

The Wharfinger

Winter 2012-13

Magazine of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust



EDITION
114

£1
free to members



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Aylestone

Weir Site Leader: Brian Fox

Lengthsman: Judith Jacobs

Withington Project

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Conservation advisor: JJ Clews

Kymin East

Waterway Recovery Group

Yarkhill

Leader: Chris High

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Oxenhall

Leaders: Brian Fox, Geoff Hopper

Lengthsman: Peter Moore

Moat Farm

Project Chairman: Wilf Jones

Site Leader: Martyn Tilford

Vineyard Hill

Project Chairman: Wilf Jones

Site Leader: Ted Beagles

Over

Site Leaders: Ted Beagles (Wed) Maggie Jones (Sat)

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Jones, David Penny, Belinda Sprigg

Llanthony

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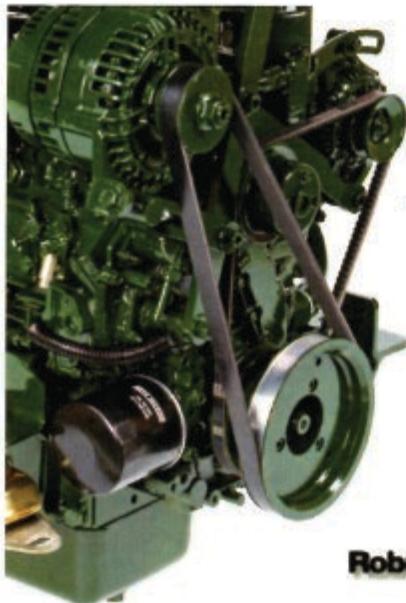
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It has been our pleasure in supporting the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust for over 20 years, and we will continue to work together in the present, to revive the past, and secure a better future. © H&GCT

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Exceeding Expectations

As I enter my 23rd year as Editor of **The Wharfinger** I look back with interest. Years ago I struggled to fill the pages; now – I hope that I don't tempt fate – it is very difficult to squeeze everything in!



It is not just the amount submitted by our many contributors that, together with Maggie Jones' design and layout expertise, hopefully results in an interesting all-volunteer produced

magazine. The **content** is equally important – *in the last 18 months this has exceeded all my expectations*. New sites acquired, Llanthony Hydro, Flood Relief and new Lock Scheme announced, an 'in house' Legal and Project Development Team created, further partnerships established (including that with Gloucester Quays/The Peel Group), another length of the Canal restored within months of acquiring the site ...



Mystery Benefactor

The H&G Canal Trust has received a great boost with a substantial donation from a mystery benefactor. The banker's draft had a note attached from the donor asking that we respect his (or her) decision to remain anonymous and expressing the wish that "*it might give a temporary fillip to your band of faithful followers*". The donor stressed that they placed no restriction on the use of the money and suggested that the ensuing publicity would also be beneficial. The note concluded with the comment that it was from "*a life-long canal lover/walker ... who shall remain nameless*".

The H&G CT Council of Management was absolutely delighted and amazed to hear the news of this totally unexpected and most generous donation. Every effort will be made to select a project that will utilise the money as a catalyst to attract further donations/grants. Also, for the location of the chosen project to be readily accessible by the public so that the money has the added benefit of encouraging further and ongoing support for the work of the H&G CT.

As with everything that we do the options need to be carefully considered and this is likely to take some time. A decision on the expenditure of the money will be reported in a future edition of **The Wharfinger**. In the meantime our most sincere thanks to our mystery benefactor.

850 additional copies of this edition have been printed to keep residents at Aylestone Park and Dymock informed of progress – see pages 7 & 8. Our thanks to the team at **Print Plus** for getting this edition printed on a restricted deadline.

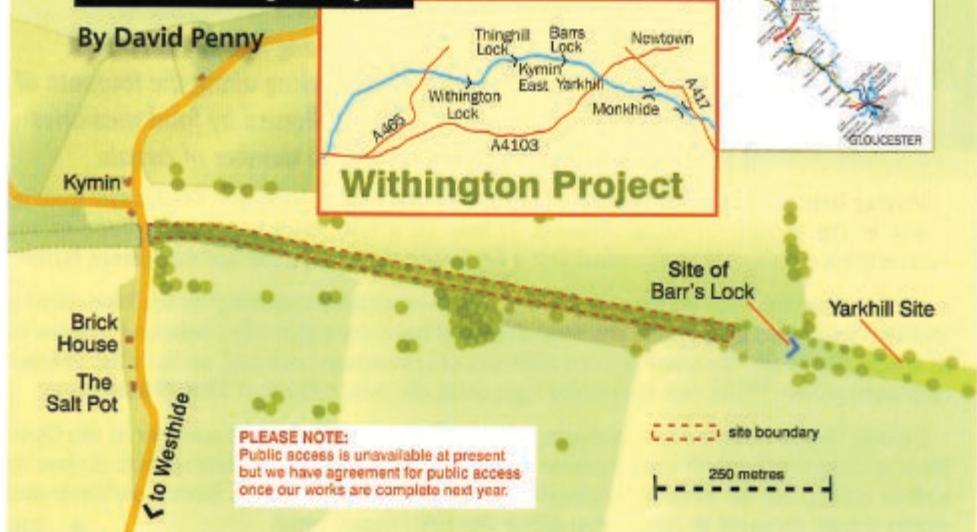
◆ CRP

NEW SITE

Kymin East

Part of the Withington Project

By David Penny



Our third major new site to be announced in just over a year!

Having completed Vineyard Hill in 12 months, and commenced Moat Farm, we are very pleased to be able to announce another new site – **this time in Herefordshire ...**

Thanks to the generous support of the landowner we are able to access a further 1,000 yards of the Canal at Kymin East – part of the wider Withington Project to restore the Canal from the existing Yarkhill site to Withington.

The Kymin East length is intended to be a showpiece of how we will continue to restore other stretches of the H&G Canal – on the basis of minimum intervention and the maximum retention of existing trees. The primary objective is that from the adjoining fields the site will retain a look much as today and that upon ultimate completion of this length public access will also have been delivered so all can fully enjoy this attractive stretch of the Canal.

Waterway Recovery Group held their annual National Reunion Weekend during the second weekend in November – and chose the H&G Canal as the venue – with over 125 WRGies attending from all over the country. As a part of their activities on the H&G Canal that weekend WRG cleared an agreed defined line of the Canal and towpath at Kymin East. Excavation is planned to take place next summer and this will be another site on the H&G Canal to be restored and delivered within 12 months of gaining legal access ...

The Withington Project will be managed in accordance with the new methods of working (*already successfully implemented at both the Vineyard Hill and Moat Farm restoration sites*) with overall control coming under Wilf Jones as the Withington Project Chairman. We are very pleased that landowner 'JJ' Clews has agreed to act as Conservation Advisor for the Withington Project.

(Full report and photographs in the next edition of **The Wharfinger**.)





Chairman's Column

By Ralph Barber

Hello from your new Chairman

I have been a member of the H&G CT since we moved to Herefordshire five years ago but I have long had an interest in canals. My first memory of canals is cycling along the towpath of the Leeds and Liverpool in Bradford, followed by fond memories of family holidays on hire boats along a number of canals.

Moving here we were thrilled to find that the Canal – barely a stone's throw away from us – was in the process of being restored. It may be a few years away but I hope to see narrowboats passing along the canal just a field away from us in the not too distant future.

In the meantime I get on the water when I can – at present canoeing on the Wye, Severn and the Lugg. Also by the time you read this I will have done that trip I believe a number of us would like to do – in London, turn right out of Limehouse Lock and up the tidal Thames on a narrowboat. I'll let you know how I got on in the next edition of **The Wharfinger**.

