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Autumn 2022

The Wharfinger

HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST



EDITION 153

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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Ups and downs, we have had many ups so far this year.

All the work the team have done themselves at Malswick and arranging the attendance and help of the Waterways Recovery Group that, even with a bout of Covid, has moved the restoration on apace.

Some great videos are on the H&G YouTube channel to get a view of the ongoing work.

Another team worked hard at enabling a very successful walk along the canal from Kymin to Monkhide. This involved crossing five different landowners' section – we thank them for allowing access on the day. Prior to that we also launched the new canal walk leaflet, and an excellent organised walk along the new route at Ashperton took place.

Aylestone Park Basin, or I should I say Aylestone Park Community Basin, is an idea developed within the H&G Trust that is being shared, following the announcement at the AGM, and is described within this edition of the Wharfinger on page 21. Further details will be at the Thank you Day on the 24th September.

Unfortunately, on a downward route is the number of volunteers. To continue to make progress, we need more bodies!



We are looking at ways to further engage with the local community, such as more visits by the Scouts, and at possible weekend working on some sites to attract the younger volunteer.

In the mean we still need help with the background tasks such as fundraising and other tasks.

Also, a big thank you is owed to Andy Fowler who is stepping down as site leader at Over at the end of September. If you could help with the running of the Over site, please contact me.

Please do think about what you, or someone you may know, could help with in the restoration of the canal. I am always happy to have a walk along any part of the canal corridor whilst talking with potential volunteers about how they could help. Give me a call and we can have that chat.

Finally, as a thank you for your support as a member, please find included with this Wharfinger a new car sticker – put together by Nick Dymott and Tony Higgins, with input from others. If you want more car stickers, come along to the Thank You day to purchase further stickers.



Chairman – Ralph Barber

It is a truth universally acknowledged that Annual General Meetings of any organisation are more to be endured than enjoyed, so it was with no great feelings of excitement that I set out for Ledbury on June 23rd for ours. However, it was a glorious summer evening and the drive from Bartestree to Ledbury is always a delight, so I was in good spirits. The meeting was to be held in Ledbury Community Hall and I arrived very early because my travelling companion thought we would need to help put out the chairs. However, others had got there before us, and the chairs were already in place. “Far too many” thought I, “we never get that number at the AGM”.

There were already some old friends to meet – thanks to Covid it’s been a long time. After a while, sitting near the back waiting for the meeting to begin, I detected some activity behind me – even more chairs being put out! I began to think that perhaps I was in the wrong meeting, but soon Ralph was welcoming us all and introducing the nine Trustees who were present, only one of the ten having to send apologies.

Swiftly, all the formal stuff was dealt with, reports were received and we were voting to approve minor changes to our governance including to increase the number of trustees from a maximum of 10 + 2 co-opted to 12 + 2 co-opted. Given all that was going on this seemed a good idea to me.

Then came the Q&A bit, a number of questions having been submitted in advance and answers were duly given, some interesting issues being raised.

It was good too, that we formally expressed our appreciation to Nigel Jefferies by appointing him Honorary President.

Nigel was instrumental in setting up the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Society way back in 1983 and has been a member for 39 years, and a Trustee for 30. Yes, a record for our Trust.

Nigel receives his Honorary Life President’s certificate from Chairman Ralph Barber

After a break for hot drinks and some rather tasty biscuits, Ralph took us through a review of activities over the last year, and what a busy one it has been, both on the ground and behind the scenes.



Meetings have been held with council officers in Hereford regarding the new site of the terminal basin and we were shown a slide of where it might be, but unfortunately it was gone before I could work out exactly where that was. There was also a slide of the proposed community basin in Aylestone Park which seemed to occupy most of the level area at the bottom of the hill! But the idea is that this is more than a place for canal boats, but for messing around in boats generally – including canoes, paddle boards and other things I'm much too decrepit to get excited about.

But that's the point, isn't it? It's about getting everyone, especially young people, involved with the canal so that it becomes an important part of their lives, as it is this which will determine the future of our canal. Apart from the rivers, which can be dodgy for beginners, where else in Herefordshire or west Gloucestershire can you do this sort of thing? We may have to draw the line at water-skiing, but there are all sorts of more reasonable things to be enjoyed on water. Sailing4Disabled and Discover Paddling are already well established at Over.

