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EDITION **144**

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An Introduction by Chairman Ralph Barber

Since the last Wharfinger there have been many changes. I hope you find this edition of the Wharfinger as interesting as previous ones and I thank all the contributors who have supplied a wide range of articles in these difficult times. You may have noticed several other changes to this edition as it has a new editor. Nick Dymott has taken on the editorship of the Wharfinger, he will be doing the layout and pulling it all together, I have agreed that I will still do the collection and the occasional chasing of articles. Read all about him in this edition. Nick is also our Webmaster, supporting the trust from up north. So, if you live out of the area please still think about things you can do for the canal remotely and contact myself to discuss.

Within this edition you will see the Annual Report from the Trustees. I would like to thank my fellow Trustees for all their work on helping to move the Trust forward and, with the help of the many volunteers and overall membership of the Canal Trust, we will continue to work at restoring this beautiful canal. Our Finance Trustee, Philip Marshall, has done a great job of getting the accounts ready, passed by the accountants, and then approved by the board. The accounts and a full report can be found on the web site. A shortened version of the report can be found later in this edition of the Wharfinger. Should you have any questions on these, please contact myself or Philip - details are on the inside back page.

Communication is hard to get right, too much, not enough, the method - land mail, this magazine, electronic methods such as email or the web site. Of course, social media such as Facebook, Twitter and others all exist. In this fast-changing world, we will always try to ensure the Wharfinger has as much up to date information possible. The website will be the first and best place to go to for the latest news.

With the Covid 19 lock down restrictions that are in place currently we have had to look at how we can hold an Annual General Meeting. The Trustees have agreed to have it virtually using Zoom, a software package that enables you to join us - either over the internet or via a phone line. The official notice of the AGM was posted on the web site 28 days prior to the AGM date. Details of how to connect using Zoom can be found within this edition of the Wharfinger or on the web site. While you will be able to ask questions at the AGM, It would be helpful if you can ask send in any questions you may have before the AGM via contacting us on agm@h-g-canal.org.uk.

To help keep you up to date with the latest news in these difficult times it would be extremely useful if you could let us have your email address. You can supply this via the web site or by contacting Nigel at membership@h-g-canal.org.uk .

We will always put the latest news about social events and status of other events on the web site should you not wish to supply your email address - www.h-g-canal.org.uk

Keep safe and well,

Ralph - Chairman

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Annual Report and Accounts for 2019/20



of the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust Limited

This is a shortened version of the annual report that can be found in full on the web site.

Board of Trustees of H&G Canal Trust: year to 29 February 2020

Deborah Barber (from March 2019)

Roger Holmes (until April 2019)

Nigel Jefferies

Philip Marshall

Tony Sellwood (from March 2019)

Ralph Barber

Ed Helps (from March 2019)

John Kilpatrick (until December 2019)

Eamonn McGurk

Keith Vaughan Welch

Chairman's Report:

A challenging year for the Trust with several changes within the board and key volunteers. The board has lost many years of canal trust experience that has had to be picked up by new members of the board. The trustees are continuing to develop the skills for the future, attending workshops and other training that is available from suitable organisations. Our volunteers are also attending training events. My thanks go to all Trustees and Volunteers for their ongoing support and involvement in the Trust.

A strategy review was started and remains ongoing. This has brought together a number of groups looking at sections of the canal. A team in Hereford are looking at the start of the canal and discussion and work is occurring with the local council on a number of sites in Hereford city and further afield in Herefordshire. An engineering team has looked at the crossing of a major road in Newent. After many discussions an inclined plane solution is now under development with the track going through the original station. The railway line was originally built on the old canal – thus we now bring a mixture of different heritage to the restoration.

A team at Over are looking at the development of the site working with the local residents and the new lessee of the Wharf House. The site will be more multi-functional for the Canal Trust, the Model Boaters and Sailing for the Disabled who already use the site, and seeing if the site can be developed further for other water users.

The change to the Wharf House Company operation from a directly managed to a leased operation (now The Lock Keepers and The Moorings). This has had some difficulties which have been overcome and we look forward to a profitable relationship for the Trust.

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

Looking further forward, like every other person and organisation Covid 19 coronavirus is having its effect on the Trust. Work has slowed down but volunteers continue to progress matters where they can.

In both Trust and Wharf House Ltd significant efforts have been made to let the portfolio of property assets to secure a longer term income stream, which has involved some spending to bring the property to commercial requirements.

Charitable activities and achievements:

Aylestone Park: Ongoing work to maintain the site for all. Reed clearing done by volunteers as well as the local Aylestone Park Association

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

Kymin: Ongoing site maintenance carried out. Several working parties with both volunteers and corporations getting involved in mowing, hedge trimming and removing assorted trees that had fallen in the storms. The site is very popular with local walkers.

Yarkhill: Regular maintenance and vegetation clearance continued on this stretch of canal.

Dymock: The pump that tops up the water levels in the winding pool stopped working and is in the process of being replaced (work currently hampered by Covid 19 situation).

Oxenhall: As well as routine maintenance plans to repair the wing walls below the lock were reinstated and are on course to be completed. Work was done to cut the hedge by the permissive path and during that time a leaning tree that was preventing access to Lock Cottage was removed.

Newent: Longer term investigations have been undertaken to start the process of obtaining planning permission and grants for the Station project. It has been decided that the high embankment under earlier plans was not practicable and instead an inclined plane will be employed to carry the canal over the road from Newent to Dymock.

Malswick: The new 32 tonne bridge and all works associated with it were completed and the team has moved on towards obtaining planning permission to build this section. The work here has allowed the land to be transferred and the legal transfer of the land is with solicitors. An application for planning permission to build this section is being prepared. The team undertook various work in the year to facilitate construction. A swing bridge that was formerly in Somerset was brought to near the site in preparation for its renovation and eventual placement on the site.

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

Over: A meeting was held with Historic England with a view to resolving the issue of the land slippage at Vineyard Hill. That area has been pegged out to enable monitoring to check whether the bank is stabilised and 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.

Heritage Boats: The boats continue to be worked on. Mr Maysey was lifted out of the water. A survey was done and is now undergoing repairs. The super structure will be replaced, and the outboard motor given a full service including cam belt replacement.

