

The Wharfinger

Autumn 2013

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Those in italics are not Directors.

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Restoration Sites

Aylestone

Weir Site Leader: Brian Fox

Withington Project

Chairman: Wilf Jones

Kymin East

Waterway Recovery Group, Wilf Jones

Yarkhill

Leader: Chris High

Deputy: Paul Hatt

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)

Over Committee: Ted Beagles, Chris Byrne,
Maggie Jones, David Penny, Belinda Sprigg

Llanthony

Leader: Paul Henshaw

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Cover: Great spotted woodpecker feeding his young at Vineyard Hill
by Tim Randles



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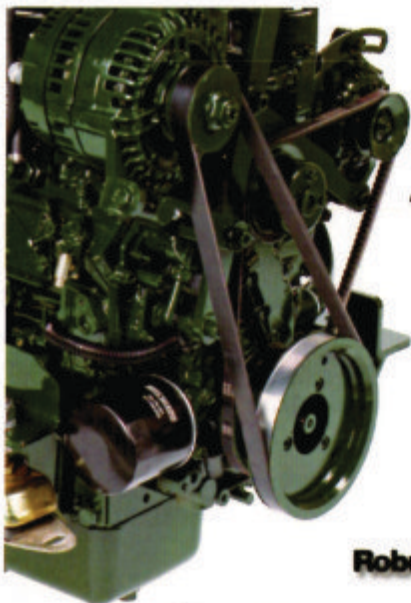
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Impressive Achievements

Cliff Penny is away on holiday. Carolyn Pascall and John Hammond joined the H&G CT three years ago as life members and were co-opted onto the Council of Management at the last AGM. They reflect on their experiences.

We discovered the H&G CT when visiting Gloucester. It was a time of spring tides and a large Severn Bore was predicted in the late evening, after a concert we were attending. We were advised that the best place to see it was from ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE terrace, and it was certainly impressive – though not, as we soon found out, as impressive as the aspirations of the H&G CT. We joined and have sought ways to help, though mostly from afar as we live in London. The recent achievements and hints of things to come are extraordinary, with H&G CT volunteers, WRGies and L&PDT all essential players and this is what inspired us to get involved. Here is a sample.

- Llanthony, Vineyard Hill, Moat Farm, Kymin East and Burcott Road sites acquired and being developed.
- Llanthony footbridge repaired at no cost.
- Ell Brook aqueduct rebuilt.
- Over, Oxenhall, Yarkhill and Aylestone sites improved, including extensive tree planting.
- ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE completed; solar panels installed at minimal cost.
- Grant obtained for tractor purchase (*details page 9*).
- Mill Barn plans made public and presented to the local community.
- Dymock developments approved with income stream to H&G CT.
- Newent developments in preparation.
- Leadon Valley improvements in preparation.
- Severn flood relief, water quality improvement, hydro-electric scheme and Gloucester Waterfront Strategy launched in partnership with Council, Peel Group and others.
- Hereford urban regeneration, including canal development for water management, proposed in partnership with the Council and others plus a new Park and recreational facilities jointly with the Council, Hereford United Community Trust and others.

Unusually for a canal restoration, the H&G CT has already secured planning policies to prevent unhelpful developments by others throughout the entire Canal route and to help deliver the Canal and provide for the long-term maintenance of it. The engineering challenges concerned with matters such as modern requirements for bridge clearances at road crossings and the consequent Canal levels have also been resolved.

The view expressed in the Nicholson Waterways Guide is clearly apt: the H&G Canal "is now firmly fixed in the sights of a very professional and dedicated canal trust, committed to its complete restoration. ... The sheer dogged determination and tenacity shown in the face of not inconsiderable adversity, whilst meeting a demanding schedule, will surely stand as an inspiration to all those engaged in future waterway restoration."



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Chairman's Column

AGM Report

By Ralph Barber

On a very warm evening in July, over 50 members of the Canal Trust attended the new look AGM.

The AGM started with the usual formal presentation taking the audience through the events of the reporting period of 1 March 2012 to 28 February 2013.

It started off with a thank you to all the volunteers, then a reminder of all of the very interesting publicity we have had this last year. In addition to the media coverage featured in the last edition of **The Wharfinger** there was reference to the Saturday Telegraph which did a piece on the canal, and to the TV UK boating channel. See the web site for links for the items mentioned. **The Wharfinger** had another great year with comments wide and far as to the quality of the magazine. Thank you to all involved and please keep the articles coming to keep the magazine interesting.

Our social evenings also had some very interesting talks: Forgotten Waterways and Operating a Canal Business are two that I remember producing a very interesting evening. The membership was highlighted next with the total membership holding up very well compared to many other voluntary

Members chatting at the AGM.



organisations which are experiencing significant reductions. This is quite an achievement in difficult economic times and following the increase in membership rates.

Liz Connors, our Treasurer, then took the floor and took us through the financials: overall income up, overall expenditure down, expenditure on sites restoration up, trading income from **THE WHARF HOUSE** up, holdings of land, both leased and owned, up, volunteer days up; a very good message overall!

Brian Fox, after 23 years on the CoM, decided not to re-stand. The CoM agreed to give Brian and his wife Shirley Honorary Life membership. Brian will continue to be involved in running the site at Oxenhall and be part of the subgroup of the CoM looking at land and future sites. See page 10. Also leaving the CoM is Will Frecknall. We have two new co-opted members joining. John Hammond, already a director of **THE WHARF HOUSE**, and Carolyn Pascall. We warmly welcome them both to the CoM.

After the break, we had a number of displays for people to see all the work that had been done over the last year and also to enable people to discuss the work of the Trust with both Site Leaders and CoM Members.

Thank you to all who attended and I look forward to seeing you on the Canal sometime.

◆ RB



Red Beagles

Members view the displays at the AGM.

Kymin East

Part of the Withington Project

By Wilf Jones

During an enjoyable day out in the company of Martyn Tilford (from Moat Farm) and Chris High (from Yarkhill) we surveyed the whole length of the Canal from the boundary at Yarkhill to the lane at Kymin.

This was in preparation for the next stage of the work on the Kymin East site to create a drainage channel some 800yds long. The channel is to drain the bed of the Canal as much as possible in preparation for the major excavation of the Canal bed next year.

