

The

Wharfinger

Spring 2015

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branches – which break off anyway if left unchecked. Most of the trees have never been managed before so there is a lot of timber to deal with and it can take a couple of weeks to complete even one. Bernard is our only authorised chain saw operator, so he earns his keep during the winter months, although occasional assistance from our Moat Farm trained volunteers is also appreciated. We had a very welcome offer of help from the **Waterway Recovery Group** specialist forestry team so we booked them for a weekend at the end of December to cut down some trees that lie on the line of the canal extension. We are now inundated with logs which we shall be pleased to sell to those who can store them for a year or two before they are burnt. **WRG Forestry Team** will be back later this winter to tackle some of the more difficult trees. *Many thanks to them!*

The stock of logs created when the willows were pollarded.

Clearing the Builder's Yard

Towards the end of last year the H&G CT secured the lease of a former builder's yard adjacent to the old railway station in Newent. The first job is to clear all the materials left by the builders and whilst most is rubbish there is a lot still to clear and who knows what we may find. This task will be tackled in earnest after tree maintenance is finished at the end of February.

» **BF**



Brian Fox

Moat Farm ... see article on page 10

Restoration Update continues on page 22 →

NEW SEASON WILLOW FOR SALE AT OVER

Grown on the osier beds reinstated by the H&G CT alongside Over Canal Basin.

Small rods about 1.8m in length and about 3mm diameter, suitable for basketry etc. **5p each.**

Large rods about 1.5m to 2.4m in length and about 10mm in diameter, suitable for living willow sculptures, edges, screens, hurdles etc. **20p each.**



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.**

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Awards for All
Grant



LOTTERY FUNDED



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Cover image: Early Spring Sunshine at Yarkhill. Chris High.



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Editorial by Cliff Penny

'JUST' CHALLENGES!

From the outset the H&G CT has adopted the approach that there are no problems, *just a series of challenges!*

These come in many guises and we do our utmost to overcome them as appropriately and effectively as possible. Hardly an edition of **The Wharfinger** goes by without a number being mentioned – this edition being no exception. The *'it's just another challenge'* approach has served us very well over the years and usually gets us results – albeit exceedingly slowly at times.

The Wharf House, Llanthony Lock Cottages, The Travellers Rest public house and the soon to be built rental property at Dymock make a portfolio of assets that is unique amongst the 60+ active restoration projects nationally. These, together with the annual index-linked contributions from properties on neighbouring new developments (already secured at a number of locations as part of 'planning gain' negotiations in both counties) will combine to produce a sustainable long-term income for the H&G CT. This is essential to assist in the challenge of meeting the costs of maintaining and managing the Canal as each section is restored as well as after it has been completed – in perpetuity.

Readers will know that, following the sad death in hospital of one of our tenants of the Llanthony Cottages, a small team of our volunteers has commenced major improvements to that property. The H&G CT is fortunate that we have a number of volunteers who appreciate the importance of the H&G CT's policy of acquiring such bricks-and-mortar assets. The fact that they are willing to devote a considerable part of their 'Canal restoration' voluntary time and effort on repairs and improvements to our properties is not taken for granted. Please see Restoration Update – **and an appeal for specialist trades assistance – on p.25**. Interested in renting? Please see p.39.

Such assets do at times present *additional* challenges to those normally associated with canal restoration! For the third time since it opened **The Wharf House** has endured weeks of major roadworks on the adjacent section of the A40. Such major roadworks can (and do) wreak havoc on nearby businesses with little or no redress. The current works, to improve and install traffic lights at Over roundabout, should be finished by the time you read this. Despite the additional challenge of the roadworks, our hard-working team at **The Wharf House** remains on track to exceed previous annual trading records by the end of the trading year (28 February).

Yet another challenge is trying to ensure that the presentation and content of **The Wharfinger** remains at a high standard. We hope that readers will be happy with the 'refresh' of the internal pages – once again my thanks to Maggie Jones for all of her hard work on this, and for putting up with my many interventions!

“ CoMmunity Values ”

... a perspective from Council of Management

by John Hammond



The H&G CT exists as a community: of volunteers, members and supporters of many kinds – individual, corporate and official, notably the local Councils along the route, all of which have policies protecting the Canal route and promoting its reconstruction. It also exists within a wider and largely supportive community: land owners, neighbours, businesses, visitors, Parish Councils and a variety of local and national bodies representing common interests – for example, the Canal & River Trust, the Environment Agency, the Inland Waterways Association, the Carbon Trust, the Heritage Lottery Fund, and many others. All are important, but it is the volunteers who lead the way.

So how does all this work?

Our volunteers are at the heart of our own community. Their contributions to our success are many. The articles you read in **The Wharfinger** are written by volunteers and the pictures are provided by volunteers; the material is edited, assembled and designed into the quarterly format seen here by volunteers. The advertisers support **The Wharfinger**, and thus the H&G CT, and the administration of their advertising is done by volunteers. **The Wharfinger** is printed at a much reduced rate by one of our long-term supporting companies, Print Plus. Last, but not least, the tedious job of envelope stuffing and the distribution of **The Wharfinger**, many copies by hand, is done by volunteers.

A similar story can be told about the other material we produce, such as leaflets about Membership, the Land Fund, Legacies, Canal Walks, which are all the work of volunteers. Volunteers also ensure our achievements are celebrated more widely by, for example, maintaining contact with and drafting articles for the national press. On a larger scale, the excellent new book on “the

continuing story of the H&G Canal”, Rescued from Obscurity – which every member should own – was researched and written by a volunteer, Dick Skeet, with added material and many pictures contributed by other volunteers, designed and set into the form of a book by another volunteer, printed at a minimal rate by Print Plus, and with sales and distribution administered by yet more volunteers.

Dick served for a time as Chairman of the Council of Management, one of a long line of volunteers fulfilling this role, together with all the other officers and members of CoM in the past and today who are also volunteers. Those who represent the H&G CT in our relations with other bodies are also volunteers, as are those who promote the H&G CT at local and national festivals, our own Over Festival on the Canal and at other events by organising and staffing stands. Our online presence in the form of www.h-g-canal.org.uk is maintained by volunteers, as are the associated email distribution lists and the “Count me in” e-newsletters.

I emphasise all the above forms of volunteer activity because it is all too easy to fall into the mindset of considering only the more

obvious and visible form of volunteering. This is equally important, but only as a part of the whole: the activity on our sites whether this is surveying, digging and profiling a new stretch of the Canal, constructing an essential part of the infrastructure, maintaining the towpath, vegetation and environment, improving the properties we now own, or sharing enthusiasm for our overall objective with visitors and passers by. Our teams of volunteers, whether focused on a specific site or roving between sites as work priorities demand, play a crucial role. The lengths of the Canal we have are a vital public face of the H&G CT, so what they look like and how they welcome visitors and draw them in is a major part of extending our community.

Of course, the sites we have would not exist were it not for the work of more volunteers, who over the years have fought for recognition of the H&G Canal, persuaded Councils to adopt policies protecting its line,

won arguments at public inquiries to defend future reconstruction, and negotiated arrangements with land owners and developers to secure those sites. That work continues, with an ever increasing demand as the number of sites and developments under negotiation grows, managed by volunteers and now supported by a professional team which is also active in gaining grants and other funding for the H&G CT.

