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Autumn 2018

The Wharfinger

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Baa!"



EDITION 137

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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.

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Cover image: An excellent job! Bah! – Alan McBride.

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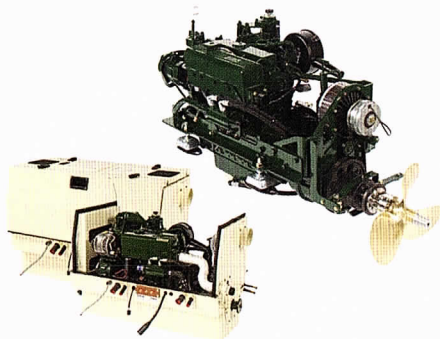
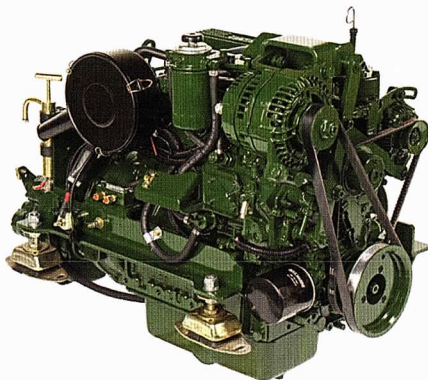
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An excellent job! Baa!

Phew! What a hot summer this has turned out to be! Water levels at Over Basin are way below what they should be, with little water coming down the River Leaden to top up. Our volunteers at Over joke that if the dry conditions continue, they will be able to repaint the hulls of the heritage boats without lifting them out of the basin first.

An excellent job! Baa!

You will see on the cover a 'bridge inspection' of brickwork at Malswick by a local woolly resident. The volunteers have completed their restoration of the two bridges over Ell Brook. It is ironic that the volunteers had to halt work on these just a few months ago because of the very wet spring that caused the area to flood. Read more about this on pages 4 and 5. A fine job has been done here, thank you to the teams who achieved this.

This Wharfinger

We welcome back Chris Witts, who is once more sending us news from the friends of the National Waterways Museum in Gloucester.

A big thank you to Janet Moulton, who after many years of distributing *The Wharfinger*, has decided to reduce her workload from this edition onwards. Thank you to Janet, who writes on page 35 about this.

Annual General Meeting

Previously, we have had the H&G CT Annual Report in Summer edition of *The Wharfinger*. This year, as the Annual General Meeting will take place in October. You will find details of this year's AGM and the Annual Report on the centre pages of this edition. Note the new location at Ledbury Community Centre.

Thank you >>> MJ

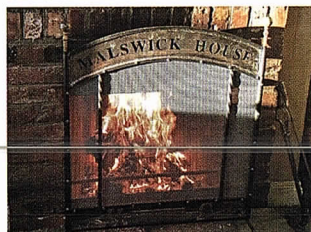
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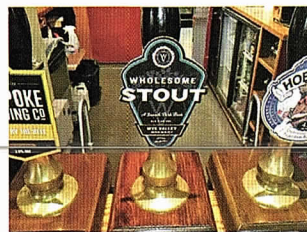
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All profits from Malswick House will be used for the promotion and restoration of the Hereford & Gloucester Canal.

projects in progress ...

Paul Henshaw writes:

Malswick

With the onset of better weather in the spring, we were able to resume work on repairing the two brick bridges.



West Bridge before.



West Bridge after.

The parapets were completely rebuilt and tie rods were inserted through the side walls to help prevent future movement of the structure. New gates were hung and finally, the bed of the bridges received a top dressing of road planings. So the refurbishment is now complete and we hope that our efforts will add many years of life to two very attractive structures.

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East Bridge before.



East Bridge after.



Work in progress on the East Bridge.

A big thank you goes to the members of the two teams headed up by Geoff and Robert for the hard work which has been put in, often in demanding conditions.

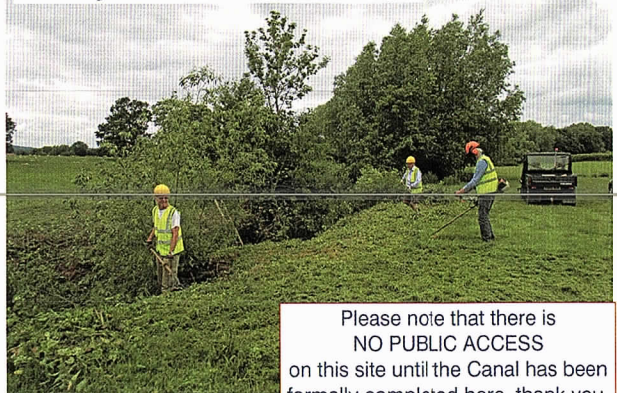
And so the "Bridges Are Us" team moved onto bridge no 3 ...

During May, we finally received all the appropriate consents for the construction of the new bridge across Ell Brook. As previously reported the new crossing point was to be capable of a load capacity of 32T and have an operating width of five metres. →



East Bridge after.

Clearing the bank for the new bridge.



Please note that there is
NO PUBLIC ACCESS
on this site until the Canal has been
formally completed here, thank you.

Mid June saw the start of the construction phase. The digger was transferred from Moat Farm and was used to strip away the top soil. Forty tonnes of crushed concrete was delivered to site and levelled to form a firm pad for the tracked piling machine to operate on. We were relieved that we were able to get eight wheelers down to the site without any difficulty thus removing the need to break bulk into dumpers.

Two compounds have been erected, one each side of the stream, to keep out the sheep and cattle which are grazing on the flood plain

We marked out the precise position for the piles. Twelve are required in total – six each side of the stream. We were fortunate to have a new volunteer called Pythagoras helping out with the measurements. It caused a bit of head scratching with people recalling *"in a right angled triangle, the square on the hypotoneuse ..."*

Piling is scheduled for the beginning of July and the timber has been ordered to build the shuttering for the pile caps.

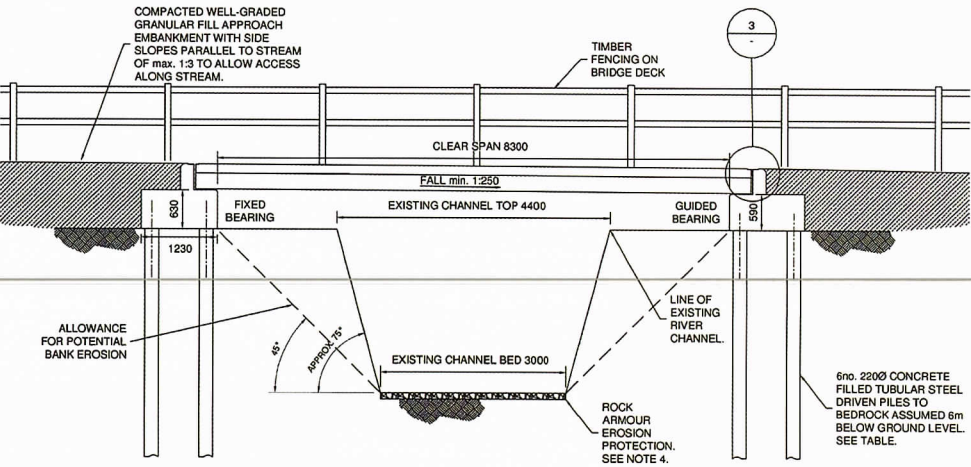
The steel beams have been ordered and Eamonn McGurk has kindly allowed us to use his yard for the fabrication work which will involve a considerable amount of welding off site. Thank you to Eamonn. Thank you also to Thomas of *Tony Gee & Partners* for the design of this bridge.

So all in all there is a lot of activity going on. We are now working on Tuesdays and Fridays to take advantage of the better weather.

If you feel you would like to help, please contact Paul Henshaw on 01684 293930, *thank you.*



Preparing the bases for the piling platforms.