Llanthony: Following the departure of a tenant from one property significant repair work has been necessary. This was completed after the year-end and it is expected that the property will be re-let in early Spring.

Membership:

43 new members during the financial year to February 2019 and 24 in 2020 year which was lower than in some earlier years. Sadly, we lose a few each year too so the overall figure has decreased slightly to 1239. We thank members for their generosity with all their donations.

The Wharfinger Magazine:

Its high standard has been maintained thanks to many volunteer hours given by writers, photographers, editors, proof-readers, layout and delivery. The Wharfinger was, for many years, delivered by hand around the two counties but we have now moved to a more efficient way and it comes directly from the printers – thanks to all those who delivered in the past. We have also had items used in national newsprint from The Wharfinger and our published walks have been covered by a leading Waterways magazine this year.



Website:

This is constantly running behind the scenes. Queries are passed to the relevant Trust member for a response. The webmaster and web team spent a great deal of time in the planning of the new website which was released in February 2020. Apart from the new layout and look, extra features such as payment of membership and donations can now be done online.

Sales & Promotion:

Several shows were attended, including Braunston and Droitwich. With more volunteers we would like to attend more local events to promote the H & G. The Winter Bazaar brightened up Ledbury in November.

Socials:

We continue to meet at the Royal Oak and between 30-40 usually attend to hear talks on a range of subjects from both paid speakers and our own members. The sale of books and jigsaws at the socials continues to add to the Trust's income.

Grand Holiday Draw:

Raised £1600 – lower than usual as we did not hold any Open Days. Our gratitude goes to those who donate all the prizes

The value of the volunteer work that we have recorded adds up to around £106,551, but we know this does not reflect all the time dedicated to the business of H&GCT by our hardworking volunteers.

R A Barber - Chairman April 2020

Accounts for the year ended 29 February 2020



1. H & G Canal Trust Ltd

This year the Trust made a surplus of £67k of Unrestricted funds together with £7k of Restricted Funds, which compares favourably with the previous year (total £55k). We received some generous large donations and legacies which formed a significant element of this. There was a reduction in rents received, in one case prior to the tenant moving out he failed to pay and in another case the tenant moved out to facilitate the sale of a property, (see later) and it is expected that monthly rents will rise in the current year.

Support costs have been reduced from £21k to £13k, and some of the Unrestricted surplus has been spent at sites (£18.6k).

During the year (and after extensive consideration) it was agreed by the Directors that it was essential both for the long term and short term to support The Wharf House Co Ltd because that company had incurred debts which it could not support on its own. In order to finance that it was agreed to sell one property which was vacated and which has resulted in a loss of rent in the year of about £7k. The objective was to support the good name of the Trust and improve the asset base, and in doing a saving on interest costs is expected. However because of adverse market conditions no sale was achieved, and to finance short

term requirements a bank loan of £65k was taken. This will be repaid when the property sells. One property at Llanthony was vacated during the year and has needed extensive maintenance work to bring it up to a standard to allow it to be let. During this year the amount was £8.5k and that will be increased by a further £2k in the current financial year. This year has been difficult but has laid down good foundations for the future.

2. The Wharf House Co Ltd

The result of this year shows another loss, this year amounting to £48k (2019 £57k). However as can be seen from the spreadsheet of the quarterly results with the accounts, before annual costs (ie those not attributable to any particular area of the business or a time) the whole of this loss was incurred in the first quarter and since then trading has been profitable. There is every reason to suppose that losses will not recur, since costs have been cut, loss making parts closed and rentals increased.

The loss in Quarter 1 was caused by a number of factors. Wages costs for staff at Malswick House for the current year even though the pub had closed (£7k) and dilapidations in respect of inadequate fire precautions at The Wharf House (£12.5k) were two large elements, and the trading between the start of the year and close of business at Wharf House comprised the rest.

It was necessary to do some maintenance work (value about £7k) on Malswick House to make it secure and the flat lettable. These steps have been done and Wharf House (now called The Lock Keepers) is let and a resolution of the future for Malswick House is being sought. Malswick House is already being let in part and it is anticipated that the income stream will increase.

As has been referred to above a large number of old debts have been paid off, funded by H & G Canal Trust. It is hoped that in the current year income will be sufficient to start to make payments to the Canal Trust, although these are unpredictable times.

These have been agreed by the Boards and been through the accountants and are now on the website in full. Those who can would you please print any copies for yourselves and do raise any questions that you have to me at finance@h-g-canal.org.uk. Those who do not have printing facilities and would like a copy please contact me either by email or by phone at 01452 760301.

Philip Marshall - Treasurer

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The Trust Strategy - Update



From Ed Helps...

Thank you to those who came to the January meeting, or provided your thoughts in writing. Your suggestions were collated, and the Trustees met in March to agree what our strategic focus should be for the year.

Here is a brief summary - although none of us could have guessed we would be thwarted by a worldwide pandemic.

- Continue the work on five areas: Over, Oxenhall & Malswick, and Yarkhill & Kymin including the development of planning applications.
- Create and develop a technical project team. The following possible roles were identified to create the team(s). Project manager, architect, civil engineer, building surveyor, structural engineer, quantity surveyor, ecologist, planner, safety manager, trainer, fundraiser, admin support. If anyone wishes to, or knows someone who might be interested in leading, or being part of such a group, please contact us.
- Increase the volunteer workforce. Develop weekend work parties to involve those who are still working and promote the weekday work parties.
- Develop relationships with landowners initially focusing on land access that is required to join up, or extend, three of the areas being worked on.
- Engage with local authorities and developers along the line of the canal as planning applications are made, or opportunities present themselves.
- Update / carry out a survey and feasibility study of the entire canal length.
- Identify funding opportunities and prepare applications.
- Grow the membership. Develop guided visits to sites being worked on. Hold open meetings particularly following the Trusts attendance at external events, or at other suitable points in the year. Collect email contact details from all interested parties so they can be provided with information about our work and invited to events.
- Develop signage and interpretation boards where public can access to make people aware of the canals route.

This list is not exhaustive but does give the Trust focus on areas to be worked on. The Trust strategy will continue to be developed and reviewed as part of the regular board meetings. We will keep you updated on progress once we can all get fully back to work.

