

The Wharfinger

Magazine of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust



Summer 2007

£1

free to members



WHO DOES WHAT?

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

Vice Presidents:

*R. E. Barnes TD.
Duff Hart-Davis
David Prout*

Council of Management:

CHAIRMAN:
Janet Moulton

COMMITTEE:
Tony Austin-Bailey
Nigel Bailey
Liz Connors
Martin Danks
Brian Fox
Nigel Jefferies
Caroline Jones
Maggie Jones
Cliff Penny
David Penny

Finance:

TREASURER/CHAIRMAN:
Liz Connors

COMMITTEE:
Brian Fox
David Penny
Nigel Jefferies
Nigel Bailey
Janet Moulton
Martin Danks
Chris High

Herefordshire Committee

CHAIRMAN:
Martin Danks
Brian Fox
John Forrest
Chris High
Claire Kennedy
David Penny

Gloucestershire Committee Over Site

CHAIRMAN:
Nigel Bailey
David Penny
Ted Beagles
Barrie Haysman
Paul Henshaw
Maggie Jones
Wilf Jones
John Rogers

LENGTHSMAN:
Ted Beagles

Oxenhall Site

Brian Fox
John Forrest

LENGTHSMAN:
Peter Moore

Health and Safety

Tony Austin-Bailey

Liaison:

**LOCAL AUTHORITY/
PLANNING:**
*Penny Environmental
& Planning*
Wally Thrush
LAND OWNERS:
Brian Fox

Publicity:

Nigel Bailey
Robin Smithett
OVER/WEB MASTER:
Nigel Bailey
Andy Chapman
Colin Dymott

**PHOTO LIBRARY/PRESS
CLIPPINGS:**
Lucien Perring

Member Services:

SECRETARY:
Nigel Jefferies

GIFT AID:
Liz Connors

SOCIAL EVENTS:
Janet Moulton

**RESTORATION FUND
SECRETARY:**
Liz Bailey

Talks and Walks:

Nigel Jefferies
Nigel Bailey

Support to Council of Management:

MINUTES:
Tony Austin-Bailey
ADMIN:
Janet Moulton
**IWA NOMINATED
MEMBER:**
Caroline Jones

The Wharfinger:

EDITOR:
Cliff Penny
DESIGN/PRODUCTION:
Maggie Jones
ADVERTISING:
Colin Dymott
POSTMASTERS:
Janet Moulton
D and M Gray

Honorary Posts:

ARCHAEOLOGIST:
Ron Shoesmith

*Those in italics
are not Directors.*

THE TRADING COMPANY H & G Canal Sales

DONATING ALL PROFITS TO THE CANAL TRUST

CHAIRMAN/MANNING:
Janet Moulton

**TREASURER/COM REP/
Co. SECRETARY:**
Liz Connors

**MAIL ORDER SALES/
SALES GOODS:**
Heather Worth

CRAFT FAIRS:
Pat Skeet

COMMITTEE:
Tom Bennett
Barbara Moses
Ray Moses
Derek Weaver
Penny Shetliffe

THE WHARF HOUSE

The Wharf House, Over, Gloucester, GL2 8DB
Visitor Centre Restaurant, Tea Rooms,
Superior B&B, overlooking Over Waterside

Telephone 01452 33 2 900

DONATING ALL PROFITS TO THE CANAL TRUST

FINANCIAL DIRECTOR: Liz Connors
COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR: David Penny

Fit-out Committee:

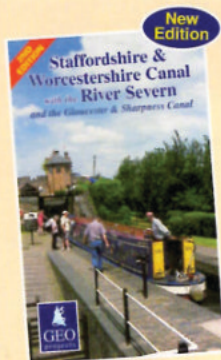
CHAIR/CO-ORDINATOR: *Maggie Jones*
MINUTES: *Nigel Bailey*

Nigel Bailey, *Ted Beagles*, *Tony Boonham*,
Barrie Haysman, *Wilf Jones*, David Penny

GEOprojects

Award winning maps & atlases

INLAND WATERWAYS OF BRITAIN SERIES



New Edition



cruising maps . . .

- Basingstoke Canal and the River Wey Navigations £4.50
- Birmingham Canal Navigations £4.95
- The Broads £4.95
- Caledonian Canal and the Great Glen £4.95
- Chesterfield Canal and the River Trent West Stockwith to North Clifton £4.50
- Coventry and Ashby Canals including the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal £4.95
- Forth & Clyde and Union Canals £4.95
- Grand Union Canal
 - Map 1 Birmingham to Ferry Stratford £4.95
 - Map 2 Braunston to Kings Langley £4.95
 - Map 3 Ferry Stratford to the Thames £4.95
 - Map 4 Leicester Line, Soar Navigation and Erewash Canal £4.95
- Huddersfield Broad and Narrow Canals £4.00
- Inland Waterways of Britain (GB route planner) £5.75
- Kennet and Avon Canal £4.95
- Lancaster Canal with the Ribble Link £4.95
- Lee and Stort Navigations with the E. London Ring £4.00
- Leeds and Liverpool Canal £4.95
- Llangollen and Montgomery Canals £4.95
- Macclesfield and Peak Forest Canals £4.00
- Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal £4.00
- Oxford Canal £4.95
- Shropshire Union Canal £4.95
- South Pennine Ring £4.95
- Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal with the River Severn and Gloucester & Sharpness Canal £4.95
- Stratford-upon-Avon Canal and the River Avon £4.95
- Thames, the river and the path £4.95
- Thames and London Rings Atlas £11.75
- Trent and Mersey Canal
 - Map 1 Preston Brook to Fradley Junction £4.95
 - Map 2 Great Haywood Junction to North Clifton £4.95
- Worcester and Birmingham Canal £4.00 with the Droitwich Canals

Available from shops and waterside outlets or direct from:

GEOprojects (UK) Ltd
8 Southern Court • South Street
Reading • RG1 4QS.
Telephone: 0118 939 3567 Fax: 0118 959 7356
E-mail: sales@geoprojects.net
Website: www.geoprojects.net
Call for details of credit card payment.



CONTENTS

Page

- 3 Chairman's Column
- 5 Editorial – How...?
- 6 Holmer Trading Estate Proposals
- 8 Work at Yarkhill
- 11 Restoration at Oxenhall
- 14 Were there deaths at the Canal?
- 16 Socials at The Royal Oak
- 17 Events Notice Board
- 19 Annual General Meeting – Agenda
- 20 Annual General Meeting – Report
- 22 Annual General Meeting and Membership Form
- 24 Over Update
- 26 THE WHARF HOUSE
- 29 The Restoration Fund Gathering
- 30 It's a Wigloo!
- 32 The Lock House at Oxenhall
- 35 A Natural Explanation
- 37 Green goes Brown, then Blue!
- 39 Not Quite the Last Page!

Inside back cover: Contact details



FRONT COVER ILLUSTRATION:

Proposed Development at Holmer Trading Estate

by Stride Treglown Limited.

The very recently submitted planning application includes restoration of the adjacent section of the Canal and construction of a striking new footbridge – see page 6

Helping Herefordshire blossom.

We make our leading range of ciders at our mill in Hereford. Blossom time reminds us that we couldn't do it without the apples from our Herefordshire orchards. So when you treat yourself to one of England's best known ciders, it's pleasing to know they're made locally.



The pint to refresh
Canal Volunteers!

Bulmers<sup>OO
OP</sup>



First of all, is a welcome back to Liz. She gave us a very worrying few months but I am pleased to say that she is now picking up her many roles as Treasurer. With the AGM approaching many thanks to all who have supported me this year. The loss of Liz for a time created a significant additional workload for already busy volunteers. I think this proves once again that we need more people on the Council of Management to share the load! We have a wide range of expertise but as the Canal Trust grows we need more engineering, legal and management skills for example – *but we can use almost any expertise* – and it is not all hard labour! This is a very exciting time for the canal with an increasing number of projects in hand and in the pipeline (*not the National Grid gas one!*)

THE WHARF HOUSE APPEAL

My thanks to Members for various donations and offers of loans. Specifically for **THE WHARF HOUSE APPEAL** our grateful thanks to Lucien and Doris Perring for a donation of £625 and for two anonymous donations totalling £1,250 (all to be increased by Gift Aid); to Michael and Greta Wright for offering a loan of £1,200 and to another Member (who wishes to remain anonymous) for the offer of a £1,000 loan. *This Appeal remains open!*

THE TRADING COMPANY

The Trading Company has embarked on a full programme of events. We hope the challenges of last year at Crick Boat Show are not repeated; mud and a nearby warehouse fire causing traffic chaos, but still the crowds came and the friendly atmosphere prevailed – *mud is a great leveller!* We then move to smaller shows before the National Waterways Festival near Huntingdon in August – *do come along and say hello if we are in your area.*

OPEN DAYS

Open days at Yarkhill, Over and Oxenhall will let you see the progress that has been reported in **The Wharfinger** – *so please come and see us and show your support for our increasingly active volunteers.* Our social evenings at the Royal Oak usually attract 40-50 members and friends, this is another way I can meet the Members, so please come along.

I hope you all have an enjoyable summer and those visiting /cruising the canals will be able to imagine that future trip from Hereford to Gloucester – or Gloucester to Hereford!

♦ Janet Moulton, Chairman

E. B. HAYWARD & Co.

We are a family run business established over 40 years ago, specialising in sheetmetal work and fabrications in most metals including mild steel, stainless steel, aluminium, titanium, copper and brass.

Items can be manufactured to your own drawings and/or from instructions, in quantities from 1 to 10,000 off and can range from the size of a washer right up to fabrication of 1 tonne.

We have a wide client base with particular involvement in hydraulic press, concrete, materials handling, feed and flour milling industries.

