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Winter 2016-17

The Wharfinger

HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST



130
EDITION

REBUILDING A SUSTAINABLE CANAL BETWEEN HEREFORD & GLOUCESTER

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Bob the builder

Cover image:
H&G publicity in Birmingham - towing Tow!
(see page 11). - BCNS.

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Editorial by Cliff Penny

Into the Future!

The formation of the *Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust* in 1992 came about following a detailed presentation we had given to senior local authority staff from both counties a few years earlier.

They advised that a charitable constitution, compared to that of an unregulated society, would enhance our credibility with the general public, local and national businesses and public bodies. In particular it was necessary to gain the local authority support for the essential protection of the route of the Canal that we subsequently achieved.

I wrote in **The Wharfing** that it was *"the correct foundation stone on which our further success can be confidently built . . . it marks a major step in the history of our endeavours."* I stressed that the charitable status required us to change some things to comply with the law and presented an opportunity for us to improve our organisation so that it was fit to help us deliver our long term objective.

It has been stressed that the physical act of rebuilding the Canal is, at times, almost the easiest bit – like an iceberg there is much more going on out of sight! The creation of the **Legal & Project Development Team** in 2012 marked another significant landmark in the organisation of H&G CT to try and meet increasing demands. The L&PDT has subsequently benefitted from a growing list of skilled professionals acting on a voluntary, pro bono or nominal cost basis. However, at times progress is not as swift as we would like due to the manner in which CoM is currently structured.

As reported previously CoM have been receiving professional advice on the implementation of major changes to the organisation and management of H&G CT – building on proposals discussed some 4 years earlier. CoM has decided to restructure H&G CT management into two tiers to improve operational effectiveness. In addition to a board of trustees ("Council") an Executive Board will manage day-to-day activities on behalf of Council. The first step is the appointment a chief executive to work with CoM to refine ideas for the new structure (see pages 4 and 5).

Whilst it is of little significance in the overall scheme of things I can lay claim to having been the last Chairman of the Canal Society and the first of the H&G CT. Just as we recognised the need for change back in 1992 quite clearly it is now time to implement further changes to our organisation to more effectively meet current day and future demands. As always, progress will be reported in **The Wharfing**.

Regular readers will be aware that our longest ever serving Chairman Janet Moulton (8½ years in total) announced at the AGM her intention to 'retire'. However, that doesn't mean that Janet has left us – far from it – she continues as Chairman of **H&G Canal Sales & Promotion** and is responsible for many other tasks! Thank you, Janet (see page 21).

As readers of Editions 128 and 129 will know, Council of Management has been engaging in a review of the organisation and management of the H&G CT. This started in March 2016 when CoM accepted the offer to lead a review by HR consultant and H&G CT member (and volunteer) Clive Weston.

Discussions in the first two workshops led by Clive have focused us on our review about the way H&G CT operates. In particular, CoM members have considered the vision for H&G CT and the associated mission, in terms of the measures needed to make progress towards achieving the vision. We have also considered the many challenges H&G CT faces in accelerating that progress. **Our review has convinced us that now is the time to step up a gear!**

The Canal Society, and then the H&G CT, has been active for a third of a century. In that period it has built firm foundations in establishing itself in the two counties as a credible organisation and restored some four miles of the H&G Canal, a major achievement.

As our regular readers know it has also:

- ❖ Secured protection of the entire route in local authority plans together with important supportive policies enabling significant 'planning gain'
- ❖ Consistently been successful in representations to public inquiries and hearings
- ❖ Successfully worked in partnership with local authorities, parish councils and their communities, landowners and developers to deliver much more than just restoration of the canal

- ❖ Acquired freehold land and property including securing the means of access to the waterways network at Llanthony
- ❖ Developed capital assets and sources of perpetual income to support restoration and maintenance into the future
- ❖ Been consistently placed within the top 5 of 65 active UK inland waterway schemes in the annual review by a leading national waterways magazine.

Janet Moulton, our long standing chairman, announced at the AGM that she wished to step down before the end of the year, and that took effect at the end of October. That leaves an important post to be filled.

CoM has decided to restructure the management of H&G CT into two tiers: a Council, which is the board of trustees, and an executive board to which Council delegates responsibility for H&G CT's day to day activities. This kind of arrangement is in accordance with our Articles of Association and is increasingly common in bodies like ours which are seeking to improve their operational effectiveness.

The first step is to recruit a chief executive, on a voluntary basis, to lead the executive board, and CoM spent 20 October in a third workshop, led by Clive, to prepare for this task. We are fortunate to have his experience, and also the help of a senior head-hunter, John Macleod, who has volunteered to lead us in finding the right person for this vital role.

The first task for the chief executive will be to work with CoM to refine our ideas for the new structure. As always we will keep you updated in **The Wharfinger**, in the e-newsletter and on our website.

H&G CT is rebuilding the long-closed canal between Hereford and Gloucester as a sustainable community and environmental asset, providing local employment and contributing to the economy of both counties.

Recognised as one of the leading canal restoration organisations, H&G CT has been consistently placed within the top 5 of 65 active UK inland waterway voluntary groups in the annual review by a respected national waterways magazine.

In 2016 H&G CT gained The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award given to local volunteer groups across the UK. It also gained international recognition with The Green Apple World Award for its Dymock partnership project.

H&G CT is now restructuring its management to address increasing demands for executive action

across a broad range of restoration and associated projects and in developing further partnerships with other bodies.

In addition to the Council (board of trustees), it is establishing an executive board which will manage H&G CT's day-to-day activities on behalf of the Council.

