

The **Wharfinger**

Magazine of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust



Summer 2008

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FRONT COVER IMAGE:

Llanthony weir and lock, see page 8

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CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

Celebrating ... 25 Years along the Canal!



A tremendous start to our 25th anniversary year! We have received £165,000 from a legacy of a long-time member Miss Elizabeth Gadesden originally of Stretton Grandison. We are extremely grateful to her relatives who chose the H&G Canal Trust to be one of the charities to benefit from her will – further details are on page 7.

I would like to thank our alert Members (especially Dr Derek Foxton and Roger Broomfield) for spotting in an auction catalogue a 1793 H&G share certificate. As we do not hold an original first issue share certificate in our archive we decided to put in a bid. *We were successful - see page 39!* Few historic items have survived (that we know of) so any opportunity to acquire items for the Canal Trust must not be missed. If we cannot acquire them now it would still be good to know where they are so we can build up a record for the future.

Many of our Members are unable to visit some of our sites but we think they deserve our support, so those that attend our monthly Social Evenings can benefit from our new sound system, which Nigel Jefferies researched and obtained.

We have also been fortunate to receive the funds of the River Wye Restoration Trust who reluctantly have wound up their Charitable Trust. We thank them for thinking of us when they made their decision – further details are on page 43.

As readers will know, our 25th Anniversary Celebrations got underway with our film evening at The Courtyard in Hereford. We had a small display in the foyer for a couple of days and our banner was clearly visible to those stuck in traffic in Edgar Street! Tickets sold out 3 weeks before the show; I need not have worried about addressing an empty auditorium! *A report of this very enjoyable evening is on page 17.* Details of further Celebration Events are on pages 11 – 13. I hope you will come along – please introduce yourselves; I look forward to meeting as many Members as possible.

As I write this the Trading Company is off to Crick Boat Show hoping for warmer/drier weather than last year. *[Update! Saturday: fine/dry - plenty of visitors; Sunday: torrential rain - muddy visitors; Monday: gale force winds - emergency evacuation of large marquee and closure of show after 15 minutes ...!]*

I hope you have a good summer, with plenty of sun but no shortage of water in the canals.

♦ Janet Moulton, Chairman

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What Next?

by Cliff Penny

As reported elsewhere in this edition, the first of our diverse list of 25th Anniversary Events (commemorating the formation of the **Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Society**) have been a huge success. Our celebration of the Anniversary not only acknowledges the important beginnings that led to the subsequent formation of the Charitable Trust but also is intended to publicise, to a wide audience, the H&G Canal and the work of the H&G Canal Trust. Both the film event at **The Courtyard**, and the Kymin to Monkhide walk, were 'sold out' many weeks in advance. "What next?" There are still plenty of events to come (see pages 11 – 13). If you are thinking of coming to a specific event, and there is a restriction on numbers, please book soon as some are booking up very fast! For example, both the Anniversary Dinner at **THE WHARF HOUSE** (40 seats) and the Mini-Bus Tours of the Canal (60 seats) could well be full within a few days of the publication of this edition!

Obviously an Anniversary is a time to reflect on the past but the H&G CT Council of Management is to also very much looking to the future. We fully appreciate that Members and supporters are anxious to hear "what next?" lies in store as far as physical Canal restoration is concerned. As we have said, many times before, we simply cannot dash onto a site and start to restore or construct a new section of the Canal just like that. Our policy has always been to try and ensure that everything is in place for a successful outcome to a specific project before we publicly announce details. CofM decided some time ago that a project group (comprising some CofM

members and other CT Members with appropriate skills) should work together to accelerate this lengthy process. As soon as appropriate progress has been made on a specific site a full report will appear in **The Wharfinger**.

Another area where we have a group of volunteers pursuing a specific "what next" objective relates to the H&G CT's web site – whilst this has proved to be an important area for the Trust in keeping up with modern day trends CofM are determined that it should be given a 'make over' and a new look site will be ready to launch later in the year.

We have also been considering "what next" as far as **The Wharfinger** is concerned. We are looking for a volunteer in each county who would be responsible for placing copies of **The Wharfinger** in suitable 'retail outlets', for sale, as a part of our ongoing objective of even greater promotion of the H&G Canal (and the work of the H&G CT). Do you have transport, and the time four times a year to liaise with likely outlets, collect bulk copies of **The Wharfinger** and then to deliver each issue and collect the money? You will be given full support to enable this initiative to flourish. It might be that the distribution could be shared with a friend (or friends) but we are aiming for a person in each county to co-ordinate this activity. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me (please see *Contacts*, inside back cover) to discuss.

STOP PRESS! We have delayed this edition and added four pages to include details of a very important purchase by the Canal Trust – see page 8.

◆ CRP

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The GADESSEN BEQUEST



Photo: Dick Street

The church at Stretton Grandison where memorials to the descendants of Beth Gadesden can be found.

Beth Gadesden left the residue of her estate to "charity" without any guidance to her executor. Her cousins, being the closest family, were able to select 10 charitable organisations as recipients. The Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust were an obvious choice due to the family connections in the area.

The Gadesden family acquired Homend, through the marriage of Clare Hopton to William Gadesden, Beth's father. The Hopton, Parsons and Poole families have centuries-long associations with Stretton Grandison and Canon Frome. **Beth Gadesden was the last holder of the name** and the Hoptons, Parsons and Pooles have all become extinct. (Many memorials will be found in the Stretton Grandison and Canon Frome churches).

Beth was born at Homend in 1924 and lived there until the death of her mother in

We have briefly referred to a bequest in recent issues. As Janet Moulton has mentioned in her Chairman's Column (on page 3), the administration of the estate of our late Member Miss E A Gadesden of Dulverton, Somerset, has now reached the stage where we are in a position to report matters more fully in **The Wharfinger**.

Her cousins, when administering the provisions of the will, have noted her long-standing Membership of the H&G Canal Trust and we are particularly grateful for their support. Here, Sir John Lushington describes the family connections with Herefordshire and why they decided the H&G Canal Trust should be a beneficiary.

1967, when the estate was sold. Although not quite a founder Member she had been a Member of the H&G Canal Trust for many years. It was one of her links with her past.

Her cousins hope that the bequest will be used to help restore part of the canal close to Stretton Grandison – with a suitable memorial to the now lost name of Gadesden. ♦ JL

The H&G Canal Trust Council of Management are committed to honouring this request as soon as a viable and appropriate project becomes available on the Canal in the area to be funded and named after Miss Gadesden. In the meantime it has been agreed that the legacy can be utilised in the short term to facilitate progress elsewhere where opportunities might otherwise be lost due to lack of funding.

STOP PRESS!

The purchase of Llanthony Lock

One of the most common questions we are asked about the Canal is how do we link to the national network ...that connection to 2,500 miles of navigable waterways is one the most fundamental points in the Canal's restoration. David Penny reports on the successful completion of not only the answer to that question but the purchase of our entry to the national network, and even part of the River Severn itself.....

Although the Canal Trust already owns the point of entry to the River Severn at Over, this only connects us to the currently unnavigable Severn below Llanthony and Maisemore weirs. Until the 1980's British Waterways owned both Llanthony and Maisemore locks, but before full restoration of the Canal was on the agenda Maisemore was sold. Early in 2007 a similar fate was about to happen to Llanthony and so I commenced negotiations to secure this crucial site for the Canal Trust.....