From the survey data we were able to plan the work including the number of

volunteers required and which skills and what plant would be needed, and then estimate how many days it would take to complete the work. Other tasks were identified such as removing stumps, arranging to move logs off site as well as the removal of some barbed wire from the back of the towpath hedge.

By the time you read this we hope the drainage channel will have advanced considerably and start draining the site, following work by an invited H&G CT working party (consisting of a team of volunteers from Yarkhill, Over, Llanthony, Moat Farm and Oxenhall working over two consecutive weekends—I ordered fine weather but there was some uncertainty over the delivery date!

The drainage trench is dug along one side of the canal.





Lining up the dumper.



Iris are rescued.



Cleaning the excavator at the end of the weekend's work.

[Some stop press photos of the work have been included – Ed]

We will now start planning the big excavation for 2014 when we hope the Kymin East length will be brought back into water.

In the meantime a big, big thank you to all the volunteers who have helped me with what I hope will be a highly successful first phase 'dig' on this new site. My sincere thanks to Peter and 'JJ' Clews for their ongoing co-operation which is greatly appreciated.

♦ WJ



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*Nigel Jefferies will be leading a walk jointly with Jackie Tweedale from the **Friends of the Dymock Poets**.*

*When: **Saturday 7 September.***

*Where: Meet outside **The Beauchamp Arms** at **1.50 pm** for a **2.00 pm** start.*

*Parking is limited: Lay-by opposite PH (3 cars only) with additional parking to the north of the village, beside the old road to Maypole Farm, opposite the close named The Crypt. **Please allow plenty of time to park and park considerably.***

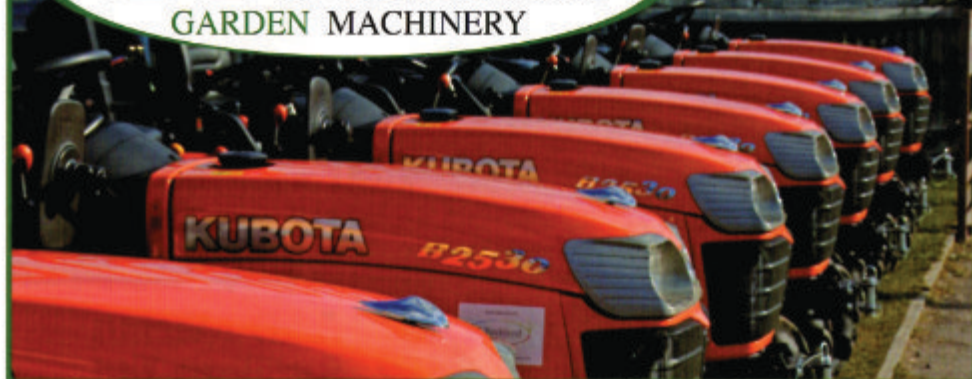
The walk will be about 5 miles from Dymock along parts of the route of the H&G Canal. The walk should last about 2 hours with stops for explanations and readings on the history of the canal past and present and there will also be a chance to explore the time of the Dymock Poets who congregated around Dymock just before the First World War. The Walk will be based on the H&G CT's popular Canal Walk series of leaflets 'No. 3 Dymock'. This, and the four other Walks leaflets, will be available to purchase from Nigel at 30p each.

This walk is being organised by the **Friends of the Dymock Poets** and Jackie Tweedale asks that if you would like to come that you contact her on 01531 890385 or by email tweedale1956@btinternet.com so that she has an idea of numbers.



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New Tractor!

By David Penny and John Hammond



Peter Tortuglia

The Legal & Project Development Team at The Wharf House has secured a £20,000 grant to help establish a dedicated Maintenance Team for the Canal.

The grant was agreed on 10 June by Forest of Dean Council on behalf of the South West Regional Development Agency, Defra and the European Commission, as part of the Rural Development Programme for England. With required matched funding of £4,063 from the Canal Trust and THE WHARF HOUSE we have bought a new Kubota Tractor with flail attachment to mow the towpath and canal banks and to trim the lower part of hedges. Our intrepid fabrication team at Much Marcle are building a trailer so it may be moved between sites. We also have a new commercial strimmer and pole mounted chainsaw plus related safety equipment.

How the Canal Trust operates is moving from site based teams to teams dedicated to specific tasks and functions, and we are fulfilling our best endeavours to provide the equipment, training and support they require to excel in their roles. This builds on the

Richard Phelps, from E Buckland Garden Machinery, trains volunteer Malcolm Caxton on our new tractor.

highly successful undergrowth clearance examples of Vineyard Hill and Kymin East where volunteers from all sites came together to move projects forward quickly. The new approach is crucial as we acquire more sites and drive forward restoration of the Canal.

We are currently planning training to develop an in-house excavation team so that we are not dependent upon external support for major work such as the excavation of the Kymin East site which is due next summer. Wilf Jones is looking for those who wish to be trained on 6-20 ton excavators and dumpers, and Ted Beagles is establishing the maintenance team.

Other funding bids have also been submitted by the Legal & Project Development Team. In particular, we are through to the last three in the Tewkesbury area for £3,000 from the Lloyds Bank Group Community Fund. The winner is decided by public vote, so please subscribe to our newsletter to hear how you can help us win. (For further details see page 35, thank you).

♦ DRP/JH



Brian Fox – Retirement

– but not as you know it!

During a recent Council of Management meeting the third-longest serving member of the Council (and the former Canal Society Committee) announced that he would be retiring from the CoM and not offering himself for re-election at the AGM (when he was due to stand down 'by rotation'). Brian stressed this was solely because he was finding it increasingly difficult to participate in the discussions due to a significant deterioration in his hearing – he intended to continue with his other roles for some time yet! [Brian kindly agreed that his reason for standing down should be published.]

Brian joined the former Canal Society Committee (the equivalent of our current Council of Management) in 1990, having joined the Society a couple of years earlier. He quickly got involved in the Restoration Committee – the first of a number of Committees

Brian Fox retires from the Council of Management after 23 years!



on which he has played an active and constructive part over the years.

