

The *wharfinger*

Summer 2009

Magazine of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust

100
EDITION

£1

free to members



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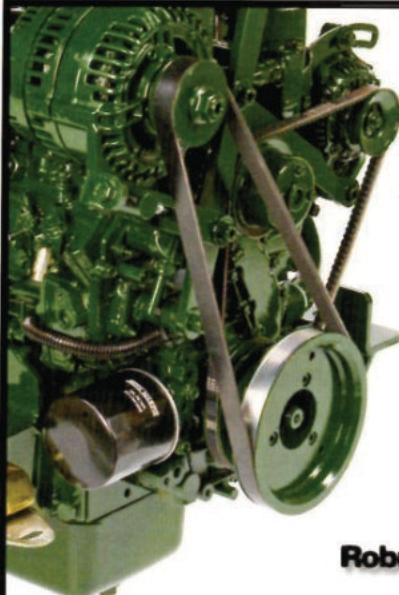
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Front Cover: Young cygnets at Oxenhall
by John Chappell



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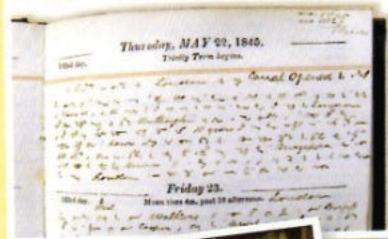


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Reading a very old issue of another Canal Trust's magazine I noted a comment that they continually sought voluntary effort from members but never acknowledged, or offered encouragement to, those who cannot give practical support.

We are very aware of the support throughout the country from our Members who pay their subscriptions – the backbone of our income – and make our volunteers' work possible. If any of these Members can get along to the events we attend around the country, please come and see us so that we can say thank you.

You will read on page 31 of the generous donation by Derek Gray of his beloved boat. He has spent many, many hours building away in his back garden and it is sad that he will not be able to sail in her (perhaps the new owner could take him and wife Margaret on a short trip?). We hope to raise a goodly sum for the H&G CT. Last year we received a large quantity of canal related books from Mrs Walton which raised over £500 (I still have a selection of titles – including new donations, if anyone is interested). These are just two of the instances of Members, who cannot physically help with restoration, supporting the Canal Trust – for which we are very grateful.

Money will be in short supply this year and we will make the very best use of our income so that we can continue to work on our sites along the Canal. You will see below another request for help in grant applications and fundraising. Recent pleas for specific help have been successful (see page 43) so I have every confidence that someone will come forward – any other offers of help are very welcome.

Hoping for a dry, hot summer – but not too dry that it dries up the canals!

◆ Janet Moult Chairman



We are looking for a volunteer to find grants/make grant applications and someone to be involved with fund raising (not necessarily the same person). On the fund raising front a couple of good events a year would make a significant difference – I have some ideas but not the time to pursue them so please do give me a ring (01432 264 366) to discuss either (or both!).

Thank you.

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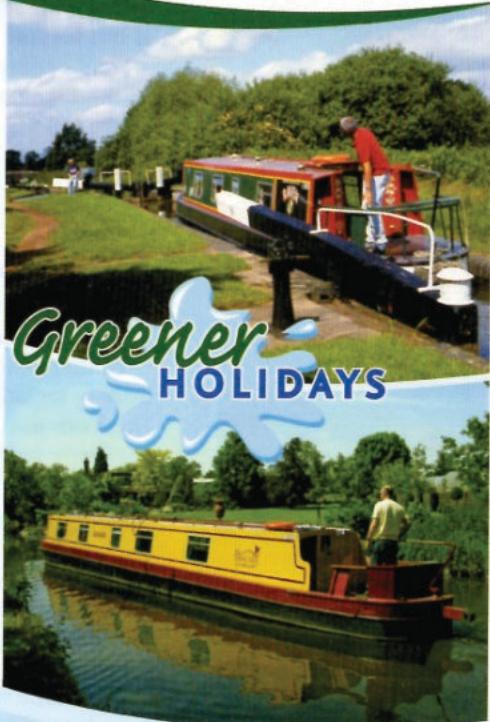
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Editorial by Cliff Penny

ONE HUNDRED ...

Welcome to edition **100** of **The Wharfinger**. As a quarterly publication mathematically inclined readers may have expected this to be published last year – our 25th Anniversary? However, an overburdened former Editor managed to publish two consecutive editions numbered 20 then, in more recent times, two editions were replaced by a four page bulletin as my H&G CT voluntary endeavours were fully occupied elsewhere.

On page 6 **Print Plus** show how they print an edition for us. Their generous ongoing sponsorship of the extra costs involved in printing each edition in full colour is not taken for granted. Our sincere thanks to Mark (and to his team).

There have been major changes in **The Wharfinger** over 99 issues! Edition no.1, dated 6th June 1983, comprised 8 stencilled pages – Janet White was Editor. “**The Hereford Wharfinger**” title was born in edition 2; in no.6, winter 1984, Mike Potts became Editor – by no.16 the title was amended to “**The Wharfinger**”. Mike continued as Editor until no.26, frequently writing all the material himself! Yours truly (at the time also Chairman of the then Society) joined Mike as joint Editor for no.27 (summer 1990) by which time the newsletter was 24 pages long.

I took over as Editor for no.29, winter 1990, with assistance from Mike (for the next two issues) and David Penny. Our use of ‘desktop (computer) publishing’ started then as did the inclusion of (rather grainy!) black and white photographs. The

commencement of our long and happy relationship with **Print Plus**, in summer 1994, brought further improvements in print quality.

From the summer of 2001 (no.70) we had the very welcome voluntary assistance of Maggie Jones – her major ‘makeover’ was so effective that we felt justified in calling the newsletter a magazine! Numerous layout improvements followed – including a different (black and white) cover photograph for each issue. Edition 85, autumn 2005, saw the first colour cover photograph – another great improvement! Then with generous support from **Print Plus**, in the summer of 2006, edition 88 marked the change to full colour throughout – and what a difference that made!

We do hope that you will appreciate the further ‘tweaks’ that have been given to the style and layout of this issue, we are determined to continue to give our readers the best possible voluntarily compiled magazine. Uppermost in our minds is the fact that **The Wharfinger** is our ‘ambassador’ reflecting the high standards that the H&G CT aspires to in everything that it does. We strive to remain both interesting and informative to our Members, supporters, decision-making bodies and our many other influential readers. Thank you to everyone who works together to make this possible.



EDITION 1



EDITION 3



EDITION 6



EDITION 9



EDITION 15



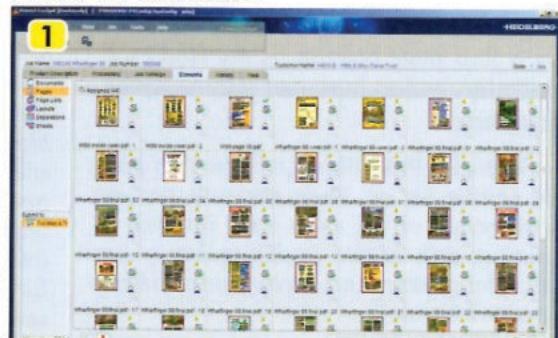
EDITION 20

100 EDITIONS OF The Wharfinger

Almost everything that the Canal Trust does involves considerable 'behind the scenes' work that is easy to take for granted – producing an edition of **The Wharfinger** is certainly no exception! It is also a (very successful) example of our 'working together' approach to getting things done – literally dozens of our volunteers get involved, in some manner or other, in getting each issue to you.

Writing articles and taking photographs are very important (thank you to the ever-increasing numbers doing so!) but so is obtaining the advertising, collecting the money and all the steps in between. Some 60 hours per edition are spent liaising, editing and proof-reading – and as much again in producing the final copy ready for print – and that is only as far as getting it to the printers!

Print Plus take over:-



Our artwork displayed on the pre-press system ready to be laid out to make up the printing plates.



The imposition process: the screen shows the content of one set of printing plates.



Making the plates: operator collecting plates from the plate setter.



Edition 27



Edition 30



Edition 48



Edition 70



Edition 85



Edition 88



4
Loading the paper at the feeder end of the press.



7
After allowing time for the ink to dry, the printed sheets are cut ready for making into books.



8
The cut sheets ready for the next stage.



9
General view of the booklet finishing machine. The printed sheets go into the bins behind the operator. They are automatically collated together, folded, stitched and trimmed.



6
... for quality check during the run.

7
The delivery end of the finishing line, stacking the books into the boxes in which they will be delivered.



Edition 100



Prior to delivery of **The Wharfinger** our 'Postmasters' have placed the labels and stamps on all the envelopes and then, on delivery of each edition, there follows the substantial task of 'stuffing' the copies, plus any enclosures, and sorting into batches for posting and hand-delivery.



