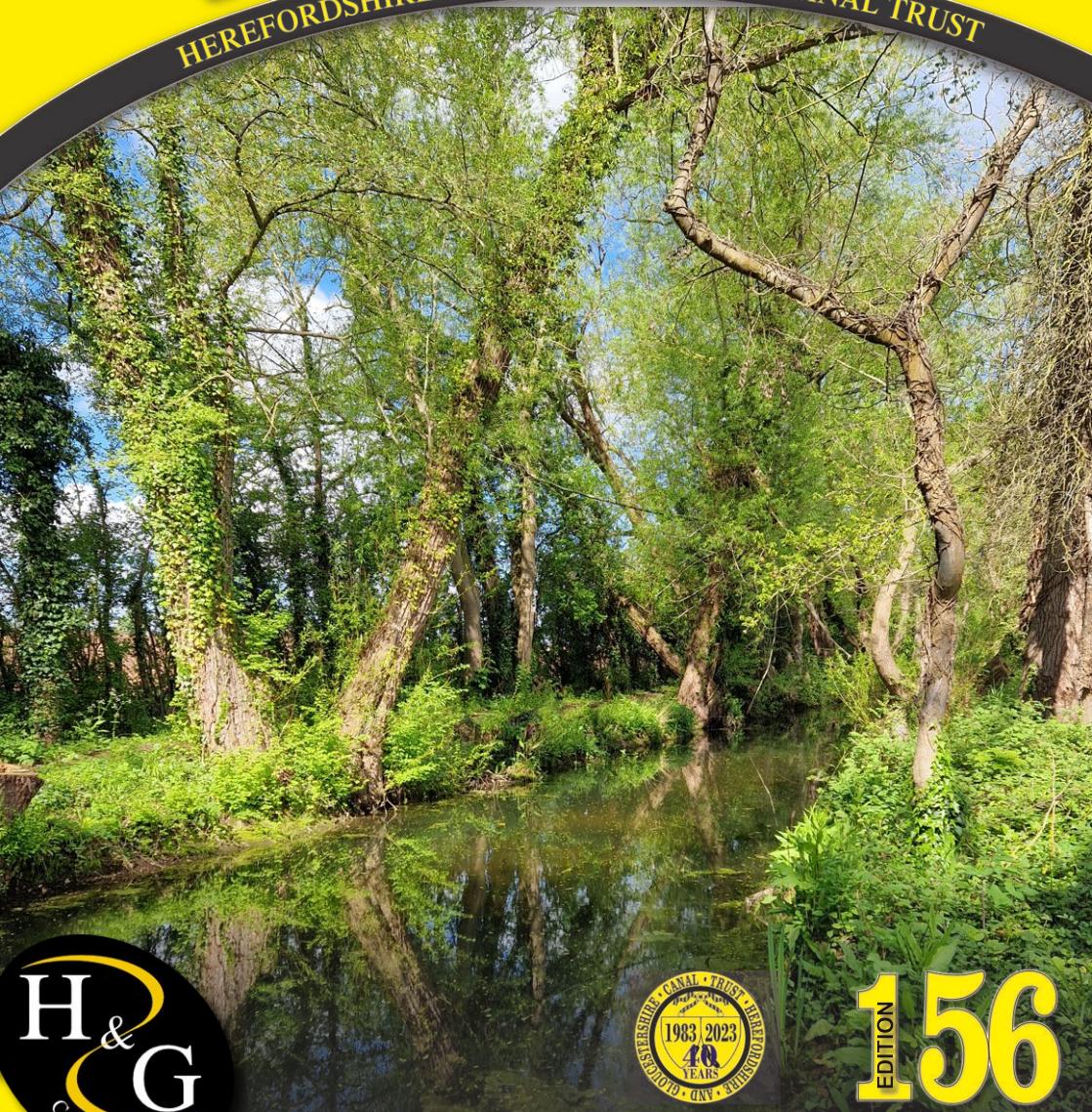


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Summer 2023

The Wharfinger

HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST



156
EDITION

REBUILDING A SUSTAINABLE CANAL BETWEEN HEREFORD & GLOUCESTER

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

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It has been our pleasure in supporting the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust for over 20 years, and we will continue to work together in the present, to revive the past, and secure a better future. © H&GCT

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Trust Business



From the desk of the Chairman

How many miles do we have in water?

Well, after a good winter, at least a third of the length of the canal is in water is the usual answer.

Unfortunately, we do not own a third of the canal.

So how much do we own?

How much of this is in water?

How many sites can I visit? How much of the canal can I see?

What is happening with Over? How is Malswick coming along?

Why are you building houses at Malswick?

...Yes true - a rumour was that that all the diggers that attended the site last year as part of the Waterways Recovery Group's three weeks' camp was for the development of houses!

If you would you like answers to the above please come along to the Annual General Meeting and we will answer them for you.

Another reason for attending the AGM is that this year we are holding it in the Royal Oak, the same location as the socials are held. A chance to have a chat with fellow members over a glass of lemonade and catch up further on what is going on with the H&G.

We need you to ensure we can complete the business part of the AGM. We will then have a slide show covering the work over the last year and our plans for the coming years. That is if we have enough volunteers and of course money to complete the work we are planning along the length of the canal.

We also hope that we will have a further walk for you soon, along the old historic route of the canal through Ledbury. It has been created by a volunteer in Ledbury and is currently undergoing testing. Hopefully it will entice people who were unaware of the canal route in Ledbury. Even I have had a go and luckily just got back to the car prior to the rain coming down for the rest of the day.

Hope to meet as many of you as possible at the AGM on the 14th June, starting at 7:30pm at the Royal Oak, Much Marcle, Ross Rd, Ledbury HR8 2ND

Ralph Barber

Trustee's Report



THE HEREFORDSHIRE AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST LIMITED TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 December 2022

The Trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2022. A non-profit distributing company no. 2704407, formed in April 1992, and a registered charity no. 1010721, which replaced the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Society launched in 1983.

Governing document

The charity is a limited company, limited by guarantee as defined in the Companies Act 2006, and as such is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Organisational structure

A team of volunteers runs the charity. It is managed by the Trustees who meet regularly, supported by site-based groups of volunteers and committees responsible for promotion and other commercial activities. The board appoint trustees to run The Wharf House Co. Ltd. The Articles of Association allow for up to twelve trustees to be in place but does allow for the co-option of two more to cover special projects. One third of the trustees stand down annually by rotation but can apply for re-election. Potential new trustees can be elected at the AGM or are co-opted during the year, but they must stand for formal election at the next AGM. When new Trustees join, they are provided with the information they need to fulfil their roles, which includes information about trustees and charity law.

Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are put in place to reduce risks of fraud error or unsafe acts.

The Board of Trustees are 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 are conducted demonstrably for the public benefit and this applies also to their plans for future action. The charitable objects are the rebuilding a sustainable canal between Hereford and Gloucester.

The Trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year were:

Ralph Barber	Deborah Barber
Nigel Jefferies (until June 2022 AGM)	Robert Morland
Philip Marshall	Richard Appleton
Edward Helps	Bob Hargreaves
Eamonn McGurk	Dave Goff
Keith Vaughan Welch	Tony Higgins

Objectives and activities:

The trust espouses the following core values: -

- Restoring, enhancing, and protecting the canal for all
- Integrating the canal corridor as a sustainable resource into the life of the communities along its route Endeavouring to complete the work in partnership with all other interested parties.

