

The Wharfinger

Spring 2013

HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST

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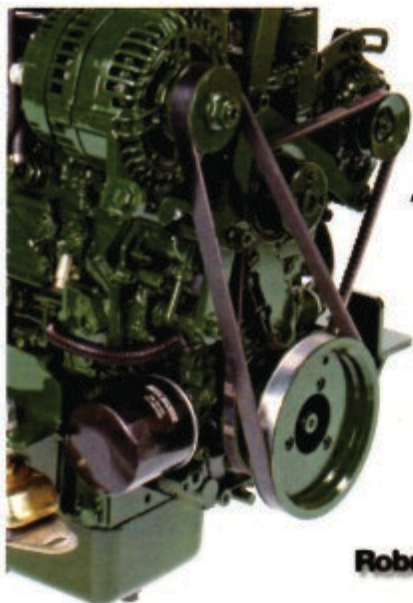
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A Different Approach

The H&G Canal Trust is recognised nationally for getting results by often taking a different approach to the many challenges (not a problem in sight!) that must be overcome in order to restore/reconstruct all 34 miles of 'our' Canal. We don't take a **different approach** just for the sake of it but where we do there is good reason for doing so.



Attitude of mind is a good starting point – H&G CT policy definitely favours the “my glass is half full” approach and that of “no problems just challenges” – however, I must be honest and say that at times the challenges tax our **different approach** almost to the limit! It may be a long and slow path that we doggedly follow (and a long and slow path is what all the other highly successful canal restorations have followed) **but we start yet another year in a justifiably optimistic mood.**

Ownership of an essential footbridge is a mixed blessing when it requires repair – and this was certainly the case of the one spanning some 82feet (25metres) over the River Severn at Llanthony. Our Llanthony team have spent much time on site over the last few years assessing the structure and concluded that there was no easy or cost effective solution to repair the footbridge without major expense and almost certainly requiring specialist contractors. Matters suddenly came to a head late last year when a government department started querying the ability of our footbridge to support an important pipeline. At this point some other well known canal restoration groups would be mounting a fund-raising campaign in the media but in true H&G CT **different approach** fashion, our Legal & Project Development Team {L&PDT} at THE WHARF HOUSE has just negotiated a long-term solution at no cost to the Canal Trust. *The full story starts on page 13.*

In the last edition we reported on the new partnership at Aylestone Park between Herefordshire Council, Hereford United Community Trust and the H&G CT to deliver all the community sports and recreation facilities originally envisaged when the site was acquired by compulsory purchase. Following the initial excavation for the new overflow weir by

Waterway Recovery Group in November our intention was that our own volunteers would then continue the work required to construct the new weir. However, we needed a detail of design that our existing volunteers did not have the resources to deliver and, combined with the appalling weather conditions, it rapidly became clear that another interpretation of our **different approach** philosophy was required. That is why the deep reinforced concrete foundations are now being constructed by a specialist contractor. This swift change in approach has been possible thanks to another new partnership, and a further expansion of the L&PDT through the assistance of another new volunteer – with the full support of his employers. *See page 23.*





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Hello again from your Chairman

As I start this in 2012 I sit in my study looking out at yet another wet day wondering if the weather will change in 2013. Part of my New Year resolution, be better prepared. No last minute documents to the editor and starting this column in 2012 is one of them.

That did not last long, it's now 2013 and the deadline is today – and it is still raining!

However the sun did come out to see the first weekend of work this year at our newest site, Kymin East. I even put on my new set of H&G PPE (*personal protective equipment*; see page 39) and joined the team – well it is a very quick walk downhill from my house. Great to see so many people over the two days helping to clear the ground and it does look like a canal already.

We continue to promote the H&G Canal in other ways as well. The Sales & Promotion team have been researching which events to attend and we could always do with more help at these events. They are very rewarding, meeting lots of like minded people and talking canals. Should you be interested, please contact Janet Moulton.

In my last column I mentioned I was doing a trip up the tidal Thames, having heard of many of you having done the trip, some of you in force 5 winds. My trip was

supposed to be rain on the way up the Thames, but we managed all the trip without rain, without police boarding us, without waves from passing passenger boats bouncing us about, in fact very calm and a great way to spend a cool day in October.

Lastly I want to thank all who have taken time to email me, write to me, talk with me while walking the Canal, or called me with your thoughts, about how the COM and the overall Canal Trust should move forward. A number of these points have already been discussed with the COM and will evolve our current thinking, and others are for the longer term. Discussed already at the last COM and will be developed over future COM meetings is how to make the AGM this year more informative on the previous year's work and giving you information on plans for the coming year.

Hope to see you along the Canal sometime.

◀ RB



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NEW Partnership at Aylestone Park

By David Penny

As briefly mentioned in the Editorial the delivery of the project on this site has now moved to one that is contract led to ensure that we can deliver what is now required at this key weir location.

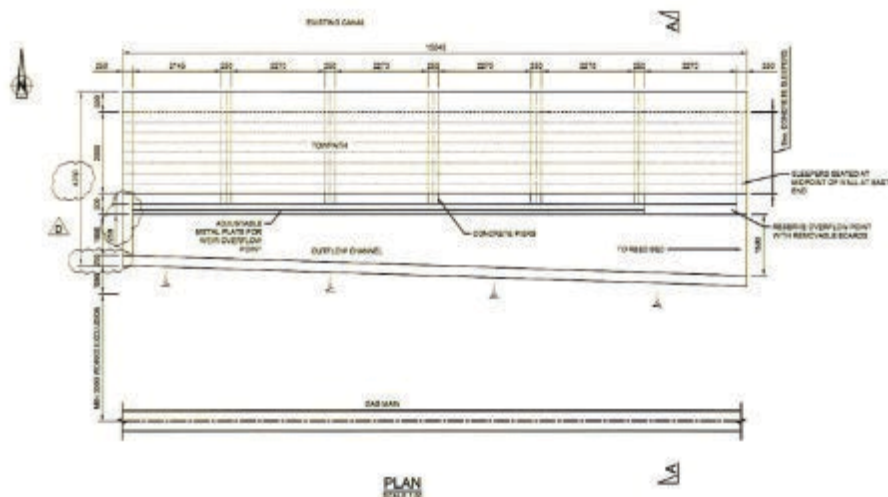
Firstly perhaps the background to the scheme....this is one of two versions of the H&G model overflow weir design.

The weir is based on a similar principle to one recently constructed by us at Over, the Aylestone version being the alternative design with full depth draw-off under the towpath to considerably increase hydraulic efficiency and permit boats to moor across the structure thus maximising use of the site at what will be a popular visitor mooring. This design ensures there is no potential for the structure to fail to perform the crucial function for surface water discharge purposes at all times.

The face fronting the Canal goes to below water level to minimise floating debris

passing under the towpath and getting caught on the weir. This will ease and add to the safety of future maintenance, as well as ensuring blockages and debris are prevented so as to maintain consistent hydraulic performance. The adjustable weir plate gives the ability to adjust the height of the weir and to have different sections at different heights to control the water level more efficiently. A section of angle on top of the concrete weir acts as the weir crest. This not only enhances the hydraulic efficiency but also ensures that there is no wide crest to the weir which can be tempting for children to 'dare' to run along! One section is provided with deeper 'stop planks' to permit partial draining of the Canal so as to facilitate easy adjustment of the adjoining weir plates. The final towpath over the structure will be surfaced to match the other paths at Aylestone.

