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Autumn 2016

The Wharfinger

HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST



H&G CT receives
The Queen's Award for
Voluntary Service 2016

1ST EDITION 29

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Contents

page

- 3** Editorial
- 4** AcCoMplishments past, present and future ...
- 6** The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service
- 6** Over Festival on the Canal
- 9** L&PDT: The Wharf House and Malswick House
- 10** L&PDT: Hydro scheme for H&G Canal Trust
- 12** Grand Holiday Draw 2016
- 12** Calling all youngsters
- 15** AGM Report
- 17** Malswick House celebrates its One Year Anniversary
- 18** Out and About in all weathers
- 20** Winter Bazaar
- 21** Social Evenings at The Royal Oak
- 22** Restoration Update: Aylestone Park
- 23** Restoration Update: Yarkhill
- 23** Restoration Update: Dymock
- 24** Restoration Update: Oxenhall & Newent Station
- 26** Restoration Update: Moat Farm
- 27** Restoration Update: Over Basin
- 30** Restoration Update: Llanthony Lock
- 30** Would you like to get involved?
- 31** Newent and Oxenhall Open Day
- 32** Nature Watch: The Over Basin Swans
- 34** News from the friends of Gloucester Waterways Museum
- 34** IWA Social Meetings and Events
- 36** Gloucester Model Boat Club at Over
- 37** Sailing4Disabled
- 39** Not quite the last page!
- 39** Advertising in The Wharfinger



page
6

Dame Janet speaking at The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service ceremony.

page
32

The cygnets are born!



page
18

Les Etheridge passes a cheque to Becca Moulton for H&G CT.



page
19

Margaret Holder holds proudly our QAVS announcement.

page
26

Alan McBride invites visitors to our latest B&B.



page
36

... and who are these men and where are they?

Cover image:
Mike Smart DL presenting Janet Moulton with QAVS crystal for H&G CT as volunteers look on.
- Jonathon Watkins, Photoglow.



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Editorial by John Hammond

Cliff Penny, long-standing editor of *The Wharfinger*, is recovering from his illness reported in edition 128, and was able to attend and enjoy the presentation of The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, but he was not able to act as editor for this edition. We all wish him a steady path to restored strength.

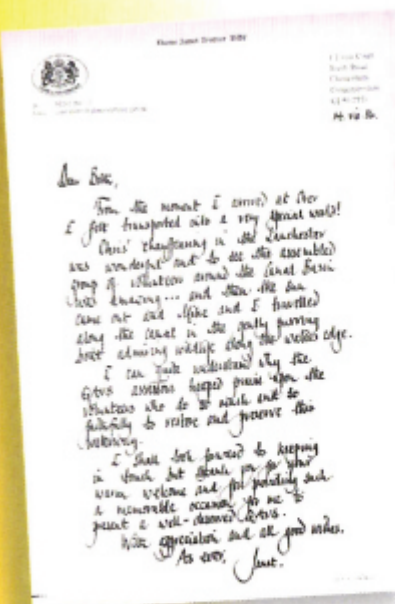
The QAVS and presentation celebrations are covered elsewhere (see page 6) but this is such a prestigious achievement and worthy recognition of the commitment and energy of our many volunteers that it must be celebrated here as well.

It is something of a one-off, but our steady stream of more regular achievements also continues. In addition to canal developments covered elsewhere in this edition, we now own our completed house in Dymock, as well as the new basin, and both that house and the extensively refurbished Llanthony cottage are providing valuable income to support our restoration work.

Three of our own events are coming up in the next few months; Over Festival, Newent and Oxenhall Open Day and, later on, the Winter Bazaar. These are all advertised within this edition. We hope you can join us on these occasions.

That we are able to accomplish so much owes a great deal to the magnificent efforts of our volunteers. Long may that continue!

» JH



“From the moment I arrived at Over I felt I was transported into a very special world!

Chris' chauffeuring in the Lanchester was wonderful and to see the assembled group of volunteers around the Canal Basin was amazing ... and then the sun came out and Mike and I travelled along the Canal in a gently purring boat admiring the wildlife along the water's edge.

I can quite understand why the QAVS assessors heaped praise upon the volunteers who do so much and so faithfully to restore and preserve this waterway.

I shall look forward to keeping in touch but thank you for your warm welcome and providing such a memorable occasion for me to present a well-deserved QAVS.

With appreciation and all good wishes.

As ever, Janet

Dame Janet Trotter's letter after attending H&G CT's QAVS presentation at Over Basin.

A new H&G CT volunteer, Clive Weston, is an HR international consultant with over 20 years' experience as Managing Director of Hartwell Consultancy, based near Hereford. As previously reported, he generously offered in March to give his advice to CoM on the organisation and management of H&G CT.

CoM accepted Clive's offer which initially involved one-to-one interviews with every member of CoM. After background reading and web research, Clive presented his findings to CoM in May. His recommendation for a series of one-day organisational effectiveness workshops as the next step of his consultation was unanimously agreed. Organisational Effectiveness is driven by Vision, Strategy, Structure and Leadership in combination with addressing the associated Systems, Communications, People and Relationships.

The programme of workshops, of which two will already have occurred when this is printed, covers:

- Improving Interpersonal Relationships
- Developing Vision & Mission
- Formulating Strategy
- Defining Structure
- Recruiting Talent

Through the workshops, CoM expects to strengthen transformational factors in the management of H&G CT and thus accelerate the achievement of our shared objective: to rebuild a sustainable canal from Hereford to Gloucester. We shall keep you informed on progress as CoM continues

on this revealing and exciting journey.

Meanwhile, what progress have we made towards our objective in the one-third of a century since the H&G Canal Society was formed on 13 April 1983? In an obvious and visible sense, we have some restored lengths of canal: Aylestone Park, Kymin, Yarkhill, Dymock basin, Oxenhall, Moat Farm and Vineyard Hill/Over basin. Further lengths at Monkhide and north of Oxenhall were also restored but we no longer have access to those so they are returning to wilderness and dereliction.