Interested Parties

This reporting period we have engaged further with the Neighbourhood Plans under development in Newent, via Zoom meetings due to Covid-19. Also, further engagement with councillors in local, distant and county wide government.

Voluntary help and gifts in kind

The volunteers form a critical part of the trust, not just in restoring the canal but also maintaining the restored sections and promoting widely through local and national events. All these aspects have continued throughout the year in question and are set to expand. The monetary value of the volunteer work that we have recorded adds up to £207,966.75 but we know this does not reflect all the time dedicated to the business of H&GCT by all our hardworking volunteers.

Risks to the Charity

The Trust continues to negotiate new sites and to rejuvenate former sites with developers and landowners at various places along the line of the canal – including locations in Hereford and Ledbury. These can take years to conclude but we continue with an ongoing diverse portfolio of negotiations so that a flow of announcements can realistically come over the coming years.

Reserves Policy

The charity aims to hold funds that are to cover the normal operating costs for 12 months.

Charitable activities and achievements

Chairman's Report:

My thanks go to all Trustees and Volunteers for their ongoing support and involvement in the Trust.

With Covid restrictions eased we were back to almost a normal operating environment. Working parties attended restoration sites, the first promotional event was held at Oxenhall (supporting the local Daffodil Day) in March and social evenings continued throughout the year. The AGM in June was back meeting face to face in Ledbury, with many attending.

We also celebrated our 30 years as a trust with a day that was held in September at Over. It was very good to see so many people come to see old friends, take a walk along the canal and also enjoy the boat trips as well as having a cup of tea with cake while talking about the last 30 years. An exhibition was also held showing the plans going forward.

This report now covers both the complete calendar and Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust Financial year as changed previously.

Work continues in many areas. A planning application has created an opportunity to look at the terminus of the canal at Hereford. With the next bit of land to be owned by the H&G Trust and then the canal line in place around the adjacent business park we have a good opportunity to push further along this part towards Aylestone Tunnel. With the housing development at Holmer we have further opportunity to connect to the restored section in Aylestone Park. Discussions are ongoing with the council linking with their city plans for the development of a Green Corridor along the canal line out to Aylestone Park and ensuring the route continues to be protected in the Herefordshire Plan that is currently under review.

One of the keys to a solid restoration is the involvement of others – councils, locals, all types of groups. Work has occurred to continue to ensure the canal route is protected and supported by all. Positive comments have been received about the change in direction the trust is now taking, after a few years of some negative comments. The sharing of ideas and use of social media with Facebook, YouTube and Twitter now used for interaction is seen as a positive.

Continuing the report from the Hereford end:-

Burcott Road: Ongoing tree pruning and maintenance of the site.

Holmer: We are in discussions with the current landowner supported by Herefordshire Council with a view to agreeing a transfer of the land on the canal corridor to a new subsidiary company.

Aylestone Park: The reed boats visited again, and the canal had a good year reasonably free from reed growth. A number of working parties attended on a Sunday as part of the development of the roving Herefordshire volunteer team. A large tree was successfully removed, another left due to a bees' nest being found in the trunk. The H&G Trust also started discussions with the local park users, the Aylestone Park Association and the council, both parish and district, about the development of a Community Basin. Feedback was positive, but lots to do to move this forward.

Kymen: Ongoing site maintenance continued. Several trees that came down in storms continued to create work for the volunteers. To help those who would like to volunteer but who work in the week we are meeting on the second Sunday of each month. We sadly heard of the death of the land owner and as a new lease was in negotiation at the time we currently have no formal agreement and are only visiting occasionally to keep the tow path clear.

Yarkhill: Regular maintenance and vegetation clearance continued to keep the volunteers busy on this stretch of canal.

Adjoining Yarkhill: The team have gained access to the site next to Yarkhill and have done an excellent job of clearing the site. Unfortunately, we are finding that a number of land owners are happy to let us work sites but are not allowing the general public on to the site.

Ashperton: In the canal restoration world, things typically move slowly, but in January, whilst walking the new Ashperton walk, I met the new owners of the cottage that overlooks the eastern portal of Ashperton Tunnel. Some working parties were then arranged that helped clear access to the flooded tunnel portal.

Ledbury: As mentioned in the last annual report the planning decision for the development of 625 houses and a number of factory units was given the go ahead to the north of the viaduct. Support for the Canal Trust in land and money was also awarded. Unfortunately, discussions are still under way with the developer and Herefordshire Council to agree a way forward.

Dymock: The pump failed, was replaced and all was well for a while, unfortunately it has failed again and we are looking at a further options.

Oxenhall: Unfortunately, the site leader who replaced the previous very long serving leader has stepped away from the site. A small group of volunteers with help from Malswick volunteers are keeping the national footpath and the permissive way clear for the local walkers.

Newent: Whilst not a lot has happened on site, we now have a model of the proposed inclined plane that proved to be a good discussion point at a number of shows the promotions team managed to get to throughout the year.

Malswick: Planning permission was finally received in November 2021. Over the winter the team did a fantastic job installing a small culvert. They also got the large culvert ready for final installation with the help of the Inland Waterways Association Waterways Recovery Groups, often known as WRGs. They had planned for three weeks of camps on site in the summer – unfortunately this was partly affected by Covid during the first week. Work has continued on site. The opportunity arose to purchase the next piece of land heading east, enabling us to connect with another section of Trust land. The response to the request for funds to enable us to purchase was great. The legal transfer of this new piece of land was finally completed in February at a cost of £72k and the team has started the process of applying for planning permission for a 450 yard section that this purchase allows.

Moat Farm: Routine maintenance, including mowing of the grassy areas, continued to be the focus of work here. The 'wilder' areas occasionally needed intervention to enhance the habitats that have been created.

Over: The land slippage at Vineyard Hill – the area is pegged out and continues to be monitored. There is a plan to improve the ability to get boats along the section of canal at the bottom of the hill. Ongoing maintenance occupied the team, including the clearance of weeds by the reed boats that were used at Aylestone Park.

Heritage Boats: The boats continue to be worked on. Mr Maysey was put back in the water. A slight leak was found, but quickly resolved.

Apart from the existing users of the basin, the model boaters and Sailing4Disabled, we have had new users. We have had further visits by the fire brigade to practise their boating

skills, the Brownies visited and a local paddleboarding business is running sessions as well as Yoga on a paddleboard during the week.

Mill Barn: As reported in editions of the Wharfinger throughout the year we are continuing to work this forward. We have a design; the original planned location has had to change due to underground pipes. We are getting the paperwork aligned ready to apply for planning permission.

Llanthony: Both properties are let, and the lock basin has had a couple of visits for volunteers to keep the Wysis Way footpath, which runs through the lock, open. We have also reached out to the Community Payback Team who have continued this work.

Membership: Sadly, we lose members each year, the overall figure has increased to 1120. With the ability to get out to shows to promote the Trust we have had a steady increase in new members. We thank members for their generosity with all their donations.

Volunteers: A steady increase and interest in getting involved in the restoration work. We always need more including volunteers who would be able to take on extra responsibility around the sites or get involved in the promotion of the H&G Trust at sales events or presenting at talks would be useful.

The Wharfinger: Its high standard has been maintained thanks to many volunteer hours given by writers, photographers, editors, proofreaders, layout and delivery.

Walks Leaflets: these have been selling well. A new walk at Ashperton was created. A guided walk of this route was done by one of our members and then a further walk was done as part of the Herefordshire Walking Festival, which enabled a walk taking in parts of the canal that are not normally accessible. Thank you to the five landowners who gave us access.