Stacking **The Wharfinger** into boxes



Over 2,000 copies ready for delivery

So, next time **The Wharfinger** lands on your doormat please remember the many volunteers that have worked **together** to get it to you; our thanks to everyone who have made this and the past 99 editions possible – and to the team at **Print Plus** for their ongoing support and encouragement.

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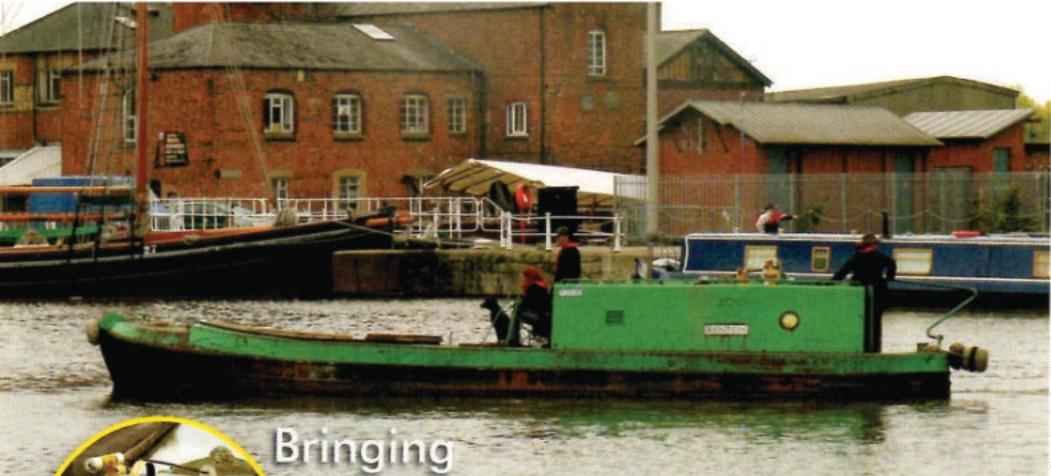
*Based on the findings of Professor Mike Tipton, world authority on immersion-related death.



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Photos: Caroline Jones and Hugh Conway-Jones

Bringing **RENTON** home to Gloucester

by
Caroline Jones

Regular readers will be aware that the H&G CT were successful in obtaining the British Waterways tug Alder (page 30 of edition 93 and subsequent reports). Alder was one of a small number of 'heritage' boats from BW's workboat fleet that were offered to suitable organisations, on a 5 year lease, on the basis that if we restore, maintain and use the vessel 'properly' ownership will then be transferred to the H&G CT.

Caroline Jones put forward the winning case and has subsequently been responsible, together with her family, for the ongoing work on Alder. Following favourable reports on our progress with Alder BW have more

recently agreed that the Canal Trust could take possession (on the same basis) of the ex. Grand Union Carrying Co.'s motor boat 'Renton' and the ex 'River Class' butty 'Tow' (which BW has converted into a mud hopper). Here Caroline tells the story of Renton 'coming home to Gloucester' ...

After a lot of work with getting the lease from British Waterways organised and a number of visits to see Renton at Marsworth we finally started the trip to bring the boat 'home' on Good Friday April 10th 2009. The crew were myself, my husband Neil, our teenage children Bethan and Sam and of course the salty sea dog that is Floss our 4yr old Staffy/whippet cross! Living arrangement were limited, it would be more like camping than anything else but it would be an adventure, or so I kept telling the kids anyway!

Renton awaiting collection at the BW Marsworth Yard.





Above: Stuck (in the rain!) in Astwood Top Lock.
Left: Renton crossing Gloucester Docks.
Inset: Caroline's painted water cans on the roof.

We planned to complete the trip in eight days, hoping to return to Gloucester either late on the following Saturday, or on the Sunday, the day of the Gloucester Docks boat jumble. This would mean 9-10 hour days but, when we go boating, we prefer to actually boat rather than go sightseeing or visiting attractions – so that would be OK.

Boating on the Grand Union was great, after all this was the canal the boat was built for, there was plenty of depth most of the time and of course the locks were plenty wide enough. We shared locks for much of the Grand Union and made good use of the generally excellent pubs we came across; after all they had the cooking and toilet facilities that we didn't!

The narrow canals, the Northern Stratford and the Worcester and Birmingham, posed more challenges for us; Renton is deep draughted at 3 foot 6 inches – and about as wide as a narrowboat can be. We got stuck quite a lot on the narrow canals, aground on the Stratford and wedged in locks on the Worcester and Birmingham. When we couldn't sort ourselves out local BW staff came to the rescue; we were very grateful to Brian, Mike, the lads from Tardebigge office and the lads working at Shirley Drawbridge when we went through, for their ingenuity, muscle power and equipment used in the



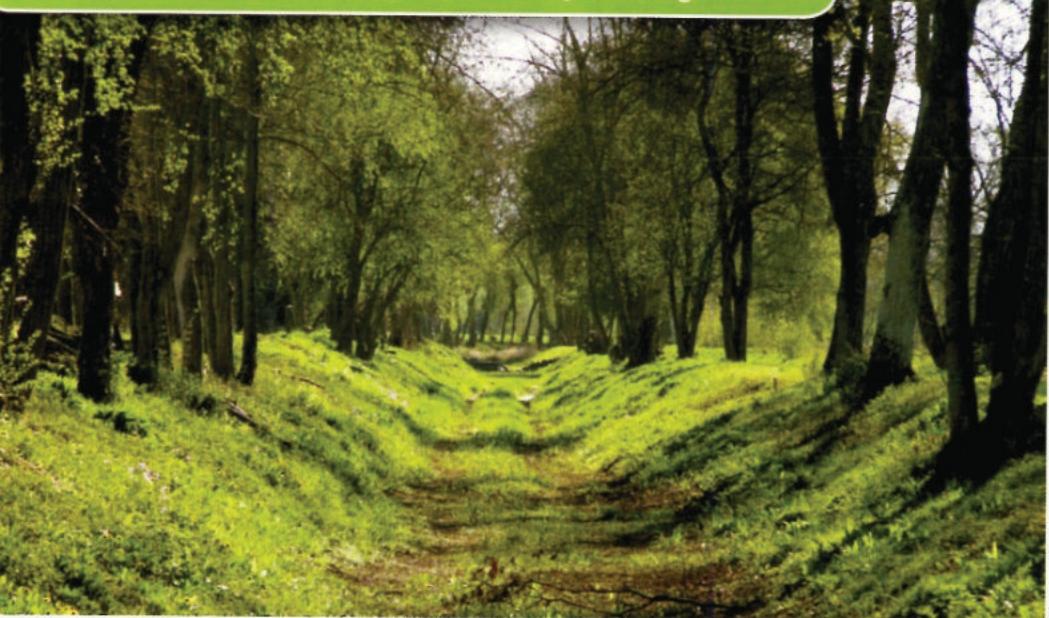
Above: Sharing Soulbury Lock.

sometimes difficult struggle to free us. Without them we might still be at Astwood Top Lock now!

After the narrow canals the River Severn was like a dream, room to move and see how fast the boat could go (within the speed limit, that is!). With enough water the big 28-inch propeller pushed the boat along very nicely indeed although we didn't keep up full speed for very long, it was far nicer to boat along at normal engine speeds and enjoy the trip. We got back to Gloucester at about 1.00pm on Saturday April 18th, a little earlier than we had anticipated. We were all tired and looking forward to a comfy bed that night and, yes, it had been an adventure!

This is only a short report on the trip, I will be giving a full account, with lots of pictures, during a presentation at an Autumn Social meeting. This will also include the history of the boat and an update on the tug Alder and our other recent acquisition, the hopper Tow.

I hope to see you there, and if anyone would like to join the crew on either of the boats, please do get in touch. We intend to get these boats looking good; Alder needs portholes fitting and painting and Renton needs painting, so if you fancy a bit of scraping, sanding and painting (in return for a trip down the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal) please get in touch on 01452 318224 (work) or 01594 861286 (home). ◀ CJ



Photos: Alison High and Chris High



Coppicing of the 'wild side' was completed just before the start of the bird nesting season. Some brush clearance and logging up was carried out with the help of a visit from Harri and Rick of Waterway Recovery Group SW – but we have plenty on the ground still to clear.

The Canal banks have been cleared of woody vegetation to enable easier strimming (and strimming of the towpath edges has started). Gardens have been tidied and a few flowers and trees planted. Stella instructed me as to the siting of the two bird boxes she supplied – *unfortunately we have no one in residence yet so cannot start charging rent!*

Yarkhill was exempted from much of the snow and dried out remarkably quickly which made vehicle access to the site possible, enabling logs to be sold and more sand for sandbags to be brought in.