So where does that money come from?

That professional team, essentially the Legal & Project Development Team, costs money, though remarkably little given the enormous workload it gets through. So where does that money come from? The answer, yet again, is through the efforts of volunteers. Through the energy and wisdom of many volunteers, the H&G CT has managed to build up a property portfolio. The Llanthony

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Lock Cottages were bought through a legacy but have been greatly improved by volunteer work and bring valuable rental income to the H&G CT. Negotiations with Councils and developers have secured land which will one day become part of the Canal, and can meanwhile be let, and perpetual covenants from new Canalside properties also bring in an annual income. Fundraising activities run by volunteers add to donations large and small – most notably the mystery £100,000 we were given in 2012 – and all this contributes to project costs and supports land acquisition. But it is another part of the H&G CT which pays for the L&PDT. Built as part of a deal negotiated with the Council and developer at Over, following a hard-fought public inquiry, then fitted out by volunteers, **The Wharf House** is both a property and a successful business wholly owned by the H&G CT. It is run by a board of directors who are volunteers and managed day to day by another volunteer, and it provides accommodation for the L&PDT and meets all of its costs, as well as the costs

associated with the Over site and the boats. The value of **The Wharf House** as an H&G CT asset is recognised by our bank, RBS, and represents the security to underwrite loans needed, for example, to acquire **The Travellers Rest**.

The commitment and energy of our volunteers draws in other voluntary contributions of many kinds from outside organisations, such as the Scout Network, the Ordnance Survey, EDF Energy and Balfour Beatty, the Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers and Sparrow Crane Hire (Gloucester), the IWA, Waterway Recovery Group, Stuart Group (Pumps) Ltd, E.B Hayward & Co, Tony Gee and Partners, Gloucester Quays/Peel Holdings.

Cause for celebration!

We celebrate the contributions made by all these volunteers, whether within our own community or from our supporters. You really do make a difference! Many thanks!

» JH

Canal Walks

The H&G CT Canal Walk leaflets are proving popular with members and supporters who would like an interesting guided walk that includes part of the route of our Canal.

- CANAL WALK NO. 1 **STAPLOW**
- CANAL WALK NO. 2 **WITHINGTON**
- CANAL WALK NO. 3 **DYMOCK**
- CANAL WALK NO. 4 **LLANTHONY**
- CANAL WALK NO. 5 **OXENHALL**

The leaflets are available from **The Wharf House** or by post from Nigel Jefferies (*address inside back cover*). Please send your name, address and a loose second class stamp for each leaflet plus another loose stamp for return postage.





LAND FUND

The **LAND FUND** will provide the means to obtain the crucial sites along the line of the Canal where there is no new development proposed or where we cannot acquire the line of the Canal by other opportunities. It is a vital fund to help us eventually restore the full length from Gloucester to Hereford.

Individuals

We are looking for members and supporters of our restoration project to contribute to the **LAND FUND** either by –

- a one off donation
- or a monthly sum by standing order
- or you may choose to remember the restoration work of the Canal Trust in your Will for people in the future to enjoy.

How to Contribute

Pick up a leaflet today or download one from our website: www.h-g-canal.org.uk. Regular monthly donations (*even small ones!*) are always welcome.

Thank you

*Thank you for a recent
anonymous £1,000 donation to
the H&G CT Land Fund.*

LAND FUND

What it is and how you
can help us restore the
Hereford & Gloucester Canal
by contributing to it.

- a one off donation
- or a monthly sum by standing order
- or you may choose to remember the restoration work of the Canal Trust in your Will for people in the future to enjoy.

Organisations

Groups or organisations who wish to support our restoration work, may also wish to contribute to this fund by –

- a collection or raffle at one of your regular meetings



Formal Notice: 2015 Annual General Meeting

To be held at
7.30pm, Tues, 21 July, 2015
at the **Royal Oak, Much Marcle.**

This is the formal notice of the 2015 AGM in order to give Members the opportunity to make a note in their diary; this year the AGM will be held on Tuesday 21 July. The Agenda and Annual Report will be in the next edition of ***The Wharfinger***.

In accordance with the H&G CT's Articles and Memorandum of Association those Members of the Council of Management who are retiring on rotation but offering themselves for re-election do not require to

be formally nominated to serve an additional term. However, new nominations to serve on the Council of Management are welcomed and have to be made in writing, in a prescribed form. Nomination forms are available from Liz Connors [see Contacts on inside back cover] to whom they should be returned to *arrive not less than 7 days nor more than 28 days prior to the AGM*.

Every Member who is entitled to vote at an AGM may appoint a proxy to vote in his/her stead. A proxy must be someone entitled to vote at the Meeting. Proxy forms are also available from Liz Connors and must be completed, signed and returned to her *at least 48 hours prior to the commencement of the AGM*.

Thank you

Awards for All Grant

By Stephanie Pike

Following the advance notice in the last edition of *The Wharfinger*, now that the embargo date on publicity has passed we are able to announce that a £5,900 grant has been secured for the H&G CT via the **Big Lottery Fund 'Awards for All'** scheme.

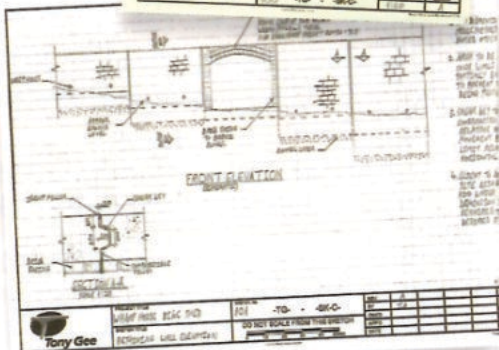
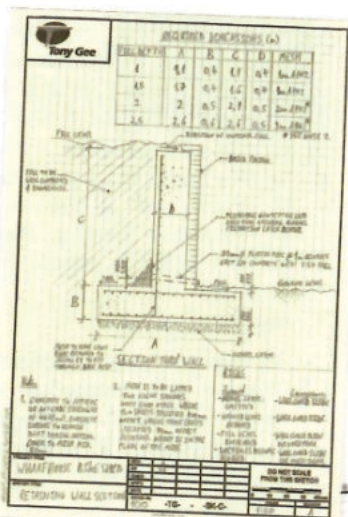
The project will consist of an integrated campaign to promote walking and cycling opportunities along and around the Hereford & Gloucester Canal, and to encourage the use of access routes to the Canal by bicycle and bus. The Canal already provides a number of picturesque walking routes (*a number of which are the subject of H&G CT 'Canal Walk' leaflets*) along what is a historically important local attraction. These and cycle routes will continue to be added to as the Canal is restored. The project will allow the canal to be enjoyed as a day out, with **The Wharf House** and dedicated visitor centre, adjacent to the restored Over Canal Basin at Gloucester, providing a great place to stay and/or for a meal or refreshments whilst exploring the Canal and surrounding areas.

With the funding we will build a bicycle store at **The Wharf House** which will enable cyclists to have a secure and free place to leave their bicycles should they wish. This facility will enable them to take a break during their ride, perhaps for lunch or coffee break, or just to enjoy the surrounding Canal on foot, with the knowledge their bicycle is safely stored. The H&G CT's existing CCTV system will be extended to increase security in the bike store area. Cycle stands will also be installed at **The Travellers Rest** public house, in Newent, which is also owned by the H&G CT.

