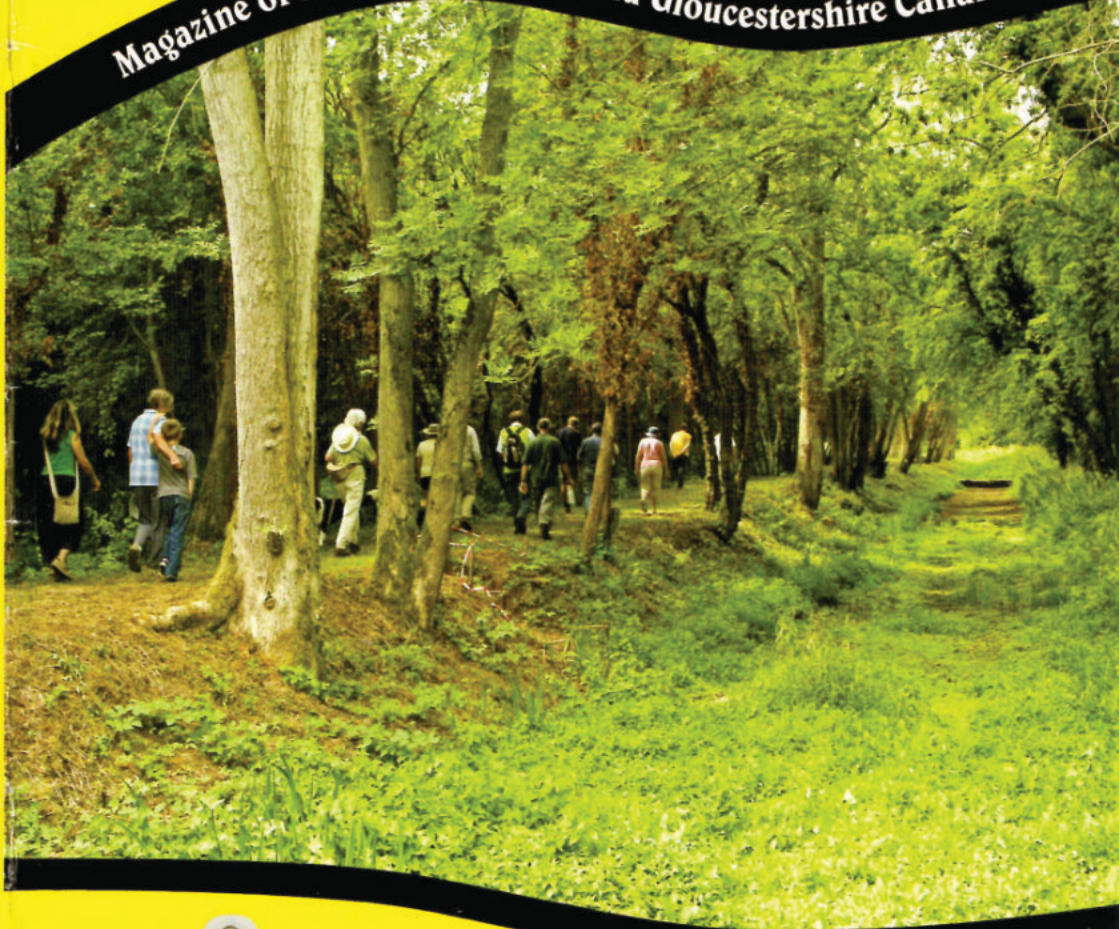


The **Wharfinger**

Magazine of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust



Winter 2006/7

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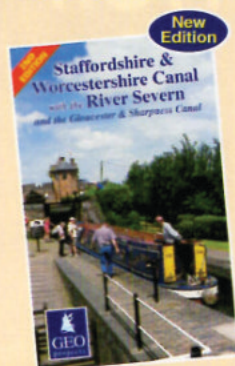
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Inside back cover: Contact details



FRONT COVER PHOTO:

Open Day visitors walk along the towpath at Yarkhill – by Robin Smithett

The sweet smell of Hereford.

In Hereford we are used to the wonderful smell of fresh apples that lingers around the county in Autumn as the harvest is brought in. It's reassuring to know that this Hereford tradition continues as we mill the apples to make our cider: So when you treat yourself to some of England's best known ciders, it's pleasing to know they're made locally.



The pint to refresh
Canal Volunteers!

Bulmers⁸³



◆ CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN ◆

Three months as Chairman and I am learning fast – as expected it is a very steep learning curve, and the ramifications of an active Canal Trust are becoming apparent!

Reviving the PAST...

I am very pleased that more of the canal's past is coming to light. It really started with the purchase of the papers at Bonhams – and through the generosity of our Members we have almost covered the cost. Especial thanks to Ledbury and District Society for their recent generous donation of £500. More papers from 1917 have been donated by Mr Tim Ward – intriguing correspondence between George Ballard of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Company and the Sanitary Laundry Company of Hereford. *More research to do there!* Our Members have also gleaned more information on H&G Canal Co. silverware - about which there will be an article in a future edition.

Working together in the PRESENT...

Work continues at a number of locations with the restoration of the aqueduct at Oxenhall, at Yarkhill, at Aylestone Park and at THE WHARF HOUSE. The Trading Company is coming to the end of a busy year, with visits to major shows and local events – *raising both money and awareness of the Canal*. I recently attended the Annual General Meeting of British Waterways, the cuts in their grant from DEFRA will have a huge impact on the current state of our waterways and on major restoration works in which they are involved. Although we are not a BW waterway the future of the inland waterways is vital to us all. We must keep a high profile in the waterways world, so yet more helpers are required to attend events and take on some of the spreading the word.

The FUTURE...

This is very much in the hands of you, the Members. The current Council of Management and our other bands of volunteers have great expertise in many areas but we still need people with specialist skills. A Civil Engineer specifically to help with ongoing projects, a bidwriter to deal with MAJOR grant making bodies, some one to run a one-off fundraising event (I have an idea but not the time!) – *now there is a CHALLENGE!*

◆ Janet Moulton, Chairman



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Towards Self-sufficiency



by Cliff Penny

Many of our Members and supporters will be aware of the very serious cuts in **British Waterways'** Government funding suddenly imposed by DEFRA which has left BW with a *major challenge*. For a number of years BW had been diversifying and strengthening their sources of income to become less reliant on this annual grant – it being accepted that the costs of managing and maintaining our inland waterways can never be covered solely from income from boaters, commercial waterway users, riparian waterways businesses and fishermen. *Indeed, why should the income solely be from such sources?*

Increasingly our waterways are being recognised (and used) by a much larger section of the population and in many areas have become linear parks to be enjoyed by all (*yet only a fraction of the users directly contribute to their upkeep*). The benefits of inland waterways are significant in both urban and rural areas; they are a vital component in the economical well-being of the area as well as a valuable public amenity.

The H&G CT recognised, a number of years ago (*as part of our strategy for building firm foundations for the future*), that we too had to diversify and secure additional income streams to the more normal. When development is proposed adjacent to the Canal we work with the local authority to secure 'Planning Gain' for the benefit of the Canal (*and, ultimately, the whole community*). This can include the transfer of the freehold of the land through which the restored H&G Canal will pass, a financial contribution towards the costs of restoring/reconstructing the Canal and legal arrangements to ensure

a modest perpetual annual income from every new property adjacent to (and in the vicinity of) the Canal. We also realised how important it would be to have direct ownership of waterside businesses at key locations so that such businesses transferred all profits (*not just a small percentage*) towards future Canal operational costs.