I would like to congratulate everyone who worked so hard over the summer at the Open Days at Yarkhill, Oxenhall and of course at the grand opening of the new section at Over as well as promoting the interests of the H&G Canal at shows like Crick, Stroud-on-Water and others. *I look forward to seeing you along the H&G Canal soon.*

◆ RB

The Trading Company, H&G Canal Sales

A Charity Commission requirement that charities such as the H&G CT had a separate trading company no longer applies. The Council of Management approved a recommendation from Treasurer Liz Connors that H&G Canal (Sales) Ltd (reg no. 2710215) be wound up and all activities be transferred to the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust (reg. no. 2704407). This action has been approved by the CoM. In practical terms no change will be apparent to Members and supporters – Janet Moult will chair a new **H&G Canal Sales & Promotion** committee, comprising the original team, within the H&G CT structure. A Gloucestershire Sales & Promotion team has been formed – to be led by Maggie Jones.

The Restoration Fund

We have been reviewing the methods of collecting revenue for the H&G CT balanced with the different ways we are asking Members and the general public to support our overall aim to get 34 miles of canal back in water. The CoM have approved proposals to close the Restoration Fund at the end of December. *The balance in the fund will be transferred to the Land Fund.*

Existing regular subscribers to the Restoration Fund have received a letter from our Treasurer advising them of the proposals, repeating our thanks for their support and inviting them to agree to transfer their regular payment to the Land Fund in future.

◆ CRP

The need for improved communications is one of the issues identified by the team undertaking the review of the CoM – see page 39.

Revised Planning Application

Dymock

By David Penny

As reported in **The Wharfinger** this time last year (page 6 of Ed 110) the H&G Canal Trust leads a partnership of Dymock Parish Council, Two Rivers Housing Association and the Landowner to restore the Canal in the centre of the village and deliver 15 social housing and 5 open market housing units – as well as a new village car park and play area. The H&G CT is committed to deliver the Canal on the site within 12 months of the transfer of the land once planning consent has hopefully been granted.

The original planning application, submitted by the H&G CT and registered in March 2012, was subsequently withdrawn to permit changes to be made to reflect further discussions with the planning authority and other interested parties. Revised proposals led to further detailed discussions which have resulted in the new plan reproduced here.

Provision is made for a 20 space car park to meet the severe shortfall in the village as well as a new play area to replace the one that is on the line of the Canal. A key part of the application is the development of affordable housing to keep Dymock a vibrant community and ensure the survival of the village school and other facilities. A vision was formed between the Parish and Canal Trust that all this could come about with the Canal as the axis upon which it all hinged.

All of the land comprising the green area around the Canal, and the Canal itself, will be transferred to the Canal Trust with the development making annual contributions towards the restoration, maintenance and management of the Canal, and in addition, the Canal Trust will secure a small percentage of the end value of the open market properties to assist with the delivery of the Canal elsewhere in the village.

This is yet another example of the H&G CT working in partnership to deliver not only its own vision of a vibrant Canal for the benefit of all to enjoy but also facilitating much wider benefits for the communities through which it passes.

◆ DRP

Did you know?

Do you have access to the internet?

If you do, and had registered for our occasional email newsletter, then you would have heard about our new site at Kymin East early in November rather than reading about it for the first time on page 6.

To register, please send a blank email with 'count me in' in the subject line to newsletter@h-g-canal.org.uk. You will receive an automatic acknowledgement that you have been successfully added to our specialist emailing software. Your details

will not be released to any third party and each message that you receive will include details of how to unsubscribe.

The occasional email newsletter is intended to ensure that readers are made aware of significant items of H&G CT 'breaking news' as soon as possible. More detailed reports on all such news will always follow in the next edition of **The Wharfinger** so readers who do not have access to email (or who do not wish to subscribe to the email newsletter) will not be disadvantaged.

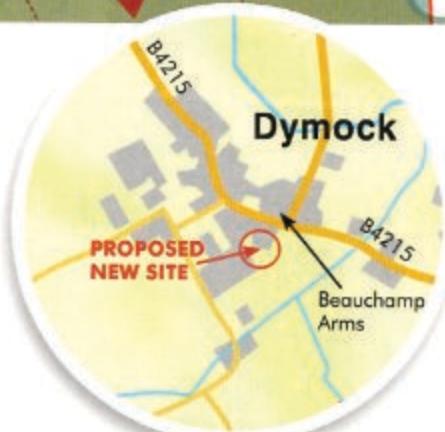
◆ CRP



Signing Up!

The first of what will be a series of official highway specification signs, indicating the presence of the H&G Canal, were erected by WRG volunteers during their Reunion Weekend at three locations where roads cross the Canal in Hereford City. More details will be in the next edition of **The Wharfinger**.

CRP





Vineyard Hill is OPENED!



Over Festival was a great success! All our efforts to restore Vineyard Hill, paint the tug boats and put on a celebration weekend were rewarded with many visitors coming to see us. The craft marquees buzzed, the morris dancers danced and beer flowed!



Jason Pullen, Managing Director at Gloucester Quays, cut the ribbon to open the new length at Vineyard Hill.

A wide variety of boats including a katakanu, model boats, steam boats and a rowing boat joined the regular tug boats and trip boat on the new length of the Canal.

The fire brigade not only brought engines to view but also gave a water rescue display. Trips on Mister Maysey were extremely popular along the doubled length of restored waterway.



The plant and produce stalls did a roaring trade as did the refreshments.





On the Sunday **Prunella Scales** and **Timothy West** joined us in style in Chris Clark's Lanchester. They unveiled a plaque at the start of the Vineyard Hill length and had a good look around the many stalls and stands, including that of the Gloucester and District Model Boat Club. Then they too took to the water and cut a second ribbon for Vineyard Hill!

By popular request canal horse **Gypsy Queen** made another guest appearance.

A VERY BIG THANK YOU to all those who took part, or in any way contributed to the Festival. We couldn't have done it without you

◆ MJ



Chris Byrne, Barbara Everitt, James Fryer (seglos), Cliff Penny, Chris Roberts

Restoration Project

Vineyard Hill

By Ted Beagles

Work has gone ahead well through the summer, despite the weather, and everything was finally in place for the Grand Opening.

Once the dam between the Vineyard Hill and Over Basin sections of the Canal had dried out sufficiently, so that it was safe to work from the top of the dam, Paul ventured out with the excavator. Whilst the rest of us admired his skill he quickly and efficiently proceeded to build up a large pile of wet clay on the towpath as the dam was removed. Twenty five minutes later it was gone, and we had unrestricted navigation into the new section of the Canal.

The first of our boats to venture along was Alder, crewed by Malcolm and John. On a sunny July morning she cautiously edged her way through the water lilies, along to the winding hole at the far end, before turning and making an uneventful journey back to Over Basin.

Back on dry land there was still plenty left to do. The towpath top was trimmed to be smooth and even, and the back was dressed to remove debris and form the finished profile. The towpath was then surfaced with wood chippings to provide a surface suitable for all weather conditions. Because our Roper ride-on mower was out of service we were unable to use it to



Ted Beagles/Tim Rumbold



Top: Ernest wheels more wood chip for the towpath.
Middle: Woodchipping the towpath.

Above: The towpath is levelled.

Far left: The water levels are lowered to expose the dam.
Left: The remains of the dam are removed.



tow the trailer to carry the woodchip at first, and so resorted to traditional methods of wheelbarrows and shovels to do part of the job. Fortunately the trailer was available to finish the work at the far end! With the towpath completed and the ride-on mower back in service it was a simple job to place a bench seat and reposition the half mile post to complete the far end.

What a difference!

Two views from the same spot – top photo is October 2011



September 2012 – the opening flotilla sails down Vineyard Hill!



The commemorative plaque, designed and procured by Nigel Jefferies and Wilf Jones, was mounted on a suitable boulder (a surplus stone from our Oxenhall site) and placed alongside the towpath at the start of the Vineyard Hill section.