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Notification - Annual General Meeting 2020



The 2020 Annual General Meeting of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust will be held on Thursday, 18 June 2020 at 7:30pm.

The formal notice of the 2020 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 web site.

Due to the current government restriction on public meetings this meeting will be held virtually over the internet using the Zoom video conferencing service. 'How to connect' for the AGM can be found on the web site and within this edition of the Wharfinger.

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 agm@h-g-canal.org.uk Nominations should be submitted in the period between 28 days and 7 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.

Annual General Meeting - Going Virtual



With the government Covid 19 restrictions currently in place and our continuing legal requirement to hold an AGM the Trustees have agreed to convene the AGM on a virtual meeting basis – i.e. the meeting will not take place at a conventional venue, but will be a gathering of people using the internet and Zoom or joining by telephone. The virtual meeting will be able to be seen / heard by all involved, using a means where everyone can contribute live as the meeting takes place.

What do I need to do to take part?

Register your interest by emailing your name, address and contact details to agm@h-g-canal.org.uk by end of business day(17:00) of Monday 15th June. We will then check our membership records (only bona fide H&GCT members can "attend" and take part in the meeting), and you will then be contacted to confirm all is correct.

With this confirmation we will ask if you wish us to retain the email address provided on our Membership database, whether you wish it to be added to our electronic email list for

further communications in future, or if you wish us to delete it after the AGM. If you have a Joint Membership and you both wish to “attend” then please tell us when registering.

If you do not have email, or do not wish to share it with us, then please contact the Trust Chairman Ralph Barber (01432 853086) so we can confirm you are bona fide members and supply you with information about how to connect on the day via telephone.

How do you connect to the meeting?

A couple of days before the meeting you will be contacted via email (or phone) and provided with the means to link electronically to the meeting over the internet, which will include a username/meeting ID and password to be entered at the time. If you connect using the hyperlink provided in the email you will be able to connect without having to enter the username/meeting ID or password. Those choosing to take part by phone will receive similar instructions as needed. Please do not try to connect prior to the designated time day of the meeting.

On the day of the meeting

Please try to connect from 7.00 pm onwards so we can start at 7:30pm. If we then have some technical issues, we should have time to help you resolve them and still enable the meeting to start on time. One hint: Make sure your volume is up high on your PC.

What about security?

The details needed to take part in the meeting are confidential and should not be shared with others. We will only share these with our members – and will not be published on the website or elsewhere for all to see. This should eliminate any “gate crashing” or other inappropriate behaviour.

Introducing.... Nick Dymott



I live with my partner Clare in a 18th century farmhouse high on the Pennines 800' above the West Yorkshire town of Hebden Bridge. West Yorkshire has been my base since I left my childhood home in Herefordshire in 1978.

I retired earlier this year after 37 years in the structural repair industry, where I managed civil engineering repair and refurbishment work on water, power, highways, marine, commercial and industrial infrastructure including some on the canals. Since retirement I find myself busier than ever, not least on a barn conversion for Clare just 100 yards up the lane from where we currently live.



I have a vague recollection of being aware of a canal in Hereford during my time at school, partly because I used to bunk off school to watch trains at the end of Widemarsh Street, and because of numerous trips with my Dad (Trust member Colin Dymott) to George and Tudor's builder's merchants yard on Canal Road (now home I believe to Jewson's).

My interest in canals more widely did proliferate as a result of other bunking off school, this time to the library on Broad Street, where I ploughed through all the works of Charles Hadfield, Anthony Burton, Derek Pratt and the like, mixed in of course with a generous sprinkling of books on the railways too. School took me on two canal trips, on the Leeds and Liverpool and the Four Counties Ring if I remember rightly, and I inveigled my way onto another trip (for just one night), when I turned up unannounced as a school party made their way along the BCN, having hitched a ride to Birmingham early that morning.

Subsequently, myself and a team of mates from Leeds University managed a canal trip once a year (twice one year) for a period of several years whilst at uni and after graduating. These took me back to the L&L, the Four Counties, the Cheshire Ring, into Birmingham again and out along to the Trent at Nottingham, whilst later trips with my family included Whaley Bridge to Llangollen on a one way arrangement (what a great idea) and around the Warwickshire Ring (several times – I can't get enough of the Hatton and Lapworth lock flights!!).

Thoughts about the H&G did not re-surface until Dad became involved with the H&GCT, and he began to relate tales of his activities with Chris High and the team at Yarkhill, cutting down trees and digging out the canal with a digger called Sam. Somehow, (I can't remember why), I was persuaded to offer assistance with developing the Trust's website, and soon found myself up to my neck in image files and learning how to use new website development software.

For the first new version of the website I used NetObjects Fusion to change Maggie Jones' words and pictures into HTML code, and it served us well for several years. A subsequent version of the website was produced, this time using Adobe's Dreamweaver (another learning curve), and again this worked well.

The constantly developing world of IT more recently encouraged us to look at a further update, and over an extended period of work "behind the scenes" a new iteration of the website was developed, this time using the well established Wordpress platform, and was finally made live to the world wide web in the last couple of months. The new site uses a more modern format, and introduces a range of features not previously seen, including options to join the trust and/or make donations online, and a more effective way of communicating with the Trustee's and wider team of leading volunteers.

With the hard work involved in getting to grips with Wordpress and PayPal now done, I plan to get on with addressing a number of fine tuning operations which have had to be left behind, and provide ongoing assistance to the Trustees in publicising the work of the Trust more widely. In the current climate, it feels very satisfying to be able to contribute to the canal restoration work, whilst remaining over 150 miles from either Hereford or Gloucester!

I have just been accepted onto the Canal and River Trust volunteer team, and will hopefully be able to act as a lock keeper on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal near Skipton, and of course apply myself more to the barn project up here in the hills, from where I can assure you that it is not as "grim up north" as some would have you believe.



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Tales from the Workshop



- *A Groaning Grillo...*

The Yarkhill ride on was giving cause for concern and eventually expired. Richard was dispatched and kindly recovered it back to the Malswick.

First task was to establish a spark. We linked out the safeties after blocking the wheels and it returned a rather frail spark. The HT leads were quite poorly but spiral wrapping them restored decent ignition. The engine was run up but ran very badly. The first issue was the badly worn key switch which was replaced with a new unit which resulted in the same awful output. The fuel supply was tested which proved intermittent and unstable.