A national review by British Waterways led to their decision early in 2007 to dispose of Llanthony as a non operational asset. This consisted of a pair of cottages, the lock, and surrounding

Council of Management members on a visit to Llanthony Lock last summer.

land. After extensive discussions the lock was offered to the Trust, a liability that was not an enticing prospect, and so I continued negotiations based on acquiring the whole site. This would ensure we would have any land needed for modern day requirements for safe operation and entry to the lock, as well as an income stream to make this key operational asset self financing in the long term.

During this time we received the very welcome news of the Legacy, so what might have been an investment with borrowed money funded by the income from the cottages, became a sound investment for some of the bequest generating an annual income for the Trust whilst securing this crucial operational asset. It would also give a sound asset that could be borrowed against should an opportunity arise elsewhere on the Canal, considerably

strengthening the Canal Trust overall.

A year of complex negotiations to offset liabilities against the asset of the cottages, and detailed reports to the Council of Management of the Trust followed. Like much to do with the Canal the negotiations were complex to secure a balanced proposal for our respective Boards to endorse. At last the middle of June saw the transfer agreed – hence this edition being late out!

So what have we acquired? Well for £150,000 (with 50% not payable until next year!) we have acquired all the land outlined in yellow on the aerial photograph with the exception of the structure of the weir. We have however, secured full rights to alter both Llanthony and Maisemore weirs at any time in the future giving us any control we need of these structures without any of the liabilities. The site includes a pair of tenanted cottages which generate



a commercial level of return for the investment we have made in the site. For those who think of a canal cottage in H&G terms such as at Oxenhall, it needs to be appreciated we are talking of a considerably greater scale as the footprint of the building is closer to the size of THE WHARF HOUSE. We now also own a section of River Sever as well as land around the cottages and on the City side.

So why choose Llanthony as the route of entry to the H&G Canal? Both Maisemore and Llanthony locks were used as routes to the Canal as can be seen from historical records, but only Llanthony permits

Council of Management members study Llanthony Lock from the bridge above. The pair of cottages are in the background



full size H&G width boats to gain entry to the Canal. There were also issues in using Maisemore as this would involve all boats coming to the H&G having to turn in the River just below ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE at Over so that they would be facing upstream to have steerage to gain entry to Over lock. With the railway pier in the middle of the river just down stream of here this raised considerable navigational concerns. By using Llanthony, boats will already be approaching from downstream and a much safer approach to Over is permitted. It also will give the Canal, and Canal Trust, a real presence in the City, a considerable PR asset of the future.

The site may currently seem isolated and in a back water, but it is just to the edge of the huge Gloucester Quays redevelopment and to the corner of Gloucester Docks, with a new direct off road cycle link from here to Over, and the new south west bypass visible in the bottom left of the picture. The Canal Trust will be putting together a programme of work to tidy the site up over the next couple of years and to use it as a shop window for the Trust within the City of Gloucester in the future. The importance of controlling our entry to the national network and extending our landholding into the City of Gloucester will become increasingly relevant in the coming years.

♦ DRP





Celebrating ...

25 Years!

Anniversary Events

FULLY BOOKED

Friday, 21st June

HEREFORD WALKING FESTIVAL

Canal Walk

Kymin to Monkhide and return. Watch for Festival Publicity for details and booking arrangements. H&G CT volunteer Chris High will lead this walk.



Following the highly successful inaugural 25th Anniversary Celebration event at The Courtyard in Hereford (see page 17) we have plenty of other events, in both counties, for you to enjoy.

We hope to see you at as many as you can attend – and please tell (and bring!) your friends as well.

HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST

25 YEARS ANNIVERSARY DINNER



THE WHARF HOUSE

**Wednesday, July 9TH
7 pm seated by 7.30 pm**

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See you there...

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10.30 am to 5.00 pm

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Monday 11th August at 7pm

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at **THE WHARF HOUSE**

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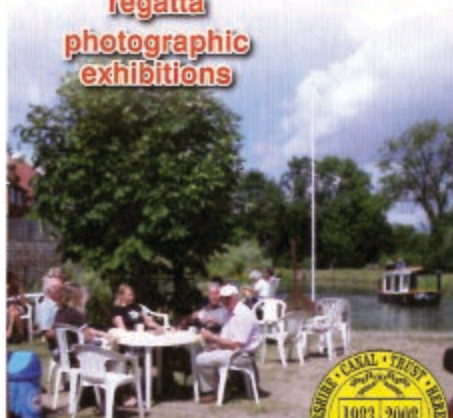
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25th Anniversary Celebration

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Oxenhall Tunnel gas pipeline crossing

*In Spring 2007 (Ed.91, page 7) we reported on the outcome of successful negotiations with **National Grid** in respect of the proposed routing of the 109km (120mile) long Brecon to Tirley 1220mm (48inch) diameter natural gas pipeline over Oxenhall Tunnel. The work has now been completed, to a very high standard, and we greatly appreciate the time and trouble taken to ensure that this vital pipeline was constructed so that it did not adversely impact on the Canal, or Oxenhall Tunnel, now or in the future.*

***National Grid's** Senior Project Manager (Construction) Brian Smethurst, together with **Murphy Pipelines** Project Manager Tony O'Sullivan, describe how this section of their major project was designed and constructed.*

The routing of the pipeline presented some extraordinary challenges to **Murphy Pipelines Ltd.**, who were contracted by **National Grid** to build the project. The successful construction depended hugely on the 1,000's of hours spent on finding the best available route - which was no easy task. All the constraints along the proposed route had to be surveyed and mapped, which in-turn influenced the pipeline route.

The primary constraints, which had to be considered, were:-

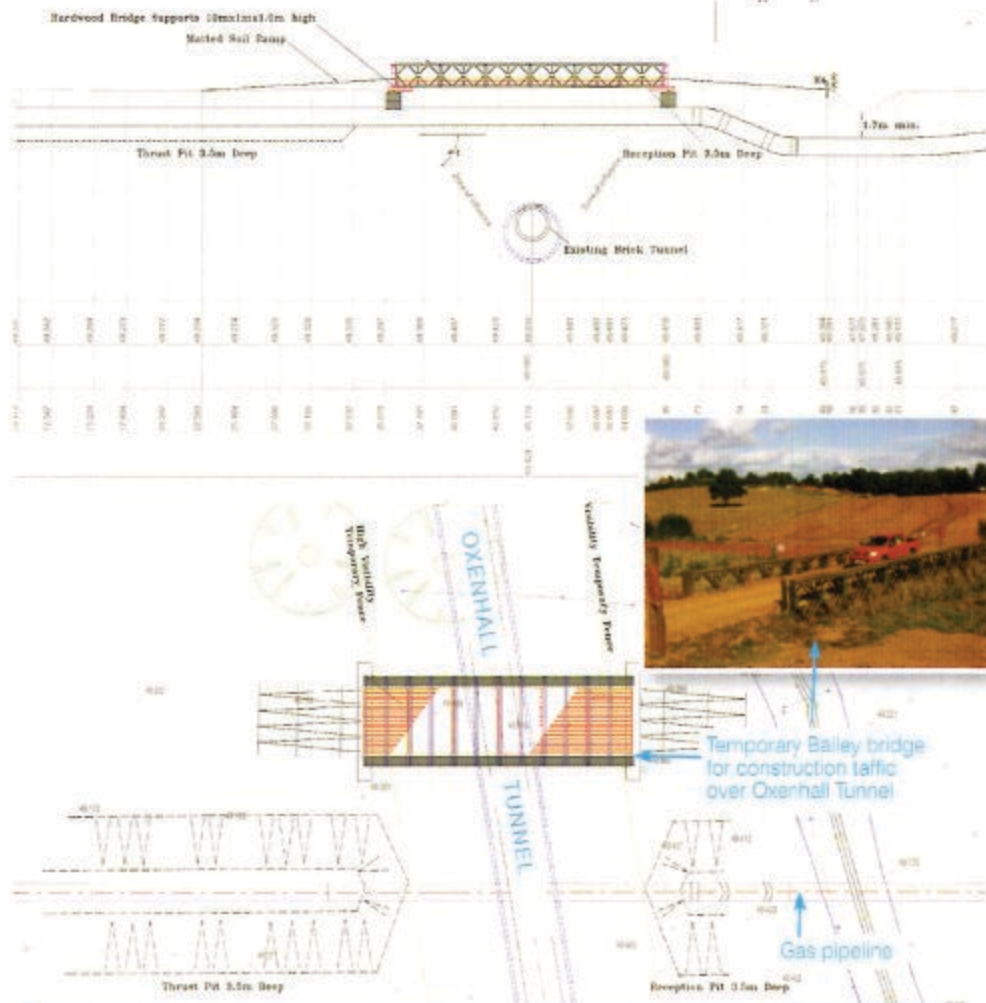
- Environmental - Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) rivers, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Ancient Woodland, special grasslands etc.
- Ecological - Protected Species such as bats, dormice, great crested newts, badgers, nesting birds etc.
- Physical conditions - steep slopes, side slopes, roads, rivers, high density populations, etc.