It has been our pleasure in supporting the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust for over 15 years, and we will continue to *work together in the present, to revive the past, and secure a better future.*

© H&GCT

For further details please
contact Simon Hayward –
Tel: 01452 700384
Fax: 01452 700740



SHEETMETAL WORKS
ASHLEWORTH
GLOUCESTER
GL19 4JJ



Inland Waterways insurance



Competitive rates from one of the leading
Inland Waterways insurance providers,
Michael Stimpson & Associates

- Official discount policies for IWA and NABO members
- Fitting out, Residential, Commercial and Private Pleasure policies
- Highly competitive rates and expert advice

For a free competitive, no obligation
quote, call the marine experts NOW on:

0800 515 629 or visit: **www.mardon.co.uk**

New Zealand House, 160-162 Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6AL
Tel: 0800 515 629 Fax: 0870 156 6378 Email: marine@mardon.co.uk

Mardon Marine is a trading name of the Towergate Underwriting Group
Limited. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority



How ...?



by Cliff Penny

How long will it be before there is some physical restoration/reconstruction of the H&G Canal within **Hereford City** has been a question raised in recent years – especially after the massive voluntary effort that successfully completed the first phase of the work at **Over Canal Basin** on time – and within (as always!) – a very limited budget.

The fact that in recent years all the ‘civil engineering’ construction work has gone on within Gloucestershire (**Over Canal Basin**, the reconstruction of **House Lock** and the **Ell Brook Aqueduct** at Oxenhall for example) led to an even greater perceived imbalance in what we have been doing – at least in physical work terms ‘on the ground’. Thanks to our **Yarkhill Team** we have an active restoration site within Herefordshire but the length does not contain any significant structures – *not that restoring the main ‘track’ of the rural canal in the county is any less important.*

We have been working hard to address the imbalance between the two counties. Our partnership with **Herefordshire Council** and the local organisations/community to deliver the new **Aylestone Park** should have resulted in a restored section of the canal alongside the Park by now – *that was how we intended to restore our first section within Hereford City boundary!*

The complication of contaminated silt (*a legacy of past industry some distance away*) meant that we were unable to undertake the work; a specialist contractor was required. Undaunted, the first construction work within the City by **H&G CT** volunteers (assisted by **WRG**) was non-canal work within the Park. In turn, **Herefordshire Council** have let a

contract for the silt removal from the Canal, which has just been authorised to proceed.

Whilst the **Aylestone Park** section was initially regarded as an ‘easy’ section to restore, the adjacent length (up to the portal of **Aylestone Tunnel**, running back towards the City centre), was most certainly not as it comprises an infilled cutting with (albeit temporary) commercial activities within **Holmer Trading Estate** above. The front cover of this edition shows how this specific section could look. *All very well you may say – but how do we intend to restore this section?* Subject to the granting of Planning Permission, the answer lies overleaf!

Extensive negotiations and liaison continues regarding the **Edgar Street Grid** redevelopment proposals for **Hereford City**; we have passed considerable information about the Canal to the Masterplan Team and, utilising our long-established contacts throughout the area, also assisted with information on ‘non-canal’ issues as well. As demonstrated at **Over Basin**, **The Wharf House**, **Aylestone Park**, and now at **Holmer Trading Estate**, the **H&G Canal Trust** can play a significant (and at times, unusual) role in producing results. It is not just physical restoration of the Canal by the Canal Trust that will deliver it to Hereford; it is **partnership** with a wide range of interested parties – from the local authority to developers.

That’s how we intend to get the Canal back right into the heart of Hereford City. That’s how Hereford will secure a significant public amenity and commercial asset for the long-term benefit of both the City and the whole community.

◆ CRP

Developers to Restore Canal at Holmer Trading Estate

A major new development proposal in Hereford is to see one of the most difficult sections of the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal restored as an integral part of the development scheme.

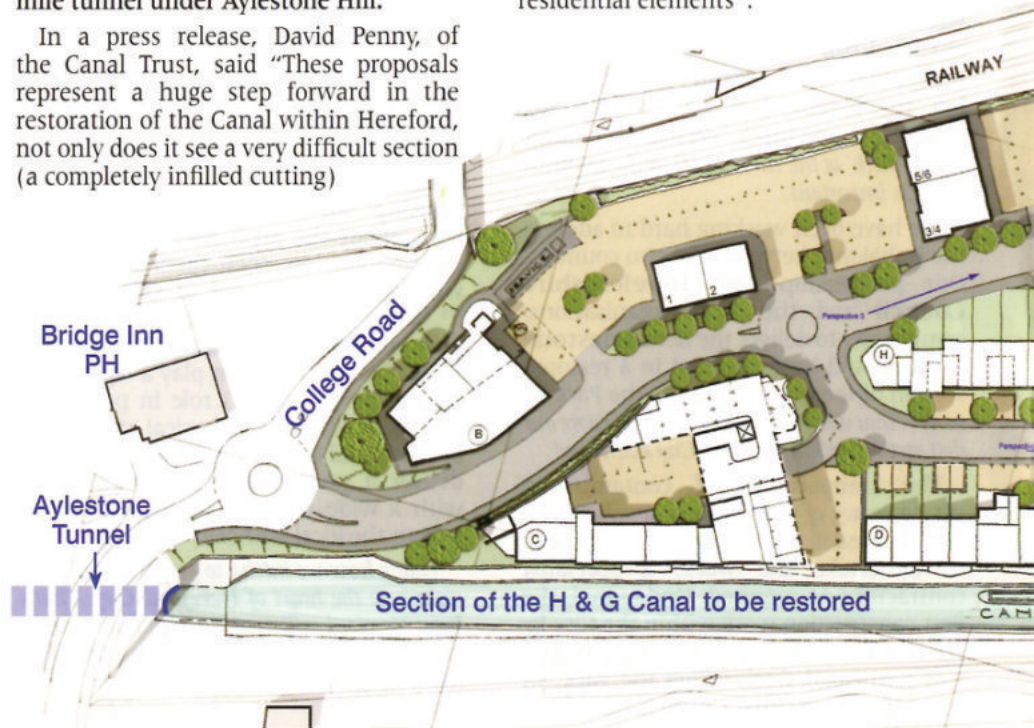


Herefordshire Residential Developments submitted a Planning Application to redevelop Holmer trading estate in mid

May. We have been working closely with them to bring forward the redevelopment of the site for the last 18 months. This will see $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of the Canal restored right up to Aylestone Park and include the transfer to the Canal Trust of the restored Canal and, in addition, the $\frac{1}{4}$ mile tunnel under Aylestone Hill.

In a press release, David Penny, of the Canal Trust, said "These proposals represent a huge step forward in the restoration of the Canal within Hereford, not only does it see a very difficult section (a completely infilled cutting)

restored as part of the adjoining development, but the developers have also worked closely with us to secure an extremely high quality prestigious development on the site which makes the most of the Canalside setting". He continued, "We welcome these proposals and are always pleased to be able to work with developers from the outset of schemes, as we have on this site. Not only will the proposals make a huge improvement to the area but they also provide a much improved quality of employment space to replace what already exists on the site, alongside the proposed imaginative waterside residential elements".



The section will see the canal cutting fully restored with a feature footbridge across, linking the new development to Victoria Park and via the cycleways already completed by the Trust to Aylestone Park.

As normal on such developments, there will be annual payments to the Canal Trust to meet the long term restoration, maintenance and management costs of the Canal.

This summer will also see the restoration of the adjacent section of the Canal through Aylestone Park as part of the Partnership between Herefordshire Council and the Canal Trust and the local community. Within the new Park the Canal Trust, with assistance from WRG, has

already constructed an extensive network of footpaths/cycleways and two viewpoints, as well as undertaking significant landscaping works.

The works at Holmer form an important part of the overall strategy for restoring the Canal within Hereford. This will see further significant progress as part of the major Edgar Street Grid redevelopment of the City which includes the construction of a large new Canal terminus basin and approach Canal heading back towards the proposed Holmer development and Aylestone Park.

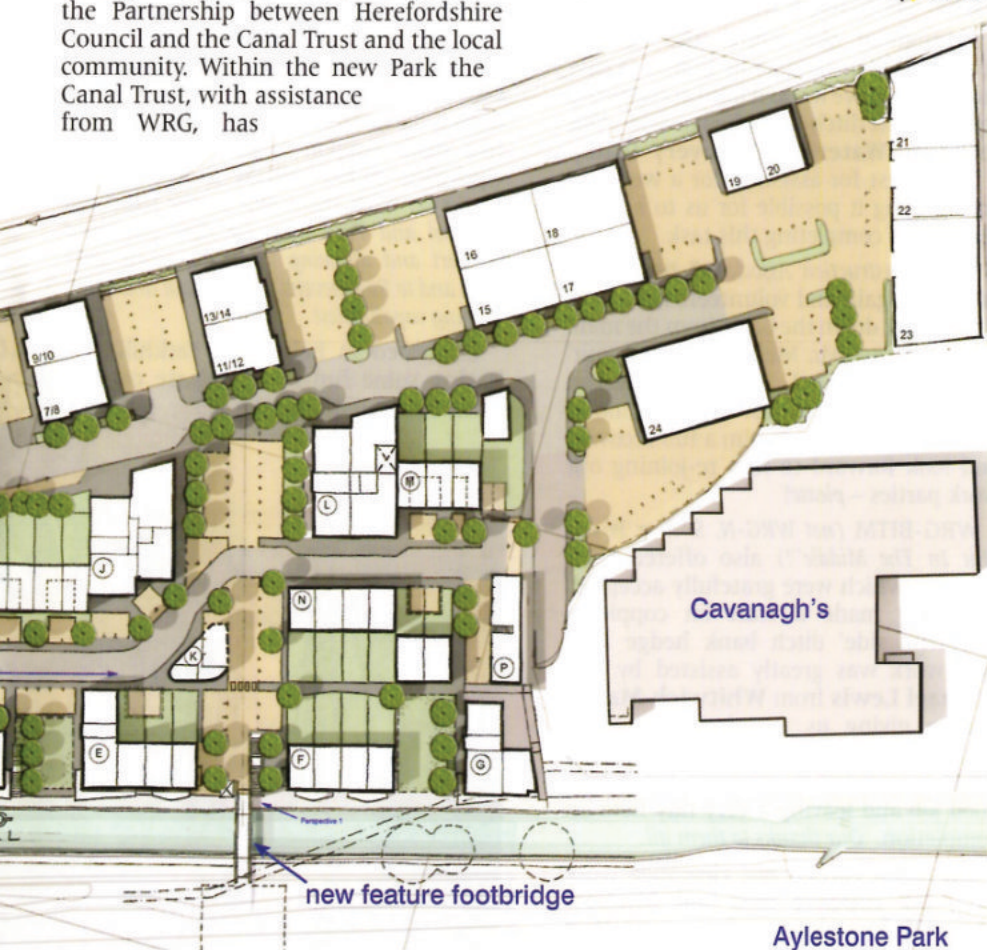


Illustration: Stride Treglown Limited.

