue tit nest between the doorskins of the Tool Store using the redundant lock as an entrance. Those babies must have found it all a tight squeeze as the skins are just 1¼ inches apart. Also a great tit nested in the outlet pipe to the water pump! This made me think we could do with a few nest boxes for this site, so late last year I wrote off to the RSPB for some plans. They sent me a number of drawings back and Keith and I resolved to manufacture some. Unfortunately so far, due to other commitments on the site we have not started, but I am resolved to make a start this year.

Well it has since occurred to me that I am being rather selfish about this and that there may well be someone out there who would like to take on this project which will consist of building a series of nest boxes, getting them positioned (with help of course) and monitoring who uses them during the season. This will allow me to get on with the vital task of lengthsmen, i.e. seeing that nobody has stolen any part of the canal, checking the tadpoles and counting the fish etc. Any volunteers then? Oh, and as an incentive you can use the workshop. This year as well we hope to do a survey of the fish that have established themselves in the canal, there must be some of a reasonable size or why else would the heron be there, another indicator is that the stickleback and minnow numbers have gone right down and its not the heron that's eating them.

We appear to have solved the problem with the blanket weed by placing bales of barley straw in the canal. Apparently, this has an enzyme in it that suppresses the development of blanket weed. In fact the little floating islands of straw proved irresistible to the resident moorhens who last year built a nest on it and raised several chicks. Amazing really as the nest was totally exposed.

Last month I found a 12" long flatfish on the bank by the dam, I could hardly believe my eyes! A possible explanation for its appearance was that the heron had caught it but, as it was so wide, it simply couldn't swallow it. Any ideas on a post card please and leave them with the sales volunteers at the next Open Day!

This will be an occasional article, but if anyone would like a point raised or an observation made please contact me; my telephone number is on the back page.

◆ TB

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PHIL KENNEDY

As regular readers will know, the Canal Trust has very supportive Corporate Members; also, from time to time, a non-Corporate Member business assists the Canal Trust in some way. Where this support is £250 or more (or equivalent, if 'in kind') then the business is made an honorary Corporate Member for two years as a token of our appreciation.

Phil Kennedy and his Wife, Claire, are Life Members of the H&G CT. Phil is a professional Piano Technician and his business has very kindly donated £250 specifically for paint at The Wharf House. They are keen narrow-boaters who are looking forward to the day when they can cruise the H&G!

Philip Kennedy offers a professional and efficient service in tuning, servicing and general repair and renovation of quality pianos and other stringed keyboard instruments. Philip has worked in the piano industry for more than twenty years, and he has considerable experience in the tuning and repair of many types of piano. Instruments can be tuned and serviced for domestic clients, but preparation of

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Philip Kennedy is a Fellow of the Institute of Musical Instrument Technology (FIMIT), a Member of the Pianoforte Tuners' Association (MPTA) and holds a diploma in piano playing from Trinity College of Music, London (LTCL). He works with a team of experienced professional piano technicians throughout the UK, and personally oversees all work.

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As usual, I begin my report with my grateful thanks to the following people who have so generously given gifts of tools and equipment to the toolstore. You will all, I am sure, be pleased to know that, in terms of engineering, we are now able to tackle most jobs that come along. This saves the Trust money and also gives me, and my mate Keith, the satisfaction of a job well done.

So, our thanks to Janet Moulton for a number of excellent wood working tools which had belonged to her late husband Brian, to Lyndon Bowen for a bench grinder, to Colin Scrivener for a large toolbox full of essential engineering tools, from Keith an electric drill, from Mike Bowden, Dave Mordaunt miscellaneous tools and finally to **Ian Coleman, ADM Milling**, Healings Mill, Tewkesbury, Glos for 2 four wheel trolleys and to **Simon Hayward** for repairing them. We have just started work refurbishing the two trolleys that Simon obtained for us, they should prove very useful for moving heavier loads around the site when they are finished.