A number of sites within both counties have already been the subject of 'Planning Gain'. The Swan Hill Homes development at Over included all of the above on one site – including the agreement that resulted in the shell of ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE being constructed by them for £1. Regular readers will know that we have successfully completed the fit-out of the ground floor. Our major grant from DEFRA was awarded at 50% of the fit out costs (not 75% as expected) therefore we urgently need additional funds to complete the 'B&B' letting bedrooms on the upper two floors – an essential part of the enterprise to secure the planned income stream from the building. *So we too have a major challenge!*

On pages 22/23 of this edition we launch a major appeal to enable us to complete ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE. We are recognised as leading the way amongst voluntary groups in securing such 'Planning Gain' and it is very important that we have the financial resources to complete the fitting out as soon as possible. Please do consider how you (or a company that you have dealings with) can assist us. *Your support will be greatly appreciated and help us to help ourselves so that we secure this vital source of income for the long-term.*

CRP

Ideal for Christmas?

The seven spiral bound Nicholson's Waterways Guides, covering the whole country, were completely revised for 2006. We have one complete set donated to assist our fundraising – an ideal Christmas gift!

Ordnance Survey based full colour mapping shows locks, bridges, tunnels, towpaths, aqueducts and many other waterway features/facilities including point to point mileage plus detail of the surrounding areas. The text includes a brief history of each waterway, information about nearby towns and villages, local shops and other services plus places of interest, pubs and restaurants (and much, much more) – of interest to walkers, cyclists – and boaters.

Each Guide sells for £12.99. **Written offers (over £55 please!) for the complete set of seven** should be sent to the Editor by post, or to canal@penny-ep.co.uk, by 15th December. Free delivery within 10 miles of the Canal - otherwise by arrangement.



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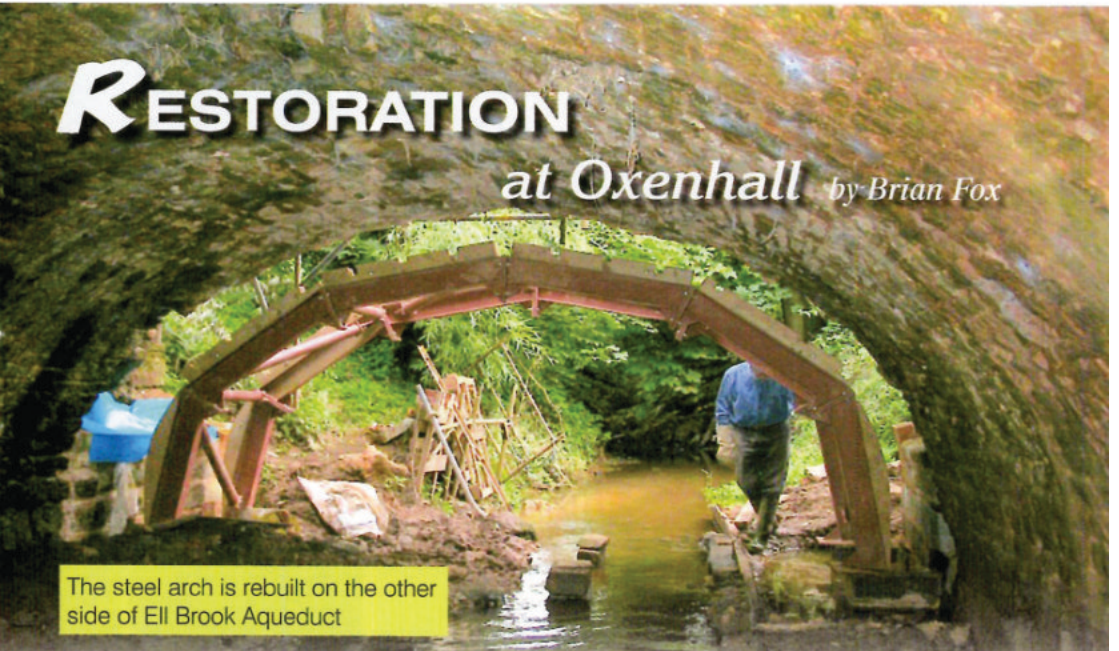
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RESTORATION

at Oxenhall *by Brian Fox*



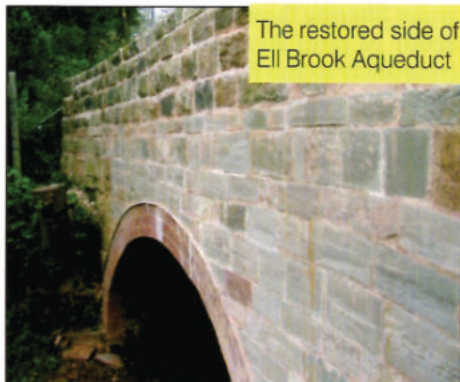
The steel arch is rebuilt on the other side of Ell Brook Aqueduct

Global warming has to be a good thing when it comes to canal restoration! This glorious summer has meant we could get down and work in the Ell Brook on the arch foundations of the aqueduct without getting too wet – and a bonus during really hot weather is that you are working in the shade with a gentle breeze blowing through. And still it continues as we eat *al fresco* and keep our tans topped up as lunch is taken at the beginning of October.

I am pleased to say that our numbers are in double figures most weeks and it looks as though it will be a bit of a squeeze when we do eventually have to retire to our cabin for breaks! The overspill could be accommodated in the new tool shed which now looks resplendent in our new livery of dark brown or green depending on which way it catches the sun. The colour came about as a result of mixing several tins of spare paint which had been accumulated but it is generally agreed that it is eminently suitable as an addition to our compound furniture. In fact painting seems to be so popular that someone was overheard suggesting that the cabin was looking a bit dingy and could do with freshening up. Who knows what colour

this might turn out? I did suggest our trusty tractor was looking a bit the worse for wear but it could be that may take a little more time and hard work – anyone got any pink paint?

The main focus, as always in recent months, has been on the aqueduct and the foundations have now been completed and the steel former is once again in place. It was put together just in time for the Open Day in September and gave visitors an opportunity to see the before and after in our efforts to restore the aqueduct. The scaffolding from the completed side had all been removed to show the arch in its full glory and the other side was still a sad



The restored side of Ell Brook Aqueduct



Above: Our volunteers start to rebuild the second side of the aqueduct.

Right: The hoist on a swing jib safely lifts and lowers materials and equipment from the bridge to the bed of Ell Brook.



sight, all the crumbling stonework having been removed, leaving a large hole to be filled. We had slowly taken out the loose decayed stones, powdered mortar and unsafe puddle clay until the solid structure was revealed. This had been assisted by the installation of a small hoist on a swinging jib, bolted to the 'Bailey' bridge, which allowed large pieces of broken masonry, concrete blocks and buckets of clay to be safely lifted out from the bottom of the brook under the aqueduct. The hoist also lowered all the steel sections down to the brook bed where they were erected to form the steel arch and formwork for the restoration of this face of the aqueduct.

Too much water during canal restoration is always a challenge and one of the arch foundations has a surplus of water filtering through from the canal which currently ends about 10 yards away. It proved impossible to stop the flow completely so this has now been controlled by diversion into pipes especially set into the foundations to take it away from our work area and into the brook. The restoration is now at the stage where work can continue from the scaffolding over the top of the arch and it doesn't matter if the Brook rises with the winter rains.