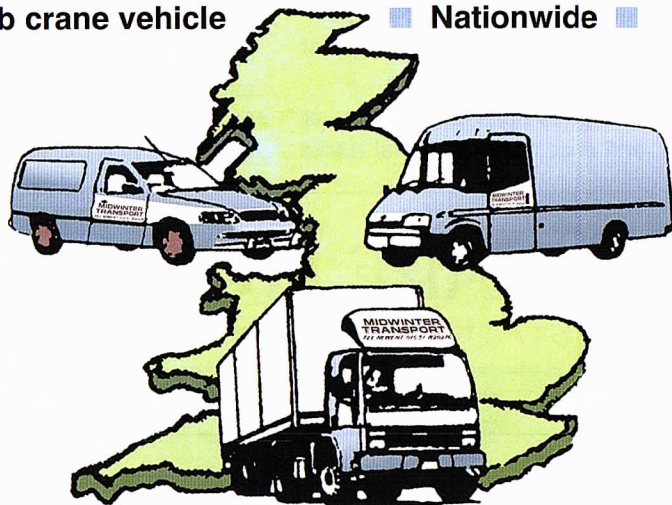
Drawing of the new bridge.

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Delivering volunteering opportunities and sustainability

David Penny writes:

The L&PDT's primary focus of the last few years has been to deliver a 5-year land bank. We have successfully achieved that, and are constantly seeking to add to it.

Now the focus is just as much on the delivery of the projects that will take place on that land. This is a vast range from straight canal restoration at Malswick to Newent Railway Station and Mill Barn. There is no chance of any shortage of volunteer work for years to come!

We have well-established team at Malswick, and once the conditional works

of the river bridges and other agreed work on the farm is finished, will move onto several other bridges over streams, a new swing bridge off the B4215, a new lock and $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of Canal restoration. This will include considerable areas for conservation in the cuttings and years of work from undergrowth clearance, machine work and two major structures. Above all, this delivers a very high profile site alongside the main road and directly accessible from Malswick House.

Meanwhile, many will have noted the team established on the inside front cover to drive forward the Newent Station site, aqueduct, and the staircase of locks there.

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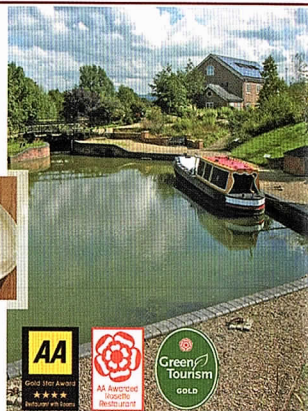
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We now have over a mile at this site in our ownership and hugely interesting and diverse projects to bring forward. As well as Mike Harris, who has been a key part of this for years behind the scenes, we also have a volunteer local architect David Gregory leading on the more detailed design of the station along with Wilf, Brian, Tony and myself. This is likely to lead to a Heritage Lottery Fund development grant to help us take forward the entire site for much larger funding.

At Over, we have reformed a team to take forward Mill Barn and a folly at the end Vineyard Hill; like the other teams, more

volunteers to help take this project forward to delivery would be greatly appreciated.

Alongside this the L&PDT, funded by and based at *The Wharf House*, negotiates, manages, and grows our diverse income streams delivering some £55k a year into the Canal Trust from the property portfolio we have acquired. This is not just from renting our properties, but also spare land at Newent and Hereford, by signs on fences and covenant income etc. It is a meaningful and growing income that makes the H&G CT very resilient, and stand out from other canal charities. >>> **DRP**

News from THE WHARF HOUSE

David Penny writes:

Despite extensive roadworks at Over, with closure every weeknight for a couple of months and all-night piling, *The Wharf House* has delivered comparatively strongly at the start of the year and come through one of the worst periods on the high street for retail and catering.



Left to right: Ryan, Lauren, David, Maisy and Ellie.

We have driven forward with our lighter option Terrace Menu which encompasses current trends for 'grazing' and snacking with everything from sharing boards and paninis to small plates and burgers. This has been a great success during our daytime trade. As the roadworks come to an end our evening trade starts to grow back with both our à la carte and 9 course Tasting Menus receiving a great response.

In the kitchen, David and Maisy have been joined by Ryan, as we push forward to achieve two AA Rosettes. Ellie, who has been with us for five years has come back from her round the world travels and now heads up social media, events and Front of House. Tess may have left, but might perhaps have been seen back for the odd shift!

... and at MALSWICK HOUSE

At *Malswick House* the new menus are proving very successful with repeat custom. This saw us within a whisker of break-even in May. Like *The Wharf House*, *Malswick House* has been hit by roadworks in July, and we look forward to being able to push forward again in August with our dedicated team. We are very pleased that Lauren has chosen to stay on and become an Apprentice Chef sharing her time between Malswick and *The Wharf House*, while studying at Cheltenham's Chefs Academy from September. Franco and Shane continue to dedicate themselves to making Malswick House a success – why not pop in for a pint, or some of Franco's lovely home-made food?

>>> **DRP**

more projects *in progress ...*

Operation Bailey bridge!

Brian Fox writes:

As a site leader I have the challenge of balancing volunteers, their skills and availability with the range of tasks available each week. The challenges of the week are not always obvious until the two factors are brought together.

Understandably, volunteers like to have a good idea of what they might be doing after getting out of bed early and perhaps driving for several miles to reach Oxenhall. But, back in April, a new challenge came our way. We were told that there was a possible new use for the Bailey bridge, which has been languishing in our yard where it has been since removing it from its former position, spanning the Ell Brook, four years ago.

The Board of Trustees have suggested that it could be used to cross the small stream adjacent to Malswick House giving better access to the small field on the opposite side, which H&GCT now own.



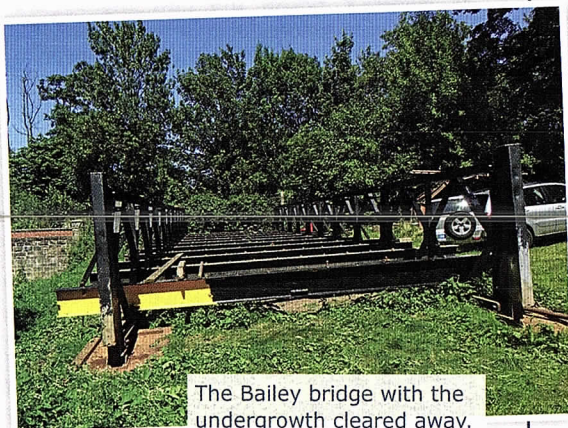
The Bailey bridge before clearing.

Brian Fox

Consequently, a couple of days were spent there strimming the banks of the stream and clearing rubbish from the water so that we could see the Bailey bridge site clearly and take a few measurements. It was clearly feasible to use the bailey bridge for this task and after considering the options it was decided that in the first instance it would be sensible to contact the TA volunteers at Monmouth, who have helped in the past, to see whether they might undertake this task as a community exercise. They agreed to take a look and have now visited the Malswick site and inspected the bridge where it is standing at Oxenhall. A decision from them is eagerly awaited.

PAINTERS REQUIRED PLEASE!