Less obvious, but in terms of our future success every bit as vital, are two other notable achievements. Through very substantial, persistent and continuing negotiation and lobbying, we have a recognised and protected status in the policies of all the local councils along the route. We are also acknowledged by national authorities. For example, the Department of Transport accepted the need to create a bridge for the future canal in its plans for a Hereford bypass (yet to be built), and when it was disposing of surplus land near Newent it recognised the long-term public benefit of the canal so transferred to us for a nominal sum that part of its land which we shall one day require. At Over, the Health Authority reached a similar conclusion which was a key to our development of both Over basin and The Wharf House. These successes came only as a result of vigorous and focused efforts by members of CoM at the time.

The second notable achievement is where we are distinctive in the waterways restoration context and are widely

recognised and applauded for our approach. That is our strategy of building up a commercial asset base as a means both to support our work now and to pay for maintenance and improvement of the canal into the indefinite future. We own The Wharf House and Malswick House and run both as income-generating businesses. We own the cottages at Llanthony and a house in the new development at Dymock, and these produce rental income. We also gain rental income from land we own and let commercially at Newent and Hereford. And, through Section 106 public benefit clauses implemented by local authorities, we receive annual index-linked covenant income from canalside properties at Over, Oxenhall, Dymock and Hereford.

Future plans, described in this and previous Wharfingers, include developments at Holmer and Ledbury, where we shall have significant income-generating interests as well as new lengths of restored canal. The

proposed Newent Station development with its visitor centre and tea room will also generate income. And the hydro-electricity project at the mouth of the Leadon will become a source of income, and it will pioneer the much larger and longer-term project on the Severn at Llanthony. The Gloucester Waterfront developments will generate income as we own land along the river banks.

All of this is essential if we are to prosper. It is a sad reality that with each length of restored canal there comes an immediate and continuing cost for maintenance – and the more we have restored, the higher that cost becomes. So, somehow, we have to maintain the balance between building up our asset base and our secure generation of income with our creation of more canal. That is a challenging balancing act ... but H&G CT has a track record of taking on big challenges and succeeding!

»» CP/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**

NEW

CANAL CYCLE/WALK NO. 6 **OVER BASIN**

This new cycle walk leaflet for Over Basin will be available very soon. Further details in the next Wharfinger

30p
each

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.



The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

by Carolyn Pascall

The exciting news arrived on 5 April 2016: Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust had been recognised with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service for 2016. But there was an embargo on the news being released until 2 June, the Queen's official birthday. The cost of breaking that embargo and telling the press – indeed anyone else – early could forfeit our receiving the award. We had to keep it under our hat for another two months.



Presentation party with QAVS crystal and volunteers across Basin

It all started with the launch of the 225 Anniversary Campaign at Eastnor Castle last summer, where one of the guests was describing how appropriate it would be for H&G Canal Trust to apply for QAVS, and how it would strengthen our position, as our organisation is composed almost entirely of volunteers, and many who spend much of their free time working for H&G Canal Trust, and have done over many years.

So after much investigation and precision drafting to a stringent wordcount, the application was duly completed and submitted in September. A rigorous interview in November, by two Deputy Lieutenants of Herefordshire and Gloucestershire, put David Penny, me and treasurer John Hammond through our paces. The sun shone as we proudly showed them Over Basin and Vineyard Hill, the former



Dame Janet chatting to H&G CT volunteers Ray Moses, Barbara Moses and Dick Skeet.



Dame Janet Trotter giving her speech at H&G CT's QAVS presentation.

completed by volunteers for £65,000 instead of the £750,000 quoted by contractors, a very appropriate demonstration of the power of volunteers and private sector working together with public sector facilitation. The two Deputy



Janet Moul, H&G CT Chairman, replies at QAVS presentation

Lieutenants then went away to write their joint assessment and recommendation to the Cabinet Office from where the QAVS is administered.

Along with the news of our receiving the award came an invitation for two people to attend one of the garden parties held at Buckingham Palace in May. David Penny and Maggie Jones, representing H&G Canal Trust volunteers, attended on 24 May 2016 where they met other winners of this year's award in the presence of the Queen and other members of the royal family.

H&G Canal Trust is one of 193 charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups to receive the prestigious award this year. The number of awards given to groups across the whole of the UK this year is slightly higher than last year, showing that the voluntary sector is thriving and full of innovative ideas to tackle community challenges.



Dame Janet Trotter and Mike Smart DL take a trip on Heritage boat Alder.

The award was presented to H&G Canal Trust by Dame Janet Trotter, Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire, because the charity's headquarters, The Wharf House, is in Gloucestershire. Air Vice Marshal Mike Smart, Deputy Lieutenant of Herefordshire, assisted at the ceremony, and represented the Countess of Darnley, Lord Lieutenant of Herefordshire, as it was widely recognised that H&G Canal Trust is an enterprise across both counties.

» CP

Photoglow

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service is the highest award given to local volunteer groups across the UK to recognise outstanding work in their communities. The awards were created in 2002 to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee and winners are announced each year on 2 June - the anniversary of the Queen's Coronation.

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Beer, Cider and Perry Festival see reverse ...



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THE WHARF HOUSE and MALSWICK HOUSE

Within The Wharf House and Malswick House we have some good and sad changes this quarter.

On the good side we are pleased to have Joanne York take over management at Malswick House. Jo previously spent 2 years helping run the well known and respected Glass House on May Hill and will provide a welcome boost to grow the business.

At The Wharf House itself our great apprentice chef Maisey Smith has been featured in a two page spread in leading food magazine *Crumbs*, with stunning photography provided by our very own Aimee Genders. Maisey is part of our training partnership with River Cottage in Devon, and we hope to take another apprentice into the group with them shortly.

Very sadly Aimee will have moved to pastures new by the time you read this. She has been with TWH in various roles and at various times over the last seven years, before, during, and after university, having taken control of the accounts at the age of 16, to progress via stints in both kitchen and front of house to become assistant business manager for TWH Co Ltd last year with particular focus on Malswick House. She has now found her dream job as an event manager for a leading local company in that field and we wish her the very best. She will be very sadly missed.

