

The **Wharfinger**

Magazine of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust



Autumn 2006

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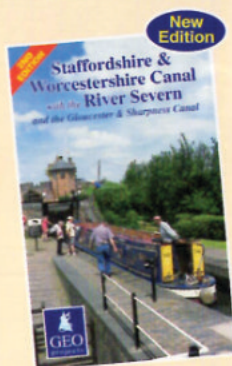
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FRONT COVER PHOTO:

Margot and Rudolf our two new residents
at Over Basin – by Maggie Jones

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The pint to refresh
Canal Volunteers!

Bulmers

WELCOME!



by Cliff Penny

Firstly a very warm welcome indeed to our new Chairman - which, apart from anything else, means that the Editorial will return to its more normal position in the next edition!

The proposal that Janet Moulton should assume yet another important role within the Canal Trust was warmly welcomed by the whole of the Council of Management. I know that we all understand that our future success is dependant upon teamwork and I have little doubt that the best results come from a team that is well led - and anyone who has experienced Janet's skills in this department will know that we have gained an excellent leader.

This does not mean that there will be easy solutions to what seems to be the ever increasing voluntary workload within the Council of Management (and elsewhere). One thing is very certain, we need to ensure that we are concentrating our limited resources on the right priorities and again I am very confident that Janet will be ensuring that all we do!

One of the many issues to be considered by the Council of Management over the coming months relates to future major projects on the H&G Canal. For a number of years now our efforts have very much concentrated (*of necessity*) at Over with our other sites having to assume a lower ranking. Within the Council of Management we appreciate that we have an expanding band of volunteers on the ground who are just itching to get on with physical work elsewhere (in *addition* to the ongoing work at Over!).

No longer can we just look at small areas in isolation - no matter how well they fit into the overall scheme of things - we need to ensure that projects are properly planned and work scheduled and designed in an appropriate manner; and all with an ever increasing raft of legislation to comply with. And of course there is the small question of funding!

We need to be planning now in significant detail the next major projects - and the related funding. This all requires yet further voluntary resources so if you have appropriate skills and don't wish to get mucky then we need to hear from you, *please*. And if you are one of our volunteers just itching to start *another* project then please understand that we cannot do so without the paperwork and funding in place. There really is plenty to do with the maintenance and improvement of our existing sites - and if you are really passionate about a future project then why not get involved with the paperwork and the essential funding applications to make it possible? *You will be made very welcome!*

ROGER CONNORS

Just as we were going to press we heard the very sad news that Roger Connors, husband of Liz Connors our indefatigable Treasurer, had died at a young age following a period of illness. Our hearts and minds are with Liz at this very sad and difficult time.

◆ CRP

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Firm Foundations

In the seven years I have been in Hereford, the H&G has seen the two new bridges built on the essential diversion route for the canal through the old Farriery site in Hereford and the completion of the restoration of the Listed House Lock at Oxenhall and progress on the adjacent aqueduct. At Over the Basin has been excavated, brought back into water and the ground floor of **The Wharf House** opened as a Restaurant and Visitor Centre. I think these are significant achievements for a Canal Trust with a small dedicated team and limited resources.

Before moving to Hereford Brian and I were very involved with the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust and they took 50 years to re-open that canal! We took their sales stand to National Waterways Festivals and other shows, so it was inevitable that we would get involved in the H&G. I retired from Reading University Library in April 1999 and by that August we were involved assisting with the significant H&G presence at the National Waterways Festival when it came to Worcester. Brian took over as Chairman of the Trading Company and after he died in 2002 I took over and continued to travel with the sales stand with great support from my daughter and the rest of the team. Our intrepid band continue to tour the country and it is interesting that now we rarely have to explain *where* the H&G is and that the question has changed to *when* are you going to re-open – not *if*!

As Chairman I hope to be able to report progress on further restoration projects – to do so we need the support of all our Members. If you can help *in any way*, please contact me.

◆ Janet Moulton, Chairman

NEW CofM MEMBER

The July CofM meeting warmly welcomed Maggie Jones as a co-opted Member of the CofM. Apart from the design and production of **The Wharfinger** Maggie is deeply involved in organising work at **THE WHARF HOUSE**, the recent Over Open Days, and produces much promotional material for all of the Companies forming the Canal Trust.

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RESTORATION at Oxenhall *by Brian Fox*

Steady progress has been made on the aqueduct now that the warm weather has arrived. One side has now been completed to just below the original height and will be left for the time being until a decision is made as to exactly how high the new wall should be and how it will be topped off. It is now almost certain that the canal will not be restored at the original height through here as it will be necessary to raise it on an embankment in order to have sufficient clearance when it crosses Bridge Street by the Newent fire station.

Talk of embankments and new aqueducts over roads is a whole new ball game to us but plans must be initiated now in order for there to be continuity of work on this particular section of canal restoration for our enthusiastic gang of volunteers. Discussions must take place with adjacent land owners, FODDC, GCC (and their tenants), Newent TC, the Environment Agency, Nature Trust and many others as well as seeking sources of funding for such an enterprise. Much of the work will necessarily be

Photos: John Chappell

undertaken by contractors but there is still much scope for volunteers and certainly all initial proposals and discussions have to be undertaken by the Canal Trust. As our more detailed plans progress for Oxenhall/Newent there will be further reports in **The Wharfinger**.

Meanwhile, back at Ell Brook, we have been able to get down into the water without getting a welly full, although some still manage to achieve wet feet if they walk in the wrong places or make too many waves! The foundations and new springing point for the arch have been completed on one side where the task was relatively simple but the other side is more of a challenge as large chunks of the wall and foundations have disappeared over the years. Old, broken and worn stone has been cut away using the trusty portable stone saw in conjunction with hammer and chisel so that we now have a firm, level base on which to build the start of the new arch.