The first task for the Chief Executive will be to work with the existing Council of Management to refine our ideas for the new structure and to lead the executive board.

If you are excited by the challenges and rewards of this voluntary leadership role we look forward to hearing from you.

A briefing pack for applicants is available from Carolyn Pascall, at

chiefexecutive@h-g-canal.org.uk

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Welcome Donations

Donations in the past three months include £2,500 towards the **225 Anniversary Appeal**, including two grants of £1,000 each from the **Ratcliffe Trust** and the **DG Albright Charitable Trust**, and a grant of £500 towards the **Mill Barn Appeal** from the local branch of **IWA**. Land Fund income continues to accrue from those generous members who give a monthly sum; although the individual amounts are small, the annual total from this source is about £1,000.

Thank you to all

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OVER FESTIVAL

Report by Maggie Jones

The largest ever free 'Over Festival on the Canal' welcomed crowds to Over Basin on Saturday and Sunday 20/21 August.

Despite rain on the Saturday it was a great success with even more attending on the brighter Sunday. The waterside was teeming with craft of all shapes and sizes from model boats to the H&G Canal Trust's own heritage fleet.

There was fun for all the family to get involved from boat trips on Mister Maysey to face painting, a climbing wall, donkey rides and treasure hunt. The fire engine and fire brigade displays attracted both young and old. The very full marquee housed a wide selection of local crafts and produce stalls.

New this year was a BBQ from the **Malswick House** team which proved very popular. The refreshments team were also kept very busy serving teas, sandwiches, a great array of home-made cakes and ice creams. **The Wharf House** featured its new terrace menu with local beers, ciders and perry on tap for the festival. A full programme of the best local live music talent played on the river terrace and continued through into the evening on the Saturday.

Two of our regular users of the Basin attracted a great deal of interest. The Gloucester and District Model Boat Club brought a great range of small craft and Sailing4Disabled welcomed visitors to ride on their wheelyboat and katacanoes.





Amy Bugler

For everyone the message of the benefits of canal restoration by the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust was implicit throughout. The restored parts of the Canal provide a great venue for everyone to enjoy. We gained 10 new members, three volunteers and some hundreds of draw tickets were sold for our Grand Holiday Draw.

None of this could have happened without a large team of volunteers giving their time and enthusiasm. The H&G CT thanks everyone who helped in every aspect of the event both over the weekend and in the preparation beforehand. Also a big thank you to those who contributed the home-made cakes, ice-creams and bric-a-brac.

The Festival next year will be held on **Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 August 2017** - **we hope you can join us.**

» MJ



GRAND HOLIDAY DRAW 2016 *Results*



This year's draw was made at the September Social by the speaker Ray Alexander.

Thank you to everyone who helped, in any way, to make this *yet another successful Grand Holiday Draw*. The draw raised over £2,500 and well over half of this came from the tickets sent out in the Wharfinger and returned by our members. The draw was once again made at the September Social Evening at Much Marcle.

1st Prize: Ticket no. 09465

Narrow Boat Holiday for 4 - donated by **Black Prince Holidays: Lyn Baker, Gloucester.**

2nd Prize: Ticket no. 2086

One Day's Boat Hire - donated by **Beacon Park Boats: John Flemons, Gloucester.**

3rd Prize: Ticket no. 07744

One night Bed & Breakfast for 2 at The Wharf House: Mr & Mrs Ball, Shoreham-by-Sea.

Our grateful thanks to **Black Prince Holidays, Beacon Park Boats and The Wharf House** for donating the Holiday prizes which help to make our annual holiday draw such a success.

Thank you to everyone who supported the 2016 Grand Holiday Draw in any way.



Land Registry volunteers still smiling after they had completed the undergrowth clearance.



Maggie Jones

The far end of Vineyard Hill after its makeover, taken from the same spot as the top photo.

Employees from **Land Registry** swap their desks for *life in the sunshine!*

By Maggie Jones

From time to time we have offers of help from local businesses and organisations.

These offers come in the form of a team prepared to do some physical work on our Canal. They are, of course, very welcome. So when a group of employees from the Land Registry, based in Gloucester, volunteered to spend a day with us we of course said 'yes please'.

It was a couple of weeks before the Over Festival. Our regular Over volunteers were already working flat out to get the site ship shape for the event. The far end of Vineyard Hill had become very overgrown over the summer and young saplings, planted a year or so ago, were beginning to get lost in the undergrowth. The perfect job for the Land Registry team to tackle and eight volunteers, led by their co-ordinator Lynne Feddon, tackled it with gusto! It was a hot day but the enthusiastic team continued until the area was cleared and tidy once more.

A big thank you to them all. We hope they come back soon and recommend our 'green gym' to their colleagues.

» MJ

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Towing TOW!

Through Birmingham to Alvechurch on its way to Gloucester

By Carolyn Pascall

H&G CT's 70' heritage mud hopper, Tow, was towed by Muskrat, a 35' foot narrow boat, from Camp Hill to Alvechurch, on Sunday 23 and Monday 24 October in fine weather along the Birmingham Canal Navigations.

The journey involved 25 locks in Birmingham from the top of the Camp Hill Flight of 6 locks, through the Ashted flight (6 locks), then the Farmer's Bridge flight (13 locks) and through Gas Street Basin, then the Wast Hills Tunnel (2,276 yards) and down to Scarfield Wharf in Alvechurch.