A casual inspection of the bridge revealed that, whether it goes to Malswick or not, it is desperately in need of a good clean and a coat of paint. It has been used as a repository for all the Trust items that wouldn't go anywhere else. Scaffold poles and boards, old railway sleepers, fence posts and rails plus all the decking which goes on the bridge when it is in use. These have now been removed by



The Bailey bridge with the undergrowth cleared away.

fundraising

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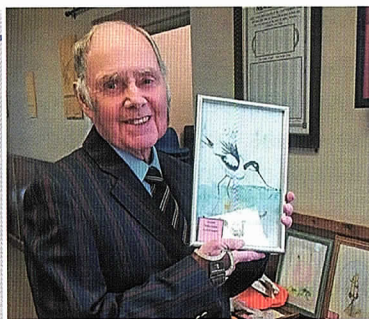
**IT ALL
H&G CT
COUNTS**

As a charity we always need funds to further the aims of our Canal restoration. Yes, we need large sums of cash that must be raised by grants, loans, donations and so on, but there is also a need for a steady flow of small amounts to help with the day to day running and for smaller projects. Here are a few of the recent ways that our Members have been raising money for the Canal restoration. If you are able to help raise funds in any way we look forward to hearing from you. **Thank you.**

Osier Weaving

Last edition we mentioned an Osier Weaving course run by Cathy Wallace. The proceeds (*once the hall hire was subtracted*) £125 was donated to the Trust by Cathy Wallace and Elaine Shears to a section of our **Land Fund**. **Thank you to all concerned!**

hand but not the decking of which each section weighs over 100kgs and could only be moved with the help of our trusty tractor. Thankfully, the temperatures were low on the removal days, and not approaching the 30°C that it is as I write. The bridge was last painted almost 20 years ago, soon after we bought it, by David and Elizabeth, who unfortunately retired some years ago now. It is not a job we relish so we are looking for volunteers to spend a day doing a bit of painting and socialising at the same time. I await your call. (See inside back cover for details.) **>>> BF**



Keith's way of helping our cause ...

Ginny Birkett writes:

Mr Keith Aston, pictured here, regularly attends the Wednesday painting classes at the Malswick House. He occasionally exhibits his work locally at the Newent Friday Craft & Produce, and donates all takings to our Trust. What a wonderful way to raise awareness of us locally and some funds too. **Thank you Keith**, and long may you continue to produce such beautiful work.

>>> GB

Grand Holiday Draw 2018

Reminder

All completed ticket stubs and money from their sale should be returned to the promoter, Janet Moulton by Thursday 13 September 2018 please. More books can be sent to you if required. Please contact Janet Moulton. See inside back cover or tickets for details. **Thank you**

Once again we have some great prizes, so let's make this another successful Year!

Health & Safety Officer

Following the recent resignation of the Trustee responsible for Health and Safety, the Trust has reviewed how it should manage its future activities in this regard.



The Trust is looking for a willing qualified volunteer, with NEBOSH accreditation, (*The National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health*). He or she should have experience in practical construction work. Being a key role this will involve working directly with the Board of Trustees to maintain and improve our existing arrangements for managing all aspects of Health & Safety within the Trust.

Could any interested Member please contact the Chairman, Vaughan Welch (*see inside back cover*), with your CV, so that we can discuss how you can help the Trust?

Thank you >>> VW

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Health & Safety Course *A report from Tony Sellwood*

As part of the ongoing review of H&G CT's Health and Safety Policies & Procedures, a lack of training offered to senior volunteers had been identified and a training course was arranged on 25 and 29 June at Malswick House to address this issue.

The course was presented to 15 delegates by Nick Jones of Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Construction Safety Association, our Safety Advisers, and was introduced by Vaughan Welch, our Chairman.

The course was held over two half days, which allowed sufficient time for project work (homework) to be completed.

The wide-ranging topics covered included health and safety law, compliance, legal duties and enforcement, construction regulations, welfare requirements, construction phase health and safety

plans, risk assessments and method statements, site induction and record keeping. There were practical group exercises that were carried out with enthusiasm, and report backs were healthily debated.

A draft for a new Health and Safety Policy for site operations was issued for consultation, and a number of useful comments have been forthcoming.

The Construction Phase Health and Safety Plan for the Malswick Bridge Project, was issued as a template for other sites to follow, and a Site Safety Handbook was also issued for reference.

Overall, a good course, well presented by Nick Jones, to whom we proposed a vote of thanks, and also a big thank you to Franco, of Malswick House, who came in on his day off on Monday to keep us refreshed.

»» TS

L&PDT News *from the Legal & Project Development Team*

Our Members' vigilance has paid off!

Recently we asked our readers to help us to spot any piece of land or building along the line of the canal that is put up for sale or has development plans that may impact on our Canal's restoration.

This request has paid off, as a Member was able to give us valuable information regarding a stretch of land that was being developed, *thank you*.

The line of the whole canal is protected by the local authorities in both counties and as a result we are usually informed

should owners and developers wish to make changes along it. However, there are times when your ears and eyes can give us a better picture of what is happening on the ground.

Please continue the vigilance ...

We very much appreciate your help, if you should spot that a piece of land or building along the length of the canal is put up for sale or if there are any new development plans that may impact on our restoration please contact us by emailing L&PDT: **l&pdt@thewharfhouse.co.uk**.

Thank you



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Robin Styles

*... a secret behind
the H&G Canal
Trust of today!*

*It is with sadness that
David Penny writes about
the passing of one of the
Trust's key benefactors ...*

Robin's interest in the H&G Canal predated the former Society. As a former Estates Officer, he saw Oxenhall Lock Cottage become available from the then British Rail Property Board and bought it and the adjoining canal, lock and aqueduct with the plan that it would be his retirement project. Ill health got in the way of his plans and he fought a running battle with local vandals who constantly took possession of the derelict cottage.

When in the early 1990's the H&G Canal Trust started to look to full restoration and to spread into Gloucestershire Robin's site was an obvious area of interest. In reality, we first restored the adjoining stretch up to the tunnel as Robin continued to battle on against the vandals in the hope still of retirement to the cottage. As we finished that stretch it came to the point in the mid 1990's that the lock and cottage were regarded by all as being 'at risk' as listed buildings and the only surviving 'intact' lock and unaltered lock cottage were of particular interest to us. Forest of Dean Council resolved to Compulsory Purchase the site and I stepped in to talk to Robin to see if the Trust could work with him. This led to Robin kindly donating the site, including the cottage, to us and we set about rapidly securing it and restoring the canal above the lock, the head of the lock, and creating an access down the towpath.



Lock Cottage, Oxenhall before restoration.

A year later the cottage was featured as 'wreck of the week' in the Telegraph and sold by tender to adjoining landowner Nigel Freeman who undertook the most fantastic restoration of the cottage whilst we continued with the lock.

Robin was extremely proud of the finished lock, aqueduct and canal at Oxenhall, and seeing his vision of it being restored come to reality. Although Robin received 10% of the sale price of the cottage he immediately became a paid up Life Member and over the years donated much of the money back to the Trust. The money we received from the sale of the cottage thanks to Robin's generosity provided some of the finance for the Oxenhall Lock site, but more importantly gave us the liquidity and credibility that Over could become a reality. *Without doubt, if that generous gift by Robin had not been made, the H&G CT as we know it today would not exist!*

Robin's niece, Sue Harrison, writes:

"My Uncle Robin passed away peacefully in late March after a short illness. You will know that Robin's great passion in life was for the waterways and our industrial heritage. He stated that preserving the cottage and site at Oxenhall Lock from demolition was his proudest achievement in life."

Thank you to Robin and his family.

»» DRP



promotion nature crafts wildlife local knowledge recount boats fun societies laughter friends members entertainment environment experiences pleasure discussion canal restoration information canals societies members friends campaign presentation reminiscence adventures waterways

Social Evenings at the Royal Oak

7.30 for 8pm start

Much Marcle, HR8 2ND

Join us at our monthly meetings on the third Tuesday of each month (*except December*), so 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!**

Forthcoming programme:

21 August

Natter and a Noggin at Malswick House

Please note the change of venue for this meeting.



18 September

Heroes and Villains of the Basingstoke Canal

– Roger Cansdale

Followed by the Grand Holiday Draw.



Thursday 18 October – Ledbury Community Hall

H&GCT 2018 Annual General Meeting

Please note: This replaces the October Social.



20 November

Severn Estuary – Gloucester to the Bridges

– Martin Connop Price

This time Martin moves from railways to our local river. A personal perspective on a fascinating stretch of waterway.