»» **DRP**



Maisey Smith in *Crumbs* magazine featuring Aimee's stunning photograph.

River Leadon Hydro

We have let the first contract for our small hydro scheme on the River Leadon where it flows into the Severn at Over. This also helps secure the long-term water supply for the Canal. See feature on page 10.

This is a precursor to our Llanthony hydro scheme which also makes progress behind the scenes helped by the latest addition to our team of Dr Caroline Buffery who had just completed her doctorate on the legal geography of the River Severn before she joined us – fitting, considering the project we have in hand – particularly our hydro schemes.

»» **DRP**



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

L&PDT News

Hydro-scheme

for H&G Canal Trust

by Dr Caroline Buffery

Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust is on its way to becoming a carbon neutral charity thanks to a grant from the Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF).

H&G CT, a charity which works towards reopening the whole of the canal from Gloucester to Hereford, is renowned for its sustainability, having already installed solar panels on its primary buildings. Being so closely connected to water, it has been considering hydropower as a potential renewable energy source for a number of years.

Now, thanks to the grant, it is able to begin Phase 1 of an ambitious plan to



build a hydropower facility alongside its headquarters at The Wharf House, Over. Once installed, the hydro system will provide enough power to enable both the Wharf House and its proposed new Mill Barn community building to be run entirely off grid. By increasing the amount of clean, renewable energy which can be provided on site, it is hoped that the H&G Canal Trust can eventually become a carbon neutral charity and a role model for other rural organisations.

The grant has been awarded by RCEF, a £15 million programme delivered by waste and resources charity WRAP and jointly funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC). It supports rural communities in England to develop renewable energy projects which provide economic and social benefits to the community.

This project will use the grant to engage local Stroud-based company



'Renewables First', engineering consultants and project delivery experts who specialise in hydropower systems. RF will undertake initial feasibility tests on the River Leadon and investigate the potential for constructing a hydro generator. The study at the potential site in Over will obtain a detailed analysis of water levels, catchment and flow.

It is hoped that the design will be an Archimedean screw, which uses the



Example of an Archimedean screw hydro turbine.

weight of the flow of water to cause a large screw to rotate, creating energy which can be extracted by an electricity generator. These turbines operate at various speeds, which means that the rotational speed of the screw can be increased or decreased depending on the flow rate available in the river.

While advising on the best possible designs for a complete hydropower system, the report will also undertake ecological and environmental surveys. This will ensure that the hydro scheme will benefit the ecology of the wildlife on the river. In addition, the installation of a fish pass will allow fish and elvers to travel upstream easily to access the river's upper reaches, and pass through the turbine safely on the way downstream.

» **CB**

The River Leadon at Over,
– a potential source of energy.

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As reported in the last edition of *The Wharfinger*, the Grand Holiday Draw 2015 was a huge success raising **£2,291**. Let's make this year even better!

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As the AGM took place just before the deadline for this edition, we have the opportunity to include a brief report of that important formal meeting. It is important because it is a legal requirement of both the Charity Commission (H&G CT is a registered charity) and Companies House (H&G CT Ltd is a registered company) that we hold an AGM, and it is also a requirement in our Articles of Association, the legal document which defines our status and operational procedures.

There is a certain amount of formal business which has to be enacted at the AGM: approval of the previous AGM's minutes; presentation and approval of the annual report (printed in edition 128) and the accounts for the financial year 2015-16; approval of the appointment of the independent examiner of the accounts; and election of Council of Management members. There is also space for the Chairman's welcome and remarks and for a report on membership and, after the formal business, a presentation of highlights in our activities during the past year.

Notable points this time included:



Janet Moults's decision that she will resign as Chairman of H&G CT before the end of 2016 (and this time she is determined not to return for yet another period of office in the future, but will be continuing her many other valuable and varied duties within H&G CT)

Expenditure in 2015-16 of £298,193, of which the largest part was investment in our commercial assets (primarily the new house at Dymock, but also the refurbishment of the larger cottage at Llanthony) and also on canal restoration (most notably at Kymin);

Income in 2015-16 of £288,408 which, together with a proportion of our reserves, was sufficient to cover that expenditure;

Expenditure by TWH Co Ltd (a wholly-owned subsidiary of H&G CT) of £49,906 (L&PDT costs and Over site and boats costs) for the benefit of H&G CT, as well as capital investments of £45,950 in Malswick House and TWH, subsidised in part by the operational surplus of the TWH and MH businesses and in part by drawing on reserves;

- ❖ the appointment as independent examiner of the H&G CT accounts for 2016-17 of volunteer Philip Marshall FCA (who had played a major supportive role in guiding production of the 2015-16 accounts);
- ❖ the election as a new member of Council of Management of volunteer John Kilpatrick;
- ❖ a presentation by volunteer Clive Weston illustrating the review he is carrying out with Council of Management into its operational processes and structures with the purpose of improving H&G CT's organisational effectiveness;
- ❖ and a presentation by Maggie Jones and David Penny covering the very wide range of canal restoration and other H&G CT activities over the year and with a view of forthcoming new developments.

The enjoyable and informative evening, in the Malswick House marquee resplendent in decorations from a recent wedding party there, was well attended by members wanting to learn more about the H&G CT's inner workings. We hope you can join us next year for what I am sure will be an equally enjoyable evening at next year's AGM, on Tuesday 18 July 2017, 19.30, at Malswick House.

» JH



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



Members of Malswick House staff who have worked together to complete the pub's first year of trading.

MALSWICK HOUSE

celebrates its

One Year Anniversary

by Aimee Genders

Malswick House is thrilled to announce that it is now a year since first opening its doors and what a year it has been. In year one, Malswick House has seen plenty of changes and improvements, including: a marquee revamp; a new fireplace and beer garden thanks to the dedicated H&G CT volunteers; disabled access and toilets; the introduction of several popular feature nights including Quiz Night, Burger Night and the newly added Steak Night; and last but not least, let's not forget the adoption of the beautiful husky pub dog, Kai.