The project will be promoted via a dedicated marketing campaign through third parties, new combined cycle and walking leaflets and new information boards at **The Wharf House, The Travellers Rest** and at Maisemore. » **SP**



LOTTERY FUNDED



Tony Gee and Partners'
plans for the bicycle store at
The Wharf House.



As reported in the last edition of **The Wharfinger**, the Grand Holiday Draw 2014 was a huge success raising **£2,739** (including £80 donations in lieu). Let's make this year even better!

GRAND HOLIDAY DRAW 2015

H&G Sales Grand Holiday Draw
(Stubs and money to be returned
to Promoter by 15th September 2015)

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GRAND HOLIDAY DRAW 2015

1ST PRIZE **NARROW BOAT HOLIDAY for FOUR**
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ONE WEEK PRIOR TO 31/5/16 Excluding Bank Holidays.

2ND PRIZE **ONE DAY'S BOAT HIRE**
To be taken prior to 31/5/16 – excluding Bank Holidays.
Donated by ABC Leisure Group.



3RD PRIZE **ONE NIGHT BED & BREAKFAST for TWO**
at **THE WHARF HOUSE**, Over, Gloucester.

Promoter: Mrs E. Connors, 18 St. Ethelbert Close, Sutton St. Nicholas, Hereford, HR1 3BF.
Prizes to be drawn at the September Social at Royal Oak, Much Marcle
on September 15th 2015. Registered under the Gambling Act 2005. **TICKETS £1 each**

Once again this year we have some great prizes!

This year we have again sent you two books of tickets to sell to family and friends. More books can be sent to you if required. Please contact Janet Moulton (see below).

The prizes are to be drawn at the Social Evening at The Royal Oak, Much Marcle, on 15 September 2015. Our thanks to **Black Prince Holidays**, **ABC Leisure** and **The Wharf House** for donating the Holiday prizes – so every pound raised is a pound towards restoration of the Canal.

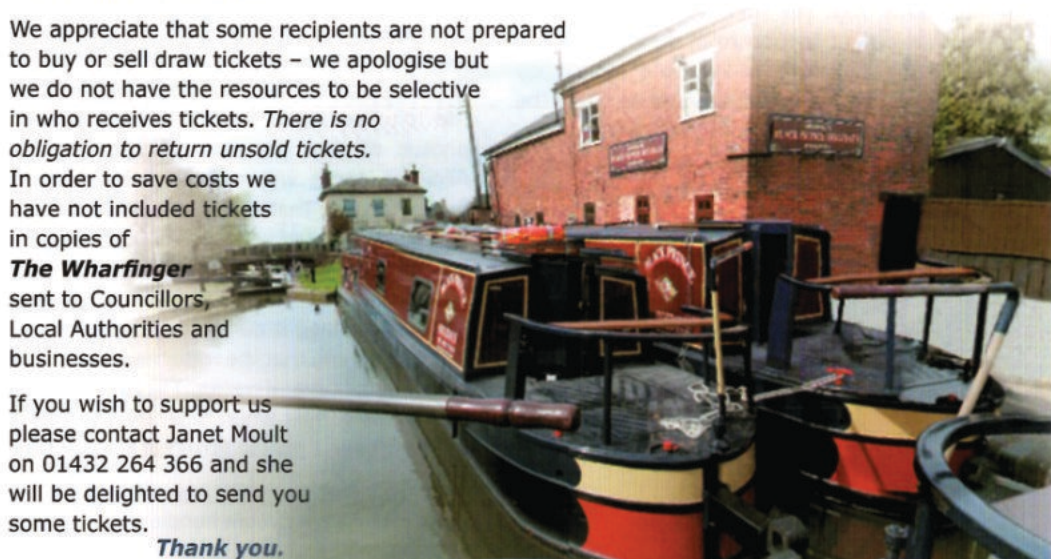
We appreciate that some recipients are not prepared to buy or sell draw tickets – we apologise but we do not have the resources to be selective in who receives tickets. *There is no obligation to return unsold tickets.*

In order to save costs we have not included tickets in copies of

The Wharfinger
sent to Councillors,
Local Authorities and
businesses.

If you wish to support us please contact Janet Moulton on 01432 264 366 and she will be delighted to send you some tickets.

Thank you.





100 Days at Moat Farm!

by Martyn Tilford

Three years have elapsed since our first visit to Moat Farm in late February 2012. The sum of the fortnightly visits amounts to 100 days, which, if worked consecutively would be roughly the equivalent of just three months on site! With an average attendance of six volunteers per visit it is remarkable what has been achieved and a good indicator of what is possible with a committed and competent volunteer workforce.

Virtually all the work has been undertaken from resources within the H&G Canal Trust, primarily with the Moat Farm regulars but with excellent support from members of the Yarkhill, Oxenhall, Over and Llanthony teams. We have had assistance from the **WRG Forestry Team** for aerial tree work, local land owner John Burton to remove a huge willow stump and a professional wildlife consultant to survey and report.

South-end in water

In the last edition of *The Wharfinger* Wilf Jones reported that the excavation and profiling of the south end of the site had been completed but unfortunately not all the photos were available. Some more photos of that process are shown here. Allowing some water through one of the dams ensured that the newly profiled canal bed was protected with about 30cm of water. Having taken great care to establish the position of the original puddle clay lining and not damage it during the excavation, it was heartening that the water level remained constant for several weeks. The real question was would it leak when full? Over 500,000 gallons (over 2 million litres) of water would



◀ Puddle clay core samples, removed with our improvised hollow broom handle core sampling tool.

The Wharfinger

Spring

HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL



1ST EDITION 23

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Winter maintenance

It was decided that during the winter period only minor site maintenance would be carried out. Nearly all the tree and scrub clearance had been completed in previous winters and large areas of disturbed ground had been sown with grass seed in the autumn which we were keen not to disturb. More tree planting took place with a range of indigenous species placed at suitable locations.

Our next main task is at the north end of the site which will involve re-creating the towpath and excavating and profiling the original canal bed over a length of about 100 metres. Work should commence once ground conditions improve; more about this next time.

» MT

THE FUTURE



60 foot narrowboat 'Brock', shown here moored on the offside of the newly restored south-end. A little photo editing but, nevertheless, an excellent vision of the future.



BEFORE

The scene from the railway bridge in February 2012.



AFTER '100 days' later in November 2014.

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

Martyn Tifford

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L&PDT News

from the team at The Wharf House

Welcome!

The Legal & Project Development Team are very pleased that retired solicitor Simon Freeman has joined the team in a voluntary advisory capacity one day a week. Born in Gloucestershire and now living in Worcestershire, Simon Freeman was until recently a partner with **Gabbs Solicitors** in Hereford having previously practised in London for the most of his professional life. He has specialised principally in development and investment property work. Having now retired from private practice, amongst other voluntary roles he is actively engaged in his local community as a parish councillor and board member of a statutory conservation body.



Holmer Trading Estate

Detailed legal and technical discussions have been continuing regarding the redevelopment of the Holmer Trading Estate at Hereford following the announcement and initial plans in the last edition of **The Wharfinger**. The formal planning application for these proposals, which will see this section of the Canal restored and transferred to us, together with provision for long term income from all the new properties, is due to be submitted shortly.