A chance remark from Paul led to Paul, Colin,

*Top: The spring banks go green.
Middle: The wild side has been levelled.
Left: 'Sam' working on the wildside.*



Above top: Colin and Alison clear the weed.
Above: After the weed has been cleared.

Stella and myself investing in a small excavator for use by the Yarkhill Team. My sincere thanks for their generosity and support. 'Sam', as the excavator is to be known, has already proved its worth. Five hundred yards of the wild side has been made safer to access and the lock dam has been levelled and tidied.

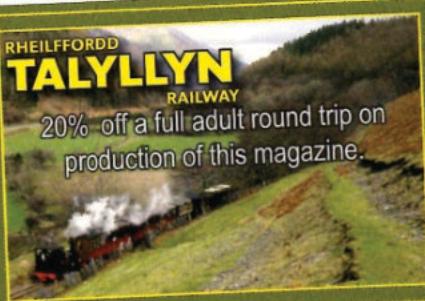
Enough chat then – I will leave the rest to the photo's, but don't forget, to get involved, please contact me (Chris High) on 01568 615 575 – or why not come and see us at our Open Day – full details are on page 14. ◆ CH



From the top: The towpath after strimming.
Inset: Preparing the mower.
Penny and Eileen clear the brush.
The tidied lock dam.

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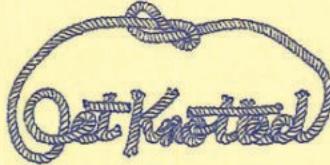
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Visit our new Website!

The **H&G Canal Trust** is launching a new website. It will include lots of useful information about the **Hereford and Gloucester Canal**, its history, construction and restoration. The work of the Trust is explained, and the beautiful scenes along the towpath. If you have access to the internet you will be able to go on-line and catch up on news and events. Check on the Monthly Socials, find answers to Canal-related questions and much more.

Will it ever replace The Wharfinger? Not a chance! Our magazine will still be published quarterly, delivered direct to Members and Supporters; also to virtually every Councillor and many senior Council officials – plus the media and many other influential readers both locally and nationally. **The Wharfinger** is also a vital part of our promotional work at shows and events.



www.h-g-canal.org.uk



The website will introduce new people to the H&GCT illustrating our achievements to date and inviting new members to join and support our work.

As there is a lot to include on the website it will be uploaded in stages, so keep surfing – more information will appear.  MJ

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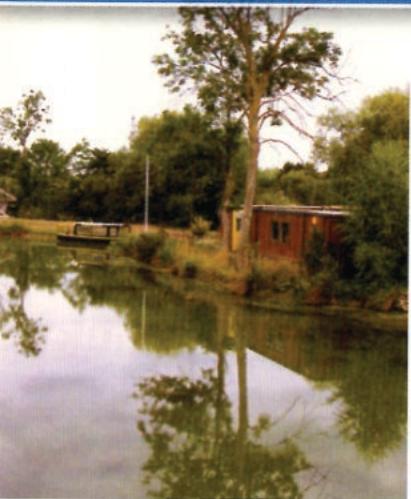
It has been our pleasure in supporting the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust for over 15 years, and we will continue to work together in the present, to revive the past, and secure a better future.

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Top: The two ash trees by the Basin when in their prime.

Below: The dead trees being felled.



The felled trees are logged for sale.

As part of our ongoing maintenance and management of the Over site a major tree maintenance program has been successfully completed. Although we have trained volunteers to handle smaller trees and branches the nature and extent of the work on this occasion required the advice and expertise of qualified tree surgeons. The logs have been tidied and prepared for sale and the wood chippings from the smaller branches has been recycled and put to good use.

Our volunteer gardeners have also been hard at it during the spring period preparing flower beds ready for planting. The daffodils planted in the woodland bank have made a good showing for visitors enjoying the walk alongside the Canal and we have had beautiful displays of snowdrops. Currently the tulips in the gardens and iris along the canal banks are in full flower. The birds have started nesting and we have built a floating nesting island in the hope that it will be used by ducks, moorhens or even the swans that sometimes visit our site. Otters have again been spotted on the site and we now have a family of foxes.

MISTER MAYSEY'S 'SEA TRIALS'

The mechanical team have concentrated on bringing Mr Maysey back into service for our Open Days. The maiden voyage went well when the salvaged 'new' engine was tried out for the first time but on the second (termed by the skipper as the First Sea Trials) we had a challenge! The journey started well with the skipper David, and first mate Ted, first recruiting passengers Tony and Barrie. The weather was clear and there was an air of expectancy as Mr Maysey cast off and the engine revs picked up – we surged forward increasing speed rapidly (soon exceeding the previous top speed) and quickly came to the turn at the top of the Canal – the tiller was swung hard over and the boat began to heel over; but she turned well and we missed the walls by a wide margin! We straightened up and picked up speed on the return down towards the Basin and round the bend. Tony and I commented how well things were going when there was a shudder and the boat came to a jarring halt. We had hit not an iceberg but a submerged straw bale and the baling twine had wrapped itself round the propeller. We limped back to the mooring – well we were pulled back by tow-rope by John – our hopes for the trip dashed on something unseen!



PAVING THE WAY!

Works on the driveway have now been completed. At the top of the driveway the laying of road quality kerbs, bedded in concrete, with two rows of facing pavers now edge the entrance to the Basin. We removed all the 80mm pavers laid from the pathway to the entrance (some 3,000) and cleaned them of dirt. We then removed the underlying sand and the membrane and prepared the earth for the stronger foundations. First roadstone was wheel-barrowed from site and then we 'whackered' it down with the vibrating plate, levelling it as we went – then the sand was brought back and levelled. Finally we re-laid the pavers, with many cut pavers needed to finish the edges, then spread sand in the joints and compacted the driveway with the 'whacker' to finish – all completed over the Easter weekend thanks to Ted, Wilf, Paul, John and Barrie.

Our friends from the **Gloucester and District Model Boat Club** have again been busy removing the weed from the Canal Basin (*thank you*). Now the roadworks have finished (and we are, once more, only five minutes drive from Gloucester) we are now getting more Boat Club Members sailing their boats here (*see Report on page 35*).

THE WHARF HOUSE FIT-OUT

Inside **THE WHARF HOUSE** the professional carpenters have now completed fitting the oak stairway and various cupboards doors have been measured and made off-site ready for fitting. Our volunteers have finished building the walls, skirting, boxing out and painting and decorating the Staff Room and started works in the Office. Plumbing work has been undertaken in bathrooms 1, 2, 3 and 4 with toilets being fitted and various other plumbing being commenced. Bath panels in bathrooms 1 and 2 have been started and skirting cut and fitted. Templates have been made and sent away for onyx worktops to be cut ready for finishing. Preparation works have been undertaken ready for the shower unit to be plumbed in bathroom 4. Meanwhile in bathroom 3 a wall has been adjusted to take a corner sink and preparation works for a bath panel have been completed.

New volunteers are always welcome – just contact the relevant person listed inside the back cover to see how you could get involved (either inside or out) at Over and at **THE WHARF HOUSE**.

◆ **BH**

Photos: Barrie Hayman



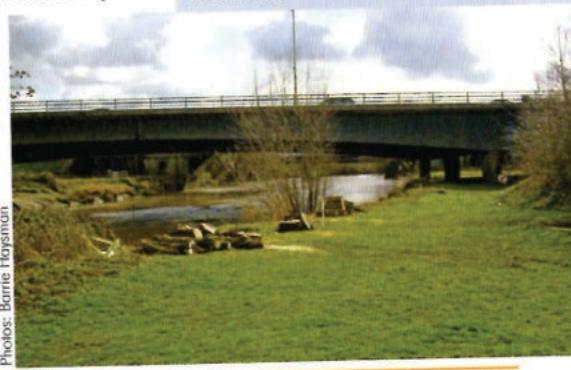
Top: Wilf 'tunes in' whilst 'whacking' the sand base.

Above: The entrance is prepared for repaving.



Above: The tree fellers make wood chip as they work below the terrace.

Bottom: The willows are coppiced along the Severn.





The shows and events that we hope to attend this year – raising funds and promoting our work both locally and further afield.

June 27-28 Braunston Boat Show
June 27 Lydney Boat Gathering
July 11 Sutton Fete
Aug 2 Herefordshire Country Show
Aug 29-31 National Waterways Festival & Boat Show, Ratcliffe-on-Soar
Sep 5 Alfrick Show
Sept 12 Newent Onion Fair
Sep 3 Leominster Vintage Show
Oct 17 Oxenhall Apple Day
Nov 14 Winter Bazaar, Ledbury

Why not have a good day out with the H&G CT?

