

The

Wharfinger

Winter 2014-15

HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST



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Working together in the present to revive the past and secure a better future

REBUILDING 34 MILES OF CANAL BETWEEN GLOUCESTER AND HERFORD

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Working together in the present to revive
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Site Leaders: Ted Beagles (Wed) Maggie Jones (Sat)

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REBUILDING 34 MILES OF CANAL BETWEEN GLOUCESTER AND HERFORD

“CoMMERCIAL SAVVY”

By John Hammond



What do we want? A restored canal from Gloucester to Hereford. And how do we get it? Now that's a more difficult question. It is perhaps instructive to recall how the visionaries who promoted the original canal set about making it a reality. Dick Skeet's new book "Rescued from Obscurity" (see page 11) tells the full story ...

The promoters of the canal had commercial savvy, or thought they had. In the 1790s they were riding on the crest of a national wave of "canal mania": nearly all roads were unsurfaced tracks impassable for wheeled traffic in most seasons, railways existed only as a few short and primitive local tramways and canals were seen as the essential means for economic, industrial and social advance. The public were invited to invest in this new venture, with a prospect not only of bringing improvements to their businesses and communities but also of receiving substantial dividends and seeing the capital value of their investments increase.

More than enough money was raised to meet the estimated cost of the entire canal, but the problem of projects greatly over-running their

budgets is not new: the money ran out in 1798 with the canal from Gloucester still a mile short of Ledbury. Traffic on the truncated canal was disappointing but somehow it survived, even making enough money to cover minor improvements though not to pay a dividend.

In 1838, with little heed to the rapid advance of railways, plans were made to extend the canal to Hereford and investors were beguiled by a prospectus which suggested massive increases in traffic. However, even before the canal reached Hereford in May 1845, the committee had resolved to attempt to sell it to a railway company. This was eventually achieved in 1862 when the Great Western and West Midland Railway companies were persuaded to take over the canal for an annual rental of £5,000 in perpetuity (it actually lasted until 1948), the best deal the H&G Canal proprietors ever made in a final display of commercial savvy. The end for the canal came with the construction of the railway, in 1881.

Our optimism for a complete canal is as great as theirs, but we need to modify and improve on their commercial savvy. British Waterways' analysis in 2009 is with us: it estimated annual benefits to the local economy at £20million and associated employment at some 500 full-time equivalent – but these are future benefits which do not pay for restoration now. The five local Councils are also on our side: the vision, energy and commitment of the H&G Canal Society and then the Trust has secured their agreement to protect the canal line from adverse development. But when the canal and later the railway were closed, no one had the vision to see that the continuous route was of inestimable value, and the land was sold off in a piecemeal manner for negligible sums.



Please contact L&PDT for a copy of the Guide.

Our biggest challenge by far is how to recover this land which was so carelessly disposed of and now belongs to around a hundred landowners. We have had some striking successes where development partnerships will bring or have already brought us benefits, including sections of canal, such as at Llanthony, Over, Aylestone and Dymock. But these sections are short and disconnected, and similar development potential does not exist along most of the canal – nor would we wish it.

CoM, supported by the L&PDT, grapples with this challenge. It would be lovely if we could wave a magic wand and, abracadabra, the canal line is ours to restore ... but no, we are not fairy godmothers. So we have focused our efforts on a mix of fundraising activities, grant applications and appeals for donations and bequests, together with projects which not only cover their costs but will increase our financial resources

over the long term while enhancing the canal and its environment.

Examples include THE WHARF HOUSE, Llanthony Hydro, The Travellers Rest, the Dymock development, Aylestone Park and Holmer Estate (see pages 6–7). That approach is commercial savvy. But much more is needed in the form of capital funding to enable the essential, substantial and urgent land purchases for the canal. That is why we have a Land Fund. Please see www.h-g-canal.org.uk: You really can make a difference!

♦♦ JH



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GRAND HOLIDAY DRAW 2014 *Results*

Thank you to everyone who helped, in any way, to make this yet another successful **Grand Holiday Draw** raising **£2659 + £80** donations in lieu for the H&G CT. As *always especial thanks to our 'star sellers' and to the prize donors.* The draw was once again made at the September Social Evening at Much Marcle, on Tuesday 16th September. The draw was made by the speaker, Roger Black.

1st Prize

Narrow Boat Holiday for FOUR –
Donated by **Black Prince Holidays.**
Ms J Bullock, Leominster.

2nd Prize

One Day's Boat Hire – donated by
Anglo-Welsh.
Mr & Mrs B Evans, Gloucester.

3rd Prize

One night Dinner, Bed & Breakfast for
two at **The Wharf House.**
Mrs Featonby & Mr Spencer, Newent.

Our grateful thanks to **Black Prince Holidays, Anglo-Welsh** and **THE WHARF HOUSE** for donating the Holiday prizes which help to make our annual holiday draw such a success.

*Thank you to everyone who
supported the 2014*

Grand Holiday Draw in any way.

Your Help Please

Would your firm be prepared to sponsor the print costs of the tickets for the **2015 Grand Holiday Draw** to ensure that every single pound raised continues to come to the H&G CT? For £200 the company name appears for over 6 months on thousands of tickets and is fully acknowledged, along with those of our holiday prize donors, in **The Wharfinger.** Janet Moulton would be very pleased to hear from you (01432 264 366). *Thank you.*

News from the
**Legal & Project
Development Team**
at ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE

By David Penny

The Holmer Trading Estate scheme ...

The scheme for redeveloping the Holmer Trading Estate was secured solely on the back of restoring the Canal but did not actually proceed due to the recession ...

The inspector's landmark ruling was:

“ in my judgement, the Canal restoration, and its resultant benefits to long-term planning objectives for the City, are material considerations in this case, which are sufficient to outweigh the conflict with the development plan ”

Now the property market is reviving a new developer has stepped forward and revised plans are being put together to see a new scheme come to life.

This will see about one third of the Canal in Hereford restored and transferred to us as well as a long term income stream from the adjoining properties. *See initial indicative sketch on opposite page.*



For the latest updates please show your support by liking us on Facebook. You can do this by searching for us on Facebook or by following this link:

www.facebook.co.uk/hgcanaltrust

and clicking the 'Like' button on the page.