- Existing third party services, e.g. water and oil pipelines, aqueducts and tunnels.
- Landowner requirements.
- Safety.

When all of the above had been surveyed and mapped, the best available route was chosen, and the remaining constraints were then overcome by the best engineering solutions available. The Oxenhall Tunnel on the H&G Canal was one of the un-avoidable constraints which was very carefully considered in liaison with the Canal Trust.

One of the first challenges was to determine the depth of the tunnel below ground level, and to check for buried construction shafts. As there was no safe access into the tunnel to allow conventional surveying at the point of the pipeline crossing alternative means had to be deployed. **Murphy Pipelines Ltd** used "Geophysics" which, by sending sound waves into the ground and measuring





Extract from National Grid/Murphy Pipelines Ltd. plan and section of Brecon to Tirley 1200mm (48") dia gas pipeline crossing of Oxenhall Tunnel.

the time taken to travel to an obstacle and back to source, allows the depth to be determined and any shafts to be located.

Once the depth had been established, there were two main criteria to consider in relation to installing a pipeline of this large size over the tunnel. These were the short-term impact during construction and installation of the pipeline (the activities at or near ground level), and the long-term impact from the presence of the pipeline over the tunnel with regard to the future

restoration and operation of the Canal.

Protection of the tunnel during construction and installation.

The size and weight of the pipe required some very heavy and robust pieces of construction plant to handle and manoeuvre it. For example, the pipe carriers weighed up to 65 ton, and the machine used for bending the pipe 80 ton! Therefore protection of the tunnel from the temporary imposed loading of the construction plant

had to be considered. Initially a reinforced concrete slab was proposed that would have been constructed to span over the tunnel beneath the pipeline; however, the actual construction of this protective slab could have caused damage to the tunnel. It was therefore decided that the best solution was to install a temporary bridge to span the tunnel to safely transport all pipeline traffic and plant over the tunnel to ensure that the imposed loading during construction was kept away from the tunnel structure. The bridge installed was a military style bailey bridge with a clear span of 18 metres (60ft.).

The long-term impact on the tunnel from the pipeline.

In order to install the pipe and minimise the impact on the tunnel for the long term, it was decided to use a "non-open cut" technique called an "auger-bore". This is a tunnelling machine which uses an auger to transport the cut material from the face. The diameter of the hole that is cut

is slightly larger than that of the pipeline, which enables it to be installed behind the cutting head. The pipe and head are propelled by a drive train, which uses a series of hydraulic rams, which move along a length of rail within an excavated pit. This method has a neutral impact on the loading of the ground on the tunnel and avoids any heavy machinery working over the tunnel as would be required for a conventional open cut method. In addition, the thickness of the pipeline steel was increased from the normal 15.9mm to 22.9mm so that the pipeline can safely span the tunnel should there be any localised settlement of the ground when major repairs, or even enlargement, of the tunnel is undertaken in the future.

The temporary bailey bridge was installed in mid April 2007, this section of the pipeline was constructed in August, and the final reinstatement of the ground and bridge removal was successfully complete by mid October 2007.

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Celebrating 25 Years!

Film Evening Report



The first of our 25th Anniversary Events in Hereford took place at The Courtyard in mid April. Peter Lawrence reflects on a highly successful evening of rare historic archive film expertly hosted by our Member Amanda Huntley of the Huntley Film Archives ...

Hereford station filmed in 1906, Gloucester Docks in full swing; scenes among many others seen when the historic films of railway and waterway were shown. Nearly all the films were made before the days of colour, including an amateur one from 1922. *I miss black and white!*

150 people packed The Studio to capacity – it was fully booked 3 weeks in advance showing what a popular event it was. Items included the Bulmer film of the locomotive King George Vth, fascinating scenes from Swindon works (showing a steam locomotive in construction virtually from start to finish), women taking over men's jobs on the wartime railways of the 1940's, boats being worked up the Grand Union canal in the 1950's, a clip from the 1945 movie "Painted Boats" (directed by Charles Crichton) and even

a 1950 publicity film from the Docks & Waterways Executive. It showed many parts of Britain when boats quietly and efficiently carried thousands of tons of cargo on the rivers and canals.

The Canal Trust's two stands caught the attention of many concert goers visiting the adjacent main auditorium as well, which is all grist to the mill of our publicity. We are indebted to H&G Canal Trust Member **Amanda Huntley of Huntley Film Archives** www.huntleyarchives.com who runs her father's amazing collection of documentary films, keeping it up to date. Her knowledgeable introduction to the silent and sound films made it a great evening to kick off celebrations to mark the Canal Trust's 25th year. And thanks to Janet Moulton for both the idea for this particular celebration and for organising it as well. Judging by the satisfied faces and comments the punters liked it too. *A number of new Members were also recruited during the evening – welcome!*



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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.

Janet has put together some great topics for you to enjoy over the next few months. We look forward to seeing you there.

JUNE 17TH

The Forest of Dean

A speaker from the Dean Heritage Centre will give a talk on the Forest on our doorstep

SEPTEMBER 16TH

River Severn part 1

Brian Draper

We start a trip along the Severn – you will have to wait until next year for the second part!

JULY 15TH

Annual General Meeting

7.30 start

OCTOBER 21ST

Wild in West Wales

Les Kedward

Superb photography for our natural history evening

AUGUST 19TH

Informal Natter and Noggin in the bar or on the patio at the Royal Oak



Photo: Maggie Jones



Please see pages 11 and 13 for information about our **25th Anniversary Celebration Events.**

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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, 15TH JULY, 2008**
at the **THE ROYAL OAK, MUCH MARCLE,**
NEAR LEDBURY, COMMENCING AT 7.30PM.

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDING 28TH FEBRUARY 2008

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 Companies) for the year ended 28th February 2008, Report of the Honorary Auditor thereon, and the Report of the Honorary Treasurer
5. To Appoint the Auditors of the Trust (and associated Companies)
6. To Re-appoint those Council Members retiring by rotation who offer themselves for re-election:-

Liz Connors, Brian Fox

[Note: Nigel Bailey is standing down as he has moved away from the area.]

7. Close of Formal Business

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.**

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

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR YEAR ENDING 28TH FEBRUARY 2008

This is the sixteenth **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 2008] those listed below have been members:-

COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT OF THE CANAL TRUST

(12 MONTHS TO 28-2-08)

Tony Austin-Bailey; Nigel Bailey (*to 01.08*); Liz Connors; Martin Danks; Brian Fox; Nigel Jefferies; Caroline Jones (IWA Nominee); Maggie Jones; Janet Moulton; Cliff Penny; David Penny.