NOTE – no meeting in December

15 January

A brief history of nostalgia

– Dick Skeet

Looking at our passion for yesterday and attitudes to “old things” such as heritage railways and old canal boats!





THE HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST

2018 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

will be held on **Thursday 18 October 2018 at 7.30pm**

at **Ledbury Community Hall,**

Lawnside Road, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2AE

(Members and friends are welcome.)

A G E N D A

1. Welcome
2. Apologies for absence
3. Approval of minutes of both parts of the 2017 AGM, copies of which will be available at the meeting
4. Chairman's remarks
5. To receive and approve the report of the Trustees and financial statements for the year ending 28 February 2018.
6. To approve the appointment of an Independent Examiner of all the Trust's accounts.
7. Trustees standing down: Caroline Jones, Eamonn McGurk, Tony Sellwood.
8. To elect nominations of new Trustees.
9. Close of formal business, and short break.
10. Presentations and open discussion forum.

Statement of Financial Activities and the Balance Sheet 2017-18: copies will be available at the AGM. A PDF of the complete accounts can be emailed to you on request to accounts@h-g-canal.org.uk.

Questions: Prior notice of any questions would be welcomed ideally via our website: H-G-Canal.org.uk / **Contact Us** thereby enabling a more comprehensive response to be given at the meeting.

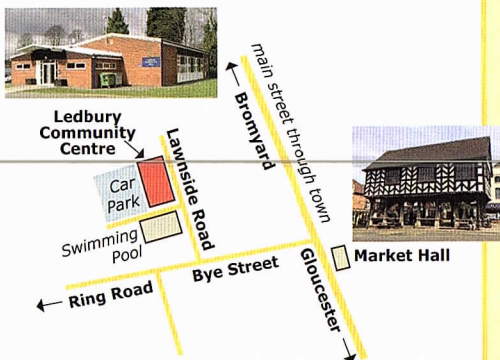
Appointment of Trustees: The H&G Canal Trust Memorandum and Articles of Association allows up to 10 Trustees to be appointed. One third of the Trustees are required to stand down annually in rotation, but can apply for re-election. Potential new Trustees are elected at the AGM. The maximum number of Trustees is ten. Two further Trustees can be co-opted onto the Board at the other Trustees' discretion during the year, but they will need to stand for election at the following AGM.

Nomination forms obtainable from the Company Secretary, are required to be completed and returned in accordance with the Articles of Association which are available on the Trust's website. New Trustees are given an induction to the work of the Trust

and what they need to fulfil their roles, which includes information about the role of Trustees and charity law and their liabilities.

Proxy Votes: A member may appoint a proxy who must be someone entitled to vote. Proxy forms are available from the Company Secretary via our website: H-G-Canal.org.uk / **Contact Us**. and must be returned to her at least two working days prior to the start of the AGM.

Location of Ledbury Community Hall





Annual Report for the year ending 28 February 2018

This is the twenty-sixth Annual Report of **Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust Limited**, a non-profit distributing company no. 2704407, formed in April 1992, and a registered charity no. 1010721.

It replaced the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Society launched in 1983. This is also the report of The Wharf House Company Limited no. 4627931, the wholly-owned subsidiary, all profits from which are used for the promotion and restoration of the Canal. Registered office for both companies: The Wharf House, Horseshoe Drive, Over, Gloucester GL2 8DB.

The Board of Trustees is aware of the general guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit. The Trustees have regard to this guidance and consider the activities of the charity have been carried out demonstrably for the public benefit and this applies also to their plans for future action. The charitable objects are defined as rebuilding a sustainable canal between Hereford and Gloucester.

Chairman's Report:

During the year the former Council of Management reformed itself into a Board of Trustees and, with agreement of the membership, rewrote and modernised its Memorandum and Articles of Association to reflect the requirements of the latest Charities Act and Companies Act, and to reflect modern communication methods. This has been seen as a positive move within our sector and, imitation being seen as the greatest form of flattery, has been used by at least one other Trust as the basis to revise their Constitution.

Incidents elsewhere within the sector has drawn the Trust's attention to ensure that it manages its health & safety in a professional manner and as an interim measure it has engaged the services of a local professional body, The Hereford & Gloucester Construction Safety Association, to help with this improvement work although in the longer term it is looking towards

Board of Trustees of H&G Canal Trust: year to 28 February 2018

(formally known as Council of Management until August 2017)

Paul Hatt (December 2017 to January 2018 – deceased), Roger Holmes (from December 2017), Nigel Jefferies, Caroline Jones (co-opted – August 2017, elected December 2017), Maggie Jones, *John Kilpatrick (until August 2017)*, *Janice Lyall (March 2017 – August 2017)*, Eamonn McGurk (from December 2017), Cliff Penny (until December 2017), David Penny, John Pritchard (until April 2018), Tony Sellwood (from December 2017), Vaughan Welch (*co-opted – August 2017*, elected December 2017).

Those in italics are not a director of the relevant body.

Board of The Wharf House Co. Ltd: year to 28 February 2018

Eamonn McGurk, David Penny (Commercial Director).

the membership for people with suitable qualifications (ISOH or NEBOSH) who are willing to help. (*See page 12*).

H&G CT's Legal & Project Development Team continues to work on land acquisition and major reconstruction work has commenced in the Malswick area; this is in its early stages at the moment, and has come about as a consequence of an arrangement whereby the Trust has acquired the land on the basis of a number of preparatory works being completed. Hence, as this is presently on private land, we trust that you will respect the interests of the land owners. If you visit the area you are more than welcome to support the Trust and visit Malswick House instead.

I would like to thank you all for your support in this time of transition especially as this is likely to continue in other areas of its activities as it changes into a vibrant, 21st century organisation.

»» VW

L&PDT – *delivering volunteering opportunities, and sustainability ...*

The L&PDT's primary focus of the last few years has been to deliver a five year land bank. During the year in question, we have successfully achieved that, and are constantly seeking to add to it. Now the focus is just as much on the delivery of the projects that will take place on the acquired land. This ranges from straight canal restoration at Malswick, to delivering Newent Station. There is no chance of any shortage of volunteer work for years to come!

The now well-established team at Malswick, led by Paul Henshaw, is focused on the conditional works of the river bridges and other work on the farm which all form part of the land purchase agreement. Looking forward 2019, will see the team move onto several other bridges over streams, a new swing bridge off the B4215 and $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of Canal restoration directly alongside the road, with a new lock to follow. Above all, this delivers a very high profile site directly alongside the main road and directly accessible from Malswick House.

Newent Station site, aqueduct, and the staircase of locks has seen a team expand to include a local architect, and more detailed proposals will come forward in 2019 for a very large scheme here. We now have over a mile at this site in our ownership and hugely interesting and diverse projects to bring forward. This is likely to lead to bidding for a Heritage Lottery Fund development grant to help us take forward the entire site for much larger funding.

Alongside this, the L&PDT, funded by and based at The Wharf House, negotiates, manages, and grows our diverse income streams delivering some £55k a year into the Canal Trust from the property portfolio we have acquired. This is not just from renting our properties, but also spare land at Newent and Hereford where signs on fences and covenants bring us an income. This meaningful and growing income, makes the H&G Canal Trust very resilient, and sets us apart from other canal charities.

The Wharf House Restaurant and Rooms have weathered the storm on the high street, and the winter saw a significant refurbishment to create the new lounge and enhanced quality of canal interpretation, highlighting the upcoming Newent site. At the same time, two rooms were refurbished and improvements undertaken. Malswick House consolidated its position

dramatically cutting costs, and eagerly awaits being alongside the Canal to deliver its potential.

Charitable activities and achievements:

Aylestone Park: The Hereford Roving Team has finished erecting a post and rail fence with rabbit wire around the spill weir.

Burcott Road: In the autumn 25 scouts from the 10th Hereford Scout Troop with support of our own volunteers tackled the task of clearing brambles and undergrowth from the site.