Within a year Brian was persuaded by the writer to start writing regularly about restoration for **The Wharfinger**, followed over the years by a number of historical articles about aspects of the Canal. Another of his interesting contributions was one chronicling the history of the Ordnance Survey – his employer until retirement – which enabled him to spend even more of his 'spare' time working with both 'pen and spade' on the H&G Canal!

In 1996 Brian was elected Vice Chairman (of what was by then the H&G Canal Trust) and served as Chairman of the Trust from 1998 to 2000 – including of course leadership of the Council of Management amongst the many other duties.

Also in 1998 Brian was part of our first team to undertake preliminary work at Over and a year later became Restoration Site Leader at Oxenhall. In July 2013 the Oxenhall History Group had a major exhibition in the village "100 years of rural change" – which included Brian!

Over the years, utilising his surveying expertise and long-standing knowledge of the workings of the Canal Trust, Brian was the obvious person to undertake visits to most of the landowners along the 34 mile line of the Canal to gather ownership and other related information.

At the 2013 AGM our current Chairman presented Brian with a certificate of Life Membership of the H&G CT in acknowledgement of the very considerable contribution that he has made over the years – which Brian stressed is not finished yet!

◆ CRP



Ted Beagles

Chairman, Ralph Barber, presents Brian with an honorary Life Membership.

Restoration Team

Moat Farm

By Martyn Tilford

As expected the Summer season brought a variety of tasks at Moat Farm. A balance was struck between vegetation management, involving mainly mowing/trimming, and carrying out further work to develop the site.

The rather unsightly and inconvenient scaffold-pole fence adjacent to the south end railway bridge has been replaced with a timber post and rail fence incorporating a field gate. The gate hanging post is made from an eight foot length of ash we felled early last year and the fence from recycled timber from around the site.

Tree stumps and the towpath

We have a large number of tree stumps to remove from the towpath following the felling carried during the previous two winters. Our excavator is an excellent tool for this and will deal with all but the largest stumps. It is a messy but necessary process to enable the towpath to be profiled at the correct level and this work will continue into the Autumn and Winter. Starting at the south end of the site the original towpath was buried during the construction of the railway and, following tree stump removal, excavation of this length is now under way. We will then progress northwards profiling the towpath to provide a good level walkway adjacent to the cut throughout the site. Re-profiling of the canal bed will then follow.

However it is not always plain sailing and on a Tuesday morning back in June our excavator misbehaved very badly with severe incontinence and a stubborn refusal to move! A significant hydraulic oil leak from the right track final drive motor suggested something serious (and probably expensive). An initial



Martyn Tilford/Alan McBride

Top: The new fence adjacent to the south end railway bridge - all the timber having been sourced on site.

Middle: Tree stump removal on the towpath bank, a messy but necessary job.

Above: After tree stump removal part of the railway embankment is excavated to create the towpath. The canal bed is on the left and the track bed on the right.

strip-down revealed a fractured bolt and this appeared to be the problem. With help and guidance from Over regular Andy Fowler the excavator was back up and running within a couple of days. *Many thanks, Andy.* Also there was some good news ... the cost of replacement parts amounted to only 66 pence!

The very large willow stump in the canal bed midway through the site, mentioned in edition 112 of **The Wharfinger**, was always going to be a challenge. A large excavator was probably the best solution and local farmer, John, offered to help. A couple of hours of skilful digging, raking and manoeuvring by John in his excavator saw the removal of this and several other large willow stumps from the canal bed. *At three times the size of our own excavator, this machine was the ideal tool for the job – thank you John.*

Ground maintenance

As mentioned mowing and strimming was to feature throughout the Summer months and, whilst often a satisfying task, it is never really complete. It is a job made easier with good equipment and on several occasions Paul very kindly brought along his superb Italian 'Grillo' ride-on mower. This versatile four-wheel drive machine handles most mowing with ease. Large areas, tall grass and steep banks are straightforward and with a 'v twin' engine and well designed cutting deck it is surprising quiet, a real bonus at a tranquil canal site.

'Lithium-ion Man' Alan has a different approach! His battery powered walk-behind mower is equally impressive and is used to great effect on a regular basis, very quietly dealing with the smaller areas and woodland walks. With regular mowing the quality of the grass improves and it provides a more durable surface on which to walk and, in some places, drive vehicles. We can now access most areas with relative ease.

Of course the greater proportion of the site is normally left uncut and the profusion of tall grasses, wild flowers and nettles makes for an attractive environment. In the last edition of **The Wharfinger** John Chappell, in his article on Campion, showed how 'working with nature throughout the seasons' can enhance canal restoration. It was pleasing to see both Red and White Campion happily flowering in some of our uncut areas at Moat Farm.

The offending right track final drive motor with fractured bolt. Fortunately the repair was reasonably straightforward.

A different approach ... Alan 'Lithium-ion Man' with his superb Bosch! Below: Paul on his brilliant Grillo ride-on mower...

White and Red Campion beside the railway track bed.

Our misbehaving excavator with Wilf stripping it down... or maybe he is just taking a midday nap?

Site accommodation

The 'staff restaurant and amenity area' beneath the railway bridge at the south end of the site has served us quite well but it was always an intention to provide something better, in the form of a site hut. An opportunity arose when Over volunteer Mike offered a 'Marley' style modular garage to the H&G CT – thank you. Having been dismantled and temporarily stored at Over we just needed to transport it to Moat Farm, prepare a suitable location and re-erect it. Soft, wet ground at the Moat Farm access and the lack of a suitable lorry delayed the plan but by early Summer everything fell into place. Wilf, Ted and Alan made multiple trips with a lorry (very kindly loaned by Simon Hayward of **EB Hayward & Co**) whilst Paul and I prepared a level area, adjacent to the towpath, in the middle of the site. Another day saw the re-assembly under way with many careful hands required to handle the heavy concrete sections. Thoughtfully the sections had been numbered and a 'drawing' provided, although this did not prevent some head scratching and much discussion on which bit went where! An advantage with this style of modular building is that, if required, it can be dismantled and relocated to another of our restoration sites at some time in the future.

As always, many thanks to everyone who has helped on Tuesdays at Moat Farm. ♦ **MT**

Our 'new' site hut taking shape. Steve, Paul, Ralph and Ray discuss the merits of using a spirit level whilst Ted sorts out the bolts. Can you spot the deliberate mistake?