Above all though, Malswick House has been able to promote and support the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal

Trust, a registered charity which has the ultimate aim of completing full restoration of the canal from Hereford to Gloucester.

We were pleased to welcome the H&G CT Volunteers to their Christmas Lunch last year and hope that they will be back to join us again this year.

So as you can see, it's been an exciting year and we can't thank our friends, family, employees, and customers enough for all your support and encouragement over the last year.

To celebrate our One Year Anniversary we held a party on 16 July with Live Music and a delicious Hog Roast.

» AG



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Out and about in all weathers by Janet Moulton

Janet tells of the Herefordshire Sales Team's recent outings.



Tim Coghlan far right presents a £200 cheque to H&G CT at Braunston Historic Boat Rally.

We started our 2016 travels attending **St Richard's Festival in Droitwich**. This is held on the restored section of the Droitwich Canal in Vines Park, close to the town centre. It set the pattern for the next few months – sunshine and showers. There was plenty of interest as the H & G is the nearest restoration in progress.



Pat Skeet runs the sales stand at Hellens Garden Festival.

The Spring Bank Holiday found us at our usual venue – the **Crick Boat Show**. As one of only three canal societies attending the show there was a great deal of talking about the H & G – at times it seemed that all 28,000 who attended came to talk to us but Ray, Barbara, Steve, Becca and I covered the three days. No rain this year, just dust! It was frustrating not being able to mention The Queen's Award as it was embargoed until the following Thursday.

Moving on to **Hellens Garden Festival**, Dick was there to sign copies of *Rescued from Obscurity* which is still being well received as was the progress on the local canal. Sadly the weather did not hold and heavy overnight rain meant a move of the car park to a further field. A burst water main in the next village cut off water supplies to the site so the show was forced to close early.



A very rainy view from the sales stand.

Janet Moulton

This set the pattern for **Braunston Historic Boat Rally**: torrential rain and thunderstorms on Saturday and more rain overnight.

It didn't keep the people away and we were very pleased to receive a £200 donation from Tim Coghlan of Braunston Marina presented by Les Etheridge and Richard Parry – as you can see in the photograph the ground in the marquee was not good – owing to the high water table the water comes up as well as down!

Sunday morning and I needed to be pushed on to the car park – unfortunately covering the Scout pushing me with mud and the car was a disgrace. The state of the car park meant that it had to be closed at midday so curtailing the event. Everyone remained cheerful and I found some enthusiastic car washers nearby.

An interesting start to the season with considerable interest in the progress on restoration and on our sustainable approach – the envy of other Canal Societies. »» JM

Maggie tells of the Gloucestershire Sales Team's recent outings.

The Gloucester sales and promotion started the summer season at the **Disabilities Health Check Day** – a bitterly cold day in May.

In June we returned to the **Ledbury Community Day** where we had much interest shown in the possibility of a new length of our Canal which would be at the north of Ledbury alongside the proposed housing development. Margaret had her photo taken holding a framed copy of our poster declaring that we had won The Queen's Award.

July saw us at **Dymock Remembered** in the village Hall where they had a great deal of information about the village including interesting maps of when the Canal went through the village.

A week later we were at **Lydney Festival** down by the Docks. Again our stand was warmly welcomed and we sold many draw tickets, as well as more copies of *Rescued from Obscurity*, and gained three new members to the H&G CT. »» MJ



Andy by our H&G CT displays at Ledbury Community Day.



Margaret poses for photos at Ledbury Community Day.

Jan Long

Forthcoming events

August 20-21	Over Festival, Over Canal Basin, Gloucester
September 10	Oxenhall and Newent Open Day
November 12	H&G CT Winter Bazaar, Ledbury



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All profits from the Bazaar will be used for the promotion and
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Social Evenings

at The Royal Oak

The third Tuesday of every month (except December)
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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!*

16 August – **This meeting will be held at Malswick House**
Informal Natter and a Noggin



20 September
Somerset Levels and other news from the
West Country.

– Ray Alexandra

Followed by the **Grand Holiday Draw**



18 October
Idle Women –
the working boatwomen during World War 2
– Vince Williams

We welcome back Vince who visited us a number of years ago. Do come to hear this presentation.



15 November
From the IJsselmeer to Berlin.

An inland cruise on a seagoing catamaran.

– Robert Harris



Note – no meeting in December but back in January



RESTORATION UPDATE

News of our work on the Hereford & Gloucester Canal

Want to get involved at any of our restoration sites? – You will be most welcome – all the contact details are on page 30.

Aylestone Park John Pritchard

John Pritchard has led the Yarkhill Volunteers at Aylestone to work on the lush undergrowth and weed in the Canal there.

The Yarkhill team has made five visits to Aylestone Park. The main task has been removing the vast amount of weed in the Canal. Progress has been slow but steady, and 80% of the channel is now clear. The dog walking fraternity have been very supportive and are looking forward to the development of the Holmer Trading Estate section. »» **JP**

Below and top right: The Canal is gradually cleared of the vast quantity of weed.



John Pritchard

Yarkhill

Chris High

Work at Yarkhill is currently limited due to the number of volunteers available and the fact that John Pritchard has taken responsibility for tidying up the Aylestone site and by mutual agreement is using the Yarkhill Team, generally every other week, to do it.

Holidays, grandchildren and paid work are the reason for the low numbers, and with only fortnightly visits to Yarkhill this only gives us the opportunity to try to keep up with controlling the vegetation growth such that our visitors are able to walk through and enjoy the site. »» **CH**



Towpath vegetation looking north.



Chris High

Wildside vegetation looking south.

Dymock

Wilf Jones



John rakes away the stones whilst others tackle the fast-growing vegetation.

shrubs planted around the basin, and the wooden picnic tables are being painted as and when the weather allows.