Kymin: Maintenance was carried out during the winter, including tidying the length of the towpath and removing logs from a fallen tree branch.

Yarkhill: Regular maintenance and vegetation clearance continued on this stretch of canal. Plans were made for a machine cut of the canal banks and bed vegetation.

Dymock: In the autumn a team of volunteers descended on Dymock Pool to give it a good tidy before winter. The banks of the pool were strimmed, as were the weeds around the trees on the bank edges. The gravel footpath in front of the houses had the weeds removed. We have now resolved the problems with the bore hole pump the pool is filling and the site now looks very picturesque. A wide range of wildlife is now arriving at the area and are being enjoyed by local residents.

Oxenhall / Newent: As well as routine maintenance, the main effort this year has been repairing one wing wall of the old railway bridge which involved working off scaffolding. Plans to move on to repair the wing walls below the lock were abandoned when the acquisition of land at Malswick, which involved repairs to old bridges, was announced. Volunteers with the necessary skills went there and the rest remained here to continue routine maintenance. Three large trees by the old station were felled as they were deemed to be unsafe. Income from sale of logs and surplus building materials: £740.

Malswick: Work started in earnest on the Malswick project at the beginning of August 2017. Two teams were set up to carry out extensive repairs to two small brick bridges which cross Ell Brook. After a three month interruption due to bad weather and flooding, the bridges were finally completed in June 2018. During the wet spring, when it was not possible to work on the bridges, the volunteers moved camp and started clearing the East and West

woodlands to enable surveying to be carried out in the autumn. Meanwhile in the background, the design for the new 32 Tonne capacity bridge was being developed and the appropriate consents for its construction were being obtained.

Moat: Work included the profiling of the middle section of the canal and the removal of the east dam. Routine maintenance involving regular mowing of the grassy areas has become an easier task with the purchase of the Grillo mower in the autumn. The 'wilder' areas occasionally needed some intervention in order to enhance the habitats that have been created.

Over: Work was carried out to reinforce the bank at the back of the overflow weir to protect against water erosion. This was completed by anchoring geotextile fabric with concrete to the weir base, and a thin layer of top soil over the fabric for a mix of flowers and grasses. Progress on the great wall below The Wharf House continued with the laying of the capping bricks and the infill behind the wall. Reinforced concrete 'L' beams were cast to transfer the roof loading to the side walls. The backyard at The Wharf House was expanded and a small courtyard garden created for the ground floor bedroom. The volunteers tackled the usual tasks of site maintenance of trees and shrubs, mowing, weeding, mulching and fixing a frozen tap in the site hut. The essential topping up of the canal with fresh and nutrient rich water from the River Leaddon continued. Our Volunteers along with members of the model boat club worked on keeping down the growth of algae, blanket weed. Several thousand bricks for the bridge repair work on the Malswick site were sourced from the bricks stored on site.

Heritage Boats: *Mister Maysey's* outboard engine was removed for routine service. *Alder* continued to run each week, ensuring the navigation channel through the landslip section of Vineyard Hill. *Renton's* engine failure resulted in re-plumbing the fuel supply pipework and fuel tank replacement with a modern smaller plastic tank and the cabin given a repaint. *Bosley:* the inside of the cabin has been re-clad, and the front window glass replaced after it was broken by vandalism. *Susan E:* was weather-proofed and improvements made to its stability.

Llanthony: Routine maintenance is carried out here by a contractor.

Membership: We gained 74 new members during the year this is up on last year. Sadly

though, it is inevitable that we lose a few each year too, so the overall figure has decreased slightly to 1338. We thank members for their generosity and those who donated to the Land Fund, and Mill Barn Appeal.

The Wharfinger: Its high standard has been maintained thanks to many volunteer hours given by writers, photographers, editors, proof readers, layout and delivery. The Wharfinger has been hand-delivered in many villages and areas of Hereford and Gloucester – a saving on postage and adding to volunteers' hours.

Website: This is constantly running behind the scenes. Queries are passed to the relevant Trust member for a response. The webmaster and web team are spending a great deal of time in the planning of a new website which will be installed in the future.

Sales: We flew the flag at Braunston Historic Boat Rally and a number of local events including Dymock Music, Ledbury Community Day and Hellen's Garden Festival.

Over Festival 2017: Around 35 volunteers came together each day, plus weeks of planning and preparation created a weekend to remember.

Oxenhall Open Day: Around 12 volunteers welcomed visitors to the Oxenhall and Newent sites and offered refreshments

Winter Bazaar: Planning, refreshments and running the event gave a lovely seasonal boost to the end of the year.

Social Evenings: These continue to attract an average of 30 attending and paid speakers are balanced with members to cover many topics. Sales of books here and at events is around £180 this year.

Grand Holiday Draw: This raised c £2200 and as the prizes are donated it brought a handsome profit.

The value of the volunteer work that we have recorded, add up to around £150,000, but we know this does not reflect all the time dedicated to the business of H&GCT by our hard working volunteers.

The Board of Trustees thanks all volunteers for their effort and hard work to progress the development of the Canal whether it was along the line of the Canal, in its promotion, or have assisted H&G CT in many other ways during the year.

THANK YOU ALL

Site News *roundup!*

Our regular volunteers have been kept busy through the spring and summer months. Here are some of the tasks they have undertaken:

Over *Ted Beagles Reports:*

Britannia Engineering

Visitors to Over Basin in recent weeks will have noticed much has changed. This is due to Britannia Engineering occupying the hard area of the flood plain for their site offices, for the contract to improve the traffic flow around the Over roundabout. The first week was chaotic whilst all the offices and welfare containers were unloaded and connected to water and electricity supplies.

Since then we have come to an understanding which allows us all to work safely alongside each other with minimal disruption. In return for this, Britannia are assisting with our work by using idle plant to carry out work for us.

Canal water level

The water level in the canal basin is unusually low at the moment due the recent long spell without rain. The stuck pump suction pipe (See *The Wharfinger* 135) has been removed in one piece by Britannia, but improvement of the pump hardstanding area is only partially done and this needs to be completed before we can get the pump into position and set up for pumping water into the canal.



Top: Britannia's site entrance on the lower compound at Over Basin.

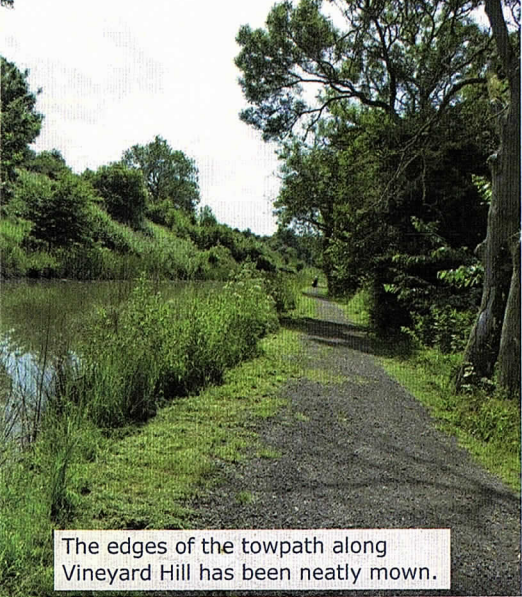
Above: Safety precautions mean that the pedestrian access to Over Basin is cordoned off from the main compound.



Heritage Boat Renton is aground on its mooring due to the low water level.

Vineyard Hill

All the unsafe deadwood branches have now been removed from the old ash trees along the Vineyard Hill section of the canal. The work was carried out by professional tree surgeons employed by A Hope. Only branches that could be a potential hazard to anyone 'on or near the towpath' were removed, leaving those branches not directly near the towpath for the wildlife to occupy. All the felled timber has been moved to the side to allow normal use of the towpath. This will be collected up by volunteers over the next few weeks and subsequently transported to the Trust's central stock pile at Malswick House.