The decision was made to remove and thoroughly clean the accumulated silt from the tank and fuel system, this entailed removing the bottom cutter deck and the top over deck to gain access to the tank whereupon the tank was cleaned. The opportunity was taken to re-fix the rather floppy steering. Ian made a search for some missing spacers and fixings from the auto adjuster on the cutter deck.

Coffee, Cake & Canal Walk



With Debbie and Ralph Barber

Join us at Brick House, Westhide, HR1 3RG for coffee, tea and cake.

Saturday 5 September 2020 - 1pm – 5pm.

Wander down by the canal at Kymin to work up an appetite - or to work off the calories!

Caution – towpath uneven and not yet suitable for wheelchairs or pushchairs.

Find us on the road between Withington and Ocle Pychard. Parking in local field – if weather dry. Feel free to wander around the half acre country garden.

No need to book.

01432 853086 - in case you get lost!

All proceeds to go to H&G Canal Trust

A two day cruise which changed the face of Britain...



Exactly 100 years ago, come September, a 10 year old boy called Tom left his home in the village of Cusop in Herefordshire, right on the border with Wales, to become a boarder at Cheltenham College. On that basis we can call him a local boy, but Tom wasn't his first name at all. It was Lionel, but as that was also his father's name they called him Tom to be less confusing. The fact that his father was often called Lily might have been a bit confusing too.

Never happy with life in urban Cheltenham, he left the College in 1926 to work with his godmother's husband, Kyrle Willans at Bomford Bros. near Evesham building steam ploughing engines. Two years later he began an apprenticeship, again with "Uncle" Kyrle now with Kerr, Stewart and Co., steam engineers in the Potteries. He was obliged to live in a small terraced house amid the smoke of the nearby factory chimneys - not like Cusop at all! At weekends he sped off as quickly as possible to the Welsh border on his BSA motorcycle. One of the added attractions at weekends was helping Uncle Kyrle convert an old wooden working boat called Cressy to steam power. The boat was moored at Beech's Dock by Frankton locks at the junction with the then barely navigable Llangollen Canal.

In March 1930, once the work was complete, Uncle Kyrle, his son Bill and Tom set off to move the boat from Frankton to Barlaston on the Trent and Mersey Canal, a distance of 64 miles with 60 locks which today you might expect to cover in five or six days. Tom had never slept on a boat before. As they cruised along the canal he fell hopelessly in love with everything about it.

They reached the Trent and Mersey Canal at Middlewich by the first night - a remarkable achievement, but discovered the next day that the new cabin Kyrle had built was too high for Cressy to get through Harecastle Tunnel, just 12 miles or so from their destination. Tom was just 19 and despite the disappointment, these two days had changed his life and one day would change the face of Britain.

In the same month Kerr Stewart and Co. went into liquidation and Kyrle Willans was forced to sell Cressy. Tom wrote to the new owner asking for first refusal should he ever want to sell the boat. He then had a succession of unsatisfactory engineering jobs which led in 1935 to his setting up a garage on the A30 at Hartley Wintney in partnership with John Passini, a former colleague in Basingstoke.

He never forgot those wonderful two days on the canal. He later wrote "On hot summer days ... when the air was full of the stench of petrol fumes and hot tarmac, I would think of



Cressy gliding along some narrow ribbon of still water, between green fields as a traveller in the desert dreams of an oasis". He began to wonder if it would be possible to live permanently on a boat and travel the system earning his living as a writer. The idea began to grow in his mind, but he did nothing about it. He needed a push. The push came in 1937 in the unlikely shape of a white Alpha Romeo which swept into the garage forecourt. Tom was impressed with the car, but even more so with the driver, a stunning 22 year old blonde called Angela Orred, the daughter of a wealthy retired army major. Two years later, Tom and Angela began to think of a life together afloat. Suddenly Cressy was for sale but Tom couldn't afford to buy it so Uncle Kyrle stepped into the breach, bought the boat back and sold it to Tom for £100. They moved the boat to Tooley's boatyard in Banbury and Tom began converting her to what we would now call a live-aboard. Tom and Angela were married in 1939 and began living on Cressy. Her father never forgave her.

The war years were taken up by various engineering jobs including building aircraft engines, but between them Tom and Angela cruised 400 miles of what remained of the canal system in England and a small part of Wales. He recorded their experiences in a book called *Narrow Boat*, published in 1944 and never out of print since. The book gives us a picture of both the dreadful state of the canal system and the lives of some of the remaining working boat-people. Above all, he describes scenes and a way of life which



were rapidly disappearing, and it almost breaks his heart. Sometimes the romance and nostalgia hid the grim reality of the lives of the men, women and children who lived in tiny cabins, working every daylight hour and more, to earn a meagre living, but it is hard not to be moved by his beautiful prose. Here's a little extract:

"There is something indescribably forlorn about these abandoned waterways; like old ruined houses or silent mills, they are haunted by the bygone life and toil which has left its deathless, eloquent mark upon them. Just as in old houses the worn stone steps are the memorial of many vanished feet, so on the canals it is the grooves worn by the towing lines in the rotting wooden lock beams or the crumbling brickwork of bridges that bring the past to life... But if the canals are left to the mercies of economists and scientific planners, before many years are past the last of them will become a weedy, stagnant ditch, and the bright boats will rot at the wharves, to live on only in old men's memories."

Tom was not a campaigner, but *Narrow Boat* was read by people who were and in 1946 this led directly to the formation of the Inland Waterways Association which began the gruelling campaign to preserve and restore the canal system we now enjoy today. We owe Tom Rolt and that two-day cruise in 1930 a huge debt of gratitude.

Dick Skeet

Site Update - Malswick



During the winter months the path of the canal and its towpath were cleared. Some of the wood was placed in rotting log piles and any stumps added to the stumpery. The remaining logs were taken to the Malswick and, after cutting and splitting, sold in aid of Trust funds. Storage of the logs before they were sold was a problem as the sheets we were using began to deteriorate.



So, we built a wood store. Most of the timber for the store came from a part of a pergola that was no longer needed and the roofing panels were kindly donated by Paul Dando from Rudford.

The lock down was brought in just before the finishing touches were made, but another session should complete this stage of the project.