During excavation of silt from the bed of the brook we came across a large plank about 18ft long, 9" wide and about 3" thick. It appears to be very old and had been laid on edge from the side of the aqueduct into the middle of the brook at an angle. Another plank, in a similar situation but on the





Above: The very old and very long (and mysterious) plank?



opposite bank, was found last year but not considered significant at the time. Could they have been put there to keep the stream bed (which consists of cut stone laid under the arch for added strength) from being washed away during floods and thus weakening the whole structure? They have both been removed and we must closely monitor the bed when the next flood comes along! If anyone has another theory as to their use then I shall be pleased to hear it.



Thanks to everyone who came along to the Open Day and of course to those ladies who baked the cakes and served the refreshments. We were able to open up the whole length of canal land now owned or leased by the Canal Trust right from the fire station in Newent to the Lock Cottage. It was only for the day but gave an opportunity to walk those parts not normally open to the public and the fine weather helped to make it a most enjoyable day. Sales on the Trust stand were impressive and new Members were signed up to keep our numbers steadily rising. Thanks for all the favourable comments and we look forward to seeing you next year.

◆ BF



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In July our first outing was to the **Evesham Water Festival** where Derek, Taryna and I were surrounded by Daleks (*the theme of the decorated boats!*). Then we moved indoors to **All Saints, Hereford** where we held our book sale and had a display of our ongoing work at the various restoration sites. Members of CofM were there to explain our current and future work. It was the first day of the Three Choirs Festival so there were plenty of people, both locals and visitors, to hear our plans and a great deal of interest was shown.

At **Tibberton Flower Show**, Heather and I managed to get the gazebo up and, thanks to help from another stall holder, we managed to secure it against the wind; luckily it did not rain until the end of the show! The end of August saw us with what is always our largest display and sales stand of the year, at the **National Waterways Festival**, held this year at Beale Park, near Reading. A full report is on page 19.

This year was our first visit to the **Alfrick Show**, unfortunately it was on one of the windiest, wettest Saturdays of the year. Penny and I put the gazebo up but, for the first time, we had to abandon a show. It would have been impossible to keep our stock dry. *Rain we can cope with but not with wind as well!* Luckily we had greater success at **Newent Onion Fayre** as last year's rain was not repeated and Penny, Derek and Tom had a very successful day.

Almost the end of the season saw a well attended **Open Day** at **Oxenhall** with a good crowd taken on walks to the Aqueduct, and the Station site, and then return for a well earned cup of tea and piece of cake! *As always there is a great deal of interest in our progress here.*

At the time of writing we were preparing for our own **Craft Fair** in November, our final event of 2006, so again a big thank you to all who helped throughout the year. **Please come and join us in 2007 – it is hard work but fun!**

◆ JM

GRAND HOLIDAY DRAW 2006

Thank you to everyone who bought tickets – just over £2,200 was raised this year thanks to the hard work of our volunteers. As always our sincere thanks to the three prize sponsors without whose support the draw would not exist.

The winners were:-

1st PRIZE

NARROW BOAT HOLIDAY for FOUR

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Ticket No. 3800: Graham & Margaret White, Colwall.

2nd PRIZE

Two VIP tickets to **The London Boat Show 2007**
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Ticket No. 2244: Mrs Neff, Hartley Wintney.

3rd PRIZE

One night Dinner, Bed & Breakfast for two people at
THE WHARF HOUSE, Over, Gloucester.
Ticket No. 2195: Mr Wilkinson, Presteigne.



Work at Yarkhill

by Chris High

The last three months have been a busy period at Yarkhill.

Considerable preparation took place for our Open Day. My thanks to all who helped make it such a great success. Robin Smithett's report on this is on page 24.

A free concrete sectional building has been obtained, is destined to be our site hut and was quickly dismantled and moved to site! We were very grateful to **Ridgewood Construction** of Malvern for their help in the loan of a lorry for transporting the bits; *thank you*. A previously cleared bramble patch was cleared even further to provide site and access. Work is well underway on erection of the hut, which will provide very welcome shelter now that we are getting into the winter months.

Not only our section but also the feeder section of the canal ran out of water! The locals report that they have never seen the water level so low. We still lack water so are taking advantage of the situation by pulling saplings from the canal bed and strimming the lower banks, both activities being achieved without getting wet or muddy! It is now possible when standing in the bed at the bend in the canal to see the two ends of our section – real progress.



Above: The sectional hut is delivered.

Below left: The original bramble patch is cleared.





Left: Members of the Waterway Recovery Group (South West) help to clear the brush and retrieve the wood.

Below: The sleepers are positioned.



To promote hedge regeneration, and improve site safety, coppicing of the towpath tree/hedge line is now under way. We are very grateful to Waterway Recovery Group SW who joined us for a weekend in late September and helped us clear the brush and retrieve the wood.

From now through to March is the time of most activity on site - lots of controlled "slash and burn" to do.

So come on - don't let the winter doldrums set in - **VOLUNTEER!** Come and join us - we have jobs to suit everyone - you might enjoy it - we do - (*I think*)! Please do contact me on 01568 615 575. ♦ CH



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OVER Update

by Nigel Bailey



Over the last few weeks we have commenced a major project which will greatly improve the appearance of the entrance to the Basin. The approach to the 'Bailey' bridge has not been altered since we opened the Basin in 2000 – a solid surface of gravel on hardcore – which is functional but in no way attractive.

Step one was to improve the profile of the surface between the pavement and the bridge, in effect removing the dip using a hired excavator operated by various volunteers. The bridge approach still has to be functional to allow access for Severn Trent Water's 40-tonne tanker should they ever need to pump out sewage from their pumping station and the Environment Agency access to the flood gates on the River Leaddon.





While this was progressing, work started on preparing the area for laying paviors to match the ones already in place around THE WHARF HOUSE. The fencing opposite the first of the terraced houses had already been realigned so that it stands at an angle to the pavement, inviting people to enter the site. Teams then worked either side of the entrance, concreting into place the edging stones.

The excavator moved on to its next job of rearranging the access route from the entrance to the path around the wharf. A gently-sloping pathway was roughly cut between the fencing and the flower bed. The idea is that this will invite visitors to THE WHARF HOUSE to explore the Basin and will provide much more suitable access for pushchairs and wheelchairs.

Once this new path is in place, the existing gravel area leading down to the Basin will become unnecessary. So, a trench was cut across it for building the base of a brick wall which will form the edge to the paved area on that side. The concrete footings are now in place and several courses of concrete blocks have been laid on top. As I write, the first course of bricks is now in place.

Footings are being laid for the building of two brick pillars at the entrance and a hole has been dug and lined ready for installing a bollard. This is for security purposes and will prevent unauthorised vehicles entering the site; this will replace the gate on the bridge.

This work is being funded by **The Gloucestershire Environmental Trust** which provides grants from funds generated by the **Landfill Tax Credit Scheme**. *Thank you.* That Trust is, in turn, funded under the Scheme by **Cory Environmental**.

- 1 Work starts on diverting the path to the Basin.
- 2 The ground is levelled in preparation for the paving.
- 3 A hole is dug for a drop bollard.
- 4 Concrete is poured around the former for the bollard.
- 5 Edging bricks form the new curves of the entrance.
- 6 Thousands of paviors are laid from the road to the bridge.
- 7 Earth is moved to form the new contours of the path.
- 8 The brickwork is started on the wall.
- 9 Landscaping begins.



OTHER WORK AROUND THE BASIN

Several weekends during the summer were spent strimming the grass around the car park, below the terrace and around the lock; *there is always something to do on site!*

It is some weeks now since we have seen our pair of swans but the heron is still keeping tabs on the fish stock!