The water is not to the full depth at the moment, but this will be rectified by the time you read this. A contractor has been engaged to sink a borehole and install a pump, and work has started on building a water outfall for this supply which will keep the water level topped up. We have surveyed the level to ensure the overflow from the basin will perform as planned.

The hundreds of trees and shrubs planted by volunteers are now well established and picnic benches, donated by the parish, are in place. The towpath around the basin has been raked and grass seed sown. It is growing well as we were fortunate to catch the weather just right with the rain which followed.

The new houses facing onto this new feature, including the one owned by H&G CT, are now all occupied, and have a wonderful unobstructed outlook south across the water.

Work by volunteers continues to clear the weeds springing up between the trees and

The boundary fence to the neighbouring chapel has been erected by the volunteers from Oxenhall, who also cleared a pathway for the chapel volunteers to get their mower to the newly fenced land.

Work will continue over the next few months to complete all tasks including reinstating the towpath once the drilling for the borehole is completed. Volunteers from Oxenhall, Yarkhill and the Saturday Roving Team have all been committed to this development, and have been supported with help from residents of Winding Hole Close and local parish councillors. This is truly an example of "Working together in the present to revive the past and secure a better future", achieving the shared vision of the Dymock community and H&G CT.

» **WJ**

Word has got around that the Oxenhall gang is good at building fences.

The first was completed last year when we built one bounding the car park at Malswick House and earlier this year we were called in to restore a boundary to the rear of the pub where it meets the old railway/canal line. A few old concrete posts were all that was left but three weeks later a chestnut paling fence was in place which should

last until the canal is restored through here and it can be removed. In the meantime a new beer garden is now open on the adjacent ground so you can sit and dream with a pint in your hand.

Another fence has just been completed alongside the new canal basin at Dymock forming the boundary between the canal land and the chapel. (see *Dymock* on previous page)

Back at Oxenhall the focus has been on maintenance. The grass now needs cutting every two weeks and thanks to the appeal last time there are now sufficient mowers to do the job. Thank you to the donors. There have been comments in the past about the towpath being too manicured so this year it has been decided that the bare minimum will be cut and the rest can go wild. One of our biggest challenges is keeping down the brambles in the Willows area on which we spent a lot of effort last year. The plan was to spray an effective weedkiller on them in the spring but so



These two photos show the difference a few months can make in the amount of vegetation we regularly maintain. The top one being early spring and the lower one mid-summer.

far the weather has thwarted our plans and it has become necessary to mow or strim them again or all our efforts will have been in vain. The ride on mower is feeling its age but can still cope with brambles up to about 6" high and the strimmer does the rest. A corner of this area has been used in the past for storage of materials but over time this too had become overgrown with nettles and brambles so it was impossible to see what remained. It has now been partly cleared revealing some good bricks but mostly rubbish which has been re-palletted and taken to the station for disposal at a later date. There remains a trailer which we use for storing scrap metal, another mobile site hut and a caravan chassis still hidden in the jungle, so there is still plenty of work to do to open up the whole area ready for the survey for the future extension of the canal through this section.

Work in the station area has necessarily slowed down as we and the Saturday

team have been busy elsewhere. One of the platforms has been completely uncovered revealing the extent of the work required here before a canal can be put through. Several pallets have been filled with bricks loose enough to pull off by hand but a lot of them should be reusable when the time comes. A start

has been made on taking down the rest of the fence which used to surround the builder's yard but there is no urgency and it is being saved as a standby job.


Finally I have to report that two of our gang have recently left us. John Chappell, who for several years wrote his article "Working With Nature" for the Wharfinger, and Peter Field who started with us when we were restoring the lock. Fortunately we have two new volunteers to take their places - Mark and Robert who both live locally.

» BF

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Moat Farm

Martyn Tilford

The indications of extended dry and fine weather in May were rather washed away with the arrival of June. The progress made in the spring, developing the towpath level up to the site of Double Lock, was somewhat halted by inclement conditions throughout June.



Ted re-handles excavated spoil adjacent to the site of Double Lock.

Fortunately July improved matters and enabled the towpath level to be extended right up to the lock site and into the lower chamber area. The material removed during this excavation has been stockpiled on the old railway trackbed adjacent to the lock site for re-use in landscaping the large change in level that will occur when the Double Lock is reconstructed. This had the advantage that dumpers were not required to relocate the spoil which was achieved by re-handling it two or three times with the excavator.

Moat Farm Bug Hotel

We are pleased to announce that the Moat Farm Bug Hotel is now open for business. Alan had been developing the idea for a while and after collecting suitable construction material was assisted by Robert to create this multi-storey haven. The position of the hotel was an important factor in attracting residents and a suitable location was chosen in the centre of the site near to our site cabin. We await with interest the arrival of our first guests.

I mentioned last time that the resident ducks seemed to be busy preparing for nesting, and as the summer developed we were greeted with three separate broods of ducklings who, with their attentive mothers, rapidly gained weight and size due to the abundance of suitable aquatic food along the restored canal section.

Of course, mowing and strimming is a regular task at this time of the year and it was assisted by the first visit of H&G CT's Kubota tractor with flail to the site. Not only did this speed the treatment of the level and easily accessible areas of the site, but it also enabled the training of some Moat Farm regulars in its use. » **MT**

Alan proudly declares the Bug Hotel is open for business.



Martyn Tilford

Over Basin & Vineyard Hill Ted Beagles

After I wrote in the last issue that there was no sign of the resident swans building a nest, they almost immediately started to build one, and are now raising six fine cygnets. They were hatched on 1 June, and overnight moved from the nesting site on the floodplain into the main basin, where they are growing rapidly.



The swans with their one week old cygnets.

Regular proximity of people and familiarity due to occasional feeding, means that they are not generally aggressive, and so we have a peaceful relationship, sharing the waterway with the new family. They seem to be very fond of sunbathing on the slipway at times.