◆ **DRP**

PROPOSED MASTERPLAN



**...comes
back to
life!**



Codex Land PCC

Following the analysis of the site and surroundings, an initial Masterplan has been prepared with the following key features.

1. A development of around 100 generally detached, semi-detached and terraced new homes.
2. Homes generally 2 storeys in height.
3. 3 storey buildings at key corner locations.
4. A density of approximately 35 dwellings to the hectare rather than 85 dwellings to the hectare of the former consent.
5. Ample car parking for the units within the scheme.
6. Improvements to the existing vehicle access into the site and on College Road.
7. Reinstatement of the canal.



Artist impression

8. Footpath and tow path/cycle route into and through the site.
9. Foot/cycle bridge crossing to link to Aylestone Park.
10. Shared surface streets with maximum vehicle speeds of 10mph.
11. Landscaped buffer to Cavanaghs.
12. Demolition of all existing buildings and hard standings.
13. Decontamination of the site.



OVER FESTIVAL

on the canal

This year's Festival was the most successful yet!

The annual 'Over Festival on the Canal' was the largest so far. The site including the canal basin at Over, was visited by more than 1000 people to savour, discover and enjoy the wide variety of attractions in near perfect weather.

Entrance to the Festival was free, for all to enjoy the usual sideshows and stalls associated with a family fun day out. There was obviously a watery theme, enhanced by visitor participation with a Model Boat regatta, Fire Brigade displays and canoeing and kayaking. The Canal Trust's own trip boat, Mister Maysey provided tours of the canal to Vineyard Hill. This year included the addition of Shetland ponies to provide rides for children, circus skills and other attractions in partnership with the Scout Network.

There were large marquees housing a range of local produce and crafts for sale, including local beers, cider and perry. There was the largest programme to date of live music on the river





terrace with ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE providing tapas and a hugely successful Beer Festival.

For everyone there the message of canal restoration through Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust was implicit everywhere.

Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust is grateful for the generous support of Gloucester Quays and the Gloucestershire Network of Scouts in mounting this Festival.

The Festival next year will be held on Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 August 2015.



John Hawkins, GNS / Johnathon Watkins Photoglow Photography / Maggie Jones



CALLING ALL ONLINE SHOPPERS!!

Give as you Live is a new easy way to raise money for the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust that does not involve parting with extra cash.

Please can I urge you all to sign up and do your internet shopping through Give as you Live from now on. It will generate another income source for the Canal Trust and help us on our way with restoring the Canal! Use this link to sign up and follow the instructions: www.giveasyoulive.com/join/handcanaltrust. Alternatively there is a link to **Give as you Live** on our website.

Step 1 Sign up to Give as you Live on your desktop, tablet or via the mobile app. It is fast, simple and 100% secure.

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Step 3 The retailer will donate a percentage of the purchase value to your favourite cause. The best thing is, it won't cost you a penny extra.

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

**Grant secured
for the Canal Trust**

We have some exciting news which we will be able to share with you all soon in relation to a £6000 grant we have secured for a project primarily on the Over site

The details will be formally announced on our Facebook pages once the embargo date has passed in December.



'Like' us on Facebook if you would like to hear more about this very soon!

◀ SP

Travellers Rest

Sadly ^{THE WHARF HOUSE} Company Ltd had to issue a Court Claim to recover possession of The Travellers Rest in early November.

We are however pleased that Jeff & Judith Steers in the middle of November acted honourably and handed the property back to us without the need for further action. We thank them for this.

Please note ^{THE WHARF HOUSE} Company Ltd is solely the owner of this property and is in no way associated with the operation of the business.

The property will be reopening shortly with new tenants and we will announce the details as soon as they are available.



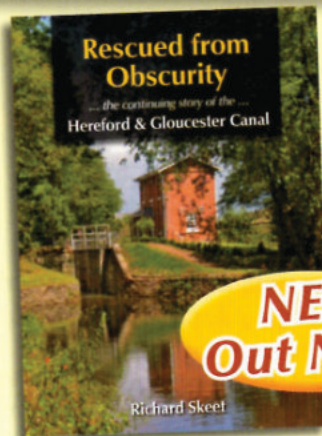
Like The Travellers Rest facebook page for the latest updates.

◀ DRP



Rescued from Obscurity

... the continuing story of the ...
Hereford & Gloucester Canal



**NEW
Out Now!**

David Bick, writing in 1979, described the **Hereford and Gloucester Canal** as being more 'lost in obscurity' than any other major navigation in England.

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In this richly illustrated book a former Chairman of the Trust tells the story of the building and operation of the canal, not as a textbook of industrial archaeology but as a narrative drawing on the words of those involved with the Navigation Company itself or watching from the side-lines.

In the second half of the book Dick Skeet describes how the Hereford and Gloucester Canal Society and later the Hereford and Gloucester Canal Trust has set about the enormous task of restoring the 34 miles of this historic canal, reconnecting two ancient Cathedral Cities.

— o o o —

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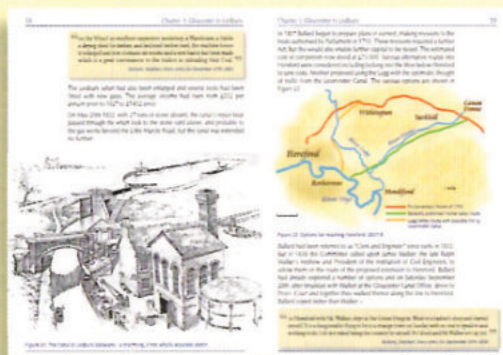
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The book is also available from **The Wharf House.**

Our thanks to Print Plus for their help and support with this H&G CT publication.





The route of the CANAL

By John Hammond

During the last few months the Local Authorities along the route of the Canal have carried out public consultations on their plans for development over the next 12 years.

Ted Baogjes

One item among the large number of specific plans and policies has been the Councils' renewed statements of support for reconstruction of the Canal, a continuation of the policies held since the 1990s. The consultations included maps which, along with details relating to many other proposed schemes, show the protected corridor for the Canal reconstruction, including potential diversions where the original route is obstructed by modern developments. Protection means that the Councils will not approve developments within the corridor which would prevent or adversely affect reconstruction of the Canal.