The Travellers Rest

Extensive negotiations with interested parties are at an advance stage and we look forward to announcing plans for the grand reopening soon.

Dymock

Work continues to progress slowly and there will be a fuller report and photos in the next edition.

Get the Latest News!

Whilst our 'breaking news' ignores print deadlines for **The Wharfinger** there are a number of other ways to keep up to date - see page 39.



Gift Membership of the H&G Canal Trust

Looking for something different to give a friend or family member? How about a year's subscription to the H&G CT including 4 editions of **The Wharfinger**. Subscriptions start from **£7.50**.

A membership form is available online or from **The Wharf House**.

H&G CT 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

PLEASE NOTE: All subscriptions and donations are treated as being made under the Gift Aid scheme unless you state that you do not wish us to do this. Payment made by Standing Order greatly assists us and payment remains under your control. All payments to: H&G CT, 6, Castle Street, Hereford, HR1 2NL

Corporate Members & Sponsors

By Cliff Penny

The continuing support given to the H&G CT by businesses, both local and national, is very important to us and is not taken for granted. *Thank you to all concerned.*

H&G CT Corporate Members

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Our sincere thanks to all of the above – and to our regular advertisers listed on page 37. We ask all of our members to support these businesses whenever they can.

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Your business would be made very welcome as a Corporate Member of the **H&G CT**. Just £25 per annum (or *life Corporate Membership* is secured for a single payment of £500).

Please download the membership leaflet from our website www.h-g-canal.org.uk and complete and return the membership form.

Thank you » CRP

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RESTORATION UPDATE

News of our work on the Hereford & Gloucester Canal

Aylestone

Wilf Jones

A number of the tasks outlined in the previous edition 122 of *The Wharfinger* have been successfully completed – despite the weather! The brick wall on the face of the weir has been finished, the weir plates fitted and the scaffolding removed.

This permitted the removal of the temporary dam which was put in the Canal during the construction of the weir. However the weather conditions at the time made the area a quagmire and thus the plan to complete the landscaping has had to be postponed. The proposed fencing and hedge planting will follow in spring of 2015 – weather permitting! It was also possible to re-arrange the security fencing to reduce the area fenced. » WJ



The completed brickwork on the canalside.



The canalside in water.



The ground is built up to continue the towpath over the weir.



The outlet side of the weir.

Wilf Jones/Colin Dymott

In mid November we were blessed with another spell of dry weather. This coincided with the dates we had agreed for a contractor with a 13 ton excavator to work on widening and deepening the drainage ditch which had been dug to help to drain the very wet middle section of the Canal. This is necessary before the main excavation of the Canal can proceed.

The excavated material was spread on the towpath to build up low spots and to assist with the drying and, where possible, the offside bank was profiled.

Our dates for further work have to tie in with the farming calendar in order that we have the agreed adjacent disposal sites available between crops. The plan is to start pumping out the water in April, followed by a 10 day



The widened drainage ditch looking towards the Kymin lane, showing the offside profiling.

'dig' in May 2015, starting from the Kymin end and working as far as possible towards the site of Barr's lock. Planning the details for this work is well under way. Also, the provisional planning has commenced for a 3 week 'dig' during July which we hope will complete the excavation of the Canal.

Let's hope we are blessed with fine weather on both 'digs'. » **WJ**

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branches – which break off anyway if left unchecked. Most of the trees have never been managed before so there is a lot of timber to deal with and it can take a couple of weeks to complete even one. Bernard is our only authorised chain saw operator, so he earns his keep during the winter months, although occasional assistance from our Moat Farm trained volunteers is also appreciated. We had a very welcome offer of help from the **Waterway Recovery Group** specialist forestry team so we booked them for a weekend at the end of December to cut down some trees that lie on the line of the canal extension. We are now inundated with logs which we shall be pleased to sell to those who can store them for a year or two before they are burnt. **WRG Forestry Team** will be back later this winter to tackle some of the more difficult trees. *Many thanks to them!*

The stock of logs created when the willows were pollarded.

Clearing the Builder's Yard

Towards the end of last year the H&G CT secured the lease of a former builder's yard adjacent to the old railway station in Newent. The first job is to clear all the materials left by the builders and whilst most is rubbish there is a lot still to clear and who knows what we may find. This task will be tackled in earnest after tree maintenance is finished at the end of February.

» **BF**



Brian Fox

Moat Farm ... see article on page 10

Restoration Update continues on page 22 →

NEW SEASON WILLOW FOR SALE AT OVER

Grown on the osier beds reinstated by the H&G CT alongside Over Canal Basin.

Small rods about 1.8m in length and about 3mm diameter, suitable for basketry etc. **5p each.**

Large rods about 1.5m to 2.4m in length and about 10mm in diameter, suitable for living willow sculptures, edges, screens, hurdles etc. **20p each.**



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.**

still being stored in one of our sheds. So as an unconventional temporary zero-cost improvement for the regular walkers of this section about 25 metres of old carpet were soon spread out – we now have the only carpeted footpath in the country!

Once the weather and ground conditions are more suitable the line of the footpath (and the adjacent route for our tractor) will have some spoil removed and hardcore will be spread on geotextile to provide a foundation upon which the final surface can be laid. Top soil will be laid, and the whole disturbed area levelled and grassed so that later in the year there should be no evidence that there was ever a Bailey bridge here.

Help from Ordnance Survey

Last year saw the commencement of the construction of a path which will go along the old Willows nursery, through the woods alongside the Ell Brook and finish next to the old railway station at Newent. It has been 'on the back burner' for several months whilst we tackled more urgent jobs but we did have a very welcome offer of help for a day from the **Ordnance Survey** – who have helped the H&G CT in the past – so this path was deemed an eminently suitable job for them to tackle. Eight younger and fitter guys than our usual volunteers spent a Tuesday in December on the task and by the end of the day it was about 40% complete. We are very grateful to **Ordnance Survey** for their help. The plan now is for us to complete the remainder and open up the path as a permissive way for members of the public to enjoy. There will be an Open Day here at Oxenhall later this year so that should provide an opportunity to follow the route of the canal a little further through some very pleasant countryside which has previously been inaccessible.



A temporary fix of carpets to cross the mud.



The footpath worked on by Ordnance Survey volunteers

Brian Fox

Tree Maintenance

We now have clearance from the Forest of Dean District Council to undertake necessary work on trees between the aqueduct and the lock. This has enabled us to get in and pollard some of the willows growing on the non towpath side. The work entails cutting through the trunk about 6ft above the ground and removing all the extremely long

branches – which break off anyway if left unchecked. Most of the trees have never been managed before so there is a lot of timber to deal with and it can take a couple of weeks to complete even one. Bernard is our only authorised chain saw operator, so he earns his keep during the winter months, although occasional assistance from our Moat Farm trained volunteers is also appreciated. We had a very welcome offer of help from the **Waterway Recovery Group** specialist forestry team so we booked them for a weekend at the end of December to cut down some trees that lie on the line of the canal extension. We are now inundated with logs which we shall be pleased to sell to those who can store them for a year or two before they are burnt. **WRG Forestry Team** will be back later this winter to tackle some of the more difficult trees. *Many thanks to them!*

The stock of logs created when the willows were pollarded.