Members of Birmingham Canal Navigation Society helped us rediscover Tow's location after it had been moved mysteriously from its mooring on Icknield Port Loop to the Cement Arm at the top of the Camp Hill locks. BCNS also volunteered their help, in the form of two very able boaters, Jeff Carter and Paul Smith, in this weekend collaborative project. Muskrat's owner, H&G CT Vice Chairman John Hammond, who has 30 years of canal boating experience and is a member of BCNS,



Above: Jeff (BCNS) ducks as Paul (BCNS) watches from above.
Top right: John at the tiller with Seth, Darren and Henry on Tow.
Middle right: Tow in Edgbaston Tunnel with Muskrat in front.
Bottom right: Darren pulls Muskrat in at Gas Street Basin.





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Left: Group photo, along with passerby, at Cambrian Wharf of John, Carolyn, Seth, Darren and Henry.

Below: Muskrat towing Tow, John at tiller, with some crew on towpath.

very much welcomed the support of BCNS in this venture. The H&G CT team included skilled navigator 11 year-old Seth and his father Darren Barnett, whose family live on a boat in Bath, and John's son Henry and wife Kirsty.

As the sun shone, people along the route stopped in wonder to gaze at this relatively diminutive narrowboat, evidently able to tow the wide, heavy and rusty mud-hopper, both craft being suitably bedecked in H&G Canal Trust livery.

After being craned out of the water at Scarfield Wharf, Alvechurch, a gesture generously offered to H&G CT by ABC Leisure Group Ltd, Tow will be transported by lorry to Over Canal Basin to undergo her restoration makeover and start a new life on the H&G Canal.

»» CP



Below: Tow in place at Alvechurch opposite the crane.



Carolyn Pascall



Gift ideas from THE WHARF HOUSE



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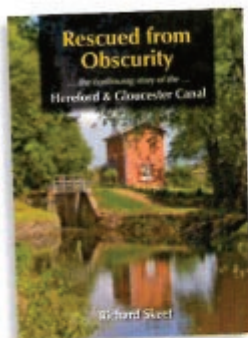
- A short history of the Trust and its restoration work
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By popular demand there is now a gift voucher for Afternoon Teas at **THE WHARF HOUSE**. The teas include a pyramid of sandwiches, scones, cakes and desserts as well as a choice of beverage. Vouchers are **£16.50** per person. They can be purchased either at **THE WHARF HOUSE**, or available by post with a gift card included for value of vouchers + £2.95.



Christmas Cards

Christmas Card of **THE WHARF HOUSE** and Over Basin at dusk. The design is printed on quality card, and comes singly or in packs of 5 with self-sealing envelopes. Size: 210mm x 99 mm. **£1** each or **£3.99**

for a pack of 5 cards with envelopes, plus £2.95 P+P for minimum of 4 packs of 5.

Why not come and see us soon – we have many other gift ideas so why not do your Christmas shopping in the Visitor Centre then join us for a meal – a far more relaxed way of working through your gift list!

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Over the **New Year** we are closed from Saturday 31 December to Tuesday 10 January.

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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.

MALSWICK HOUSE

holds an afternoon of

Beer, Cider, BBQ + Live Music

by Maggie Jones

Towards the end of August, before the summer had started to fade, Malswick House held a BBQ welcoming guests, families and "Dogs too"! The latter certainly pleased Kai, their lovely canine resident.

With local beers and ciders including those from Wye Valley and Weston's

Cider and music played in the marquee, the afternoon went with a swing.

The food served from the BBQ in the courtyard proved to be particularly popular.

The newly completed beer garden along the former canal line gave visitors an attractive place to relax and take in the late summer sun.

» **MJ**

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

Remembering Liz

Some 15 friends from the H&G CT gathered at Over Canal Basin in August, together with 5 members of Liz's family, for the unveiling of a plaque in memory of Liz by her parents Ann and Rodney Wood.

The weather was very kind to us and we then gathered on the terrace at The Wharf House for a cup of tea and cake – Liz would have approved both the cake and the budget! Members of the family then took a walk in the sunshine along the Canal at Vineyard Hill.

A memorable day when family and H&G CT friends could exchange fond memories of a truly committed and determined volunteer. Liz is rightly remembered for the undoubted major role that she played, from the outset of the Canal Trust, in helping to establish and then maintain the credibility of the organisation and in managing our finances. » **CRP**



Liz Connors

1959 – 2015

IN MEMORY OF LIZ CONNORS, FOR 25 YEARS TREASURER
OF THE HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE
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NEW**Canal Cycle and Walk leaflet****OVER BASIN**

We have just published a
sixth walk leaflet –
although this time it is
equally suitable for cycles.
Three picturesque routes
to Over Basin from the
villages of Highnam and
Maisemore and Gloucester
City Docks. All three

have well-maintained,
all-weather surfaces and are suitable for walking or
cycling. This enjoyable route uses the National Cycle
Network routes 42 and 45.



This leaflet is twice the size of previous
leaflets and opens up to a plan of Over Basin
and extensive information about the area's
wildlife and water activities and well as a
short history of its restoration.

The **H&G CT Canal Walk** leaflets are proving
very popular with members and each 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**
CANAL WALK/CYCLE NO. 6 **OVER BASIN**

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.



This leaflet has been:



LOTTERY FUNDED

"We have an interesting project for you at Llanthony"



... that is how it was put to Paul Henshaw in 2008 when he began leading the work on our new acquisition in Gloucester.

"My initial reaction was why Wales?" said Paul.

From the very first visit to the new location, it was apparent that the site has tremendous potential for improvement for it to become a positive attraction in the local area whilst our major H&G Canal hydro and lock project is designed, negotiated and funded.