As reported last time we are now the owners of a large bench saw for cutting our mountain of stone from the old railway bridge at Stretton Sugwas. It has taken a few weeks to get the saw



The tank for the water supply to the brick saw is hoisted into position

into position and become familiar with the best ways of utilising it but it is now being put to good use as we cut the stone for the other arch and spandrel wall. It is powered by a small diesel engine and those with diesel cars will know that glow plugs are provided to heat the air intake and assist in the starting of the engine, particularly on a cold winter morning. Well our engine has no such refinements and we have found that a kettle or two of hot water poured over the engine block will have a similar effect but then it still has to be turned over with a starting handle (who can remember them?). You soon learn about decompression levers and swinging techniques so the one with the strongest arm generally gets the job. Training is being undertaken for those who wish to use it and the necessary Risk Assessments have been made to comply with Health & Safety regulations.

The stone 'mountain' is now more of a hill as we are not only using it on the aqueduct but much has been taken

up to the lock for putting extra height on the wing walls to accommodate the new embankment and slightly raised water levels. Larger blocks have been set aside for some landscaping of the ground around ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE at Over but there should still be enough for another lock or even a couple of small bridges!

Maintenance work has been ongoing on the towpath and lock area using a push mower and strimmer but the ride-on should soon have its own trailer and be transportable from the Hereford end where it is currently kept. Chris High has just about finished converting the old railway wagon to our new workshop/toolshed so that it is weatherproof and secure and we can now find everything in an instant without delving through the old tool bin. He has agreed to take over responsibility for the tools and to make sure everything is safe to use, repaired, or thrown out.

◆ BF

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Above: Brian Fox inspects the nearly completed side of the aqueduct.

Below: The opposite side of the aqueduct awaits restoration.



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May saw our first trip north to the **Moira Canal Festival**. Derek and Taryna joined Des and Lesley to spread the word and the draw tickets!

After a week of heavy rain Ray, Barbara, Janet and Becca arrived at **Crick Boat Show**. Trackways and walkways on site kept things passable but the car parks were soon



Above: Our promotional display at a national event.

a quagmire and 4x4 and muscle power was required to keep things moving. Thank goodness we hired a space in a floored marquee. The rain continued on

Saturday but the crowds still came. 2am Sunday morning and a local warehouse went up in flames – so where do you get your water – you pump from the canal, lay your hoses along the road *and close the roads between the M1 and the site!* **The crowds kept coming.** Steve, Becca and Janet managed to find a route to Crick village, parked and walked to site. The road remained closed until 10 minutes before the show closed on Monday so another long walk either side of a long day – so we all headed home (exhausted!)

Penny was joined by some 'Gloucester end' helpers at **Hartpur College Open Day** and then it was back up north for **Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rally**. Ray and Barbara, Derek and Penny were joined by Des and Steve. *Thanks to Tim Coghlan for inviting us and for the generous donation to the Canal Trust.*

Still plenty more shows to visit and places to promote the Trust – come and join us **PLEASE!!**

◆ JM



Below: The fire brigade pump water from the canal to fight the blaze.

Work at Yarkhill

by Chris High

A considerable amount of time is now being spent ensuring that our earlier vegetation clearance was not in vain. The recently donated ride on mower, with Tim at the wheel, did sterling work cutting the complete towpath in an hour and a half! Strimming of the towpath edges is now well under way. Large willow branches that had unexpectedly fallen across the canal have also been removed.

The forecast dam building has taken place with dams at 27 and 55 yards. The first length rapidly filled to some twenty inches deep. The 55 yard dam also seemed to prove the water holding properties of the canal so far but unfortunately the extreme dry spell has now totally depleted



Above: The completed steps



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the water feed and some 80% of the canal is now dry. The first dam has now been removed and preparations are being made for dam three at 240 yards. A big jump forward but hopefully this stretch will be in water for the Open Day.

The dry spell has enabled Dave G. to get his vehicle and trailer on site and deposit sand, sleepers and rails right to our working place, a great help - many thanks Dave.

Fallen branches across the Canal



Photos: Chris High



Right: The steps in construction



We were pleased to welcome a new volunteer, Chris South, especially as it has enabled us to complete our bridge and steps ahead of schedule! With the agreement of Mr. Clewes, our neighbouring landowner, a sleeper bridge and steps now connects his permitted footpath to the towpath, adding to the local amenity value and earning us valuable 'brownie' points with DEFRA!

The initial bank investigation has progressed and the puddle clay located

in the upper level of the bank. This will now be followed down the bank to where it meets the canal bed and hopefully establish the canal/bank profile.

Vegetation control will continue, stump pulling from the canal bed has started and we are actually benefiting from the dry spell by not having to get muddy whilst doing it! Initial planning is also underway for a Waterway Recovery Group weekend in September.

◆ CH



Canal bed vegetation



The mown towpath

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Update at OVER

As the year moved towards Summer, our efforts moved outside to a range of jobs around the Basin.

For most of the year the level of water in the Basin has been maintained quite well, topped up by the run-off from Staunton's Hill. Though, as our first Open Day approached, a further top-up was needed. We hired a pump for a few days which quickly raised the level to about "three red bricks down" - which is the optimum level. *This intervention was of course followed by torrential rain!*

We have now built up another team of five youngsters doing their Duke of Edinburgh Awards (plus Gareth who has completed his Award but keeps coming back!). They spent their first few volunteer days painting the smart hut which is now a reasonably unobtrusive "clay brown" colour with black trimmings. The height restriction barrier at the entrance to the car park has also been given a new coat of black paint.

In 2000, when we completed the rebuilding of the Basin, we purchased our small trip boat from Langport in Somerset.

We then spent some months at Oxenhall repairing, repainting and renaming it as "Mister Maysey" in honour of the original Over Site Manager back in the 1790s. Since then it has been enjoyed on Open Days by hundreds of visitors even

though the length of navigable canal is still very limited! As we are again holding Open Days this year we found it was time to once again refurbish the boat. So for some time it has been out of the water, propped up on blocks.