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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 The Royal Oak, Much Marde, HR8 2ND
7.30 for 8pm start.

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!*

17 March

Joint Meeting ...

with IWA, the Cotswold Canals Trust and the Herefordshire & Gloucester Canal Trust.

Updates on the restoration of our two local canals.



HEREFORDSHIRE
&
GLOUCESTERSHIRE
CANAL TRUST



21 April

Wilts & Berks Canal – Chris Coyle

We follow up the last meeting with another southern canal restoration.



19 May

The Water Works Museum, Hereford

– Noel Meeke

This museum continues to expand and is now of national importance in the industrial archaeology world.



16 June

Neath and Tennant Canals

– Mike Jones

Across the border to hear of the progress of this restoration scheme.



Over Basin & Vineyard Hill Ted Beagles

Apart from all the usual winter site maintenance activities, trimming back the vegetation after an unusually vigorous year for growth, much time and effort has been spent during the last two months on dismantling the old lock gates which have been stored on site since 2002. This task is part of the main site area clean up in readiness for the future construction of the Mill Barn.

The gates are made of solid oak and it is proposed to incorporate this in the design and construction of the barn. All the lengths have been carefully stacked with separating pieces to ensure the heap is well ventilated so the pieces will dry out ready for use. Looking back at old pictures it is interesting to note that the techniques we were using to dismantle them were exactly the same as those used 12 years ago to partially dismantle them for transport to site.

The tractor is brought in to lend a hand with dismantling the old lock gates.



2015



Top and above: Dismantling the lock gates.



The carefully stacked lengths of oak.

Mister Maysey

Mr Maysey has been taken out of service for the winter, and Dave and Mike are carrying out some minor repairs and improvements. The bench seats have been rebuilt with lockers underneath to store all the equipment on board that is required for carrying passengers. →



Ted Beagles

Dinghy Donation

We have been fortunate to receive a donation of a fibreglass rowing dinghy, complete with a trailer, from Mrs Sue Tring, a neighbour of one of our regular volunteers. Considering that it has lain unused in her front garden at Shurdington for many years it is in remarkably good condition. Following a quick check of the wheel bearings and some WD40 on the tow hitch we were able to tow it to Over. We are now checking and painting it before sending it on its way to a new home at the Moat Farm site. We are very grateful to Mrs Tring for donating the dinghy and trailer.

Heritage Boats

The front hold refurbishment of Renton is progressing well; all bare metal has now been treated with rust inhibitor and given at least two coats of paint. The concrete block ballast has been removed to enable the floor support timbers to be fitted; it will be replaced with steel blocks, as these will occupy much less space in the hold. Both Alder and Renton continue to be run regularly along the full length of Vineyard Hill, with the usual minor scrapes passing through the landslip area, which seems to be stable at the moment.

Our Christmas Lunch

The Toby Carvery, just down the road, was once again the venue for our annual Christmas lunch, along with colleagues from the Llanthony and Moat Farm sites. Numbers seem to be increasing each year with 41 people attending this year. Thank you to Pat and Belinda for arranging it all so superbly.

» **TB**

Right: Volunteers from three sites enjoy a Christmas lunch.



A newly arrived pair of swans eye-up Mike and Dave whilst they work on Mister Maysey.



Dave Hurran thanks Mrs Sue Tring who kindly donated the dinghy and trailer.

Ted Beagles / Tim Randles



As reported last time, No 1 Cottage at Llanthony became vacant following the sad death, in early October, of our tenant Colleen Best – who had lived there since 1971.

It was quickly decided that the cottage should be re-let as soon as possible so that there could continue to be an income stream generated for the H&G CT. However, whilst we have carried out some works since the two cottages were purchased (in 2008 together with Llanthony Lock and the surrounding land from the former British Waterways), much needed to be done to bring the property up to a satisfactory standard.

A detailed survey was conducted to assess what was required, a comprehensive report was presented to the H&G CT Council of Management and an agreed programme put in place to carry out the extensive refurbishments. The plans involve the resolution of damp coming into the building (both rising and falling!), a complete kitchen and bathroom refit, the installation of a central heating system, and complete renovation from top to bottom. Some work items will have to be carried out by professional contractors, but a great deal can be handled by our volunteers.



Kitchen in the process of being dismantled.



Wendy and Pat stripping wallpaper.

To speed up the refurbishment programme we now have a work group every Tuesday (thanks to Martyn Tilford for his cooperation here in agreeing to suspend the alternating arrangement with Moat Farm) and each Saturday (thanks to the Saturday Over team who have responded brilliantly to the challenge).

Since the end of November we have concentrated on gutting the bathroom and kitchen, stripping wallpaper and rubbing down paintwork, removing lead piping from the water mains coming into the cottage and carrying out plumbing and electrical installations in preparation for the kitchen



Old bedroom fireplace which will be restored.

Maggie Jones

refit. The loft hatchway has been enlarged. The old one was 12 inches square – obviously designed for a slim-line generation!

Alan has been braving the elements making a start on clearing the garden area.

Stephanie from the H&G CT's L&PDT is providing valuable support investigating the feasibility of securing funding for wall insulation and other heat retention initiatives under the Green Deal.

A big thank you to all the volunteers who have helped out to date. We could always do with more assistance. If you can spare a few hours your help would be very welcome.

» PH

URGENT APPEAL

Do you have specific skills?

Do you (or does your business) specialise in any of the following? Would you (or your business) be prepared to assist us with the continuing refurbishment of the H&G CT's Llanthony Cottages?

The following skills/trades are **urgently** required please for what, in most instances, would be only be a day or so.

- **Kitchen fitting** (particularly for the worktops where our volunteers don't have the specialist jigs).
- **Plastering.**
- **Roofing repairs.**
- **Electrician – Part P qualified** (to inspect work on completion).

Other skills/trades such as plumbing, carpentry (door repairs/fitting especially) and tiling would also be welcomed.

The hard work of our own volunteers is making fantastic progress but they would really value your additional help as soon as possible, please. *Thank you.*

Please contact **Paul Henshaw** as soon as possible on **01684 293 930**, **paulhenshawuk@yahoo.co.uk**



Wilf and Ted modifying the electrics.



Jane strips the wallpaper on the landing.

Would you like to be involved?

You will be made most welcome on any of our sites, please contact:

Aylestone and Kymin

Wilf Jones on 01452 413 888
wilfredjones506@gmail.com

Yarkhill

Chris High on 01568 615 575
chris@chrishigh.plus.com

Oxenhall

Brian Fox on 01432 358 628
briandfox74@gmail.com

Moat Farm

Martyn Tilford on 01452 790 358
martyn@tilford.free-online.co.uk

Over Basin/Vineyard Hill

Ted Beagles on 01452 522 648
tedbeagles@blueyonder.co.uk
Maggie Jones on 01452 618 010
maggiejones@blueyonder.co.uk

Llanthony Lock

Paul Henshaw on 01684 293 930
paulhenshawuk@yahoo.co.uk

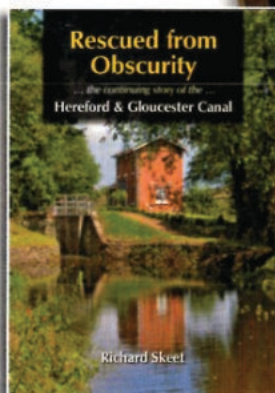
Rescued from Obscurity

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

Following the launch of Dick Skeet's new book about the Hereford & Gloucester Canal, published by the H&G CT at the end of last year, copies have been selling fast!