TRADING COMPANY H&GC (SALES) LTD

(12 MONTHS TO 28-2-08)

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 28-2-08)

Liz Connors; Janet Moulton; David Penny

Italics indicates not a Director.

The 12 months ended 28th February 2008 was another busy year with *physical work* continuing at Aylestone Park (Hereford), Oxenhall, Over and Yarkhill – and with *negotiations* continuing in respect of a number of important sites in both counties. **THE WHARF HOUSE** fit-out appeal resulted in loans totalling £2,200 and a donation of £1,250. The Canal Trust made a loan of £20,000 to permit the fit-out of the bedrooms and bathrooms to continue. Despite an enforced two week closure due to the July floods the operation of the Restaurant and Visitor Centre has been self-sufficient during 2007/8 enabling **The Wharf House Company** to start to repay loans taken out during the start of trading. **THE WHARF HOUSE** and the adjacent Over Basin are continuing to act as an important promotional asset for the Canal Trust. **H&G CT** entered into an agreement with **British Waterways** to acquire the historic workboat **Alder** for £1. The **Restoration Fund** was used for restoration work at Yarkhill during the year 2007/8. We acknowledge and thank Members for donations received with their membership renewals. **Gift Aid** of £3,017 was claimed from the Inland Revenue. We received a legacy of £130,000 as the first payment from the estate of a former long-standing Member. The money is currently on deposit whilst we agree projects which will maximise the value of this legacy. Despite appalling weather at many events (and a number being cancelled) very good income from the **Grand Holiday Draw**, and advertising income from **The Wharfinger**, enabled **Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Sales Ltd** to transfer a much appreciated £4,500 to the Canal Trust whilst continuing to increase public awareness of the Canal locally and nationally. The monthly **Socials** continue to be popular.

At **Aylestone Park** the **Herefordshire Council** specialist contractors removed and treated contaminated silt from the canal, constructed the access road and car parks and the drainage system. The silt was removed

and treated, then placed beneath the car parks. **Environment Agency** monitoring continued to ensure that the contaminants were safely locked up chemically with cement and clay, and were not leaching out. Landscaped areas were seeded and by autumn had 'greened up' well. Canal Trust volunteers, together with local residents, have planted trees over the winter on the off-side bank to provide a visual screen for users of the park to the industrial premises off Staniers Way. At **Yarkhill** access to the canal was re-profiled and a new sleeper bridge constructed. Maintenance of the towpath and banks, and work on the canal bed (which is now clear of all major roots and debris) continued. **Waterway Recovery Group** visited us from Southwest, Bitm (*'Bit in the middle'*), and London. Investigations commenced at Barrs Lock. A successful Yarkhill Open Day in August 'spread the word' and raised funds from refreshments and donations - and gained 3 volunteers. Coppicing of the 'wild side' ditch bank resumed in the autumn and continued through the winter. We achieved 525 'person workdays' at Yarkhill this year (a 'match funding' value of over £25,000).

The **Oxenhall** team made considerable further progress with restoration of the Ell Brook Aqueduct notwithstanding flood conditions in the brook. Masonry remedial work has been substantially completed on approach wing walls to House Lock; we are very grateful for £1,700 received from **Forest of Dean District Council** as the last instalment of grant aid for restoration of this Lock. An unexpected challenge was dealing

with 'squatters' in two caravans and clearing up after an arson attack. A considerable amount of volunteer effort has been expended in maintaining and managing this section of the Canal which was the subject of many compliments at the Annual Oxenhall Open Day in September. **Over** volunteers made considerable progress with landscaping enhancements around **Over Basin**. Although the serious summer flooding did not reach the level of **THE WHARF HOUSE** the River Severn did rise above the towpath and into the Canal - causing localised damage and depositing much silt and detritus. Our volunteers worked hard to restore (and improve) affected areas. Within **THE WHARF HOUSE** work continues fitting out the bedrooms (at a much slower pace due to lack of funding). Between Christmas and the New Year volunteers and staff worked together to enhance the parquet floor in the Visitor Centre and Restaurant and took the opportunity to freshen up paintwork.

As always extensive 'behind the scenes' negotiations continue in respect of many aspects. A planning application was submitted for the redevelopment of the **Holmer Industrial Estate** in Hereford including restoration of a difficult infilled section of the Canal together with the transfer of this and Aylestone Tunnel to the H&G CT. Detailed negotiations continue regarding the massive **Edgar Street Grid** redevelopment which proposes a new Hereford Basin and wide approach Canal. **National Grid** successfully constructed a 48" diameter natural gas pipeline over Oxenhall Tunnel making full provision for future repair and use of the Tunnel.

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**.

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 CoM is 18 and, unless new nominations bring the total in excess of this number, the above stated Members will be returned un-opposed. The CoM is also empowered to Co-opt Members during the year (subject to the maximum size not being exceeded).

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please complete below and return this form to:

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Donation £

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

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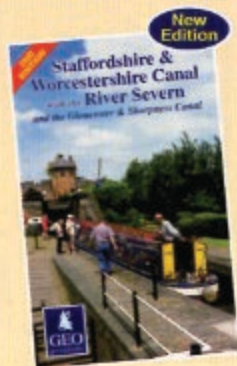
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THE TRADING COMPANY H & G Canal Sales

Possible outings 2008

The H&G CT would like to attend all the shows below and others to which we are invited.

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 28-29 Braunston Boat Show

July 5-6 Saul Boat Show

August 3 Herefordshire Country Fair

August 16 Tibberton Fete

August 23-25 NWF Wolverhampton

September 13 Newent Onion Fair

September 14 Leominster Vintage Show

October 19 Oxenhall Apple Day

November 8 Ledbury Craft Fair



The Inland
Waterways
Association

Gloucestershire & Herefordshire IWA Branch

*No meetings will be held
throughout the summer months.*

Autumn Meetings at
Gloucester Yacht Club at 7.30pm
Thursday 2nd October 2008

Purton Wrecks

Thursday 6th November 2008

Restoration on the
Herefordshire &
Gloucestershire Canal

David Penny

For further details of any of the above:
Martin Turner 01291 650605

RESTORATION at Oxenhall *by Brian Fox*



The extended and heightened wing walls to House Lock.

Work is progressing at a sensible pace with some reasonable weather – but a lot of late frosts which means mortar has to be carefully covered at the end of the day.

Peter has recently joined us and Ray, who was a bricklayer, starts next week and has agreed to pass on some of his knowledge to us. This may seem a bit late in the day now that we have finished the lock, and almost finished the aqueduct, but laying stones (where we had the relevant training at the beginning from a skilled stonemason) is not the same as bricks! Each stone has to be individually dressed to fit into its allocated hole in the wall and it is not always necessary or appropriate to follow courses and maintain a vertical face. Indeed it was not required at the lock where the sides sloped outwards, from bottom to top to a slight degree, as do most locks. The stonework

on the aqueduct has a very rough finish which allows us to use the stones just as they came out of the demolished railway bridge but in doing so it permits some leeway when laying the stones. It just so happens that the aqueduct will be topped out by three layers of bricks with blue coping stones on top – and there will be no margin for errors as they will stand out like a sore thumb! To complicate matters the walls are curving so it is fortuitous that a qualified bricklayer will be around to keep an eye on things and help us to expand our skills.