Website: This is constantly running behind the scenes. Queries are passed to the relevant Trust member for a response.

Sales & Promotion: Following the slow year previously we did manage to get to a full calendar of promotion events, starting in Oxenhall, Ledbury and Tibberton. Out of the area we attended Droitwich and Braunston. The Winter Fayre at Newent was a very successful promotion and fundraising event, and it was great to see so many volunteers getting involved.

Socials: A full calendar was undertaken, talks on many subjects canal related, rail related and another subject that Herefordshire is famous for, apples.

The Grand Holiday Draw raised £1,439. Our gratitude goes to those who donate all the prizes.

Financial review, Achievements and Performance

2022 was another successful year financially. The Trust group (H & G Canal Trust and Wharf House Co Ltd) earned rent of £104k compared with nearly £75k in the previous accounting period (which covered 10 months). The combined surplus for the year was about £39k after spending £50k on the restoration at Malswick, to which should be added over £6k in respect of equipment maintenance, much of which applied to that site.

The Wharf House Co Ltd showed another profit (continuing the upwards trend of recent years) of £11,420 after interest paid to the Trust of over £28k. Costs continued to reduce and turnover increased. During the year the company was able to repay £42k to the Trust to facilitate the purchase of the new land at Malswick.

Donations to the Land Fund contributed £17k which was also used to buy the land at Malswick. The Land Fund has been invaluable in enabling the Trust to acquire the land that is essential to the continuing restoration of the canal and the donations to the Fund are much appreciated.

Overall, the Trust's financial position is stable and improving steadily, which we hope will continue but which is heavily reliant on rental income continuing on all sites. In these difficult trading times this cannot be guaranteed.

Gradually the long-term loan from the bank is being paid off, in the 2022 year £16k having been repaid.

Ralph Barber - Trustee

Dated: 19th April 2023

H&G Stamp Appeal - Next Stop £5,500!



Yes folks, that's the new target for the Stamps Appeal. Thanks to your continuing generosity, we passed the magic £5000 mark early in the new year.

So please keep saving all of those stamps off your mail (we know it's not so much these days) and check your drawers and cupboards for old albums, postcards etc.

Either hand in what you've got to Janet at any social meeting or send them directly to me, Steve Bence, at:

H&G Stamps, 35 Lime Road, SOUTHAM, Warwickshire, CV47 1EQ

We can always arrange to collect bulky lots, see inside back cover for contact details.

Many thanks again,

Steve Bence

Board Notes



The board met in February at Malswick House. Before the meeting we took a walk along the Malswick site, first working our way up to the top of the site, next to the football ground, and then back down through West Wood, onto our new piece of land, and then on into East Wood, where we looked at the location of Road Lock.

The Chair started the meeting with a discussion about the board and doing a review. This would be in two stages, first being the review of the operation of the board and then at a later date a skill review and what are we missing. A questionnaire was handed out for each Trustee to complete and then a 1-2-1 with the Chair at a later date.

We then moved on to the agenda, going through the reports submitted. Finance Policy was updated and approved. The required review of the Environment Policy is underway. Potential First Aid course in April, discussions about land and further contacting owners. Sorting out the containers in Over to support the clearing of the land for Mill Barn. Decisions about Membership and Volunteers, which Tony, Membership Secretary took an action away from this discussion. Looking at events for the next period, the Volunteer Day and how this would look. Further discussion about Aylestone Park and Hereford led to agreement about looking further into the EOI process that Herefordshire Council have in place.

March was a Zoom meeting – with several people attending funerals and a couple with Covid it was a smaller meeting than normal. The agenda was quickly completed, and the meeting finished well within the two hours we aim for. A lot of discussion about the Volunteer Day we had in the calendar for May 8th. One of the questions – should this be a day for attracting volunteers or, as the Coronation idea, get possible volunteers to work on something.

April was back to Malswick House, and almost a full house of trustees attending. The meeting started with a review and then approval of the work that Philip had done in getting the Annual Accounts for 2022. These should be on the website by the time you read this article. We then reviewed the past quarter – the first quarter of FY23.

We then discussed a boat. While I enjoy discussions about boats, this one was an interesting challenge, currently on the Worcester and Birmingham canal. Canal and Rivers Trust want it moving, It has no engine and, without a water connection to our system, land transport will be required. Further investigation was agreed by the Board, and we will report further once we have agreed a way forward. In the meantime, you will find an article about it with this edition of the Wharfinger on pp 21-2.

Also raised to the board was a request for the loan of our Bailey bridge, the one that used to be over the Ell Aqueduct. It was agreed that this could be agreed to. As long as we get it back! The Trust requesting it want it for around 3 years.

Typically, our meetings finish at around 2 hours. This one continued a bit longer as the Chair introduced a plan to aspire to.

The Chair's main drive behind this was to ensure we focus currently on sites under our control and make the best of land we already own. Also, with the Volunteer's Day coming up, we should be clear about the work we are looking at across the sites. Lots of discussion occurred and we finally left the pub at opening time with work for the Chair to do, so the information can be shared further at the AGM.

Ralph Barber

IWA Restoration Conference



On a bright Friday in March, two Trustees set off to get to the Inland Waterways Association (IWA) yearly conference. This year it was held in Chesterfield; fortunately for the Trustees attending as their daughter lives just a short distance away. The traffic wasn't good, a typical journey of just over a couple of hours was almost double, but luckily when we arrived, a quick turn around and down to the pub for a catch up. But this article is about the IWA conference that started the following morning in a beautiful building with a maze of rooms and stained-glass art that brightened the place up – The Winding Wheel Theatre.

After the introductions came a very well created presentation from the Chesterfield Canal Society. Lots of things to think about – funding requested: the Green Book – not a security book as I know it but about having to pay people for some tasks. These tasks may be ones that volunteers are not willing to do, or just need to be done by skilled people under tight deadlines; working SMART and several other comments that reminded me of a statement quoted to me on a management training course a number of years ago – "Driving change is fun, been driven by it is not". I can completely agree with that, having been in both camps over the years.

This was followed by a session on local government, given by an officer from the district council, with some interesting points. Then there were two break-out groups. A session on temporary works was very interesting with a discussion about A, B and C related to site classifications that I think would be useful for the H&G to think about. A – anything in the garden, B – building site, and C – contractors. The other Trustee attended the Environment session with a case study on the Montgomery canal raising some fascinating and frustrating points.

After lunch and some networking came a session with a speaker from the Avon Navigation Trust. Interesting points noted – 1300 boats on the River Avon; steel used for lock gates; and a Trust representative assigned to each town to liaise with the locals. This would be a good way to go for H&G if we had the volunteers, maybe this could be something to aim for. Unfortunately, as the conference was running late, we couldn't stay for the last questions as the car park was a calling. An interesting day. Looking forward to seeing what next years conference will be about.

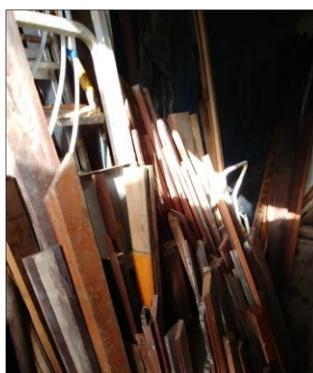
Ralph Barber

The site has been attended to by the same faithful volunteers since I dropped into being team leader. A big thank you from me to them as it seems that since Covid all voluntary reliant organisations are struggling as we are. If you feel a need to help now that spring/summer is upon us then please do contact us.