This is the last time I shall be reporting on Vineyard Hill as a separate item, as all of the main works have been completed. There are still a few minor things to do before the construction phase of the project can finally be closed, and I will cover these in future Over Basin reports.

Wilf Jones (Project Chairman) and I (Site Leader) would like to thank all those people who have contributed in any way to the successful completion of this project. In addition to our own Canal Trust and Waterway Recovery Group volunteers there are many others, including members of the Vineyard Hill Trust and the general public, who have made this possible. *Thank you all.*

◆ TB



The '34 miles to Hereford' sign is relocated at Vineyard Hill.

Restoration Project

Over Basin

By Ted Beagles and Chris Byrne

We have been very busy throughout the summer getting the site and the boats prepared for the September Over Canal Festival and opening of Vineyard Hill.

Mowing the grass has been even more of a job than usual for Malcolm due to the wet weather, and a series of punctures of the ride-on mower tyres; hopefully the self-sealing gel we have now put into the tyres will prevent this problem in future - watch this space!

With the completion of the overflow weir brickwork by Bob, Ivor and Andy, the first phase of this project is finished, and the gravel towpath has been reinstated through to the start of Vineyard Hill.

We were fortunate in having Lyn and Julie come and spend a day volunteering with us as part of an Ecclesiastical Insurance charity day scheme. They did an excellent job in painting the Bailey bridge and gate at the site entrance, and the pedestrian barrier below the lock, ready for the Festival weekend. We hope they will be able to come again in the future.

A memorial bench to Over volunteer Tony Boonham has been donated by his widow Dorothy and we have located it overlooking the Canal Basin below skew gardens.

The Heritage Fleet

Belinda, Pat and Jane have returned from their summer cruising and been busy completing painting the outsides of all three of our heritage boats, and Mr Maysey, in the H&G livery. They make a fine sight to everyone visiting the Basin; their efforts are now turning to sorting out the cabins. At the engine room end the mechanical team are engrossed in solving a problem in the fuel system that suddenly afflicted both Alder and Renton during the open weekend. Thanks to the efforts of



Our heritage boats in 'H&G livery'.



The completed overflow weir.



Julie and Lyn painting the entrance gate.



The memorial bench to volunteer Tony Boonham.



Chris and John we were able to keep them both running throughout the event.

Mr Maysey is now looking splendid, with a new fibreglass roof fitted by Dave, Mike and Paul, and a new paint job in the established H&G colour scheme by the painting team, to match the heritage boat fleet. Refitting the outboard motor and the steering and control gear all went smoothly, and we were soon off for a test run to the far end of Vineyard Hill and back; however the small leak in the hull that we have been monitoring during the year suddenly got much worse and the reliable operation of the bilge pump became very important. Boat trips were very popular during the Festival weekend; we had to carefully monitor the leak throughout and no passengers got wet! Thankfully, the leak stopped when we partially grounded her on the slipway and we are now awaiting a suitable opportunity to get her out of the water for investigation and repair over the winter.

◆ TB

THE WHARF HOUSE

During the early hours on the Saturday morning of the Over Canal Festival we unfortunately had a large diameter water pipe burst under one of the bathrooms on the first floor. {a pipe joint failed – it was part of the 'first fix' plumbing installed by professional plumbers – Ed.}

David Penny swiftly isolated the water supply to the building and then had his work cut out dealing with the guest in the affected room (who panicked and rang the fire brigade and set the fire alarms off) whilst also trying to get as much water out

Mister Maysey high and dry on the slipway until the leak has been fixed.

of the building as quickly as possible.

Sadly the guests in the affected room refused repeated attempts to let the team assist them in finding alternative accommodation. However, once they had been reassured all the other guests returned to their rooms and, despite all the disturbance, left happy the next morning. One guest re-booked 9 days later and another has booked 4 rooms for next year!

Even with the prompt isolation of the water supply the floor of the bedroom was saturated and torrents of water leaked down through the ceiling into the kitchen and flooded the floor (and that of the restaurant and visitor centre) before pouring out of the doors. I (Chris Byrne) arrived at THE WHARF HOUSE around 5.20am and David and I were able to repair the plumbing and restore the water supply to the building. Our next task was to check over the electrics, making them safe, then the restaurant and kitchen were deep cleaned. With the staff all working very hard we just managed to be ready for breakfast. Then we had the first day of our busy Festival and Opening Ceremony weekend ... by the time it opened to the public at 11am some of the team had been hard at work for nearly 6 hours – the show must go on!

When the hire shops opened in the morning a couple of dehumidifiers and a wet 'n' dry vacuum were acquired to get as much water out of the carpets and moisture from the room as we could.

After the Festival weekend the carpet and floor boards were lifted to enable experts appointed by our insurers to check to see if there had been any further damage to the building structure beneath the bedroom floor which, thanks to our prompt action, was given the all clear. A couple of weeks later the floor and carpet were relaid in the bedroom, the vinyl floor replaced in the bathroom, and the room was put back into service again. →

The specialist's inspection in the kitchen confirmed damage to the ceiling and floor that, in order to remedy, will require the temporary removal of everything from the kitchen. The insurers' plans for contractors to remedy this have been postponed by us in order to limit further disruption to trade to a more convenient time later in the year. Meanwhile we have taken the opportunity to make some changes to the kitchen waste pipes, moving the grease trap from inside the kitchen to underground outside (with access still for cleaning). This has freed up space in the kitchen for additional shelving

and has made the essential regular maintenance of the grease trap easier and, just as importantly, has considerably shortened and reduced the costs of the eventual shut down.

Our Saturday volunteers have continued their clearing of unwanted vegetation in the car park, and around THE WHARF HOUSE, keeping the gardens and adjacent areas tidy as we go into Autumn.  CB/CRP

Want to get involved at Over then please ring:-

Ted Beagles 01452 522 648

Maggie Jones 01452 618 010

DOUBLE the Benefit!

By Cliff Penny

During the Over Canal Festival and Grand Opening of Vineyard Hill we were very pleased that one of our Vice Presidents, Tim Parker, and his wife, Bernadette, were able to see the finished ground floor bedroom at THE WHARF HOUSE.

As previously reported, a cheque for £5,000 from Tim enabled the fit-out of this special room to be completed.

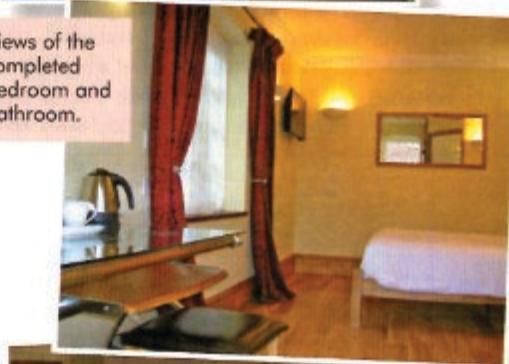
THE WHARF HOUSE has since paid £5,000 to the Canal Trust's **Land Fund** to assist in the Trust delivering its objectives – giving a *double benefit from Tim's donation.*

Whilst there may not have been a Grand Opening Ceremony for the room it is already in regular use by our less able B&B guests who really appreciate the high standards that have been achieved creating a very welcoming and comfortable room. It also has a strong following being suitable for our guests with four-legged friends! *Thank you Tim – your generosity and support is not taken for granted!*

 CRP



Views of the completed bedroom and bathroom.



Chris Byrne

Record Breaking ...

GRAND HOLIDAY DRAW 2012

A record breaking £3,584 has been raised this year – over £800 greater than our previous record – *our thanks to everyone who bought and sold tickets (and especially to our 'star sellers')*. The draw was once again made at the September Social Evening at Much Marcle, on Tuesday 18th September. The draw was made by the speaker at the meeting, Edward Helps, who is the Managing Director of the ABC Leisure Group. The winners were:-

1st Prize

A weeks Narrow Boat Holiday for FOUR –
donated by Black Prince Holidays.