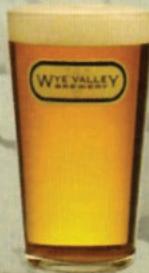
We cannot promise that you will see the world with us but you may visit an area that is new to you – and we always do our utmost to ensure that you have some time to look around (and your admission to the event will be free!).

We urgently need additional volunteers to help us at these interesting events. Our well established small team will welcome you and you will have a choice of tasks from which to choose. Please contact Janet Moult (see inside back cover for Contact details) to discuss where and when **you** can get involved. **Thank you.**



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All monies from The Wharf House will be used for the promotion and restoration of the Hereford and Gloucester Canal.

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 16TH

Idle Women

Vince Williams

What did you do in the war, Granny?

JULY 21ST

Annual General Meeting

Starts at 7.30 prompt and includes a slide show of H&G recent projects.

AUGUST 18TH

Natter and Noggin

You are invited to join us for an informal evening.

SEPTEMBER 15TH

Bats

Rebecca Collins

The flying sort not those made from willow!

OCTOBER 20TH

H & G CT's Heritage Fleet – so far

Caroline Jones

The history of the boats and progress with their restoration.



The Royal Oak, Much Marcle



OUR MARCH MEETING

Royal National Lifeboat Institution

Our guest speaker, Helen Goddard, proved to be very knowledgeable on the history and organisation of the RNLI. Commencing with a run-down of significant events such as the establishment as a National Institute, the exploits of Grace Darling in the early years and the renowned Cromer Lifeboat cox, Henry Blogg, in the 20th Century. Helen also covered the participation of no less than 19 Lifeboats during the Dunkirk invasion.

We were brought up-to date with the present costs of training and equipping a Lifeboatman today (for example £1176 for full all weather kit). Helen pointed out that being entirely funded by public support had the positive effect of no governmental interference!

When the Ice Prince ran aground in 2007 releasing its cargo of timber, little publicity at the time was given to the two lifeboats and helicopter that attended and rescued the crew, earning one of the cox'n the RNLI Silver medal.

The evening ended on a light-hearted note with a 1924 black and white film showing a lifeboat call-out at Whitby (with the characters moving in double-quick time!). Thank you Helen for a very informative talk.

◆ Pat Skelton



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, 21ST JULY, 2009
at the THE ROYAL OAK, MUCH MARCLE,
NEAR LEDBURY, COMMENCING AT 7.30PM.*

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDING 28TH FEBRUARY 2009

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 2009, 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:-
Nigel Jefferies and Cliff Penny
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 2009

This is the seventeenth 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 2009] those listed below have been members:-

COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT OF THE CANAL TRUST (12 MONTHS TO 28-2-09)

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

TRADING COMPANY H&GC (SALES) LTD (12 MONTHS TO 28-2-09)

Liz Connors; *Ray Moses*; Barbara Moses; Janet Moult; *Penny Shetliffe*; *Pat Skeet*; Derek Weaver; *Heather Worth*.

THE WHARF HOUSE COMPANY (12 MONTHS TO 28-2-09)

Liz Connors; *Janet Moult*; David Penny

Italics indicates not a Director.

The 12 months ended 28th February 2009 was yet another busy year with *physical work* continuing at Aylestone, Oxenhall, Over and Yarkhill – plus our new site at Llanthony. As always, extensive *negotiations* continued in both counties. A number of events were held to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the founding of the former Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Society – from which evolved the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust.

The Trust continues to support ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE, both with volunteers and financially when necessary, as part of our medium-term plan that all profits will be used to further the aims of the Trust. The Trust made a loan of £11,000 to enable the fit-out of the bedrooms etc to continue, on a reduced

scale, and to cover the running costs and ongoing improvements to the Over site (which is funded through ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE). The operation of the Restaurant & Visitor Centre has continued to be self-sufficient during 2008/9 despite over 7 months of major road-works on the A40. The impact of these works led to a decision to suspend any significant fit-out expenditure. During the year the Canal Trust also repaid £11,000 of £20,000 loaned by a Member at the start of the fit-out. Llanthony Lock & Cottages and adjacent land/river were purchased during the year and the first instalment of £75,000 was paid using some of the money from the legacy from *Miss Beth Gadesden* (a long-standing Member) – received in the previous financial year. This year we received a second payment of £35,000 from this legacy and we were able to reclaim £676 tax on a proportion. Our investment here saw an immediate return, via rent received, which totalled £4,400. Donations to the *Restoration Fund*, amounting to £2,585, were spent on the Llanthony site. We received a donation of £500 from the Transport Trust towards the restoration of *Alder*, and a legacy of £1,000 also to be used for *Alder*. A donation of £665 was received from the *River Wye Restoration Trust* and an anonymous donation of £3,000, to be used between Withington Marsh and Crews Pitch, brought the total of donations from Members to £5,000 which we greatly appreciate. Expenditure on *restoration* was made mainly at *Yarkhill & Oxenhall*, & also on a report to allow us to plan restoration at *Newent*. We purchased a Hereford & Gloucester Canal Share certificate during this year.

For Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal (Sales) Ltd. the weather conditions were, yet again, a challenge. The rain was not as heavy as last year but high winds forced early closure of the Crick Boat Show and we lost our gazebo at Tibberton Fete! The small enthusiastic team have taken the sales stand to shows, large and small, continuing to spread the word about the H&G CT. We achieved very good *Grand Holiday Draw* results, and advertising income, passing £4,750 to the Canal Trust. Monthly (excluding December) *Social Evenings* continue at the Royal Oak and for most of the year the numbers have been good but we would like to see a few more people attending to offset the costs of the hall and the increase in many speakers' fees. It is still a very important part of our services to our Members (and guests are welcome).

In Gloucestershire, August 5th 2008 was our first day at **Llanthony**, a site which had been allowed to become completely overgrown over a period of 30 years. During the ensuing months extensive clearance of the undergrowth and thinning of trees which line the banks of the river Severn has already made a marked improvement. We took appropriate advice regarding Japanese Knotweed growing on parts of the site and have agreed an eradication programme. However our greatest achievement has been the building of a great team of volunteers and they have already undertaken sterling work at Llanthony. What we have achieved to date has been the result of a magnificent team effort. At **Oxenhall**, the number of volunteers this year has been severely depleted due to illness and 'proper work commitments'; however we still all but finished the visible part of the aqueduct within the reporting period - but there is much still to do underneath. Maintenance seems to be taking more and more time not just in general grass cutting and strimming, but managing the hedges and trees, some of which have been untouched for years. The cutting and shaping of 3 milestones to commemorate the 25th anniversary was a welcome diversion ('our' milestone was unveiled as a part of our popular annual Open Day) as was construction of the experimental willow retaining wall to prevent erosion of the river banks. At **Over** considerable work continues to be undertaken by our volunteers maintaining and improving the site. A site hut has been removed and during the year there has been a significant increase in the extent of the grassed areas. Numerous bird boxes have been constructed and placed around the Basin and a new garden area ('skew gardens') has been constructed close to our entrance. The new porch for the building that was designed, fabricated and erected by our volunteers has been the subject of many compliments. Our team working within The Wharf House has continued to progress fitting out the bedrooms and on other internal works. One of the new milestones was placed at Over and unveiled during our 25th Anniversary Open Day celebrations.

In Herefordshire, at **Aylestone Park**, a survey was undertaken following the cleaning out of the canal the previous year and our volunteers repaired the sluice where water overflows into the Little Lugg. Restoration Fund subscribers were given a guided tour of our work in the Park and on the canal at this stage of restoration. The Slipway Project was accepted by CofM and a successful bid

made for Waterway Recovery Group volunteers to construct it. The "Aylestone - Party on the Park" event celebrated completion of phase 2b of works on the Park infrastructure, the H&G CT's 25th anniversary and promoted use of the Park by the local community. The event was organised and delivered by volunteers from the local community, the Canal Trust and WRG and attracted an estimated 1,000 people. At **Yarkhill** site maintenance, mowing and strimming, commenced early in the year. An anonymous donation for work on the Canal between Withington Marsh and Crews Pitch, and the volunteer purchase of an excavator, emphasises the support for the work of our Yarkhill Team. 'Wild side' coppicing was completed and levelling of material deposited on this side commenced following a level survey. Our Open Day again helped spread the word and saw the milestone unveiled. A walk was held from Kymn to the river Lodon as part of the Herefordshire Walking Festival and a talk 'H&G Canal Featuring Yarkhill' was given to the Leominster Historical Society. The Team accumulated 582 'person-days' of work.