A number of very favourable reviews of the book have been published nationally, with both **Canal Boat** magazine and **Towpath Talk** leading the field in their January editions.

This was closely followed by an excellent extended review in January's **Waterways World** by Deputy Editor, Keith Goss. He said *"The H&G Canal is one of the high fliers among restoration projects, widely acknowledged to be one of the nation's top five such schemes" and "the H&G Canal Trust is a highly professional outfit" - "it is no surprise that the Trust has published a thoroughly competent and enjoyable book". "Richard Skeet ... traces the history of the waterway, detailing its construction and operation, using informative text, a good selection of old photographs and clear, concise, maps". "The second half of the book concentrates on [the former Society and the H&G CT] and how they set about the challenging task of restoring all 34 miles of the waterway. As will be seen, excellent progress has been made and the book concludes with an optimistic look into the future - relishing the prospect of full restoration and reopening."* The **Waterways World** review included a copy of the cover the book and a large photo of the downstream approach to the partly restored Oxenhall Lock and the restored Lock Cottage. Keith



Dick Skeet signs copies of the new book at the H&G CT's Winter Bazaar in Ledbury.

Goss concluded, **"Rescued from Obscurity is highly recommended to anyone with an interest in the Hereford & Gloucester Canal, and indeed to canal restorers everywhere - for this is a restoration project from which everyone can learn lessons."**

In addition to a much appreciated promotion by Jonathan Mosse, writing on the **narrowboatworld** website, **Rescued from Obscurity** was also the subject of an excellent review by 'Up-Side-Down', a regular contributor to the **canalworld** online forums. In under two months the latter achieved over 2,500 hits and, following the review, some very positive comments from those who had purchased and enjoyed the book.

Our thanks to all concerned, both in the press and on the internet. » **CRP**

Order your copy today

200 page paperback, over 200 illustrations and photographs. Price **£10 + £2 P&P**

Please send cheques made payable to **Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust** to Janet Moulton, H&G Sales and Promotion, 18, Coningsby Court, Coningsby Street, Hereford, HR1 2DF.
Also available from **The Wharf House**.

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

We welcome additional volunteers; no experience necessary – just come and be part of our team – we will do our best to put you at ease and to find a task that you will enjoy. Your admission to the event will be free and we always try to ensure that you have some time to look around.


Please contact either of us (*see Contacts inside back cover*) if you can help or know of any local events which we could attend with our display and sales stand. **» JM / MJ**

We hope to be able to attend the following interesting events during 2015 – some of which are new venues for us.

March 29	Gloucester Boat Jumble
May 2	Droitwich Boat Festival, Worcestershire
May 13	Learning Disability Big Health Check Open Day at Barnwood, Gloucester
May 23–25	Crick Boat Show, Northamptonshire
May 23–25	The Gloucester Tall Ships Festival
June 6–7	Hellens Garden Festival, Herefordshire
June 27–28	Braunston Boat Show, Northamptonshire
July 13	Sutton St Nicholas Fete, Herefordshire
August 23–23	Over Festival, Over Canal Basin and The Wharf House, Gloucester
November 7	H&G CT Winter Bazaar, Ledbury







**SUNDAY
29TH MARCH
2015
start 10am.**



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WATERWAYS
MUSEUM**
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CONTACT
☎ 01452 859991
or Email
glosboatjumble@gmail.com

Thank You 100 Field Squadron

by Cliff Penny

In the last edition of *The Wharfinger* Brian Fox reported on the careful removal of the H&G CT's Bailey bridge from over the Ell Brook aqueduct to its new temporary storage position within our Horsefair Lane compound.

Our volunteers may have many skills, and we appreciate the assistance that we regularly receive from many professionals and organisations, but safely moving some 7 tons of Bailey bridge is not (yet?) within our capabilities!

One thing that we are renowned for is finding solutions to what at first might seem to be a



Sparrow Crane Hire (Gloucester) lifted the bridge



major challenge. It was decided to make a case to request that the work be undertaken by the Territorial Army as a "Community Service Collaboration" training exercise. One of our longstanding volunteers at Oxenhall, Geoff Hopper, produced an excellent report for our Council of Management, which then formed the basis of a formal application to the military, detailing two possible options for undertaking the work. This also identified all the necessary preparatory work and liaison to be undertaken by the H&G CT before the work could proceed.

The site was inspected and the project was subsequently agreed as a suitable funded training exercise to be undertaken by **The Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers (Militia)**, the senior Reserve Regiment of the British Army. Its Regimental Headquarters is in the grounds of Monmouth Castle and at the nearby Vauxhall Camp, Monmouth. The approved work was to be undertaken in conjunction with a crane kindly supplied to the Sappers, with an operator, by **Sparrow Crane Hire (Gloucester)**.

The Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers (Militia) willingly gave advice when we first obtained the Bailey bridge, and provided a Staff Sergeant to supervise

Left: Two Officers take a photo of the Royal Engineers team.

Right: The bridge is lifted into the compound.



Brian Fox / Colin Dymott

the assembly and positioning of the bridge, so we particularly appreciated their further assistance now that it has served its purpose following our Oxenhall Team's successful restoration and strengthening of the Ell Brook aqueduct.

As briefly reported by Brian Fox in the last edition of **The Wharfinger**, at the beginning of September three days of hard work by men from **100 Field Squadron**, led by Captain Noel Brown, successfully completed the move. On the Thursday a small team of Sappers took delivery of three lorry loads of hardcore, supplied as part of the exercise, and used an army machine to spread it ready for the arrival of the mobile crane. The following day more men arrived and the 35 decking plates were removed from the bridge — most being a six-man lift — and manhandled some 100 yards to the compound. The area around the bridge was then finally checked and cleared ready for the lift. The mobile crane, organised as part of the exercise in conjunction with **Sparrow Crane Hire (Gloucester)**, duly arrived on the

Saturday and the bridge was moved in 3 separate and careful lifts (the crane having to re-position due to the weight). The Sappers then flexed their muscles once again and carefully stacked the decking plates on the bridge ready for our next use.

Yet another challenge successfully completed! Our sincere thanks to The **Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers (Militia)** and to **Sparrow Crane Hire (Gloucester)** for a job well done — all at no cost to the H&G CT.

»» **CRP**



Brian Fox gives the thumbs up!

WHAT BAILEY BRIDGES?

From everything that you have read over the years in **The Wharfinger** you might think the H&G CT is the proud owner of two Bailey bridges — one at Oxenhall and its shorter sibling spanning the lock approach at Over Canal Basin? Yes, the H&G CT does own two demountable (sectional) truss bridges but, strictly speaking, they are not Bailey bridges — and the difference proved to be vitally important in our negotiations when the H&G CT first acquired ownership of them! When is a Bailey bridge not a Bailey bridge? — the story will be told in a future edition of **The Wharfinger** ... »» **CRP**

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It was my first visit to the Winter Bazaar as usually I am working with a team of H&G CT volunteers at Over Basin on a Saturday. However, on that particularly blustery day, the rain was pouring in torrents and I was rather glad that the outside work party had been cancelled!