Although the policies and the maps have been in the public domain for many years and have excited little comment, this consultation produced responses which raised concerns together with general support for a completed Canal and recognition of the financial and community benefits it will bring. Based on an analysis of rural canals and using 2009 figures, the former British Waterways estimated the completed Canal would provide some 500 jobs and contribute £20m per year to the local economy. The ambition, indeed the expectation, of the H&G CT is to achieve more than these estimates for the local community.

The reconstruction of any section of Canal

can only proceed in liaison with the relevant Council, the Environment Agency and other bodies such as those with responsibility for roads. But at least as important, access to any land for reconstruction can only be obtained by legal agreement with the landowner and, where purchase is involved, at a cost agreed with that landowner. There are several precedents along the route where Canal reconstruction is proceeding with the full agreement and support of the landowner. The H&G CT's approach is to seek constructive negotiations with landowners and other interests to create similar harmonious agreements for further reconstruction sites when progress elsewhere makes those places the next priority.

One effect of the policies established for around twenty years by all the Councils along the Canal relates to Section 106 Planning Obligations. These are concerned only with new developments and place requirements on the developer, negotiated with the Council and other local interests. Where the development is adjacent to the route of the Canal the negotiation with the Council will normally include some provision for reconstruction of that section of Canal to be supported by the developer. There are again precedents which demonstrate how this works and where agreements beneficial to both developer and the Canal have been

negotiated, such as at Over, at Dymock and in Hereford.

The objective of the H&G CT is to create a complete and continuous Canal and, in the meantime, to maximise the potential benefit for the community on isolated stretches which are reconstructed. One of the major tasks in achieving this objective is overcoming the small number of obstacles which modern developments have created along the route. The original Canal crossed many roads – in those days little more than muddy bridleways – usually making use of simple lift bridges or fixed hump-back bridges. Many of these structures remain but others have been destroyed, particularly at crossings of more major roads where those roads are now on different alignments and, more significantly, at different levels. An added complexity is that modern roads are subject to regulations on matters such as bridge clearances, gradients, sight lines and so on. Generally it is not a realistic possibility to expect major realignments of the roads to allow Canal reconstruction as it was originally, so the challenge is to find appropriate ways to create new crossings. The options at each location were drawn up in consultation with the highway authorities many years ago but numerous factors, including negotiations with landowners, engineering and operational issues, environmental considerations, cost implications, agreements with relevant authorities and more, will determine the precise details at each location. The protected diversions ensure a possible route exists but, as the Councils' documents state, the route may be varied by agreement. The H&G CT recognises there are potentially conflicting factors and will negotiate with interested parties to attempt to reconcile any conflicts and agree the best option.

The level of the Canal at any point is related to the challenge of road crossings and the solutions eventually adopted. The protected corridor allows for an embankment or cutting where required. The Councils' documents note, "it is expected that as the Canal is re-established the precise areas concerned will be refined", and this is a process which will continue as



Dick Skeet

The Canal corridor at Hereford Retail Park.

agreements are reached and reconstruction proceeds. A good example is at Hereford Retail Park where the protected corridor was to the rear of the site but, after working closely with the landowner, a corridor to the front of the site was agreed as a better solution for all parties. The Councils also ensure that proposals for developments adjoining the route of the Canal are drawn to the H&G CT's attention, in the same way as applies to consultation with any other neighbours. The intention is to ensure such developments respect and make the most of the Canal for the long term benefit of the wider community.

In planning and conducting any Canal reconstruction the H&G CT is guided by several relevant agencies and is bound to meet their requirements. For example, reconstruction of any section of the Canal must avoid any increase to flood risk. In practice the Canal will often form an important part of flood mitigation by acting as a reliable drainage route, as is already planned in several places. In Hereford the H&G CT has taken the lead and invested heavily to construct a major storm overflow for the City, and it is pursuing vigorously the benefits of the Canal as a surface water discharge facility.

Existing canals are widely celebrated as enhancements to the environment and valuable habitats for a wide variety of flora and fauna. Moreover, they are recognised as sources of significant added prosperity for the local economy, the basis for many extra jobs and a cause of increased values of adjacent properties. The aim of the H&G CT is to maintain and extend this varied and beneficial record, by seeking as far as possible to work with its neighbours: *'working together in the present to revive the past and secure a better future'*.



Restoration Team

Oxenhall

By Brian Fox

Following on from the item in the last Wharfinger, I can now report that the Bailey Bridge has been moved to its new temporary position in our compound. It has taken about 18 months of correspondence with the Royal Engineers at Monmouth to organise but it was finally achieved over a long weekend at the beginning of September.

Moving the Bailey Bridge

Everything was undertaken by the army and the first task on Thursday was to secure delivery of three lorry loads of hardcore to provide firm access and parking for the large crane which came on the Saturday. On the Friday the young soldiers had to remove all the decking plates from the bridge to make it as light as possible, and each one was a six-man lift – certainly not a job for the senior citizen volunteers of the Canal Trust. Each plate was carried about 100 yards, to be close to the final resting place of the bridge, and there were 35 altogether although some were only a four-man lift!

The bridge lift went roughly to plan with a hired crane from Sparrows passing easily through the new gate recently installed. The crane driver had been told to expect to lift a weight of about 5 tons with all the decking removed but it turned out to be nearer 7 tons which meant the crane had to



Brian gives the thumbs-up to the successful move of the Bailey Bridge.

Colin Dymott

move twice more, moving the bridge a little each time, in order to drop the bridge safely in its final resting place without the whole lot toppling over. The decking plates were finally stacked on the bridge in a tidy pile as the soldiers didn't have time to replace them all in position. And there they will have to stay.

Digging down to the Aqueduct

But that was only the beginning. The space now revealed under the Bailey Bridge contained several tons of soil which had to be removed before we could get at the aqueduct underneath to complete the repairs. So the following Tuesday saw the arrival of an excavator driven by Mr Tuck who spent the day moving this soil to one side revealing the top of the stonework comprising the arch of the aqueduct. With his skilful use of the excavator controls he skimmed off all but the final inch of soil which the volunteers spent the following two Tuesdays removing with buckets and trowels. This final scrape revealed the reason why we were doing this work. The old stonework, which is over 200 years old, had



A Sparrows crane was brought in to lift the Bailey Bridge by the Royal Engineers.