Our historic tug **Alder** was craned into the basin at Over in the spring having had fairly major works to the hull over the previous winter. Further work painting the upper parts of the boat have been seriously hampered by the weather, difficulties in accessing Over during the roadworks, and major challenges with the manufacture of new portholes (the sides of the boat cabin cannot be painted until they have been fitted). During a few dry days good progress has been made in preparing and painting the roof. We have signed further 5-year leases with British Waterways on 2 more workboats; the tug **Renton** and **Tow**, an ex carrying butty converted into a mud hopper.

As always, extensive 'behind the scenes' negotiations continue in respect of many aspects of our work in both counties. As soon as it is possible to carry an appropriate report it will be published in **The Wharfinger**. During the year a small Team was formed to totally review the H&G CT website and a new site is at an advanced stage of development.

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 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).

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please complete below and return this form to:

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6 CASTLE STREET, HEREFORD HR1 2 NL

Name

Address

Post Code:

Telephone:

E-Mail:

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

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

New member

Renewal

Gift

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

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Donation

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Total payment

£

Thank You

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.

Date: / /

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To: (Name and Address of Bank)

Sort Code:

My A/C No.

Signed

Date

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.

Triple Open Day!

Sunday, September 6th, 11 am – 4.30 pm

Over Basin

A chance to visit three
of our restoration
sites in one day!

A guided riverside walk
of 1.5 miles will take you
from Over to Llanthony.

Books

THE WHARF HOUSE

Refreshments

Restoration of our new
tug boat, ALDER

Exhibitions

Oxenhall

Demonstrations from
Gloucester Model Boat Club

Llanthony Lock

See you here!

See the restoration of
Over Basin, House Lock,
Ell Brook Aqueduct
and the stretches of
adjoining Canal.

See you there!



Guided Tours

Restoration at OXENHALL By Brian Fox



Photos: Brian Fox

Now that the spandrel walls of the aqueduct are complete it is worthwhile to look back at how we have achieved this remarkable feat. We are already being complimented on how professional the finished project looks and I do wonder what it might have cost if it had been done by a civil engineering contractor!

None of our team had any formal qualifications in building or construction matters and the only skilled input was by our volunteer John Forrest who designed the steel former which held the arch in place (and what a good job he made of that). Specialist manufacturer cost by far the biggest chunk of our budget although I must say that it was actually paid for by the generosity of the Restoration Fund Members. All the skills required to complete this project have been developed over the years as we rebuilt the lock – stone cutting and laying and the various means of transporting it about site without breaking our backs! Brickwork skills were also needed but we did have Ray, who was a professional, join us as we neared the end. Scaffolding and how to erect it safely was a challenge sometimes but it has literally stood the test of time and we are now finally about to dismantle it until the next job.



Finishing touches being made to the aqueduct by our team of volunteers. Top photo: Our steel former in place under the aqueduct during restoration.



New planting next to the overspill weir by the Lock Cottage.

But back to the aqueduct as we consider what went into the construction. The stone was donated from a demolished railway bridge near Hereford and was transported free of charge to our site at Oxenhall, over 20 miles away – about 10 lorry loads. All the bricks used in the arch and to finish the top came from Over being surplus to requirements by Swan-Hill, the builders. Likewise for the concrete blocks used in the back of the walls. The blue coping stones which top the walls were from the old railway station at Newent and when we discovered we didn't have enough a plea in **The Wharfinger** resulted in a call from our friends in the **Cotswold Canals Trust** who had a few to spare – and finally a dozen from Mr. & Mrs Shetliffe who live in an old canal house and just happened to have a few lying around in their garden. *Thank you all.* The final capping stones for the 4 corner buttresses were made by Bernard on site from concrete and a bit of reinforcing wire!

The only items we paid for were the several tons of sand, gravel, cement and lime which hold it all together and not forgetting the petrol to drive the generator (donated by Mrs. Day) to drive our electric concrete mixer donated by John Forrest (*repeated thanks to both!*). And that, you might say, is a good example of how the H&G CT strive to get value for money in all our restoration efforts!

The visible part of the aqueduct may be completed but there is still maintenance work to do underneath which will require a dry summer so that the water levels are low



The ancient tractor deserves a mention once again as we couldn't manage without it; we now have several trained driver/operators.

enough. We can also complete the rebuilding of the wing walls on Ell Brook when the scaffolding is down – a great job on a hot summers day. *So we are not quite finished at the aqueduct yet.*

The garden next to Lock Cottage has had a makeover, paving some of it and introducing new plants to supplement the few that were there fighting amongst the nettles and weeds. More plants have been introduced along the towpath and several varieties of trees into gaps in the hedgerow. These have largely come from members gardens although our colleagues at Yarkhill generously donated several plants which were about to be buried during canal maintenance. One of the trees introduced is believed to be a Dymock plum which is indigenous to this area and indeed there used to be a couple near the lock which have disappeared. This tree just happens to grow in my garden and we hope to introduce more as cuttings become available.

Peter and Bernard are now into the swing of cutting and strimming the canal banks and towpath having serviced one mower and made another good one by joining together parts from 2 others which were unsafe. Hints are often dropped about acquiring a ride-on like at Over and Yarkhill but they are constantly being told that the exercise is good for them, and it could be good for you. *Why not join us and learn something new?*

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I'm afraid you've got *Fallopia Japonica!*

Not being Latin scholars, the team at Llanthony became a little alarmed until it was explained that it was Japanese Knotweed, originally brought from the Far East as an ornamental plant by the Victorians, which has been rapidly colonising stretches of riverbank, hedgerows and wasteland in many parts of the UK. The plant is a perennial, and grows from rhizomes, reaching a height of up to 3 metres with bamboo like stems. Its growth is quite prodigious as can be seen from the photographic record made over a four week period by Alan McBride (one of our Llanthony group of volunteers).

Japanese Knotweed produces a mass of white flowers during the summer and although these turn to seed, they are not sufficiently viable to spread the growth of the plant. This occurs via the rhizome system which can even penetrate and damage concrete and brick built structures. *Not a plant to be welcomed!* It is now an offence to plant or otherwise cause the species to grow in the wild.

At Llanthony the knotweed has spread in and around the lock and therefore, with support and advice from The Environment Agency, we have developed a programme for the eradication of the plant using approved herbicides. A cocktail of glyphosphate will be applied in May and August of each year until we get it completely extirpated.

◆ PH



mid March

View towards Llanthony footbridge in mid March – not much sign of *Fallopia Japonica*.



mid March

Llanthony Cottages with the Lock in the foreground – taken in mid March.



mid April

View towards Llanthony footbridge a month later – if left unchecked the Japanese Knotweed will soon obscure it.



mid April

A month later – the Japanese Knotweed is growing at an alarming rate!

Photos: Alan McBride

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BOAT FOR SALE

For some time now long-standing Member (and volunteer) Derek Gray has been undertaking the construction of a new boat. Derek now feels that his advancing years mean that he cannot, unfortunately, safely enjoy the benefits of all of his very hard (and skilled) labours. He has very generously offered the boat to the H&G CT to be sold with **all proceeds to be donated by him to the Canal Trust – for which we are exceedingly grateful.**

The boat is open, having benched side-seating with cushions for several people, with buoyancy built into the side and stern lockers. The hull is glass fibre, of robust construction, having keel, rubbing strakes and gunwales of hardwood, believed to be Iroko. Most of the interior woodwork is marine ply. A bilge pump is fitted.

- There is a brand new Honda 2.3hp. outboard, complete with instruction manual.
- The boat measure 15ft long with a beam of 5ft 6ins.
- A sound, purpose built boat trailer, is included.

Written offers for the boat, outboard and trailer (buyer to collect from Hereford) should be sent to the Chairman, Janet Moul, 18, Coningsby Court, Coningsby Street, Hereford, HR1 2DF to arrive no later than Saturday 11th July.

To view the boat, or to raise any queries, please contact Derek Gray on Hereford (01432) 356007.



Photos: Ray Morris



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Stephen Ballard
(1804 - 1890)

The Diaries of Stephen Ballard

PART ONE

Our 100th edition seemed to be a fitting time to commence this new series based on the original diaries of Stephen Ballard – who was responsible for successfully completing the H&G Canal to Hereford. Stephen's diaries, which are safely held at the Herefordshire Record Office, were written in a form of shorthand – but not one that a modern day secretary would understand! However, the 'code' was cracked and the Editor was lent copies of the (lengthy) transcripts. Caroline Jones has read through the transcripts, and inspected the originals, and has risen to the challenge of producing a series of articles especially for *The Wharfinger*. It will give us a fascinating insight into how the trials and tribulations of canal construction were successfully overcome – as well as a glimpse of every day life as it was in the area over 200 years ago.