We also saw some wonderful pictures of local scouts launching their homemade boats at Over. Most of the boys appeared to end up in the water when their craft fell apart, but clearly they were having a grand time, and the scouts have been working on the canal too. We've always said that canals aren't just for boaters and we're really proving it. There were several videos of the progress at Malswick showing the enormous culverts being craned into place before the excavation of the canal begins in the summer. Some of these are on our website, as well as the YouTube site, and are well worth a look.



Interestingly, The Lock Keepers and Malswick House hardly got a mention, not because these aren't important, but because the Trust has changed its direction of travel. We're not in the hospitality business and are now really putting all our energy into delivering more miles of restored canal.

The impression I came away with was that there was a tremendous lot going on with planning for plenty more, managed by a Board of Trustees with real ability and which works together as a team. There are also several relatively new members who are now getting really involved as volunteers. The Trust has been through a difficult period but has clearly emerged stronger, more focused and revitalised, and this came through very clearly at our AGM.

For me, despite my initial misgivings, this was a really enjoyable evening, thoroughly well spent. Not like an Annual General Meeting at all. The challenge for our Chairman, of course, is to make the AGM of 2023 even better, and that's a big ask.

Dick Skeet

Minutes of the HGCT Annual General Meeting

22nd June 2022 7.30pm

Meeting held at Ledbury Community Hall, Ledbury.

The Chairman Ralph Barber welcomed everyone to the meeting – good to see everyone in person rather than on a Zoom meeting.

Present: there were 46 members present.

Apologies were received from Ruth and Clive Jones, Eamonn McGurk, Janet Moulton, Robin Nicolls and Adrian Smith.

Approval of Minutes of 2021 AGM. Minutes were approved.

Chairman's remarks: As everyone should have had sight of the Wharfinger in hard or digital copy, and therefore the Annual Report, Ralph did not propose to go through that line by line. He did however wish to repeat one line – his thanks went out to all Trustees, Volunteers and Members for their ongoing support and involvement in the H&G, especially in this the Trust's 30th year. A big thank you to all those volunteers who turn up on the sites week after week in all weathers. He introduced all the current trustees and their roles plus the two new trustees standing – Dave Goff and Tony Higgins.

This brought him to Nigel Jefferies who was standing down after 30 years as a trustee. Ralph invited Nigel to the front of the hall to receive a certificate confirming him as an Honorary Life President, with Life Membership with the H&G Canal Trust's grateful thanks for all the work he had done over the years. Nigel confirmed his passion for all things historical and recommended a book – 'Black Gold' by Jeremy Paxman – on how coal made Britain.

Annual Report of the Trustees & Financial Statement for year ending 31st December 2021. No questions were asked at the meeting.

Independent Examiners Griffiths Marshall were appointed.

Articles of Association. Ralph gave background to this – it was felt that each trustee should have a focus area they can concentrate on, for example Bob Hargreaves on Engineering. To achieve this the number of trustees should be raised to cover the roles identified, but also to keep the option to co-opt two more in a year, should it be necessary. Also, to raise the number required by Quorum for an AGM from 26 to 30.

Articles 24.1, 24.2, 24.3 and 37.2 to be amended as proposed – carried by majority vote with one abstention.

Article 25.6b requiring notice before AGM of submission of new trustee form. Proposed that this be altered to the form should be submitted at least 7 days before an AGM. Carried by majority vote with one abstention and one against.

Election of Trustees: as the proposed changes to number of Trustees had been agreed then no need for election this year as numbers of those standing for trustee did not warrant it. Those Trustees standing down by rotation were Nigel Jefferies, Eamonn McGurk and Vaughan Welch.

New trustees appointed in 2022 were – Richard Appleton, Dave Goff, Bob Hargreaves, Tony Higgins, Eamonn McGurk and Vaughan Welch.

Questions

Pre-submitted questions followed.