DRAGONFLIES



One of my favourite forms of wildlife on the canal are the dragonflies. I know little about them but admire their bold, bright colours. A visitor who had walked around the Basin recently left me a note about dragonflies:-

"We saw what looked like a dragonfly but one we did not recognise. It had a band of dark blue on its wings and what made us notice it was the distinctive pattern when it flew."

It would appear to be a male Banded Agrion (Agrion Splendens). Seen about May to August over slow flowing streams, rivers and lakes especially those with muddy bottoms. Common in the South of England. Nymphs live amongst reeds and water plants on muddy bottom. It has iridescent coloured patches – which is what we saw."

The note was signed "A Highnam resident"; thank you, whoever you are.

◆ NB

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We will be **CLOSED** from
(and including) Sunday, 24th
December; reopening on
Thursday, 4th January 2007.

All profits from **The WHARF HOUSE** will be used for the promotion and restoration of the Hereford and Gloucester Canal.

Over pen Days

During August and September we had another two successful Open Days at Over. Lots of new people learnt about the Canal for the first time. Highlights of the occasions included: –

- ◆ Bernard Tudor and Phyl Edwards display their excellent walking sticks
- ◆ Chris Clarke brought a vintage car.
- ◆ Local resident, Janice Lyall, demonstrated willow weaving.
- ◆ Gloucester and District Model Boat Club gave us a display of their craft.
- ◆ A large furry dog, donated by local resident, Pat Peters, was raffled.
- ◆ And further excellent displays of plants grown by Wendy Henshaw proved very popular.
- ◆ Visitors browsed around the second-hand books and white elephant stall.
- ◆ Light refreshments were popular.
- ◆ Our boat, Mister Maysey, gave many trips around the Basin with a commentary as passengers floated along.

Photo: Colin Dymott



- ◆ Nigel Bailey led conducted tours for visitors to understand our work at Over.
- ◆ Our volunteer artist, 'Arty' drew a number of visitor's portraits.
- ◆ THE WHARF HOUSE Restaurant was very busy, especially at lunch time.
- ◆ We had a number of new memberships to the Canal Trust.

Trust volunteers gave a lot of time and effort to make these days successful. *Thank you to all concerned.* ◆◆ MJ

IN MEMORY OF DON FREEMAN

At the last Open Day of the year, the Gloucester and District Model Boat Club unveiled their new bench in memory of Don Freeman. Ted Tedaldi thanked Don's friends Richard and Mavis Warriner for organising the construction

and installation of the bench, paid for from Don's will.

As a mark of thanks, the Model Boat Club presented Richard and Mavis with two black-and-white photographs of Sisson steam engines which were built in Gloucester until 1968. Richard lives in Sissons Road in Gloucester but had never seen a Sisson engine, hence the idea for the gift. The photographs shows a 12 inch stroke 4-cylinder engine built in 1914 for South Shields Marine Engineering College and a 9 inch stroke 2-cylinder engine built in 1891 for the steam yacht "Phantom". ◆◆ NB

Richard and Mavis Warriner with Ted Tedaldi (right) from Gloucester and District Model Boat Club sitting on the new bench.

Photo: Nigel Bailey



ANOTHER YEAR...

Becca Moulton reports on our annual presence at the Inland Waterways Association's flagship event – held at a different location somewhere on the national inland waterways network each August Bank Holiday – which involves a huge amount of work (and enjoyment) for our regular Trading Company volunteers ...

The National Waterways Festival was held this year at Beale Park. This is a repeat visit to this site and again, being over the Bank Holiday, it coincided with the Reading Festival a few miles down the road (although this had no effect on us at all). It's always nice to return to a site you know well.

I'd arranged to meet Mum just outside Reading at Aldermaston Station this year, so I could travel directly from home in London. Derek and Taryna were driving the van as usual, Ray and Barbara were travelling from Ross and Des and Lesley were travelling down from Leicestershire. Despite the various directions we'd all travelled from, we all met up on site on Friday afternoon without any problems.

As previously, we'd hired a 6m² marquee from the organisers, and as we're getting quite good at setting up the stand by now, we got everything ready in a few hours. Our marquee was in a pretty good spot, near enough to the food stalls to do the 'tea run' without too many problems and far enough away from the main arena to avoid conversations being drowned by noisy displays! As in previous years, we'd talked to the organisers and got permission to display one of our banners on the ringside to further spread the word about the H&G.



Ann Allen kindly draws this year's winning tickets, supported by Janet and Des

We all reconvened bright and early on Saturday morning (well, 9am!) and got ready for the hordes of visitors that come to the National whatever the weather. As luck would have it, the weather on the Saturday was very good, with occasional sharp showers that brought everyone scurrying to our stand. Pat Skeet (who, along with Dick) had joined us for the day took advantage of this to sell plenty of Grand Holiday Draw tickets. Des Pick had been doing his usual grand job of selling them in the morning and again that afternoon. We had one slight challenge that day in that someone appeared to have abandoned an elderly lady outside our tent, but we brought her in when it rained and fed her ice cream when requested! *She was later reunited with her daughter-in-law who was on another stand.* We weren't very happy with this situation and we didn't see the lady again for the weekend, so who knows what they did with her on the other two days!!

Sunday and Monday were quieter but there was still a great deal of interest in

... ANOTHER NATIONAL!

the H&G canal, with quite a few technical questions, which between us (and a copy of David Bick's book) we managed to answer. Des continued to sell plenty of Grand Holiday Draw tickets and Monday afternoon saw the Draw itself, kindly carried out by Ann Allen (*wife of Garth, the waterways artist who has painted various parts of the H&G*).

Suddenly it was the end of Monday afternoon and time to pack away the stand and displays again. We always seem to be able to do this much quicker than putting it all up! Derek had somehow managed to get the van second in the queue to come on site to load up, so we could pack up even quicker than usual. We officially lowered the H&G flag, to the sound of the Last Post, expertly hummed by Lesley and, by six o'clock, we were all on our way home.

Des lowers the H & G flag
after this year's event



Photos: Becca Moulth

Now I've cut back on my H&G commitments (*full time work in London isn't very conducive to attending every event*), I only meet up with the gang once or twice a year, but we all seem to slot into place very well. We each have our areas of expertise: Des and his draw tickets, Derek, Ray and Janet doing the explaining, and the rest of us persuading people to buy our stock. *What's more, we all have a good time doing it!* So, another year, another National successfully completed! Next year it's in Cambridgeshire, which will be a new experience for us all; and it's a new site, so we won't know what to expect until we get there. So, if you fancy spending some time on the stand at next year's National, why not join us - *you will be made very welcome*. Although it's hard on the feet, I can guarantee it'll be as complete a change from your everyday life as it is mine!

◆ BM

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Everyone is welcome to our monthly meetings held on the third Tuesday of every month, 7.30pm for an 8pm start.

DECEMBER

There will not be a meeting in December – the third Tuesday is too close to Christmas. *We will have our mince pies in January!*

JANUARY 16TH

Bird ringing and migration

Denis Jackson

Our annual wildlife talk – tracking our birds on their long winter flights

FEBRUARY 20TH

Herefordshire from the air

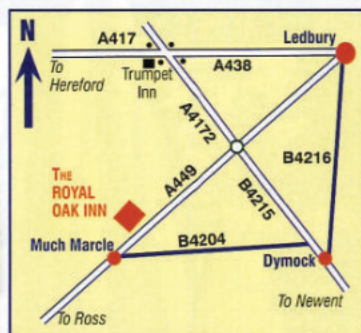
Derek Foxton

Last year we looked at Gloucestershire's industrial heritage – now we look at our other county from on high

MARCH 20TH

Full details of our speaker and the talk will be in the next edition of **The Wharfinger**.