The work started with some urgent maintenance on the cottages and the creation of temporary car parking facilities

for volunteers and visitors to the site. After research by Paul the team started a regime to eradicate the Japanese Knotweed which was prevalent on the northern section by the lock area and cleared the undergrowth from around the lock and between the lock and the river. The jobs were many and varied.

Paul has led the team at Llanthony Lock for 8 years. Following completion of the larger lock cottage's refurbishment and a new car park for the properties Paul has decided the time is right to stand down as Llanthony site leader.

The CoM thanks Paul for his hard work and leadership of the teams that have worked at Llanthony over those years. Paul continues to volunteer on our other sites and we hope will be willing to take on other challenges when the opportunity arises. **Thank you Paul** » MJ

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Social Evenings

at The Royal Oak

The third Tuesday of every month (except December)
at **The Royal Oak**, Much Marcle, 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!**

Note – No meeting in December. The Wall Hanging (p. 35) should be on display at our January meeting.

17 January

The RAF gardener: the story of a wartime escape.

– Stephen and Gillian Chowns

Two of our members start off the New Year with something completely different and an intriguing title.



21 February

The Vale of Berkeley Railway

– Ian Raven

Exciting news of a new heritage railway in our area and their plans to reopen the Sharpness Branch Line.



21 March

Russia – from Astrakhan to Moscow via the River Volga

– Penny Platts

We welcome back Penny after her splendid presentation last year.



After 14 years I am beginning to run out of ideas! I am sure there are a lot of our members out there who give talks so why not give one to the other members at Much Marcle? Canals and waterways related topics – plus wildlife and heritage railways – have been the focus of our past talks and with your help we hope this can continue. Other related topics would be of interest. Please let me (Janet Moulton) know if you would like to pass on your interests.

» **JM**



Thank you Janet

by Cliff Penny

Janet Moulton announced at the AGM her intention to retire as Chairman of the H&G CT, and from the CoM, *"prior to the end of the year"*. Having stepped down from this important post once before, and subsequently been persuaded take over the reins for a second term of office, she said (with a broad smile) *"I really mean it this time"!*

In April 1999 Janet retired from Reading University Library and she and her late husband Brian swiftly moved to Herefordshire to 'retire'. The removal lorry could hardly have been out of sight before they were both greatly assisting that summer with the significant H&G CT presence at the National Waterways Festival, on the River Severn, at Worcester. Brian took over as Chairman of the H&G Trading Company in 2000 and, following his sad death the previous autumn, in 2003 Janet joined CoM and took over as Chairman of the Trading Company.

Janet first became Chairman of H&G CT in the autumn of 2006 – 5½ years later she was reporting back on her first period as Chairman with a number of memorable (and some significant) achievements. Excellent publicity from our 25th anniversary celebrations, new milestones erected, the purchase of Llanthony Lock, Cottages and land (thanks to the Beth Gadesden bequest), the opening of the slipway and first stage restoration through Aylestone Park (first boats on the Canal in Hereford since 1880!), the bedrooms at The Wharf House being completed and, for good measure, work well under way at Vineyard Hill and about to commence at Moat Farm.

After a 2 year interval (I quite deliberately didn't say 'rest'!) in December 2013 Janet was persuaded to once again take on the role as Chairman of H&G CT. During these latter 3 years just some of the notable achievements included publication of *Rescued from Obscurity*, construction of the large overflow weir at Aylestone Park, redevelopment of Holmer Trading Estate

approved with some £3million of 'planning gain' for the Canal, work at Oxenhall extending to Newent Station, the Dymock Partnership successfully completed with the additional 'bricks and mortar' asset of our house there, the purchase of what is now Malswick House and the refurbishment of the Cottages at Llanthony being completed.

Janet is quick to acknowledge just how much H&G CT value each and every one of our volunteers – no matter what they might be doing to assist our ongoing success. Now it is our turn to thank Janet for the thousands of hours that she has so far spent (supported by daughter Becca) as a volunteer in a multitude of roles. Janet has made it clear that she is willing, for the time being, to continue as Chairman of H&G Canal Sales & Promotion – in addition to all her other tasks such as distribution of *The Wharfinger*, arranging speakers for the Social Evenings (see request on page 20), organising the Grand Holiday Draw ... a most sincere **'thank you Janet'** for everything that you have done – so far!

» CRP



Janet and daughter, Becca, receive a cheque on behalf of H&G CT from Brauston Marina.

Waterway Images



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.*

Hereford Roving Team John Pritchard

Burcott/Newtown Road.

An area of overgrown buddleia was removed and the undergrowth along the fence-line adjacent to Burcott Road tidied. Further maintenance will be carried out over the winter period.

Aylestone Park.

Over the summer we continued our ongoing battle with the weed in the canal. In some places it is completely across the canal and the full depth of the water. Looking ahead to the completion of the adjacent Holmer section, when redevelopment of the adjacent industrial estate proceeds, we are going to need a better plan for tackling the inevitable weed.

Kymin.

The towpath has been strimmed and kept clear. A large fallen branch was logged up and stacked. Thanks to Wilf for organising two work parties to strim the spoil heaps and remove any large pieces of wood.

JP



John Pritchard

YOUR HELP PLEASE

John Pritchard would like to hear from you if you can assist in his pursuit of the 'holy grail' – aquatic weed extermination! *{I think you may have to settle for "best practice" in controlling it, John! Ed.}* As with everything that we do we are always willing to learn. John (contact details inside back cover) would like to hear from anyone who can assist him at Aylestone Park (and the H&G CT in general) with the identification of the aquatic weed species and recommending best means of control/prevention and disposal.