I made my way to Ledbury where a cheery welcome was waiting at St Katherine's Hall with Judy Street's draw tickets for the lovely big hamper there to greet you at the door. The wet, miserable start to the day did have an affect on the number of people attending, but there was a good steady trickle of visitors throughout the morning. A good mix of craft and produce stalls were set up and homemade cakes and warm soup were waiting.

The stallholders all had interesting stories to share about their wares from the making of homemade jams and preserves to the techniques of glass engraving. Many hours of love and patience had gone into their work and a credit to them all. One experienced wood engraver turned up to show us his work in the hope of getting a stand at the Bazaar next year as he was too late to book a table this year.

Our own H&G CT volunteers had worked hard to set up the refreshments and gift stalls and it all appeared to run as smooth as clockwork under Pat Skeet's capable hands.



Maggie Jones / Dick Skeet

However, Pat and Dick had moved house just the weekend before so it must have been an exceptionally busy week for them.

A popular purchase by many people attending the event was our brand new book, 'Rescued from Obscurity', with a personal book signing by the author himself, Dick Skeet.

We still meet people who come to our events for the first time and say, "Well, I didn't know there was once a canal from Gloucester to Hereford!" and this year's Bazaar was no exception. It is clear we still have much to do to reach everyone in the two counties, but thanks to the

tireless efforts of our volunteers we continue to promote our restoration work and hopefully gain their support.

But despite the bad weather the total raised was significantly higher than previous years at £763.65! Thank you to all who, once again, made the event a success! » MJ

The **H&G CT's Winter Bazaar** will be in Ledbury once again on **Saturday 7 November**. Pat Skeet (please note new telephone number) 01432 850 788 is the person to contact to book a stand.

THE WHARF HOUSE



Over, Gloucester, GL2 8DB | enquiries@thewharfhouse.co.uk

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2015



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We are delighted to announce afternoon tea is now available at **The Wharf House**. £16.50 per person, or £19.99 with a glass of sparkling wine.

Please ensure that you book in advance!



01452 332 900

www.thewharfhouse.co.uk

Directions:

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

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

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

By Chris Witts

Fantastic news, **Gloucester Waterways Museum** has been successful in securing £994,000 from the **Heritage Lottery Fund**.

The best Christmas present that the Museum could have wished for! Now the hard work can begin allowing the waterways story to be told from Birmingham to the Bristol Channel. Our dumb barge, **SABRINA 5**, will be refitted to become a floating exhibition unit and school room. Plus our education and interpretation for all ages will be improved.

The Friends of Gloucester Waterways Museum has given a total of £15,000 towards the bid and that will not be the end. The Museum will be revamped and it is hoped that volunteers and Friends can work on exhibits outside the HLF bid, to make some into working units.

Level 4 of the Museum is now fully functional as offices with facilities for volunteers to use too. By the time you read this the Friends will have had their first winter evening talk back in their home. Future talks are to be held on Level 4. Remember, the talks are free and all are welcome, with details of each one listed on our website at www.friendsofgwm.co.uk.

» **CW**

Friends BOAT JUMBLE!

Sunday March 29 from 10am – 4pm. New venue. **Gloucestershire College**, off Llanthony Road. Entry to the Boat Jumble is just £3 with accompanied children free. See our advertisement on page 27.



Sabrina 5, the Museum's dumb barge.

Chris Witts



Gloucestershire & Herefordshire IWA Branch 2015 Social Meetings and Events

Non members are welcome and admission is nominal.

NOTE NEW VENUE

The Warehouse, Parliament Street, GL1 1HY
Free parking at the Docks, Southgate St from 6pm

Thursday 5 March – AGM

*Followed by a talk by a CRT South West
Waterways Trust Representative*

**Tuesday 17 March 7.30pm for 8pm
at The Royal Oak, Much Marcle, HR8 2ND**

Joint H&G, CCT and IWA meeting

**** Sunday 5 April**

**Tour of the Llanthony and Over sites followed
by Tapas at The Wharf House (charge).**
Meet at The Yacht Club GL1 2EQ at 11am.

**** Sunday 12 April**

**Tour of the Cotswold Canals sites walking
from the Daneway Portal to Chalford.**
*Meet and park at Brimscombe Port. GL2 5QQ.
at 10.30am.*

**** Must be booked with
Sue Turner 01452 312 228**

*Further details contact: **Martin Turner**
email: martin.turner40@btinternet.com*

The Gloucester & District Model Boat Club has enjoyed another year at Over Basin. The excellent summer has produced some superb walks along the towpath to the winding hole. The seat there gives a rest for those who have walked their boats along the Canal.

Much wildlife has been seen. The heron probably the highlight, birds, sheep, cows and horses have also given entertainment!

As reported last time, the Over Festival at the end of August gave us plenty of sailing amongst canoes, rowing boats and, of course, Mr Maysey. We also had plenty of visitors to our stand and maybe a couple of new members.

To celebrate the end of summertime, another bright day, we had a Beans on Toast Fun Day. This consists of a couple of yacht races and a steering course for motor boats. Lunch was, predictably, beans on toast! The tea and coffee flowed all day with cake mid-afternoon.

During the year we have a fortnightly sailing

series. The series is for a class of yacht known as a Micro Magic. They are 21" long and so ideal for the canal. There is a winter and summer series. Winner of the winter series was Bryan Evans; the overall result wasn't established until the last event. It was the exact opposite for the summer series where Rodney Bottomley was the 'sail away' winner. Throughout the year the average race attendance was ten.



Bryan and Rodney our 2014 sailing competition winners.

All types of weather can be encountered: the windless flat calm of summer to the high winds of winter – which produce quite large waves on the Canal. This gave wheelchair-bound Rob Strong the opportunity to win our Club Titanic Trophy which is awarded for the best sinking of a model boat!

Matthew Giddy won the Club's Dave Smith Memorial Trophy for the member who contributes most towards the club. Matthew is always in attendance on a Sunday; he looks after the club Model Rescue Boat. He, like the RNLI, is always ready to go!

Finally, for statistically minded readers, we estimate there were 1,640 sailings throughout the year.

» TT



Group photo of Beans on Toast Day in November.



Sailing4Disabled

Pete Bisson

Hello and here's wishing you all a fruitful 2015. We were issued with a "clause" just before Christmas, but I'll come to that later. As usual we Pirates ended the year with our Christmas Dinner with 24 attending and having a good time, with presents from "Secret Santa" (my gloves fit)!

We have had a long Christmas break, but back to normal now and in demand for the Wheelyboat to help with filming. The funding is trickling in and we now own one third of – the engine end, as it's cold in the canal pushing at this time of year!

To the "clause" — well I thought for a photo promo why not find a "Santa" and the clause was that I had to find children! A short phone call and the 46th Cubs jump at the chance of a visit and a splash on the H&G Canal and a BBQ. Santa arrived on the Wheelyboat greeting the Cubs before going to his Grotto in the boat shed where Santa and his helper gave out presents to all the children – and he knew their names? He assured me that he would be back next year, but would like to see more people there. He then departed to Tredworth for a visit and a swift sherry and another mince pie!