TICKET NO 0846

John Arnold,
Hereford.

2nd Prize

One Day's Boat Hire on either the Kennet and Avon or Mon and Brec Canal,
donated by UK Boat Hire.

TICKET NO 04093

Mike Taylor, Cheltenham.

3rd Prize

One night Dinner, Bed & Breakfast for two at THE WHARF HOUSE, Over Basin, Gloucester.

TICKET NO 08378

Mr & Mrs Peberdy,
Hereford.

Our grateful thanks to Black Prince Holidays, UK Boat Hire and THE WHARF HOUSE for donating the Holiday prizes and to Bulmers for sponsoring the printing of the tickets.

Thank you to all who supported the Grand Holiday Draw in any way. Every pound raised is a pound towards restoration of the H&G Canal.

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Gift ideas from THE WHARF HOUSE

NEW



Canal Trust Calendar 2013

A smart desk calendar with each month showing an H&G CT view or activity. All photos have been taken by our H&G CT volunteers. It comes in a plastic display wallet 191mm x 110 mm and will make the ideal gift or desk accessory for the New Year. Available from **WHARF HOUSE** and Trading Company.

Price £5

(plus £1.50 UK postage and packing)

Thank you to all our photographers who have made this possible. A fuller credit will be in the next edition.



Food and Drink

Christmas at **WHARF HOUSE** comes with the opportunity to take sumptuous food and drink home with you, as a special treat to yourself or your nearest and dearest. We have a wide range of delicious Tackleman's chutneys and marinades. They make the perfect gift or accompaniment to your festive feast.



Christmas Cards

Our own H&G CT Christmas Cards.

The designs, printed on quality card, feature images from our own volunteers' photographs. They come in packs of 5 cards, with self-sealing envelopes.

Size: 105mm x 148 mm.

There are two designs to choose from:

- **Bulrushes in the snow at Over**
- **Snowdrops at Oxenhall.**

From **WHARF HOUSE** and Trading Company.

Price £3 per pack

(plus £1.50 UK postage and packing)

Villeroy and Boch

Villeroy and Boch tableware makes the perfect gift for that special person in your life – sleek lines and savvy shapes make the ideal accompaniment to the stylish table, whether it's palm plates, party platters or cappuccino cups with a unique twist.

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we have competitive prices with special deals to make Christmas much brighter!



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Restaurant

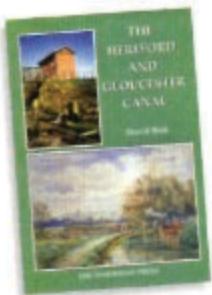
Turn off the A40 at traffic lights 250 yards west of Over Roundabout (junction of A40/A417). CR SO 816197
All profits from The Wharf House will be used for the promotion and restoration of the Hereford and Gloucester Canal.

Christmas Opening Times – As in previous years, **THE WHARF HOUSE** will close after lunch on, **Sunday 23rd December** and re-open on **Thursday 3rd January**.

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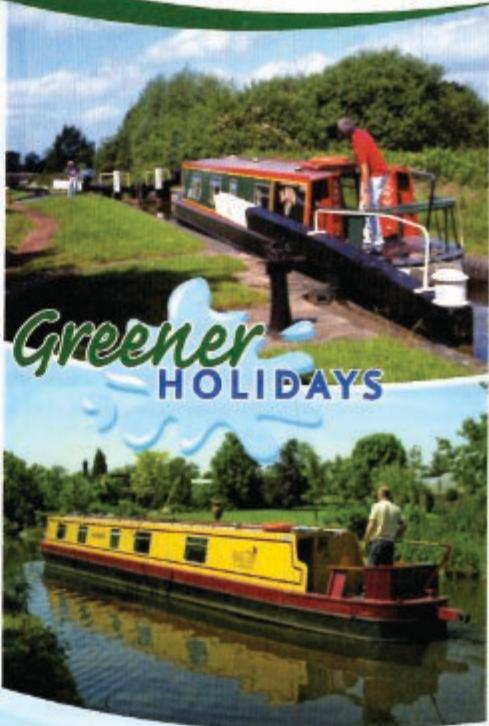
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The third Tuesday of every month (except December) at The Royal Oak, Much Marcle 7.30 for 8pm start.

December

There is no meeting in December

January 15th

Dick Skeet:

*Forgotten waterways
(that Dick has remembered!!)
The H & G is no longer forgotten but
many other waterways are waiting
to be discovered.*

February 19th

Roger Foster:

*The Mon & Brec Canal
An update on our neighbour over the
border.*

March 19th

Tony Condor:

*Gloucester Docks – then and
now*

*The changes over the years of an even
nearer neighbour.*



Dick Skeet

Edward Helps, the Managing Director of the ABC Leisure Group, draws the winning tickets for the Grand Holiday Draw at the September Social.

SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER TALKS

Our Autumn programme commenced with a very entertaining talk on running a business on the canals by Ed Helps. In October we welcomed Ray Wilson for another look at Gloucestershire's amazing industrial history, including two contrasting canals – the Coombe and the Gloucester & Sharpness. Please do join us for future social evenings – we have a good venue and interesting speakers.

JM



Derek Gray

Derek Gray, who sadly passed away aged 85 in October, was a long-standing Member who first served on the former Canal Society Committee in 1987; I first met him when I joined the committee a year later. Shortly after the formation of the H&G Canal Trust Derek migrated from the Council of Management to the Trading Company committee and, ultimately, the then Boats Group. He 'retired' from that group in 2000.

Despite his advancing years Derek was a regular, reliable and well liked volunteer who undertook a number of different roles for as long as he was able. By way of example, together with his wife Margaret, he regularly assisted at various events. Whilst a number of us were rather concerned for his well-being his rather frail figure and unassuming manner seemed to combine to make him the star Grand Holiday Draw ticket seller of his time.

As the years progressed his physical involvement naturally became less but for many years, together with Margaret, he played a key 'behind the scenes' role within our small despatch team undertaking the somewhat thankless task of 'sticking and stuffing' **The Wharfinger**, a role that in more recent years he had to (I suspect very reluctantly) leave for Margaret to continue. Our sincere condolences to Margaret and family. CRP

THE TRADING
COMPANY
H&G Canal Sales

Lock 200
report



The 200th anniversary of the opening of Gloucester Lock to commercial traffic was celebrated on the 8th – 9th September.

There was a gathering of decorated boats in the main basin and stalls on the North Quay. Two boats re-enacted the original opening, rising in the lock to the sounds of a band playing, a gun firing and spectators cheering! The event was organised by the Gloucester City Centre Community Partnership and the Gloucestershire & Herefordshire Branch of the Inland Waterways Association.

Our stand, in a prominent position outside the Canal and River Trust (former BW) offices, was run by H&G CT volunteers from Gloucester, headed by Andy Fowler. Saturday was busy with many learning about the existence of our Canal for the first time and there was much interest in our restoration work. We sold lots of Grand Holiday Draw tickets. Sunday was a different story; strong winds swept through the docks and ensuring the gazebo stayed on the ground, let alone keeping the displays in place, was a constant challenge! We persevered for most of the day but, with fewer visitors, all stall holders chose an early pack-down.

MJ

Our newly formed Gloucestershire Sales & Promotion team welcomes new helpers – please give me (Maggie Jones) a ring on 01452 618 010.



Chris Byrne

Gloucester Quays

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Restoration Projects

Yarkhill and Aylestone Park

By Chris High

The continuing work by the Yarkhill Team at Aylestone throughout the summer has curtailed our progress at the Yarkhill site.

All the necessary Yarkhill maintenance work and planning took place for our Open Day in August. My thanks to the volunteers who helped with the event. This year we had to console ourselves with the quality of our visitors rather than their numbers!