Virtual Tea break

During the lock down some of the Malswick team have been meeting for a half hour chat on Tuesdays at 11 using Zoom. The usual banter is present and even H & G matters are mentioned. Biscuits and tea are required and of course, full PPE.

Fungi

Two interesting fungi have been found in the Malswick woodlands.

The Tree Ear fungus (*Auriculariaceae*) - see right - has a rubbery feel and the appearance, unsurprisingly, of an ear. It has another common name derived from Judas's Ear. This refers to the belief that Judas Iscariot hanged himself in an elder tree and that his spirit emerges in this ear-like form. This fungus is edible and considered by many as a delicacy - nevertheless our volunteers stuck to their sandwiches at lunchtime.



The bright yellow lobes of our second fungus are from the very common Witches' Butter (*Tremella mesenterica*) - see left. It forms on damp fallen twigs and branches which we have in abundance. In dry weather the fungus shrivels to a hard lump, expanding to the gelatinous mass with rain. The transformation is perhaps the origin of its mystical common name.

Alan McBride.

Thanks Paul - you will be missed!



An appreciation of Paul Henshaw



As some of you will know, Paul Henshaw, Site Leader at Malswick, has recently decided to hang up his hard hat and has resigned his position with the Trust for personal reasons. His resignation is a huge loss, and all of us who met him will miss him, and his good humoured management of the Malswick Team.

I first met Paul some three years ago when we started the Malswick Project, and soon come to admire his dedication to The Trust and his wholehearted commitment to the task in hand. Paul organised the work parties, always made sure there was meaningful work to do, and supervised the activities of the many volunteers who appreciated his commitment. In addition Paul implemented many changes to working practices on site particularly in the field of Health and Safety compliance which are now such a large part of Site Leaders responsibilities. I know that the Tuesday working parties were only a small part of the time he spent on Trust business, many hours being spent in the buying and collecting of material and plant and in other administrative duties.

The achievements of the site team at Malswick have been largely driven by Paul, and the challenge now will be to ensure that his legacy continues.

Prior to leading the team at Malswick, Paul was involved with Moat Farm where much work has been done in restoring a length of canal, and where he continued to organise work parties to maintain the area and cut the grass after the team moved to Malswick. Paul was one of the consortium of volunteers who jointly purchased the digger which has been so valuable in carrying out restoration works.

Paul working with the team at Malswick (pics by Alan McBride).



The Restoration of Llanthony Cottages where Paul was Site Leader as long ago as 2008 was an earlier project which occupied much of Paul's time ,and this has proved extremely valuable in providing income for the Trust, and will continue to do so for many years to come. I understand that the work was all encompassing and difficult but was accomplished to a high standard and typical attention to detail.

Paul is recorded in an early edition of Wharfinger as being a member of the Gloucestershire Committee back in 2006, so he has put in a long shift with The Trust and deserves his retirement.

So, thanks Paul for all you have done, and thanks to Wendy for her contribution too, no doubt she will see more of you now! Keep in touch and good luck with whatever projects you have in mind, as I am sure you won't be idle.

Tony Sellwood

Site Update - Over



How things can change!

At the start of February we had a plan....By the end of February we had no plan at all.

Since then, we have been making up the plan as we go and doing what little we can to adapt to these very uncertain times. As a result of an extended period of fine spring weather, the site has recovered well from the flooding and the wildlife is thriving.



We have tulips in the gardens

We have cowslips along the towpath and blossom in abundance



We even have a nest in the door panel of one of our containers. At the time when we opened the panel and inadvertently disturbed the nest, there were four eggs in the nest but no sign of any bird.



The thought was that perhaps the nest had been abandoned for some reason. However a couple of days later, a bird was seen to have flown out from the door, so we hope that all is well with that particular family.

Nature does not recognise the problems associated with Covid-19 and gets on making the most of the situation as nature always has. The irony of the situation is that all this is not available for the canal volunteers to enjoy, being beyond normal exercise distance for the majority.

We have found, however, that quite a large number of people and families have discovered the site as a very pleasant place to walk and cycle during the fine weather. This has led to a number of issues concerning breaches of the Social Distancing Regulations, with families picnicking on the benches, sunbathing on the grass and cycling along the towpath. These are problems that we are trying to address.



The Over Swans

We had planned to include a separate article, including some lovely pictures of the swans and their nest.

However, on the afternoon of Monday 26 April the female swan was callously and brutally beaten around the head, leaving her severely injured. A local resident reported the incident to the police, who took the bird to a Wildlife Rehabilitation centre, where regrettably she died later that day. The male has now abandoned the nest and the eggs are no longer viable. A Police investigation into this mindless, vicious and subsequently fatal attack is being carried out.

Vineyard Hill

The situation with the landslip along Vineyard Hill and the resultant narrowing of the canal was discussed at a meeting between the Canal Trust, the Vineyard Hill trust and a representative from Historic England. What can be done to maintain a navigable passage through the area will depend on whether the hillside is still slipping or whether it has largely stabilised.

To determine this, a series of pegs have been placed from the top of the hill down the slope to the canal bank and accurate measurements of the spacing between each peg recorded. These measurements are to be checked regularly over a period of several months to determine if movement is still taking place. Possible future plans can then be considered in the light of the findings.

Future Projects

Some planning work is currently being undertaken with regard to the replacement and re-positioning of the storage containers and welfare facilities.

Beyond that ??

Andy Fowler

Grand Holiday Draw



Tickets are now available on the web site!

Our huge thanks go to **Black Prince Holidays** for their ongoing support of H&G with the **First Prize** of a Narrow Boat Holiday for Four, a wonderful prize. There are various bases around the country from which to start your trip.



Now if skippering a boat is something you want to avoid - then the **Second Prize** this year may be of interest to you. A three-hour trip for up to 12 people on the Pamela May, an electric driven narrow boat (that can also take wheelchairs).

The boat was launched in April 2019 and has a crew of RYA qualified helmsmen who will be very happy to take you for a gentle cruise on the Droitwich Barge Canal or if you would like to go along the Droitwich Junction canal you will be taken through 10 locks and under the M5 by the crew. Thank you very much to the **Droitwich Waterways (Pamela May) Trust Limited** for this prize. See their web site for more - www.pamelamay.co.uk.