A key action to progress the project at the end of last year was a re-appraisal of the original design concept. This essentially remained unaltered but with a change in construction method and, most crucially, the working up of detailed designs. It was no small task to deliver this on a reasonably tight deadline, including the necessary structural calculations and detailed



construction drawings, so that the work could proceed as soon as the appalling weather conditions permitted. As reported on p.23 we are very pleased to welcome to our team volunteer **Thomas Ashworth of Tony Gee & Partners**, a world respected firm of Structural Engineers in Gloucestershire, and this presented the ideal first project. *We greatly appreciate the support of Tony Gee & Partners in both this and a number other projects – thank you.*

Having produced full construction drawings we now needed to be able to ensure, once we actually started construction, that it would be completed relatively quickly. **Chambers Builders of Gloucester** had already been involved undertaking work at **THE WHARF HOUSE** after the internal burst pipe last September (having first been recommended by our contacts at **Gloucester Quays** and **Keyway**) and undertake works of all scales in a diverse range of industries. It actually turned out that the owner of the Company was a customer of **THE WHARF HOUSE** and an ongoing partnership has rapidly evolved – they were obvious candidates to approach in respect of the work at Aylestone Park. *Add in the offer to undertake the work at highly preferential rates and all the H&G CT boxes were ticked!* Chambers are therefore

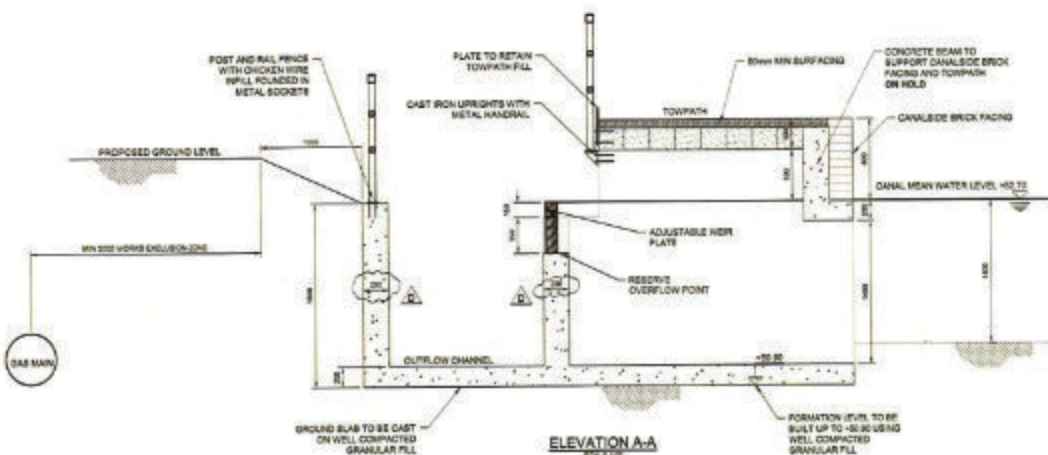
the Principal Contractor delivering the reinforced concrete element of the project. The weir will act as a crucial structure in the long term surface water management of both Hereford City and the Hereford pound of the H&G Canal.

By early spring we will have submitted the joint planning application with **Hereford United Community Trust** for the levelling of the lower part of the Park and the construction of the new sports and recreation facilities. The considerable reed bed and overflow channel that the weir will discharge into will form another phase later this year. This will include the selective widening of the Canal at Aylestone Park to meet modern requirements – *more in the next edition of The Wharfinger.*



Want to get involved?

Want to get involved constructing the rest of this important overflow and the discharge channel? Brian Fox, 01432 358628, would welcome both existing and new volunteers, both to maintain the Aylestone site this summer and to undertake the extensive landscaping of the new overflow channel and reed beds.



NEW SITE at **Kymin East**

Part of the **Withington Project**

By Cliff Penny and Wilf Jones

At the same time as we announced this new site in the last edition of **The Wharfinger** we reported that the **Waterway Recovery Group** (part of the **Inland Waterways Association**) would be holding their annual National Reunion Weekend with us to start work here during the second week of November. No one can say that when we have the necessary approvals in place that we waste time getting started!



Before work started the trees to be removed were identified with red or white marks.



The **WRGies**
... came again!



Before the sun could break through the mist the WRGies arrived.

So just as the last edition was being printed over 100 WRGies arrived, from all over the country, to commence the clearance of a defined line of the Canal from a point close to the site of Barr's Lock to the road crossing some 1,000 yards to the north-west. The precise details of the work had been agreed during earlier planning meetings with the landowner JJ' Clews, H&G CT and the WRG site leaders and specialist volunteers from the WRG Forestry Team. WRG Forestry came in a day ahead of everyone else to make a start and to ensure that the site was a safe workplace for everyone over the weekend.

This concentrated effort of organisation and 'personpower' was a huge success with many compliments at the end. Over 800 yards of the Canal were well on the way to being cleared in accordance with the principles "minimum intervention and maximum retention of trees" and "from the adjoining fields, the site will look much as it did before".

It was not all tree cutting and 'scrub bashing' however, as over 150 trees were planted on this section during the weekend including one by our Withington Project Chairman Wilf Jones and our new Conservation Advisor (and owner of this section) JJ' Clews.

Our thanks to everyone who was involved in any way, especially all the WRGies who just managed to find a space to sleep on the floor of Bartestree and Yarkhill Village Halls and ate all their meals in a not so centrally heated marquee!



Kymin continues →



Bonfires were carefully located.



The volunteers worked in five teams.



Trained chainsaw volunteers were kept busy.

Chris Byrns



About a quarter of the people who took part.

**waterway
recovery
group**

Commemorative Tree Planting



Landowners, JJ Clews and her father, planted commemorative trees, followed by WRG and the H&G CT.

H&G CT volunteers continued!

Early in January we organised an H&G volunteer week-end to continue the task. WRG in November had been split into 5 teams and some had not quite completed their section and, in addition, we have the final 200 yards or so to clear well before the nesting season. The volunteer response was great, with over fifty volunteer 'man days' (which included at least 6 'woman days') from all our H&G sites. Magnificent work cleared the final stretch. **My thanks to one and all.**

The weather was kind to us; the photos show what a difference a weekend can make! We were also well fed by an anonymous donor on Sunday morning with hot bacon butties, eaten with grateful thanks by all. The Yarkhill team are now progressively cutting and stacking the felled logs and removing the majority of tree stumps during their 'away days' from the adjacent length.

By the time you read this we hope to have undertaken a second weekend of work to complete the tidying of the whole length in preparation for surveying to establish exactly what work is required so that, hopefully later in the year, we can undertake excavation of this length of the Canal.

◀ WJ



More chainsawing and more bonfires.



The H&G Volunteers continued with the work to clear the final stretch and by the end of the weekend the first phase of clearance had been completed.

Two photos far right show the site in sunshine then just a week later – SNOW!



Chris Blayden and Ralph Barber

Restoration Project

Yarkhill

By Chris High

With the exception of the holiday period, and wet weather, the team is now back at Yarkhill following its summer "camp" at Aylestone.

Work commenced with vegetation management around the site of Barrs Lock, and that end of the Yarkhill section of the Canal, followed by the careful burning of accumulated rubbish.