Come and join us, you will be made very welcome!





We wish a
Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year
to all our Readers!



IWA

The Inland
Waterways
Association

Gloucestershire & Herefordshire IWA Branch

December 2006

As we are concentrating
Branch energies on the BW
funding cuts there will be no
December Social this year.

1 February 2007
7.30pm

at Gloucester Yacht Club
Dorset & Somerset Canal
Derrick Hunt

1 March 2007
7.30pm

Waterways Museum, Gloucester
AGM & Talk

Further details: **07913 261030**

An Invitation to **all** our Volunteers

SKITTLES



SOCIAL

Join us in this popular event at
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Saturday, January 13th at 7.30 pm

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THE WHARF HOUSE

A P P E A L

The Editorial in this edition has set the scene; the H&G CT has been striving to lead the way in planning for self-sufficiency as a vital part of its promotion of the restoration/reconstruction of the H&G Canal. It is very important that we take steps *now* to try to ensure that the funding is in place for the future long-term management and maintenance of the whole Canal.

THE WHARF HOUSE is a significant asset that forms part of that overall plan. However, we need to secure additional funds to complete the upper two floors to a high standard in order that we can gain the optimum income stream. *We have been advised to aim for high standards as that is where there is a significant shortfall in B&B accommodation in the area (and the greatest potential for profit).*

It is not viable to leave the upper floors unfinished for any period of time. The building can be run most economically when the seven bed and breakfast letting bedrooms are finished and we plan to do this as soon as possible. However, our shortfall in the DEFRA funding was some £80,000. Because our volunteers have made a substantial start on the upper floors alternative grant sources are unavailable to us; in any case very few funding bodies currently understand the complex situation of a canal restoration Charity wishing (*needing!*) to diversify and trade in this way. Perhaps this is a good place to stress that the freehold of THE WHARF HOUSE (and the Canal and surrounding land) is owned by the H&G Canal Trust. To comply with Charity Commission requirements the H&G CT cannot itself 'trade'. THE WHARF HOUSE is run by THE WHARF HOUSE COMPANY, a wholly owned subsidiary of the H&G CT Charity – and the Company is legally

constrained to donate all (*eventual*) profits to the H&G CT.

After careful consideration the Council of Management have decided to launch this Appeal for assistance – can you, your business (or one that you may be associated with) or, perhaps, your employer assist in one of the following ways, *please*:-

Sponsor a Bedroom

£5,000 secures the right (*within reason!*) to name the room for 10 years and to maintain a company promotional folder in that room for the period of Sponsorship. The Sponsorship would also be acknowledged for the period within the Visitor Centre.

Make a 'Soft Loan'

An interest free loan (*any amount from £800 upwards*) to be repaid in equal instalments between August 2010 and August 2017.

Assist with the supply of materials

If your Company is willing to provide high quality bathroom fittings, bedroom furniture and furnishings etc at very keen prices then please do get in touch!

On the facing page is a form – *please return it to Janet Moults as soon as possible* – we have to decide where our funding is coming from by mid January.

Any shortfall will have to be secured by commercial loan with an impact on our day to day cash flow.

Thank you.



to The H&G CT Chairman,
Janet Moulton,
18, Coningsby Court,
Coningsby Street,
Hereford,
HR1 2DF

THE WHARF HOUSE APPEAL

Please do not hesitate to contact Janet
to discuss any aspect in greater detail.

I/we wish to express interest in supporting the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal
Trust with the completion of the fitting out of THE WHARF HOUSE in the following way:-

1 Sponsor a Bedroom

(single donation, minimum £5,000).

I/we/my Company will sponsor a bedroom for 10 years; we wish to name the room

_____ OR we would not wish for any publicity ☐.

Please give your full details below*.

2 Make a 'Soft Loan'

(any amount from £800 upwards).

I/we/my Company will make a 'soft loan' of £ _____ interest free on the
understanding that it is repaid in equal instalments between August 2010 and
August 2017. Please give your full details below*.

3 Assist with the supply of materials

I/we/my Company wish to consider assisting with the supply of materials such as:-

_____ Please give your full details below*.

4 Other ?

I/we/my Company wish to assist in the following manner:-

_____ Please give your full details below*.

*Name _____

Tel: (day) _____

Company (if appropriate) _____

(evening) _____

Address _____

Would you like us to send
a replacement copy of

The Wharfinger?

☐

Thank you. We will contact you to discuss arrangements early in the New Year.
Please return as soon as possible; at the latest by **20th December 2006.**



Photo: Will Jones



Open day at Yarkhill

A group of visitors gather round to learn more of the work being done at Yarkhill.

On Sunday 6th August, the Trust organised a series of guided walks for the public along the canal towpath at Yarkhill, near Withington; some 7 miles from Hereford. Some of the access to the canal here is not yet on permissive rights of way, so the Open Day was a first opportunity to view this pound since our recent clearance work.

The walks enabled over 120 members of the public to inspect the ongoing restoration work on this section. A half mile of the canal bed has been cleared, up to the site of one of the locks, and the towpath is now available as a pleasant walk amongst the trees. The canal was not in water here, due to the dry conditions, but the clearance work enabled visitors to enjoy an easy walk along the towpath and to envisage the canal as it will be when fully restored.

Refreshments were provided in Yarkhill village hall, together with the Trust exhibition and sales stand. The leader for the work, Chris High, pronounced the event a great success. "We were very pleased to see so many local people come out to inspect the progress on the restoration of the canal." In addition to those on the walk, another 50 people came to the village hall find out more about the canal.



Photo: Robin Smithett

Above: Visitors to Yarkhill cross the bridge and climb the steps constructed by our volunteers.

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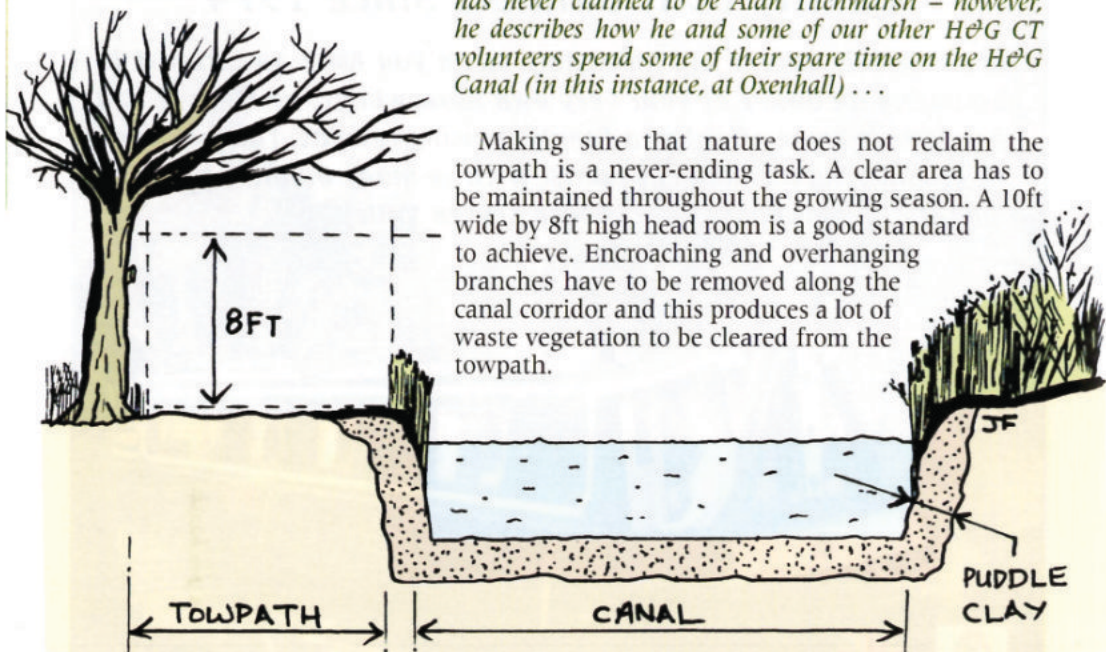
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Email: sales@severnboat.co.uk Web: www.severnboat.co.uk

Extreme Gardening!