The H&G CT would like to thank our Member Rosemary Ballard (the wife of the late Stephen Ballard III) for her willing agreement to our publication of this series and the staff of the Herefordshire Record Office for their assistance and co-operation.

In this first article on the collected papers of Stephen Ballard (Hereford & Gloucester Canal Engineer between 1827–1845) held at Herefordshire Record Office (reference L2) I explain what the Collection includes and how I came to write this series. Subsequent articles will look at different parts of the Collection in detail giving us an insight into Stephen Ballard, the man, Stephen Ballard the Canal and railway engineer and how the northern section of the Hereford & Gloucester Canal was built – as well as a glimpse of every day life at the time.

The main Collection of documents held at the Record Office is simply titled 'The Ballard Collection'; it includes a set of diaries and extracts from journals written by Stephen Ballard between 1829 and 1870. Other documents in the Collection include an autobiography, extracts from the Hereford and Gloucester Canal Co. minutes and a series of notebooks covering Stephen Ballard's various works on the Canal, and elsewhere.

The diaries and notebooks are written in an obscure form of shorthand, called Odells Shorthand and dating from the 1830s. A clue to the form of shorthand lies on a slip of paper inside one of the earlier diaries, this is written in what seems to be Ballard's hand and gives equivalent letters for the symbol used, it is dated 1868 some 20 years after the diary itself was written. Time did not allow me to try some transcription the day I visited the Record Office – a worthwhile task for the future? The diaries (but not the notebooks) were transcribed some time ago at the request of Record Office staff and are

Left: part of the Ballard Collection at Herefordshire Record Office.

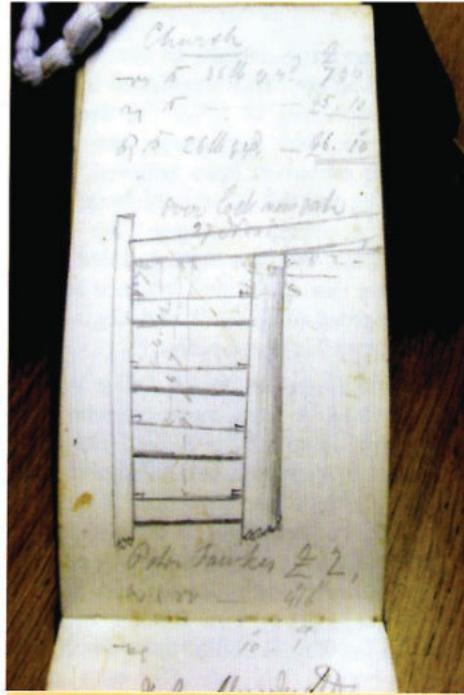
Right: image of one of the diary pages showing the original shorthand.



referenced BG37; a copy of the transcription is held alongside the original documents. The transcriptions were photocopied by Michael Handford some years ago and subsequently loaned to our Editor, Cliff Penny – *thanks to Joan Penny for the further extensive copying so that Michael's copies could be returned to him*. The file holding the copies is substantial and Cliff, being the very busy gentleman that he is, hasn't had the time to do anything with them. Last Autumn Cliff asked if I would have a look at them with a view to a series of articles to celebrate the 100th edition of **The Wharfinger** – so here we are!

The copies encompass 336 pages of text, some typed and some handwritten and quite difficult to read; what the copies do not encompass are sketches mentioned as being in the original documents. Being a curious sort where engineering and archives are concerned, I felt a visit to Herefordshire Record Office was in order to see the original documents for myself. This was a revelation as although the original diaries contain much the same as the copies show, the notebooks contain sketches and drawings of engineering works on the H&G Canal (as well as on Ballard's later works).

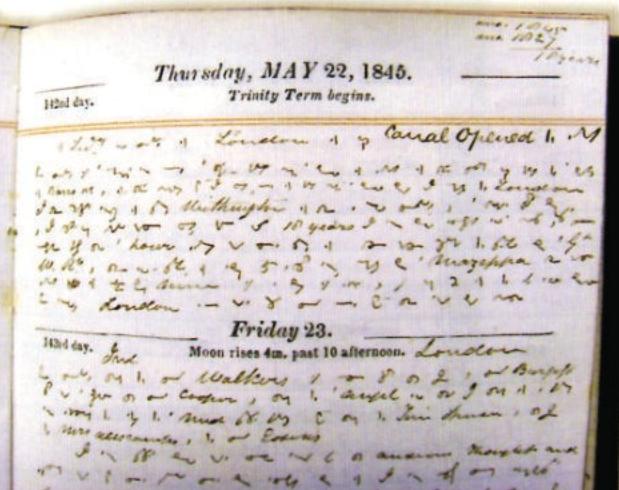
As far as the restoration of the H&G Canal goes the notebooks are far more interesting,



Above: Stephen Ballard's notebook sketch of a gate for Over Lock.

or should that be potentially useful, than the diaries! Information given includes measurements and longitudinal sections along the Canal and sketches of features such as Road Lock Bridge, Little Marcle Bridge and Lock, Hazle Mill Lock, a crane at Crews Pitch and some lock gates for Over Lock. It is a great pity that the notebooks have not been transcribed as the text they contain is also mainly in shorthand, but as they stand the sketches alone are very interesting.

Included in the Collection of papers at the Record Office are a number of other documents which are just as interesting as the diaries. These include earlier Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal related papers such as Acts of Parliament and an article of agreement by the Canal Co. to



The Wharfinger

advance an extra £4,000 to complete the Canal to Ledbury. This was signed by many of the Proprietors in 1794; the document shows over 100 signatures and is an important record of who believed in the Canal in its early life. Also to be found is the original agreement between the Canal Company and Stephen Ballard, dated 1827, this shows that in the first instance at least Ballard agreed to be Clerk and Engineer to the Company for seven years.

Lastly while at the Record Office I found time to look at two more collections of documents. Firstly Philip Ballard, Stephen's brother took an important number of railway related photographs, referenced K13. That collection is a fascinating set of images taken from the 1860s onwards of railway projects undertaken by Messrs Brassey and Ballard. As Messrs Brassey and Ballard included Stephen (as well as Philip) there are images of Stephen in his late 50s with other engineers he worked with, together with images of his railway related work – those I will leave for future articles, so something to look forward to.

Secondly, the Record Office, as the County archive for Herefordshire, hold most of the legally deposited Parliamentary railway plans for the County, referenced Q/RW/R. These were deposited with the then Clerk of the Peace when the railways were planned. Between them the plans show the full length of the Canal as the railways impinged on the Canal along their way, unfortunately the accompanying books of reference are not all held so we cannot find out who the various landowners or tenants were at the time the railways were planned. There are other Collections referencing the Canal at the Record Office and these are no doubt very interesting and possibly useful – *more research for another day!*

In the next article I will look at Stephen Ballard the boy, man and engineer, using his autobiography and other notes found in the Collection.

 CJ

Sailing Barge Cruises

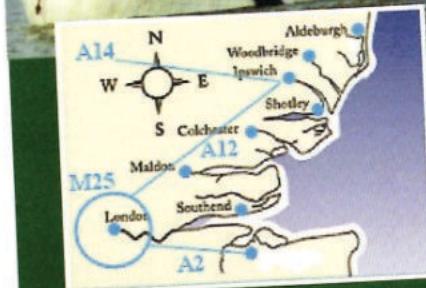
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SUBMARINES RETURN TO OVER!

Shortly after Over Basin was filled with water for the first time Gloucester & District Model Boat Club expressed an interest sailing their craft on (and under!) the water. Boat Club Chairman Ted Tedaldi and his colleagues have worked closely with H&G CT volunteers over the years and Ted reports on their valiant efforts to keep the waters in good condition . . .

Gloucester & District Model Boat Club has sailed at Over Basin since its opening day. Apart from the Basin itself Club members have also worked on ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE and its surroundings. The early sailing days saw crystal clear waters where you could watch model submarines submerged well below periscope depth patrolling the waters! During recent years weed growth has taken over the waters and sailing had become one big gamble. Various weed clearing methods were tried, but these were not really successful.

During January 2008 the Club put in a concerted effort to clear the weed and subsequently recorded over 600 man hours during the year. This effort gave us some good sailing, but still frequent maintenance was required. Club Secretary Peter Pogmore, a keen fisherman, found an advert for a weed clearing device which takes the form of a chain saw. Like magic we were cutting weed even when the canal was just frozen;



Photos: Ted Tedaldi

two sessions and the waters were transformed. Two further sessions in February have returned sailing to its original course and pleasure. We are also indebted to Barrie and his Thursday team for cleaning the weed from the banks.