The Woodland Trust advised us at the end of October that our application for a Jubilee Wildlife Tree Pack, submitted by Bernard in February 2012, had been successful and that we were to plan for its delivery, and subsequent planting, in early November. Site preparation took place, the

trees were delivered and some 360 trees were planted – with a further 60 trees being made available to other H&G CT sites.

The pack consisted of hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, rowan, birch and oak. With the additional planting of 450 hawthorn whips, and a few home grown horse chestnut and crab apple trees a couple of years ago, this brings our total to an impressive 820 trees! The team ended the year with a walk from Aylestone into Hereford, exploring the remains of the route of the Canal and viewing its proposed future route from public vantage points, before taking substantial refreshments in Hereford.

The New Year saw the team at the Barrs Lock end of the new Kymin East stretch removing previously cut logs and digging and pulling stumps. Yes, it was wet and muddy! The team also joined other H&G CT volunteers the following weekend clearing brush from the Kymin Lane end.  CH

Planting gets off to a good start!

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

Chris High

Restoration Project Llanthony

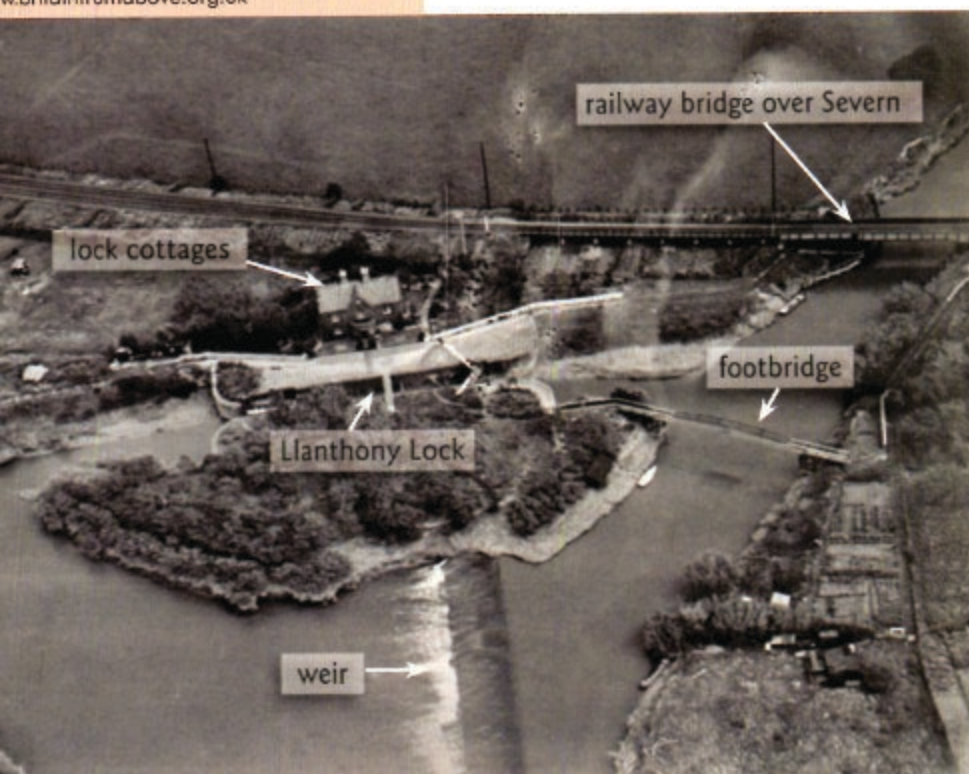
by David Penny and Paul Henshaw

Regular readers will know that in 2008, thanks to the legacy of Beth Gadesden, H&G CT purchased the freehold of Llanthony Lock and Lock Cottages from former British Waterways. Apart from the Lock and Lock Cottages we also acquired part of Alney Island and some land on the Gloucester bank – together with a section of the eastern parting channel) of the River Sever.

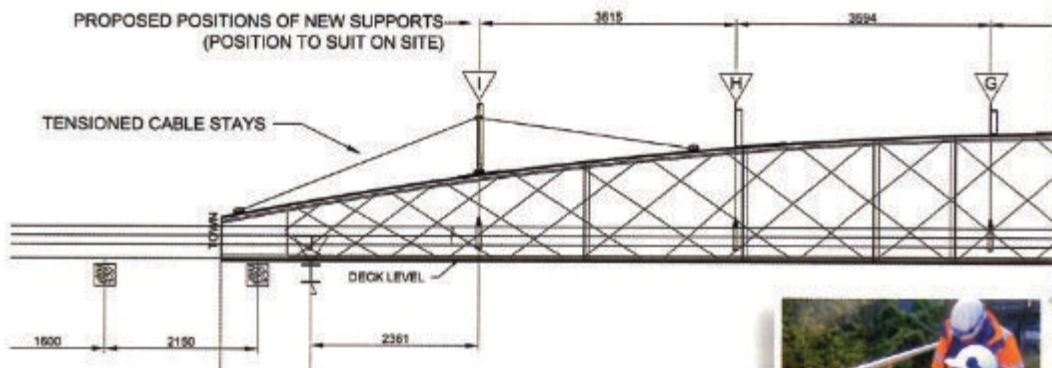
Llanthony Lock four years after its closure in September 1928. Reproduced under Licence. Part of the 'Britain from above' collection: www.britainfromabove.org.uk

As part of the Llanthony site we own the former Great Western Railway (GWR) footbridge spanning the river Sever which acts as the crucial pedestrian access to the cottages. We have always been aware of the poor condition of parts of the structure and the Llanthony team have spent much time looking at ways to refurbish it – there was no easy solution, but we factored our liability into the price of the site when negotiating the overall purchase.

The bridge actually has a much longer history than may be appreciated as it came to the site second hand from the GWR and would have originally been a much wider structure capable of taking much more than just foot traffic. It is this considerable 'over engineering' for its current use that has enabled it to survive so long without major works. →



© English Heritage (Aerials Collection)



Over the last year the H&G CT Legal & Project Development Team {L&PDT} had several approaches from, and discussions with, the Government Pipeline Agency who are responsible for the Government Pipeline and Storage System {GPSS}. A crucial pipeline, forming part of the GPSS system, is carried by the footbridge over the River Severn. As issues of liability were raised by our legal team at THE WHARF HOUSE all went quiet, until a few weeks before the Agency desperately wished to undertake work to ensure that our footbridge was able to continue to support the pipeline.