The start of the concrete pour on the top of Ell Brook Aqueduct.



... and the concrete kept on coming!

Peter Field

been patched up over the years but in a couple of places our trowels found small holes where stones had fallen out and great care had to be taken not to make the damage any worse and collapse part of the arch. A temporary plug of concrete was inserted supported by emergency shuttering underneath and with fingers crossed the cleaning was done. Finally a bit of shuttering to contain the concrete and we were ready for the final phase.

Pouring the concrete

Initial calculations indicated that about 14 cubic metres of concrete weighing about 20 tons would be required to give a substantial protective membrane over the old aqueduct arch. The largest lorry only carries about 8 cubic metres so a morning delivery was made and there was plenty of time to spread the load evenly and lay reinforcing wire on top ready for the second delivery in the afternoon. This too was achieved, the arch was still standing, and the total volume of concrete came to 13.5 cubic metres. Readers will recall that we had to get carpets out for the first concrete lorry some months ago as it got stuck on the wet grass, but this time the stone laid for the crane provided a firm base and both deliveries went off without a hitch. Again the rakes and shovels were used to spread the wet concrete evenly over the whole arch and a final smoothing off with the back of a shovel prepared the top for a coat of waterproofing compound when the concrete is dry next week. A long day but four very tired volunteers went home quite satisfied at the end of it all.

Meanwhile ...

The usual more mundane tasks have continued although the grass cutting should ease off with the onset of autumn. Now is the time to think about pollarding old willows and removing further trees which are growing on the line of the future canal restoration. Strimming of summer vegetation has started to open up access along the non towpath bank and hedges have been cut back. Our tractor is undergoing essential repairs in readiness for the next major task which awaits but that will be reported next time.



The finished article covered in waterproofing compound and ready for backfilling

Peter Field/Brian Fox

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Restoration Team

Over Basin

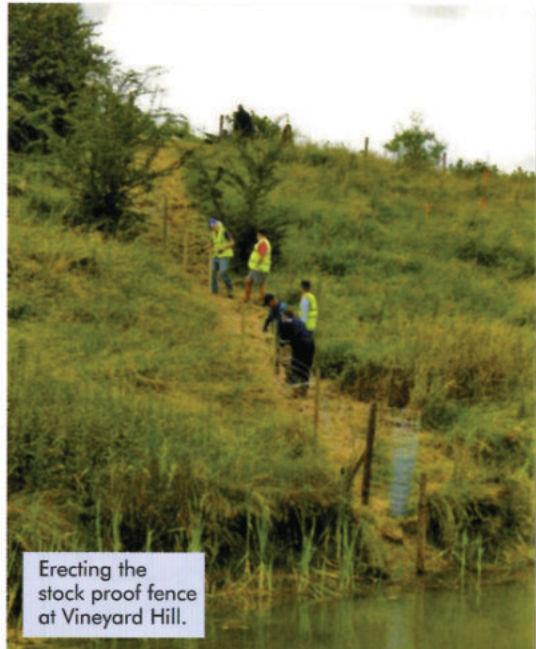
Incorporating Vineyard Hill

By Ted Beagles

Summer is always a very busy time of year for us with lots of mowing of grass, weeding of borders, pruning of shrubs, as well as keeping the scrub under control in the wilder areas around the site, but this year has seen an exceptional amount of growth. We were also involved in assisting the Vineyard Trust to erect a stock proof fence around an area of the hill where many young trees were planted last year; this was to protect them from damage by the sheep which were to be brought in to graze the field.

Water levels

It has also been an unusually warm and dry period with very little rainfall, so the water in the canal fell to such a low level that we began to be concerned about running the boats during the canal festival. However in the event we were most fortunate to receive an offer of a suitable pump on loan from **The Stuart Group Ltd.** This is an excellent machine and in no time the level was back to normal. There was particular concern about the landslip area along Vineyard Hill as we had not been able to run the heritage boats through for some weeks, but it turned out to be fine. *Many thanks to Stuart Sayer, Managing Director of The Stuart Group Ltd.*



Erecting the stock proof fence at Vineyard Hill.



The pump in service.



Unloading the Stuart Group pump.



Mike and John scrape Renton's base plate



Floor construction in Renton's Hold



A trial fit of the reed boat's cutting mechanism.



Our heritage fleet at Over Basin

Work on the boats

The drier weather has allowed us to make good progress on the restoration of the heritage boats. The inside of the open hold at the front of *Renton* has now been scraped and wire brushed to remove all loose rust, treated with rust inhibitor, and painted ready for the floor construction which is now well under way. Good progress is also being made on the reed cutting boat; the engine has been installed and attention is now being turned to the reed cutting equipment. This is a particular challenge: it arrived at Over as a heap of parts inside one of the two boats, and so far we have been unable to find any information on the mechanism.

Bosley's hydraulic drive motor problem is proving to be very elusive. Andy has taken it apart, and we can see what is wrong, but at the time of writing we have no inkling of what has caused it. Watch this space. Meanwhile much work has been going on around the remainder of the boat, including repair of the leaking gland on the rudder shaft, painting of all the under deck areas outside the engine room, and refurbishment of the fibreglass cabin. Finally we now have a complete set of riot shields to protect the windows thanks to **Simon Hayward of EB Hayward & Co.** (advert p1), who made us an excellent replacement for the one that was missing when *Bosley* arrived at Over Wharf. →

Throughout the two days of the Canal Festival in August there was a lot of interest shown in the heritage boats which were all opened up for display. *Alder* and *Renton* also made several trips along the length of canal. Much interest was also shown in the reed cutting boat which was on display in its partially rebuilt condition. As usual *Mister Maysey* was very popular running trips for visitors continuously on both days.

Electric charging point

In issue 119 I reported the installation of the electric car charging point in ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE car park. At that time the only outstanding thing was the final connection to the electrical supply, but unfortunately this was delayed; it has now been completed and the charging point is fully functional. My apologies to anyone who may have been inconvenienced by this delay. ♦ **TB**

Want to get involved at Over
then please ring:-

Ted Beagles 01452 522 648
Maggie Jones 01452 618 010



Margaret clips the laurel hedge outside The Wharf House.