Work at Yarkhill

by Chris High

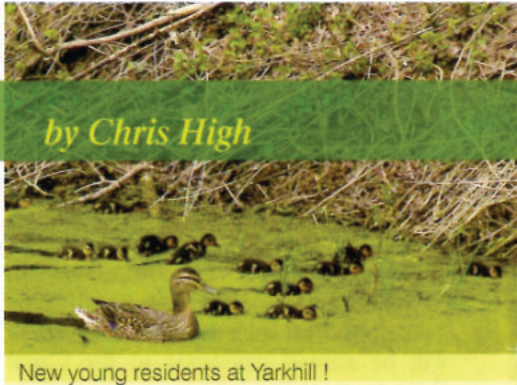
My last report ended with the news of having 2 ft of water along this whole length of the canal. Imagine my excitement when in February the Canal became full and overflowing! Since then and with the subsequent dry period it's a case of "going - going - gone"! Not all the water has gone, but so much that it was possible for us to remove temporary sand bag dam number two and to raise the level of dam three to just under 30 inches. This dam is already holding back water suggesting that the first 275 yards of this section has no major leaks in its base.

Throughout the winter the Yarkhill Team, joined in January by Robert (a new volunteer), have worked hard at coppicing the towpath ditch bank hedge line. Our thanks to **Waterway Recovery Group** - Southwest for assisting for a weekend and making it possible for us to achieve our goal of completing this task.

"Step Construction Associates" have been in action again and volunteers now have a safe route down the bank from the main road to access Mr. Mess's field and 'our' stretch of the canal. Unfortunately Tim injured his ankle whilst assisting me in this task. We all wish him a full recovery and look forward to him re-joining our work parties - please!

WRG-BITM (not WRG-N, S, E or W but "Bit In The Middle"!) also offered their services, which were gratefully accepted, and they made a start on coppicing 'the wild side' ditch bank hedge line. This work was greatly assisted by **Mr. Michael Lewis** from **Whitwick Manor Estate** giving us permission to work from the field adjoining the canal and BITM responded by carrying out a very good job and leaving a very tidy field on completion. *Our thanks to them all.*

The Team carried out clearance work from the entrance field and **Michael Mess** of **Stonehouse Farm** and **Rod**



New young residents at Yarkhill !

Stevens of R.J. & R.E. Stevens Plant Sales carried out ditching and ground profiling work, further easing our access to the canal which was also greatly appreciated.

The final achievement of our winter programme was the quick completion of our sleeper bridge from the site hut to the canal towpath. Rod's capability with his digger, in positioning and levelling the two main support beams with a mass equivalent to five railway sleepers, had a lot to do with this. *Our sincere thanks to Michael and Paul Mess for their continued support and allowing us access across their land and to Rod Stevens for his beam and earth moving capabilities!*

Interested in helping at Yarkhill and having some fun - then please contact Chris High on 01568 615 575. ♦♦ CH



Photos: Chris High



Yarkhill Canal Walks



Sunday 12th. August 07

10.30 am to 5.00 pm

at **Yarkhill Village Hall**

Refreshment • Displays • Sales

Guided walks of 1½ hours at

10.45 am • 12.15 pm

2.00 pm • 3.30 pm

Enjoy a saunter at your own pace along the sign posted route. Even bring a picnic lunch.

Volunteers at the canal to provide canal history and enthuse about our work.

Wellingtons if wet, else stout shoes.

Enquiries to Chris High, 53 Mill Street,
Leominster HR6 8EB. 01568 615575.



Left: The heavy rains in February brought a well-filled canal. Sadly, all gone now after the long dry spell!

Right (from the top): New steps give better access to Yarkhill.

WRGSW left a neat coppiced site.

The coppice work goes right to the end of the towpath.

Chris tries out the new sleeper bridge. (So the hut was painted to match his truck!)

WRG have done a good tidy job.

Buying a boat..? Booking a holiday..? Own a boat..?

Whether you are looking to buy a narrow boat or hire one for a holiday, or you already own one, you need to look no further than **Alvechurch**. With over 25 years of experience in hand, building boats and operating the UK's finest fleet of holiday craft, you can be sure that we can help you with all you need to cruise on the Great British Waterways.

We also offer full marina services including:

- diesel • gas • pumpouts •
- moorings • brokerage services •
- boats for sale • repair •
- breakdown and refit work •
- boat painting •
- signwriting •

RYA Helmsman
Training



ALVECHURCH

BOAT CENTRES LTD

TEL: 0121 445 2909 FAX: 0121 44 7120

Email: enquiries@alvechurch.com

www.alvechurch.com

Alvechurch Boat Centres Ltd, Scarfield Wharf, Alvechurch, Worcs B48 7SQ

RESTORATION

at Oxenhall *by Brian Fox*



Photos: John Chappell

Above: The aqueduct arch starts from both sides. *Middle:* The first complete line of bricks are complete. *Bottom:* A second aqueduct arch is complete!

Summer has arrived with a vengeance *S*— although it is only April as I write! The dining tables and chairs have come out and the lunch/tea breaks tend to get extended as the sun shines and a start is made on the tanning process. I seem to remember saying last time that progress was slow due to the winter rain and frost — but at least it was too cold to hang around for long and activity was necessary to keep warm. There is a danger that work will become even slower as it gets hotter and the sweating starts and drink breaks have to be taken! There is no pressure to finish by a certain date as it was with the first phase at Over and the overriding criterion at Oxenhall is that it must be enjoyable. Can we expect a flood of new volunteers after they read this?

Despite our leisurely approach things *do* get done and I can report that the aqueduct arch over the steel former is now complete and work has started on the spandrel wall above. Unfortunately, this means a considerable amount of concrete to be mixed (hard work even with a mixer) and large stones to be cut and transported into their correct positions, all as the temperatures continue to rise. Over the years we have developed means of transport (wheelbarrows, trolleys, tractor, pulleys and electric hoist) to alleviate the strain on our backs which is essential in order to comply with our Risk Assessment of each task and to cope without serious injury. However, this doesn't avoid stiff muscles and minor scrapes — or the odd boot full of Brook water! The stone saw bench has been overhauled (*see article on page 37*) and should make our life easier when cutting large stones.

Our winter maintenance programme was completed by the beginning of March, so we now leave the birds and other wildlife in peace to go about their normal business until next autumn/winter, when no doubt there will be



Left: A chute enables materials to reach the aqueduct builders below. Left lower: The area behind the arch is filled in.



more that requires attention outside the nesting season. Some of the work that we do along the towpath may appear a little drastic, but we are dealing with trees and bushes which have not been managed for many years, and can get out of hand if left too long. Several hawthorns blew down this winter because they had become too tall; unfortunately this means that roots and all are dragged from the ground, the tree is lost, and a gap appears in the hedge. It is quite clear that these canalside hedges have never been properly 'laid' and maintained, so we shall be taking advice on how best to tackle this challenge in the future. In the meantime a short stretch has seen some tall hawthorns cut off at waist height so that they will send up some new growth. We have filled in the gaps with hawthorn cuttings which will hopefully grow and fill out the hedge. A small nursery has also been started to grow more which will fill more gaps in time.

We have also seen two large branches broken from canalside willow trees this winter (see 'Extreme Gardening – Wind in the Willows' in the last edition). It is clear on closer inspection that these trees are not healthy and will need some drastic attention but again we will be taking specific advice. We can't afford to leave these trees untouched if there is any danger to the public who walk the footpath directly beneath. It is certainly not a job for our own trained chainsaw operators and may involve bringing in qualified tree surgeons. Two old conifers which were probably planted next to the platforms soon after Newent station was built in 1883 have now disappeared. One was blown down and the other was deemed to be unsafe and cut down by the Council, whilst a large sycamore next to the old station platforms was uprooted and lays there awaiting our gang to cut it up and take it away for logging.

As we have said before, restoration of a canal is not just that but increasingly involves the necessary maintenance of the canal and towpath corridor (and finding the volunteers to do it)! There are those in our team who prefer this type of activity, and who can argue that a roaring bonfire on a cold winters day is not welcome; so why not come along – *we can probably find something to suit your tastes be it heat from bonfires or the sun that spurs you on!*

◆ BF



You can write your own caption for this one!

Photos: John Chappell

We would like to recruit you to help!

If you would be interested in helping to complete

THE WHARF HOUSE

or would like to help restore the Hereford and Gloucester Canal, please contact one of the following: –

OVER TEAMS

Saturdays/Sundays

Maggie Jones 01452 618 010

Wednesdays

Wilf Jones 01452 413 888

OXENHALL TEAM Tuesdays

Brian Fox 01432 358 628

YARKHILL TEAM Thursdays

Chris High 01568 615 575

Peter Bell's

FAX MACHINES & SUPPLIES

**Brother, Canon, Panasonic,
Philips, Sagem & Sharp
consumables from stock**

**Most non-stock items
available overnight**

10 & 11 Bridge Street

Hereford HR4 9DF

Telephone: 01432 341408



A warm welcome awaits you at:

**RED LINE BOATS
GOYTRE WHARF
LLANOVER
ABERGAVENTY NP7 9EW**

On the "Mon and Brec Canal"

Try us for: Day boat hire for a trip on this beautiful old waterway.

Boats to seat from 5 to 12 passengers or canoes for 3.

Holiday narrow boats for 2 – 8 for a short break or long holidays.

All your chandlery and fitout needs, boatcare products, ropes etc.

maps, guides and memorabilia. Boat safety, paint oils and grease.

"Mercury" main dealers, all outboards service and repair.

www.redlineboats.co.uk Telephone: 01873 880 516

Were there DEATHS at the CANAL?

Apart from managing our Membership records Council of Management Member Nigel Jefferies has always taken a keen interest in the history of 'our' canal. His recent topic of research was the potential for navvies to have lost their lives during the construction of Oxenhall Tunnel. However, as Nigel's account shows, his research proved to be more challenging than he first thought . . .