The edges of the towpath along Vineyard Hill has been neatly mown.



The remains of the dead ash tree.



The view of the dead ash trees from the end of Vineyard Hill.

Logs for sale

The logs available are mainly ash and hawthorn.

If you would like learn more please contact

Brian Fox on

01432 358 628

oxenhall@h-g-canal.co.uk



Beer cellar

The redundant beer cellar on The Wharf House terrace has been demolished and all the materials recycled. The Wharf House wall has been reinstated and after removal of the concrete base, the kerbing along the edge of the path was reconstructed. All that remains to be done to complete the project is to refill the drainage channel with gravel.

Block paving

In front of The Wharf House the block paving around the manhole underneath the balcony has again become a tripping hazard, due to differential settlement between the piled areas and the general ground. But by careful removal of a small number of blocks and resetting them without any step changes in level, Bob and Graham have managed to remove the trips without having to re-lay the whole area. Well done!

Heritage Boats

The two tugboats, Renton and Alder, were running regularly during April helping to maintain the navigable channel through Vineyard Hill, but due to the falling water level since the end of May and throughout June this has not been possible. Mr Maysey and Bosley have continued running along the full length.

The opportunity is being taken to remove all temporary fuel pipework and begin installation of the permanent system, now that all trial work is finished. Work has started on permanent fixing down of the new tank in its final position refitting permanent bilge pumps.

Mowing

As usual a lot of effort has gone into mowing all over the site, with hand mowers and the ride on roper mower in addition to the Kubota flail mower. Wild flower areas have been left in the larger sections of grass, and only the edges of the towpath verges have been mown.



The bench at the end of Vineyard Hill has been cleaned and treated by Pat and Margaret.



The rear wall of cycle cave has been completed.



The area by the beehives leaving a wildflower area in the centre.


Site News *roundup continued ...*

Oxenhall and Newent

Brian Fox Reports:

The majority of our team from Oxenhall are still down on one of the bridges at Malswick refreshing their bricklaying skills which have been developed over the years on restoring the lock and aqueduct at Oxenhall. The small group left here have been kept busy through the winter and spring with the usual maintenance tasks which have to continue wherever there has been restoration of the canal. There has also been the opportunity to prepare ground for further lengths of canal to be prepared in readiness for future restoration. Readers will be aware of the land to the side and rear of the fire station in Newent which we have been clearing of dense vegetation and it is now possible to see clearly the extent of the old canal and so plans can now be made to determine how much soil needs to be removed in order to restore the original canal. >>> **BF**






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Yarkhill

Bob Comba Reports:

The Yarkhill team have been busy keeping on top of the growth released by the recent dry and sunny weather. A vital part of the work was cutting back the overhanging tree growth which was threatening access to the site hut – not to mention blocking the lunch break area.

»» **BC**



Bob Comba

Left: Three old tree stumps with the winch wire around the middle one.

Above: The rotten root base of the extracted stump.

Maintenance

Wilf Jones Reports:

It is that time of year when spring has sprung and so the grass and undergrowth have grown like crazy, and hence we have spent several maintenance days trying to keep on top of it.

We will continue with further maintenance days managing the growth by grass cutting strimming, trimming of hedges and clearing fallen branches.

Kymin East

One maintenance day has been completed strimming, and a second planned for early July – using the Grillo.

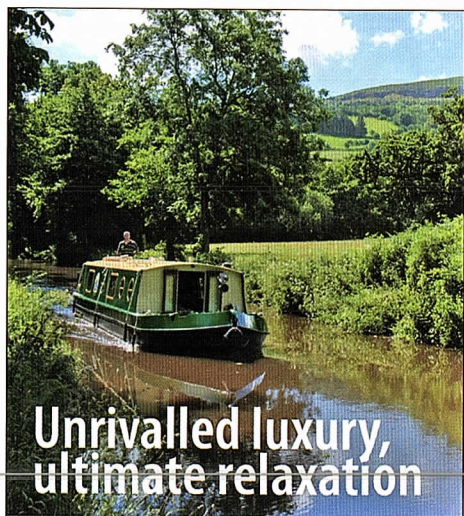
Dymock

A maintenance day planned for the end of June, strimming. The water level is holding now the pump has been switched from 12 hrs per day to 24 hrs per day. We are still monitoring this.

Moat Farm

One day of grass cutting using Grillo has been completed and a second day planned for mid July.

»» **WJ**



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How to have fun and help the Canal Trust!

by Ginny Birkett



I love canals, and love canal festivals too! This one is special because the Historic Narrow Boats at Braunston make an effort to gather here, and what a delight it was to be a part of it all, and to share our story with canal enthusiasts from all parts of the UK.

Over many years, Janet Moulton has made sure we have a presence at these events, and our modest stall attracted many characters who wanted old canal books, pristine jigsaws, even cuddly toys, as well as many buying our draw tickets. If you like a chat then this is the place to be!

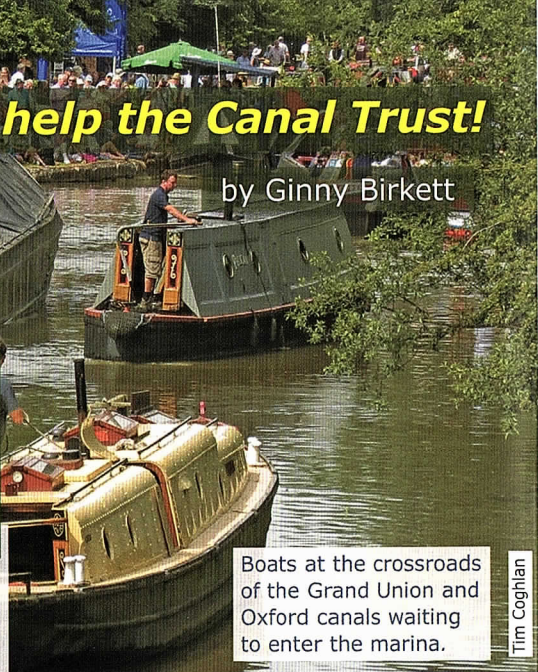
The boats paraded, while the commentator gave us their histories, and the public watched contentedly in the warm sunshine, with ice-cream or beer in hand. I wandered down the towpath to eavesdrop on waterways characters discussing their engines mainly. Shoreside, I had time to explore the other canal restoration stalls, and enjoy the Morris dancing.

I returned home at the end of the weekend, tired but with a feeling of satisfaction that more people out there know about our project, and fond memories of a happy laid back event.

This is a very satisfactory way to volunteer for H&G CT, especially for newer members like me!

»» **GB**

We thank Tim Coghlan and Braunston Marina for their support again this year.



Tim Coghlan



Timothy West joins the parade of boats.



Ginny Birkett, Janet Moulton and David Suchet.

Becca Moulton



Travels
with the
Trust Stand

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

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

We would like to attend other local shows so if you know of any please talk to Janet or Maggie.

»» **JM/MJ**

*Join the Sales and Promotion teams
at the following events:*

Aug 18 Tibberton Show

Sept. 8 Newent Onion Fair

Nov.10 Winter Bazaar, Ledbury

Please note: *Contrary to the last edition it has been decided **not** to hold an Open Day at Oxenhall/Newent this year.*

Ledbury Community Day

by Maggie Jones

In June, but much closer to home than Braunston, a small team of regular sales volunteers turned out to support this annual event at Ledbury. Trading was busy through the morning with sales, membership and queries from a wide range of visitors to our stand in St. Katherine's Hall. Local people are always enthusiastic and supportive of the work we do in the Canal's restoration. **Thank you to all concerned.** »» **MJ**



WINTER BAZAAR

Saturday, 10 November
9.30 – 15.00

St Katherine's Hall, Ledbury



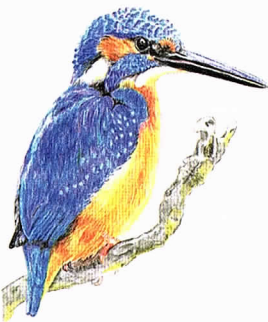
*It may be cold and bleak outside, but at our annual
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nature watch

Our ever-vigilant Members regularly send in photographs of interesting nature spotted along the canal line.