Tasks undertaken over the last quarter have been varied and challenging. The team have worked hard to clear the garden and car parks for the Lock Keepers restaurant. The results are so pleasing to the eye with many people saying how much better it looks. With the hard work to cut back and clear many months' (maybe years') of overgrowth, it is hoped the upkeep will be less arduous. You can now see there is a building from the entrance and the canal basin can be seen from the garden room again.

Now spring is upon us we are working on the H&G gardens and of course grass management. Bringing out of storage our sit-on mower and starting it up was fun. Some heavy repairs were required on the fibreglass cowlings.



The site is in the process of being cleared up. The containers and portakabin are looking poor, and with the general feel of our H&G "flagship" location also in need of major attention, a plan has been created. The task believed to be required is to ascertain what is at the location and dispose of or sell what is not required by the Trust.

Easier said than done with upwards of twenty years of collected items, thousands of bricks from the old hospital, general building materials, old hard woods etc etc. The containers are full of items that may be of use in the future, but do we hold onto them in the event of their use?

The status of the containers is deteriorating, with water ingress not helping in the condition of the stored items. Sometimes you have to be ruthless and this has been started, we now can see into the containers and have a good idea of what they now contain.

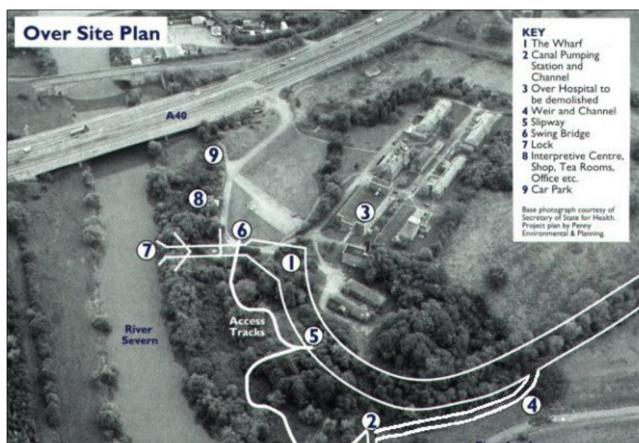
A metal heap is being created to be sold for scrap and new pallets obtained to neatly stack the bricks, starting with the more valued items. Apologies to the volunteers as this has been done before many years ago, but the pallets have rotted and their work lost. In addition it has to be reported that the old portakabin is sadly beyond repair.



With the clearance work, there is a view to realign the containers into a small row, releasing the current area for the next step for the Mill Barn building. Yes, we are aware that the build will take money and it could be years before the next step in its construction, but at least the area for the build would be vacant.

With natural water being plentiful in March, the basin water levels are high and visibility to the silt being good has shown a failure in one of the metal gabions. Bricks have fallen through the metal and the situation is in need of attention, another action for the task list!!

I stumbled across an old aerial photo of the site when it was a hospital. It might be of interest for us to remember what it was like and give so much praise to the volunteers who have worked tirelessly to return it to its near to original state.



WELL DONE.

There is always something to do towards the site upkeep and we would more than welcome anyone who feels they would like to assist.

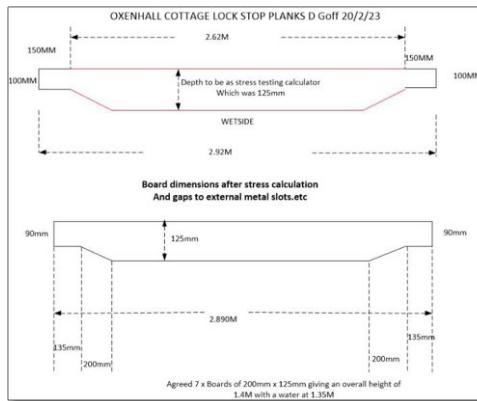
Dave Goff.



Oxenhall stop plank replacement continued!!



Much discussion and reading of documents obtained from the Canal and River Trust as to what timber type, stress grades and dimensions should be used for the board replacements. The first thing we did was to work on what final height the new boards should be from the top cill. We worked out that the water level overspill from the top basin would be 1.34m so the boards needed to be higher to prevent water pouring into the lock. An electronic stress calculator was obtained from the Canal and River Trust and measurements were taken many times to create the required board dimensions.



The contacts that one of our new volunteers, Graham Watling, had in the timber industry were very useful and quotations were obtained. Seven boards were cut and treated to the dimensions required of C24 stress grade. The grades and timber types (Douglas Fir) offered different quotations ranging from £530 to £2,300 (both incl. VAT). What a difference you say, well it appears that if you require the boards individually stress tested to C24 grade using machinery then the sources are reduced and the prices increase!! The lower quotation was for visual grade testing so a decision was made to go with these. Final measurements made and dimensions created for the final sizes/quantities and an order made with a lead time of six weeks. With the project on pause for this time other tasks were undertaken at the site and with the coffer dam holding back much of the water we were happy, but regular inspections were undertaken by Martin Boulton, a regular for this location.

A delivery date was organised to coincide with the Oxenhall volunteer day. The 28th of March was to be the day to offer up the coffer dam, remove the remaining old boards and start to rebuild.

We had six volunteers offering their assistance for the day and we were looking forward to good weather and a completed task. The weather on the 27th had been lovely but we obviously we had not sung to the weather gods enough as it was a wet day for us on the 28th.

An 8.30am start was required to take delivery of the timbers and a start to what could be a long day (thanks to Walford Timber).



The coffer dam was forced into place as best as possible with sledge hammers driving the support beams into the basin silt to reduce any water loss. All looked good so the final boards were removed reducing the area to the sill.

The area was cleared of silt and a method devised to seal up any potential unevenness between the first new board and the brick sill. Some soft rubber was rolled up and pinned to the board base and lowered into the metal plank slots. All was going to plan (and the method statements) until the board stuck! Even with all the measurements we had an inward slope on the lock walls which was preventing the board dropping to the floor.

This was removed and some fine tuning was done with a battery circular saw, before it dropped to the sill well.



A UVA guaranteed pond liner was also utilised on the wet side of the boards to prevent water penetrating the timbers. The same procedure was undertaken for all the remaining boards resulting in what looks like a very professional job if I may say so myself! It was agreed that the top board would be allowed to be lifted occasionally to allow water to pass through the lock base to assist water algae clearance.



Task completed apart from the location tidy up which was completed after a well-deserved tea break, and all completed by 1pm.

A big thank you for all who have offered assistance especially the following: Martin Boulton, Darren Ball, Bob Hargreaves, Graham Watling and Peter Longbottom. The project was wrapped up and we are moving on to the next one - repointing the lock walls I believe. If anyone is up for the challenge, please do contact us.

The water levels in the top pound have now risen to the levels required and any overspill is passing over the desired water course bypassing the lock.

Dave Goff

Oxenhall Update



I would like to say much has been achieved by few volunteers this quarter. The stop plank replacement has been a big success.

The replacement of the final stones on the tow path wall below lock cottage has been completed. This has been a major task involving the water level in the pound being managed and lowered, with full concrete reinforcements with stone capping. I say major for any group but even more so with the few attending. Grass seeding has been undertaken to attempt to return the grass edging between the towpath and the wall.



A concrete slab for a donated bench has been created, and the bench securely mounted onto it and painted with appropriate preservatives. Safety barriers have also been fitted on the top of where the second lock would have been. Thank you to the family of David and Elizabeth Williams for their donation (see photo below and feature on the next page).