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

PLEASE NOTE: Public access to the Moat Farm site is unavailable at present but the Trust is working on proposals to develop this.

Above: The huge problematic willow stump in the canal bed.

Below: Not a problem with the right machinery!



Martyn Tilford/Alan McBride.

Restoration Team

Over Basin

Incorporating **Vineyard Hill** By Ted Beagles

The old ash trees along the Vineyard Hill towpath have long been a favourite haunt for woodpeckers, as was evident during the excavation work last year when we found strange wood chippings on the newly formed clay surface; but we were delighted this Spring when a pair of Great Spotted Woodpeckers nested in one of the trees in full view of the towpath. Tim Randles, one of our regular volunteers is a keen photographer; he managed to get an excellent shot of one of the fledglings being fed in the entrance to the nest.



Our work in the site entrance area is now completed (for the present!), with the final levelling of the block paving that we lifted last year to drain the rising bollard chamber, and the erection of the fence between ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE Annex and the reclaimed brick gate pillar. The fencing includes a gate for easy access to the gas meter! The building team of Bob and Ivor have now turned their hand to ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE surrounds with the building of an underground chamber to house the new fat filter fitted to the kitchen drain and the adjustment of the block paving paths adjacent to the external doors to restore them to the correct level for wheelchair access.



Bob and Ivor relaying site entrance pavements.



Bob working on the fat filter chamber.



The new fencing running up to the annex.

As usual at this time of the year the grounds maintenance team has been exceptionally busy keeping the new growth under control; in fact even more so this year with the new banks of Vineyard Hill, with all the small saplings fighting for survival amongst the grass and nettles.

Alder and Renton are checked over and run along the canal weekly to keep them in good condition. This also helps to control and disperse weed and confirm the navigation along Vineyard Hill past the land slip area.

The hull repairs on Mister Maysey are now progressing well. Dave and Peter have made an accurate template in hardboard of the complex shape required for the repair. This was used by the H&G CT's very long-term supporter and advertiser Simon Hayward of **EB Hayward & Co** to make the actual patch in their workshop. The welding is now in progress by H&G CT Member Henry Clarke, the Much Marcle blacksmith, supervised as usual by his apprentice Andy Smith! In the meantime the remainder of us are getting on with all the rest of the things like scraping and painting which needs to be done whilst the boat is out of the water.



Top: Henry takes a break from welding.

Middle: The large repair to Mister Maysey's stern.

Above: Tim paints the hull base plate.

Ted Beagles / Tim Rardolles



The new saplings reappear once the longer grass is trimmed.

Want to get involved at Over then please ring:-

Ted Beagles 01452 522 648

Maggie Jones 01452 618 010

An unusual sight at Over recently was a steam powered boat sailing on the canal. This has been built by Member Alan Keef, and was in the water for ballasting and final commissioning trials. It is powered by steam from a Merryweather solid fuel fired boiler supplying a totally enclosed Stuart Turner steam engine. The engine then drives an alternator to charge a bank of batteries which power a Ray 4hp electric outboard motor. It looked splendid gliding silently through the water. *We are hoping to see more of it at Over in the future.* ◆ TB

Right: Susan E – the steam powered boat, glides through the water at Over Basin.

Below: Susan E's boiler and engine.



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Restoration Team Yarkhill

By Chris High

The numbers of volunteers on work parties has dropped recently. Holidays, grandchildren, even illness are justifiable excuses but ... paid work – I ask you – what next!

All of a sudden the vegetation has woken up and mowing and strimming is under way but the growth rate has made it hard to keep up. For the faint-hearted the offside is a no through route.

Finally the weather allowed us to complete the stonework repair to the hole in the culvert. Time was allowed to pass so the lime mortar could set following which we were able to start re-puddling the bed of the canal over it. Due to the smallish area this had to be done by hand but the volunteers have persevered and good progress has been made – but not without a few comments. The most surprising of these was considerable interest in raking or stump digging as an alternative tasks!

Offside stump removal has continued. They now seem to be taking longer to dig out. Are we getting weaker or was it a case of 'oh! that looks a nasty one – shall we leave that for later'?

Vegetation clearance in and around the lock was carried out so that it could be pumped out and the lock base depth recorded as the datum for the height survey and later excavation of the Kymin pound.



The completed stonework repair to the hole in the culvert.

Puddling under way over culvert stonework in the bed of the canal.



Adrian, Bob and Paul remove soil from a freed stump to lighten it prior to getting it out of the hole it's in – or is it we who are in a hole again!



Sam digging deep to remove another stump from the offside.



Chris High

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

Social Evenings

at the Royal Oak

Please support our monthly meetings, make a note on the calendar and tell your friends and neighbours; we have an excellent venue and interesting speakers on a wide range of topics. Why not share transport and make an evening of it – **everyone is welcome!**

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

20 August

Natter and a Noggin

Informal summer evening social

17 September

Jeremy Picton-Turbervill

The Hereford Bull

its inception & participation in the Diamond Jubilee River Thames Pageant

followed by the Grand Holiday Draw

15 October

David Saady

We go north to explore the Ribble Link

19 November

Roger Beck

Nearer to home we explore the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust's Nature Reserves

December

No meeting held in December

SOCIALS REPORT

by Maggie Jones

June's meeting was thrown open to our members to bring along their slides and entertain us. Ralph and Debbie Barber stepped up to the challenge. First Debbie gave us a very interesting insight into her expertise as a garden designer. She showed us a very special garden project that she and her fellow students constructed in just a few days at Westonbirt a few years ago.

Ralph brought us a pictorial fun quiz; guessing locations from very small sections of the covers of **The Wharfinger**.



Members view the displays at the AGM

July's meeting was the AGM. (See Ralph's Report page 5).

◆ MJ

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Canal

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Gloucester Quays
Pleased to support the H&G Canal

We hope to see you there!

H&G Canal Sales & Promotion

Outings 2013

by Janet Moulton and Maggie Jones



Janet Moulton

General view of Hellens Garden Festival – sun actually shining this year.