Work has progressed at a good pace at Aylestone and practice and experience have now fine-tuned the manual method for weed and reed removal from the Canal. The most productive method is to suit-up in waders, thick waterproof jacket and gauntlet gloves plus (depending on the temperature of the water) extra under layers. Armed with a well-sharpened grass hook and using the boat as a buoyancy aid, navigate to the next area to be cleared. Grass hook in-hand and using it like a knife, cut through the reeds to detached a "manageable" chunk of growth from the bank and adjacent vegetation.



Some of the visitors to the Yarkhill Open Day.



Clearing the excess reeds at Aylestone Park.



Excellent progress made clearing the excess reeds at Aylestone Park.



It's all looking neat and tidy.



Now stand back, to avoid being splashed or worse, whilst the bank contingent "accurately" despatch their grappling hooks (providing they are not standing on the rope!) into the segregated chunk. Pulling now takes place as the chunk is carefully floated across the Canal to the lower towpath bank when a significant and sustained heave is essential to get the chunk up on to the towpath. Meanwhile the 'transport section' is continually loading the accumulated piles of rubbish onto a trailer and transporting them to the spoil pile. Whilst all this is going on any spare hands tackle further work on the banks.

There have been various observations made. There has been a total lack of volunteers to undertake the cutting process. The 'bank contingent' and 'transport section' have disagreed with the cutter's interpretation of the word "*manageable*". And ensure that the water level is as low as possible before starting work ...

Passers by continue to appreciate the team's efforts, as do I, but one comment - "wouldn't a long reach excavator and a dumper truck be a lot easier?"

Oh! – I hadn't thought of that! ◆ CH



Top: Steering through the reed-free water.
Above: Tom takes a boat trip.

Anyone interested in lending a hand? Please contact
Chris High 01568 615 575



Weeds and reeds no longer obstruct the canal.

Chris High

Restoration Project

Moat Farm

By Martyn Tilford

Despite our record breaking wet Summer we have been fortunate with the weather on Tuesdays at Moat Farm enjoying some glorious days and just a couple of short rain showers.

Much of our time has been spent mowing, strimming and raking to keep those previously cleared areas under control. For those without 4x4 vehicles there was always a chance of getting stuck adjacent to the access gate so some minor land drainage work has been carried out to improve this persistently boggy spot.

On a pleasant afternoon in mid August Paul and Hilary – Moat Farm owners – hosted a very fine BBQ on site for the volunteers and guests. Paul's culinary skills were fully expressed with an excellent range of grilled delights and some of us even managed to do some more work afterwards. Thanks to Paul and Hilary – a great time was had by all.



Day begins with Paul, Ralph, Penny and Wendy sprinting to site to get started!

Our Kubota excavator has remained at Over for the Summer in order to carry out further work in connection with the Vineyard Hill project but it should be with us at Moat Farm by the time you read this. It is said that 'variety is the spice of life' so as a change from scrub bashing, mowing and strimming Ted, myself and a couple of skilled volunteers at Over have been undertaking excavator maintenance and repair tasks. Perhaps the most important was the replacement of the failed crawler track upper rollers. Both brain and brawn were required in equal measure and the job was successfully completed with the normal array of tools which included large hammers, hacksaw, car scissor jacks, metal wedges, lots of WD40 and a very fine Axminster carpet!

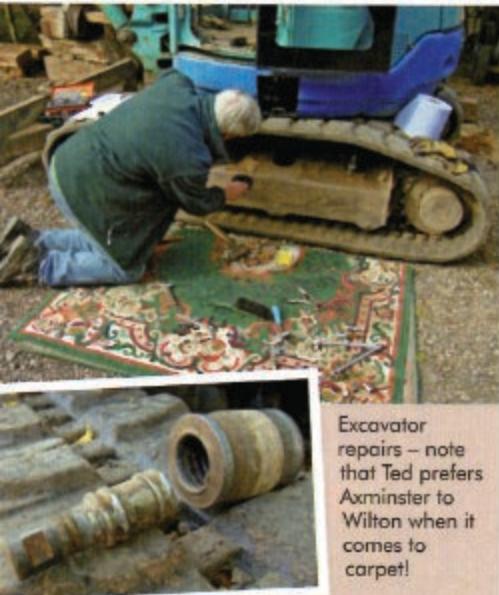
With the arrival of Autumn

BBQ in full swing, Paul is poised to serve more grilled delights

serious vegetation clearance in the canal bed has restarted and the area of very dense growth at the South end of the site became our focus. The Goat Willow trees in this length are particularly difficult to deal with. Paul and Ted have used their chainsaw felling and lopping skills and training to deliver a safe and satisfactory start. The rest of the team assisted with raking, dragging, bonfires and log stacking. Several days will be required to work through this length but I am sure an enjoyable time will be had by all!

Finally, a landmark was passed in late September with 100 volunteer days now spent here. Once again many thanks to everyone who has helped at Moat Farm and, as always, if you are thinking of joining us on Tuesdays please come along – you will be made very welcome.

◀ MT



Excavator repairs – note that Ted prefers Axminster to Wilton when it comes to carpet!

The failed crawler track roller – not a ball-bearing in sight.

PLEASE NOTE:

Public access is unavailable at present but the Trust is working on proposals to develop this.



Can you spot Alan and Paul as they survey the scene – where shall we start?



Just a few hours later, the canal bed is cleared and the logs stacked on the railway track bed behind.



Martyn Tilford

... and the day ends with 'big George' apparently asleep leaning on the mower!

Would you like to be involved? You will be made most welcome, please contact either Martyn Tilford on 01452 790 358 or Wilf Jones 01452 413 888

Restoration Project

Llanthony

By Paul Henshaw



At the time of writing, we are getting to the end of the grass cutting season which this year has seen quite prolific growth. Our trusty mower has just about coped with the demands which were made of it during the summer.

As reported in the last edition much work was carried out by volunteers renovating the vacant cottage and we are delighted to welcome our new tenants Gill and Calvin and family who moved in at the end of July.

Three new windows have been fitted at the rear of the properties. New cills have been added and the exposed brickwork has been boxed in. Work has resumed on the refurbishment of the iron railings at the front of the cottages and we are now turning our attention to carrying out tree management work around the site. This has included the removal of a large leylandii tree where the root system was in danger of undermining the foundations of one of the cottages.

PH

Would you like to join our team at Llanthony? Please call Paul Henshaw on 01684 292997



... mowing and more mowing!



Stripping off the many layers of paint.

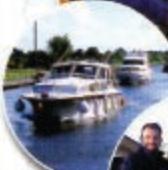


Removing the lower branches prior to felling.

Alan McBride

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Restoration Project Oxenhall

By Brian Fox

A review of our work programme for the next few months revealed that many of the items we would need were scattered around other H&G CT sites so we decided to hire a suitable vehicle.



Collecting the materials from Over.

After collecting a truck from Rotherwas, Hereford and picking up Geoff and Peter, the first stop was at Aylestone Park where Chris was waiting to help load 8 fencing panels and stands to enclose our work on the aqueduct. Then on to Canon Frome to pick up the sheer legs and planks left after completion of that job (see p.30 of edition 113). We then drove to Oxenhall to offload, snatched a quick coffee and loaded a concrete guide post and 3 large stones for Over (one of which was used to affix the Vineyard Hill opening ceremony plaque). We travelled to Over, had lunch and offloaded before picking up reinforcing mesh required for our concrete pours plus a large pipe (to replace one in a culvert at Oxenhall). A last minute addition was some fence posts and rails for delivery to Malswick and we then set off on the home run. About 10 hours, and a few aching muscles later, it was back home to a hot bath and a well earned rest!



Stripping off the soil ready for the concrete pour.