We have replaced a fair amount of the timber which had rotted, repainted just about everything and are in the process of rubbing down and re-coating the hull with a protective paint and then repainting the name plate. Several visitors have asked me what was the *original* name of the boat and I had completely forgotten. Then, out of the blue, a few weeks ago I received an email from Langport telling me about a water festival being held there and asking if I knew the whereabouts of the "Ruby II". They wanted to invite her back for the festival. As soon as I read the name I remembered. Then, coincidentally, the name was confirmed when I found the original metal nameplate in the old site hut while looking for something else - that's serendipity.



Mister Maysey gets a thorough overhaul and new signage



Photos: Maggie Jones

For some months we have awaited the arrival of a new wrought iron bench, to be sited between the smart hut and the slipway. It has been donated to the site by the Gloucester and District Model Boat Club who also fixed it in place – bolted into sufficient concrete that it won't be moving!

Back in 2000 we made some temporary information boards for the site which provided some brief details about the history of the Corn Mill, the Lock and so on. By this year they were looking decidedly past their sell-by date so we decided to make some new permanent ones. Most of our regular volunteers played a part in designing, cutting, assembling, varnishing and painting the stands and printing, laminating, fixing and gluing the wordings on to them. The text is larger so it is easier to read and the stands are shorter so they are less obtrusive. They now look very professional and because they can be spotted from a distance, they draw visitors into the site to read them. They have the added advantage that they can stay out all the



One of the new information signs around the Basin

time rather than be placed out for each Open Day. *Thank you to all who were in any way involved.*

◆ NB

GET WELL SOON TED!

It is unfortunate that our regular band of volunteers has had a number of its key helpers taken ill with various ailments over this year. A few of them having to spend short stays in hospital. However, for Ted Beagles this stay in hospital has grown to around three months. Ted helps with many key tasks both in ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE and outside so as you can imagine he is sorely missed. However, the good news is that he is now on the mend.

Just remember Ted, we all wish you well and however much we miss your expertise, we want you to make a full and complete recovery first! Our very best wishes.

◆ The Over Volunteers

THE WHARF HOUSE *fit-out*

Major work in ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE has drawn to a halt at present. The volunteers are still helping with items of general maintenance and on rainy days we tend to go inside, preferring to paint windows in the dry than strim the undergrowth in the wet!

We are waiting for sufficient funds in order to make the final push to get the whole building complete. In the meantime there is more than enough keeping us busy around the basin and preparation for our Over Open Days.

◆ MJ



Photos: Maggie Jones

Gloucester Model Boat Club's new bench

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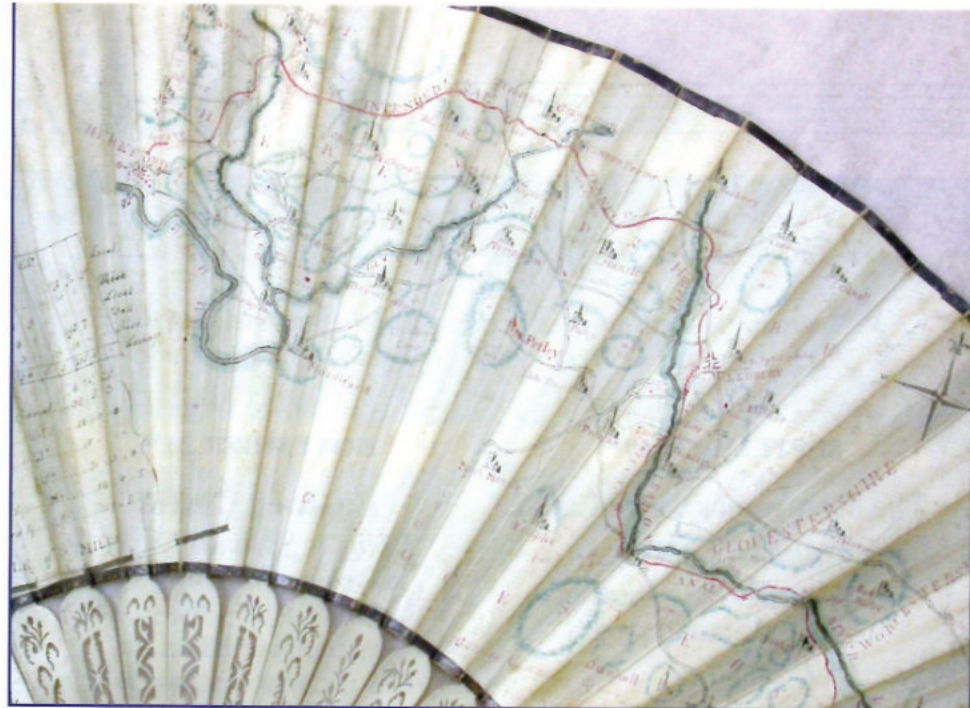
Member Lucien Perring voluntarily manages a photo-library and press clippings for the Canal Trust. An alert Canal Trust Member contacted Lucien to advise him that a temporary exhibition at Hereford Library contained a very interesting item . . .

For many working in modern industry the corporate gift is an accepted part of business life. Such items are often given away free to mark important company events such as the launch of a new product, the foundation of a new company or as publicity at sponsored events. They are generally of an ephemeral nature and I would not expect very many of the pens, desk top thermometers, golfing umbrellas and the like that make up such gifts to be around in two hundred years time!

It was so in 1790 when the proposals for a canal from Gloucester to Hereford, with a branch to Newent, were being canvassed. When in 1791 the necessary Act of Parliament was obtained, it seems as was even then the custom, a number

of small gifts were given to shareholders by the Company as a record of the proposed scheme.

This particular item is in the form of a lady's fan upon which has been printed the plan drawn up by Josiah Clowes in 1791 and which formed part of the Act for the construction of the canal. Although now very faded much of its detail can still be made out. On the left is a panel headed "Plan of an intended Navigable Canal from Hereford to Gloucester; with a Collateral Branch to Newent" Underneath is a table entitled "Explanation" setting out various distances along the route. The remainder of the fan is a plan of the route of the canal as it was originally intended although subsequently, in 1793, the Act was amended to allow the canal to run direct to Newent. If you have a copy of the book on 'our' canal written by the late David Bick you will find the plan reproduced on page 14 [2003 edition] in somewhat clearer detail.