Sunday March 1st 2009 saw members once again sail from the slip to the Basin and northwards to the spill without being weeded up. This gives a run of some 175 yards all on a slight curve. *Magnificent – just like the early days!*

Subject to weather conditions we intend to race 'micro magic' yachts on Wednesdays in the summer months, from 5.00pm onwards, and also sailing in general. Please feel free to come down to view or support. If the weed level can be contained with reasonable working then we hope to have a regatta in 2010 – full details will be published in a future edition of **The Wharfinger**.

◆ TT



A Natural Explanation By John Chappell

In our ongoing series about the natural surroundings of our Oxenham restoration site John Chappell finds just a single specimen growing close to our work this time – but, before we get to that, how's your Latin?

The average gardener or nature lover tends to think that botanic names are something we could manage without but I have given the Latin or botanic names of the plants I have written about throughout this series because I believe it to be essential to understanding more about what grows around us. Centuries ago each plant was known by a long, descriptive, cumbersome sentence until a plan was formed to adopt two names only for each one. Linnaeus (1707–1778), the Swedish naturalist, undertook the task of naming and classifying the whole living world from 'buffaloes to buttercups' and this established the dual name system that today offers gardeners all over the world a glimpse into the past history of their plants.

My subject this month, the hazel tree, is a welcome and familiar sight in spring with its long, yellow catkins waving in the breeze; its two part botanic name *Corylus avellana* tells us a lot. The first name, which may be likened to our surname, is a generic or group name and the second, a descriptive name - like a Christian name in a family - is given to only one plant in a group. *Corylus* probably comes from the Greek *korys* meaning a hood or helmet and refers to the covering on the nut whilst *avellana* is derived from Avella, a town in Campania, where hazel nuts of a very choice quality grow. Thus we have a brief picture of the hazel nut and can even take a stab at the sort of conditions in which it prefers to grow!

It is all too easy to take the hazel for granted, it is a welcome sight in spring with its long yellow catkins waving in the breeze and there are a multitude of interesting facts to tell. The catkins are male, pollen bearing structures and on a bright spring day clouds of this pollen are released on the breeze. The female 'flowers', which receive the pollen, resemble a tiny growth-bud and only become distinguishable



Photo: John Chappell

The female flowers of the hazel tree.

in the spring when tufts of crimson styles protrude from their scale-like structure. A style is the connection between the stigma which receives the pollen and the ovary which produces the seed, in this case a nut. Once the catkin has shed its pollen it disintegrates and the female flower, if fertilized, develops into a leafy shoot bearing a terminal cluster of nuts.

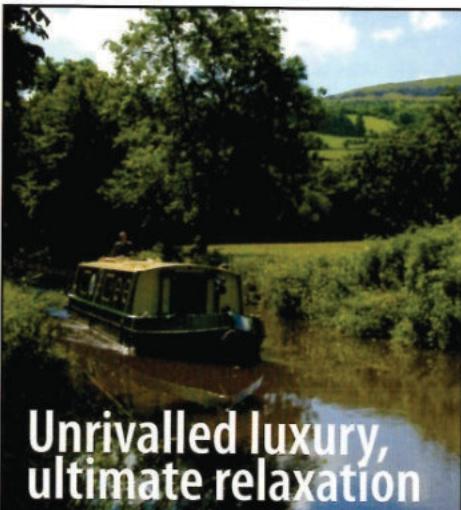
The hazel tree is prolific in ancient hedgerows and its nuts are rich in fat. Also known as the cob nut they are essential eating for squirrels and you have to be quick off the mark if you wish to get there before they gather them in the autumn! For the gardener perhaps the main attraction is the lovely butter yellow colour of the leaves in the autumn. One variety *C. a. 'Contorta'*, found in a Gloucestershire hedgerow in 1863, has twigs that are remarkably curled and twisted; it makes an interesting addition to the shrub border as do forms with purple and laciniate leaves. *Corylus maxima*, the filbert, originates from Southern Europe and as its botanic name suggests has a larger nut with the outer husk protruding well beyond the nut. The well known variety 'Kentish Cob', chosen by gardeners, is a selected variety of *C. maxima*. Hazel twigs are the tree of choice for water

divining and hazel interplanted with hawthorn makes an excellent hedge, both being readily laid to form an impenetrable barrier.

The hazel has proved useful to man since prehistoric times, producing hazel rods which have been woven into many products. To ensure a steady supply of rods trees are coppiced at regular intervals, usually about seven years. The coracle, a small shell like boat used for fishing, dates back 3,000 years and usually had a hazel rod frame covered in hide. More recently the 'wattle' of the wattle and daub used in building construction were hazel rods woven into panels which were then fixed between posts and covered in daub (mud and straw); primitive, but they have lasted several hundred years! Similar panels are today used as sheep hurdles and, of course, the rods can be used in basketwork.

Oddly, considering the age of the Oxenhall site, there is only one hazel tree but Geoff is busy thickening up our newly laid hawthorn hedge with young hazel saplings ... *on reflection though I suppose it could be said that there are enough nuts on site already!*

◆ JC



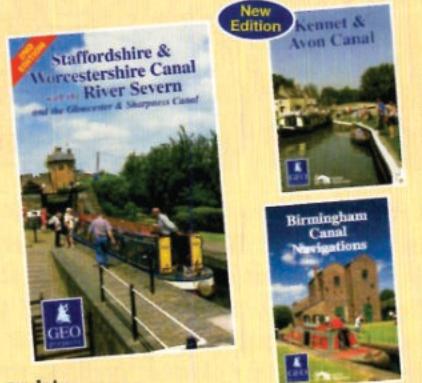
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Shocking Ruffianism in Gloucestershire!

by John and Daphne Chappell

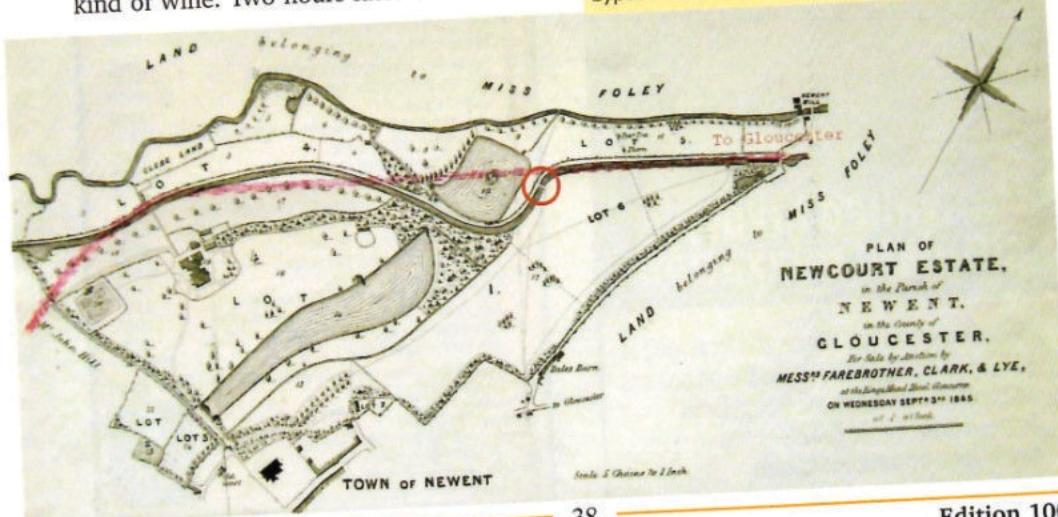
PART TWO

Part one of this fascinating tale (page 34 of edition 99 of *The Wharfinger*), triggered by a press clipping from the *Manchester Times* of 1860, took us just beyond the point where 'temptation got the better of the men' and they started sampling their cargo. Here, as predicted, events take a turn for the worse ... indeed, as the press headline stated at the time, it is a tale of Shocking Ruffianism in Gloucestershire!

Samuel Wood the lock-keeper at Malswick, (later known as Philips Lock), saw the 'Number 7' go through at about 12 noon, he observed the two barrels on board and that Harper and Osborne had been drinking. Osborne offered him a drink, which he took and thought it to be some kind of wine. Two hours later Wood went

up the canal and caught up with the 'Number 7' at Niblett's Bridge, a small drawbridge near Newent Lock on what was then the New Court Estate. Here, according to Wood, he was asked to step on board. When he entered the cabin – which he noticed smelled strongly of drink – he was offered another cup full of wine which he drank. He fell asleep and the next thing he remembered was being woken by Harper's son who told him they were at the mouth of the Oxenhall tunnel and that it was nine pm.; realising he had neglected his lock duties Wood hurriedly left. He was later dismissed from his post.