Concrete Membrane over the Aqueduct

This now allowed us, once again, to focus on the aqueduct. A start has been made on the concrete membrane to be laid over the top of the arch to strengthen it and make sure it will last for another 200 years. This will not be a quick job as there are tons of soil to be removed before we can get down to the stonework – it certainly is not a job for wheelbarrows and shovels! Robbie Hall, a new Member, lives just down the road and volunteered the use of his JCB and dumper to excavate and remove the material to a convenient location. This can't be too close to the working area as there has to be room for the concrete lorry to get close.

We plan to place the concrete in 6 pours so that our efforts can be concentrated on one at a time and the whole job will be more manageable and be executed more efficiently. The JCB and dumper were set to work and after a few hiccups the bulk of the soil covering the first area was removed. The final few inches had to be dug out by hand as we couldn't risk the heavy bucket on the JCB damaging the arch. This wasn't easy as the depth meant that it was not possible to run a barrow in and out so we resorted to the electric hoist last used when we constructed the former for the rebuild of the spandrel walls. This worked very well and it was soon time to form the shuttering to hold the concrete in place. Heavy duty plywood was cut to fit the shape of the arch supported by a framework of scaffolding poles.



The challenge of getting the lorry through the gate.

Heavy rain prior to the day of the concrete delivery meant that the hole was a foot deep in water which our generator and electric pump cleared just before the large concrete lorry arrived. The next challenge was getting the lorry through the gate at the rear of our compound but it wouldn't fit no matter how hard the driver tried. A smaller lorry was immediately dispatched and managed the gate with no trouble. The actual pour went like clockwork and 10 tons of concrete, with added reinforcing mesh, were placed in the hole in $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour (we had been allowed $\frac{3}{4}$ hour but for every minute over there would be an excess charge of £1!).

The following week the shuttering was removed and a coat of waterproofing bitumen was painted on the top of the concrete – the first pour successfully completed! We showed off our efforts on our Open Day in mid-September but the weather has been most unkind since then; it has rained every Tuesday and the heavy concrete lorry would chew up the ground and make the footpath very muddy. After we have undertaken the next 2 pours it will be necessary to remove the Bailey bridge before we can do any more.



The concrete pour.

John Chippell and Brian Fox

OXENHALL OPEN DAY

Our Open Day turned out to be bright and sunny with a steady stream of visitors walking the towpath and enjoying the home made produce on sale in the hall. There was a chance to show them the work being done to strengthen the aqueduct and to discuss the plans for restoration of the next $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of canal as far as the fire station in Newent.

Winter Maintenance

Now that the autumn is upon us thoughts turn to maintenance and management of the trees and other vegetation, the growth of which has been rampant this summer. A couple of large trees have been singled out for felling as they were looking very unhealthy and a potential danger to walkers if they shed large boughs or fall. Pollarding will continue on the willows as time permits and we shall even be re-pollarding one willow which was first tackled about 6 years ago.

Nature Watch

We have had 2 swans in residence most of the summer but no young ones, a family of moorhens appear to have used the artificial island to raise young and last week a kingfisher was spotted skimming through the lock. Blue tits have used both the nest boxes in the compound. A cluster of four Dymock plum trees has been discovered this summer on the offside bank after they produced a good crop of fruit. It would appear that one or two of the volunteers over indulged themselves and the ripe plums didn't last long! *Nature can be unpleasant when it is pouring with rain or there is a howling gale but it does offer compensations for those who keep their eyes open.*

BF

Would you like to join our team at Oxenhall? Please call Brian Fox on 01432 358628

It's not all hard work!

By Brian Fox

The Oxenhall Team, accompanied by friends and family, took a day off and went for a trip on the Monmouthshire & Brecon canal near Abergavenny – hiring 2 boats as we couldn't all get into one! Goytre Wharf was the starting point and we got as far as Llanfoist where we turned round and had lunch moored alongside the towpath.

Those who fancied a turn on the tiller were given a quick lesson but there isn't much room for mistakes on such a narrow canal and the bank got a bit too close a few times! A couple of heavy showers were ignored as we cruised under a leafy umbrella and a good time was had by all.

◆ BF



Brian Fox

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News from the friends of Gloucester

NATIONAL WATERWAYS MUSEUM

By Chris Witts

A week after the H&Q CT's Over Canal Festival another of memorable note was Gloucester Lock 200 held on Saturday 8th September. North Quay was full of colourful stalls including one from the Friends of the Waterways Museum. The Ladies Craft Group were displaying their handiwork as well as demonstrating their skills to the many people who came to look. The men, not to be outdone, were entertaining children in the art of rope making. A very successful day and hopefully more like it in the future.

At a recent fund-raising meeting the Friends agreed to concentrate on raising funds for the narrowboat Northwich. Northwich is used regularly as a floating exhibit by schoolchildren and is in need of urgent attention.

Indeed, we have now reached the end of the steam dredger HLF programme whereby during a four day period in October, schoolchildren visited the Waterways Museum to see SND No 4 in steam. They spent time in the Museum with craft work and on the dredger operating valves to start the large steam engine.

◆ CW



Photo: Chris Witts



Gloucestershire & Herefordshire IWA Branch

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Thursday, 6th December

Christmas Social

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Thursday, January 3rd

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Thursday, February 7th

Roger Holmes - Archive Waterways Films

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The Canal Wharves at Newent

By John Chappell

Behind the Fire Station on the Newent to Dymock road, on the line of the H&G Canal, is a curious area of flat land underneath an almost vertical face. This has been the subject of much speculation between Oxenhall site volunteers during coffee breaks, with the longer-standing colleagues being convinced it is the site of a wharf.

David Bick's book 'The Hereford and Gloucester Canal' states "Newent Wharf was on either side of the road to Dymock, and the basin is still visible in part, cut from solid rock behind the fire-station". Unfortunately he never quotes his sources. I have reservations about this; it did not seem likely that a wharf would be sited at this point with no direct access to the road so I decided to investigate further.

In the early part of the 19th century most of the land adjoining the Canal in Newent was owned by James de Visme, the builder of New Court, now demolished. In 1845 he decided to sell his estate and produced a detailed map and description of the property. This map was used in my article 'Shocking Ruffianism in Gloucestershire' (see edition 100, page 38). However, the crucial piece needed for this article is off the page so the missing bit is reproduced here.

On the accompanying map the road to Ledbury through Dymock is shown on the left with the winding Ell Brook forming the northern boundary of de Visme's land. The Canal goes across the centre with the 'basin', protruding like a carbuncle, just in from the left. In the sales particulars accompanying the map the various plots are given descriptive rustic names like "Dead Well Meadow", "The Two Acres", "Rough



Extract from 1845 Map of De Visme's estate.

Ground" etc. Plot 1, on the left of the map (lying between the Ell Brook and the Canal), is called "The Company's Meadow". A note states that the plot was 'given up by the Hereford and Gloucester Canal Company upwards of thirty-two years without any rent being paid. It was surrendered in part payment of the money due for Lands taken for making the Canal'. It doesn't take much imagination to see why this plot is called "The Company's Meadow" as presumably it could have reverted to them after 32 years. Today it is behind the John L. Dennis Transport depot.

The Apportionment, a list associated with the 1838 Tithe map for Newent, also names this plot (Plot 353 on the Tithe map) as "Company's Meadow".