*Variety is the spice of life! The Sales & Promotion Teams have been out and about promoting the H&G Canal, and the work of the H&G Canal Trust, in very different settings since the last issue of **The Wharfinger** and we have been blessed with more sunshine than we saw all of last year.*



Tim Coghlan donates £200 to the Trust at the Braunston Marina Rally. Left to right: Tim Coghlan, Janet Moulton, Becky Moulton, Prunella Scales and Timothy West.

Towards the end of May we were off to Northamptonshire for the **Crick Boat Show** – a major feature of the boaters' calendar, with thousands of pounds changing hands, with a few hundred coming to the H&G CT. This show is not attended by too many Canal Societies/Trusts so there is always plenty of attention to our efforts from some of the 26,000 who attended the show this year. While the Hereford team was at Crick the Gloucester team was at the **Tall Ships** event in Gloucester. (Maggie Jones reports on this on the adjacent page)

Our next event was the **Hellens Garden Festival** at Much Marcle, in Herefordshire, held in the grounds of this ancient manor house. The setting could not be more different but local interest meant non-stop talking for Dick Skeet on Saturday and myself on Sunday!

A very small event was the **Forest of Dean Local History Fair** in Lydney, Gloucestershire, where I took a small display about the history of the H&G Canal and talked to descendants of lock keepers and others whose ancestors knew the Canal.

The end of June we were off to Northamptonshire again to the **Braunston Historic Boat Rally** – the show for those with

Our fund-raising stand at Crick Boat Show.

a love of the canals, the working boats and boat people. One thing that never fails to amaze me is the skill exhibited negotiating a 70ft boat in a confined marina. Tim Coghlan of Braunston Marina very generously gave us another most welcome £200 donation which was presented by our long-standing friends Timothy West and Prunella Scales. *Thank you.*

A very tiring six weeks but well worth the effort. More to come at local fetes, the **Herefordshire Country Fair** (at Hampton Court Castle on 4th August) and of course, our very own **Over Canal Festival** on 31st August/1st September plus our **Winter Bazaar** at Ledbury on 9th November.

◆ JM

Tall Ships, Gloucester Docks

Our friends at Gloucester Quays stepped in at the last minute to ensure we had a market stall position at the ever-increasingly popular event at the end of May. (*Thank you Gloucester Quays*).

Our H&G Canal Sales and Promotion display was set up on the Friday in bitter winds blowing across Victoria Basin. Two stalls along from ours were toppled over by a particularly heavy gust. We hung on tight and survived the gales. As you may imagine there were few visitors that day. The weekend was a whole different picture! Bright sunshine and no winds brought the crowds out in droves.

The event had changed from three days to four that meant we were challenged to find enough volunteers who could offer cover right through until Monday. Luckily, a few new faces agreed to lend a hand – volunteers who were more used to working at Over Basin than meeting and greeting the public.

We had a good sunny spot where passing

Bottle Stall

We shall be holding another bottle stall at our Winter Bazaar (details on page 31) so bottles of all shapes and sizes would be very welcome, please. Ideally please bring them to one of our Social Evenings or contact Janet Moulton to arrange collection. ◆ JM



Tall Ships at Gloucester Docks 2013

Ted Boagles

visitors were keen to take part in our Grand Holiday Draw, as well as learn of our restoration progress.

After the windy start we had a successful event with nearly 500 draw tickets being sold and we also gained a number of new members. *Thank you to all who made this possible.* ◆ MJ



The H&G stand at the Tall Ships.

Maggie Jones

**Want to get involved in our outings? Please call:
Janet Moulton on 01432 264366 or Maggie Jones on 01452 618010**

Restoration Team

Oxenhall

By Brian Fox

The reconstruction of the spillweir by the cottage has been quite a challenge and plans have necessarily been changed as obstacles arose. Before any work could start on the sump in front of the weir it was imperative that the flow of water through the culvert under the towpath was blocked enabling the work to be carried out in the dry.

After a number of attempts we eventually found the solution and were able to pump out the remaining water without the hole filling up again so the removal of the silt and a few old bricks began. Looking back at the old photos of the original restoration in 1995 clearly shows the state of the structure before we started then and also how many old bottles were retrieved which had presumably been dumped there by the residents of the cottage over the years.

Now that the hole has been cleaned out down to the base it has become clear that the whole structure was built with no foundations whatsoever for the surrounding walls and no solid base, not even some puddle clay, to keep



1995 restoration of the spillweir.

the water in! It is not surprising that water was seeping through under the weir itself and therefore causing the brickwork to collapse so the work will take considerably longer than was originally anticipated.

Plans have been made to start the reconstruction now that we can see more clearly what the main challenges are but the details may have to be modified as we progress. *We do know that there will be a lot of concrete to mix and bricks to lay so anybody out there with some energy to spare will be very welcome to join us.*



The spill weir cleared right down to its base.



Evidence that the original structure had been built with no foundations.

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

Our tractor has been put to good use again by ferrying all the waste soil dug from the spillweir hole to fill the hole on top of the aqueduct. This, together with the large pile of soil originally removed from the aqueduct, has now been deposited back into the void and a new track has been created at the side of the Bailey bridge. This will permit the minor diversion of the footpath while the steelwork of the bridge is removed later this year.

My worries, reported last time, over the grass seed planted earlier this year were unfounded. It has now been growing at a phenomenal rate and keeping the mowers busy every week – it is difficult to imagine that the two seeded areas were covered in brambles and nettles only 6 months ago! The trees which were planted in the winter are also all growing well and great care is now being taken to keep the surrounding growth at bay so that they will have a good chance of surviving to maturity.

◆ **BF**

THE WHARF HOUSE

By Carolyn Pascall



HOSTS THE THREE CHOIRS FESTIVAL STARS!

International star Vladimir Ashkenazy and a host of other Three Choirs Festival composers, conductors and officials chose The Wharf House in Gloucester as their home-from-home during the renowned music festival.

The Three Choirs Festival brought the world's finest choral music to Gloucester from Saturday 27 July to Sunday 4 August 2013, and with it came some of the globe's most acclaimed performers and conductors – including international star Vladimir Ashkenazy.

Proving Gloucester can hold its own when it comes to hosting visiting celebrities, THE WHARF HOUSE at Over – which offers seven individual rooms and holds 4 AA Gold

Stars for its luxury accommodation – played home to Ashkenazy during the event, as well as hosting a number of Three Choirs parties.