With the spring brings the added work to manage the grass along the public and permitted footpaths which will add to the workload required.

A big thank you for the volunteers, Martin, Keith, Derren and Derek who have been attending.

Dave Goff



Memorial Bench at Oxenhall



David and Elizabeth Williams were great supporters of the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust for many years. They gave their time working at Oxenhall and also gave financially. A bench has been placed at Oxenhall in their memory.

They moved from Clehonger and lived in Hereford not far from me, and on a number of occasions they appeared on my doorstep with a generous cheque.

Sadly, they have both died and the bench is a fitting memorial

Janet Moult



Yarkhill

This quarter has been dominated by machinery problems. Our strimmer has been returned with the motor fixed but, on attaching the shaft to the engine, we found the cutting head did not engage when the motor was started so back to the team at Malswick.

Taking into account suggestions from Chris Phelps and others about our ailing sit-on mower we found and replaced a broken fuse, replaced the spark plugs and installed a new air filter. Bingo. The mower leapt into life and worked well - for two weeks. On the third week it again refused to start.

Further investigation revealed very worn brushes in the starter motor. A trip to our usual supplier was unsuccessful. Brushes would only be supplied within a very expensive totally new starter motor. Fortunately, Chris High knew an auto-electrical engineering company which was able to quote a much better charge for sourcing and fitting the brushes which had to be soldered into place. The pieces had to be shipped from Denmark so a further delay ensued.

With the refurbished starter motor fitted, the starter switch was turned and – nothing. Using a spare battery and jump leads we applied power directly to the starter motor which responded and the engine fired – at least the new brushes were working. Further tests eliminated other possibilities but failed to find the solution. Work will continue, so another update next quarter.





Alongside the mechanical efforts, removal of wood from the field to the wild side continued. However, the wild side is becoming very full of log piles and difficult to negotiate so we cleared an area near the site hut.

Transference of the logs from the wild side to the new site has started where the wood will be held pending advice from the landowner as to its disposal.

Bob Comba

Malswick News



Work continued on the engineer's accommodation in early Spring; rafters were positioned and side panels were installed. The roofing panels are on order and should be in place "before May be out".



In early Spring we had a very short section of the canal in water, to the correct depth and profiled close to the final requirement.

Unfortunately the drier start to the season didn't last and rain turned the ground conditions to mud; any heavy work had to be put off.

In the hope that the weather would improve it was decided to drain the section that was in water. It would have been almost impossible to use diggers and dumpers on soft/wet ground. So it was a good chance to test out what has become known as the Sellwood pump.



The pump cleared most of the water in a few hours and we are looking forward to reversing the flow to fill the completed cut. To prevent any further build up of water a small channel was cut by Malcolm Clivery using our Kubota excavator.

Preparing the planning permission submission for the next stage of the Malswick project (the eastern end of the site) is now underway. Various reports are needed including archaeological, tree, land contamination, flood risk assessment and ecological surveys. The different professional bodies that are needed for these have been appointed and, if all goes well, we hope to have planning permission later this year.

Alan McBride



Tales from the Workshop

Another testing quarter for Malswick team.

The infamous Biogester has dominated the team's time this quarter. All the restored parts were eventually assembled and fitted and the drum fired up. The new bearings and modified support platform was a great success but it still let out a painful cry at a certain point in rotation. The drive unit was again sent to Delta who confirmed it was OK.

The next move was to restore the drive and borrow a monster industrial steam cleaner to steam clean all the wafers in the drum, a massive task. Job done, the drum was again set in motion, much better, much quieter but still a little tiny whimper, what to do...





A stripping pump was borrowed from Over to assist in the steam clean. It worked splendidly for 20 minutes, and then blew up. We are in trouble now, said Paddington.

A strip down revealed a totally obliterated capacitor and all upper wiring wiped out. A new capacitor and rewire restored it to life but had to be done in full PPE as incinerated capacitor innards and wiring are classed as very hazardous.

The Kubota tractor has served many years trouble free. Desperate for a robust machine it was borrowed by Malswick House where upon it promptly broke down. It ran fine on the flat but when confronted with a mole hill, transmission was lost.

After transmission oil and filter change and hydrostatic reset it was off like rocket only to fall seriously ill with electrical paralysis; faults were traced to a failed battery cell and several corroded wiring terminals. Fixed perhaps ... a full on field attack when the ground firms up will spell success or yet another challenge.



A new pump has been kindly donated for the failed unit at Dymock – it is next on the list for refit and a maximum level cut off for the pool is hoped to be incorporated.

In addition the supply has been converted to a smart meter which should do away with the monthly readings, but work is held back as a pair of massive swans have set up a nest.

The main lift ram on our newly acquired dumper decided to go slow. Removing this enormous lump entailed a certain amount of controlled violence, but it surrendered in the end; new seals, filter and oil change brought about considerable improvement but still not outstanding.

Chris Phelps

Mud Hoppers and the Narrowboat “Tow”



Four years ago, the Trust acquired two redundant Mud Hoppers from the Canal & River Trust which were no longer required for their Maintenance Fleet, as part of their policy of donating unwanted but historic boats to the preservation movement. One was placed on loan with the Cotswold Canals Trust and is still in use there.

The second was lent to the Lapal Canal Trust for use in connection with their work at the junction of the Worcester & Birmingham Canal and Dudley No 2 Canal near Selly Oak.



“Tow” moored at Alvechurch on the Worcester & Birmingham Canal, April 2023

This is an interesting boat in that it is the former narrow boat “TOW” originally built as a ‘River Class’ un-powered butty for British Waterways in 1961 by EC Jones & Son of Brentford. It was named after the River Tow (pronounced “Toe”) in Northamptonshire which gives its name to the small town of Towcester; although the river, which meets the Grand Union Canal at Stoke Bruerne on the Grand Union Canal, is now generally known at the ‘River Tove’.

The River Class boats were the last boats built for commercial carrying on the narrow canal network – a new design of narrow boat, designed to be cheap and simple to construct and to have 20% extra carrying capacity over more traditional boats. The River Class butties were intended to be towed by older motor boats. They were built of welded steel sections and used distinctive blue glass fibre hatch covers instead of cloth covers. A total of 25 were built between 1957 and 1961 and all were named after three letter rivers apart from the last two which were experimentally fitted with removable cabins and outboard motors and given longer names.

They now have no use for it and it is, at the time of writing, languishing at Alvechurch and we need to find a new home for it.



“Tow” when in commercial use in the early 1960s



Sister River Class narrow butty boat “Yeo” in original condition with its distinctive glass fibre hatch covers

Unfortunately, they had a very short commercial life, in Tow's case not much over a year, as much of the surviving carrying business on the narrow canals came to an end in the severe winter of 1962/3 when navigation was impossible for many weeks, leading to British Waterways closing their carrying business in 1963. Tow became part of the maintenance fleet and at some time after that, possibly in the 1970s, the cabin was removed and it was converted into a mud hopper based at Icknield Port in Birmingham.

The Trust's Board are discussing Tow's future and its possible transfer on to our canal for use in future restoration work, but there are a number of issues to resolve before this could happen. We hope to give an update in the next issue of Wharfinger.

Richard Appleton

A Volunteer's Experience



In 2022 I retired from my job as manager of Cheltenham Fencing; a very busy supplier of landscape timber and fencing supplies. Having enjoyed a long hot summer in the garden, a friend told me about his experiences volunteering at Malswick on 'the canal' and he suggested that I join him just to see what I thought. It was at a time when they were digging a brand-new stretch of canal and apparently there was all sorts of heavy machinery on site. He said it was all very exciting!