Third Prize is a Dinner, Bed and Breakfast for Two at the refurbished **The Lock Keepers**, overlooking Over Basin. Thank you very much to **The Lock Keepers** for this prize.



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Site Update - Yarkhill and Kymin East



Photos from Bob Comba



The canal seen at the Barr's Lock end of the Yarkhill pound (left) and a little towpath blockage at Yarkhill (below).



Last year a very old friend of ours died. Debbie was one of his executors and we spent the next few months travelling down to Surrey to work on the house clearance. He was a great collector of all sorts - watches, clocks, furniture, glassware and many other items. If he had one kind of item, he had another five.

This takes me to the garden shed. 5 lawn mowers. One was an incredibly old push mower, a few electric, but also an interesting old Flymo - would that work on the canal ...its petrol? So, in the car it went, this time not to the local tip which I had got to know very well, but back up to Herefordshire. A discussion with those experts in the Canal Workshop at Malswick led to it being dropped off down there and I was able to pick it up again very quickly with a note saying they are a pain to start. Not those exact words as they are not printable in a family magazine.

So, with the lock down and the grass growing well in the bright April weather and then boosted by the April showers the grass grew even longer. Vague murmurings were heard from the locals about the jungle down by the canal at Kymin East. With the Grillo in quarantine lock-down in Malswick a good opportunity to try the Flymo. So out it came. After the 15th pull it started (hooray) and off we went – nettles and grass subdued but all cowslips carefully avoided.

But before I have Ed on to me about H&S, questioning was it done safely. Debbie was the second worker watching out for me, pulling the odd tree out of the canal, and we both wore the correct PPE. We also walked 3 miles so part of our daily exercise.



Ralph Barber

Beep beep...beep beep..... my alarm clock tells me it is 7 am and time to get out of bed. Why do we stick to such rigid habits when the rest of life is so topsy turvy?

I am John March and I spend from March to October every year living on my narrowboat Sam Gunter, a 58' narrow boat with a vintage engine. By this time of year my wife Pat is usually with me and we are cruising around the waterways. However, this year it's a bit different!!

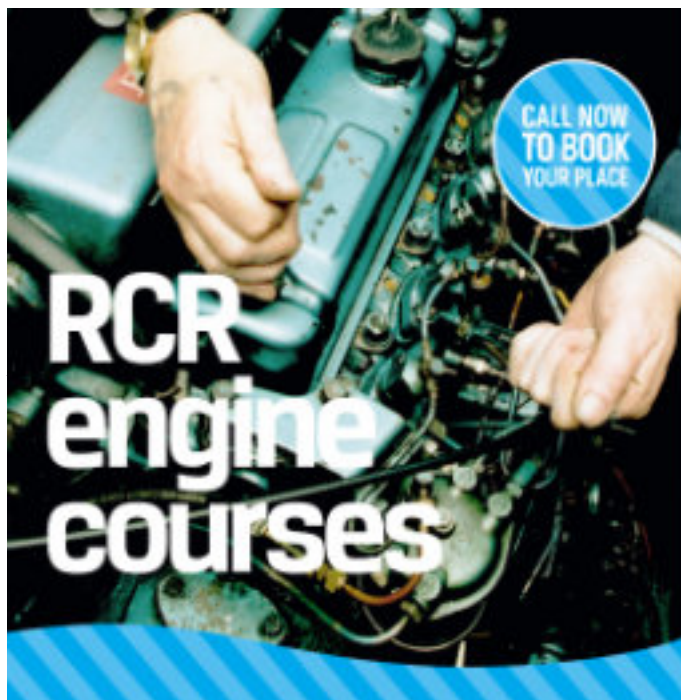
Since I left my winter mooring at Penkridge (Staffordshire) late in February Pat has joined me twice for a few days, most recently at Minworth (a suburb of Birmingham) where she helped me descend the 11 locks at Curdworth on the Birmingham & Fazeley Canal. I had already ascended them, planning to cruise the northern part of the BCN but we were aware that a lock down might be coming so we agreed that it would be better for me to get into a more rural location. I wasn't prepared to abandon the boat just tied up by the towpath in an unguarded area and Pat hadn't shut down our home or brought "trappings" for more than a few days, so we decided to live separately with me on the boat and Pat back in our Gloucester flat. As Pat said "two people living in isolation for an unknown length of time on a narrow boat is probably a case for justifiable homicide..!!! "

So, my daily routine begins. Most days are the same, with my first job on these cool mornings being to light the stove. Wood is gleaned from the towpath and as we all know, logs warm you three ways, in the collection, cutting and burning. Then I phone Pat for a morning chat, clean my solar panel of dew and cook breakfast.

Sometimes (depending on where I am moored) there are dog walkers passing by on the towpath or perhaps the occasional jogger, the sight of whom from inside the boat makes me remember that I am not really alone in the world.

I try to do something every morning when I'm not cruising to fill in the time, I think we're all doing that. I might need to go shopping. Having a very minimal food storage facilities, a "drinks" style fridge and cubby holes under the cabin floor, I need to top up on supplies pretty regularly and am getting used to standing in the "over 70's" queue and being treated with care and kindness (better than being at home!). I might clean the outside of the boat, remove oil from the engine casing, service the engine (but that is only every 150 hours of running) or tidy the living area of the boat. At one of my regular stops I can walk to a launderette which is still open, so that's clean sheets and undies...special day!

After lunch I go out for my daily exercise, walking along the towpath, most folk, exchange a few words, canals are very friendly places. As in most places people are good at the social distancing thing but you always get someone who thinks it doesn't apply to them, don't you? I vary my route, following my nose and have discovered byways previously unknown to me, although I know this area well.



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Tea time, another chat with Pat and supper watching the TV if I can get decent reception, Classic FM and a book on my Kindle bring the day to a close.

There aren't many boats moving around at present due to the lock down. Certain activities are officially sanctioned. CRT tell us we can cruise to access shops and essential services (water, Elsan and rubbish disposal and (Heaven) a shower block at Fradley) or to move away from a busy towpath area. The other day the fuel boat went past, and I was able to top up with diesel and gas cylinders. Even though not moving far I am still using the engine to charge the batteries so that I have electricity. We are so fortunate, in this day and age, as boat dwellers, that there is reasonably good access to the internet in most places, so I am not isolated from family goings on. Not the nonstop, in your face stuff that many seem to be indulging in, but enough to let them know what I'm up to, as a daily blog, and to find out their circumstances.