Ted Beagles



David pauses for a photo shoot between Mister Maysey's trips at Over Festival.

John Hawkins, GNS

NEW SEASON WILLOW FOR SALE AT OVER

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Contact Mike Bowden on site at Over Basin most Wednesdays or telephone:

01452 790459
mykeljhb@aol.com

This impressive cover for a clay oven was produced from Over Willow by Cathy Wallace.

LOGS for SALE



We have a number of sites where we have logs, mainly ash and hawthorn, available.

All proceeds support the Canal Restoration. For more information please contact **aimee@thewharfhouse.co.uk.**

Social Evenings

at the Royal Oak

*The third Tuesday of every month
(except December) at
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7.30 for 8pm start.*

18 November

Paul Barnett

Gloucester and Sharpness Canal

*We conclude the year with Paul's
latest presentation*

December

No meeting in December

20 January

Denise Foster

*Herefordshire Bats –
woodlands and water*

*They may be hibernating but we will
hear of their habitats.*

17 February

Gareth Davies

*Colourful history of buses
in the Borders*

*Another form of transport which we
have not heard about before,*

17 March

*Joint meeting with the local IWA, the
Cotswold Canals Trust and the
Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust
Updates on the restorations of these
two local canals.*



Please support our monthly meetings,
make a note on the calendar and tell your
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on a wide range of topics. Why not share
transport and make an evening of it –
everyone is welcome!

Socials Report for October

by Maggie Jones

Shrewsbury and Newport Canals

Due to the advertised speaker being unavailable Brian Nelson, from the **Shrewsbury and Newport Canals Trust**, kindly stepped in to talk to us about the restoration of these two canals. The talk was illustrated by a series of aerial photos with the line of the canal clearly marked across the landscape. The route of the canals to Shrewsbury starts at Norbury Junction on the Shropshire Union Canal. Some similarities to our own restoration were clearly visible in that much of the canal had been filled in and only short stretches are at present in water.

Clearly some of the biggest challenges are the number of major roads over which the canal once ran which have been raised over the years and now obstruct the route of the canal. An impressive aqueduct built by Thomas Telford at Longdon-on-Tern is reputed to be the oldest surviving iron aqueduct in the world. Thank you to Brian for this very interesting talk.

♦♦ MJ

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

Winter and Christmas opening times see page 31 →

Restoration Team

Moat Farm

By Wilf Jones

As reported in The Wharfinger 121, a second week of work with excavator and dumper was completed.

This allowed us to excavate about 100 metres of Canal bed and to profile the banks, including the removal of the first dam. Nature being as it is, the bed of the canal has filled to a depth of over 30 cm without any help from us, even though it was the driest September for over a century.

Unfortunately, the excavator owned by the volunteers was 'professionally' vandalised: it had parts removed from the engine compartment and tossed into the undergrowth. Although most were found, some key pipes have yet to be discovered. However, replacements were sourced and fitted. But all the dry weather has passed us by.

We were hoping to have some 200 metres completed, but the recent rains naturally filling the bed have given us a greater challenge. Work will continue on preparing the towpath area for the full length of the site. Meanwhile, maintenance of the site will be eased by the petrol flymo recently donated by a member, Mr Kellett, who also donated another five items which will be of great use to the Trust at various sites. *Thank you.*

◆ WJ

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



Martyn whizzes by using the donated Flymo.

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**



Will Jones/Alan McBride

Moat Farm site looking towards the south end.

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Restoration Team

Llanthony

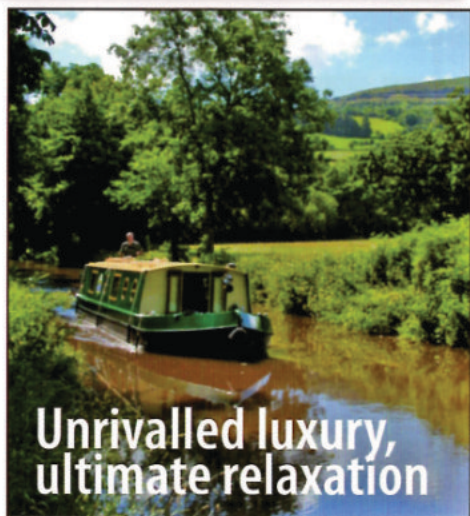
By Paul Henshaw

The fencing which was referred to in the last edition of the Wharfinger has now been completed.

It will be able to withstand rising river flood levels which flow into the cottage gardens and will allow the high water to drain away via the various drainage channels which abound on the site.

During the summer the major activity involved managing the prolific growth of vegetation we have experienced this year.

*Would you like to join our team at Llanthony? Please call **Paul Henshaw** on 01684 293930*



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Alan and Wilf (rear of the year contender) secure the palings.



The completed fence.

Ted Beagles, Alan McBride

Colleen Best

In early October we learned of the sad passing of Colleen Best who had lived at Llanthony since 1971. She was regarded with some affection by the Canal Trust volunteers at the site. Our sincere condolences go to her family.


◆ PH

Restoration Team

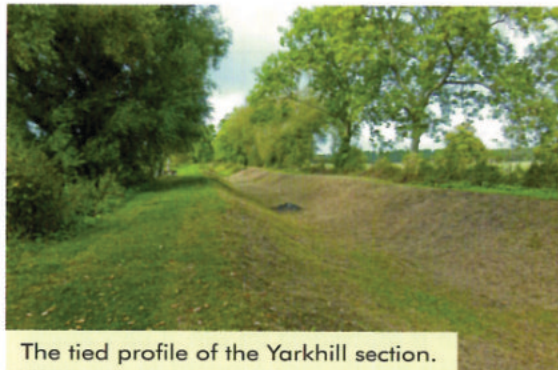
Yarkhill

By Chris High

Site maintenance has continued and moved on from the access paths to the canal itself.

An assault with brush cutter, strimmer, loppers, grass hooks and rakes has revealed the canal profile again. The continued lack of water and the willingness of the Team will, we hope, see the cleared section extended before rain and canal water level put paid to this task.  **CH**

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



The tied profile of the Yarkhill section.



Still lots more to tackle as shown here!