My thanks to the Member who brought this to my attention. Also to the Herefordshire Heritage Services, Herefordshire Council, who have care of the fan, for supplying the images and granting us permission for their use.

Although asked to write a short piece about the fan I recently came across a reference to yet another item of H&G Canal history. Shortly before his death David Bick passed to the Canal Trust the correspondence that formed part of his researches for his book concerning the canal. Included in these was a reference

to three items of silverware then in the possession of a family in Tibberton. These were a silver salver and silver tea and coffee pots. All were engraved "An honourable token from the Hereford and Gloucester Canal Company." However no explanation as to how, when and why they were presented was apparently known. I would be very pleased to hear from any reader who knows anything about these items and can shed light on their history. *My contact details are on the inside back cover.*

♦♦ LP



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Michael Limbrey

Across the border to hear of a major restoration project

OCTOBER 17TH

Gloucester's Industrial Heritage

Dr Ray Wilson

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NOVEMBER 21ST

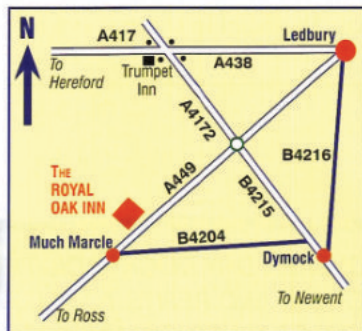
Eastnor Castle

Douglas Silvanus Davis

A look at the history of Eastnor Castle – the stone was transported on the H & G Canal (see page 26)

*Come and join us,
you will be made
Very Welcome!*

No meeting in December.





A number of our restoration sites hold open days for members and visitors to see our work there. For details of the next ones please see:

page 8 for Oxenhall

page 29 for Over



IWA The Inland Waterways Association

Gloucestershire & Herefordshire IWA Branch

5 October 2006

at Gloucester Yacht Club

Steve Haywood

Canal changes over 35 years –
a sentimental journey

2 November 2006

Wheatsheaf Inn, Leckhampton

Clive Field

Narrowboats to Norway –
a presentation of Clive's Journey

16 November 2006

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Thornbury

Peter Kelly

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Beale Park, nr Reading

SEPTEMBER 9 Newent Onion Fayre

SEPTEMBER 17 Oxenhall Open Day

NOVEMBER 11 Ledbury Craft Fair

Most of these are firm bookings – if any one can
help at any of them (*even for an hour*) please
contact Janet Moulton. [see inside back cover]

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For further details please
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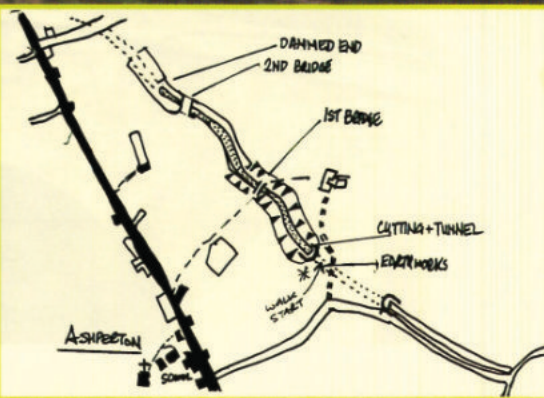


Exploring the Canal

ASHPERTON

John Forrest reports on a recent walk where a group of Members explored the Canal in the Ashperton area . . .

We started this particular exploration of the route of the H&G Canal starting at Ashperton cricket ground, where the quarter mile long Ashperton Canal Tunnel runs below. The first clues are large earth banks which are the spoil heaps from digging out the canal tunnel and the approach cuttings. As we continued through dense undergrowth the high sides of the cutting become apparent and the obligatory rubbish tip appears. The vast size of the cutting makes



you think about the numbers of men employed to work with wheel barrows and horse drawn carts to excavate this cutting. There must have been hundreds of men pouring over the site with barrows being pulled up the side of the cuttings by horse powered windlasses. These men worked from sunrise to sunset and lived in tents near the canal site. Food would have been provided by the Canal Company and the cost deducted from the men's wages.

The logistics must have been incredible! The tools of the day were manually operated whereas today we have excavators, draglines and lorries.

Suddenly the first accommodation bridge pops into view, this is the highest bridge on the route and is in really good condition considering its age. We switch sides and continue our



Top of page: Large earth banks of spoil from the original Canal excavation.

Above: The first accommodation bridge.

Photos and map: John Forrest

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walk by the side of some mature cherry trees. The canal is more visible now as some of the trees have been cleared. The second accommodation bridge is traversed across and we find ourselves back on the other side of the canal bank. We continue to the dammed end of the canal. Here swans patrol up and down the canal and the ground is flatter with hop yards on either side of the towpath. The sun begins to set as the Members return to the cricket ground where the walk began.

We always seek permission of land owners before commencing any walks over private land. Most walks will be advertised in advance in **The Wharfinger** or on the web-site. Canal walks are always interesting with so many surprises. If you would like to join our small band of explorers, with free lashings of ginger beer, then please contact Martin Danks who currently organises the 'canal walking group'.

◆ JF



Above: Mature cherry trees line the route.



Above: Crossing the second accommodation bridge.

AYLESTONE PARK CANAL PROJECT

Herefordshire Council have completed the tender document for removing and treating the silt from the canal and building the access road and car parks on Aylestone Park. Several companies are interested and tendering for the work which is due to begin in early September and last for up to 8 weeks.

One part of the work is to build outlets from land and surface water drains and

this will be conveniently used as a feeder for the canal.

There are regular meetings of the Aylestone Park Association to discuss the detail of further work on the Park. The Canal Trust volunteers are pleased to continue to play an active part with the Council and the other partners in the provision of this important public asset.