Our regular volunteer and correspondent, John Forrest, has never claimed to be Alan Titchmarsh – however, he describes how he and some of our other H&G CT volunteers spend some of their spare time on the H&G Canal (in this instance, at Oxenhall) . . .

Making sure that nature does not reclaim the towpath is a never-ending task. A clear area has to be maintained throughout the growing season. A 10ft wide by 8ft high head room is a good standard to achieve. Encroaching and overhanging branches have to be removed along the canal corridor and this produces a lot of waste vegetation to be cleared from the towpath.



Dragging the bulky branches back to an open area or the compound for a monthly bonfire is a drawn out and sometimes tedious job. However, a four-wheeled hand truck has been fitted with an open cradle, made from galvanized steel flats, bent in to shape and bolted together. This small truck now has a very large carrying capacity which makes the clearance job so much easier.



Photos: John Forrest



With the steel cradle removed, two timber bearers can be attached to the truck to support the boat which again can be pulled along the towpath to House Lock and launched in the pound below. From time to time ivy, ferns and lichens have to be removed from the vertical stone faces of the restored lock and the boat provides an excellent floating platform. With a rope tied to each end, the boat can be positioned and steadied within the lock chamber while the cleaning takes place.

◆ JF



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waterway recovery group (wrg)

by Martin Danks



WRG volunteers have contributed much to the restoration of the H&G Canal over the years, ranging from working weekends to full-blown weeks with dozens, nay hundreds, of volunteers beavering away, travelling from all parts of the UK (and beyond!). They have worked on all the restoration sites on 'our' canal and held two large reunion working weekends at Over in 1999 and 2000.

During the last two years a South West group has emerged, with the hint in the title that they work in the South West of England and Wales! The annual programme is made up of weekend "digs" most months of the year and site support for the annual Saul Festival. This year included two weekends on the H&G at Aylestone and Yarkhill, with accommodation at Yarkhill Village Hall, as well as digs on the Grand Western Canal, Wilts and Berks, Cotswolds, and the Mon and Brec.



I have been to most of these sites during the last two years and enjoyed learning the working techniques, seeing other canals and developing ideas for our restoration. But most of all the camaraderie of the volunteers and a weekend away! At Risca (on the Mon and Brec) we worked in the snow on the fourteen locks site which sweeps down the hill to the M4 (and then under it!) - and from a boat clearing the

offside bank of overhanging trees. On the Grand Western we worked on Lowdeswell Lock and again, from a boat, exposed a wharf wall and a loading ramp covered with the usual vegetation. At Pike Lock on the Cotswolds we restored a culvert, but at tea break in the work compound we had to resort to ear muffs as hailstones the size of marbles clattered down on the corrugated iron roof!

This summer I also spent three days helping prepare the Saul Festival site on the Sharpness Canal, setting out fencing, sign posts and chairs. Thousands of visitors enjoyed the festival and it was a very different experience to digs on canals, but a good time was had in the searing heat and many useful contacts made.

The programme for 2007 will be planned this winter and we expect to welcome WRG South West again on the H&G in the Spring and Autumn.

◆ MD

WRG is a division of Inland Waterways Enterprises Limited, which is a subsidiary of the Inland Waterways Association.
Website: www.wrg.org.uk.

Photos: Brian Fox
and Judy Jacobs

Above: 'WRGies' work camp at Oxenhall in 2005

Middle: 'WRGies' laying paths at Aylestone Park

Below: 'WRGies' uncover the Station platforms at Newent



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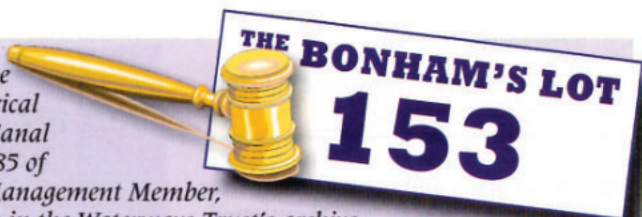
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Following the H&G CT's purchase at auction of the numerous historical documents relating to the H&G Canal [see article on page 24 of edition 85 of

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 fifth of a series of articles by Caroline giving more detail about some of the interesting documents that we purchased for just under £4,000.



5th instalment

The Railway Related Documents

The fifth set of documents in the Bonham Lot is dated between 1845 and 1848 and is related to railways and the canal.

The earliest, dated October 1845, is a draft *Memorandum of an Agreement* between the Canal Company and Thomas Waters a Gloucester Solicitor and Edward Leader Williams a Gloucester Engineer. The document records an agreement to sell the canal to the two men for £145,000 as long as they set up a Company and gain Parliamentary authority to convert the canal into a railway. The agreement includes a clause whereby if the Canal Company hinders the setting up of that Company to build the railway then they will have to pay £5,000 in damages to the two men. As this is a draft it is unsigned by either party.

Another document from 1845, also unsigned and so presumably also a draft, is a letter to the Canal Company calling a Special Assembly to be held in Ledbury. The purpose of the assembly being to confirm the sale of the Canal to the Welsh Midland Railway Company.

Following on from this are three connected documents; the first is a letter and notice addressed to Hubert Edy from William Price and Joseph Gibbins Proprietors of the Canal Company. The

letter invites Mr Edy to the meeting advertised in the notice, the meeting to be held at Ledbury on 13th May 1847 where a draft of a bill to construct the Hereford to Gloucester Railway will be available. At the meeting a petition in favour of the bill is to be written and sent to both Houses of Parliament.

The second document is a draft petition to the House of Commons, in favour of the railway. The inhabitants of Ledbury wanted a *more rapid means of communication with the County Town...*, although they do state that *The traffic between Ledbury and The Port of Gloucester is very considerable* listing these traffics as timber, corn, hops, apples and cider and perry for which this County has long been noted, a large portion of which articles find their way by water carriage to Gloucester... Worcester, Birmingham and Staffordshire from whence the main supply of coals and manufactured articles is received. So actually they admit their canal is quite useful but a railway would be better! Again this has not been signed by any inhabitants of Ledbury.