I recently read again Humphrey Household's excellent book entitled "The Thames and Severn Canal". On page 76, he records that there is circumstantial evidence for a number of navvies having lost their lives during the construction of Sapperton Tunnel, because, during the years of its construction, the number of burials recorded in the parishes of Sapperton and Coates, is almost double that of the preceding and following years. Sapperton Tunnel was the "Channel Tunnel" of its day, being 3,817 yards long and was much larger than the earlier canal tunnels, being built to a bore of 15' square.

This set me wondering if there may be similar evidence in the parish records during the construction of Oxenhall Tunnel on "our" canal, which was 2,192 yards long, although only built to a width of 9'. I thought that any fatalities would be recorded in the parish records



The southern entrance to Oxenhall Tunnel.

at Dymock and Newent, however, when I looked in my copy of Pevsner it pointed out that the church at Oxenhall, had been built in 1865 – long after the construction of the Tunnel!

Enquiries led me to discover the records for the churches concerned are now kept at Gloucester Records Office. I discovered in the Dymock church records, the burial on 28th October, 1793 of Richard Coates, a canal digger, who died of small pox, aged 26. On 28th July 1797, when the

tunnel was under construction, Thomas Hart aged 20 was buried after being found dead in the canal, but it is recorded he was supposed to have been murdered!

At Newent on the 8th August 1793, Elizabeth Boyce, a wife, was buried, after being accidentally drowned in the canal. On 8th September 1793, John Uzzell, a husband, was buried after having been accidentally killed at the canal, but at this date, construction of the tunnel had not begun. During the years of construction of the tunnel, there is no significant increase in the number of burials at these two churches so I appear to have drawn a blank.

However, when I discussed my findings with one of the archivists, he helpfully suggested that I should look in the parish records for Oxenhall. I pointed out to him that Pevsner records that Oxenhall Church was built in 1865, but he assured me there would have been an

earlier church on the site. With renewed enthusiasm, I delved into the Oxenhall records, only to find that the microfilm of the actual records is very largely illegible. The Bishop's records, also on microfilm, are in a similar condition. Having pointed this out to the archivist, he agreed to allow me to consult the actual register, but he suspected that if the microfilm is largely illegible, the actual register would be in a similar condition. When it came from the vault, I fear his opinion proved to be the case; apart from a few words and the date at the beginning of most years, due to the faded ink, holes in the paper and soiling, I could gain little information. The only conclusion I could draw, is that the space on the pages relating to the years concerned, is not significantly greater than on the preceding and following years; so perhaps this is an indication, that there were not a significant number of fatalities as a result of excavating Oxenhall Tunnel.

◆ NJ



TRADITIONAL ROPE AND FENDER MAKERS SUPPLIERS OF ROPE & TWINE

- No VAT • Makers of Traditional rope fenders • Rope for decking •
- Suppliers of rope and twines • Mooring lines • Tow ropes •
- Decorative cotton rope • Bannister ropes and fittings •
- Garden features • Cotton rope sitting hammock @ £59 + £7 p+p

IF IT IS MADE OF ROPE WE CAN MAKE IT
www.getknotteduk.com

Tel: Alan 01926 410588 (24 hr answering) Fax: 01789 778953
Warwick Top Lock, Lower Cape, Warwick CV 34 5DP

Social Evenings at The Royal Oak

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

Please note that due to an increase in the cost of our hiring the room there will be a £1 per person admission charge – we hope that you will agree this is a small price to pay for what are invariably interesting evenings.

JUNE 19TH

Droitwich Canals

Margaret Rowley

It is 6 years since Margaret came to speak to us – things have moved on apace.

JULY 17TH

AGM

Please note 7.30 p.m start – we will have updates on various projects taking place along the line of the Canal

AUGUST 21ST

Natter and Noggin

We have not booked the function room for this date but hope you will come along for a drink and a chat – hopefully on a sunny summer evening on the terrace!

SEPTEMBER 18TH

The Caledonian Canal

Tim Boddington

We go back north of the border from Neptune's Staircase to Loch Ness





Gloucestershire & Herefordshire IWA Branch

LYDNEY TWO Boat Gathering

7th - 8th July 2007

A great weekend whether attending by boat or car!

Includes Lydney Folk Festival and the Yacht Club Open Days.

Bar, BBQ, bands, Stalls, exhibitions etc in a superb setting.

Boats - £20 including a weeks moorings - contact Martin Turner on 01291 650 605.

Non-boaters are very welcome - plenty of parking space - free entry (donations requested).

The H&G CT would like to attend all the shows below and others to which we are invited. Our small regular band of helpers cannot do it all - it will not be possible to attend everything unless we have some new volunteers to help out, please.

Please contact Janet Moulton if you may be able to attend any of these events, it is a good day out, you will be made very welcome and we always try to leave some time for you to look around. ♦ JM

June 23-24	Braunston Boat Show
June 30-July 1	Saul Boat Show
July 7	Evesham Water Festival
August 18	Tibberton Fete
August 25-27	National Waterways Festival, St Ives
September 1	Alfrick Fete
September 8	Newent Onion Fair
October 21	Oxenhall Apple Day

Over pen Days 2007

Sunday, June 24th • Sunday, July 29th • Sunday, August 19th
Sunday, September 9th • 11 am - 4.30 pm



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

guided tours • boat rides
photographic exhibitions
model boat demonstrations
handycrafts



See you there!

Severn Valley Boat Centre

— Quality Boat Builders Since 1974 —

Reading this advert will inevitably mean you have an interest in becoming an owner of your very own narrowboat, whether it is a permanent home afloat or a family cruising retreat. You may even be considering a change of boats. With so many builders offering 'quality' narrowboats, why choose Severn Valley?



Made in Britain



Why choose Severn Valley?

- ✓ FLEXIBILITY
- ✓ EXPERIENCE
- ✓ MOORING GUARANTEED
- ✓ VALUE FOR MONEY
- ✓ LOCATION and PREMISES
- ✓ POTENTIAL and PRIDE
- ✓ TRUST
- ✓ VARIOUS INCOME SOURCES

Tel: 01299 871165

Fax: 01299 827211

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



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING *of the* **HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST**

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

to be held on **TUESDAY, 17TH JULY, 2007**
at the **THE ROYAL OAK, MUCH MARCLE,**
NEAR LEDBURY, COMMENCING AT 7.30PM.

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDING 28TH FEBRUARY 2007

AGENDA

1. Welcome and formal opening of the meeting
2. Chairman's Report
3. Group Reports
4. To receive and approve the report of Council, the Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet of the Trust (and associated Company) for the year ended 28th February 2007, Report of the Honorary Auditor thereon, and the Report of the Honorary Treasurer
5. To Appoint the Auditors of the Trust (and associated Companies)
6. To Re-appoint those Council Members retiring by rotation who offer themselves for re-election:-

Tony Austin-Bailey, Martin Danks

7. To consider a proposed change to the wording of the Memorandum of Association – see page 22
8. Close of Formal Business

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

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR YEAR ENDING 28TH FEBRUARY 2007

This is the fifteenth **Annual Report** of the **Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust Limited** [a non-profit distributing company [formed in April 1992, No.2704407], which is a Registered Charity [1010721] and of the wholly owned Trading Company - **Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal (Sales) Ltd.** [2710215]]. They replaced the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Society which was launched in 1983. It is also the report of **THE WHARF HOUSE COMPANY LTD.** [4627931], the wholly owned subsidiary of the Canal Trust, donating all profits to canal restoration. The Canal Trust is indebted to its *Council of Management*, and to the *Trading Company Board*; during the period under review [year ended 28th February 2007] those listed below have been members:-

COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT OF THE CANAL TRUST

(12 MONTHS TO 28-2-07)

Tony Austin-Bailey; Nigel Bailey; Liz Connors; Martin Danks; Brian Fox; Nigel Jefferies; Caroline Jones (IWA Nominee); *Maggie Jones (co-opted)*; Janet Moulton; Cliff Penny; David Penny; Dick Skeet (*to 03.06*).

TRADING COMPANY H&GC (SALES) LTD

(12 MONTHS TO 28-2-07)

Tom Bennet; Liz Connors; *Ray Moses*; Barbara Moses; Janet Moulton; *Penny Shetcliffe*; *Pat Skeet*; *Derek Weaver*; *Heather Worth*

THE WHARF HOUSE COMPANY

(12 MONTHS TO 28-2-07)

Liz Connors; *Janet Moulton*; David Penny

Italics indicates not a Director.

The 12 months ended 28th February 2007 was another busy year for our volunteers. **H&G CT** continued to work at Aylestone Park, Oxenhall, Over and Yarkhill, gratefully receiving Grant Aid for three of the sites, and from **Restoration Fund Members**. The **H&G CT** continues to be fully committed to supporting **THE WHARF HOUSE**, with volunteers (and financially if necessary). However, a successful trading year for the Restaurant, Tea-Rooms and Visitor Centre meant that **THE WHARF HOUSE COMPANY** was in a position to take on the £50,000 loan which the H&G CT had negotiated to cover start-up costs. This is in line with our determination that **THE WHARF HOUSE** will not negatively impact on the ongoing running of the H&G CT. The next important stage in our commitment that the enterprise will generate sufficient profits to make meaningful donations to the H&G CT is to open the B&B. To facilitate completion of the fit-out, late in the period an appeal was made through **The Wharfinger** for loans or donations; we were delighted to receive our first donation in February 2007. **H&GC Sales** continued to spread the word about the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal at events locally & nationally and despite increasingly difficult trading conditions the small team's hard work has enabled another £3,000 to be handed over to the H&G CT. The **Socials** continue to be popular and we are now settled in at the Royal Oak, Much Marcle; the higher cost of hiring the function room has meant a small admission charge – however attendances have continued to be excellent.