The woodland permissive path through wild garlic alongside Newent Station site.



Dryad's Saddle fungi forms tiered brackets on ash, elm and birch. Seen here along the permissive path.

Brian Fox



Ted Beagles

Andy Fowler writes:

This large wasp's nest was discovered underneath a tarpaulin covering the pile of old lock gate timbers at Over.

Unfortunately, it was firmly attached to a sheet of plywood that was needed for the cycle cave roof formers. It was discovered by Bob Reid when he pulled off the tarpaulin, before beating a very hasty retreat!

As luck would have it, our Over apiarist,

called in later in the day to check the bee hives and saw the problem. He very kindly came back during the week and safely dealt with the nest.

On a similar note, a couple of weeks before, we had discovered a colony of bumble bees nesting inside the door of the tool storage container, using what apparently had been a bluetit nest a year or two ago. They were not really causing any problem except when shutting up the container, when they would come flying out of the old keyhole – somewhat cross.

I had believed that bumble bees did not normally sting, but when trying to padlock the door, I found this was not the case and got stung right between the eyes. The bee man subsequently cleared the bees out of their home for us as well.

»» AF

The Over Basin Swans

Monica Hamer writes:

A rainy April, combined with high spring tides and the Severn bore became just too much for Sadie with her nest being flooded twice daily.

She abandoned her six eggs and headed for the safety of the canal. It then became clear that a new nest was being made by Sam along the canal bank, which was eventually occupied by Sadie. She then sat there for six weeks on what was thought to be three/four eggs. However on the 19 June, five little heads popped out and a few hours later all five tiny cygnets tumbled into the water for their first dip. They are now a talking point and a delight to everyone that comes to see them.

»» **MH**



Sadie on the flooded nest.



Monica Hamer

Sadie with her successful brood of five cygnets.

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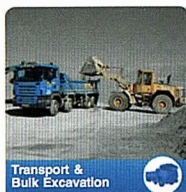
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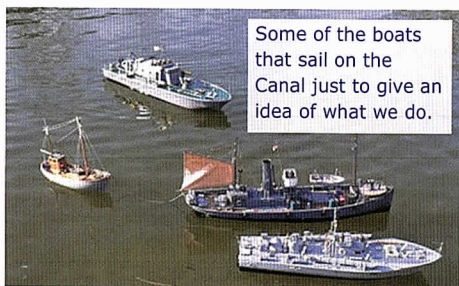
Gloucester & District Model Boat Club

David Exell

Our model boaters play their part in maintaining the Basin at Over by keeping the weed at bay for their small craft. David writes:

It is now June and we have had a pleasant, dry, and surprisingly unwindy late spring and early summer, your scribe's new sailing barge has merely drifted down the canal very slowly and it would be nice to see it with a strong breeze. The Micromagic racing has suffered from a lack of wind as well.

We are coping with the minor restrictions caused by the Britannia Construction camp, they seem to be very easy going, and we are carrying on as usual with racing and normal model boating. In May we had one of our fun days, which was reasonably well supported. We had steering competitions and fun sailing competitions plus an American Picnic (you all bring a dish of something and share), plus a barbecue carried out by Derek.



David Exell

Model Boaters work team with some of the weed they have extracted from the basin.

Under John Hamer's direction we have managed two "weeding" sessions this year and have removed large quantities of weed from the Canal Basin bed. Our usual (why is it always the usual!) band of somewhat elderly volunteers turned up and pulled the weeding chain across and out of the basin, John Taylor has 'invented' a method where by pushing a plank under the chain as it rises up we are able to lift out far more weed, which tends to fall off the chain as we drag it across the bank. This was so successful it resulted in the large piles left, as you can see in the photo. The Canal volunteers will barrow this away on the following Wednesday. The pile in the photo was mainly of the weed growth across from and around trip boat, *Mr. Maysey*! Danny thinks that there should be elvering rights as several eels were eased back into the water.

»» DE

Gloucester & District Model Boat Club

Sails at Over basin on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday afternoons (weather permitting). You should find somebody sailing between 1.00pm and 4.00pm. The Club members will be pleased to talk to you about their models and the Club. Members have models of all descriptions including amphibious craft. Yachts are very popular.

Chairman. Edward Tedaldi.



Everything Canal Boats

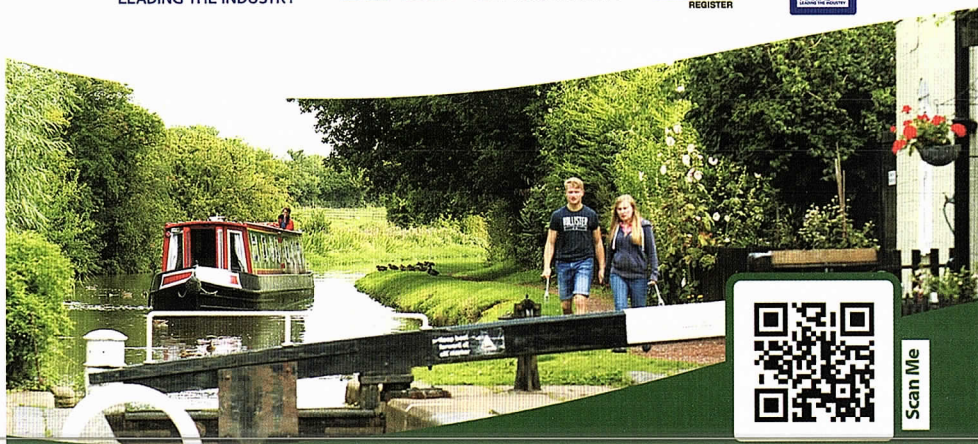
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News from the Friends of National Waterways Museum Gloucester

Chris Witts writes

Following the completion of the second phase of refurbishment of the National Waterways Museum (Gloucester), it re-opened during May.

Staff, Friends and Volunteers alike all joined in to ensure we opened on time on the 5th May and, with two days of glorious weather, visitors enjoyed the new museum experience.

Speaking of glorious weather, the 45-minute boat trips on *Queen Boadicea II* along the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal are in great demand. We are proud of QBII, surviving as a Dunkirk veteran for nigh on 70 years, may she continue to provide us with many more years' service and enjoyment.

For the second year the Museum has provided a programme of 'Learning at Lunchtime'. Six lunchtime 30-minute talks



Sprite sail barge, *Gladys*, in the dry dock at Gloucester Docks

on the dumb barge *Sabrina 5* began in early June and are increasing in popularity. One talk of special interest is by David Robins about the long-term project by Tommi Nielsen & Co on *Gladys*, a Thames spritsail barge built in 1901.

Boaters' Crafts Group

Six members of the Boaters' Crafts Group, who are Friends of the National Waterways Museum (Gloucester) and volunteers for the Trust, went to the Braunston Historic Boat Rally on the 22–24 June to demonstrate crafts of the boat

women. They were all in costume and attracted great interest. Amongst those showing an interest were none other than actor and keen waterway enthusiast, David Suchet CBE and the owner of Braunston Marina, Tim Coghlan.

» CW

Chairman FGWM

The Boaters Craft Group with David Suchet and Tim Coghlan (right).





Hello, to all our followers, users, readers...

I know you're all out there as I've had very positive feedback, which is always welcome. Don't forget that we are open on a Tuesday from 11.00 – 14.00 ish. Come and see what we have achieved with limited accommodation.