For a number of years the use of slowly rotting barley straw has helped to control blanket weed at Over and our friends at the Gloucester & District Model Boat Club have been trialling a system they developed of heavy chains dragged along the canal to help remove other types of weed. We know that (full size!) boat movement helps to reduce the rate of growth – but with the downside that it can also spread the weed. The historic weed cutting boat, under restoration at Over, might have been brought in to assist (and would have been triallable between 'wet' sites) but health and safety aspects arising from the old design preclude this.

The H&G CT is anxious to reduce the ever increasing maintenance workload for our volunteers that aquatic weeds present at all of our 'wet' sites so if you can assist with specific advice John Pritchard would be very pleased to hear from you.

CRP

Yarkhill

Chris High

We are now into October and despite the odd chilly morning the vegetation is still growing.

The Team continue to meet the challenge head on and have also been preparing for a visit from "the man with a tractor" who will be giving the hedge, canal banks and canal bottom their autumn short back and sides.



The preparatory work involved strimming the first 150 yards as this always remains wet and is not accessible to the tractor. This pre-cut removes the temptation to try! » **CH**

Chris High

The water level slowly rises with the aid of the borehole pump.



Dymock

Wilf Jones

As reported in the last edition our next task was to have the basin filled and the borehole completely installed. At the present time water is still being pumped into the basin and, as can be seen from the photos, it's slowly filling up.

The borehole was designed to 'top up' the water, not fill the basin, so it is doing this slowly but surely! The contractor has not yet completed his work (due to difficulties when drilling the borehole); once completed the adjacent towpath will be finished along with the planned overflow.

Volunteers have been working to clear weeds and the first cut of the towpath has been completed. The trees and shrubs have taken well, and therefore next year we should have a good display of slowly maturing trees. Planting of native waterside plants in the spring should enhance the overall picture. » **WJ**



The first cut of the towpath has been completed.



The play area ground levelled by the parish council.

Much of our work this time has been devoted to completing the clearance of the former Willows Nursery site area and preparing the whole site for the Open day we held in September.

The wooden footbridge over the lock was found to be rotting away so remedial work was promptly commenced and has now been completed. The three trailers/site huts hidden in the 'jungle' have now been released and moved out so that the surrounding area could be cleared revealing some ground which we had not seen since the purchase of The Willows in 2004. The brambles were resistant to the weedkiller which we eventually managed to spray on but trimmers and then mowers did the job and are now keeping everything under control. Some small patches of Japanese Knotweed in the wooded area have been sprayed twice this year by Paul Henshaw and are now looking a bit sick but experience has shown us that it will take at least another couple of sprays next year before we can expect it to die. Goodness knows where it came from in the first place!



Site hut trailers "in the jungle".

Permissive Path

The permissive path which we opened last year is now regularly walked by locals and H&G Canal Trust members. It is well signed with information boards at intervals. There are places where nettles and Himalayan balsam try to encroach but they are easily held back by a slasher now and then. Our trial of leaving the towpath with a minimum cut this year will not be continued next year because we think it does not present the canal in the best light and in particular our show-piece area around the lock and cottage.

Good Neighbours

We have a good working relationship with our neighbour, the 'skip man'. He not only hires out skips but has a small excavator which he has generously used to level off a large hump in our track and to open up an access, through some very rough ground, to a level open area behind the ladder factory. This will soon be completely cleared of vegetation and will become the new parking area for our 3 trailers and various other bits and pieces which are in the way elsewhere. He also provides us with any spare pallets he has which are essential in our work at the station for storing bricks etc. In return he is given any scrap metal which we come across.

Station Site

The station has now become the focus of much of our work and, together with the Saturday group under Wilf Jones, the clearance of the old station platforms is continuing. There is still old stock left by the builders, the previous tenants, which we are only just uncovering. Much of it is in good order and will be sold on to provide income for the Trust and the future plans for the station. One item which we found under a pile of old paint tins and general

Brian Fox



Look what we found! To be 'upcycled' to form a new counter for an antique shop.

rubbish was a long wooden bench and on cleaning it up it became obvious it was quite old and well made. I mentioned this to a friend of mine who showed some interest and as soon as he saw it he offered

a substantial sum which was eagerly grabbed. It will apparently form the frontage of a new antique shop which he plans to open soon. It took some moving as it was extremely heavy but well worth the effort.


Another item which is now more visible is an old railway footbridge which will eventually span the canal here. It came from Llanthony, near Gloucester, and has been lying in the undergrowth next to the platform here for many years now. It looks as though there will be work commencing on restoring the platforms early next year so how long before the bridge is spanning a new stretch of the H&G Canal? Watch this space.



Railway footbridge from Llanthony, Gloucester.



This year our annual 'away day' was to the Monmouth and Brecon Canal at Goytre Wharf near Abergavenny. 10 volunteers with a few wives hired a day boat and had some decent weather and a very enjoyable time. The pub we stopped at for morning coffee was found closed but the lovely lady who lived next door spotted our dilemma and invited us all in for a drink and chat. What wonderful Welsh hospitality. » **BF**



Newent and Oxenhall Open Day

on the canal 2016

Report

The open day was a great success despite drizzly weather in the morning. A steady stream of visitors came to see the work done so far at the station and a good proportion of them finished up at Oxenhall Parish Hall for tea and home-made cakes. Several new members were enrolled and generally the comments from the public were very positive and looking forward to seeing the proposed changes through this site coming to fruition. » **BF**

Moat Farm

Martyn Tilford

It's all quiet on the Moat Farm front. That is, business as usual with routine maintenance activity mixed with the continued 'development' of the site.