Great wall progress

The blockwork walls of the cycle cave are now completed, along with the brick facing. The reverse sides of the blockwork have been painted with two coats of bituminous paint and a waterproof membrane. Once the void area behind the walls has been backfilled we shall then begin the more complex task of building the brick arched roof. In the meantime Bob and Ivor are working on the brick facing for the front of the main wall. All the bricks we are using were recovered from the old hospital buildings which were demolished when the basin was built.



Ivor and Bob completing final the course of blockwork.



Cycle cave walls brick cladding almost completed.

Inset above: Cycle cave brickwork wall tie.

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Site Maintenance

The log pile that has been on the main site for some time has now finally been cleared, and the area has been reseeded to return to grass. Many shrubs and trees have been pruned in **The Wharf House** car park to keep the parking bays clear. One of the horse chestnut trees was found to have a canker disease. All the affected branches have been cut off and burned, along with some healthy wood necessary to restore it to a reasonable shape. Also the Pin Oak tree near to **The Wharf House** is looking very unhealthy, probably due to a mineral deficiency. Mike Bowden is providing nursing care and treating it with a ferrous sulphate tonic in the hope that it may be returned to good health again.

Following the dry weather in May it has been necessary to start topping up the water level in the basin again. The Stuart Group pump is now installed back on the River Leadon bank and running as required. There are several commemorative benches around the site, and Dave and Mike Hunt have been busy cleaning and treating these with the various wood preservatives necessary to maintain them in good condition for another year.

Boats

The wooden structure for Renton's front hold is now completed, with a temporary cover fitted to keep rain out until a permanent one is available. Terry and Chris are now working on the forward hold of Alder. Secure decking has been manufactured from scaffold board offcuts and a fitted tarpaulin is in place to make the hold weatherproof. Inside, all rust has been removed as far as possible by a combination of wire brushing and use of an air powered needle gun; it is slow work but worth it in the end. All metal surfaces have been treated with a rust inhibiting agent and painted with rust preventative paint. Finally new flooring is being fitted throughout the hold.

» TB



Dave and Mike applying wood preservative to benches.



Malcolm on the Kubota keeping the grass trimmed throughout the site.



Ted Beagles and Chris Hands

Chris Hands and Terry Holder ensure that Alder is shipshape for The Queen's Award presentation trip.

The new entrance into the site has been completed.

We had 11 tons of scalping delivered for the final section of the car parking area and were able to use H&G CT's Kubota tractor to spread the material to form a hard level surface.

We have erected a new section of wooden fence bordering our neighbours in Hemmingsdale Road. The old fence was completely rotten so the whole length was taken down and replaced with new posts and fence panels.

The warm and wet summer months have produced an explosive growth of vegetation throughout the site and much volunteer effort has been spent with the usual activities of strimming and mowing. »» **PH**



Removing the old fence.



The new fence goes up



The new fence completed

Alan McBride and Paul Henshaw

Would you like to be involved?

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

Hereford Roving Team

John Pritchard on 01432 272972
johnpritchard32@btinternet.com

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
brianfox74@gmail.com

Newent Station - Saturdays

Wilf Jones on 01452 413 888
wilfredjones506@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

Llanthony

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

Saturday Roving Team

Maggie Jones on 01452 618 010
maggiejones@blueyonder.co.uk

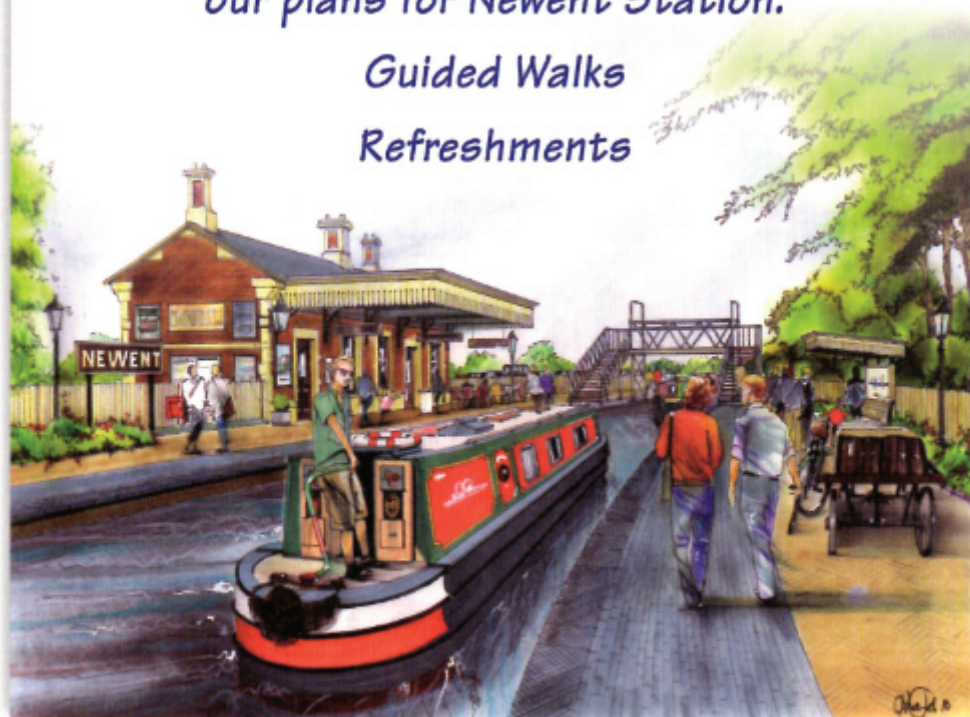
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Nature Watch

The Over Basin Swans

By Monica Hamer

Monica is a long time friend of H&G CT, and as a resident overlooking our Canal Basin is able to keep a watchful eye on the wildlife there. She takes up the story ...

One... two... three...
four... five... six ...
sev...



Monica Hamer and Maggie Jones

As regulars to Over Basin are aware two swans took up residence at the Over Basin again this year, and built a nest in the middle of a small pond in the woods adjacent to the car park. By mid-April seven eggs had been laid and then the wait began.