Map of 1845 (Courtesy Gloucester Archives Ref P225a M1 1/9) with Niblett's bridge circled in red. Gloucester is to the right and Ross on Wye to the left, the approximate line of the Newent bypass is sketched in for reference.



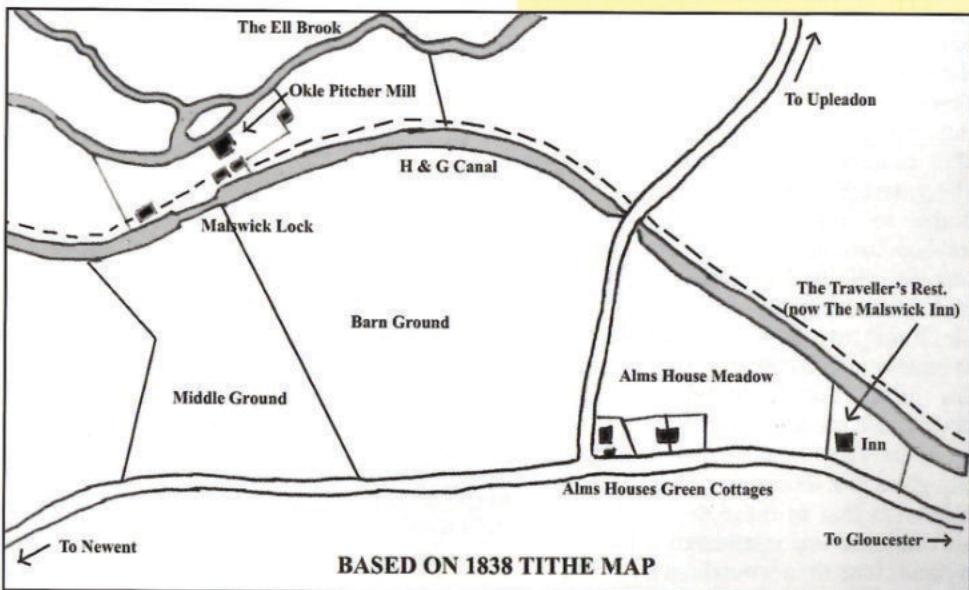
Three boats were lying at the tunnel mouth that evening, the 'Number 7', 'The Lion' and another belonging to a Joseph Holloway. Holloway was a Hereford boatman, aged 46, a stocky man who had lost his left leg below the knee some years before but still managed to work the boats on the canal. He was carrying timber for **Shaw of Hereford**; his wife and young family were on board. John Butler also had members of his family on board 'The Lion', his wife and son Charles, and his daughter Jane with her husband John Edwards. Several local people had gathered round the boats as word had spread that drink was flowing freely. It wasn't long before most of the adults were drunk; a fight started and several women ended up in the canal.

The Newent police were alerted and at nine-thirty pm. Sergeant Matthew Roach made his way to Oxenhall only to meet Charles Butler and his wife going in the opposite direction. Butler was bleeding freely from wounds to his face and neck saying he had been stabbed by a man called Holloway. Roach advised Butler to go immediately to the Doctor's house and then sent for assistance. Constable Hopkins arrived and they found Harper and Osborne

very drunk on board the 'Number 7' and noted that the cloth which should have covered the boat was untied; on throwing it back they found a hammer, a barrel of wine with the tin off and the bung out, a basin, several mugs and a two gallon jar, all smelling strongly of wine. A gutta-percha tube, also smelling of wine, was found close by. It was obvious the barrel had been breached, the contents siphoned out with the tube and freely handed round. Harper and Osborne were apprehended; others were questioned and sent on their way.

The next day Sergeant Roach visited the cottages at Alms Houses Green. As he approached he saw James Edwards leave his cottage and enter that of John Butler's. He ran to Butler's cottage and searched it. Upstairs he found Jane Edwards hiding two jars and some bottles filled with wine under the bed and pillows. The two Butlers, and James and Jane Edwards, were taken into custody. Joseph Holloway was arrested a few days later on a charge of wounding Charles Butler. →

Alms Houses Green Cottages, where Sergeant Roach carried out his search, lies very close to the Canal at Malswick.



The Trial at Gloucester Assizes

On Monday August 13th 1860, James Harper, William Osborne, John Butler, Charles Butler, James Edwards and his wife Jane were charged with having been concerned (with others) in stealing two gallons of port wine, the property of **Benjamin Danks and Co.**, from a boat on the Hereford and Gloucester canal at Newent. *All the prisoners were found guilty.* Harper was given four years penal servitude, the severity of his sentence reflected a previous charge of stealing 200 pounds of coal. Osborne was given twelve months imprisonment and John Butler, in consideration of his previous good character, received six weeks. Charles Butler and James Edwards would each serve two months – but the judge considered Edward's wife Jane had acted under the direction of her husband and she was discharged.

Joseph Holloway appeared the following day charged with wounding Charles Butler. Holloway maintained that the wounds Butler sustained were caused during a fight by his falling on some tiles, part of the cargo he was carrying. Butler maintained that Holloway attacked him wounding him in the neck. Several witnesses corroborated Butler's story and Emma Steward, a resident of Newent, testified she had seen Joseph Holloway push his naked wife into the canal after beating her mercilessly with a poker. The woman's cries of 'murder' had caused Butler to intervene and Holloway had stabbed him in the neck. The Newent surgeon who had inspected the wound said it could not have been caused by a tile; it was two inches long and appeared to have been inflicted by a knife. Had the jaw bone not deflected the blade downwards the wound would have been fatal. The jury found Holloway guilty. He was given four months imprisonment – an indication that in those days theft from an employer was considered a far more serious crime than wounding!

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Poor Mr. Treherne the wine merchant never did receive his wine. The 'Number 7' was held at Oxenhall and later taken to Ledbury where it was handed over to Joseph Fawkes, the agent for Messrs Danks and Co. The Excise Officer at Ledbury, Joseph Jones, measured the wine in the open cask; it contained 54 and 8/10ths gallons and had been contaminated with muddy water from the canal – rendering it useless. ♦ JC/DC



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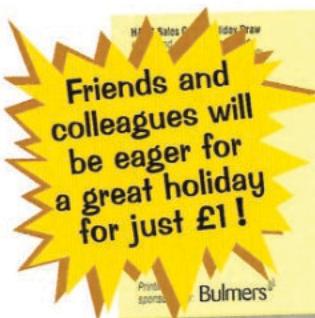
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The H&G CT will be constructing a new slipway on the Canal at Aylestone Park this summer – with major assistance from our friends the **Waterway Recovery Group** who are holding two of their national Canal Camps on consecutive weeks commencing 25th July. Volunteers from all over the country will pay £49 a week towards food and accommodation – sleeping on the floor of Yarkhill Village Hall – and then work together with our own volunteers to construct the slipway.

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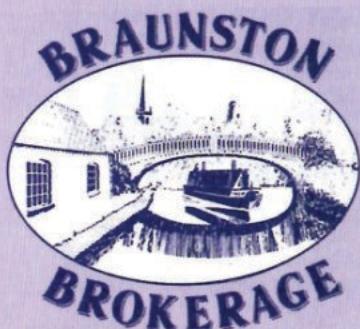
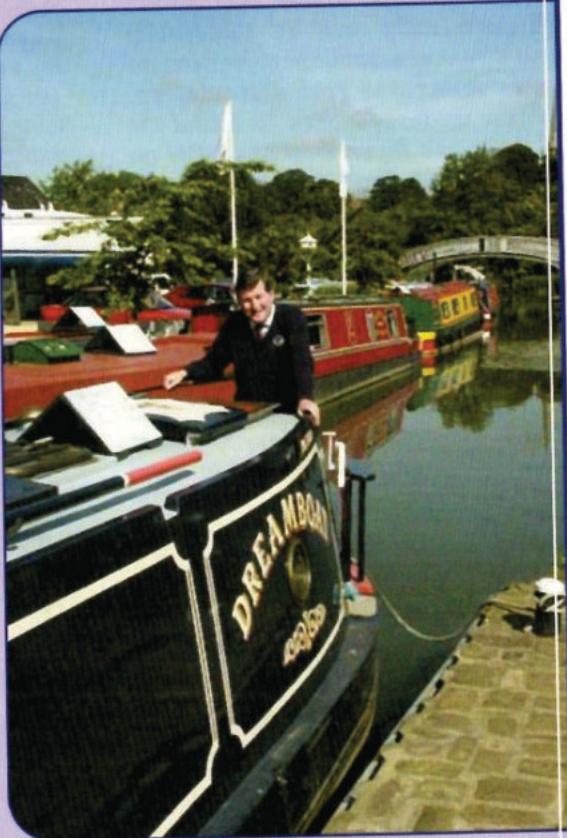
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