Despite being totally on my own in many ways I am less affected by isolation than many people. I am able to travel, even if my route is only about 20 miles, this can take two or three days of short cruising if I spin it out, and gives me a regular change of "back garden" and different walking routes. I'm used to being self sufficient and finding my own entertainment and I don't need to overstock from supermarkets and can adapt my diet. The weather has been very kind and if I sit out in the warm sunshine in a deck chair there's no one any the wiser. It'll be nice when we get back to normal though, won't it?

John March, somewhere between Great Haywood and Fazeley.

Traditional versus Modern?



A survey has now been completed by a private survey company, from House Lock down to Newent station, and the results are being scrutinised with plans being drawn up as you read this. This survey was done using GPS (global positioning survey) technology which most people are aware of these days as it is used in cars and smart phones to establish one's position anywhere on the globe at the touch of a button. As a surveyor with the Ordnance Survey before retirement 26 years ago, this form of survey was alien to me, and it might be of interest to readers if I explain what I mean.

During my career one of the skills I developed was using a levelling instrument on a tripod reading on to a staff to establish heights above the Ordnance datum at Newlyn. This involved observations to bench marks and triangulation points around the country to establish the heights.

In 1982 a new method of survey was being tested using satellites 2000 miles above the earth sending out signals which were received using a special receiver which calculated the distance from the satellite. If you were able to receive at least 3 of these signals simultaneously then your position could be fixed by triangulation. It was known as Doppler survey then but is the same principal as GPS now. The trouble was that there were only 6 of these satellites orbiting the earth at that time and the chances of 3 of them being above the horizon at any one time were small so to get any sort of result it involved placing your receiver on top of a triangulation pillar, switching it on and waiting for a week.

I was sent to several places on the east coast, Wick and Dunnet Head in the North of Scotland, and finally to Tiree in the Outer Hebrides. 2 surveyors shared 12 hour shifts taking temperature and pressure readings on site and the observations were then sent off to HQ. The best answer achievable was in 3 dimensions and to within a cubic metre if you were lucky!

Nowadays there are 25 satellites orbiting the earth and your receiver on a pole is placed on the point to be measured, press the button, and an answer is given in a second to the nearest centimetre.

So, I couldn't resist testing this "new" method of survey against the old fashioned instrument on a tripod method. Several permanent markers were placed around the No. 2 old lock, and heights established using an instrument on a tripod and the values were then compared to those achieved by GPS.

They all agreed to within a couple of centimetres so what can I say. How can heights derived many years ago above a datum in Newlyn agree with heights derived from satellite orbits 2000 miles above the earth today?

The wonders of modern technology...

Brian Fox

Regular Volunteer Work Parties

Due to the Coronavirus situation, at the time of going to print very limited volunteer working will take place on site until further notice. So, for future reference only ...

Tuesdays

Malswick

Robert Heigham

malswick@h-g-canal.org.uk

Thursdays

Yarkhill

Chris High 01568 615 575,

yarkhill@h-g-canal.org.uk

Oxenhall/ Newent Station

Brian Fox 01432 358 628,

oxenhall@h-g-canal.org.uk

Ad Hoc

Hereford Roving Team

John Pritchard 01432 272972,

hereford@h-g-canal.org.uk

Wednesdays

Over Basin/Vineyard Hill

Andy Fowler

overbasin@h-g-canal.org.uk

Kymin

Ralph Barber 01432 853 086

kymin@h-g-canal.org.uk

Social Evenings at The Royal Oak



Join us at our monthly meetings on the third Tuesday of each month (except August and December), at the Royal Oak Inn in Much Marcle (HR8 2ND). 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! 7:30 for 8:00pm start.

Sadly, due to the current Coronavirus situation, recent planned monthly social meetings have been cancelled.

It is hoped that the following will be able to take place - refer to the website or ring Janet on 01432 264366 for up to date details and confirmation that the events are going ahead.

21 July 2020 - **In and around the Brecon - Merthyr Railway** - a Talk by Ken Mumford

15 September 2020 - **Paper and Planes - A topical and not so topical look at the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust** given by Dick Skeet.

An updated calendar of meetings and other events will be released as and when restrictions are lifted and normality returns.

Other News



Brian Fox has surplus goldfish in his pond.

Happy to hand some over in exchange for donations to the Trust.

Canal Walks



H&G Canal Trust has produced a series of walk leaflets which explore various parts of the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal.

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All proceeds towards the promotion and restoration of the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal.

More details and ordering options available on the website.

Logs for Sale Proceeds to Trust Funds

These logs are processed by our volunteers from the clearance work during canal restoration. The sale of them helps to fund the cost of our work restoring the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal.

Logs are available for purchase at £50 per builders dumpy bag.



Purchases can be arranged by contacting our Malswick site team by email: malswick@h-g-canal.co.uk

Winter Fayre

SATURDAY 14th NOVEMBER

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9.30 – 3.00

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Keeping in Touch



The present restrictions have highlighted that we have no direct contact for most of our members, other than by post.

We would love it if you would please send your current email address into our Membership Secretary Nigel Jefferies so we may update our records – thank you.

membership@h-g-canal.org.uk

Your information will be stored securely and can be amended or deleted on request.

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For your diary - 2020



Make a note ...

The **Annual General Meeting** will be held as a “virtual meeting” on 18 June 2020 - see Trust Business on p3 for more on this and pages 12-13 for details on how to take part.

Promotional Events to be attended by our Sales and Promotion Team

- **Braunston Historic Boat Rally**, Saturday and Sunday 27 & 28 June 2020 - EVENT CANCELLED
- **Newent Strawberry Fayre** - 18 July 2020 (subject to Covid 19 restrictions permitting)
- **IWA Festival of Water** at Worcester, Saturday, Sunday and Monday 29 - 31 August 2020 - EVENT CANCELLED
- **Newent Onion Fayre**, Saturday 12 September 2020 (subject to restrictions permitting)
- **Winter Fayre** - Saturday 14 November 2020 at Newent Memorial Hall

Help always very welcome at events such as the above - when better times return.