There has been a change of plan for some of our now redundant plant, the cost of fitting anti-roll bars to the dumper trucks proved to be simply uneconomic so we are in the process of disposing of them. Three from Oxenhall have already found new homes, but some others are still available, so if you would like a dumper truck painted yellow, and nicely run in, give me a call.

Andrew Sykes have examined and serviced the water pump but the final two spare parts needed are proving very difficult to find, but we are keeping our

fingers crossed, it may make Aylestone Park yet.

The inventory check went very well, in fact the only item missing is a set of bolt croppers so if anybody knows of their whereabouts please give me a call. We are getting into more and more landscaping and gardening work so spare or surplus garden tools would be appreciated, we have lots of shovels but no garden spades. While on the subject of gardening, a remedy for getting rid of docks would be well received as well.

This has been a short report because for much of the Winter we have all been working in ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE, but, with the better weather we fine weather birds will soon be out and about in shorts and T shirts and the tool store will be much busier again. In fact the first mowing of the season took place two weeks ago, now there's a cheering thought.' Till next time then.

◆ **TB** (*The Toolman*)

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Do you use products in aluminium cans? Are you willing to save the cans (*and perhaps persuade your neighbours/work colleagues to do so too*)? Do you live in the area south of Hereford City, towards Ross and Monmouth? Then Mrs Pamela Day wants to hear from you (*see p.15 of edition 80 for further details*) on 01432 275443 or contact her or husband, Alan, by e-mail: allan_day@lineone.net
All proceeds are donated to the H@G CT.

On the Trail of the Soft Red Osier

H&G CT Member, and Over volunteer, Mike Bowden has been undertaking what might be defined as horticultural historical research. It all started after we found that the Canal Company Minutes for 1795 record a decision ... "to buy a quantity of soft red osier sets...not exceeding 20,000 and plant them in the Vineyard Hills".



Photos: Nigel Bailey

The Vineyard Hills are the fields immediately to the north-west of the new Swan Hill homes and they drop down to the line of the canal as it heads towards Lassington. However, the 1840's tythe maps show these fields as pastureland and it may be the osiers were planted along the canal banks or in the lowland between the canal and the river Leadon. Today, no trace of any red stemmed osier (willow used for basketry) can be found near Over.

Once the major work on the first phase of the restoration of Over Basin was completed in 2000 it was decided to try to re-establish a small osier bed and stock it with 'soft red' osiers as a further historical connection. A small area north of the old mill leat was thought suitable and was dug over to remove the nettles and burdock. Enquiries to a number of sources, such as Long Ashton Research Station (which had more than 1500

willow varieties!), Westonbirt Arboretum and Gloucester Folk Museum, about the precise identity of the soft red osier, were inconclusive. RHS thought it was probably a variety of *salix x rubra* (a cross between *S. purpurea* and *S. viminalis*). Pershore College suggested the red stemmed *Salix alba Chermesina* also known as *Salix alba 'Britzensis'*. These were seen growing as a colourful winter feature at Westonbirt and as they had offered us some rods after their annual pruning it was decided to give them a try. Cuttings about 250mm long were made from the rods and planted in spring 2002, and by the autumn the result was *complete failure*, not a single cutting had rooted! *So much for willows being very easy to grow.*

In spring 2003 some rooted plants of *Britzensis* were obtained from a nursery near Dymock and it was comforting to discover that the nursery had difficulty in

Above: Mike Bowden with osier cuttings
Below: The osier nursery at Over

striking cuttings of that variety! At the same time cuttings of *Salix triandra* 'Black Maul' and *Salix purpurea* 'Leentjes' were planted to experiment to find which varieties would do well at the site. Black Maul is widely grown in Somerset for basketry, and for the production of artists charcoal; Leentjes has bright green stems and is also used for basketry. Despite browsing by rabbits and suspected muntjac deer, also autumn drought, and shading by ash trees, a good proportion of each has survived, especially the Leentjes, which must be bitter and unappetising to the browsers.