Our winter stint up around the lock has now been completed and was generally a successful operation. Keith and Geoff completed the newly extended and heightened wing wall below the lock at the end of February and the towpath wall was likewise ready. The bungs were put back in the drainage pipes the following



It is good to see the pond below House Lock back in water once more.

Tuesday and the pound was full 24 hours later – just in time for the Daffodil weekend. Any bare soil has been reseeded and the grass is now coming through to put the finishing touch to a job well done. Since the pound was filled we have noticed an increase in the quantity of water flowing through the lock and over the dam, so much in fact that the pipes provided are not coping with the volume and the emergency overflow is running constantly. It even broke through the bank and ran down the towpath for a few days until we completed emergency repairs. Work is now about to start on redesigning the overflow; but more about that next time.

The leak which was reported in an earlier edition has not been found despite our efforts at water divining and digging trial trenches. Mr. Heath, our neighbour, even dug around on his side of the hedge with a JCB (*thank you!*) but found nothing. Further efforts will be made to stop this loss of water as it is a precious resource for us and is waterlogging his field.

Bernard, our qualified chain saw operator, has been attending to the hedge next to the towpath where unmanaged hawthorns have grown up to 25ft high. Several have blown down in the last few years and it was decided to experiment with some hedge laying despite their size. The main trunk has been partially cut



The walls before the water was restored to the pound.

through about 3 ft from the ground and then pulled over to lay horizontally along the hedge line. This has now been left to send out new shoots which will hopefully form a new hedge. Martyn's willow fence down by the aqueduct is already beginning to sprout so it looks as though that trial has been successful.

The aqueduct is now being 'attacked' from both sides. We have re-erected the scaffolding on the west face so that we can complete the brick copings as described above. It is also being used to support our electric hoist which is being used to remove excess soil accumulated in the bed of the Ell Brook over the years. This set-up has been given a first trial and completed a day's work with a few modifications to the operation as we went along. It will take a few days to shift all of the material but once it is clear the Brook will run more smoothly – particularly at time of flood.



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Work *and play* at Yarkhill by Chris High

My last article happened to mention coppicing a couple of times and up to the end of February the Yarkhill Team were again fully engaged in yes, you guessed it, coppicing. *Will they never stop you might ask?* The answer is yes; after we have the unchecked rampant growth of some 125 years under control, but further coppicing is currently suspended until September and we are well clear of

the bird nesting season.

March saw the start of the *big tidy up*. Brush that had accumulated from the coppicing on the 'wild' side and in the Manor's field has now been burnt. The field is once again tidy with just a neat row of log piles waiting for drier weather and some customers before we move them out.



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The Team were very grateful for the return visit of Waterway Recovery Group (Southwest). It was also Harri and Rick's stag and hen celebration – *congratulations and best wishes to you both. [Combining canal camps with the opportunities for WRGies to celebrate are legendary! – Ed.]* The task set for the weekend was the clearance of previously felled trees from the canal. This involved the winching of trunks of not insignificant size onto the towpath. Removal of brush and logging up followed. Finally the brush was burnt and the logs move to storage by the site hut. *Thanks to all who helped achieve a canal clear of all major debris - and a towpath left as clear as when they came!*

During one brief spell of dry weather we took the opportunity to move some eight tonne of materials onto site. Subsequent work has seen hardcore broken up and deposited on the site access and a tonne of sand was used to fill sandbags, which in turn have been added to what is now a substantial temporary dam. The dam is working well and holding back two feet of water over the first 450 yards of the canal.

Over the last couple of weeks other maintenance work has got underway. The first job was clearing a large ash tree, which had been brought down by the wind, from the access. I am pleased to report that our hard work of last summer is now paying off by making towpath upkeep much easier; the first mow and strim has already taken place. *The towpath is now in the condition that took us until July to reach last year!*

Please contact Chris High on 01568 615 575 to join our regular Thursday work party at Yarkhill.

◀ CH

Photos: Chris High



Top left: Volunteers enjoy the pound now the temporary dam is in place.

Top: Clearing a large ash tree, brought down by the wind.

Above: Neat log piles.

Below: The temporary dam holds back 450 yards of water.



Views at Yarkhill now include the Whitwick Manor Point to Point.



"We've been asked to make a PORSCHE"

H&G Canal Trust volunteer Andy Smith was attracted to the idea of teaming up with fellow volunteer Henry Clark and becoming his blacksmith's apprentice. Although our volunteers are increasingly used to successfully completing unusual challenges, as Andy graphically describes in this contribution to **The Wharfinger**, the particular challenge at first seemed more impossible than most...

"David's asked me to make a Porsche" said Henry. I expressed my doubts as to whether, even with his finely honed skills as Much Marcle's village blacksmith, he could achieve such a feat. A few well chosen epithets later, I realised that I was being seconded to help him build a porch (or balcony) for THE WHARF HOUSE. Planning permission had been obtained and an outline design prepared. *"It's only a suggestion from David"* said Henry. Uh, oh! How could I resist?

"The footings are already in place" we were told. Well, some place anyway; but not the right place – as Wilf and Ted found when they removed the paving blocks to find them! Leaving behind the lively debate about the footings, and armed with the "design" drawing, we set off to Corporate Member **Simon Hayward** at **E B Hayward & Co.** who very generously agreed to order and deliver the heavier bits to Henry's picturesque workshop on Marcle Ridge.

As an office worker, I'd never actually been in a blacksmith's workshop. Henry quickly put me at my ease. *"You can easily*

kill yourself if you don't do as I say" he told me. **Reassuring**

The balcony needed to be demountable after erection. Something to do with access to sewers and drains running close by we were told. This meant a lot of brackets ("cleats" said Henry), hole drilling, and bolts. Metal was ordered to construct the banisters ("balustrade" said Henry) and, nervously, I made my first tentative stroke with the disc cutter. *"Never mind"* said Henry *"Have another go"*. My confidence increased *"I'll switch the power on now"* said Henry. It was obvious that more tutoring was needed. Henry gave me some light reading matter. *"Wrought Iron for Beginners"*. Riveting stuff!

I suggested a more geometric design of rings and diamonds for the top of the balustrade. David agreed, *"I just want it finished"* he said. *"You work it out"* said Henry, *"I'm busy building a balcony."* Several weeks, and two sets of calculator batteries later, I'd worked it out to neatly match the rails below, which according to David must not be so far apart that a child could get its head stuck. *"I can think of some kids whose heads I'd like"* Yes, yes thank you for that Henry.

The design was complete and all Henry had to do was **build** it. This he proceeded to do brilliantly, despite a heavy workload in his "day job" as farmer, tree surgeon, logger and – oh yes – blacksmith. I learned how to use (non lethal!) machinery and

*"You can easily
kill yourself if you
don't do as I say!"*

how to pass the tools, but always under Henry's watchful eye. All the real work was done by him – especially the hot bits like welding. "How long does it take to set" I asked him? "Set??... Have you read that book yet?" A constant stream of visitors watched week by week. David came ("Can't stop got a meeting – like it – I want it finished...").

"well it all fitted fine in the workshop!"



*WELL DONE
Henry, Andy and
all concerned!*



The day of the 'big lift' as the balcony is assembled with the aid of a large crane.

Harvesting forced a lull in construction but as soon as he could Henry started up again, hopeful of meeting an early 2008 deadline. A "dummy run" was carried out to see that all parts fitted together. The twisted rings around the pillars were made in the forge, Hammers clanged and sparks flew, I cowered, Henry sweated.