◆ MD



A VISIT TO EASTNOR CASTLE

Regular readers will know that the exceedingly interesting ongoing series about the material purchased from Bonhams - and more recent articles relating to the 'Railway Maps' - are written by H&G CT Council of Management Member Caroline Jones whose 'day job' is in the Waterways Trust's archive at the National Waterways Museum in Gloucester Docks. In May she took a 'busman's holiday' to join our volunteer Advertising Co-ordinator Colin Dymott who had arranged a visit to the archives of Eastnor Castle. Initially, their hopes of finding records mentioning the H&G Canal in any detail were dashed . . .



The castle is situated in extensive grounds just north of Ledbury and was built by the 1st Earl Somers in the very early 19th century, finally being completed in 1820. In the first eighteen months of construction (beginning in 1810) 4,000 tons of Forest of Dean sandstone was carried along the H&G Canal from Gloucester to Ledbury where it was offloaded to be taken by mule and cart to the site of the castle. Previous to this the family had taken an interest in the canal that ran so close to their estate so we were hopeful of finding some plans or other records referring to the canal.

The family improved the estate through the 19th century; major internal refurbishment was undertaken by the 2nd Earl who in 1849 commissioned Pugin to redecorate the Drawing Room and by

the 3rd Earl who lavishly redecorated the Long Library and State Bedroom in the 1860s and 1870s. The Earldom became extinct in 1883 and the last Earl Somers inherited the castle in 1920; in 1926 he was appointed Governor of Victoria in Australia and the castle was left empty.

The parents of the present owner, the Hon. Elizabeth Somers Cocks and Benjamin Hervey-Bathurst, moved into the castle in 1949 and began the slow process of reviving its fortunes. James Hervey-Bathurst and his family came to live in Eastnor in 1988 and have carried on with the work at the castle so that it is now a venue for corporate entertainment, weddings and parties as well as a deservedly popular tourist spot.

Colin and I turned up at the castle a little early for our appointment with the Archivist Douglas Silvanus Davis; there was no one around especially as being a weekday it was not open to the public. It was really very nice to see the exterior of the castle and the grounds, so peaceful; I've only ever been there for big shows involving steam engines or Land Rovers!

Douglas arrived and took us into the castle; I think apart from a few staff we were the only ones inside the building, we were taken to a small (relatively speaking of course) dining room where the (14 seat!) table was made available for our use. The first place we went to was a small interior room where most of the

archive material is kept. It was all boxed and with Douglas' help we sorted out a few boxes and maps to take back to the dining room. We didn't find a great deal of interest regarding the canal in those boxes and nothing at all on the maps, beautiful though they were. The archives at the castle are mainly the personal papers of the family and the estate records. Secretly I had hoped to find some useful maps of the canal but this was not to be the case. The few references we did find have been added to Douglas' card index and will be easier to find again. While looking through the boxes a gentleman with a camera turned up, he was taking new pictures for the display of castle life for visitors and wanted to take pictures of Douglas and us looking at the archive material. We didn't mind in the least although Colin did ensure a copy of **The Wharfinger** was in the picture as you can see! We left **The Wharfinger** with Douglas as he was very interested in the Canal.

To assuage our disappointment that the H&G Canal did not feature to any great extent within the documents we had seen, Douglas offered to take us to a turret room in another part of the castle where more archives were stored, just in case any were of interest. We crossed the castle and went up a very grand staircase, along a few corridors and then up another much smaller winding staircase to the turret room. Its main contents were a number of shelf units packed with dozens of old volumes, many of the volumes contained copies of letters and memos written by the estate manager and looked to be quite interesting. We started looking through the volumes one by one and gradually came across the canal and the Ballard's mentioned. The topics under discussion included the purchase of land for the canal at 'Hill Top' from a Mr Alan Higgins who wanted £500 plus a bridge for his land in 1840; new locks wharves and a warehouse at Ledbury being built

in 1843; the installation of an engine to supply water to Earl Somers by Stephen Ballard in 1843 and the construction of a boat for Earl Somers by Robert Ballard in 1842. Having looked through a few volumes we discovered that actually most were indexed which made searching much easier. It is quite obvious that we will need to return to Eastnor to go through these volumes in greater detail. Whilst we are unlikely to find anything that may help with the restoration of the canal it will be very interesting to return to Eastnor and see what we can find about the family's involvement with the canal and how it was run.

All in all Colin and I had a very interesting morning at Eastnor and Douglas was exceedingly helpful; we were very grateful for his interest and help. Just as we were leaving I commented on the beautiful chairs we had been sitting on to look at the archives - Douglas said "Yes, *they are nice aren't they, they're Chippendale*". I think I nearly fainted, one of those chairs is worth more than my car!

Eastnor Castle has a very good website at www.eastnorcastle.com which gives further details of all facilities, opening times and special events; a visit to the Castle is thoroughly recommended.

◆ CJ



Over pen Days

We are now half way through this year's Open Days at Over.

Although we had unable to run them last year, it was with renewed enthusiasm that the volunteers rallied round and an excellent show of teamwork was displayed. The first Open Day had competition with one of the England games during the Football World Cup. Despite this, a good steady stream of visitors came to see our work at Over Basin.

Having set a successful standard for the first one the second Open Day started slowly but we ended up just as successful with another steady stream of visitors.

With more than twenty new members recruited and nearly a thousand pounds raised between the two events we are pleased that our efforts have been rewarded.

Some of the highlights have been:

- ◆ A good show from the Gloucester Model Boat Club in June.
- ◆ Trips on Mister Maysey around the basin in July.
- ◆ Craft stands including canal ware painting, willow weaving and quilting.

- ◆ Demonstrations from Sailing for the Disabled and Guide Dogs for the Blind.
- ◆ Eric Bottomley with his very impressive prints in July
- ◆ An excellent plant stand run by new volunteers Paul and Wendy Henshaw.
- ◆ Not forgetting our white elephant and second hand book stalls.
- ◆ Guided tours of the Over site.