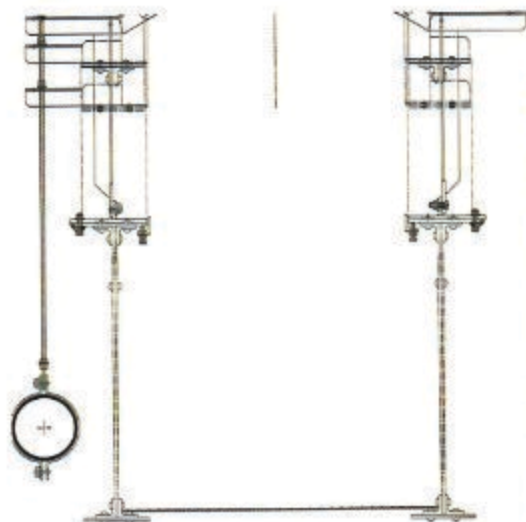
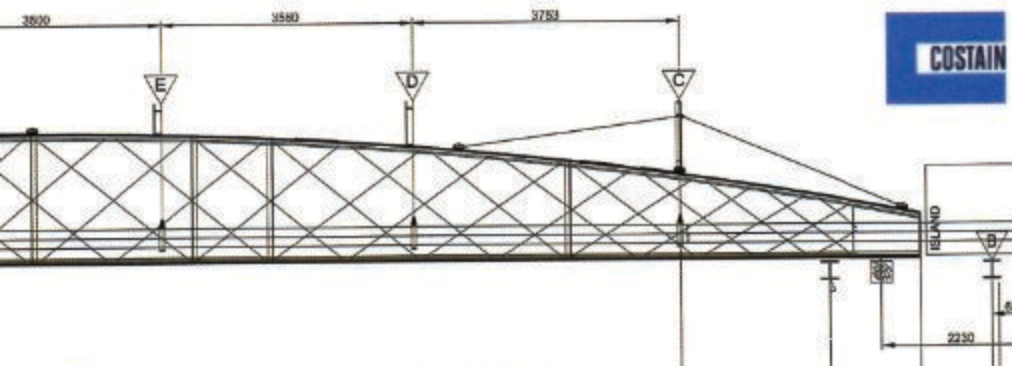
Over the course of a couple of weeks late last year, designs were produced, refined and approved by our L&PDT for the bridge to be enhanced in order for it to continue to carry the pipe safely; obviously we wished to also ensure that the bridge continued to serve our purpose for access. In literally last minute negotiations (whilst the contractor's team stood waiting on site to be authorised to commence work!) legal liability for maintaining the structure – to the same functional and 'fit for purpose' state you see it in today (both to support the pipeline over the River and for pedestrian access to our site) was transferred from the Canal Trust to the Government Pipeline Agency. This legal transfer of responsibility for the bridge was at no cost whatsoever to the H&G CT. By ensuring that we have no future maintenance costs for this bridge a considerable ongoing liability has been removed from the H&G Canal Trust whilst all our rights of use remain.

GPSS engineers conducted a detailed examination of the footbridge.
Below: New cross members in place.



Right: Old overhead cross members removed.





Paul Henshaw takes up the story of activity on the footbridge – in addition to the normal work elsewhere at Llanthony by our volunteers . .

As David has explained, during the autumn Consultants and specialist contractors working for the Government Pipeline and Storage System (GPSS) conducted a detailed examination of the footbridge. This followed several earlier visits – probably partly triggered by our sign “no more than 4 people at a time on the bridge” – which hinted at our assessment of the structure!

The tests revealed some structural weakness in the overhead cross members



The new pipeline support system.



Tree surgeons taking down the leylandii tree (as reported in the last edition).

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

which tie the main lattice girder spans. If left there was the potential for strong winds to cause these to topple sideways, destroying the structure! The clamps which secured the pipeline to the bridge were also found to be defective. During a week of intense specialist contractor activity new cross members were fabricated to replace the old ones together with new pipeline supports. A system of tensioned cables was also installed to provide additional rigidity to the whole structure. *Thanks to the transfer of responsibility for maintenance of this footbridge immediately before work commenced all this substantial engineering work [a significant 5 figure cost] was carried out at no cost to the H&G CT.*

Alongside this short lived but crucial flurry of third party activity the volunteers have continued with further progress in clearing the river banks, but the poor autumn weather and high river levels have led to operations being temporarily suspended. On one occasion we even had our carefully positioned bonfire swept away by an abnormally high flood tide!

Thanks to the work of our team the site continues to improve with every season as it has been brought back into proper management to correct decades of inactivity when, as it did not form part of the current navigation, it was effectively abandoned. Now we have a most attractive site, crucial to the future connection of the H&G Canal to the inland waterways network and (thanks to all the skills of our volunteers in maintaining and enhancing the Cottages), our investment in the site generates a return of some 7.5% a year for the H&G CT.

◀ PH



High water levels on the flood plain ...



and at the entrance to the Llanthony Lock.

Alan McBride

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Restoration Project

Oxenhall

By Brian Fox

Work has continued apace on preparing the ground for laying the concrete membrane over the aqueduct. As reported last time the first pour of concrete went reasonably well but that left us 2 more pours to complete before the anticipated winter weather was upon us.



Laying out the red carpet for a 20 ton lorry!

We calculated that it would be more efficient to remove the soil from the remaining 2 sections using an excavator capable of swinging a full 360° as this would enable the excavated material to be placed to the rear rather than into a dumper waiting to the side. This worked very well and the remaining 10 tons or so were soon removed leaving just a small amount to be scraped off the top of the arch by hand using trowels and brushes.

What we hadn't planned for was the extremely wet weather which made the approach to the aqueduct very boggy and difficult for a lorry with a total weight in excess of 20 tons. The lorry driver actually refused to come on a couple of occasions for fear of getting his lorry stuck. Another day was lost because the road at Highnam was flooded and he couldn't get through and yet another Tuesday was lost because it was too frosty to lay concrete. This called for drastic measures so we put the red carpet out for the lorry – literally! There were also a few bits of pink and blue but in all about 40 metres of carpet were laid out across the wet ground and it did the job and was much cheaper than using Terram. The lorry was able to get in and out twice to complete the concreting on the last Tuesday before Christmas so we can now relax. I didn't ask Richard, who supplied the carpet,

where it came from (or if it was Wilton or Axminster? – see page 27 of the last edition – Ed.) but he could be walking around on bare floorboards at home for all I know! There is still the other half of the aqueduct to do but that can wait until the warmer weather and requires the removal of the Bailey bridge first.

Still going strong!

Back in 1992 the H&G CT opened a fund to purchase various items of plant which were required for our canal restoration work. Donations didn't exactly flood in but sufficient was raised to purchase a small dumper, a tipping trailer and a tractor with front bucket. Other items were purchased over the years, particularly when work started at Over, and these included a 20 ton dumper and large 360° excavators. Since then we have developed a policy of not owning heavy plant as we have found it is more efficient and cost effective to hire it in as required. The one exception to this rule is our tractor which is still going strong at Oxenhall and has been worth its weight in gold. The tipping trailer is still in the compound here but now only used as a receptacle for scrap metal. Last year the tractor developed a serious leak in the cooling system and a faulty water pump was diagnosed. Ian, our resident mechanic,

with help from Geoff, volunteered to undertake the necessary repairs and attend to a couple of other defects at the same time. We now have a renovated tractor with new pump, hoses and drive belt plus a new radiator, new brake shoes and linkages well lubricated. So a vehicle which was built in 1975, and qualifies for no tax, should see us through a few more years with a bit of luck and careful nurturing!

Winter tidy-up

Now that winter is upon us we have taken the opportunity to cut and burn overgrown vegetation along the towpath. In our compound a large area which used to be rampant brambles has been cleared to reveal ground which will now be levelled, planted with some new trees and seeded with grass so that it can easily be maintained in future. Another thing to keep tidy is the large pile of stone, the remnants of an old railway bridge in Herefordshire, which was



Preparing the ground for laying the concrete membrane over the aqueduct.

kindly donated to us by HCC. It proved invaluable in completing the rebuilding of the lock, and then the aqueduct, and there is sufficient left to face a bridge or possibly a lock – so we shall keep it safe and tidy until there is an opportunity to recycle it in yet another H&G Canal structure. **BF**

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

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



March 19th

Tony Condor:

Gloucester Docks – then and now

The changes over the years of a near neighbour.