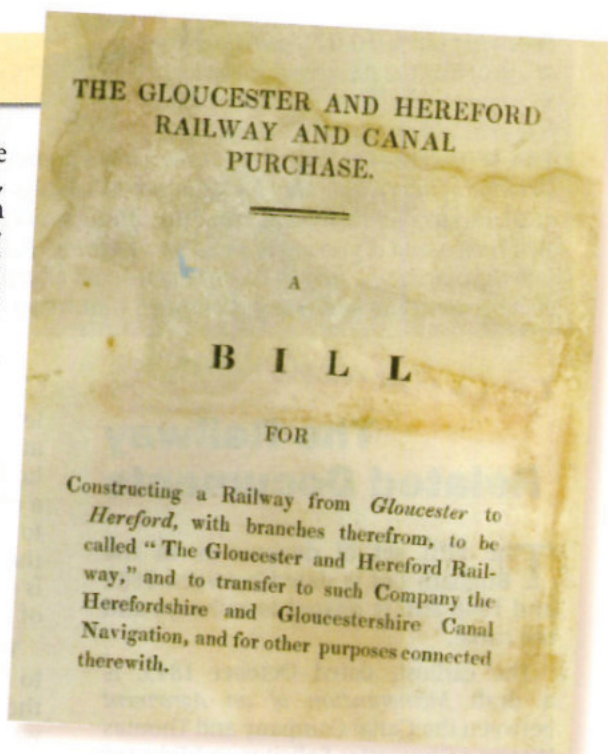
The third of these documents is a copy of the Bill itself entitled *THE GLOUCESTER AND HEREFORD RAILWAY AND CANAL PURCHASE* dated 10 Victoria Sess. 1847(1). The bill goes into some detail about the shares of the new Railway Company and how Canal Company shareholders will be dealt with, it also lists the first directors of the Railway Company, these including William Price and the Gibbins brothers as mentioned above. The

1847 the Bill itself giving details of the new railway company.

deposited plans and books of reference for the new railway are mentioned, with copies to be deposited with the Clerks of the Peace for the City of Gloucester and the Counties of Gloucester and Hereford (where are these plans and books now we wonder?); places the railway will pass through are also mentioned. The bill gives the railway the right to *fill up, stop up and discontinue the use or maintenance of all or any part of the said Canal Navigation*, but it also passes all the Canal Company's debts and obligations to the Railway Company. On a technical note, detail is given about the bridges crossing the Severn at Over, one of which is to be a drawbridge unless a navigable cut can be made across Alney Island(!) as well as the positions of the other bridges for the railway. The main subscriber to the new Railway is the London and North Western Railway Company and they are empowered to raise funds and build the railway. Finally the bill gives the classes of goods to be conveyed on the railway as well as the tonnages to be charged and the tolls for animals, passenger fares are listed as, *in a first class carriage, the sum of twopence halfpenny per mile, in a second class carriage the sum of one penny three farthings per mile and in a third class carriage the sum of one penny farthing per mile.*

As we now know this was only the start of the fall of the canal as these early railway schemes came to nothing and it wasn't until 1862 that the Canal Company agreed to sell its canal to the Great Western and West Midland railways, the canal finally closing on June 30th 1881 to allow a railway to be built – the Ledbury to Gloucester Railway which finally closed (following the report of Dr Beeching) in 1964.

◆ CJ



Donations for the Bonham's Sale Purchase

Our sincere thanks to our Corporate Members **The Ledbury and District Society** who have recently made a donation to the H&G CT of £500 towards the cost of securing this important historical collection. The documents were originally from the office of the Canal Company's Solicitor of the 1830s and 1840s, Hubert Edy of Ledbury - so there is a strong Ledbury connection!

Together with the earlier contributions (*listed and gratefully acknowledged on page 30 of Edition 88 of **The Wharfinger***) we have now raised a total of £2,930 towards the total cost of just over £4,000. Caroline's final article in this fascinating series will appear in the next Edition.

◆ ED

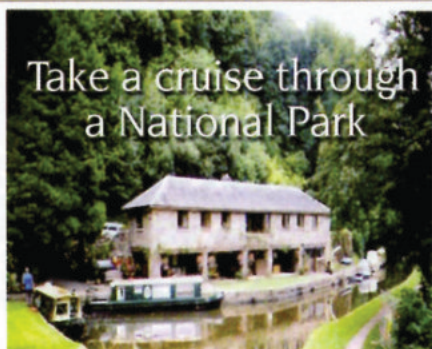
The Wharfinger

IT'S A RECORD!

This edition of **The Wharfinger** contains photographs from no less than eleven different Members, and articles and news items from twelve; a record!

Thanks to the ongoing Sponsorship of **Print Plus** in meeting the additional costs of full colour reproduction – we can now do full justice to good colour photographs and strive to make our magazine one of the leading voluntary produced waterways publications. *The support of all our advertisers is also gratefully acknowledged.*

Please do continue to send photographs and articles to me – we want to continue to beat our own records in future editions! ♦ CRP



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How we built an **OTTER HOLT** by Mike Bowden

Some time after Over Basin was first opened a start was made on building an artificial otter holt adjacent to the River Leaddon. The first thing we did was to obtain professional advice both from the Nature Trust and from conservation experts at the Environment Agency who provided some example drawings. Waterway Recovery Group volunteers then excavated the necessary hole on the riverbank and Paul Brown organised some concrete blocks and paving slabs ready for construction, plus an external team of volunteers to come to site for a weekend to build the holt. However, the very weekend chosen the Leaddon decided to overtop onto the floodplain and the holt site was underwater, so work had to be postponed.

The following months were very wet and the holt site remained mostly inaccessible, other work was started and the priorities changed. It was decided to keep the holt site in reserve as a suitably interesting wildlife conservation job for external volunteers to undertake at a later date. In due course Nigel Bailey made contact with Marlborough-Stirling, a Cheltenham based IT company who were looking for a job for a group of volunteers for a 'team building' exercise. *Our holt fitted the bill!*