This spring (2004) some of the shading ash trees have been coppiced and the staves used to make a woven fence near the mill leat. The willow planting is being further diversified with another six varieties that may have a number of uses:-

Salix purpurea 'Green Dicks' used in basket making

Salix purpurea 'Daphnoides' mottled dark red used in basket making

Salix triandra 'Zwarte Driebast' dark brown used in coarse basketry and hurdles

Chinese willow... ornamental bright green stems

Salix triandra x viminalis 'Q83' used in hurdles, living sculpture, and for biomass

Salix aegyptica or the musk willow, possible use in basketry.

The willows should provide a shrub layer, provide cover for small mammals and birds, also attract insects that will be a food source for birds such as the willow tit. Hopefully there will also be a crop of rods available for some of the above uses.

We would be pleased to hear from anyone who can throw further light on the identity of the 'soft red' osier, or who can offer cuttings of red stemmed willow growing locally and of known provenance.

◆ *MJB*

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RIVER TALES

Age Concern Herefordshire is developing a reminiscence project gathering and sharing memories of those who, lived, worked or played on (or by) the four main rivers which transect Herefordshire. (*The funding for this project is specifically limited to rivers.*) There will be a series of workshops where people can share stories using artifacts, photographs or other material to trigger memories. In addition, and central to the project, will be the production of resources based on selected oral histories. These will be filmed interviews inter-cut with additional footage, photographs etc. Documents and transcripts of the Tales will be included in the resources, which will be aimed at schools, local residents and visitors.

Field of Vision are a partnership working on a feasibility study for **River Tales** and at this stage their Katya Coupland is trying to find out the level of interest – both in terms of contributions to the project, and in the finished resources. She can be contacted by email: rivers@fieldofvision.co.uk; tel: 01568 760 545. *Please mention the Canal Trust when responding.*

NEWENT RAILWAY MAP

Following our appeal for donations towards the £500 cost of acquiring this important document we are very pleased to acknowledge a contribution of £100 from Member **Mr Warren Marsh** of Bristol. [*Our observant readers will note that we reported Robin Stiles' support in the last edition – and Robin also lives in Bristol!*] Total donations to date are £230 plus £110 profit from the two visits to the Records Office to view the map. *Our sincere thanks.*

Volunteers wanted please ...

We need a volunteer to undertake the liaison, once a quarter, with the existing advertisers in **The Wharfinger**, to check existing advertisements remain up to date and ensure that payment is received. This is a relatively simple task and only requires a few hours 4 times a year.

also...

We are looking for a volunteer to assist in making small-scale grant-aid bids which are critical to the success of the Trust.

Volunteers please contact Cliff Penny (see contacts)

◆ CRP

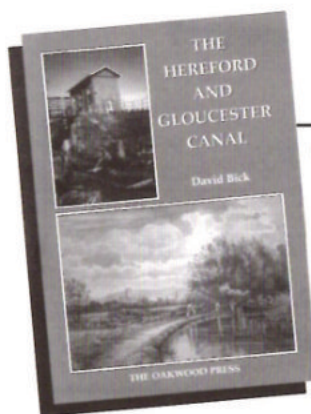
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18TH JULY, 2004

THE HEREFORD AND GLOUCESTER CANAL

The latest edition of David Bick's detailed history of our Canal, *'The Hereford and Gloucester Canal'* 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.

The book is available from our regular Trading Company sales stands at Over Open Days, price £8.95. Alternatively, contact Heather Worth, Mail Order Sales, details inside back cover.





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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		

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Individual	£150	Joint/Family	£200
Senior Citizen	£80	Joint Senior Citizen	£110
Corporate	£400		

PLEASE NOTE: All subscriptions and donations are treated as being made under the Gift Aid scheme unless you state that you do not wish us to do this. Payment made by Standing Order greatly assists us and payment remains under your control. **All payments to:**

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ADVERTISING IN The Wharfinger

Show the support of your business by advertising in **The Wharfinger**. Rates start at £12, there is a series discount and we will gladly design your advertisement free of charge. Heather Worth, Tel. 01432 270 552, has the details.

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Membership records are computerised. Your entry is available for inspection if you send a SAE to the Membership Secretary.

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