April 16th

Gareth Davies:

A short history of Herefordshire railways

A railway talk this year stays closer to home

May 21st

Robert Nash:

Archiving the Rhodes Thomas collection of slides

PLEASE come along and help identify those taken of the H & G in the 60's and 70's

June 18th

Members' Midsummer Miscellany

Films, slides, quiz, talks – if you would like to contribute please contact Janet

July 16th

Annual General Meeting

Will start at 7.30pm prompt. After the formal AGM there will be a new look at our progress and the way forward. Everyone welcome.

THE JANUARY TALK

Report by Maggie Jones

Dick Skeet is well known for his witty and informative talks, and so it was not a surprise that the first meeting of 2013 was very well attended.

Dick did not let us down! Talking about **Forgotten Waterways** he gave a very interesting insight into a number of waterways both near and far that, like parts of our own canal, have only fragments of their industrial past still in existence.

Dick spoke of their history and original purpose and the way and reason that each had fallen into disrepair.

Without an enthusiastic restoration group like our own H&G CT, these waterways will remain totally hidden in history. It is good that Dick has researched a few of them so they could be remembered once more.

Thank you Dick, I enjoyed it very much.

◆ MJ

As reported in the last edition of **The Wharfinger**, the Grand Holiday Draw 2012 was a huge success raising **£3,584**, some £800 in excess of our previous record! Let's make this year even better!

GRAND HOLIDAY DRAW 2013

Friends and colleagues will be eager for a great holiday for just £1!

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GRAND HOLIDAY DRAW 2013

1ST PRIZE	NARROW BOAT HOLIDAY for FOUR Donated by Black Prince Holidays ONE WEEK PRIOR TO 31/5/14 excluding Bank Holidays
2ND PRIZE	ONE DAY'S BOAT HIRE on the Mon and Breck Canal. To be taken prior to 31/5/14 - excluding Bank Holidays. Donated by Beacon Park Boats
3RD PRIZE	ONE NIGHT DINNER, BED & BREAKFAST for TWO at THE WHARF HOUSE , Over, Gloucester.

Promoter: Mrs E. Connors, 18 St. Ethelbert Close, Sutton St. Nicholas, Hereford, HR1 3SF
Prizes to be drawn at the September Social at Royal Oak, Much Marcle on September 17th 2013. Registered under the Gambling Act 2005.

TICKETS £1 each

Once again this year we have some great prizes!

Again this year, due to popular request, we have sent you two books of tickets to sell to family and friends. More books can be sent to you if required - please contact Janet Moulton - (see inside back cover).

This year the prizes are to be drawn at the Social Evening at The Royal Oak, Much Marcle, on 17th September 2013. Our grateful thanks to **Black Prince Holidays**, **Beacon Park Boats** and **THE WHARF HOUSE** for donating the Holiday prizes - so every pound raised is a pound towards restoration of the Canal.

We appreciate that some recipients are not prepared to buy or sell draw tickets -

we apologise but we do not have the resources to be selective in who receives tickets. There is no obligation to return unsold tickets. In order to save costs we have not included tickets in copies of **The Wharfinger** sent to Councillors, Local Authorities etc. If you wish to support us please contact Janet Moulton on 01432 264 366 and she will be delighted to send you some tickets.

Thank you.

We have a few copies left of Nigel Bailey's 70 page illustrated booklet "**Over & Over Again**", which chronicles 750 years of change at Over, at the special price of £5 including P+P available by mail order* only.

(*Mail order details - please see inside back cover)

Historic Vineyard Hill - see page 32



H&G Canal Sales & Promotion

Outings 2013 by Janet Moul

We expect to attend about ten events this year. Some will be covered by the Gloucester group, others mainly from Hereford.

It is unlikely that we will attend the National this year which is being held at Watford July 19-21 2013. The move from the August Bank Holiday has meant we do not have any "old hands" available.

May 4-6	Droitwich
May 25-27	Crick Boat Show
May 25-27	Tall Ships, Gloucester
June 8-9	Hellens Garden Festival
June 29-30	Braunston Boat Rally
July	Sutton Fete
August 4	Herefordshire Country Fair
Aug 31- Sep 1	Over Open Weekend
Sep 7	Alfrick Show
Nov 9	Winter Bazaar



Chris Byrne

If you know of any events – especially along the line of canal – please let me know as we may be able to attend with more help from members. We welcome additional volunteers to help us at these interesting events. Why not have a good day out with the H&G CT? We always do our utmost to ensure that you have some time to look around (and your admission to the event will be free!).

Please contact Janet Moul (see inside back cover for Contact details) to discuss where and when you can get involved.

Thank you. ♦ JM

Formal Notice: 2013 Annual General Meeting

**To be held at 7.30pm,
Tues, 16th July, 2013
at the Royal Oak, Much Marcle.**

This is the formal notice of the 2013 AGM in order to give Members the opportunity to make a note in their diary; this year the AGM will be held on Tuesday 16th July. The Agenda and Annual Report will be in the next edition of **The Wharfinger**.

In accordance with the H&G CT's Articles and Memorandum of Association those Members of the Council of Management who are retiring on rotation but offering themselves for re-election do not require to be formally nominated to serve an additional term. However, new nominations to serve on the Council of Management are

welcomed and have to be made in writing, in a prescribed form. Nomination forms are available from Liz Connors [see Contacts on inside back cover] to whom they should be returned to arrive not less than 7 days nor more than 28 days prior to 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 also available from Liz Connors and must be completed, signed and returned to her at least 48 hours prior to the commencement of the AGM.

Thank you.

NEW Improved AGM!

Further details next time.

News from the Legal & Project Development Team at THE WHARF HOUSE

By David Penny

*A good start might be to explain that the L&PDT is our Legal and Project Development Team, based at THE WHARF HOUSE at Over Canal Basin. Those who study the inside front cover of **The Wharfinger** will have seen a change in title emerging over the past few years to better reflect the work (and abilities!) of our expanding team.*

We are very pleased to be able to confirm that Peel Holdings (part of the Peel Group and owners of Gloucester Quays) have again agreed to sponsor our H&G Canal Festival at Over in September as well as

contributing towards the employment costs of our L&PDT.

Following a presentation to members of the Institution of Civil Engineers in Gloucestershire on the diverse work in hand and the commercial strategy of the L&PDT, we are very pleased to report that Thomas Ashworth of Tony Gee & Partners agreed to join our team as a volunteer Engineer helping to take projects forward. Tony Gee & Partners have an enviable reputation worldwide including such appropriate projects as the Falkirk Wheel, and we are very grateful for their 'back office' support in providing resources and technical expertise to assist Thomas in providing this crucial expertise to the H&G Canal Trust. Thank you.

We are also pleased to welcome Katie Purton to the L&PDT in her full time role helping to take forward the full breadth of Legal and Project Development schemes currently being advanced.

♦♦ DRP

Gloucester Quays

Home & Garden Party

2013

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Above: The drainage trench is dug to the bollard.

Right: Ivor and Bob finish off the relaying of the paving.