My wife and I have lived in Ross for nearly forty years, and I have to admit that this was the first time that I'd ever heard of a canal that linked Gloucester to Hereford! I knew about the local railway network and the routes that took but I had no inkling that it was preceded by a canal.

Volunteering to help communities and organisations is something that appeals to me and 'the canal' sounded like a fun, worthwhile way to spend a day or so during the week. I went along to the H&GC Christmas fair at Newent where I had a long and interesting chat with Ralph the Chairman. He told me about the plans and future ideas for the Canal as a whole and about the Trust's sites at Oxenhall and Over. I'm interested in local history and boats and I thought it sounded like my sort of thing. My intention was to join the gang at Oxenhall as it's the nearest site to my home in Ross-on-Wye, but I thought I'd get the feel of things by visiting the Over site first (is it Over or Oover?).

At Over I received a warm welcome from Dave Goff and the team. After introductions and a brief chat I was put to work helping to move a ton or two of shingle to dress a path next to the canal. With the path suitably dressed I then helped fellow volunteer Bob to sort out and erect some informative signs at various points around the site. We then set about stripping down a small and neglected trailer with a view to cleaning and repainting the metalwork so the trailer could be re-clad to become a useful piece of equipment once again.

This all sounds a little more intense than it actually was. The work was interspersed with a pleasantly long coffee break and an equally pleasant and equally long lunch break!

I enjoyed my first day at Over so much that I returned the following week and the week after that and the one after that! I now consider myself as a regular and thoroughly enjoy my Thursdays at Over. I did make it to the Oxenhall site in the end. With my connections in the timber trade I was able to source a supplier of heavy timber planks that were to be used to replace the degraded timbers of a stop lock.

It was a cold and wet day when some of us joined the volunteers at Oxenhall to prepare the site. We returned a few weeks later on another wet day to remove and replace the timbers and finish the job.

We have a great team at Over, people from all walks of life, but we're all bound by a common interest. That's not to say that we wouldn't welcome new volunteers. There are a great many jobs to do at Over just to maintain the site and many exciting plans for the future too and there is always the chance of hitching a ride on one of the boats as it trips up the canal on a test run!

I am very much looking forward to visiting some of the other H&G sites in the coming months so that I can fully appreciate the vision of the Trust and the work of all the groups of volunteers who will one day bring the vision to fruition.

Graham Watling

Sales and Promotions Team are Out and About



We are looking at the events we can attend this coming year. Not all event organisers have set their dates yet, so it is difficult to confirm our own involvement, but the current understanding is as below.

- 10 June 2023 Ledbury Community Day – somewhere in Ledbury !
- 24–25 June 2023 Braunston Historic Boat Rally – if you would like to get involved, please contact Tony Higgins
- 19 August 2023 Tibberton Show – please do come and help – contact Tony Higgins if you can
- 26–27 August 2023 Gloucester Retro on the Water – a new event for us over two days – if you would like to get involved, please contact Debbie Barber, details on inside back cover.
- 23 September 2023 Land Fund Visit, Malswick
- 23 September 2023 Members' Afternoon, Malswick
- 11 November 2023 Newent Winter Fayre

Come and visit, or better still, join us on the stand – we always do our utmost to ensure that you have some time to look around – and your admission to the event will be free!

Debbie Barber, Promotions Trustee



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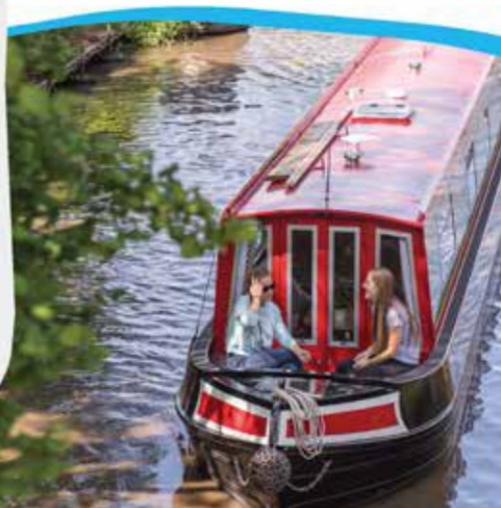
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All Steamed-up



If you haven't yet been, I can recommend the Water Works Museum in Hereford. On Sunday 26th March they held a Steam Day, open to the public, when all their engines are fired up, making a noise and pumping water from one tank to another. (Pumping through the ages, is very much their thing.) The H&GCT was kindly invited by one of our members, Kathy Burrows, to come along and show off the Trust by way of a stall and display posters. Janet Moulton, Dave Goff and myself were there to show and to explain the existence and the history of our canal, together with our current restoration activity. There are still folk in Hereford who were not aware that we have a canal!



A dream of steam, the thrum of the engines and the thump of the pump made for a lovely background to the day's chat with anyone who drifted in our direction. One of the aims of the day was to seek volunteers to help with the many canal projects that are underway or still in planning. Janet, Dave and I were kept quite busy for most of the time and it was good to see Ginny Birkett who came along to facilitate a lunch break and Chairman Ralph who came to see that all was running smoothly. Many and varied were the conversations, from those who remembered the early days of the Trust, those who came to look at the wares laid out on the table, and some who expressed interest in the heritage and wanted to know more. Many members also stopped by to say hello and check what was going on. The raffle tickets, offering prizes including boating and eating, proved popular.

The final tally showed a successful day and already, one week later, we've signed up two additional volunteers with some others expressing interest and taking away the appropriate forms.

Next action is the Ledbury Community Day on June 10th closely followed by the Historic Boat Rally at Braunston on June 14th. See you there?

Tony Higgins.

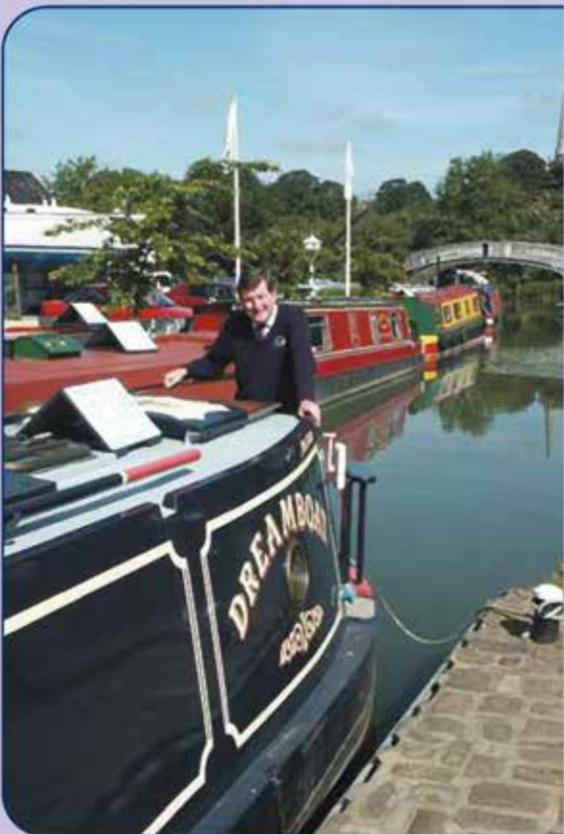
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Notification - Annual General Meeting 2023



The 2023 Annual General Meeting of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust will be held on Wednesday, 14 June 2023 at 7:30pm in The Royal Oak, A449 Ross Road, Much Marcle HR8 2ND.