Chris High

E Buckland

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Development Site

Dymock

By David Penny

We are pleased that at last the Canal restoration is proceeding on site, if very much delayed. We greatly look forward to our long term partner Keyway completing the work.



David Penny

Thanks to GP Thomas the towpath bank takes shape with diverted electricity cable buried within the new bank.

The housing site is now to a level where construction will shortly commence, and something Dymock village has been waiting to see developed for many years will start to take shape.



'Like' the H&G CT on facebook for the latest updates.

◆ DRP

Restoration Team

Kymin East

Part of the Withington Project

By Wilf Jones

For three days, over two weekends, volunteers from Yarkhill, Moat Farm, Llanthony, Oxenhall and Over gathered at Kymin for some hard labour on the next stage of completing the Kymin project.

Many thanks to all those who took part. The days were spent pruning, strimming, logging up and removing the logs from the Canal corridor to the designated temporary storage areas. It was hard and heavy labour in some difficult conditions as the corridor is still very wet in places. We had to extract the dumper from a sticky spot – thanks to Paul Hatt for being the knight in shining armour!

Surveying by Martyn Tilford has allowed us to confirm the towpath height and the level of the Canal bed, which will be needed in the next few weeks when we start further work on the drainage ditch which was dug last year, to include making it wider and deeper, also levelling and widening the towpath.

Starting at the Kymin lane end and working towards Barr's lock, the distance achieved will depend on the difference made by pumping out water from the improved drainage ditch which we hope will help dry out the wettest area in the middle.

◆ WJ

Overflow Weir at Aylestone Park

By Wilf Jones

Progress has been slow over the past months, but by the time you read this ...

the brick wall on the face of the weir should be completed, with thanks to Ray Davies, plus the removal of all the scaffolding, and the weir plates should be fitted.

The landscaping of the area is planned to start in November, followed by the fence around the weir, with the planting of the hedge inside the fence also taking place, weather permitting. This will allow the temporary site security fence to be reduced.

The final work on this phase of the construction of the overflow weir will be the erection of the handrail and laying the towpath surface on the sleeper bed across the top. Together with clearing weed growth from the Canal this should greatly improve the area, and the intention is to maintain this throughout 2015 and beyond.

◆ WJ

Reward

Theft and Vandalism of Excavators

In what appear to be linked incidents the mini-excavator 'Sam', owned and maintained by our Yarkhill restoration site volunteers, has been stolen and the mini-excavator, owned and maintained by our Moat Farm restoration site volunteers, has been "professionally vandalised". The H&G CT will consider making a reward available for information received that leads to the successful prosecution and conviction of the person/s responsible. Please contact (in confidence) our Vice Chairman John Hammond. *Thank you.*

JLHammond@blueyonder.co.uk

07894 473125

Sonia Rolt



We sadly report the death of Sonia Rolt in Gloucester hospital in late October. Widow of the late LTC Rolt, who wrote 'Narrow Boat' (the book which is widely regarded as saving the inland waterways network), Sonia was a remarkable woman who continued to campaign for the inland waterways – amongst many other interests – until a few weeks before her death.

During the second world war she trained as boatwoman on the canals to release the boatmen for active service and it was during her back-breaking labours transporting essential cargoes during the war that she gained first hand knowledge of the canal system and developed her passion for the retention and restoration of the inland waterways.

She was a most welcome VIP at the opening of Over Basin and both then and in more recent years was still very articulate despite her age and a fascinating lady to talk to. Whilst the achievements of Tom Rolt are well known the tireless involvement and dedication of Sonia Rolt has undoubtedly contributed to the inland waterways that we know today – as well as to those of the future – and she will be sadly missed.

◆ CRP

Hyde Mill

By Chris High

Previously we reported that Chris High and friends had commenced work carrying out an archaeological dig at the site of Hyde Mill by kind invitation of the landowner Malcolm Davies. They have made some further interesting finds

Hyde Mill has been revisited with significant further excavation being carried out. The bridge wall section, although short, is impressive as it is not just straight stones laid in an arc. The face of each stone has been expertly worked to produce a smooth curve. The water wheel, now removed from the mill race, is in surprisingly good condition and the buckets are expected to collect and retain any future rainfall. The additional photos tell the rest of the story.

◆ CH



Left: large cast boss to connect the drive shaft to the grinding stone.

Below: Section of the water wheel removed from the wheel pit.





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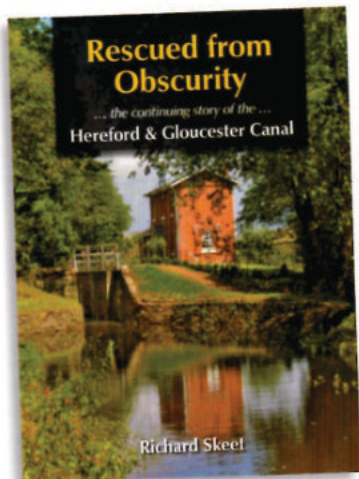
Above: Significant progress has been made on the clearance of the mill.



Left: A short section of wall has been uncovered by the bridge.

Chris High

Gift ideas from ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE



Rescued from Obscurity

Dick Skeel's brand new book about the history of the Hereford and Gloucester Canal and the restoration work of the H&G CT will make the perfect stocking filler. **£10**



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Winter and Christmas opening times see page 31 →



Model Boat Club

By Ted Tedaldi

Sailing this summer has been continuous for The Gloucester & District Model Boat Club. The highlight was The Over Festival with forty boats on display each day. The display consisted of every type of boat from submarines to tugs and sailing craft. A dozen models were in car boots as our area was fully occupied.

The sailing was at its best this year. A constant breeze kept the sailors happy. They were able to demonstrate to the public the various skills of sailing, tacking and running with the wind. Members also liaised with *Mister Maysey's* skipper and were able to use their motor boats along the full length of canal. The daily visitors showed much interest in the display with many questions.

The club has many senior members, but age and health problems are catching up with them. Arthur Edgecombe, one of our senior members built his own yacht in his back garden. His skills are now model size which he builds completely from scratch from drawings. His knowledge of timbers goes unchallenged. He finds unwanted antique furniture a good source for timber. His well equipped workshop enables him to cut the timber to the scale required.