Routine maintenance, as always, involves regular mowing of the grassy areas we endeavour to maintain in that style. The 'wilder' areas occasionally need some intervention in order to enhance the habitats that we have created. The team have been busy working on the 'off-side' bank selectively pruning and strimming to preserve the hard won semi-managed areas we were able to create two or three years ago.

The excavator has been kept busy dredging and shaping the canal bed extending the length that had been completed last year. We have now accumulated a large volume of spoil arising from this work which will be relocated around the site during the next dumper session.

A problem arose with one of the excavator tracks when the main idler wheel bearing failed. Fortunately the machine was in a relatively convenient position when this occurred and replacing the failed component proved to be a straightforward challenge for our volunteer mechanics despite the weight of the idler wheel assembly.



Dredging and reshaping the canal bed.



The failed excavator track idler wheel during removal ...



... and the replacement ready to fit.

Martyn Tilford



Ivor Bob & Chris completing great wall brick cladding ...
Right: ... with the help of other members of the team.

» MT

Over Basin & Vineyard Hill Ted Beagles

The summer is always a busy season, especially so this year with a very long period of vigorous growth of everything. Keeping on top of the grassed areas has been a demanding job, as well as cutting back shrubs and brambles. The garden areas have required a lot of attention to weed and replant. The weed in the canal basin is prolific, despite the efforts of other canal users to keep it under control. Thank goodness it is easing off as we move into autumn.

'Operation River View' is being mounted by The Wharf House to restore views of the river from the terrace, which over the years have been lost behind willows on the riverbank and shrubs growing on The Wharf House bank. In combination with The Wharf House staff the shrubs and brambles are being cut



Ted Beagles

Top: Andy strimming river bank.

Above: Graham and Maggie clearing The Wharf House Bank.

Inset: Bob laying bricks.

back and thinned out and some willows are being cut down, and the material being used to weave a willow fence along the waterline to help inhibit erosion of the bank.

Great wall progress

Bob and Ivor, assisted from time to time by other members of the team in transporting bricks from elsewhere on site and cleaning them ready for use, have now completed the basic brick facing of the concrete wall and are in the final stages of profiling the top of the wall. Next they come to the more challenging stage of building the brick arched roof of the cycle shed section!



Inset: Peter cleaning recycled bricks for the wall.



The River Leaden at the point where the water is sourced.

Water Issues

Maintaining the canal water level has been a challenge throughout late summer. Lack of rain and a long warm period has meant that the level of water in the nearby River Leaden, which is our source of water, has been very low making it difficult to get the pump suction pipe into the fresh water and clear of the mud. We just managed to top up water in the canal for the Festival weekend by pumping during the short periods when the fresh water rose due to backing up on the incoming tide and stopping before the Leaden water became contaminated by the brackish water from

the Severn. Subsequently we have removed the suction pipe completely to clean out the mud and have repositioned it midstream, with ropes attached to both sides of the river. In pulling the pipe out we found it to be damaged at the site of a previous repair patch. This meant we had to cut off about 1metre of the pipe and refit the coupling back on to the remaining piece. The pumping system is now in normal service, and we have developed new skills to refit the end fittings on 6 inch plastic pipes!

The pump suction in the mud.




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Ingenious Repair

For many years our wheeled strimmer has served us well, in cutting through tough banks of brambles and nettles, when it failed dramatically – the head drive shaft having sheared. There seemed to be no way of extracting the broken shaft. However, by perseverance of our mechanical team, and a combination of WD40, heating, a hub puller, and a big hammer over a period of several weeks the broken shaft was finally removed! But the mounting plate had unfortunately broken during the process; not to be outdone, Dave Hurren and Mike Hunt contrived a scheme to repair and put it all together, and the strimmer is back in service once more.



The ingenious repair on the wheeled strimmer.

Over Festival.

Throughout August we were busy getting ready for the Over Festival (see page 8), preparing the site for car parking, mending and putting up signs, washing and touching up the paintwork of the heritage boats. H&G CT's trip boat Mr Maysey was prepared ready for two days of hard work, and this year we also ran trips the weekend before for a wedding reception held at The Wharf House. Finally of course everything required packing up and storing ready for next year.

Visitors walking along the towpath at Vineyard Hill during the Festival came across a warning sign saying "Caution bees at work" and were surprised to see a long pole supporting a basket high up one of the ash trees. This had been placed there by Chris, our resident bee keeper, in an attempt to catch a large swarm of bees on the tree trunk. However the bees were not interested as they had already built



Inset above: Close-up of the bee swarm in the old ash tree.

Above right: An attempt to catch the bee swarm along Vineyard Hill.

Right: Close-up of the basket in place.



Ted Beagles and Chris Hands



"The swans run towards me ..."



"... disappointed I had not food for them!"

Ted Beagles

a hive in hole in the tree. At the end of September the external bees had mostly disappeared but there was still much activity in and out of the hole.

Swan Encounter

As I arrived to open up the site one Wednesday morning I was confronted by 8 swans running towards me! Careful I thought, what is going on here. I cautiously made my way through the group of excited birds into the site hut, and anxiously looked behind me only to find them all apparently lying down and resting and no longer interested in me – just disappointed as I had no food for them!

» TB

Calling all Gardeners!

Around The Wharf House and towards the Basin we have a number of shrub and flower borders. These include a herb garden and the terrace overlooking the River. The task of keeping them looking tidy throughout the year is in the hands of volunteers.