Bloor Homes now have planning consent for the Ledbury viaduct area, 'Are the Trust in active consultation with them?' *Yes, very much so. There have been several meetings on site and the Board are currently working on the heads of terms which must be agreed prior to moving forward.*

'Are the plans any different from the early proposals. If so, what are they?' *The route from the Bromyard Road to the two locks is as it is. We are in internal discussion and have had some discussion with Network Rail about the route under the viaduct. Yes, we may join the Leaddon prior to the viaduct and see if we can make use of the water under the viaduct.*

'Has the financing of this significant canal development been discussed?' *Bob Hargreaves, our new Engineering focus Trustee and Ralph Barber spent a very frustrating time two years ago at the planning appeal, which was fortunately held on Zoom. Bob did a grand job of highlighting the benefits of the canal. We now, or we will, have £1,000,000 pounds but lose £167k to the VAT man. We believe this will give us a canal corridor and two locks infrastructure towards the viaduct.*

Malswick: 'What is happening on site?' *The Waterways Recovery Group will be on site over the summer in a series of camps. Unfortunately, members will not be allowed on site then as it will be an active construction site. News of this has been put on the H&G website. New signs will be going up explain what is happening – at Malswick and at Oxenhall. It was suggested that an information folder could be left in Newent Library for locals to read.*

Ledbury: 'Which way will the canal go around Ledbury?' *It will go west of the bypass, either using land in the riverside park or possibly use the river itself – still to be decided.*

It was suggested that the postcode of the venue be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

Official business meeting closed at 8pm.

Chairman Ralph Barber invited everyone to view the model of the proposed Newent Inclined plane and to look at the revised plans for Mill Barn and proposed Aylestone Park basin whilst having refreshments. Afterwards there was a slide presentation covering work done in the past year and plans for the future.

WRG and HGCT at Malswick

Preparations for the Waterways Restoration Group's July summer camp have been underway at Malswick for many months. There has been accommodation to organise with Newent Football Club, machinery to hire and plenty groundwork to undertake.

The route of the canal at our site involves crossing two small streams, so over the past year we've been working on directing the streams through culverts. The smaller of the streams have been successfully diverted through a concrete channel and after bedding down will be ready for the canal to pass over it.



The Malswick team, led by Robert Heigham, prepared the chamber base at the upstream end of the larger culvert and started laying the first few courses of blocks.

Diverting the larger of the streams is where the WRG comes in. Although the Malswick team placed the 2 metre diameter pipes in the area where they were needed, digging the new trench and fitting the pipes was to be left to the WRG.

The ends of this culvert involved finishing one chamber and an end wall using concrete blocks. The visit started well, and all but the last of the pipes were located during the first couple of days of a preliminary visit. The block work was making progress, excavation of the canal bed was started, and training of excavator and dumper drivers was taking place.



Then, in the first week of the main visit Covid struck. Half the WRG succumbed, and the other half decided it best to suspend activities. After a period of extreme dismay, it was decided that the following two weeks of the planned visit would go ahead. The large pipes were bedded in with a massive roller, first with gravel then with soil. Eventually they had enough protection to allow vehicles to drive over them.

The trench that had been dug out to canal depth was being widened to the final width and the spoil used to further reinforce the area around the pipes.

The culvert activities were all taking place at the west end of our site. At the other end, amongst woodland, excavating was being carried out. On this stretch of the project the canal bed runs directly on top of the former railway track, which, in turn, was created on top of the original canal.

Throughout the preparation stages of this project the weather has been largely very favourable. Dry surfaces that could easily become a quagmire meant that transporting materials and setting out the route went without major problems.

However, the lack of any rain can also be a drawback. When spoil is being used to fill and build up areas it is best when it is damp, otherwise it like trying to compress dust: less than satisfactory. So, water was hosed onto the parts that were being rolled and a far better finish was achieved.

At last, we have something that looks like a canal bed. Although there is clearly much work still to do at Malswick it is very encouraging for us to have the progress made in July.

There have been some heroic efforts from the engineering department at Malswick House, our excavator/dumper drivers/volunteers, surveyors, our team leaders and planners – too much and too many to mention. When the WRGies leave the Malswick team will take stock of what needs to be done to get water into the cut; another WRG visit is being considered for the Autumn.