Above: Andy tackles Bosley's hydraulic fluid leak.

Below: The floor of the reed boat is removed.



Restoration Project

Over Basin

Incorporating Vineyard Hill

By Ted Beagles and Chris Byrne

With the Vineyard Hill opening behind us and all tidied up, we have been able to concentrate on the backlog of general work that has built up elsewhere at Over.

A lot of time has been spent around the entrance area of late. We have dug up part of the block paving roadway yet again – this time to put in additional drainage for the rising bollard cavity, which had been full of water all through the 'summer'. Amazingly, thanks to the skills that we have developed over the years with this type of paving, we succeeded in getting all the blocks back down without needing large scale relaying of the whole area.

"I can't believe that it has finally happened" said David when he saw the completed ornamental pillars which we have built (brickwork courtesy of Bob and Ivor) on either side of the main site entrance roadway. The hinge blocks and capping stones were salvaged from the old hospital main entrance when it was demolished in 1998; they have been stored on site ever since, as part of David's 'Vision' for the completed site.

The work on restoration of the heritage boats continues, and has now moved into the interiors. Cabin refurbishment has begun, although the discovery of asbestos has slowed down progress somewhat. Bilge pumps are being fitted to all the boats. Andy and the mechanical team are battling with a hydraulic fluid leak on Bosley's motor. In addition we have started to refurbish the better of our two reed cutting boats, as a work boat, and also from time to time as a floating exhibition with all the cutting gear in place.



One of the two brick columns recently completed at the entrance to Over Basin.

Lloyds Banking Group

We were fortunate to have a group of about 24 employees from the Products Business Risk Team of **Lloyds Banking Group** on site in October, who came to do a day's voluntary work for us. They spent a very productive day planting and mulching some 500 trees and shrubs along the towpath bank of Vineyard Hill, and on the slope of the hill itself. *Many thanks to all of you.*

Our sincere thanks to **Lloyds Banking Group** for the subsequent donation of £300 towards the costs of the trees that they planted.



Employees of the Lloyds Banking Group plant trees at Vineyard Hill.



The Floods

The flooding during November/December has had a significant impact at Over. Whilst ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE was designed with the ground floor over a metre above the highest recorded flood level, much of our site is lower. We started with some splendid vistas of the Canal and the flooded Leaden Valley merging together as flood water flowed into the Canal via the new overflow weir. The final level was a matter of inches below the towpath bank level (which some previous floods have overtopped). However this was bad news for the saplings which were planted in October on the back slope of the bank, some of which were lost due to debris. On the River Severn side of the site, the whole of the gravel surfacing of the roadway was scoured away by flood water flowing over the lowest part of the site.



Above: it is hard to tell which is canal and which is flood?

Left: flood waters fill the canal through the overflow weir.



Left: Flood waters almost top the towpath along Vineyard Hill.

Above: By the River Severn the roadway was scoured away by flood water.

Mister Maysey

The most serious effect of the atrocious weather for us was the sinking of our trip boat, Mr Maysey. She had sat quietly partially beached on the slipway since September but on the 29th December she sank rapidly after heavy rain and high winds. When we arrived to investigate on the same day the bilge pump was still running, valiantly pumping away to no avail!

We returned after the Christmas break, on the 2 January, and had a most interesting day re-floating her and pulling her up the slipway on wooden rollers. Initially we started pumping out to re-float her using our submersible pumps as the demonstrator SPP 6" pump that is usually on site for our use (see "NOT taken For Granted!" – page 14 of Ed 113) was temporarily back with the

company. Our much smaller pumps were managing fine until a window failed due to the water pressure! A piece of plywood was used to make a temporary repair to the window and Neil Jones rapidly brought the 6" SPP pump back to Over. The high capacity and efficiency of this pump meant Mister Maysey was swiftly re-floated. Yet again thank you Neil and SPP Pumps Ltd.

Once afloat it was obvious that we have a serious leak in the hull and that we needed to get her out of the water immediately, so there was no alternative but to pull her up the slipway at once. We have now started a thorough examination of the whole of the hull to determine the best long-term solution.

There is always something for us to do at Over!

◆ TB

Below and right: Mister Maysey is pumped out with the 6" SPP pump.





Top: Mister Maysey is brought up the slipway on wooden rollers.

Above: Peter removes the decking plates.

Christmas party

On the last Wednesday before Christmas all the Over volunteers and partners were joined by the teams from Llanthony and Moat Farm for Christmas lunch at a nearby Carvery. Our thanks to Pat and Belinda, who did an excellent job in organising everything. *All we had to do was turn up and enjoy ourselves!*



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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&C.T

Simon Hayward: 01452 700384, Fax 01452 700740
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Restoration Project Moat Farm

By Martyn Tilford

Late February marked the first birthday of the Moat Farm site. We have now experienced a full four seasons and the changes they bring.

As reported in previous editions much of our work has been clearing vegetation which has enabled us to uncover a section of 'lost' canal and to get a feel for the work required for full restoration. Whilst vegetation management will continue to be a feature in our list of activities the variety of tasks undertaken will broaden as we work on the site.

New faces are always welcome and in November we were joined by seven 'volunteers' from Ordnance Survey who spent an enjoyable day scrub bashing and tending bonfires. *Many thanks to Dom, Phil, Martin, Andy, Dick, Simon and Peter for getting 'stuck in' and*

helping the Moat Farm team. New regular volunteer Robert joined us in December and will bring some new skills to complement those of the existing volunteers.

Paul ready with chainsaw whilst I evaluate a new style hat for my lunch breaks.



A recent view north from the railway bridge. Mid picture the canal bed can be seen diverging to the left of the track bed.

A recent view ...



The same view when we first arrived last February.

... February



Visiting volunteers from Ordnance Survey enjoy lunch in our 'staff restaurant' with regulars Ralph, Penny & Alan.

Martyn Tilford / Alan McBride

Nature Watch

Back in November the arrival of fieldfares indicated that winter would soon be upon us. The multitude of berries available would keep them fed and happy for a while. Our resident buzzards continue to watch over us although less vocal than in the spring and summer. One afternoon in mid December, whilst planting a small tree, I had the feeling I was being watched. I thought nothing of the couple of field voles that scurried away as I prepared the planting hole. As I stood back to admire my horticultural handiwork my observer revealed itself. Just a few yards away a barn owl flew from its roost, in an ivy clad hawthorn tree, temporarily snagging its wing on a thorny rose briar before silently departing along the line of the canal. It was seen again the following afternoon. The grassy margins of the old railway track bed are a haven for voles, something we are keen to preserve for the benefit of these beautiful crepuscular hunters.

In order to maintain and enhance biodiversity Alan has been busy on a couple of projects. The provision of rotting log piles is seen as a valuable addition; several now exist and more will be created. These, together with hand crafted hanging bug boxes and drilled log houses, will offer food and shelter for a variety of bugs and insects.



Enhancing biodiversity. A hand crafted bug box and drilled log house.



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Tree Planting

An inevitable consequence of restoring a long abandoned canal is the felling and removal of unwanted trees that have grown in the bed or bank of the canal and on the towpath. At Moat Farm, and other locations, it is important that these are replaced with a range of indigenous trees in suitable locations. Through the winter some 70 trees have been planted which include alder, oak, wild cherry, silver birch, rowan and spindle. Several of these species are particularly supportive of large insect populations. Further tree planting will be undertaken as the restoration process continues.