In Gloucestershire our volunteers at **Oxenhall** have now expanded their work over the boundary into Newent. Restoration is ongoing on the Aqueduct; purchase of the adjacent Willows Nursery land and the lease of the next section to the fire station means that we sometimes split our efforts into 3 or 4 separate groups to cope with the extra work. During the winter scrub clearance and conservation work on trees

and vegetation has been undertaken together with vital general maintenance of the restored sections where we have ownership. Plans are now being prepared for the long term restoration of the canal in this area so the necessary liaison can commence and the essential finance sought. The major **Over** project for the year was landscaping the area between the Horseshoe Drive pavement and the 'Bailey' bridge - the Wharf Approaches project. We laid paviors to match those around **THE WHARF HOUSE** and formed a new pushchair and wheelchair friendly path down to the Basin. A short flight of steps creates a pedestrian short-cut beside the bridge. A new wrought iron bench, in memory of a Gloucester and District Model Boat Club member, was installed near the slipway and unveiled at an Open Day. New information boards with larger text and a more sturdy design were placed permanently around the site and "Mister Maysey", our trip boat was refurbished. **THE WHARF HOUSE** continued to establish itself and attracted a number of influential visitors as well as providing an impressive location to meet landowners, major utility companies and developers to discuss proposals on other parts of the Canal. Of particular note were the increasing favourable food reviews in the press. A small dedicated team of volunteers continued to make progress on fitting out the upper floors with the very limited finance available pending availability of funds to permit final fit-out so that the

B&B facilities can be brought into use in order to maximise income. An increasing number of new Members are now recruited following a visit to **THE WHARF HOUSE**.

In Herefordshire work continued at **Aylestone Park** although the main focus there was the Herefordshire Council's appointment of a specialist Contractor to undertake removal of the contaminated silt from the Canal. The **Yarkhill** Team, aided by two visits from WRG-SW, achieved much in their first full year. The cleared towpath was maintained providing a pleasant walk for an ever-increasing number of walkers many stopping to convey support and appreciation. There was considerable stump pulling/general clearance within the canal bed, the towpath ditch hedge line was coppiced and a flight of steps and a bridge were constructed connecting the towpath to the permitted footpath. A successful Open Day attracted 120 people for guided walks; 60 visited a display in the village hall. During the year 126 work parties amounted to 408 person-days of work - a very significant contribution to the work of H&G CT.

Extensive 'behind the scenes' liaison continues in respect of many aspects; not least during the year in respect of agreement in relation to the routing, level and 'accommodation works' for the 48" diameter **National Grid** natural gas pipeline that is to cross over Oxenhall Tunnel and significant discussions and information relating to the **Edgar Street Grid** redevelopment of Hereford City.

Summary (abridged) Accounts will be available at the AGM or Members may obtain a full set by sending a large SAE to the Treasurer. The full accounts will also be available at the AGM.

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

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

Note regarding Agenda item No.6; one third of the Members of the Managing Council are required to stand down each year. All those standing down (listed at 6. on p.19) are offering themselves for re-election unless otherwise stated. New volunteers to serve on the Council of Management are welcome; as reported in the last edition of **The Wharfinger** formal Nominations (on forms obtainable from the Treasurer) have to be received not less than 7 days nor more than 28 days prior to the AGM. The maximum size of the CofM is 18 and, unless new nominations bring the total in excess of this number, the above stated Members will be returned un-opposed. The CofM is also empowered to Co-opt Members during the year (subject to the maximum size not being exceeded).

Proposed change to the Memorandum of Association of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust

It is recommended to the Annual General Meeting that Clause 4. A) be amended, subject to the written agreement of the Charity Commissioners, as indicated below:

4. The income and property of the Association shall be applied solely toward the promotion of its objects as set forth in this Memorandum of Association and no portion thereof shall be paid or transferred, directly or indirectly, by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise howsoever by way of profit, to members of the Association and no member of its Council of Management or Governing Body shall be appointed to any office of the Association paid

by salary or fees, or receive any remuneration or other benefit in money or moneys worth from the Association.

Provided that nothing herein shall prevent any payment in good faith by the Association: -

- A) Of reasonable and proper remuneration to any member, officer or servant of the Association (not being who, except in special circumstances and with the prior written agreement of the Charity Commissioners, shall not be a member of its Council of Management or Governing Body) for any services rendered to the Association.

June 2007

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please complete below and return this form to:

HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST
6 CASTLE STREET, HEREFORD HR1 2 NL

Name

Address

Telephone:

E-Mail:

Post Code:

New member ☐

Renewal ☐ Gift ☐

Please help us to keep our subscriptions low and to accelerate our restoration progress by making a donation.

Subscription £

Donation £

Total payment £

Thank You

Please give details of any skills you have that might assist us in our work.

GIFT AID: as a Registered Charity we can increase our income from subscriptions, and any donations, by almost one third provided you pay tax. If you DON'T pay tax or DON'T want us to do this tick this box. ☐

Details of membership rates can be found on the inside back cover.

Date: / /

BANKERS ORDER

To: (Name and Address of Bank)

Sort Code:

My A/C No.

Please pay to account No. 11600694, Sort Code No. 16-21-20 of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust at the Royal Bank of Scotland, 21 Broad St. Hereford, HR4 9AP, the sum of £ on this day and thereafter **annually** (on the anniversary) until further notice.

This instruction CANCELS any previous Annual Bankers Order in favour of the Canal Trust or former Society.

MIDWINTER TRANSPORT

ESTABLISHED 23 YEARS

With a full range of vehicles including

- flat curtain sided and refrigerated ■
- from half tonne Escort to 38 tonne artic ■
- Hiab crane vehicle ■ Nationwide ■



TOTALLY COMMITTED TO DELIVER

Newent 01531 820276

Fax: 01531 821303

Little Carswells Farm, Upleadon, Newent, GL18 1ED

www.midwintertransport.co.uk

email: info@midwintertransport.co.uk



OVER *Update*

by Nigel Bailey



Our work was rewarded when a wedding party at THE WHARF HOUSE used our path for their photos.



Photos: Nigel Bailey and Maggie Jones

I think it is true to say that all of our hard land and painstaking work on the paving of the entrance to the Over Canal Basin is now complete. The winding path, which you saw half completed in the last issue, now runs from the entrance down to the gravel path beside the Basin. *It would not surprise me if Paul Henshaw is still having nightmares about cutting little concrete triangles with the angle grinder!*

It was probably, while prevented from sleeping, that Paul came up with a planting scheme for the area between the winding path and the retaining wall. This is now starting to take shape, augmented by some new trees planted between the path and the railings. The next step will be to build the brick pillars (incorporating the masonry blocks and gate hinge pins that we reclaimed from the former entrance to the Over Hospital mortuary block) to further enhance the entrance to the Basin area.

During this project a good deal of rubble built up in a heap by the 'Bailey' bridge. This has now been dispersed and used to improve the surface of what we refer to as Pump Hill Road (the path between the pump shaft and the inlet from the Leaddon). We have also completed a further section of post-and-rail fence beside the lock. This looks very attractive and is essential to provide a clear deterrent to anyone approaching the steep edge of the lock.

Over Easter I managed to fit in a job I've been itching to do for a couple of years! At that time I built the small stone retaining wall on the left-hand side of the entrance to the car park. I then ran out of stone for

Left upper: The planting scheme at the Basin approach begins to take shape.

Left lower: The low retaining wall at the entrance to the car park is completed at last. (Nigel now sleeps soundly!)

finishing the right-hand side. Over the intervening period I've been collecting suitable stones. After a heavy rainfall it is surprising what emerges from the ground so I've been stockpiling it - or keeping a mental note of where to find it!


I had built up sufficient stock many months ago but there are always other priorities so the wall still did not get built. I figured that if I slipped in to site quietly on a day no one else was working I could get the job done, so that's what I did. There is still one final step to take; one section of concrete railway sleeper needs moving from near the entrance to a gap that is waiting for it in one of the car park bays. Not wanting to suffer a hernia, I did not try that task on my own!

You will read elsewhere

in this issue about a practical use for our Over willows (*It's a Wigloo* - p.30). We now have a small stock of cut willow which might be of interest to any basket weavers or willow "sculptors". If you would like to make use of any of the willow, particularly if you are able to produce high quality items for sale at ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE, then please let me or any member of ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE team know.



It seems no Over Update is complete these days without a picture of Paul continuing the paving! This time he is on the terrace. (Notice the nice soft cushion for the knees.)

In recent weeks we have again enjoyed the company of a pair of swans on the Basin but whether they are Rudolf and Margot, who lived here for several weeks last year, who can say...but they make a welcome addition to the scene!  NB

**PRINT
PLUS**

the complete printing service and more

Tel: 01432 272025

- stationery • leaflets • mailers • posters • newsletters • brochures
- prospectuses • calendars • magazines • books • exhibition panels



126 Widemarsh Street • Hereford HR4 9HN • Fax: 01432 353962 • ISDN: 01432 262988
Email: enquiries@printplushereford.co.uk • www.printplushereford.co.uk

THE WHARF HOUSE *Fit-out*



There are no prizes for any caption to this photo! Working in very confined spaces is a challenge that Barrie faced whilst panelling the interior of the many cupboards and wardrobes in the bedrooms on the top floor.

It shows the excellent progress being made on the top floor by our carpenter and Barrie, who has become the carpenter's assistant. Once again, we are using the doors and wood recycled from the former hospital building. Although it does give a lovely 'characterful' finish, it does mean we have extra work filling and sanding the old timbers.



THE NEW EXTENSION

Behind the Annexe, alongside the back door, is the new storeroom for the kitchen. From the outside it looks like a continuation of the wooden fence, but inside volunteers have created a new room. Plastered and recently painted, it will soon be ready to move in the kitchen stores. Any volunteers willing to help complete the fitout at THE WHARF HOUSE will be warmly welcomed.

♦ MJ

Photos: Nigel Bailey



HEREFORDSHIRE & BORDERS

CANOES & KAYAKS

Tel: 01981 580555 Fax: 01981 580275

HEREFORDSHIRE'S LARGEST STOCKIST FOR
CANOES, KAYAKS AND ACCESSORIES

Suppliers of Old Town, Necky, Dagger,
Pyranha, Palm, Nookie, PeakUK, Mad River

Burhope Farm, Orcop, Herefordshire HR2 8EU

www.hbcanoekayak.co.uk

The Restaurant

THE WHARF HOUSE is becoming increasingly popular for wedding receptions. One bride and groom was urging the volunteers to hurry up and finish the bedrooms so that they can become the honeymoon suit!

NAMED TOP RESTAURANT

The restaurant was named as the 'Number One Spot in Gloucestershire for Easter lunch' this year by the *Citizen Weekend Magazine*. A number of local businesses also regularly bring guests for a meal. Well done to the staff at THE WHARF HOUSE for getting this good name in the area!