When the time came **Ron Mogg** and **Joseph Rice Logistics** again made a lorry available to transport all the parts to Over site for us – *our repeated and grateful thanks.*

Armed with miscellaneous small pieces and tools, we made our way to Over at the very end of March. I had already sent some details of how we might erect it, from which Ted prepared a Risk Assessment and a Method Statement. Franco, a key member of ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE kitchen team, did much of the painting – anyone seen his custard? And we were all ready for the day of the 'big lift'. With Ted and Barry joining the team for the day, and others standing by, the huge crane (the second on site that day) began lifting the pieces into position. Work continued almost without a hitch for the rest of the day ("Well, it all fitted fine in the workshop" said Henry).

Henry had good reason to feel proud as we all stood back and admired his handiwork, which will be there for all to see for many years to come. There is just a bit of tidying up left to finish the job now. *Then my apprenticeship is Over.*



The quarter has been a busy one again for our gardeners who are continuing the recovery from the July floods last year and with planting in preparation for the spring and summer seasons. Before such work stopped for the nesting season at the end of March, some Ash trees on the flood plain bordering the willow beds have been coppiced and the earth dug over extending the beds to increase our production of willows for their respective uses.

Much of the weed removed from the Basin has been used round the site for compost and the good news is the Gloucester and District Model Boat Club members are now able to sail their boats without any problems. *We are exceedingly grateful to the various Boat Club Members who have worked very hard together with some of our own volunteers to achieve this.*

Within THE WHARF HOUSE our project has moved its attention to the woodwork



Above: Vertek volunteers wood chip the tow path.

in the stairwell and first floor with all the main and bedroom doors, architraves and skirting receiving their final coats of varnish. Door thresholds and window sills have been linseed oiled and then finished with hard wax. The bathroom wall in bedroom 2 has been made good and tiled after the fitting of internal piping to install a ceiling shower and a recessed wall valve.

Externally foundations for the balcony were dug and the concrete poured – with drainage included – ready for the support pillars. Holes were drilled into the wall of THE WHARF HOUSE for the retaining bolts ready for the installation. A visit by Andy and Henry, in preparation for the big day, concluded with us finding out we were working on two different drawings! A brief exchange of information and some adjustments having to be made, we waited



Above: The wavy walls of 'Skew Gardens' are progressing well and the landscaping continues.



Above: The team, led by Henry, construct the balcony.

on the day for the crane (I think with some trepidation, although no-one voiced it) – would the work of our respective teams all fit together? The crane arrived and we set to work. First to swing into place was the floor frame; I am very pleased to report that all the bolt holes lined up and we put the first two in place to hold the position on the wall and lifted the pillars into place under the frame. They fitted onto the foundations and were extended and welded into position and then bolted top and bottom. Next the bolts went into the wall without a hitch and the floor was swung into place. ‘Eureka’, it fitted, although fine tolerances and excess paint in the bolt holes meant we had to re-drill some of the holes to clear them. The railings swung into place and again after some clearing of the holes they fitted. Now the heavy stuff was all in place and the crane had done its work – all with 10 minutes to spare. In the following days the drain has been connected and the pavers cut and laid. The railing bars in the balustrade have been fitted and welded and the top drain has been put in place. The first finishing coat of paint over the entire balcony has also been completed. *All in all a very successful installation and one that looks the part on the front of the building.*

The building of ‘skew gardens’ has continued to progress to a point that you can see the walls and pillars and begin to visualise the finished garden as it slopes



‘The railings swung into place’.

towards the path leading down to the canals edge. The good news is that over 1,000 spare bricks will have been used in its construction (4 full pallets from our site stores).

Vertek, a local Company committed to assisting people recovering from the floods, had a ‘corporate day’ here at Over – supported by Malcolm and myself. The task was restoring the chipping path that had been largely washed away by the floods around the bend of the Basin. The wood chippings were in heaps at the top of our car park and the start of the path was between 300 and 400 metres away. We all took turns shovelling chippings into five barrows with Malcolm concentrating on making the path and rolling it. In the course of the day we individually each walked over half a Marathon pushing our barrows! The day went without a hitch – except the barrow I was pushing lost its wheel as I was trying to catch up with the youngsters. A quick ‘Formula One’ switch and I got a replacement out! As the day wore on it got slowly harder to push - or I got more tired. I thought it was my age catching up on me, only to find out the barrow had a slow puncture – *all part of a volunteers way of life!*

Our team of volunteers work hard at Over – why not come and see the results so far at one of our Open Days this summer? Further details are on page 13.

THE WHARF HOUSE

LOCATION, LOCATION ...

THE WHARF HOUSE and the site at Over has become a popular location for TV film crews in recent months. First a team from **Escape to the Country** came to do some filming. This was followed by a film crew from **Location, Location** who dined in the restaurant and filmed by the river and around THE WHARF HOUSE.

More recently, well-known chef, **Gordon Ramsey**, came to learn more about the art of elver fishing from the regular team who fish on the banks of the Severn at Over. It was for Gordon's popular television series **The F Word**. During the day the film crew cruised up the Severn pointing out THE WHARF HOUSE as they checked out the stretch of river that they would be filming through the night when the tide brings up the baby eels. Unfortunately, it was not a good night's fishing at Over, as the elvers weigh

around 10,000 to the kilo, but the Over team only managed to fish just 12 elvers that night! So the production team had to find another site to film Gordon fishing. The elver fishers at Over regularly supply Gordon's London restaurants, and also the restaurants of Marco Pierre-White and other leading chefs.

As the summer begins the flowers around THE WHARF HOUSE are looking glorious and new tables and chairs on the terrace look very inviting for our visitors to enjoy the waterside views. Why not come and enjoy some al fresco dining this Summer! Who knows, in the autumn you might meet Gordon Ramsey trying his hand again at elver fishing. ♦ MJ



Al fresco dining on the the waterside terrace at THE WHARF HOUSE.

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

THE WHARF HOUSE HOSTS LOCK KEEPER AWARD

The 2007 Lock Keeper of the Year Award has been presented to British Waterways Gloucester Lock Keeper Jonathan Chater. Now in its 11th year, the Lock Keeper of the Year award is voted upon by the Association of Pleasure Craft Operators Hotel Boat Section members. The award is for outstanding performance and customer care and is open to all lock keepers throughout the UK inland waterway navigations. 25 different nominations were received. Nigel Hamilton, Hotel Boat section Chairman and Vice Chairman of APCO said *"The award is voted on by some of the most widely travelled boaters on the system, and nominations were received from many different navigations. In becoming Lock Keeper of the Year, Jonathan proved himself to provide exceptional service during the difficult conditions on the Severn during last summer's floods."*



Photo: Robin Smith/nt

Lock keeper, Jonathan Chater, having received his award at ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE.

The formal presentation, at Gloucester Docks in early April, was followed by a lunch for Jonathan, some of his British Waterways colleagues and representatives of the Association of Pleasure Craft Operators at ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE at Over.

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THE TUG ALDER

by Caroline Jones

The last report was of Alder on dry land (if only the rain would stop!) ready for Caroline and family to get scraping, welding and painting ('blacking') the hull below waterline. Then there was 'just' the question of refurbishing the propeller and associated shaft etc. . . . all so that Alder could be returned to her rightful place in the water ready for the rest of the restoration work on her to begin. It would be more economical for the crane to be booked to do two jobs at Over on the same day – would Alder be ready?

In late February, following discussions with ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE team, we agreed a date in March as a suitable date by when both Alder and the new balcony for ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE could be ready. A crane was then booked with Ellis Cranes and the date was set. Having been given a deadline we moved up a gear with the work on the boat, and spent most of our time at weekends (and in my case a few weekday afternoons) to get the boat ready.