NHS Big Health Day

Well, we are still in great demand – the NHS Big Health Day was a great success, and being next to Scrubditch Care Farm, I just had to do the "Noahs Ark" photo. After a bit of 'sheepishness', two sheep were encouraged to pose on the Wheelyboat with Pirate Eric. The YouTube video of the whole event is worth a visit, thanks to Phillip, of Barnwood Trust, (link below).

NHS BIG Health video link:

<https://youtu.be/C0R1bQQ9kr4>

At one with nature

Weed clearing has started again from the canal, the swans have hatched five cygnets, the moorhens have also been at parenting with four more chicks (*don't know if they are all hens – they could be more males!*) All of this leads to our understanding of nature and being at one with them, and none of the fish has been harmed when we have been on the water!

A comment made as to our activities made me think the other day as we have not only introduced Sailing4Disabled in Stroud (who now have their own group) to get on the water but have also introduced three groups to the Wheelyboat who have purchased their own. We are also helping the Wheelyboat Trust.

But all this is thanks to our volunteers. We welcome Martin who is now enjoying helping not to mention my cakes!

»» **Pete**, Long Gone Silver or Jolly Skipper



Pete Bisson

Sailing4Disabled meets every Tuesday at **Over Canal Basin** from 11.00 to 14.00. It is open to everyone – whether they have a disability or not.

Contact: Pete (Long Gone Silver) Bisson: on 07913 015018 • peterwb49@hotmail.com • www.sailing4disabled.org.uk

by Janet Moulton

For the last 16 years I have been arranging the distribution of **The Wharfinger** and have built up a band of volunteers who hand deliver across the two counties.

Print Plus deliver boxes of Wharfingers to me (I live close by) and I then sort those which go by hand and those trusted to Royal Mail. The labels have been printed by Nigel Jefferies and Ted Beagles and put on to the envelopes during the week before delivery.

Over the years those to go in the post have been enveloped by the late Derek and Margaret Grey and others, and now Barbara Moses helps. Once stuffed and put in crates, they are taken to the Sorting Office (also nearby).

Copy deadline for the next Wharfinger
MONDAY, 1 OCTOBER

I envelope the non-post ones and travel round the counties to around 25 different volunteers, and most of the villages with a cluster of members and certain areas of Hereford and Gloucester City are covered.

As our membership numbers have risen this is no longer very practical so this issue should come direct to you from the printers.

Over the years the "hand deliverers" have saved the Trust thousands of pounds in postage so we owe a very big THANK YOU to them all.

I shall miss my visits and the many cups of tea and coffee but I will hopefully see you again in the future. I can still visit to collect books, stamps or jigsaws for HGCT to sell – let me know.

Thank you all >>> JM

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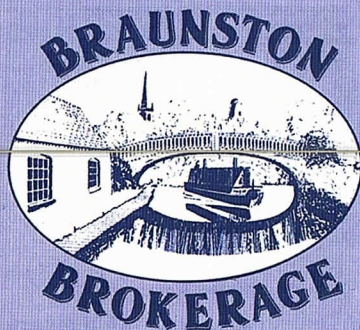
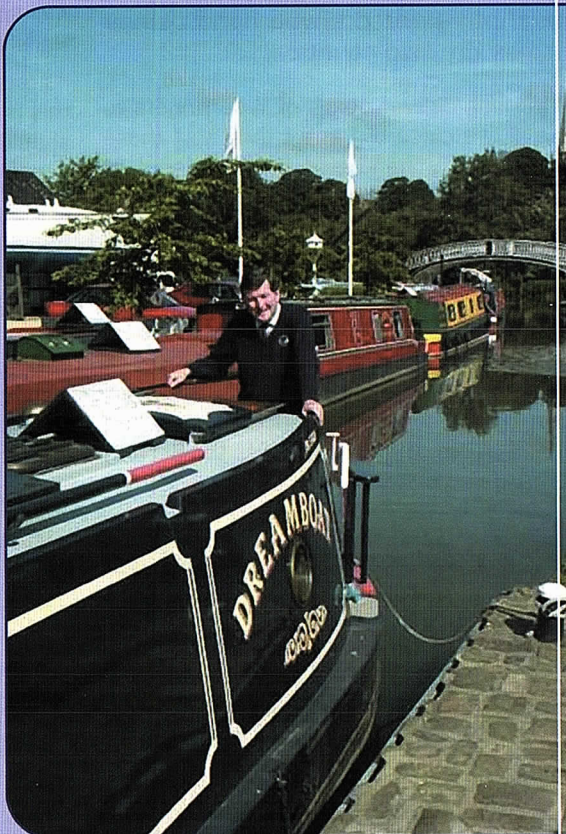
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Membership records are computerised. Your entry is available for inspection if you send a SAE to the Membership Secretary.

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

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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.

Want to join?

Please support our voluntary work by becoming a Member of the H&G CT. A membership form is available online or from The Wharf House.

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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 regular financial support from public bodies for its future operation and maintenance.

The H&G Canal Trust

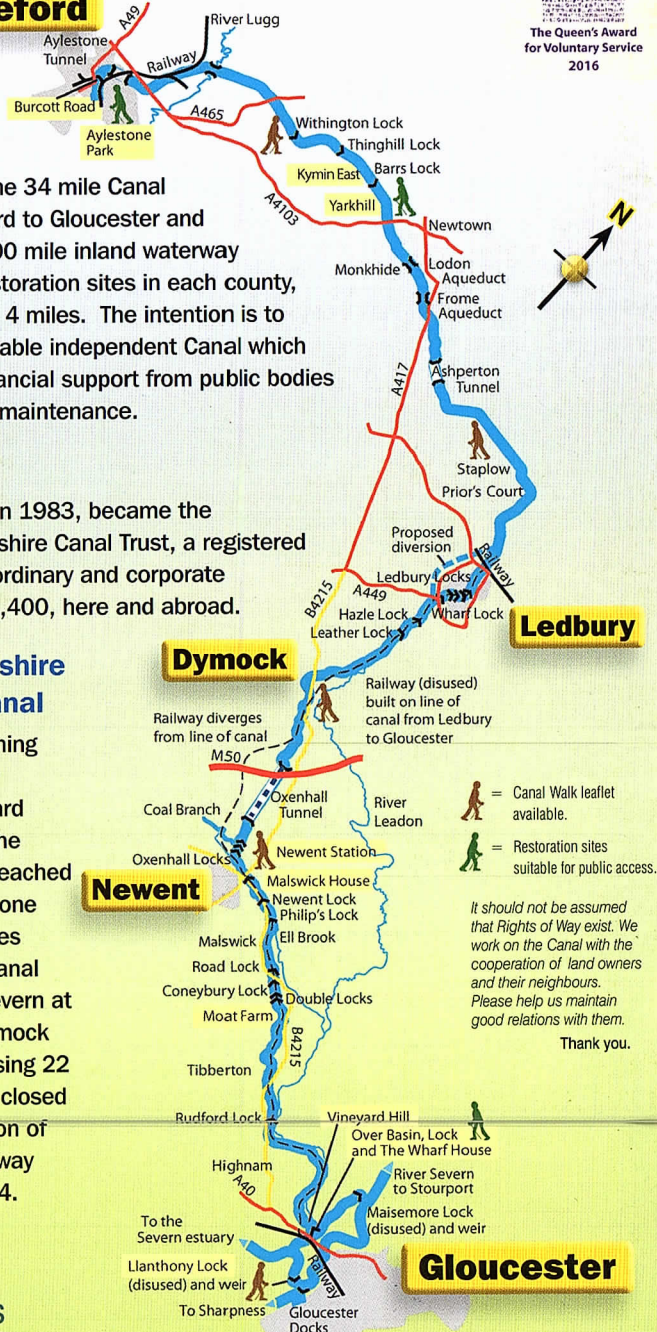
The Canal Society, formed in 1983, became the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust, a registered charity, in 1992. It has an ordinary and corporate membership approaching 1,400, here and abroad.

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.

Gloucester Quays

Experience More



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