Every day for six weeks, I visited Sadie – that's what I called the female swan – as she sat on her nest. She became very grateful for the little food I brought and somehow some kind of trust formed between us. It seemed well over the eggs'

incubation time and by the seventh week I started to think her eggs weren't fertile and would never hatch. However on 1 June I was delighted when Sadie stood up and proudly showed me seven beautiful baby cygnets. She was very hungry after her ordeal and immediately got off the nest for food. It was funny watching Sam – that's what I named the cob – desperately trying to take over, but he couldn't quite get the hang of becoming a daddy.

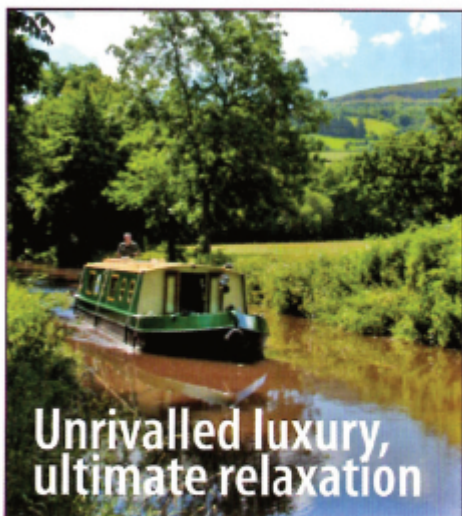
The next day I felt very anxious when Sadie left the nest for her food and the baby cygnets stumbled down into the water after her, but they were fine. It was wonderful to witness their first dip less than 24 hours after being hatched. I must say, watching them return an hour later was just as stressful as they scrambled up the slope back to their nest.

The following day, I couldn't believe my eyes when the family, Sam in the lead, came swimming down the canal for all the world to see. The canal had now become their new home and, unfortunately, exposed to predators for

their number was reduced by one the following day. However since then, perhaps surprisingly, six have survived.

The cygnets have become a delight on the canal, all healthy and growing fast – undoubtedly it would seem by everyone feeding them. As much as we would love them to stay, they are now starting to adventure away from the canal more and more. Whether they stay for a little longer is anyone's guess.

» MH



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News from the friends of

GLOUCESTER WATERWAYS MUSEUM

Chris Witts

Friends of the Gloucester Waterways Museum, our volunteers and indeed our paying customers have been very patient while the museum remains closed. It's not long before the opening at the end of July though, following nigh on eight months of refurbishment, achieved through our successful Lottery grant.

**The Museum reopens
on Friday 29 July!**

"The museum's new design takes a fresh approach to displaying objects from our national collection, allowing visitors to enjoy the stunning views of the warehouse for themselves."

*Head of museums for the Canal & River Trust
Graham Boxer*

We now have the careful task of cleaning the exhibits before they are replaced on show in the galleries. Volunteers and Friends received training prior to handling the priceless exhibits.

Another job which had been long overdue was the replacement sheets for the narrowboat Oak. Once arrived at the Museum it wasn't long before they were fitted across the hold of Oak, proudly displaying the name 'Severn & Canal Carrying Co'.

We look forward to seeing you all at our Museum soon when we reopen. »» **CW**



Chris Witts

Narrowboat Oak with her new sheets at Gloucester Waterways Museum.



Gloucestershire & Herefordshire IWA Branch 2016 Social Meetings and Events

Non members are welcome.

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The warmer weather is bringing the model boaters out, not that we have any reason not to with the mildest winter since your scribe became a member, and meeting ice on the canal only briefly last winter.

For those of us daft enough to want to raise steam, the winter does have other problems as the colder weather, and we have had cold winds a lot, causes the gas tanks to ice up and the burners do not run properly, much to the amusement of the electric brigade, who think we are mad anyway. Now all is much better and we are steaming again.

The swans, though usually only one of them, like to swim about among our boats, so far without any problems as a bash from that hard beak could cause a lot of damage, but we are at the moment managing to co-exist. Now they are a family with Mum, Dad and six cygnets growing very fast we are careful to avoid them. Dad, the pen, is very protective and always puts himself between his family and any danger, although all we have had so far is a bit of hissing. They tend to take over

the slipway so we launch elsewhere until they move on.

We have had one "weeding" session in the basin and have just finished the second one, where we tried out a different method to "weed" the canal. The kit for this was a set of heavy chains made into an "H" section dragged across the canal to collect the weed and then pulled back again. I wouldn't say it was fun but if they ever put Tug of War back into the Olympics our model club could well represent GB! The water weeds have also enjoyed a mild winter and are growing strongly. We need a Dr Dolittle to talk to the swans and persuade them to eat the waterweed and that would keep all the canal users happy.

We have now put barley straw packs all along the canal to inhibit the growth of blanket weed, so that will sort out one nuisance for everybody. Our last fun day had 19 Micromagic boats racing and also 25 motorboats doing "driving tests" round the buoys so all had fun.

The picture shows us sailing at the winding hole by the ½ mile marker. Weed is a problem here also, but the full size boats going up and down keep the channel open at the moment.

» DE



Sailing at the winding hole near the Vineyard Hill half mile marker.

Gloucester & District Model Boat Club

sails at Over Basin on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday afternoons (weather permitting). You should find somebody sailing between 1pm and 4pm. The Club members will be only too pleased to talk to you about their models and the Club. The members have models of all descriptions including amphibious craft. Yachts are also very popular.

Chairman. Edward Tedaldi.



This is our eventful update on our water activities. Thanks to Andy Beasley of Wheelyboat Trust and Jim Couland for their excellent task in getting "Sir Charles Morrison" back to us at Over in a near-on NEW condition, also with a new "Torqeedo Cruise 2" electric motor. At last I can join in with the banter while motoring up the canal. After a testing time trying to keep the batteries charged, solar power should be installed by now. On the boat!