For those many visitors that ask when the riverside terrace will be used for alfresco dining, we can now tell them that



the tables and chairs are on order and so it will not be long before they can enjoy their meals outside too. We are hoping it will have great appeal to our visitors this year as the terrace is a superb location overlooking the Severn. We also have plans to landscape the banks below the terrace where we already have a collection of bamboos and cornus growing.

Please remember to visit us at the Over Open Days throughout the summer – details on the events page. ♦ MJ



THE WHARF HOUSE *a fine blend of setting and dining ...*

WATERSIDE RESTAURANT • OVER • GLOUCESTER

A warm welcome and excellent food, created with flair and imagination, using the best local produce, plus an inviting list of fine wines.

Lunches served: **12 noon – 3 pm**

Evening Restaurant: **from 7pm**

Prior booking is advised.

Morning coffee and cakes: **10 am – 12 noon**

Afternoon Tea and light bites: **3 pm – 5 pm**



01452 33 2 900

www.thewharfhouse.co.uk

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

SUPPORTING OUR WATERWAYS



We offer an extensive range of the highest quality materials including:

Agricultural Ground Limestone

Ready Mixed Concrete

Concrete Products

Asphalt & Macadams

Aggregates & Recycled Materials

Contracting Services

Tarmac Ltd

P O Box 1, Kington, Herefordshire HR5 3LQ

Tel: 01544 230711

Fax: 01544 231406



The Restoration Fund Gathering

On Saturday March 17th we held this year's event to thank members of the Restoration Fund.

About 20 contributors to the Fund assembled at **THE WHARF HOUSE** for a presentation on progress on the Over site over the last year. The group was then split in half with one party being shown around the site and the other seeing "behind the scenes" i.e. progress on the upper floors. We don't normally show visitors the ongoing work on the bedrooms so most had never seen this work in progress before and one wrote in a thank-you letter *"There has been a huge amount of progress on all sorts of things since I was last there."*

The groups swapped around and then came back together for a splendid buffet lunch in The Visitor Centre, the same correspondent commenting that *"...the food was exceptional"*.

The Restoration Fund party then moved on to Oxenhall where they were met by Brian Fox, who showed them the progress made on restoring the aqueduct over Ell Brook. This is the project that was supported by the Restoration Fund money over the past year. He then led the group up to the House Lock stopping occasionally to describe the work of the Tuesday volunteers at Oxenhall.

THE RESTORATION FUND

The Restoration Fund is an important source of funds – *we would welcome more Restoration Fund Members to help swell the funds, which are directly available for restoration work* – the requested minimum contribution is just £3 per month by Standing Order – full details are available from our Treasurer, Liz Connors (see *Contacts, inside back cover*) who will be pleased to send you the appropriate form.



Photos: Maggie Jones

IT'S A WIGLOO!

by Liz Bailey

We have a permanent display in **THE WHARF HOUSE VISITOR CENTRE** telling the story of the osiers (willow) grown there in the past – a tradition that the H&G CT have re-established on site (see Mike Bowden's article "On the Trail of the Soft Red Osier" on p.28 of edition 82 of **The Wharfinger**). However, little did we know that Member (and teacher) Liz Bailey would put some of our home grown material to such an unusual and worthwhile use at her new school . . . how do you stop an igloo melting . . . build a living wigloo!

At one of the Over Open Days last year, I was interested to see local resident Janice Lyall weaving willow animals from the osiers grown along the towpath at Over. Not one to miss an opportunity, I approached Mike Bowden, who masterminded the growing of the osiers, and casually asked 'How do you fancy creating a living willow sculpture?' My Early Years' Centre had relocated to a new school with a grassy outside area which lacked any permanent structure to enhance children's play. Mike was

Staff from the school joined Mike at the Over osier bed to cut the willow.

a bit apprehensive as he had not done anything like this before; but this did not seem to concern him as much as the thought of working with a group of pre-school children!

In February Mike came to a staff meeting to plan the project, where it was decided to build a living willow igloo as a den for the children. We organised a day for digging out the base for the igloo, a morning to cut the willows and another day to construct the living sculpture. The whole idea fired the enthusiasm of many parents in the Centre.

We had a fantastic response to our request for helpers for our 'Dig out' day. Twenty parents and their children cleared the area for an eight-foot diameter igloo with an eight-foot long by three-foot wide entrance tunnel. We laid the black fabric 'terram', kindly donated by a parent, and in-filled the area with play bark. Due to the high levels of water in the Over Canal Basin and the River Leadon at the time, it was unsafe for the children to help cut the willows. However the staff faithfully

From the left: Willow was planted to shape the dome. The willow was interwoven to make the dome shape. The eight foot tunnel was then planted and formed into an arch.



Photos: Liz Bailey



Everyone joined in – the base was shaped, covered in terram and filled with play-bark.

turned up on a Sunday morning to help Mike carry out this task. The willows were sorted and bundled into red and green stemmed varieties and kept in water at the Centre ready for use the following week.

The big day arrived. Mike planned the construction down to the last detail to ensure that it was a success; even constructing a mini version in his back garden! Plans became increasingly ambitious. Mike suggested it would be nice for the children to have some porthole windows in the igloo and a staff member pointed out that it would definitely be an advantage for staff and other adults to have access to the igloo through a side entrance. A wise suggestion as the thought of having to crawl through the tunnel several times each day to play with the children was, on reflection, not a good idea!



The wigloo was tested!

Parents and children inserted the first willows rods through holes in the terram around the perimeter of the circle under Mike's guidance. More and more were added until we had a perfect dome (complete with two portholes and a woven back door!). After a short break for lunch, the adjoining tunnel was created.

This project was such fun and so enjoyable. The parents in particular are very proud of their efforts and rightly so. *The sculpture has been admired by so many people and is already growing and in daily use.* On behalf of everyone I work with, I would like to thank the H&G CT for the willows and especially Mike for his time and commitment. The living sculpture is providing a great deal of pleasure for the children currently in the Centre and will benefit children in the community for many years to come.

◆ LB

Our thanks to Liz for making a donation of £50 to H&G CT funds in recognition of Mike's voluntary efforts away from the Canal! – Ed.



Take a cruise through a National Park

BEACON PARK BOATS offers a superb fleet of 10 beautiful narrow boats and two electric day boats to cruise the stunning Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal.

Relax and unwind as you discover its beauty, peace, wildlife, fishing, and lovely walks, amongst the magnificent Brecon Beacons. Choice of start days, enjoy short breaks or tranquil weeks. Sleeping 2-6. Pets welcome. Please call Alasdair or Sarah for further information or to request a brochure.

01873 858277
www.beaconparkboats.com

The LOCK HOUSE at Oxenhall

by Brian Fox

Our well known contributor takes on an additional task to his regular restoration updates and delves into the history of the property adjacent to House Lock at Oxenhall – but when is a house a cottage . . . ?

Construction of the H & G canal was started at Over in 1792 and the priority was to reach Hereford with the money that had been raised so all the effort was put into digging the waterway and construction of locks and bridges. Luxuries like houses for employees would not have been considered at that time and it transpired that the money ran out anyway when the canal had only reached Ledbury. Staff newly employed in the operation of the canal, like lock keepers, must have lived in rented accommodation locally.

Trade was slow at first with sufficient income to pay the staff and it wasn't until 1818 that the manager announced that there was £1,200 in credit and plans were drawn up to build a house for the lock keeper, possibly at Rudford. In 1831 another house was built at Over and by 1838 there was enough capital in hand to build the lock house at Oxenhall. The house, with a small garden adjacent, was built on the instructions of Stephen Ballard, then canal manager, and consisted of 3 rooms downstairs and 2 bedrooms upstairs with the brick privy at the bottom of the garden. It is not clear why the house was built in this location as there was a more accessible site adjacent to the next lock on the canal where the old coal branch canal came in! The lock

overspill channel already existed to take the surplus water around the lock so it meant the house had to be built bridging this and also taking account of a steep slope into the field behind.

The house is clearly built to the same design as the one featured on the front cover of David Bick's first edition of the H&G history, which has subsequently been shown to be probably the Lock House at Rudford, built many years earlier. There are minor modifications, but generally the two are the same, with walls that are embellished with brick pilasters at intervals which, it has been suggested, were associated with the Greek Revival style prevalent in the pre Victorian era. It is now quite unique to the

area, as the Rudford House was demolished to make way for

the railway, and consequently the house at Oxenhall was Listed Grade II in 1985 (at the instigation of the then Canal Society). There has been some movement in the walls and they have more recently been tied together with steel ties from front to back – but basically it is still the same as when constructed.

The occupant is described as "lock keeper" in early census returns but it is

most likely that he was actually responsible for a length of canal, which in this case may have extended from Newent to Oxenhall tunnel, and would have included 4 locks and several bridges. He would make sure that the canal was navigable and not leaking plus organising maintenance of the locks, bridges and any hedges/trees that needed management. Census returns show that in 1841 the lock keeper was Richard Goode who lived



The Lock Cottage at Rudford, (no longer standing) was similar in appearance to the one at Oxenhall.

there with his wife and 3 children. He was a local Newent man who, it appears, may have been at Rudford Lock House in 1839 as his first child was born there. He was still at Oxenhall in 1851 when his family had grown to 5 children but there were also 3 lodgers (colliers who came from the Forest of Dean and must have worked in the pit at Gorsley). His pay would have been meagre with a wife and 5 children to support and any extra income from taking in lodgers must have been very welcome. *Goodness knows where they all slept!*

In May 1851 the canal was in the news when The Hereford Times reported that 2 boats going in opposite directions had met in the middle of Oxenhall tunnel in the middle of the night. Only recently a timetable had been devised to allow boats through the tunnel, one way for 3 hours and then the opposite direction for 3 hours. These times only applied during daylight hours so presumably the boat captains both thought that there would be nobody else about. Neither would give way and they were stuck there for almost 3 days before someone finally gave way. How long did it take Richard Goode to discover why there was no movement of boats in either direction on that fateful day? One can imagine him shouting up the tunnel, or even taking another boat in to try and resolve the impasse, but there would have been very little else that he could do but send word along the towpath to other boat captains to warn them of the stoppage.