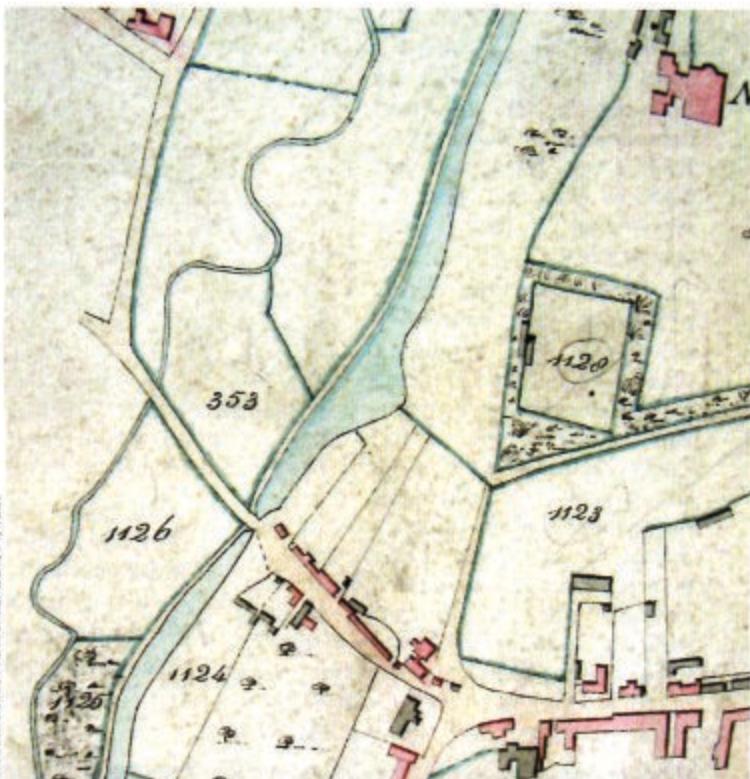
No map exists of the Canal 'as built' c1797. The only way to investigate the origins of this plot is to look at the Land Tax registers. These are quite useful in the early 19th century as they usually give a description of the land, ownership and occupancy as well as the tax to be paid. The last registers were made in 1832 after which date the arrangements

were changed by Parliament. Fewer details are given further back in time, but it is possible to follow a plot by noting the tax details.

Starting with the 1832 registers, I needed to find a plot owned by de Visme that had previously been owned by the Canal Company, and to hopefully find a description. This search proved to be successful.

These are the only entries for the Canal Company (the main wharf, under what became the Newent Station, was too small to be subject to Land Tax). The Table shows exactly what would have happened. The Canal Company was buying up land in 1795; de Visme later took an interest in the wharf and eventually acquired it to add to his estate. Perhaps he used it as his private wharf?

Gloucestershire Archive, Ref GDR/T1/126.



Section of 1838 Tithe Map for Newent.

So there we have it! Until 1832 there was a wharf each side of the road – but the 'basin' was not the location.

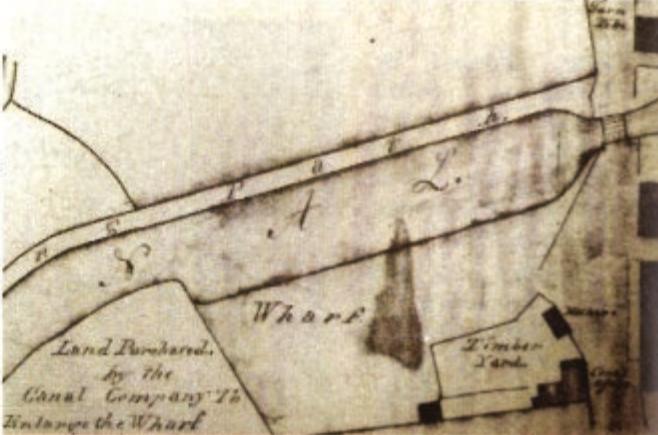
It is no coincidence that in 1832, when the Company abandoned the wharf sold to

Date	Owner	Occupier	Description	Tax
1832	de Visme	Richard Warne	Canal & Little Meadow	5/7
1826	Drew Hannah	de Visme & Canal Comp	Canal Wharf	5/7
1821	Drew Mrs	Canal Co & de Visme	Canal Wharf & Land	5/6½
1814	Drew Mrs	Canal Co & de Visme	Canal Wharf & Land	5/6½
1805	Canal Company	Themselves		5/6½
1800	Canal Company	Wm Hatchett		5/6½
1799	Canal Company late Drew			5/6½
1798	Canal Company late Drew			4/-
1795	Canal Company late Drew			4/-
1794	Drew Wid.	Philip Vowles		4/-

de Visme, they purchased a piece of land to enlarge the main wharf. This has been documented in David Bick's book (*Page 30 of the 2nd Edition*) but the plan is reproduced here for convenience.

So what was the 'basin' behind the fire station? I believe it was simply a winding hole. (The i in 'wind' is pronounced as in 'tinned'). Because the width of the Canal channel is less than the length of a full-length narrowboat it is not possible to turn such a boat in the Canal. Winding holes are typically indentations in the off-side (non-towpath side) of a canal, allowing sufficient space to turn a boat. When the Canal was built they were expecting a lot of traffic from the Newent coal fields to both Gloucester and Ledbury. Because

Gloucestershire Archive. Ref P225 N 3/3.



A map of 1832 showing land purchased by the Canal Company. Note the road crossing the canal by a 'drawbridge'.

some boats would not have made the complete trip from Ledbury to Gloucester, or Gloucester to Ledbury, there had to be a winding hole near Newent and this is it.

My thanks to Gloucestershire Archives for their co-operation and for permission to reproduce the images in this article.

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Model Boat Club

By Ted Tedaldi

The Gloucester & District Model Boat Club has enjoyed a varied summer sailing. The weather has dictated so much, but one superb Sunday saw twenty five members with thirty four craft.

However, not all our time at Over is spent boating – with three evenings in August de-weeding up to the new storm overflow. Three days later the water was almost weed free and a delight to sail.

The highlight was the Over Festival weekend and the opening of the new section. We had twenty plus boats on display each day and sailed almost continuously. We joined in the daily flotillas, even assisting Mr Maysey with two tugs and a pilot boat! Timothy West and Prunella Scales made a request to visit our stand and had a five minute chat with a number of members about their models.

Several members are into steam models. Phil is in the process of building a Mersey Steam Tug. The engine is 2½ cc capacity and, with a 2½ inch propeller, quite capable of pulling Mr Maysey! The boiler is of a large capacity giving about one hour's steaming. The model is about three feet long and twelve inch beam. Unfortunately it will be a two man lift when completed.



Above: The large Model Boat Club display at Over Festival.

Left: Phil with his steam tug.

We have sailed the canal length many times and the August Bank Holiday Monday saw us use the full length in competition. The idea was to guess how long to walk your boat from the slip to the winding hole and back. Estimates varied from sixteen to thirty minutes. The nearest was fifty seconds out on his estimate of sixteen minutes. Sailing (as in wind power) has been much enjoyed on a Wednesday with the scale sail boats a delight to watch. We have also had our fortnightly Micro Magic Racing competitions which have seen the ladies control the men!

◆ TT



A young passenger aboard Mister Maysey admires a model boat.



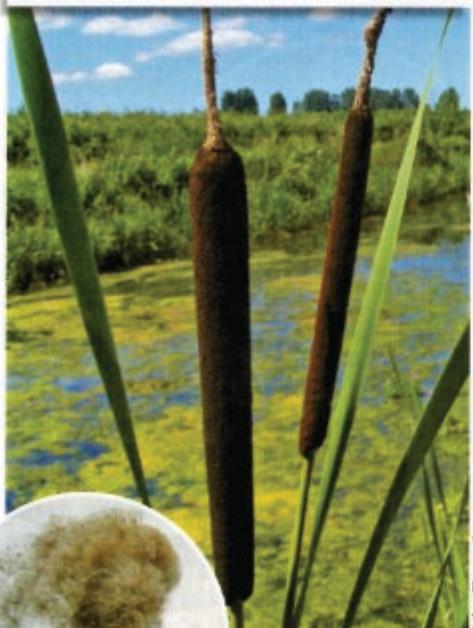
Some of the club members have fun at Over Festival.

Sandro and Ted Tedaldi

Working with Nature

The Bulrush

By John Chappell



The **bulrush** is a familiar plant, occurring where there is water. It is most at home in water about two feet deep and the edge of the Canal at Oxenhall makes an ideal habitat.