Celebration dinners were hosted at THE WHARF HOUSE for a range of composers, conductors and officials. While a buffet lunch for 69 topped the week's busy lunchtime schedule at the venue, organised for members of Florilegium – a visiting orchestra – who returned to Gloucester Cathedral in good spirits for their evening concert.

Organisers say, by choosing to stay and dine at THE WHARF HOUSE, the Three Choirs Festival stars also helped towards the restoration of the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal – as all profits go the registered charity.

◆ **CP**

Restoration Team

Llanthony

By Paul Henshaw

During the last 15 months the lock chamber has been consistently flooded, to a lesser or greater extent, depending on the seasons and tides. This has impeded access for visitors who wished to walk through the lock and across Alney island which is part of "Canal Walk No 4", one of the H&G CT's series of popular walks leaflets. The flooding has also prevented our adequate control of the vegetation especially during the summer season.

We have dug (by hand) a drainage channel from the lock chamber through to the river so that excess surface water can drain away. For safety reasons it was decided

to dig the channel close to the wing walls and in doing so we had to remove a large ash tree which had grown hard against the walls of the lock. Care had to be taken to



Garden leading to the footbridge in full bloom.

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The drainage channel.

determine whether any of the root system had penetrated the lock wall. As luck would have it, there was only one small root which had grown into the wall and once this had been identified and dealt with, the stump was pulled out with the aid of a 'tirfor' hand operated winch.

With the stump removed we were able to continue the channel to the lock chamber which is now dry enough for people to walk through. A pipe has been laid in one section so that we can get plant and equipment into the upper part of the site. There is still work to do on the ditch so that it will be easier to maintain as we anticipate that the ebb and flow of the river will deposit material which will have to be cleaned out regularly.

1

Wilf exposing the root system.



Alan McBride

Site maintenance

Mowing, strimming and garden upkeep has continued unabated. These are important activities and ensure that we hold onto the gains we have made over the years!

◆ PH

2

Wilf and Martyn checking the cables before moving well clear so that full tension could be applied to remove the stump.



3

It's starting to move!



4

Removal complete.



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

A new book about the ...

Hereford & Gloucester Canal

With stocks of David Bick's book about the Canal running low, the HG&G CT has decided that a replacement is necessary and has made plans for a new book about the Canal, and the work of the Canal Trust, to be published in 2014.

Photographs of the Canal and its associated features taken before the former Canal Society began to raise awareness of the Canal in the 1980's are quite rare but photographs from the early part of the 20th century are even harder to come by, especially those showing Canal features which have since been destroyed.

If anyone has photographs from this period which could be included in the new book please contact Dick Skeet. If you can email digital scans, that would be great, but prints would be welcome too.

Please email Dick on dick@skeetr.fsnet.co.uk or phone on 01568 797032.

◆ DS

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AA
FOUR STARS

Bring back the old days!

By John Chappell

Our regular contributor John Chappell recently came across an item in the Hereford Journal – watch out anybody thinking of damaging any of the H&C Canal bridges for you may be “transported beyond the seas for life”. Before you think that our powers of negotiation have extended to getting such harsh legislation enacted, please note that John includes delving into historical records amongst his many interests ...

DAMAGING A CANAL BRIDGE

Thomas Radbourn, a man dressed as a boatman, appeared to answer a charge preferred against him at the instance of the Hereford and Gloucester Canal Company by their Clerk, Mr Ballard, for damaging the bridge over the canal near the Burcott-row, known as the old Race-course bridge. Mr Pritchard conducted the case, and called a little boy named James Jenkins, who deposed to having seen the defendant on Thursday last push a stone off the parapet-wall of the bridge in question and afterwards throw

it into the canal. Mr Ballard proved that he had examined the bridge and found a great quantity of the stones on both sides removed; depredations and damage to the property of the Company along the line of the canal had of late been very frequent, especially within the liberties of the City of Hereford, where injury had been done to the amount of £15; {£1,210*} the whole of the palings from the bridge in question to the tunnel had been torn up, which it would cost several pounds to replace. The expense of

repairing the damage done by the defendant he estimated at 6s {£24*}.

The defendant's excuse was that he accidentally knocked off the stone, which was very loose, with his elbow, and a companion came forward to corroborate him, but his almost unintelligible story only tended to support the charge. The expenses being heavy, the magistrates, after a suitable reprimand, imposed only a small fine, with 6s for damage, altogether amounting to £1 7s 10d. {£113*}.

The publication of the following may perhaps have a good effect in checking these repeated injuries along the canal:

'By the statute of the 7th and 8th Geo.IV. c.30, s.13, it is enacted that if any person shall unlawfully and maliciously pull down or in any wise destroy any public bridge, or do nay injury with intent and so as thereby render such bridge or any part thereof dangerous or impassable, every such offender shall be guilty of a felony, and if convicted, shall be liable at the discretion of the Court to be transported beyond the seas for life, or for any term not less than seven years, or to be imprisoned for any term not exceeding four years: also to be once, twice, or thrice whipped in addition, if the Court shall think fit.'

It is the intention of the company to enforce the law to the fullest extent against all future offenders who may be detected.

From Hereford Journal Wednesday 5th September 1849

{*The figures in brackets give the equivalent value in today's money taken from <http://www.measuringworth.com> }

◀ JC



Model Boat Club

By Ted Tedaldi

The North Sea fishing boat, motor gun boat and Dukw 'moored' in the winding hole.

Maybe the Gloucester & District Model Boat Club is improving the weather! Following the wet spring we organised a model boating festival on Spring Bank Holiday Monday. What a day, sunshine from morning to night, thirty members booked in for lunch. Over at its finest.

Various competitions of sailing and motor boat events took place. The competitions were organised so that the stars did not necessarily win! Club stalwart Barrie Beesley, who is wheelchair bound, helped

his team mate Barbara to first place in one of the yachting events. Another of the yachts, owned by Adrian who is an ex-mariner and a good craftsman, was built from plans in balsa wood, tissue and dope (as in model planes). The mast is tapered dowel and the sails a nylon fabric. The radio gear is standard kit. Why is he a star? He lives in a small flat and all his work is carried out on a board across the bed. He was the first club member to sail a small yacht the length of the canal to the winding hole and back. Yes, he went home with a smile. Alas not all goes to plan. One yacht was caught out in the wind without the cabin attached properly. The yacht was retrieved without the cabin, the electrics dried out and all working again.