There are plans to revamp the beds at the entrance to The Wharf House. We are looking for volunteers who enjoy gardening and would enjoy helping in this redesign as well as keeping all the other beds looking neat and colourful throughout the seasons. Volunteers meet at Over on Wednesdays and alternative Saturdays. If you are interested in helping us please contact Maggie Jones or Ted Beagles. (see below for details). *Thank you.*

» MJ

Would you like to get 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
briandfox74@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

Saturday Roving Team

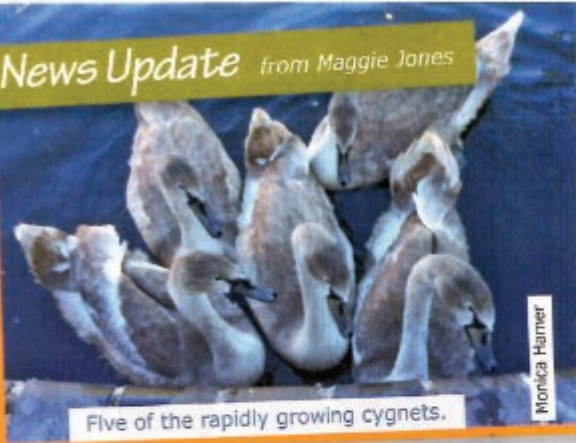
Maggie Jones on 01452 618 010
maggiejones@blueyonder.co.uk

Nature Watch The Over Basin Swans

As Monica Hamer told us in the last edition, a pair of swans, Sadie and Sam, (as she named them), have been nesting at Over Basin.

As the summer passed by the cygnets grew rapidly, and, as Ted describes opposite, became quite greedy. They knew just where they needed to be for the residents to bring them regular swan food.

When almost full grown, but still in cygnet brown plumage, the six became five. Nobody knows where the other one went (as the song goes). Perhaps he became victim to a predator, or perhaps he felt he had outgrown the flock.



Five of the rapidly growing cygnets.

The rest of the family would disappear for days and then reappear. Then one day just Sam and Sadie came back. Their responsibilities gone, they were free to enjoy the water together. The cygnets hopefully will find their way to non-breeding flocks where they will eventually find a mate of their own, and we hope they come back to Over next year, where they were treated so well.

»» MJ

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It was nice to see the H&G Canal Trust honoured with The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2016 for all the hard work they are doing in saving the Canal.

The length at Over, even in its present very truncated state, provides a wonderful facility for several groups, with the Wheelyboat owned by Sailing 4 Disabled for instance. Rob, one of our wheelchair bound members, enjoyed his cruise up to the end and back during the Over Festival weekend; also the disabled canoeists who can get out on the water in a safe environment, the fishermen, and of course for our model boat club, plus the general public who just come for a walk down the Canal.

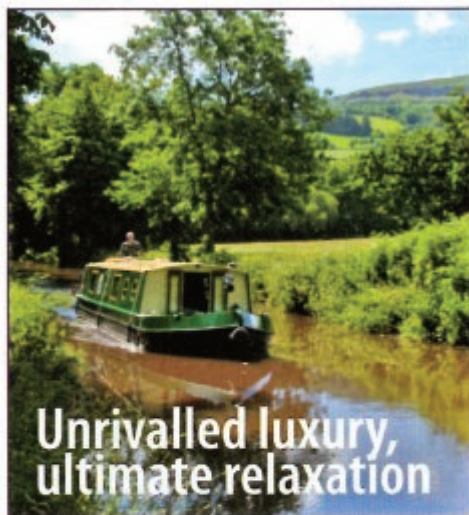
We had our usual display and boats on the

water for the Festival, some of which "escorted" the trip boats on occasions. It was a pity about the weather on the Saturday but the crowds came on Sunday which was a much better day. It was also nice to see visiting boats, both steam and paddle powered. Barry's wooden punt and canoe were wonderful examples of wood working skills and sometime after he gave a couple of us a lesson in how to get the finish he does on his boats.

The swans are getting nearly full grown although I don't know if they have learnt to fly yet. I had a confrontation with Dad one day – and Dad won! Our Safety Officer sent me in first which was wise of him!

We had an extra 'water weeding' session recently to clear the weed from the top of the Basin at the Lock End. This was very successful and the amount of weed we shifted was so heavy that we had to have extra hands to lift the chain out at the end of many of the pulls.

» DE

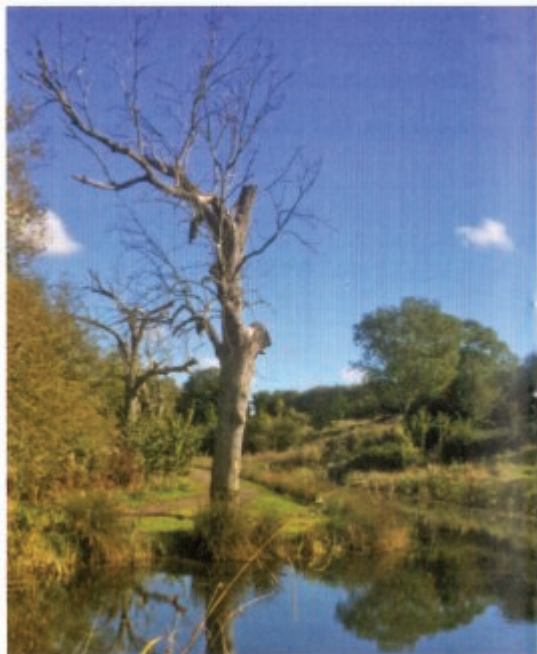


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National Waterways Museum

Gloucester by Chris Witts



The moment we had all been waiting for! Richard Parry, Chief Executive Officer of the Canal and River Trust re-opened the Museum on 29th July. The efforts of all in getting the Museum up to the standards required were recognised and many Friends of the Museum were present including some of our Craft Ladies dressed in traditional costume.