In July 1853 the canal was in the news again when a local newspaper reported that a cloudburst over Dymock at 3am had caused the level of the water in the canal to rise so much that a boat became stuck in the tunnel and the crew had to be rescued by another boat! Richard Goode, who just happened to be out and about at the time, reported that the towpath was temporarily flooded and the water came up to the 3rd stair in his house.

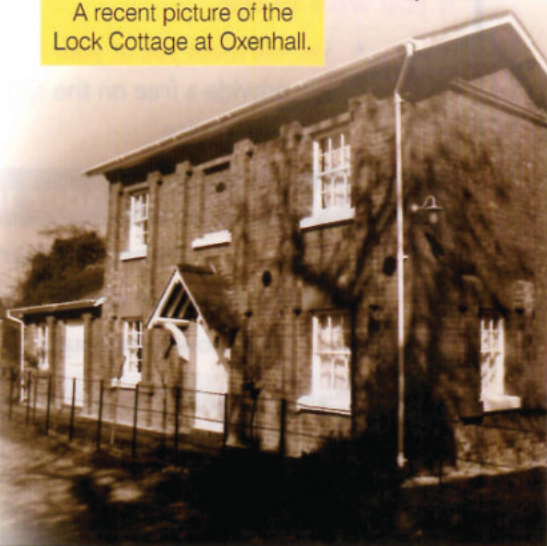
However, given the local topography this is very hard to believe. The duties of a 'lockkeeper' were certainly varied and it meant apparently being on call 24/7.

Richard died in 1859 and by 1861 the lock was in the care of Thomas Godsall but he didn't stay long as John Preece must have taken over about 1863 when the first of his children was born in the lock house. JP was a Herefordshire man having been born at Withington and in 1851 was a canal labourer there who probably jumped at the chance of promotion and a house of his own. He was still at Oxenhall in 1871 and by 1881 his family had grown to 6. In 1876 he is recorded in David Bick's history as being paid £1.8s per fortnight – *of which 4s was deducted as rent*. His job in 1881 is described as "*lock keeper (Inland Nav.)*" which the transcriber has incorrectly written as "*Inland Navy*". It paints a picture of a gunboat patrolling the canal looking out for smugglers or illegal immigrants!

This isn't the end of the story so read about the Lock House under railway control in the next edition – *and the debate about when is a house a cottage!*

◆ BF

A recent picture of the Lock Cottage at Oxenhall.



CANAL CRAFT

Dobson's Boatyard, Shardlow, Derby. DE72 2GJ

Visit our Website - <http://www.canalcraft.co.uk>

IWA
The Inland
Waterways
Association
Corporate Member

If you want to buy a boat, or sell your boat ...

...Canal Craft (Boat Sales) Ltd is the trusted leader in narrowboat sales

Exists to help you

... the company is staffed by enthusiasts who's canal experience totals over a hundred years!

If you wish to buy ...

- we issue comprehensive stock lists – newly printed each day (*usually over 70 boats*)
- boats prices range from £7,000 to £70,000
- we handle residential boats in all areas
- we can supply fully fitted or part fitted new boats or assist you in a design and build project
- we are licensed credit brokers and arrange insurance for your boat
- first time buyers guide **free** on request.

If you wish to sell ...

- we will meet you at your boat anywhere on the connected system
- we provide a free on the spot valuation but there is no obligation to use our service.

The trusted leader in narrowboat sales

Incorporating:

Dobsons Wharf Boats Ltd.

Where common sense + quality = value for money.

Narrowboats built to your requirements.

**Canal Craft (Boat Sales) Ltd., Dobsons Wharf,
The Wharf, Shardlow, Derbyshire, DE72 2GJ**

Tel: 01332 792271

Fax: 01332 799880

A NATURAL EXPLANATION?

In the last edition, John Chappell (another of our regular volunteers working to help restore the H&G Canal for the long-term benefit of local residents and the wider community) told us all about the benefits of Borage that grows wild in May at Oxenhall. But what are you likely to find there in June . . . ?

The plant **Hemlock** is synonymous with poison and as such was used in ancient Greece to put condemned prisoners to death. Its most famous victim was the philosopher Socrates and it was thought to be an ingredient of the witch's brew in Macbeth!

Hemlock's botanic name is *Conium Maculatum*. The plant is an herbaceous biennial with smooth green stems growing between 1.5-2.5m tall. The leaves are finely divided and lacy and the flowers, small,

white and clustered in umbels up to 10-15cm across (see inset), can be seen at their best in early June. When crushed both leaves and root emit a rank, unpleasant odour giving an easy means of identification. Often found on poorly drained soils, particularly near streams, ditches and other surface water, the site at Oxenhall suits it perfectly.

Hemlock can be used as a sedative and pain reliever. It is sometimes used as an ingredient in ointments for haemorrhoids but *the difference between a therapeutic and a toxic amount is very slight so don't try this at home*. Overdoses can produce paralysis but rumours that the Yarkhill crew have overdosed on Hemlock have so far proved unfounded. The best antidote, if too much of this herb is taken, is said to be pure wine. *Perhaps we should add some of this to our first aid kit!*

◆ JC



Photo: John Chappell



**A&D Marine
Services Ltd**

COVERED DRY DOCK FACILITIES
REPAIRS AND REFITS TO ALL TYPES OF CRAFT
WELL STOCKED CHANDLERY
OUTBOARD MOTORS SALES AND SERVICING

HEMPSTED DRY DOCK,
338 BRISTOL ROAD,
GLOUCESTER GL2 5DH

Telephone: (01452) 415430
Fax: (01452) 307674
www.admarineservices.co.uk

Biking for everyone

pedalabikeaway

CYCLE HIRE CENTRE

Cannop Valley, (B4234) Royal Forest of Dean, Glos.

WELCOMES ALL CYCLISTS

TRAFFIC FREE MARKED TRAILS

TRAILS FOR MOUNTAIN BIKERS

BIKE HIRE – wide range of bikes for all abilities and ages

Special Needs bikes/equipment

CAFÉ – hot and cold food

WORKSHOP – shimano service centre

– cytech trained mechanics

Repairs and servicing by our experienced and friendly staff

BIKE SHOP – cycle accessories and carriers

NEW KIDS BIKES FOR SALE – consult the experts,

friendly advice on size and suitability

TOILETS / SHOWERS / BIKE WASH

OPEN – Tuesday to Sunday 9am to 5pm

Tel 01594 860065 / 01989 770357

Email info @pedalabikeaway.com

website www.pedalabikeaway.com

Bikes also available at Abergavenny for casual cycling along
traffic free trails/canal towpaths/quiet country lanes.

Tel/fax 01873 830219

GREEN goes BROWN, then BLUE!

by Bernard Ingram

*Another volunteer Member makes a welcome debut contributing to **The Wharfinger**. Regular readers will know that the H&G CT has its own diesel powered stone cutting bench that is in regular use at Oxenhall – however, the engine was beyond its prime (to say the least!) - so what do we do ... ?*

No, we have not suddenly gone anti-ecological but the temperamental and overheating engine which drove our large stone cutting machine was in real need of the sort of overhaul that was beyond even the expertise of the skilled and resourceful volunteers at Oxenhall.

It was time to call in the expert in the shape of one of the H&G CT's Vice-Presidents, David Prout. Those who attended the Grand Opening Ceremony of the completion of the first phase at Over, in September 2000, will have seen David's magnificent steam traction engine there - and many will know that in the 'day job' he owns **Old Forge Garage at Dymock**.

David came, listened to the 'patient' coughing and spluttering, and promptly removed it to his diesel treatment centre in Dymock. Sadly the patient proved to be in worse condition than expected and was pronounced ready for that great scrap-heap where all expired Petter Diesels lay redundant.

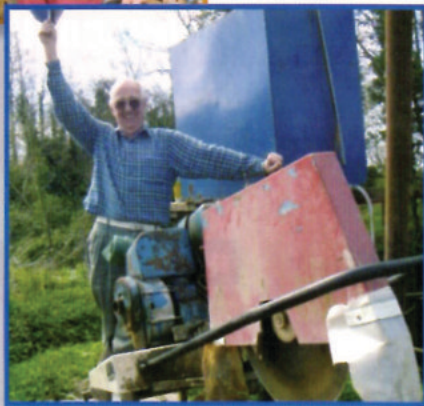
Resourceful David sent his son on an

expedition to search for a replacement. Which is how the original green painted engine turned 'brown'. Hopes were quickly dashed, however, when 'brown' proved to have even less life than 'green'! Weeks went by with little hope of a solution to the dilemma when suddenly, in darkest February, there appeared a chink of light for 'brown' had become 'blue' - in the shape of a much healthier Petter A1 Diesel, which David had found through his many contacts.

Tested and pronounced fit for purpose in the diesel treatment centre; a quick change of pulley made 'blue' ready to be installed. It fitted perfectly, old holes matching new. Team leader Brian Fox took two turns of the starting handle and with much rejoicing 'blue' sprang into life! *Our grateful thanks go to David Prout and his team for the generous gift of this newly restored engine and for his continuing interest and support for our voluntary work on the H&G Canal.*

You can meet David Prout and his steam (and other engines) at the **Welland Steam Rally on 27th to 29th July**. ♦ BI

And here was me hoping for a steam powered stone saw!
- Ed.



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

Not quite... THE LAST PAGE

Thank you ... our grateful thanks to: -

Mower: Following our plea(se) in the last edition **Mr. Smith**, of Marden, gave us a well cared-for petrol mower; it has already seen active service at Oxenhall.

THE WHARF HOUSE: We are grateful to Dave Pedrette of **Pedrette Engineering** for the free roof to our new store and to Paul Brown for the very useful sander which he recently bought for **THE WHARF HOUSE** team. It is helping greatly in the preparation of the upstairs fit-out.

Lloyd Jones: Following our tribute we heard that half the collection at Lloyd's funeral was donated, at his request, to the H&G CT (£105). In addition, we really do appreciate his daughters kind actions in donating his collection of canal related books and plates to be sold to raise further funds.

Cans: The aluminium cans have been taken to the dealers and raised £40. If you live close to Hereford then collection of reasonable quantities may be possible, please contact **Mr & Mrs Day** on 01432 275 443 or by e-mail (*this has changed*) to allancrwwys@tiscali.co.uk.