»» **PB**



Pete Bisson

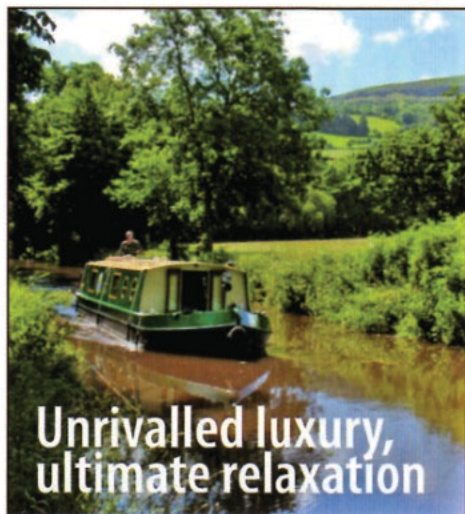
Sailing4Disabled

*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.*



Matthew and Robert
receiving their Model Boat
Club shields at Over.



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A very satisfied customer! One of our long-standing Members owns a writing desk made by the respected cabinet makers **Waring and Gillow**. He and members of his family have used it for many years and were dismayed when one of the two sliding stays, which hold the writing surface level when the desk is opened, failed. *Where would he get a replacement?* He remembered the regular advertisement in *The Wharfinger* for **E.B Hayward & Co.** and contacted Simon Hayward. The stay was sent to their works where "it was expertly and neatly repaired and returned for a very modest charge."

Regular advertisers and Corporate Members, Simon and his firm have supported the H&G CT for over 20 years for which we are very grateful.

» CRP

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Violets

Roses are red, violets are blue ... so goes the little ditty of childhood – except at Oxenhall it seems as all the violets there are white! This, and the plants' habitat, gives a clue to which species of violet this is.

Most of the violets we see growing wild in the countryside are commonly referred to as the Dog violet. As with the wild rose the word 'dog' seems to be applied disparagingly to indicate the plant is so abundant as to be worthless. You could be forgiven for thinking *Viola canina* would be its botanic name, but no, and I had better explain this carefully.

The true *Viola canina* dislikes shade and grows in acidic open uplands, hardly descriptive of the Oxenhall setting. It is also known as the Heath Dog Violet and does not occur in a white form. The leaves of *V. canina* are twice as long as they are broad, quite different from the plant at Oxenhall which can be found tucked under a shady hedge or in the grass by the side of the towpath.

No, the plant growing at Oxenhall and illustrated here is '*V. riviniana*', the specific name commemorating Augustus Rivinus (1652-1723) a German botanist who was the first to classify plants according to the structure of the flowers, a method adopted later by none other than Linnaeus himself. Flowering from April to June, the leaves of *V. riviniana* are heart shaped, smooth, with regularly spaced indentations around the edges; it is well suited to the conditions at Oxenhall. Both leaves and flowers are edible but being an important food plant for various fritillary butterflies perhaps they are best left alone for the caterpillars to enjoy!

Plants devise wonderful strategies to ensure their seeds are dispersed widely and the



John Chappell

viola, the family to which violets belong, is no exception. Seed capsules on all violas open into three separate 'gutters'. Each gutter has two rows of seed and when the sides of the gutters begin to dry they curl backwards catapulting the seeds out one by one. This may not be the end of their journey as ants, enjoying an oily excretion on the seeds, will drag them further away. A belt and braces form of seed dispersal!

Neither *V. canina* nor *V. riviniana* are scented; that attribute is held by *V. odorata*. Victorians used the leaves and flowers of this species for cosmetics and perfume and plants were widely cultivated, especially in Devon. Come the Second World War, when land was requisitioned to grow food, scented violets went out of fashion and *V. odorata* all but disappeared. Today they are making a comeback and conservationists and enlightened nurserymen are reintroducing this nostalgic, tiny flower into cultivation.

In the meantime we can enjoy the flowering of the white violets at Oxenhall, which even though lacking perfume, still remind us it is early spring and that summer is not far away.

» JC



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Not quite
... the last page!

GET THE LATEST NEWS!

If you want to be amongst the first to know the latest news from the H&G CT then please show your support by 'liking' us on Facebook — www.facebook.co.uk/hgcanaltrust.

However, if you don't want to sign up for Facebook then our *occasional* **newsletter** will bring you 'breaking news'. If you have not already 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.

As always more detailed reports on all such news will follow in the next edition of **The Wharfinger** so readers who don't have access to email (or simply don't wish to register) most certainly will not lose out.

3 bedroom house to rent in Gloucester



Llanthony Lock House is a lovely riverside property close to Gloucester Quays and within easy walking distance of the City. It is currently undergoing major renovations and will be available to rent as soon as the work has been completed later in the year.

For more details and to register expressions of interest please contact steph@thewharfhouse.co.uk

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Then the H&G CT will receive, at no cost to you, a percentage of the purchase value from any of the many retailers who have signed up to the scheme to support charities such as the H&G CT.

STAMPS

Those postage stamps are still being turned into £££s for the H&G CT's Land Fund! Stamps can be taken to any of our Social Evenings or other H&G CT event — or to **The Wharf House**. Thank you.

WINNERS



The **Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust** has been rewarded for its environmental sustainability efforts — we are the **GOLD AWARD WINNER** in the Eco Tourism category of the **Green Apple Awards 2014!** Thank you to everyone within the H&G CT and **The Wharf House** who helped us (in any way) to achieve this award.

EVERYONE CAN HELP!

Please don't forget to help us to make 2015 another record year for the H&G CT's **Grand Holiday Draw** — the odds are really good and the money raised (thanks to all the prizes being donated) is really important to us. Also, our thanks in advance for those who on principle do not sell/buy draw tickets but send a donation instead.

Copy deadline for the next issue
MONDAY, 13 APRIL

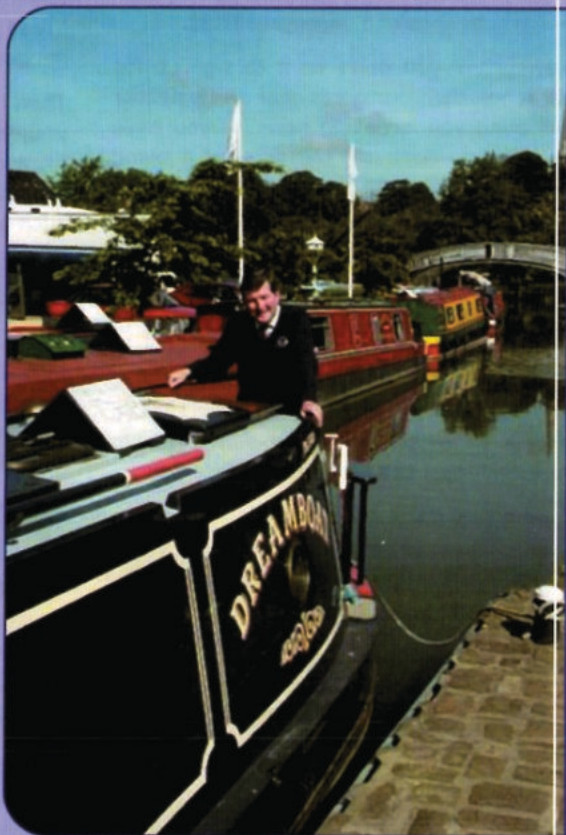
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Want to help?

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.

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Contact any of these names TODAY!

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