Volunteers from Marlborough-Stirling prepare the ground for the Holt in 2004



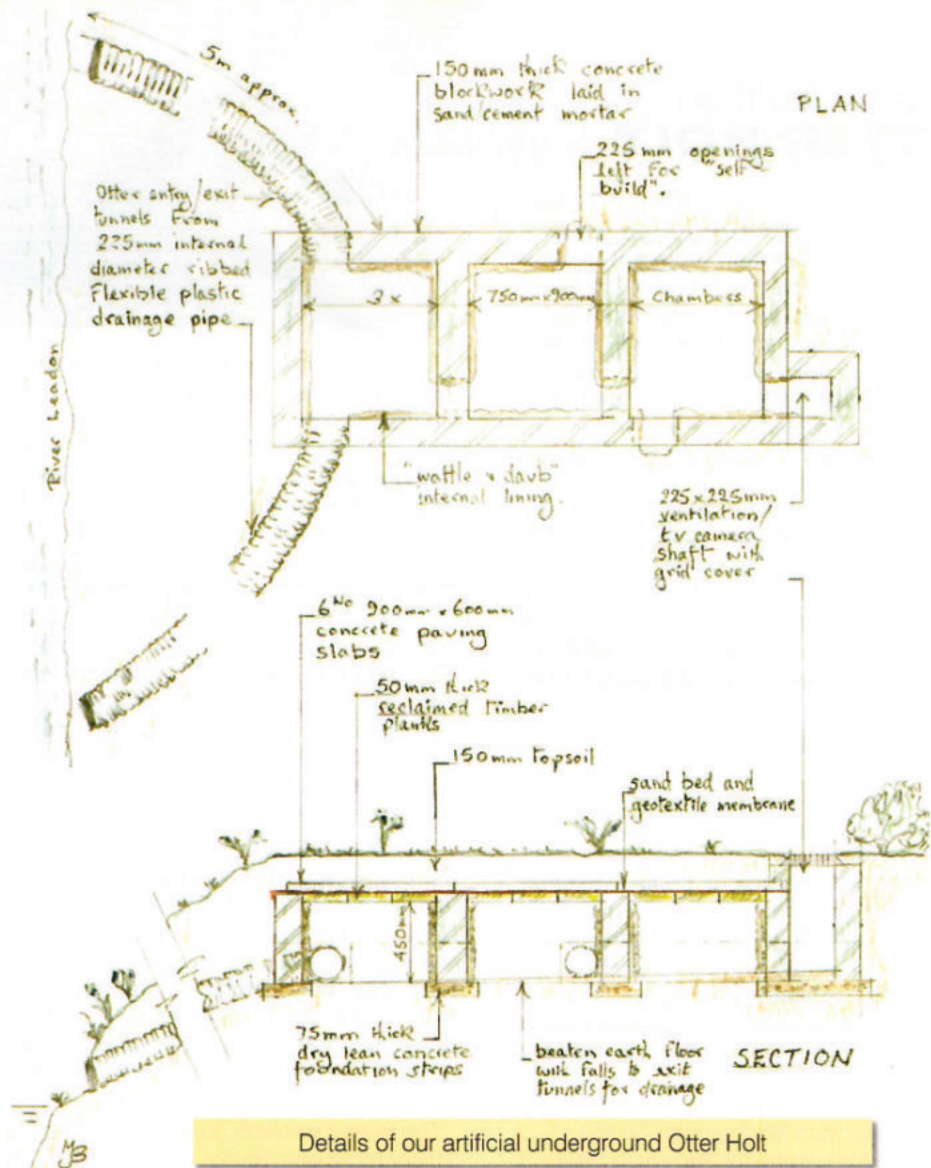
The otter holt design was based on the advice and drawings that we had obtained plus the materials that were readily available. This resulted in a three chambered holt with beaten earth floors, concrete block walls, timber and concrete slab roof and two plastic-piped entrance tunnels, as shown in the sketch plan and section (page 36). With little budget for new materials a few begging phone calls and a site visit to Alfred McAlpine's Churchdown railway embankment contract were needed to scrounge some 'Otter' pipe. McAlpine even obliged by delivering the coil of pipe to Over on the very day chosen for the Marlborough volunteers to start work.

The Marlborough volunteers completed the excavation, the entrance tunnels and the lower course of blockwork in August 2004 – *their detailed report of these 'first phase' works was on pages 28-29 of edition 84 of The Wharfinger*. Later, volunteers from 'Work Opportunities West' (WOW) completed the artificial holt so that it was ready for 'occupation' by Christmas 2005.

The three chambers are lined to make them more welcoming.



Photos: Nigel Bailey



WOW was a NHS organisation based in Gloucester that helped the rehabilitation of former psychiatric patients by providing volunteering experience of a general horticultural and carpentry nature. It was led by an Occupational Therapist with support from a horticulturist and a carpenter. Unfortunately, WOW was disbanded in the latest round of NHS reorganisation

The level of the Leadon changes rapidly

with rainfall and, despite the sluice gates, with the tides in the Severn. Nevertheless, there is a small natural muddy shelf on the riverbank, which is just above water level for much of the time. This shelf was chosen as the level for the entry/exit tunnels and is about 1.5 metres below the flood plain level. A temporary post and rail safety fence was erected on this shelf during the holt construction to save workers from slipping into the river!

During construction of a holt, one starts to get in contact with one's inner otter in true Bill Oddie style, and this brought the realisation that concrete blocks were very cold to snuggle up to. Hence we experimented with lining the concrete block chambers with earth. Early mud daubing slumped off when the chambers flooded. A mixture of red marl (from the excavations) and cement daubed onto willow wattle wedged against the blocks was more effective. Similarly the roof construction incorporated a timber bottom layer and these were 50mm thick timber boards reclaimed from old lock gates donated to us by our friends from the Cotswold Canals Trust. The timber boards were topped with a geotextile membrane to prevent fine debris from falling into the chamber at joints.

Not long after construction of the holt, dog-sized paw prints were seen in the mud by the entrance tunnels. They were meandering along the bank at first, but after a few weeks they were seen to track directly from the waters edge into the entrance tunnels. Similar prints have been seen quite regularly since then, so it does seem that we have a holt in active use by otters. Either that or we are host to the very rare wild Water Spaniel!

◆ MB



The completed Otter Holt before final landscaping to hide its location to ensure privacy for the occupants!



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PLANNING LIAISON



We are very pleased to welcome Wally Thrush to our voluntary Planning Liaison Team (*in fact, he has been assisting on a number of issues for some months*). Wally was a Captain in the Royal

Navy and subsequently spent 12 years as a Senior Planning Inspector presiding over a number of major public Inquiries. Having moved to Ross on Wye and joined the Canal Trust he volunteered to assist us in whatever way we thought most appropriate . . . *and we had little difficulty in deciding what that might be!* Thank you, Wally.

◆ CRP

In memory of R G LANGDON

A collection in lieu of flowers at the funeral of Mr Richard George Langdon, of Allensmore (*not a Member of the H&G CT*), totalled £460 and was specified to be donated to the H&G CT for which we are most grateful. A letter of condolences and thanks has been sent to Mrs Langdon.

◆ NJ

COPY DEADLINE THE FOR NEXT ISSUE:

15TH January, 2007

AYLESTONE PARK CANAL PROJECT

STOP PRESS

Just as we were going to press we heard the excellent news that Herefordshire Council have awarded the contract that includes the removal and treatment of the contaminated silt from the stretch of the H&G Canal running alongside the Park. The work is due to commence early in the New Year and the material will be treated and utilised as part of the foundations for the new roadway within the Park.

◆ MD

IWA GRANT

The Inland Waterways Association has made a grant to the H&G CT of £2,168 to cover the costs of our purchase of land at The Willows, Newent (plus legal costs). We are grateful for this financial support.

◆ CRP

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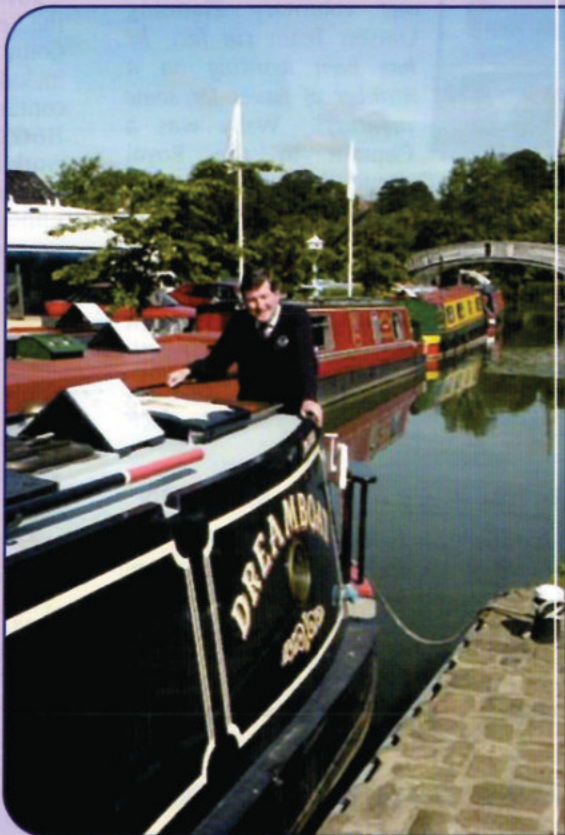
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CONTACTS

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 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.