Jumble: Attended by **Barbara and Ray Moses** and **Jenny Williams**, who raised £161.00 for the H&G CT. Many thanks to all who donated items or gave us goods to sell on commission. The event is run by the 'Friends of the National Waterways Museum' at Gloucester; we are warmly welcomed and the profit they make from stall fees is donated to the Museum.

COPY DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE:

2ND July, 2007

FRENCH LESSON

A Member from Salisbury has taken us to task over the translation of the French newspaper cutting in the Bonhams article on p.33 of the last edition. He wrote to say that he hopes no one uses this to practice their own French translations, having found some fairly important errors! "*Sous la glace*" is 'under the ice'; the measure "*Quatre pouce*" is 'four inches' ('*un pouce*' is a thumb or an inch); "*ferres*" is 'shod with iron'; "*la charrue*" is 'the plough'; and, strangely, "*experiences*" is 'experiences'!

Our translators are both French and speak excellent English ... however, we appreciate that didn't ensure a perfect translation. We now know we have an expert who we can call on in future (*thank you*) ... as we always say, we can utilise virtually any skill!

GLOUCESTERSHIRE SHOP EQUIPMENT LTD.

Chris Handscombe, of Gloucestershire Shop Equipment has asked that we clarify that he has not retired two years earlier than he planned, as implied in the last edition of **The Wharfinger** (*Tales from the Tool Store - p.36*). *Much as Chris would have liked to retire he hasn't!* The reason the business moved out of the unit in Gloucester Docks was the redevelopment of the area.

Our apologies for the misunderstanding; we are pleased to clarify this, especially to those of Chris's customers who he persuaded to become Members of the H&G Canal Trust (*and would therefore have read this*). **Gloucestershire Shop Equipment Limited** is still around to look after them and, until new premises are found, they can be contacted on 07983 710 897.

Please support our advertisers whenever you can - support our supporters!

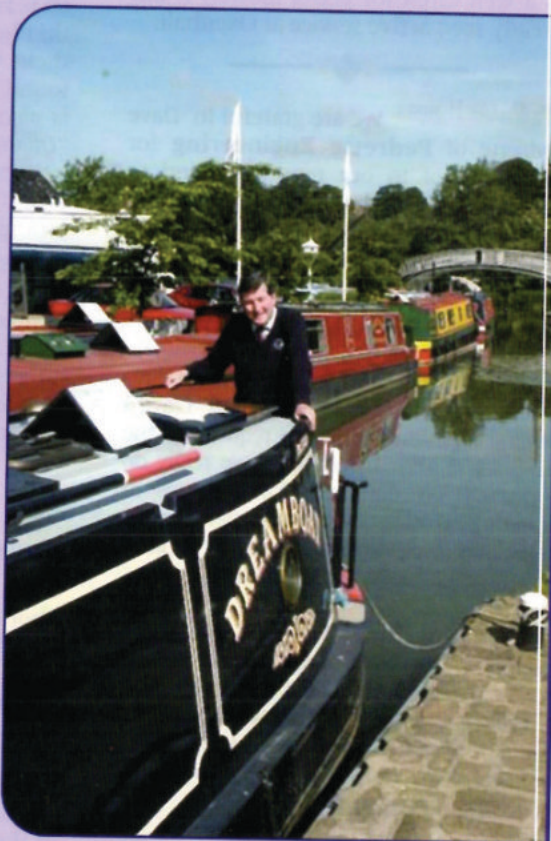
Buying or selling your DREAMBOAT?

*Then make Braunston Brokerage
– at the heart of England's
waterways – your first port of call!*

*Established in 1988, we are
a major player in the selling
of narrowboats – new and
secondhand – with a
reputation for professionalism
that is second to none.*

*Our marina offers the fullest
range of support services.
Uniquely, we have two dry
docks on-site for surveys,
hull-blackening, repaints, sign-
writing and below waterline
repairs. Also engineering and
refit facilities.*

*Sell your Dreamboat
where it will be seen!*



For full information – including our
competitive brokerage package –
contact Tim Coghlan at:

Braunston Marina Limited, Braunston,
Nr Daventry, Northants NN11 7JH
Telephone 01788 891373
Fax 01788 891436

Website: www.braunstonmarina.co.uk
Email: 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!

Janet Moulton

18, Coningsby Court,
Coningsby Street,
HEREFORD,
HR1 2DF
Tel: (01432) 264 366
jmoulton@tiscali.co.uk

Liz Connors

18, St Ethelbert Close,
Sutton St. Nicholas,
Hereford, HR1 3BF
Tel: (01432) 880 155
liz@lizconnors.orangehome.co.uk

Cliff Penny

"Coppice", Burley Gate,
Hereford, HR1 3QS
Tel: (01432) 820 420
canal@penny-ep.co.uk

David Penny

Tel: (01452) 332 900
thewharfhouse@yahoo.co.uk

Brian Fox

1, Holmer Hall Cottages,
Roman Road,
Hereford, HR4 9QU
Tel: (01432) 358 628
brianfox@tiscali.co.uk

Nigel Jefferies

Tel: (01432) 850 661
nigel.jefferies@virgin.net

Nigel and Liz Bailey

Tel: (01452) 533 835
nigel.bailey@blueyonder.co.uk

Martin Danks

Tel: (01432) 344 488

Chris High

Tel: (01568) 615 575
chris.high@lineone.net

Visit our Website ...

www.h-g-canal.org.uk

Maggie Jones

Tel: (01452) 618 010
maggiejones@blueyonder.co.uk

Wilf Jones

Tel: (01452) 413 888
wilfred.jones@homecall.co.uk

Ted Beagles

Tel: (01452) 700 476

Peter Moore

Tel: (01531) 820 671

Lucien Perring

Tel: (01989) 768 441

Robin Smithett

Tel: (01981) 540 334
robin@smithett.co.uk

Heather Worth

MAIL ORDER SALES,
12 Hewitt Ave., Kings Acre,
HEREFORD, HR4 0QP
Tel: (01432) 270 552 (evenings only)
(07889) 583 017 (other times)
Heather@worthh.fsnet.co.uk

UK Subscription Rates

	Annual	Life
Individual	£7.50	£150
Joint/Family	£10.00	£200
Senior Citizen	£5.00	£80
Joint Senior Citizen	£7.00	£110
Corporate	£20.00	£400

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

All payments to: 6, Castle Street, Hereford, HR1 2NL

Advertising in

The Wharfinger

Show the support of your business by advertising in **The Wharfinger**. Rates start at £17, there is a series discount and we will gladly design your advertisement free of charge.

Colin Dymott has the details.

Tel. 01981 540488

colin.kd@virgin.net

Unless specifically stated any opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the formal policy of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust group of companies. The Trust accepts no liability for any matter printed in this newsletter nor any advertising that may be included. Reproduction of extracts from the newsletter is welcomed provided that full acknowledgement is given.

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

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

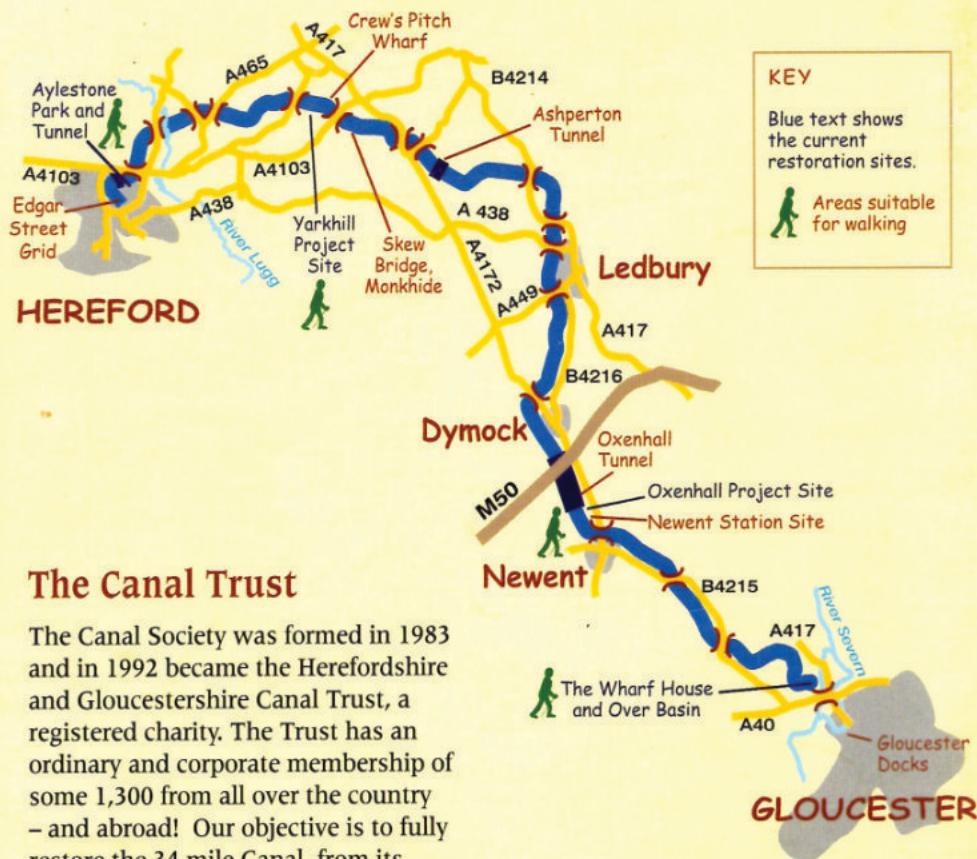
© 2007 Published by the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust.

The Wharf House Company Ltd [No. 4627931] and H & G Canal (Sales) Ltd. [No. 2710215] are part of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust Ltd. group of companies. The Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust is a non-profit distributing company limited by guarantee [No. 2704407] and is a registered charity [No. 1010721]. Registered Office: - 3 Norfolk Court, Norfolk Road, Rickmansworth, WD3 1LJ.

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 in 1992 became the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust, a registered charity. The Trust has an ordinary and corporate membership of some 1,300 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. We have major restoration sites in each county, which together extend to some 4 miles.

Please note: Unless indicated it should not be assumed that Rights of Way exist. We are working on the Canal with the co-operation of the land owners and their neighbours – please help the Trust to maintain its good relations with them. Thank you.