The formal notice of the 2023 AGM was published on our web site as required under the Articles 28 days prior to the above date. The Agenda, the Annual Report, Accounts and Finance Statements can be found on the website. In accordance with the H&G CT's Articles and Memorandum of Association, those members of the Board of Trustees who are retiring on rotation but offering themselves for re-election do not require to be formally nominated to serve an additional term.

New Nominations

New nominations to serve on board of Trustees are welcome. Requests for a nomination form should be made by the person making the nomination by email to agm@h-g-canal.org.uk. Nominations should be submitted seven days prior to the AGM.

Proxy voting

Every member who is entitled to vote at an AGM may appoint a proxy to vote in his/her stead. A proxy must be someone entitled to vote at the AGM. Proxy forms are also available via email to agm@h-g-canal.org.uk and should be completed, signed and returned to arrive at least 48 hours before the start of the AGM.

Email questions for answering at the AGM in advance to agm@h-g-canal.org.uk.

This year we are also going to share the AGM via Zoom for those who are unable to travel to the AGM. To register for access to the AGM via Zoom, please email agm@h-g-canal.org.uk and further details will be supplied.

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Apologies for absence
3. Approval of minutes from 2022
4. Chairman's remarks
5. To receive the report of the Trustees and financial statements for the year ending 31st December 2022
6. To approve the appointment of an Independent Examiner of all the Trust's accounts
7. Proposal by Special resolution to accept the updated Articles
8. To re-elect Trustees standing down by rotation and nominations of new Trustees
9. Questions from the Audience
10. Close of formal business

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First Aid Day

Knowledge of First Aid is important for everyone and some members of the Trust took the opportunity to get a refresher course. From the Trust Dave Goff (Site Operations Trustee), Graham Watling (Over volunteer), Ginny Birkett and myself were present.

The course was given by the Chairman's son Paul Barber, an experienced and well-qualified outdoor leader. He based the course around the Royal Yacht Association (RYA) syllabus to ensure water-based considerations were taken into account. The course was also attended by members of the Hereford County Canoe Club (HCCC) to brush up on their knowledge. The HCCC undertakes canoe trips down the river Wye and other local water courses, throughout the summer and so first aid around water is important. Maybe one day they will be able to canoe from Gloucester to Hereford along the canal?

Paul covered thoroughly the key techniques during the day-long course. The initial identification of any health problems is vital, techniques for understanding them including severity were covered in detail. Topics such as CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation), using defibrillators, heart attacks, drowning, choking, shock, burns, concussion, hypothermia were covered. It was stressed that First Aid could help save someone's life but getting professional help as early as possible was vital.



Throughout the day we had ample opportunities to practise techniques such as CPR, getting people into the recovery position and even bandaging. The exercises were done in a thorough and competitive but light-hearted way. Helicopter rescue was also mentioned during the course but this was not practised unfortunately!

The author left ministers to Graham by immobilising his arm in a sling. He and Dave Goff get their own back by bandaging my head – Graham then bandaged Geoff's wrist to keep things fair.

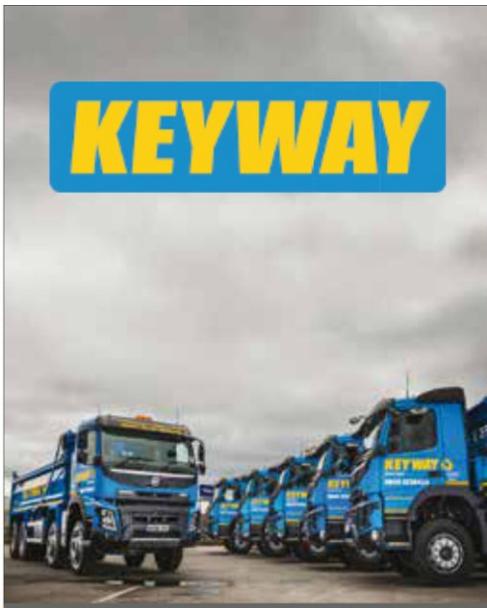


After an intense day of information, practice and fun everyone felt better equipped to deal with accidents. All members of the course were passed and presented with their certificates. A very useful and potentially life-saving course.

Phil Platt

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Easter has just passed by with the Gloucester & District Model Boaters witnessing every kind of weather, thick clothing to shirt sleeve conditions. Harbour Master John has assembled four working parties to remove the winter debris from the canal. As I write the canal and banks look a wonderful sight, neatly cut banks and grass areas, spring flowers in abundance, freshly stained picnic benches, a pleasure to take a stroll around. The modellers have been doing just that, taking their models for a sail along the canal, no footpath fouling by them.

The pilot cutter is built from a semi kit, hull, cabin, and a set of drawings.

She is basically modelled on one of the pilot boats operating in Falmouth harbour. Powered by a pair of brush-less motors she looks impressive on the Over waters.



A splendid model Sir Kay, an armed trawler named after the Knights of the Round Table, eight were built. The model is kit built with many fine details added; for instance, she has been heavily weathered, a very delicate art form. The model is thirty nine inches in length with a seven inch beam. Electric motor driven through a single shaft.

The residents alongside the canal at Over have no need to be alarmed regarding intruders, our prolific builder Mike Price has just launched his latest model; the USS Lassen (DDG-82) – an Arleigh-Burke Class Destroyer.

She was commissioned in Florida in 2001 and moved to her home port of Mayport in 2016. With an overall length of 510ft, a draft of 30ft I am afraid the canal will certainly have to be straightened and deepened.

She has a displacement of 9,200 tons. Her propulsion of four General Electric Gas Turbines driving two shafts delivering 100,000 shaft HP allows her to exceed 30 knots.



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Typical of American warships she is heavily armed: nine guns, ninety six missiles, four torpedoes and two helicopters.

Down to earth! Mikes model at 5ft 6in overall is just as impressive. Mike has manufactured moulds for most of the assemblies, the hull moulding being the challenge through pure size. Yes – the model is scratch built. The propulsion for the model is two brush-less motors turning two 50mm brass propellers. On the water she looks impressive as many of the canal visitors have stood, admired and commented.

Ted Tedaldi.

The Trust thank the Model Boaters for all their hard work in doing so much to keep the canal clear and tidy - thank you boaters!

Social report March 2023



After our Winter break we met up again at the Royal Oak in March.

Our planned speaker, Dick Skeet, was unwell so Chairman Ralph stepped in. He gave an update on all the projects in hand, interspersed with video and You Tube films – something you cannot do in the Wharfinger!

April's social evening celebrated the 40th Anniversary of the founding of the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Society.

Mike Potts and Ralph Barber had put together a rolling slide show of early work. Photographs over the years were displayed and some earlier artefacts from the beginning of the Canal's history were on display. Nigel Jefferies, one of those at the first meeting in 1983 gave some background information about this first meeting in Hereford.

It was good to see familiar faces and I hope to see more of you as the weather improves. Some of our speakers will be travelling some distance so please come and support us!

Janet Moult

Upcoming Socials



All at The Royal Oak, Much Marcle – 7:30 for 8.00pm unless mentioned otherwise.

18 May 2023 **Nick Haynes – FMC President**

The only restored steam narrow boat – a different sort of restoration!