George & Alan planting an alder tree.



Our excavator gets to grips with a preliminary cross section at the site of the Double Lock.

Surveying and Setting Out

It goes without saying that levels are critical when it comes to canals! Before excavation is commenced it is necessary to establish accurate design levels for the canal bed, towpath and other features. Local chainage has been established with distance markers provided through the site. A survey of existing levels has been completed and these relate to the distance markers and to the Ordnance Datum (the height above mean sea level) – establishing our site TBM (temporary bench mark) was described and illustrated on page 18 of edition 113. Processing the survey data will enable calculation of the volume of material to be removed or relocated and also how this, presently isolated length of canal, will relate to the rest of the route.

Finally our excavator has been busy digging out tree stumps and starting preliminary excavation at the 'Double Lock' site. More details of this next time. Many thanks to everyone who has contributed on Tuesdays during the first year at Moat Farm. ♦ **MT**

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

An intermediate distance marker - these are provided every 50 metres.



400 metre distance marker doubles as bench mark for levels.

We were extremely lucky that the forecast rain was replaced by sunshine. The morning chill wind worked to our advantage as, in true H&G CT fashion, we drew people in with the promise of a "free warm up", grasping the situation and making the most of it! Several stallholders commented that we had had the best attendance for years.

We had another of Judy Street's inspiration luxury Christmas hamper draws. The Sales and Promotion Committee provided the goods and Judy transformed them into a truly wonderful hamper, which raised a record amount. Our latest life-member, Tim Ward, made the draw and volunteer Jill Southall was both surprised and delighted to win! She is a regular helper, who provides much soup and cake and works tirelessly in the kitchen for the whole day every year. There couldn't have been a more worthy winner.

Our bottle stall, organised by Derek Weaver and with bottles generously provided by a wide variety of donors, also made a hefty profit and engendered much pleasure. The H&G stand sold a good amount and the displays of our restoration and other work raised much conversation and interest. The magnificent cakes (in both variety and quality), soups and drinks were, as usual, very popular; a dilemma as to which to choose!

We were lucky to have more stall holders than last year. These comprised a bountiful mixture of home-made preserves, an interesting selection of old postcards and documents, pieces of beautifully decorated sandblasted glass, a "Traidcraft" stall offering a variety of colourful, fairly traded goods, a candle stall proffering goods which looked fit to eat instead of light, an Aloe Vera stall, a "Phoenix" stall, hand knitted dolls' clothes and, lastly, quality garments from Peru made from Alpaca or cotton. *No excuse for leaving with a full purse!*

There was a lovely warm atmosphere, in more ways than one, and at the end of a very happy day the H&G CT made a profit of over £660. Our grateful thanks go to all who helped in any way – hired a table, provided food/bottles, those who spent money and our the large team of helpers who worked so willingly and hard all day.

◆ PS

Please put November 9th 2013 in your diary. If you have quality crafted goods that would be appropriate for sale at our Winter Bazaar, and would like a stall, then please book a place early with Pat Skeet (01568 797 032).

Above: Some of the many visitors who came to see the crafts and produce on sale.

Left: the Luxury Christmas Hamper – a popular raffle prize.



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Sailing4Disabled at Over Basin

As briefly reported in the last edition, the H&G CT is very pleased to welcome another regular user at Over. Club member Andy Wall reports ...

The club now meets every Tuesday between 11 and 2 at Over Canal Basin and it is open to anyone – whether they have a disability or not. The club's leader, Pete Bisson says "The way our club measures its success is if people come back over and over again and that makes us think that we are doing something right".

I was a member of the club at their old premises and I used to go every Saturday to meet different people and enjoy the sailing. It is great to see that, with co-operation and encouragement from David Penny of the H&G CT, Pete has been able to start it again at Over Canal Basin. Pete is hoping to bring some sailing dinghies and another



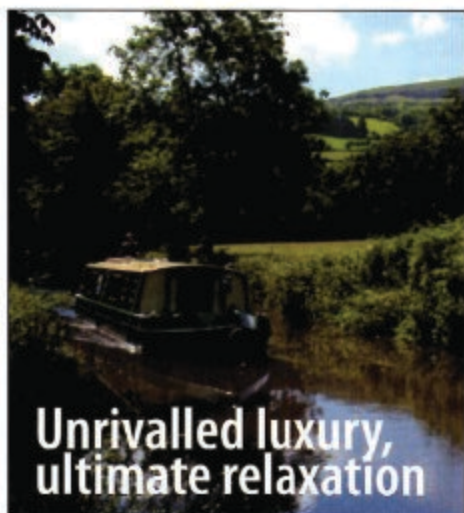
double kayak to the Basin. We are hoping to be able to permit wheelchair access onto some of the craft and be able to get people with severe mobility problems safely onto the water.

◆ AW



Sailing4Disabled at Over Festival last year.

Pete Bisson and Chris Byrne



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News from the friends W of Gloucester M MUSEUM By Chris Witts

Twenty-five years ago, on the 1st April 1988, the National Waterways Museum at Gloucester was opened by HRH Prince Charles. The early days were exciting with many events taking place in and around the museum. At this time members were recruited to join the Friends of the museum, indeed the next edition of the Friend's newsletter, **Llanthony Log**, will be number 100.

As the years sailed by a charitable trust in the form of **The Waterways Trust** was created to run the three museums of Gloucester, Ellesmere Port and Stoke Bruerne. A decision was made to take the National title away from Gloucester, thus why today it is simply called Gloucester Waterways Museum.

The Annual Waterways Festival & Giant Boat Jumble is at the Waterways Museum, Gloucester Docks, on Sunday 14th April from 10am to 3pm. Entry is just £3.50 (includes free entry to the Museum) and accompanied children, under 14, are free. A really good day out with something for everyone! – Ed

Readers will know that last year all the functions of **British Waterways** in England and Wales, and those of **The Waterways Trust**, were transferred to a new charitable trust the **Canal & River Trust**. They took over the running of five museums and attractions, including Gloucester. It is still early days to form an opinion but life does seem more positive and all who are associated with the museum at Gloucester are keen to make it succeed in these difficult times. As

Chairman of the Friends I look forward to reporting our progress under the new charity to readers of **The Wharfinger**.

◀ CW



IWA The Inland Waterways Association

**Gloucestershire & Herefordshire
IWA Branch**

Gloucester Yacht Club, 7.30pm

Thursday, March 7th **AGM and CRT speaker**

Thursday, April 3rd **Tony Guest, Chair Cotswold Canal Trust**
Why the restoration of the Cotswold Canals is important

Further details contact: **Roger Holmes 01594 840316**



Model Boat Club

By Ted Tedaldi

Members of the Model Boat Club at 'Beans on Toast Sunday'.



Wet, wet, wet – that's sailing at Over this last quarter! Yes we have had some excellent sailing at times, thanks to the wind, with a possible five out of six rounds completed in the winter sailing competition. The ladies have fared very well; have they too good a handicap?