The next one hits August Bank holiday. It will be a challenge to find enough volunteers who are not on holiday. If you have a window of opportunity on Sunday 27th August then we will be pleased to have you aboard. Please contact Maggie Jones, (*see inside back cover*). ◆ **MJ**





Photos: Amy Jones/Maggie Jones



The next Open Days

Visitors are always welcome at Over but on **Open Sundays** we are offering you even more, including:

- ◆ guided tours ◆ boat rides ◆ photographic exhibits ◆
- ◆ handicraft stalls & demonstrations ◆ model boat demonstrations ◆

27th August • 24th September ◆ 11am – 4.30pm



Following the H&G CT's purchase at auction of the numerous historical documents relating to the H&G Canal [see article on page 24 of edition 85 of

The Wharfinger] Council of Management Member,

Caroline Jones (whose 'day job' is in the Waterways Trust's archive at Gloucester) willingly undertook the initial recording of the documents for us in her own time – and also ensured their safe-keeping. Following her evenings delving deeper into the collection – here is the fourth of a series of articles by Caroline giving more detail about some of the interesting documents that we purchased for just under £4,000.



4th instalment

The Committee-Related Documents

The next set of documents to come under consideration is a variety of what I call 'committee related documents'; many are letters while others are financial documents.

The earliest is a letter concerning a bill for Mr Parsons Canal payments dated July 20th 1797 and posted in Bath to Messrs Smith, Parsons & Smith of Bristol. The payments seem to relate to share purchases dating between 1794 and 1798 and come to a total of £375. The first payment being made *At the first meeting ...Nos 669 & 670*. We then have a jump of 37 years to the next letter dated 9th October 1834, which is a letter to Hubert Edy from a Philip John Miles of Bristol. The letter discusses a property valuation at *Duckswitch* and an associated insurance policy; it mentions a *Stonehouse*, a piece of land for a nursery and *H&G Canal Completion*.

The next few documents are interesting financial records, the first two dated 1837 and 1840 are from Mr Ballard to the Canal Co, both list charges for the carriage of stone and coal on the canal, *for Wharfage charged at Over* (see fig 1) and for the weighing of stone, in addition the 1837 documents lists *Tonnage Thos Evans ticket No 6820*; could this be a boatman on the canal? The charges listed include 200 tons of stone to Barbers Bridge at 2/8 in 1837

and loads of between 9 and 31½ tons of stone at 2/8 in 1840. The third financial document is a *Statement of the Receipts and Expenditure on account of the Completion of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal up to the 31st December 1840*. The receipts include revenue from the finished part of the canal – £3059.19.10, rent on Monkhide Mill – £10.00.00 and a loan – £680.00.00, while the expenditure includes salaries – £1473.6.5, canal cutting £9525.7.5 and *Smithwork and Castiron work* – £433.1.11. The total receipts/expenditure being £27155.11.10 and balancing nicely; *Liz would have been proud!*

Next there are letters and receipts from the early 1840s. A number are from *Bicknell's, Roberts, Finch & Neale* of 57, Lincoln Inn Fields to Hubert Edy and are concerned with payments of expenses and accounts and advertising for a loan in a register to which the firm subscribe. One of the documents is actually three letters; all are dated 25th February 1840 and are between Messrs Herries, Farquhar & Co, Bankers, St James St London and Thomas and Stephen Ballard, the letters concern the sale of shares totalling £9183.12.8 and the power of attorney required for the transaction, interestingly one also mentions that Stephen Ballard has *gone over to Bosbury to attend to the new works on the Canal*.

From 1843 there is a letter to Mr Edy from a Charles Taddy of Shannon Court about his expenses of 1 Guinea per 6 hour day which the Canal Co want reduced, he

		Mr Ballard		To the LC & G Canal Co	
1834	Dec 7/5	1	Charge of 30 Tons of Stone to Egrot	1	2 8
1835	Jan 2nd	1	Do 25 Tons of Coal for Hot at Egrot	6	2 8
	10	1	Do 18 1/2 Tons of Do at Do	4	8 0
		1	Wharfage charged at Over for the	0	2 9
11	1835	1	Carriage of 20 Tons of Coal for Hot at 1/4	5	6 8
May		1	Do 200 Tons Stone to Barden at 20	26	13 4
		1	Wharfage 1/2 Tons of Do at 1 1/2 Tons	0	5 9
		1	Wharfage for Coals loaded to 5220	3	4 0
				£	41 5 8
Settled July 10th 1837					
P. Money					

Fig 1: 1837 from Mr Ballard to the Canal Co. Wharfage charged at Over.

says that *when I consider the result of my labours, I am the more surprised at your then wishing or attempting to reduce them (the charges).* Well it's always worth a try to reduce costs! Unfortunately the letter does not tell us what his labours were or what result he achieved.

The next few documents from 1845 are different. The first is a personal letter from W Money Kyrle to Hubert Edy, the letter is written on behalf of the Reverend KE Money who has resigned as Chairman of the Committee due to health problems and wishes to notify the members of the Committee that he holds himself perfectly exempted from any past or any further liability.

Also from 1845 is a document simply entitled *Proposals*, it concerns the disposal of the new line from Ledbury to Hereford at the cost price and

the sale of the line from Gloucester to Hereford with their liabilities, at a price that will give their shareholders £20 per share – as always the shareholders must be paid. With this document is a slip of paper listing the figures for mortgages and loan notes payable between 1844 and 1854, the total for the ten years being £75077.00.00. The last handwritten document is a letter from Phillip Ballard to Hubert Edy, assuring him that his bill has not been forgotten and that he *should be glad to pay you this cash if it was in my power, the letter is signed Your affectionate Cousin Phillip Ballard.*

They congratulate the Shareholders in being enabled to lay before them the following amount of Tonnage in the months of January, February, and March, for			
	£	s.	d.
1841	450	15	0
1842	468	13	9
1843	1,067	17	2

showing a more rapid progress in the extension of the trade than could have been anticipated in so short a time.