20 July 2023 **Meyrick Brenchall on Regional Park, Nature Park, Ecopark**
for the Severn Vale

18 August 2023 **No formal meeting** – meet up for a Natter and Noggin
Venue to be confirmed – The Malswick House or The Royal Oak

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Hi everyone, welcome to this round up from our group at Over.

I would like to apologise to everyone that fell for my April fool's joke. I had planted a cactus style item in full view for all to see. I then kept asking people if they knew the name of this plant?

The answers that I received were quite interesting to say the least, one interesting answer from a very knowledgeable gardener was, and I quote, "Could be a type of Aloe Vera, I'm not sure, will have to look it up? Look as though it will flower in the centre? It's an Agave succulent perennial, upright creamy flower spikes occur in summer. Tender and can be hit by the frost?"



Answer: It is a PINEAPPLE TOP!

Congratulations to the TWO people who got it right? More next year, you've been warned!

Back to the main purpose that we are at Over Wharf – allowing people to experience being on the water. The Wheelyboat has been in great demand (weather permitting) and sometimes, we're here let's go! We've noticed an increase in disabled clients already this year, so we might be able to afford that £40k boat that I have been told about? But at the moment, we're happy with what we have achieved and still getting new clients. Really, I'm exhausted after one day at the canal, and all I do is talk to the clients! So, I've been told! Well, I do have to drive the 4 miles there, and 4 miles home again, and I am in my late 50s.

Can I add sincere wishes to Vince, a volunteer who suffered a heart attack at home. After a hospital stay and a stent fitted as a quick fix, he is now awaiting a bypass to fix his problem. (Let's hope the council has nothing to do with it. And the medical staff are back at work.) Our thoughts are with you Vince and Diane and look forward to seeing you back with us once again!

That's all for my ramblings, except come and see what we do, any Tuesday 11:00 to 14:00 hrs ish. We are also at the NHS Big Health Day 16th June, Plock Court & Oxtalls Sports Park, Longlevens Gloucester GL2 9DW. Or Gloucester Day, Lloyds Bank, Eastgate St Gloucester 2nd September.

Fundraising via Gloucester Lottery. Sign up to "Sailing4Disabled" ticket costs (£1) we get 50p and your ticket has a chance of winning £25,000.

Thank you for reading this dribble, good luck to you all, and sincere thanks to our volunteers and all who support our cause.

Pirate Pete

Site Days



Regular Volunteer Work Parties

Volunteer work parties regularly convene at restoration sites as listed below.

Please contact team leaders to check for latest situations.

Tuesdays

Malswick
Robert Heigham
malswick@h-g-canal.org.uk

Oxenhall/Newent Station
Martin Boulton
oxenhall@h-g-canal.org.uk

Thursdays

Over Basin/Vineyard Hill
Dave Goff (interim leader)
overbasin@h-g-canal.org.uk

Yarkhill
Chris High 01568 615 575
yarkhill@h-g-canal.org.uk

Second Sunday each month

Herefordshire Roving Team
Ralph Barber 01432 853 086
hereford@h-g-canal.org.uk

As Required

Hereford City Team
Tony Higgins 01432 850408
herefordcity@h-g-canal.org.uk



Please submit your copy for Edition 157 to the magazine editorial team no later than 28 July 2023.

Ideas, text and images by email to **editor@h-g-canal.org.uk**.

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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, laptop or phone!

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&GCT. A membership application form is available online or from our Membership Secretary.

Membership Rates	Annual	Life
Individual	£15.00	£300.00
Joint/Family	£20.00	£400.00
Electronic	£10.00	-
Corporate	£40.00	-

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greatly assists us and payment remains under your control.

All application forms and payments by cheque please to:
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6 Castle Street, Hereford, HR1 2NL

Visit our website:

www.h-g-canal.org.uk

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

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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.

= Canal Walk leaflet available.

= Restoration sites suitable for public access.

It should not be assumed that Rights of Way exist.

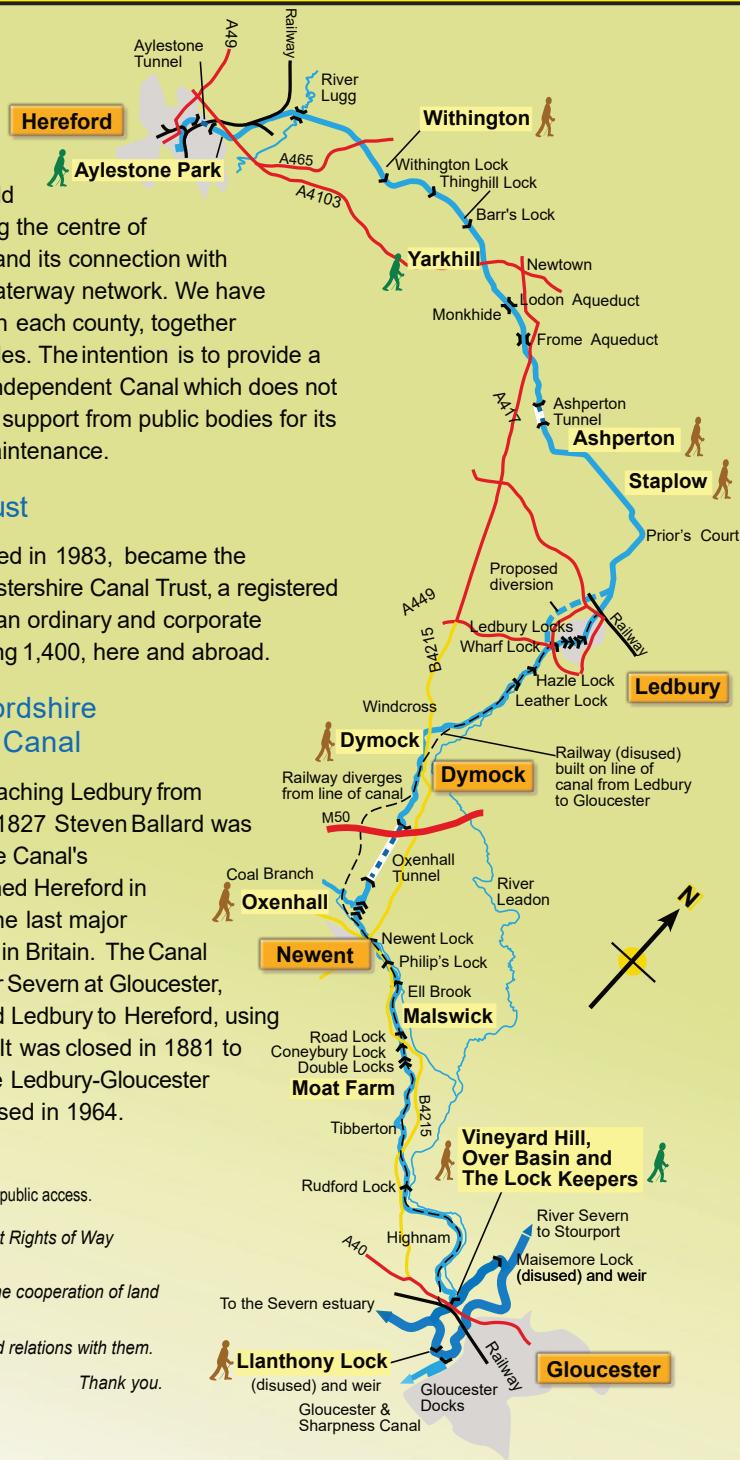
We work on the Canal with the cooperation of land owners and their neighbours.

Please help us maintain good relations with them.

Thank you.



The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service



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