I was overwhelmed when I put out a call for the Launch Day supports to read that the Mayor Neil Hampson and Councillor Said Hansdot, Sheriff of Gloucester, were delighted to accept our invitation for 7 July. My gratitude to Tony Ward, Tredworth Area Crier (aka Father Christmas), and Andy Beasley, Director of the Wheelyboat Trust, who gave a brief talk on the Trust. Sadly no one accepted my offer from Wales. Something to do with the increase of TVs!

On 7 July it was all systems go, even rain when I asked for sunshine, time getting close and a gathering of 29. The Mayor said a few words of praise for what we are doing, and with my best bottle of "brut" champagne and with a knowledgeable shake and a pop of the cork, and 50% to the fish, a sprinkling was given to the boat. With not much left the other bottle was opened!

The Wheelyboat was then loaded with the



All aboard the *Sir Charles Morrison* with its new electric motor.



Pete Bisson

Mayor, Sheriff and clients for the photo call. When the Mayor insisted on a viewing of the work of H&G Canal Trust, as well as performing a "waltz" when in control of the boat, the Sheriff took a turn at driving the boat and apologised for laughing at the Mayor's efforts.

Many thanks to all who took part and who made a great day to remember, adding a bit of history for the H&G Canal. » **PB**

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Not quite
... the last page!

Stamps

Following the appeal in the last edition of The Wharfinger Steve Bence reports that he has received several nice philatelic donations – our thanks to all concerned. Following some sales over recent weeks we've passed the £2,000 target and working towards £2,500!

Stamps can be taken to a Social Evening or other H&G CT event – or to **The Wharf House** or **Malswick House**. Or send them direct to: – **H&G Stamps**, c/o Steve Bence, 35 Lime Road, Southam, Warwickshire, CV47 1EQ. Please keep those stamps coming.

Thank you » SB

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Thank You

Recently, we have received a number of kind tool donations, including some very useful items from Chas Smith, Robert Oliver and John Crawley. We will be putting them to very good use. *Thank you.*

Volunteer e-newsletter

Contacting all our volunteers to give them the good news of **The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service** and to invite them to the presentation was challenging. What we did discover is that our **volunteer e-newsletter** only holds a proportion of our regular helpers' details. We apologise if you are a volunteer but did not get the message in time to join the occasion. We did try to contact as many as possible with very short notice of the date. If you did not receive an e-newsletter invitation please check that Hannah at The Wharf House has your up-to-date email address on her system. Her address is hannah@thewharfhouse.co.uk.

Please note the **Volunteer e-newsletter** is not the same as the **Count me in** e-newsletter.

Thank you.



DIARY DATES

OVER **FESTIVAL**

on the canal 2016

Saturday, 20 and Sunday, 21 August

Any offers of homemade cakes very welcome thank you.

Newent & Oxenhall Open Day

Saturday, 10 September

Copy deadline for the next issue

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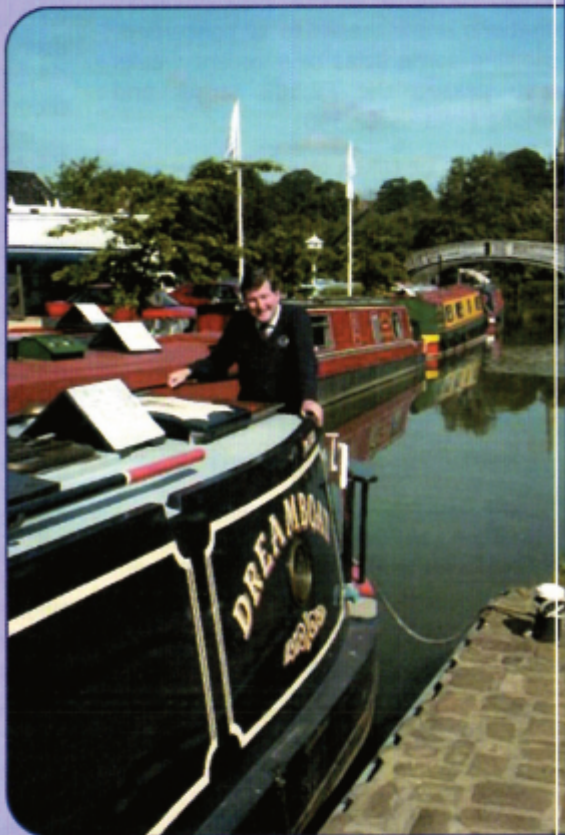
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contact Tim Coghlan at:

Braunston Marina Limited, Braunston,
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Telephone 01788 891373
Fax 01788 891436

Website: www.braunstonmarina.co.uk
Email: sales@braunstonmarina.co.uk

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. The H&G CT also welcomes offers of gifts of good quality used tools and machinery from those who no longer need or cannot use it.

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Contact any of these names TODAY!

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"Who does what ..."

is inside the front cover.

General enquiries:

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Visit our websites:

H&G Canal Trust

www.h-g-canal.org.uk

THE WHARF HOUSE

www.thewharfhouse.co.uk



'Like Us' on Facebook

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Want to join?

H&G CT UK Membership Rates

Please support our voluntary work by becoming a Member of the H&G CT.

A membership form is available online or from

THE WHARF HOUSE.

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

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Hereford

Our objective is to rebuild the 34 mile Canal linking the centre of Hereford to Gloucester and its connection with the 2,500 mile inland waterway network. We have major restoration sites in each county, together extending to some 4 miles. The intention is to provide a financially sustainable independent Canal which does not require public money for its future operation and maintenance.

The H&G Canal Trust

The Canal Society, formed in 1983, became the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust, a registered charity, in 1992. It has an ordinary and corporate membership approaching 1,400, here and abroad.

The original Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal

Work started in 1792 reaching Ledbury from Gloucester by 1798. In 1827 Steven Ballard was appointed to oversee the Canal's completion, which reached Hereford in 1845; this was one of the last major canal routes completed in Britain. The Canal stretched from the River Sever at Gloucester, via Newent, Dymock and Ledbury to Hereford, using 22 locks and 3 tunnels. It was closed in 1881 to allow construction of the Ledbury-Gloucester railway which in turn closed in 1964.