Well up on our list for The Titanic Trophy!



Above: Boat Club Members enjoy the sun at Over Canal Basin



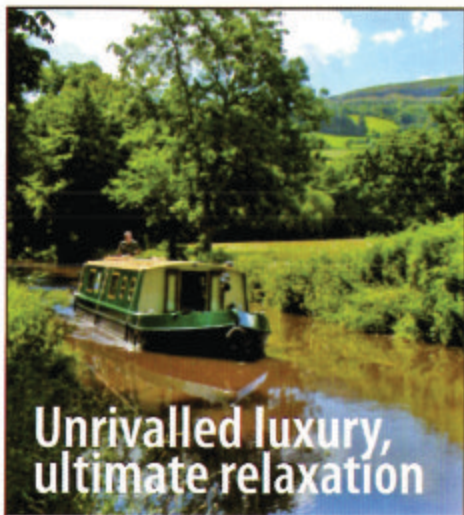
Left: The line-up for one of the yacht races.



Below: The peaceful scene of Adrian sailing his yacht along the canal to the winding hole.

Finally three boats moored at the winding hole. The owners, all pensioners, were taking a well earned rest! The North Sea fishing boat owned by Ted is a Billings kit of wood construction. Bryan's British power motor gun boat is a model of one launched in May 1942 and sunk in action in October 1942; the boats were made with a wooden hull but the model has a fibreglass hull with most of the superstructure made of plastic card. Bob's amphibious Dukw is made entirely from scratch; he produces his own working drawing from the original designs. Just like the real item it works admirably in the water and on land with full driving and steering capabilities. The owner of a real Dukw on the Thames saw Bob's model and purchased the 'mark 1' which is displayed in their London office. A feather in the cap for Bob! *The three owners returned to the slipway for a well earned cup of tea.*

♦ TT



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News from the friends of Gloucester **W** WATERWAYS **M** MUSEUM

By Chris Witts

I reported last time that the Museum was awaiting a decision on an important grant application and I am pleased to say that the first round bid for a Lottery grant was successful. We are now busy planning the submission for the next stage. One million pounds is the aim, with which we can restructure the Museum to reflect our waterways from Birmingham to the sea.

Gloucester being an inland port saw many coasters from Europe trading up the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal to the city during the 20th century, an era which is at times forgotten. To address this I have begun a small group called Coaster & Barges and all enthusiasts are welcome to come along to our third meeting on Wednesday, 18th September at 7pm at the Gloucester Waterways Museum.

Recently Gloucester held the ever popular Tall Ships Festival and the Museum entered into the spirit of it by steaming the dredger



The Tall Ships Festival attracted large crowds to Gloucester Docks.

Ted Beagles

and holding a duck race, indeed we held several over two days! I would say it was one of the most successful events held at Gloucester Docks. What a joy to see so many happy mums and dads with their happy children, mind you the weather helped, two most glorious sunny days.

On Sunday 4th August the Museum celebrated 25 years of being open with a special day of events turning the clock back twenty-five years.

◀ CW

Maggie Jones reports on the H&G CT's very successful presence at the Tall Ships Festival on page 21.

IWA The Inland
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Association

Gloucestershire & Herefordshire IWA Branch

Further details contact:

Roger Holmes
01594 840316

All meetings (except November) at **Gloucester Yacht Club, 7.30pm.**

Thurs. 5th September – THE RIVER AVON by Clive Mathews,
General manager of Avon Navigation Trust & South Wales & Severn Partnership.

Thurs. 3rd October – WILTS AND BERKS CANAL by Chris Coyle

Tues. 12th November – JOINT MEETING between IWA (local Branch),
Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust and Cotswold Canal Trust
Speaker: **Dick Skeet** on the **Hereford & Gloucester Canal**
Venue Whitminster Inn, Whitminster GL2 7NX <http://www.whitminsterinn.co.uk>

NOTE: There will be no usual meeting at the Yacht Club on November 7th.

Thurs. 5th December – FOOD and ENTERTAINMENT

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HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST

Working with Nature

Water Plantain

By John Chappell

*Mad Dog Weed? Devil's Spoons? These are among the strangest names I've come across whilst writing about the flora at Oxenhall: add to this, Leaf of Patrick and there you have three common names of **Alisma plantago-aquatica**, Water Plantain.*

Latin names are often more easily explained than those used by old herbalists. It was the Greek physician Dioscorides that named the family, Alismataceae, the Water Plantains, to which the plant belongs. The species names, *plantago*, 'sole of the foot', – referring to the flatness of the leaves – and *aquatica*, 'living in water', are easily understood. 'Devil's Spoons' also refers to the shape of the leaf, poisonous if digested in large quantities, whilst the Mad Dog reference is believed to refer to the use of the root by the old herbalists as a cure for hydrophobia, a symptom of rabies, caused by being bitten by ayes, that's it, the clue's in the name! As rabies was always fatal I am not sure how this was proven. Leaf of Patrick is more difficult to explain. Irish folk evidently used it to ward off fairies.

The common Water Plantain is an attractive, perennial, flowering plant growing in still water ditches, canals, pond margins and marshes. Leaves, either floating or submerged, are topped by much branched stems bearing small pale lilac flowers July to September. Although small and insignificant the flowers, which open only between 1pm and 7pm, are hermaphrodite (having

both male and female parts) and as a consequence copious seed is produced. The curiously curved, linear ribs of leaves were said by John Ruskin, the art and social critic, to be of 'divine proportion'. Ruskin used many features of the natural world when developing

his theories on the revival of Gothic architecture.

As far as I can recall the plant has not always been at Oxenhall. I've only noticed it over the last few years; it has probably been introduced by birds or on walkers' boots. The dead flower stalk can be overlarge and quite ugly in the autumn and maybe I have inadvertently been doing the

right thing by cutting it down in autumn before the seeds have dispersed and added to our water weed challenges. ♦♦ JC



John Chappell



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Not quite
... the last page!