Also known as reedmace, the variety pictured here is the Common Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*) which has reed like leaves attached at the base of a stout vertical stem. At the top of the stem are numerous, tightly packed, male and female flowers forming the familiar bushy-like spike. The picture was taken after the pollen had been shed and when the male flowers had withered leaving a 'rat's tail' effect at the top. The tiny female flowers remain in the familiar sausage shaped section at the bottom and, once pollinated,

seeds are formed. Each seed is attached to a fine hair which helps with wind dispersal and when fully ripe the heads disintegrate into dense cottony fluff.

Most of the plant is edible. The rhizomes (large fleshy roots) can be harvested during winter and are highly nutritious. In spring, when young and tender, the base of the leaves can be eaten raw or cooked. Later, the sheaths can be removed from the developing flower head and cooked and eaten like corn on the cob! In some under developed countries the plant is used for water filtration as it is capable of extracting poisons, particularly arsenic, from the water. This should be borne in mind if gathering plants from polluted water but we thankfully have no such problems at Oxenhall.

There is another variety of Bulrush, the Lesser Bulrush (*Typha angustifolia*) that is rarely seen. This narrower leaved variety has its male and female flowers separated by a section of bare stem.

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Not quite ... the last page!



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Please take them to a Social Evening or other H&G CT event – or to ^{the} WHARF HOUSE. Or send them direct to:

H&G Stamps, c/o Steve Bence,
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Thank you to all present and future collectors – together we can make a difference!

Thank you.

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Visit our Websites

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www.h-g-canal.org.uk or
www.thewharthouse.co.uk lately?

Both of our websites have taken on a new look and are well worth a visit (and thank you to those involved in the improvements – and in maintaining the sites – a considerable amount of work is involved).

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Review of the... Council of Management

In view of the substantial increase in the nature and extent of the H&G CT's activities the role of the CoM is being reviewed (report, page 4 of Ed. 112 of **The Wharfinger**). Recommendations will also be made for any changes necessary so that appropriate skills, experience and management are available to ensure the success of major projects and to maintain/improve all of our 'support services' for both members and volunteers. Issues already identified include the need to greatly improve communications with Site/Team Leaders, and volunteers, and for policies and procedures to be more readily available.

The review committee (Ralph Barber, Will Frecknall, Wilf Jones, Janet Moult and Cliff Penny) have been joined by Llanthony Site Leader Paul Henshaw. Recommendations will be made to, and debated by, the CoM in the New Year.

Sailing4Disabled at Over

H&G CT welcomes Sailing4Disabled to Over Canal Basin. More news from the Club in the next edition.



Paul Bissell

We wish all of our readers
a happy, healthy Christmas
and a prosperous 2013.

COPY DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE

MONDAY 14TH JANUARY

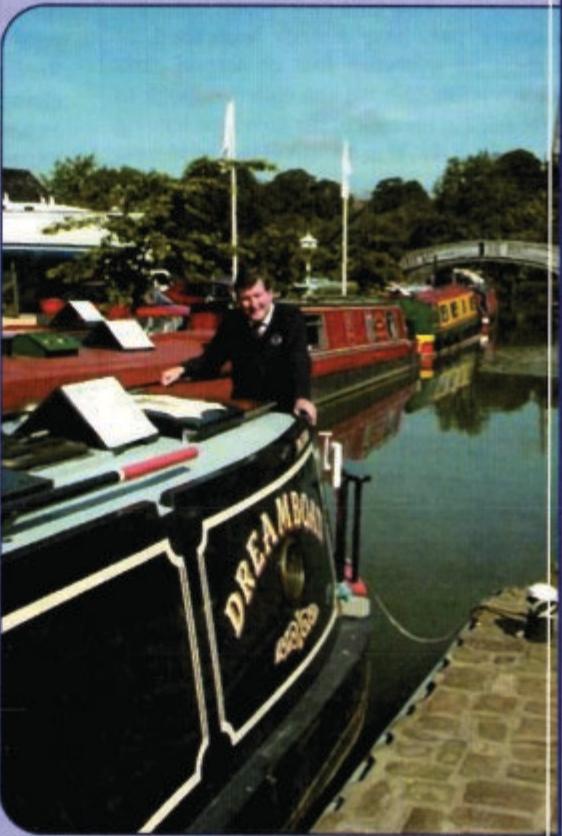
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Want to help?

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.

Contacts

Contact any of these names TODAY!

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Joint/Family	£15	£300
Senior Citizen	£7.50	£115
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The Wharfinger

The Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal

Work started in 1792 and reached Ledbury from Gloucester by 1798. In 1827 Steven Ballard was appointed to oversee completion of the canal, eventually reaching Hereford in 1845, making this one of the last major canal routes completed in Britain. The canal stretched for 34 miles from the River Severn at Gloucester, via Newent, Dymock and Ledbury to the city of Hereford, with some 22 locks and 3 tunnels. It was formally closed in 1881 to allow construction of the Ledbury to Gloucester railway which in its turn was closed 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!

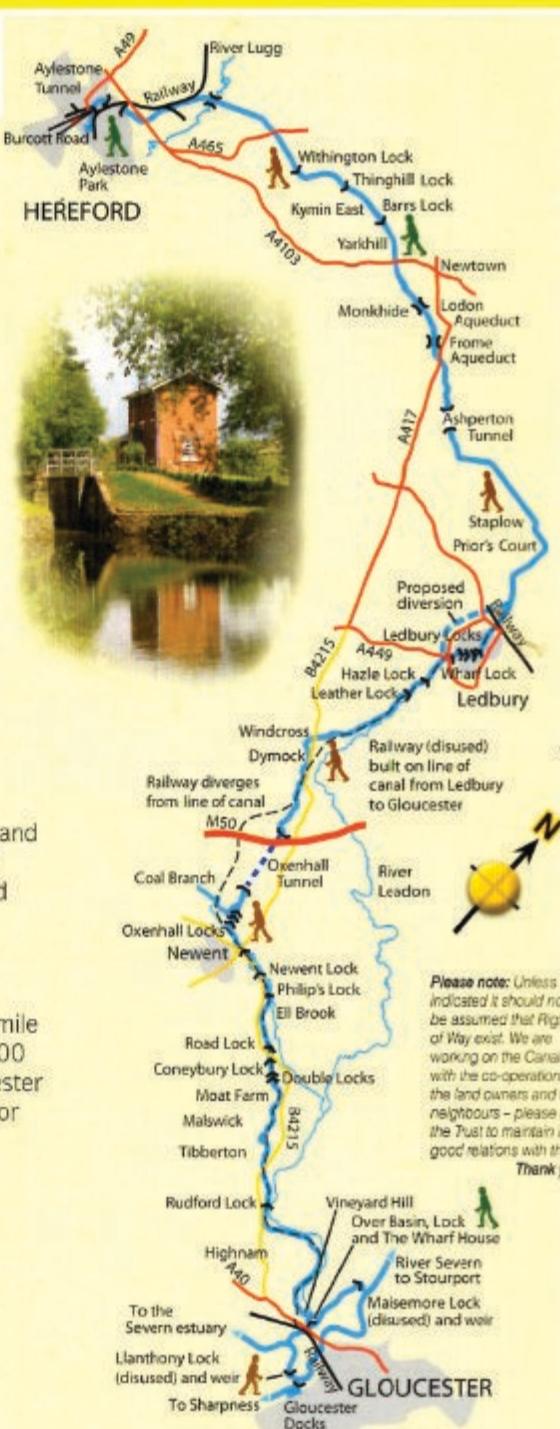
Our objective is to fully restore the 34 mile Canal, from its connection with the 2,500 mile inland waterway network at Gloucester to the centre of Hereford. We have major restoration sites in each county, which together extend to some 4 miles.

 - Canal Walk leaflet available.

 - restoration sites suitable for public access.


Gloucester Quays

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Map based on original by Martin Ludgate, Canal Boat Magazine.