Jobs undertaken include –

- ◆ Needle gunning of the hull to ascertain its condition and to clean it.
- ◆ Over-plating of the hull at the bows and under the swim (where a plate was replaced).
- ◆ Priming of the hull below the water line with anti-rust primer.
- ◆ Fitting of 4 new magnesium anodes, welded to the hull.
- ◆ 3 coats of narrowboat 'blacking' over the entire hull, and an extra 2 coats at the waterline.
- ◆ Removal of the propeller for repair. It was cracked through



Alder is lifted high over the trees that line the canal bank.

the keyway, but has now been weld repaired.

- ◆ Removal of the prop shaft for checking. It was corroded under the gland packing, but has now been polished clean.
- ◆ Removal of the stern tube to check the bushes. The outer cast iron collar cracked on removal and we've had a new one made in stainless steel; the bushes were OK.
- ◆ Refitting of the stern tube with its new collar, prop shaft with new packing and grease and the propeller with a new phosphor bronze washer.

All of this work was finally completed with the reinstallation of the running gear on March 30th. At 8.00am on March 31st we all turned up on site a few minutes before the crane appeared, it was the same crane and driver that had brought Alder to site



Alder is back in the water once more.

so he knew what to expect. The lift was done in one smooth move and Alder was floating again by 9.00am. A quick check inside the hold, cabin and engine room revealed no leaks so the crane stops were removed and Alder was tied to the two handily placed mooring rings on the side of the basin, only a few feet from where it had stood since last October.

We have to thank friendly engineering companies in the Forest of Dean for their invaluable help with new bits including **P J Engineering** of Milkwall for the propeller repair. We also sincerely thank Corporate Member **Simon Hayward**, of **E B Hayward & Co** of Ashleworth, for the steel plate for the swim.

The anonymous donation of £500 (see page 25 of the last edition) has paid for the boat insurance for this year, all the paint and for the new anodes. Our repeated thanks.

Jobs for this summer include:-

- ♦ Servicing the engine, including a long overdue oil change.
- ♦ Painting the inside of the hold, plus the gunwales, decks and topsides.
- ♦ Fitting a new floor in the hold.
- ♦ Getting a fitted hold cover made to prevent it filling up with water every time it rains.

If anyone would like to get involved with our ongoing work on Alder please do give me ring on 01452 318224 (weekdays) or 01594 861286 weekends.



The CofM have thanked Caroline very much indeed for generously donating £1,447.67 (a total of £1,800 after allowing for Gift Aid) to cover all the costs of getting the boat from Devizes to Gloucester (as reported in edition 94 of The Wharfinger.)

Peter Bell's



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undoubtedly a major step forward in securing such irreplaceable artefacts for posterity in the two counties where they belong. What the Bonhams collection did not contain, however, was any shares from the first issue of 1793.

The CofM are exceedingly grateful to the ever vigilant Members who notified us that auctioneers Spink had an auction of Bonds and Share Certificates at their London saleroom early in April which included a £100 share from

the initial 1793 issue that was reported as in excellent condition - with an estimate of £400 to £500. Given that the (ever expanding!) 'Canal Trust Collection' was missing such an important part of the history of the Navigation the CofM authorised a bid to be lodged with the auctioneers.

We waited with concern - even though the CofM had agreed an upper limit that would hopefully secure the share for the H&G CT if there was fierce competition for this item at the sale would it be enough - would we be beaten?

The share certificate was secured for a total of £494.00 (£400 plus Buyers Premium plus VAT on the charges). It is indeed in excellent condition, with an intact pink paper seal (these overlap the edges of the share certificates and are therefore often incomplete). The original has been professionally scanned at high definition by Shaun Carroll (thank you) and a reproduction will be on display at THE WHARF HOUSE Visitor Centre at Over. Full size reproductions will be available for sale - more details in the next edition. The original will be added to the H&G Canal Collection at the Gloucestershire Archives. ♦ CRP

Regular readers will know that the H&G CT purchased a portfolio of historic documents relating to the Canal at Bonhams London saleroom in December 2005. (We carried a series of six articles - "the Bonhams Lot 153" - about this important purchase commencing in edition 86 of **The Wharfinger**.) The Council of Management approved the Bonhams purchase as it believes it is important that the Canal Trust not only seeks to restore the Canal but also preserves as much as it can of the past history of the navigation.

In the third instalment of the series of articles, researched and written by Caroline Jones, she covered "The share-related documents". Obviously the issue of shares was an important part of the history of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal. The items purchased at the Bonhams sale included a number of lists recording the purchase of shares and recording other matters relating to share dealings, together with related correspondence, plus two actual share certificates dated 1839. The wide range of historic documents that we purchased has proved to be of great interest and was

25 things to do in 2008

In the last edition of **The Wharfinger** we asked you to enter into the spirit of our 25th Anniversary Year and see just how many boxes you could tick – just to remind you we are repeating the first 6 – and adding a further 7 – with 12 more to come!

- 1 Recruit a new Individual or Family Member to the H&G CT. ☐
- 2 Sell (or buy!) Grand Holiday Draw tickets. ☐
- 3 Take a friend to **THE WHARF HOUSE** for the first time for morning coffee & cakes/afternoon tea and light bites. ☐
- 4 Help run a H&G CT Open Day or other event. ☐
- 5 Subscribe to the H&G CT Restoration Fund. ☐
- 6 Attend a 25th Anniversary Event. ☐
- 7 Attend a H&G CT Social Evening (and bring a friend who has not been before!) – see page 18. ☐
- 8 If you are an individual Member of the Canal Trust please consider 'upgrading' to Joint/Family Membership – the cost is small but it all adds up as far as the H&G CT income is concerned! ☐
- 9 Sell (or buy!) another book of Grand Holiday Draw Tickets – please help us break all records for the Draw this year – see page 24. ☐
- 10 Recommend an interesting speaker for a Social Evening – please provide full details (including contact information) to Janet Moulton – see Contacts on inside back cover. ☐
- 11 Re-cycle **The Wharfinger** – give (or loan it if you normally keep it!) to a prospective Member and then please encourage them to join the H&G CT. ☐
- 12 Attend the AGM on the 15th July – see page 21. ☐
- 13 If you pay Income Tax, please ensure that you have agreed to 'Gift Aid' your subscription (plus any donations) – it significantly increases our income at no extra cost to you – Liz Connors (see Contacts on inside back cover) will be pleased to arrange/or – if you are unsure – confirm if you have already done this. ☐

If you able to say "I already do that" – then *thank you*. By the end of our **25th Anniversary Year** we will have listed 25 boxes for you to tick!



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A NATURAL EXPLANATION?

Our regular columnist and volunteer John Chappell continue his series about nature in the Oxenhall area. As always John has found that there is more to our surroundings than might at first be assumed and, should any of our readers have "ulcers and pustules in the mouth or in the secret parts ...", then what follows might be a blessed relief!

June is the month of the moon daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) which, allegedly, flowers on mid-summer's day. It belongs to the *Chrysanthemum* family and is also known as *Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*. Other names for the flower include ox-eye daisy and dog daisy (the latter because of the smell of the flowers) but its most popular colloquial name, moon daisy, is given because the plants seem to glow in the evening light. In the Middle Ages the plant was dedicated to the Virgin Mary probably because of its purity and simplicity of form.

Whilst mostly associated with hay meadows and roadside verges it grows at our Oxenhall site, well away from the canal in a hot dry spot at the entrance to our Horsefair Wharf compound. Although tough the plant is, by nature, short lived and needs to regularly rejuvenate itself from seed. This can cause problems in a meadow situation and often what was once a wonderful display can disappear in a few years; the reason being the dense sward which prevents the seed from reaching the soil. Ideally the area must be cut and raked after the plant has flowered enabling the seed to fall onto bare earth. This, of course, is what used to happen in traditional hay meadows.