A real cracking opening with dignitaries by the dozen is due to take place in Spring 2017 after the new front conservatory main entrance has been completed. By then Sabrina 5 should be back in place and we will have a more up-market café!

I must say a very big thank you to all the various teams involved in the Heritage Lottery Fund Project. Our FGWM Craft Ladies spent many hours caring for the exhibits-to-be. The volunteer teams worked hard to get the Steam Crane and Steam Dredger SND4 back into steam ready to run. The dredger caused a considerable attraction on the previous Wednesday when the first firing, running and steaming test took place, it was nice to see the crowds amassing on the far side of the Barge Arm. They were nothing compared with the Visitors queueing to get below on SND4 on opening day.

What else has happened? Well, it seems historic narrowboat "Northwich" will eventually be lifted out of the water onto the bank between Llanthony Warehouse and Wetherspools. The craft will require an, hopefully glazed, cover to keep off the seagulls, pigeons and also the

National Waterways Museum Gloucester

weather. It is being placed there to allow the children to climb aboard, dress up and enjoy.

The FGWM Talks will return to Llanthony Warehouse this season. Further details are on our website (under 'Activities'): www.friendsofghwm.co.uk

» CW



Gloucestershire & Herefordshire IWA Branch 2016 Social Meetings and Events

Non members are welcome.

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

Thursday 1 December 7.30pm
Christmas Social

No meeting in January

Thursday 2 February 7.30pm
Rich Kelsey

Aerial views of the Severn part 2
Worcester to Sharpness and beyond. (This is a continuation of the talk in September.)

Thursday 2 March 7.30pm
Annual General Meeting

Further details contact: **Roger Holmes**
email: rogervectis@aol.com
01594 840 316



Pete the Pirate!

We were pleased to be part of the H&G CT's **The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service**, an award to be proud of as we volunteers add much pleasure to so many people in this world. Many volunteers have no idea what an impact they make, and very often just for a cup of tea/coffee, however at **S4D** we also get home made cakes – if I can get to our new cooker!

Not much to report apart from that we have now moved on to start turning clients away, not because we can't cope but the accommodation does not allow wheel chair users sheltered accommodation in poor weather conditions. Something that will be remedied when the Barn is built.

We had three very very wet pirates after taking part in 'Gloucester Day' in the City,

and all for £13.06, but this is where the potential clients came from – soon we hope?

The Wheelyboat had a weekend away with the Melksham Canal Trust, as a pleasure/trip/working boat at the town's Food and Water festival, which they had been invited to but their boat was out of action. A golden opportunity to try and show the type of craft that is needed for their operation. "A very successful event" even though it rained!

» **PB**

Sailing4Disabled meets every Tuesday at **Over Canal Basin** from 11.00 to 14.00.

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

Pete (Long Gone Silver) Bisson:
07913 015018
peterwb49@hotmail.com
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Chantel Flure Lunny-Taylor

POP! Another photo of launch day! Mayor of Gloucester Neil Hampson, popping the bubbly over the Wheelyboat. L to R Tredworth Crier Tony Ward, Pete and Mayor of Gloucester.

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Not quite
... the last page!

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Stamps can be taken to a Social Evening or other H&G CT event – or to **The Wharf House** or **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**

Martin stands down

Martin Turner has decided to stand down from Chairing the committee of the local Gloucestershire & Herefordshire Branch of the IWA. Martin has been instrumental over the years to build good links between the various waterways groups within our two counties. He has led a number of successful campaigns over his time on the committee.

Martin is a good friend to the H&G CT. The photo shows him at our September social where he presented the Trust with an IWA cheque towards the Mill Barn Appeal. We wish him well and hope to see him in other aspects of waterways life very soon.

Thank you Martin. » **MJ**



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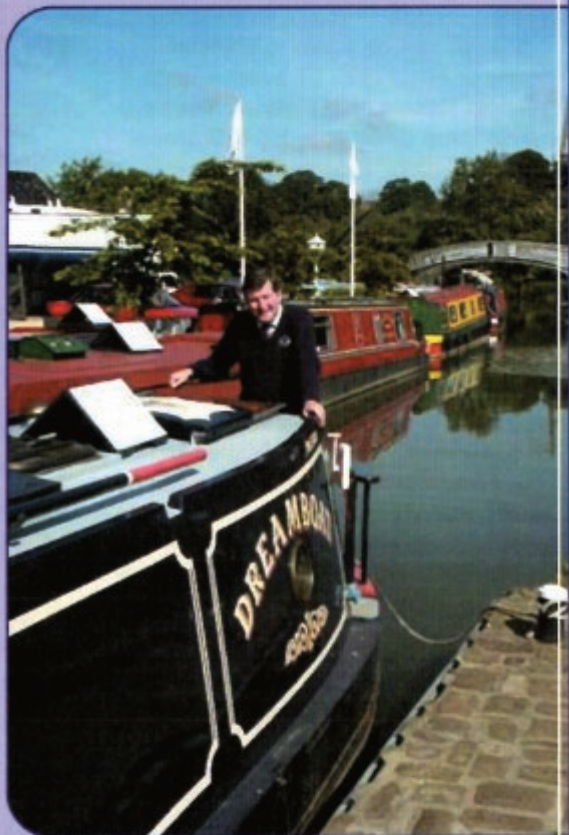
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Want to help?

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

to those willing to help with a shovel, 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.

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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 regular financial support from public bodies 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 Severn 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.