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Stamps can be taken to a Social Evening or other H&G CT event – or to ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE.

Or please send them direct to:-

H and G Stamps, c/o Steve Bence,
35 Lime Road, SOUTHAM,
Warwickshire, CV47 1EQ

Together we can make a difference!

Thank you.

Sailing4Disabled at Over Basin

The club now meets every Tuesday between 11am and 2pm at Over Canal Basin and it is open to anyone – whether they have a disability or not.



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Last minute plea for Volunteers to help with Over Festival!

Over Festival requires a large number of volunteers to run the event. If you are able to offer some assistance over the weekend **31 August – 1 September** please contact **Maggie Jones** on **01452 618010**.
Thank you

Email Newsletter

The email newsletter is intended to ensure that readers are made aware of significant items of H&G CT 'breaking news' as soon as possible – we stress that it will not be circulated on a regular basis so have no fear that we will be cluttering up your inbox! 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) most certainly will not lose out.

Help us with our Funding Bid!

You will have read on page 9 that we are through to the last three in the Tewkesbury area for £3,000 from the Lloyds Bank Group Community Fund. The winner is decided by public vote but at the time of going to press details of exactly how to vote have yet to be announced. So please subscribe **now** to our newsletter in order that we can tell you how to vote so that you help us win!

For those who wish to register with the **newsletter**, and have not yet done so, 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.

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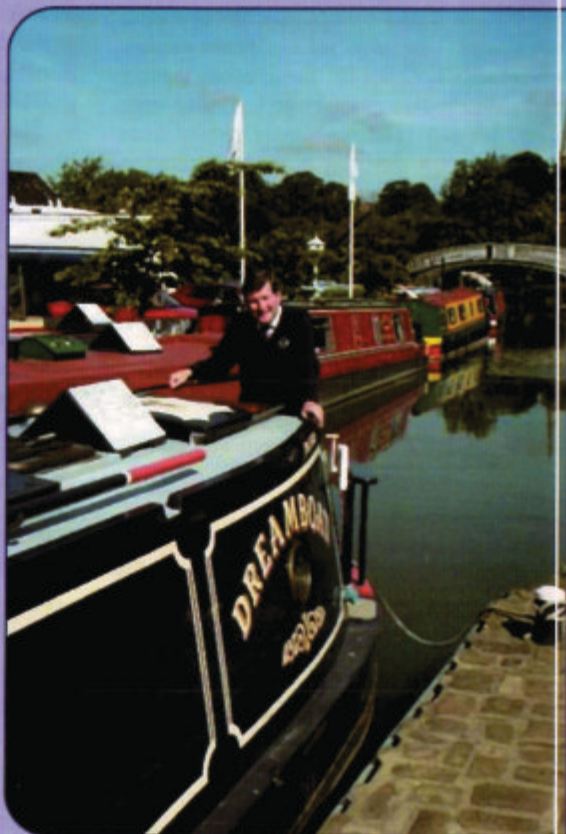
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Want to help?

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.

Contacts

Contact any of these names TODAY!

Ralph Barber

Brick House, Westhide
Herefordshire, HR1 3RG
Tel: (01432) 853 086
ralph.barber@btinternet.com

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

Cliff Penny

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Hereford, HR1 3QS
Tel: (01432) 820 866
canal@penny-ep.co.uk

David Penny

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

Nigel Jefferies

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Tel: (01432) 850 661
najefferies@talktalk.net

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Want to Join?

Please support our voluntary work by becoming a Member of the H&G CT.
A membership form is available online or from ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE.

Visit our Website

www.h-g-canal.org.uk



UK Membership Rates

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

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Show the support of your business by advertising in The Wharfinger. Rates from £45 per issue and we will gladly design your advertisement free of charge.

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Tel. 01452 332 900

ADS@h-g-canal.org.uk

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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



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

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

HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST

Festival

Canal

Free Admission

+ BEER, CIDER AND PERRY FESTIVAL

Saturday 31st August – Sunday 1st September, 2013

11am – 5pm

Heritage Boat Processions ♦♦ Fun on the water
Crafts and Produce Stalls ♦♦ Good Food ♦♦ Music
Fire Brigade display ♦♦ Horse drawn boat
Model Boat Club ♦♦ Classic Cars
and lots more ...



Over Basin near Gloucester

Turn off the A40 at traffic lights 250 yards west of
Over Roundabout (junction of A40/A417). GR SO 816197


Gloucester Quays
Pleased to support the H&G Canal

We hope to see you there!

H&G Canal Sales & Promotion

Outings 2013

by Janet Moul and Maggie Jones



Janet Moul

General view of Hellens Garden Festival – sun actually shining this year.

*Variety is the spice of life! The Sales & Promotion Teams have been out and about promoting the H&G Canal, and the work of the H&G Canal Trust, in very different settings since the last issue of **The Wharfinger** and we have been blessed with more sunshine than we saw all of last year.*



Tim Coghlan donates £200 to the Trust at the Braunston Marina Rally. Left to right: Tim Coghlan, Janet Moul, Becky Moul, Prunella Scales and Timothy West.

Towards the end of May we were off to Northamptonshire for the **Crick Boat Show** – a major feature of the boaters' calendar, with thousands of pounds changing hands, with a few hundred coming to the H&G CT. This show is not attended by too many Canal Societies/Trusts so there is always plenty of attention to our efforts from some of the 26,000 who attended the show this year. While the Hereford team was at Crick the Gloucester team was at the **Tall Ships** event in Gloucester. (Maggie Jones reports on this on the adjacent page)

Our next event was the **Hellens Garden Festival** at Much Marcle, in Herefordshire, held in the grounds of this ancient manor house. The setting could not be more different but local interest meant non-stop talking for Dick Skeet on Saturday and myself on Sunday!

A very small event was the **Forest of Dean Local History Fair** in Lydney, Gloucestershire, where I took a small display about the history of the H&G Canal and talked to descendants of lock keepers and others whose ancestors knew the Canal.

The end of June we were off to Northamptonshire again to the **Braunston Historic Boat Rally** – the show for those with

Our fund-raising stand at Crick Boat Show.

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