Moon Daisy,
Leucanthemum vulgare

Some of the old medicinal uses of the plant don't bear thinking about unless, to quote the old herbalists, you happen to have.... 'ulcers and pustules in the mouth or in the secret parts, palsy or gout' Years ago an instillation of the flowers was widely used in the treatment of chest complaints, especially whooping

cough, but vaccination has thankfully seen an end to that dreadful childhood disease.

A much more romantic use for the flowers takes place in France where it is known as the Marguerite. Here young girls make the flower tell them whether their sweethearts love them or not by pulling off the petals in a 'loves me, loves me not' fashion.

The simplicity and beauty of the flower can be appreciated by all, insects being no exception. Flowers are pollinated by several species of both insect and butterflies; the Marbled White butterfly is particularly drawn to it so a meadow with a thriving patch of moon daisies can help establish a colony of this beautiful butterfly.

To see a meadow full of moon daisies in bloom at the height of the summer often prompts nature lovers to start a 'wild flower meadow' of their own. Following nature's way this daisy is one of the easiest plants to grow but scattering seed onto grass will not work. As with most native species seed is much more successfully germinated in soil based compost like John Innes and after a few weeks seedlings are readily produce which can be grown on in individual pots and planted out into your wild flower meadow or border.

♦ JC

Photo: John Chappell

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Not quite... THE LAST PAGE

WEED CUTTER No 2!



After some weeks of anxious waiting for a telephone call, in late February a group of Over volunteers made a venture into deepest Herefordshire to retrieve a second reed cutting boat. We intend to use this, along with the weed cutter boat we already have, to make one fully working weed cutter to help to keep the vegetation in the Basin under control.



Photos: Ted Beagles

Many thanks to **Ron Mogg** and **Joseph Rice Logistics**, along with driver Dave, for making the transport to Over possible.

◆ TB

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30TH June, 2008

GWYN "STEVE" STEPHENS

We report with sadness the recent death of Gwyn "Steve" Stephens who for many years was an active supporter of the H&G CT and, for a two year period in the early 90's, undertook the role of Membership Secretary.

EDGAR STREET GRID

Detailed liaison with a number of parties continues. Meanwhile, **The Hereford Times** reports "*Plans for the Edgar Street Grid have been welcomed by Britain's leading authority on urban redevelopment. The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment welcomed the re-introduction of the canal basin, the new east-west road and the commercial prospects for Hereford. The report has a reservation about a proposed pedestrian route, linking the railway station to the city centre.*"

RIVER WYE RESTORATION TRUST

The above Trust was established some twenty years ago with the objective of making the River Wye navigable to small craft. It was established as a Limited Company and as a Charitable Trust; however, they have decided that they do not have the resources to continue. In accordance with Charity Commission requirements they have to identify another Charity to which any remaining funds and/or assets can be distributed.

The River Wye Restoration Trust has decided to distribute its remaining funds to the H&G CT – even though it fully appreciated that our formal Objectives are such that we remain neutral to their proposals. We are grateful to have received a cheque for £655.22 from the RWRT.

◆ CRP

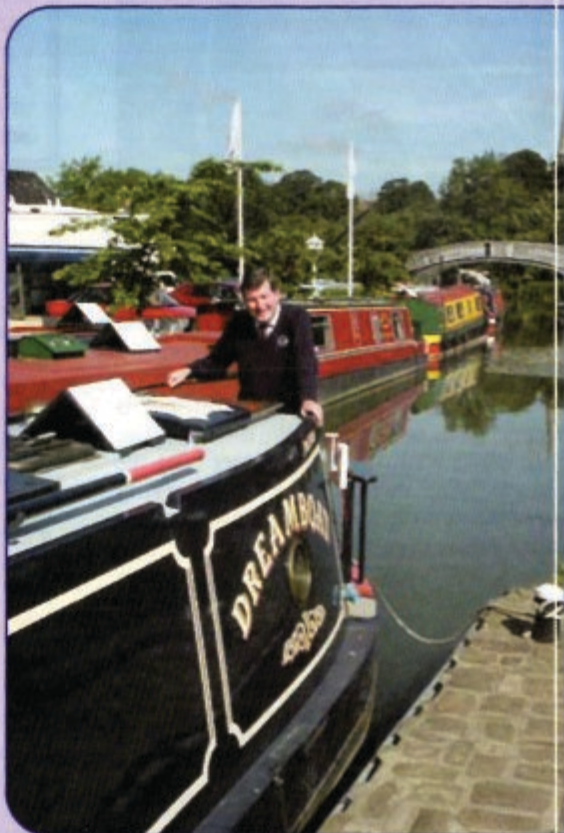
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CONTACTS

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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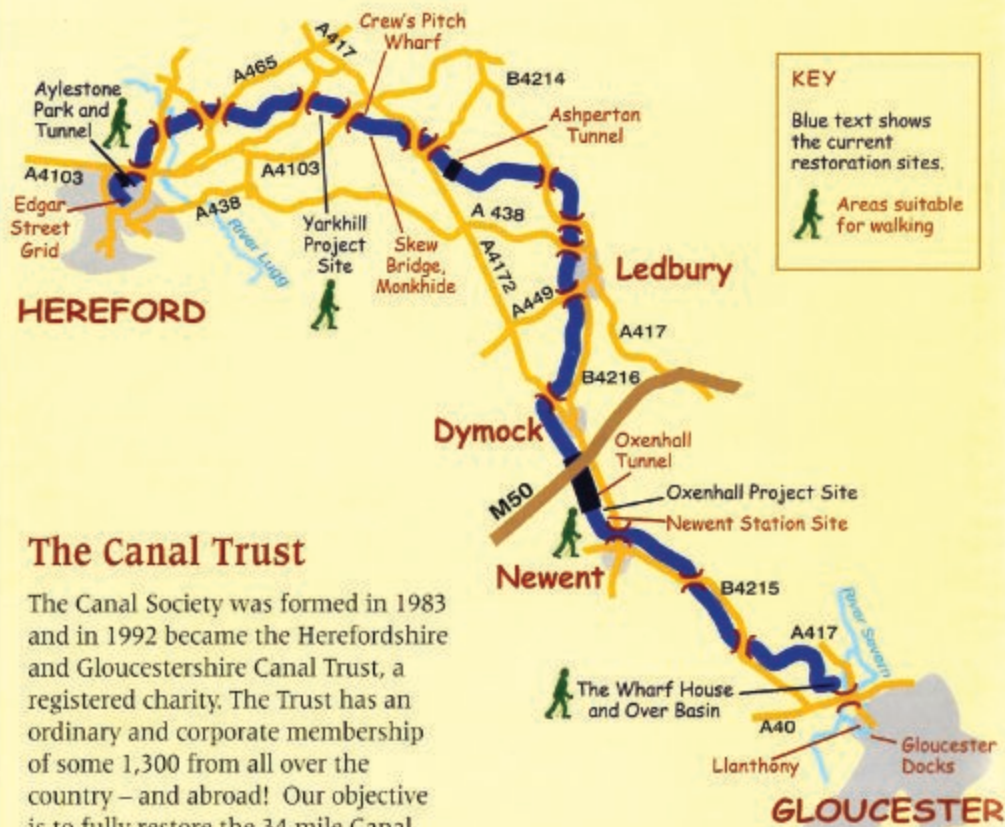
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The Wharfinger

The Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal

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



The Canal Trust

The Canal Society was formed in 1983 and 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.