The big gamble was our 'Beans on Toast Sunday'. The weather forecast varied but eventually showed a weather window for a dry Sunday. What a superb day we had. No rain, a good steady breeze and the sun out most of the day. The Severn was well in flood and so walking along the Vineyard Hill extension for the estimated time was somewhat modified. As well as competing the ladies put on a good spread of beans on toast for lunch with cakes, tea and coffee on hand all day.



section around the extreme buoys, Brian Gardiner being the winner for motor boats and Trevor, from Hereford, winning the yachting section. Brian followed with a motor boat win in the obstacle course competition. We then enjoyed lunch. The afternoon activities were similar to those in the morning; Sandra morally won the yachting devil only to be robbed on the line – *someone will be served cold tea!*

The future sees many new models being constructed, especially motor torpedo boats! Already the club has a good fleet of these craft and so the next open day should see a fine flotilla. Also, Phil (our steam buff) is well on the way with the Mersey steam Tug that I described last time. We can only hope this new season provides us all with a sunnier summer for working and pleasure.



Phil 'the steam buff'.

◀ TT



A varied collection of craft.

Working with Nature

English Ivy

By John Chappell

*Ivy is so commonplace you may well wonder what there is to write about! In fact it is a very interesting plant. The common, native ivy we see around us is botanically **Hedera helix**. The genus name **Hedera**, is the ancient Latin name for the plant and the specific name **helix** needs little explanation, meaning spiral.*

One of the most interesting facts about the native ivy is that it has two leaf shapes. A seed can germinate anywhere and the plant will run along the ground until it reaches something to climb, more often than not a wall or a tree trunk. Up it goes, attaching itself to the surface with small aerial 'roots' and climbing to reach the sunlight. All this time it has the familiar palmate leaves we all know but, as it reaches its climbing limit, thicker self supporting branches, without climbing roots, are formed. These thicker branches have a very different, elliptically shaped, adult leaf and amongst them flowers are formed in autumn and early winter. The tiny flowers are rich in nectar, attracting bees, flies and other insects by providing a valuable source of food late in the season. The fruit, a dark purple to black berry, is formed in late winter. Mildly toxic to humans, the berries provide food for birds, particularly thrushes, blackcaps and woodpigeons, when there is little else about.

Ivies are often accused of killing trees but they are not parasitic and any harm done is usually caused when ivy on senescent trees is so large and thick that the tree becomes top heavy and falls. Some people regard ivy as a rampant weed and it is true that the common ivy will smother everything in its



path, but if a cutting is taken from adult ivy growth the resulting plant will retain the adult form and the term 'arborescens' (tree-like) is used to describe it. Gardeners have taken advantage of this to produce a range of what are commonly called 'bush ivies'. A variety of common ivy with yellow berries, known as the poet's ivy, will form a small dome-shaped shrub when grown from adult growth of this variety and will bear clear orange-yellow berries. Named variously by nurserymen as *Hedera helix* 'Poetica' or 'Poetica arborea' it is very attractive plant – if you can stop the birds from eating the berries!

Ivies grown from seed differ and there are wide variations in size and markings of leaf. Many forms have been selected and named. All are evergreen making the yellow and cream variegated varieties useful in the winter garden. One of the smallest leaved ivies is *H. h.* 'Spetchley', found at Spetchley Park near Worcester. This is a well behaved, slow growing ivy; never smothering, it will cover a small wall with minute leaves. I have planted two against the wall by the milestone at Oxenhall. They were just beginning to climb when unfortunately, someone (not a volunteer) decided to spray weed killer on the area; however it's a tough little plant and might just survive!

♦ JC

Not quite
... the last page!

Raising our profile



Over Volunteer, Pat March, modelling the new issue of yellow hard hats and hi-vis waistcoats carrying our name. This H&G PPE (*personal protective equipment*) is readily available to all our volunteers offering protection whilst working on all of our restoration sites throughout the two counties.

Thank You

Our sincere thanks to Member Mr R Goss of Worcestershire for his generous donation of £5,000. Also to all those Members who have made donations in addition to their Membership renewal. *Your donations are greatly appreciated.*

New Director

The January CoM meeting ratified the appointment of Member John Hammond as a Director of ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE. Although John lives in London he is a regular user of ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE and his background and experience, both in past employment and past and ongoing voluntary work, makes him a valuable addition to the organisation. We thank John for willingly accepting this voluntary appointment.

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H&G photographers!

Our thanks go to the contributors to our 2013 Calendar. This year's photographers were: Chris Byrne, Maggie Jones, Monica Hamer, Chris High, Alan McBride, Alison High, Chris Roberts, Cliff Penny, Ted Beagles and John Chappell.

We would also like to thank all other contributors whose photos didn't make it into this year's Calendar. Your photos are very welcome. We hope that Members and supporters will continue to walk our towpaths with their cameras at the ready for those photo opportunities.

Thank you

THE WHARF HOUSE

Following the burst pipe last year, the final professional repairs to the kitchen floor, and other related work, was successfully completed between Christmas and the New Year. The 'shut down' was a busy time for the team at ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE both in supervising this work and in taking the opportunity to undertake decorating and other essential tasks whilst the building was closed to customers.

Prolonged and severe flood conditions on the River Severn have led to the main Ledbury to Gloucester road being closed at nearby Maisemore for a number of weeks and on the A40 the nearby Carvery Pub flooded. Whilst ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE sits over a metre above highest recorded flood level, and has remained open throughout the appalling weather, many potential B&B guests and restaurant customers have assumed otherwise – and the heavy snowfall has also affected what was a period of good trading. Undaunted, the team are still on track to produce takings to match previous years and introduced a new **Tasting Menu** in February which has been very well received – *let's now hope for some sun!*

♦ CRP

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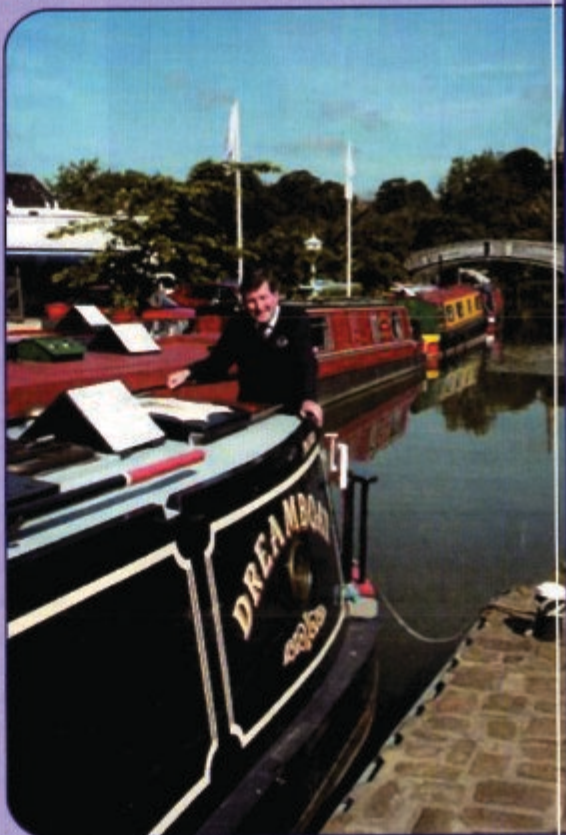
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Want to help?

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.

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Contact any of these names TODAY!

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A membership form is available online or from THE WHARF HOUSE.

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Individual	£10	£200
Joint/Family	£15	£300
Senior Citizen	£7.50	£115
Joint Senior Citizen	£10	£150
Corporate	£25	£500

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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

Pleased to support the H&G Canal