Fig 2: Tonnage on the Canal (see next page)

To conclude this instalment we will look at the printed documents, all of which are from the Canal Co Committee.

From 1841 there is a report on the state of the Canal with a statement of receipts and expenditure ... up to August 31st 1841, at this point the *Cutting between Ledbury and Moorend ... is completed but no Works on the line between Canon Froome and Hereford are yet commenced.*

From May 1845 there is a copy of a Minute of the Committee stating that *the Canal will be opened into Hereford on Wednesday next, the 21st instant, and that there are many expenses yet to be incurred to finish up the works.* The document has been sent to the representatives of the late Mr Philip John Miles and says that the committee have decided to postpone the payment of Interest to Preference Shareholders in order to finish the work in hand.

Finally, there are five Reports from the

Committee dated 1840-1845. These reports give detailed accounts of the progress of work on the canal in the period; they also tell us about the tonnage carried on the canal (see fig 2), the water supply to the canal and the names of the committee members of the Canal Company.

This is yet another interesting bundle of historical documents, giving us an insight into progress in building the canal, how it was worked and the challenges faced by the Canal Company then in much the same way as the Canal Trust faces challenges today.



When the CofM agreed to bid for these papers at the auction we had hoped to secure this collection of historic records for a lot less than £4,000; however, there can be little doubt – reading Caroline's detailed reviews – that we made the right decision! There are two more instalments to come - Ed.



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ON THE MAP!

by Cliff Penny

Some years ago a Member asked me why my family and I spent so much of our time on H&G Canal Trust matters – “what was the reward”? All three of us over the past 30 years have spent many enjoyable holidays elsewhere on the inland waterways network and have travelled what must now add up to thousands of miles (and passed through countless locks of all shapes and sizes) and spanning a very considerable part of the country. When doing so we try not to forget that a very substantial part of the inland waterways system would not exist today if it had not been for the many thousands of hours of campaigning, lobbying, fund-raising and physical restoration that has taken place (and continues!) to ensure that there is **more** of this national asset brought back into active use for present and future generations to enjoy. *So perhaps it is reasonable to play a part in adding back what will be one of the most attractive 34 miles of canal to the interconnected national inland waterways network.*

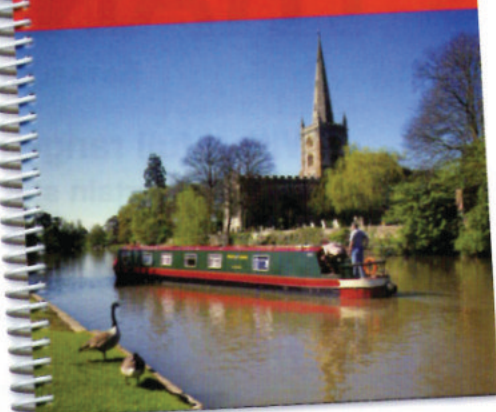
In addition, for my own part, I have always added that the thin blue line of a restored canal clearly showing on the latest edition of the Ordnance Survey map is the ultimate reward – “I helped to put that (back) on there”. Then, of course, there are the various specialist Guides to the inland waterways – however, it is going to be some years before one is published to assist in navigating the H&G Canal.

Then a copy of the latest (2006) edition of the Ordnance Survey based **Nicholson's Guide to the Severn, Avon and Birmingham** was sent to me... and on page 79 there is the extract from the Ordnance Survey map showing the River Severn and Gloucester. In addition to the River itself (a rather broader blue line!), Gloucester Docks and the Gloucester and

Collins | **NICHOLSON**

Waterways Guide 2

Severn, Avon & Birmingham



Sharpness Canal, we have the short length of the H&G Canal shown in water at Over, the next section shown dotted and the words “Start of Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal (under restoration)” - with a cross reference to page 100.

About half of page 100 of this latest **Nicholson's Guide** is devoted to a section on “Waterways up the Severn” – some three quarters of this narrative being devoted to a brief history of ‘our’ canal. Whilst earlier editions had mentioned the history of the H&G Canal at this point the latest entry is considerably expanded. And in the midst of it all is a reference to ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE “see page 81” – this is the page where readers are advised where to eat when in the area – of the nine entries for Gloucester that for ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE is the most extensive... “Well worth making the effort to visit and enjoy the newly restored canal basin, an exciting evening and daytime restaurant menu prepared from fresh local produce and the Visitor Centre...”