Coffee, Cakes and a Walk along the canal at Kymin - Saturday 5 September 2020.

See p29 for details of our **Monthly Social Meeting Calendar** and the website for updates (or ring Janet on 01432 264366).



We are enjoying the longest period of warm weather this year which has coincided with the lock down and ban from going outside our house and garden, so we cannot visit the Canal and sail at Over as we usually do. So, we have nothing positive to report about Club actual activities. Sadly, I do not know when we will be allowed back on the Canal.

However, we have a bi-monthly news letter, edited by Ross Smith which has morphed, for the present crisis into the "Weekly Warbler, so far we have had 4 editions. Asked to contribute I dug into my dusty and cobwebbed memory banks for a non-modelling topic I could write on which is Inland Waterways related and the following article may be of interest to the Canal Society members. I also checked on the internet and found that the Middle Level Watermen are still thriving and have gone on from strength to strength since this incident from the 1960's, look them up.

How Alan and I saved the Middle Level Fen Navigations.

A long time ago, in the early 1960s' I owned a small cabin cruiser on the Great Ouse. Alan and I were cruising the Fenland rivers when on holiday and decided to try and get through to March via Well Creek, we got stuck, not surprising as it was considered impassible, however a gang of blokes calling themselves the Middle Level Watermen came to our aid and where we could not use the engine Bow Hauled our little boat through to March. No boat had used the locks for years and it was very "fingers crossed" when we opened them, we went via Outwell and Upwell and arrived in March where the Watermen were based and eventually returned to the Great Ouse at Denver sluice.

As a result of this cruise, under English common law, the navigation had to remain open. At about the same time the Watermen also went the other way from March and through to the River Nene adopting the same method (bow hauling where necessary) and also managed to stop the destruction of two vital locks. Soon after the Royal Engineers lent a hand and since then they have not looked back, with many miles of cleared navigation and a thriving Club. They secured the important inter-river link between the Great Ouse and the River Nene.

If you look on the satellite view on google maps of March and Well Creek, taken on a nice weekend I think, you will see masses of boats on Well Creek both moored and moving around.

Their efforts (and ours!) saved a vital Inland Waterways link.

It is a fascinating area, entirely man made. On more than one occasion I have sailed over an aqueduct with another river at right angles flowing beneath it, all very strange. The waterways main use is drainage although before the war the waterways were used for freight, mainly sugar beet and we would often pass barges and tugs lifted onto the bank



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and just abandoned.

In those pre-satellite days, the American B52 nuclear bombers would fly down the man made, dead straight New Bedford River to check their instruments were calibrated correctly.

Website: Middle Level Watermen's Club - www.middlelevelwatermensclub.com/

David Exell

Sailing4Disabled / Rowing Pirates

In this most uncertain time let's start with something that you should all know

already - due to the Covid 19 we are not operating until future notice.



For those who don't know, I had been given the date 20 April 2020, after 11 months of waiting, for a part replacement knee. The date has now passed with no operation, so I suppose I will be in lock down until around Christmas? Still I won't have to do all the jobs around the house that had been put off until later!

Everyone - Stay Safe, Stay in the garden.

Pete (The Pirate) Bisson

Ballard and Hellebores



Thank you for the recent edition of The Wharfinger with its lovely hellebore on the front cover. I might be able to tell you a little more about it. When we moved into Kymin Cottage across the road from the canal in 1983 we planted out our garden. We knew that hellebores would do well in the rich Herefordshire clay so we ordered some plants from Helen Ballard at Mathon.

She was described by Gisela Schmeimann as "The Hellebore Queen". Seedaholic explains her role in developing the plant:

Mrs. Ballard came to the hellebore scene late in life, starting her collection with only four plants, two reds and two whites. She planted them in a shady cold border on a farm at Malvern where they thrived and when their first crop of flowers thrust their way through the ground in the depths of winter she was hooked. From those four were then borne the famous Ballard strain of hybrid orientalis type Hellebores.

*Her overriding aims were twofold, only the strongest most healthy specimens were involved in the breeding program and the plants were selected for large outward facing flowers, a very difficult trait to stabilise. Hybridisation was always carried out with as large a gene pool as possible to ensure that the vigour was maintained, and self-pollination was never considered. New colours were gradually introduced by using collected species from various corners of Europe, yellow from *H. odorosus*, darker*

purples and blacks from H. torquatus, the slate greys and purples from H purpurascens and of course a combination of these and others.

What we did not anticipate was that the plants that arrived from Helen Ballard would be tiny slips and cost a fortune. They took ages to establish but once they were at home they multiplied, hybridised further and escaped. The flower you photographed was just one of many that escaped from our garden.

There is another possible link from this plant to the Hereford and Gloucester canal. Helen Ballard was, as far as I can establish, from the extensive Ballard family living in the area for over two hundred years, and of course, Stephen Ballard, the creator of the canal, was also a member of that family. He started out in life as a nurseryman at Messrs Lee and Kennedy of Hammersmith, and remained, in David Bick's words, "a child of the country in an age when religious beliefs were strong. His faith lay closer to nature". I think he would have appreciated coming across this specimen if he were to revisit the site.

Nick Stanley

Elizabeth Williams RIP



We are sad to report the death of Elizabeth Williams, a long-time supporter of H&G with her husband David. Elizabeth and David have been very generous with donations to the Trust over the years. They were both volunteers at Oxenhall many moons ago – responsible in particular for painting the tractor and the bailey bridge. Brian Fox spoke to them last year and asked if they would like to paint the bridge again but they both politely declined!



A selection of lovely images of Over Basin taken recently by Monica Hamer.



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Contact Update Request



The present restrictions have highlighted that we have no direct contact for most of our members, other than post.

We would love it if you would please send your current email address to Nigel Jefferies so we may update our records – thank you. Email to membership@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 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&GCT. A membership form is available online or from our Membership Secretary.

H&G CT UK Membership Rates

	Annual	Life
Individual	£10.00	£200.00
Joint/Family	£15.00	£300.00
Senior Citizen	£7.50	£115.00
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H&G CT, 6 Castle Street, Hereford, HR1 2NL

Visit our website:

www.h-g-canal.org.uk

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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 to 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.