Arthur then lays the keel and continues to build as a full size yacht. Of course the electrics, servos for the rudder and sails have



Arthur with his model of a Riva cruiser.



Trevor with his model of the King's Britannia.

to be fitted before the deck can be fitted. To make the sails he uses his sewing machine. Finally the yacht requires ballast.

Most of his yachts are about 4 feet long so this requires a fair amount of lead. The

photograph of Arthur shows him with his model of a Riva cruiser. Unfortunately Arthur's eyesight and fineness of fingers is departing and his enjoyment now is joining members and canal workers at Over on a Wednesday.

Good news for Trevor Palmer's wife. Trevor many years ago made a model of The Cutty Sark. It has lived in their lounge. The Cutty Sark Trust searched for a model to go with the refurbished craft at Greenwich. They enthused over Trevor's model, and she is now permanently installed at Greenwich. Early September was the removal day. The photograph shows Trevor with his model of the King's Britannia.

♦ TT



Some of the forty model boats on display at Over Festival.



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

By Chris Witts



Tall ships arrive at Gloucester Docks in preparation for the filming of 'Through the Looking Glass'.

The office move at the Museum to Level 4 is now complete. The Coots complex is empty with news that Wetherspoons has submitted its plans for alterations and approval to Gloucester City Council. Level 4 is proving suitable for use by both staff and volunteers with pleasant spacious offices, rest room and kitchen facilities.

During the beginning of the move the Museum faced disruption for a week or so when Walt Disney turned the area into the film set for a new Alice in Wonderland film. It was amazing that by the day following filming the set was cleared and hard to imagine that it had been there at all! An added bonus was that the tall ship Earl of Pembroke remained moored alongside the Museum for a week which helped to attract more visitors.

We now wait for news on our Lottery bid, and we hope good news will be given sometime during early December. What a good Christmas present that would be!

For more details please visit our website at www.friendsofgwm.co.uk



Sue Shopp



The Inland
Waterways
Association

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Non members are welcome and admission is FREE.

7.30pm at The Yacht Club GL1 2EQ

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**** Thurs. 4th December – CHRISTMAS SOCIAL**
– with food and entertainment – tickets £5

Thursday 5th February – PAUL BARNETT
– topics to be chosen on the night

Thursday 5th March – AGM
Followed by a talk by a CRT South West
Waterways Trust Representative

Tuesday 17th March 7.30pm for 8pm
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Joint H&G, CCT and IWA meeting

**** Sunday 5th April**
Tour of the Llanthony and Over sites
followed by Tapas at The Wharf House.
meet at The Yacht Club GL1 2EQ at 11am.

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Enquiries – Sue Turner 01452 312228
Further details contact: **Martin Turner**
email: martin.turner40@btinternet.com

Sailing4Disabled

By Pete Bisson



The Wheelyboat in action at Over Festival.

Hi all, Long Gone Silver reporting on what we pirates have been up to.

Before I ramble on can I say a huge thanks to Big Andy who has been elected as the WEB Pirate (he has a spider on his shoulder) and he's doing a very good job! Check out www.sailing4disabled.org.uk for the photos of what we've been up to in the past few months since the last write up.

The Wheelyboat was collected just in time for the Belarussians' visit to Over Basin for their annual session of splashing about on the water, which they did with great joy and delight to us. They all, including the host families, went away with the promise of being back next year with their new visitors, the photos were taken by a professional photographer who donated his services and even had 10 of the 300+ photos reproduced by a photo lab! I will add they are a little better than mine!

The Wheelyboat (our new venture into power) has been an overall success and we are now endeavouring to raise the £9,500.00+VAT to purchase it, so if you're asked to buy a raffle ticket don't expect to win! Plans are well under way to raise money by social functions, such as dance, skittles, bingo, pub games, fun events! Watch the website for updates. The Wheelyboat should be back at Over by the time this goes to print, with its having been trialled at Frampton Sailing Club and on the Cotswolds Canal at Stroud. More in the next issue.

If you would like to help or just fancy being a pirate for a few hours, come and visit us at Over Basin, Hereford & Gloucester Canal (Gloucester end), on every Tuesday between 10.30 and about 14.00. You can contact Long Gone Silver on 07913 015018, ask for Pete. Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous 2015.

◆ PB

Sailing4Disabled

meets every Tuesday at **Over Canal Basin** from 11.00 to 14.00.

It is open to everyone –
whether they have a disability or not.

Working with Nature

Bindweed

By John Chappell

*Bindweed is known and hated by all gardeners as a nuisance weed and yet what a beautiful thing it is! There are two separate species, **Convolvulus arvensis**, field bindweed and **Calystegia sepium**, hedgebindweed. Both belong to the *Convolvulus* family as do Morning Glory and the Sweet Potato.*

Convolvulus arvensis is a ground creeping plant, although it will climb to 2 metres if it finds a handy host to bind around. The heart shaped leaves, pointed at the tips, are spirally arranged along twining stems and the flowers are small trumpets, white through to pink, often striped or with a pink eye. Common bindweed grows rapidly and if left unchecked will soon choke and kill cultivated plants.

Larger in all its parts, *Calystegia sepium*, or hedge bindweed, does not have the pink colouring in its flowers; its broad leaves and pure white trumpets are most often seen smothering hedgerows and large shrubs as it twines around stems counter clockwise up to a height of four metres. Common names for the hedge bindweed include old man's nightcap, white witch's hat and wedlock, the latter referring to the gown-like flowers and the 'binding' nature of the plant.

The flowers of both species are hermaphrodite, i.e. 'complete' flowers having male and female parts and produced from pointed buds like tightly furled umbrellas; they appear in mid summer through to autumn. Pollinated by bees, butterflies and small flies one flower produces two seeds. A single plant of bindweed can produce hundreds of seeds which are eaten by birds. With such a bonanza,



Calystegia sepium, or hedge bindweed.



Convolvulus arvensis is a ground creeping plant.

seeds the birds miss will remain viable in the soil for up to twenty years. The plant's extensive, perennial root system stores everything it needs and, as every gardener knows, re-growth will start from even the smallest fragment of root left in the ground, even after top growth is removed. Hand picking through the soil or 'Roundup', used before the seeds set, is the only means of control.