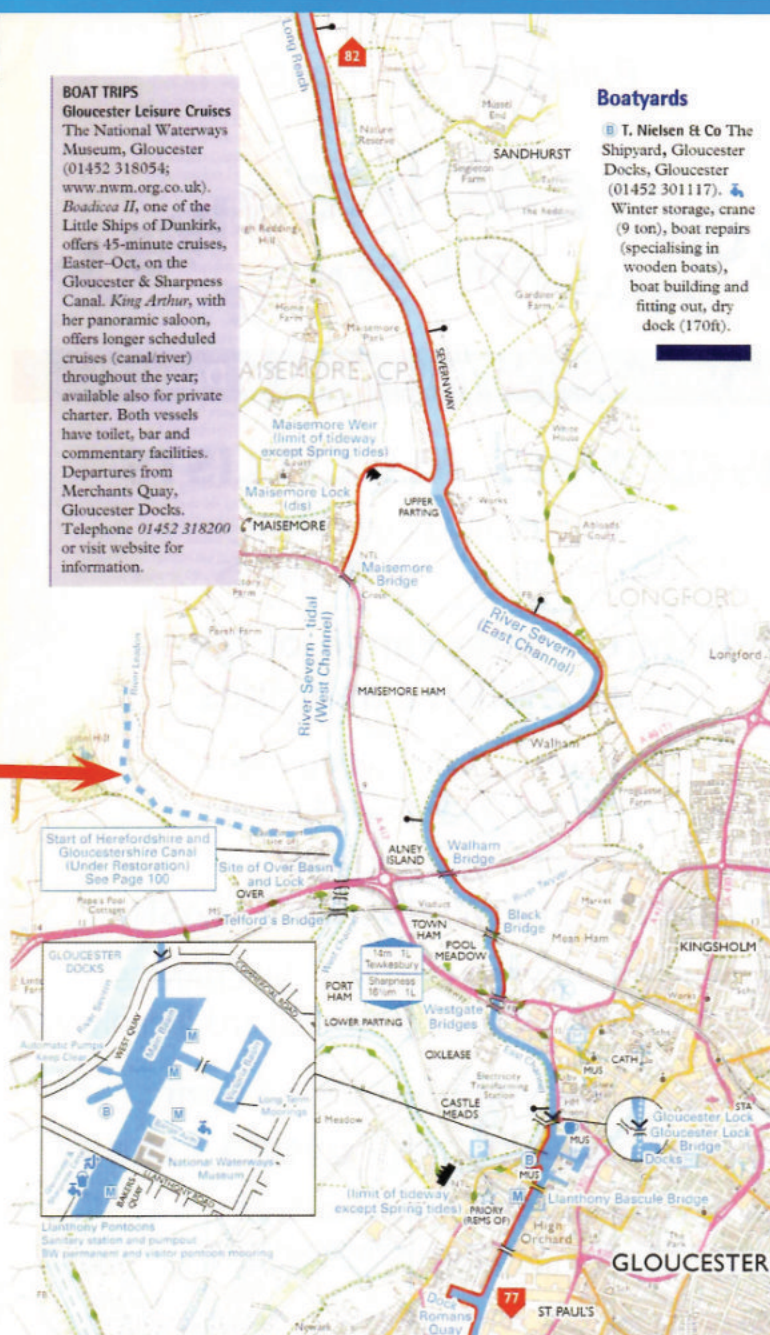
So we are now well and truly on the map! Thank you Nicholson's. ♦ CRP

BOAT TRIPS**Gloucester Leisure Cruises**

The National Waterways Museum, Gloucester (01452 318054; www.nwm.org.co.uk). *Boadicea II*, one of the Little Ships of Dunkirk, offers 45-minute cruises, Easter-Oct, on the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal. *King Arthur*, with her panoramic saloon, offers longer scheduled cruises (canal river) throughout the year; available also for private charter. Both vessels have toilet, bar and commentary facilities. Departures from Merchants Quay, Gloucester Docks. Telephone 01452 318200 or visit website for information.

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Above: Winching a fallen oak including its roots from the canal corridor.

Winches & Things

The moving of a fallen tree from the canal corridor is a difficult job. It is usually made worse by the small space on the towpath which makes the use of a tractor restricted. The solution is provided by a heavy-duty hand operated 'Tirfor' type winch. The area around the trunk is cleared for access for the sling which is connected to the anchored winch. The anchor point is usually a substantial nearby tree to which a flat webbing stop has been secured.

The winch is normally operated by one or two volunteers, a third makes sure that the tree encounters no snags on its passage. When the tree has been successfully moved, the winch is

disengaged and the logs can be cut up and trailed to the compound for appropriate disposal.

Small ratchet winches can also be employed for the extraction of saplings that occasionally take root in the canal bank. It is important to pull these as their roots will over time penetrate the puddle clay and lead to leaks through this otherwise watertight natural membrane. Equally so dead roots need to be removed as initially they form a plug in the clay but eventually they will rot and then a leak through the clay puddle will develop. Such root removal is therefore vital as water loss is very important concern in any canal system.

◆ JF

Below: Winching fallen trees and saplings from the canal corridor.



Photos: John Forrest

We're here

Customer Services: 0845 600 1616

(calls charged at local rate)

here

Technical Helpline: 0845 722 7853

(calls charged at local rate)

and here.

www.castlecement.co.uk



CASTLE CEMENT

HEIDELBERGCEMENT Group

NIMBLE FINGERS REQUIRED!

Many of you will have seen our sales stand and know that we have a Lucky Dip. This is a great enticement to children and gives us chance to talk to the parents. We keep the price low so this means lots of small items. All these have to be wrapped – is there anyone (preferably in the Hereford area) who could sit and do this for us?



If so please contact
Heather Worth or
Janet Moulton.

◆ JM

GOODBYE FUDGE!



Many of you will have met Fudge, a cat who lived at Staunton's Hill, who has been a regular companion whenever we are working on site. She feels like a long-established part of the team but we've now had to bid a sad farewell to Fudge as her owners are moving away from the area.

◆ NB

COPY DEADLINE THE FOR NEXT ISSUE:

9TH October, 2006

Anecdotes from HEREFORD

CANOEING ON THE CUT

The present St Thomas Cantilupe CE Primary School in Widemarsh Street, Hereford, was previously used for girls Secondary Education (the boys were in the school on the other side of the road).

During the late 1950's it was home to the Bluecoat School. The dining room was in a building near the canal, and canoes were kept in a nearby shed and the girls were allowed to paddle on the canal.

RUN AWAY JACK

Children growing up on the College Estate at Hereford in the 1960's used to go swimming in the river Lugg at Shelwick and part of the way followed the canal through what is now to be the new Aylestone Park. The path was known as "run-away-Jack" and there are two theories on the name:-

- 1 the children scrumped apples on their way and were chased by "Jack" from the "big house" who had dogs, a stick and a gun ...
- 2 the railway runs parallel to the canal for a short stretch, and "years ago" there was a run-away-train, the engine driver being Jack!

◆ MD



At the heart of England's waterways

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

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

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sales@braunstonmarina.co.uk

CONTACTS

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 gardeners to first aiders, brickies to those willing to help with a shovel or pen.

Contact any of these names TODAY!

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The Wharfinger

The Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal

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

THE CANAL TRUST

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 1,200 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 major restoration sites in each county, which together extend to some 3.5 miles.