Both species of bindweed grow at Oxenhall and when I see either the large version with its huge white trumpets smothering a hedge, or the common field bindweed with pretty pink and white striped flowers in grassland on the Willows, I'm always reminded that a weed is only a plant in the wrong place. ♦♦ JC

Working with Nature p. page 38 →

The Cherry Tree

Following my article on the wild cherry trees growing at Oxenhall (page 35 of the last edition of **The Wharfinger**) a Member living in Worcestershire contacted me saying that she enjoyed reading my 'Working with Nature' articles which she found to be so interesting. However, she suggested that I was incorrect to say the wild cherry was also known as the bird cherry – although admitting that the wild cherry name of *Prunus avium* was very confusing! Her tree encyclopaedia described the bird cherry as a quite different little tree, examples of which had lined a road at a previous address, whereas she had two huge wild cherry trees in the meadow next to her house.

Gardeners will always know *Prunus padus* as the Bird Cherry. In my article I wrote about *Prunus avium*, also known as the wild cherry, and I quoted Wikipedia and the RHS website in this. Popular books refer only to *Prunus padus* as the bird cherry.

Our Member illustrates the whole problem with vernacular ie non Latin names. Latin is used botanically as it is international,



unchanging and cannot be misinterpreted. Using vernacular names has, and always will, cause confusion. I blame the botanists! I am so glad she enjoys my articles, I did suggest to the Editor that readers had read enough of them but he soon put a stop to that idea.

◆ JC

As John mentions, earlier in the year I had to work quite hard to persuade him to continue with these interesting articles – illustrated with his excellent photographs – which I first introduced in the spring of 2007 as a "short series"! John has opened up my eyes to the sheer number and variety of plants, trees and shrubs that surround our volunteers on just the Oxenhall site – something for everyone to treasure as more of the Canal and towpath is restored and opened to the public. *Ed.*

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Not quite
... the last page!

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Turn stamps into cash for the H&G CT's **Land Fund**. It doesn't matter if they have already been used, or if they are everyday first or second class stamps; – **together** we can collect enough to raise ££££'s. Please **cut** the envelope leaving approximately 1cm of envelope bordering each stamp. We can raise even more money from overseas stamps, first day covers, presentation packs and stamp albums.

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Warwickshire, CV47 1EQ

Together we can make a difference!

Thank you.

Post Haste

An important reminder to all Members. There are times when we may need to contact Members regarding their Membership and an increasing number have kindly provided their email address* (**thank you**). If you have email then please advise the Membership Secretary (Nigel Jefferies – njefferies@talktalk.net) of your email address so that we can save the (seemingly ever increasing) postal costs. [**If you have sent details previously please ensure that we have your current email address – if in any doubt please don't hesitate to send it again.*] We can assure you that your details will not ever be passed on to any other organisation nor will we pester you with numerous emails.

3 bedroom house to rent in Gloucester



Llanthony Lock House is a lovely riverside property near Gloucester Quays. It is currently undergoing major renovations and will be available to rent in Spring 2015.

*For more details please contact
steph@thewharfhouse.co.uk*

Gift Membership

If you are still struggling to find that elusive Christmas gift why not give a H&G CT Gift Membership – it will *outlive those flowers or box of chocolates!* Available to callers at ^{THE} WHARF HOUSE or just send your and the recipient's details, together with the relevant membership rate for the gift (for rates see inside back cover), to the H&G Canal Sales and Promotion mail order address (*inside back cover*). Details of your gift will be sent inside an H&G Christmas card at no extra cost to you and the recipient will receive four editions of **The Wharfinger** – a gift that lasts all year. ♦ CRP

*We wish all of our readers
a Happy, Healthy
Christmas and a
Prosperous 2015.*



COPY DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE

MONDAY, 12 JANUARY

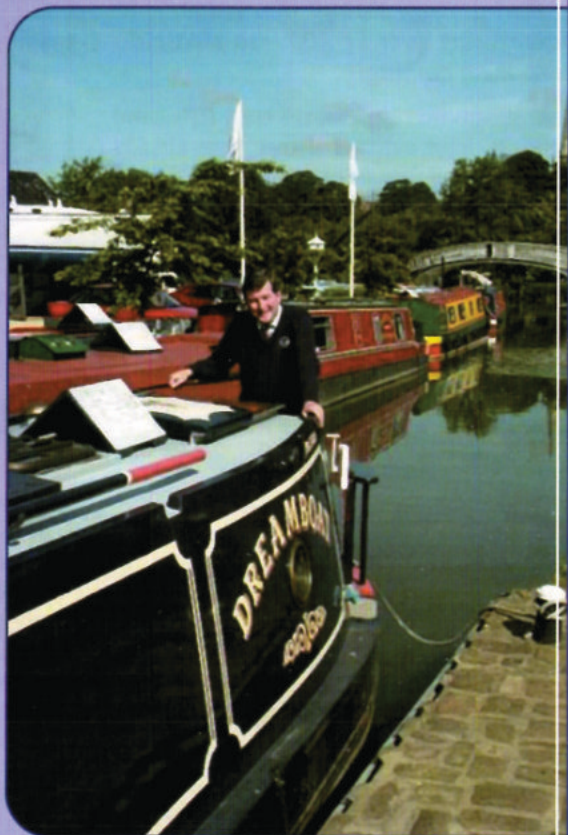
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Want to help?

The Canal Trust is always in need of new volunteers as our activities continue to expand. We can normally find a use for any skill from gardeners to first aiders, brickies to those willing to help with a shovel, pen or laptop.

Contacts

Contact any of these names TODAY!

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www.h-g-canal.org.uk

THE WHARF HOUSE

www.thewharfhouse.co.uk



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H&G CT UK Membership Rates

Please support our
voluntary work by
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the H&G CT.
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available online or from
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Joint/Family	£15	£300
Senior Citizen	£7.50	£115
Joint Senior Citizen	£10	£150
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Membership records are computerised. Your entry is available for inspection if you send a SAE to the Membership Secretary.

We try to ensure details of talks/events are correct - please verify with the relevant organiser if travelling long distances.

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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 H&G 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.



Gloucester Quays
Pleased to support the H&G Canal