The whole visit has been a success thanks to the cooperative efforts of the WRG, the Malswick team and the H&G board.



Photographs by Mark Atkin and Alan McBride

Mark Atkin has compiled a library of short videos showing the work going on at Malswick.



These can be seen on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTXkscrq5CEi-42ISY1ACA>

Or just search for Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust within YouTube....

There is also a couple of clips showing work undertaken recently at Ashperton Tunnel.

Mother Nature – Predictably Unpredictable

In the previous issue of the Wharfinger, we reported on the “Bee-Baiting” trial that our local bee-keeper Chris was carrying out. Within a couple of days after the article had been submitted to the editor – the bees swarmed.

But with predictable unpredictability, they completely ignored the welcoming aromatic attraction of the Bait Hive and swarmed onto a tree branch alongside the towpath – to the consternation of some passing dog walkers and a cyclist!

As the swarm was easy to reach, a quick phone call to Chris brought him quickly from home to collect the swarm. By the time he arrived, only some 20 minutes later, the swarm, with predictable unpredictability, had left the tree branch and all gone back into the hive they had just come from. Since then, Chris has moved the Bait Hive to hopefully a better location – with some limited success – and the trial continues.



Heritage Boats

Mr. Maysey – After over two years of sitting on timbers in the car park, the refurbished and re-painted Mr. Maysey was finally returned to the water in the middle of May.



Unfortunately, the following week, it was found that the repair carried out on the transom was not totally watertight and began to leak if more than two people stood on board.

Mr. Maysey was therefore dragged stern first onto the slipway to allow some further work to be carried out.



The modifications proved to be effective and Mr. Maysey took to the water again in fine condition. A Boat Safety Inspection was carried out by an examiner at the end of June which Mr. Maysey passed satisfactorily and a Certificate to allow the carrying of up to 12 passengers was subsequently issued. Since that time, Mr. Maysey has had a considerable amount of use.

Helmsman Training

There were within the H & G Trust a number of volunteers who hold Helmsman qualifications but were not familiar with the particular details and idiosyncrasies of Mr. Maysey.

An afternoon of familiarisation training took place in July, with four members of H&G taking part, together with two qualified powerboat drivers from Sailing4Disabled. We now have a pool of six helmsmen all familiar with Mr. Maysey. The opportunity was also taken at the same time for the H&G volunteers to become familiar with both the Sailing4Disabled Wheelyboat and our other trip boat – the all–electric Susan



Picture by Kayleigh Parks

Immediately following the training sessions, the newly acquired skills were put to practical use by an evening visit to the Basin by the 1st Tibberton and Taynton Brownies

This group had been studying various aspects of canals and canal life for some time and had made a request to visit Over one evening as part of their studies. On that evening, 13 Brownies and three leaders arrived.

Mr. Maysey made two trips along the canal, during which the girls were introduced to some of the wildlife along the canal. They also had the opportunity to look at one of our heritage working narrow boats, in particular seeing the very cramped living space for the boatman and his family.

Evening trips on Mr. Maysey had also been planned for the Waterways Recovery Groups working on the Malswick site. Some of these volunteers had been involved in the original work on Over Basin and also on the Vineyard Hill extension. Naturally enough, they were interested to see how the site had developed since they had previously worked there.



Unfortunately, the first group's visit had to be cancelled on the day due to an outbreak of Covid in the Group. A suitable date for the second week group could not be arranged in time, but the third week group managed to make it and Mr. Maysey took nine WRG members for a trip to the winding hole and back. This was on the first of the two hottest days of the year and provided a pleasant contrast at the end of the day to working in a field with the temperature in the high 30s.

Susan E

Our electric powered trip boat had spent the winter out of the water and well sheeted over to protect it from the worst of the weather. She was re-launched at the beginning of June, the batteries re-installed and re-charged and subsequently was used as part of the Training Day mentioned previously.

Son (or Daughter) of Susan

Susan was originally the brainchild of Mr Alan Keef, and was, in today's terminology, a "self-charging hybrid" – being powered by a steam engine / electric system. She was subsequently converted to a "plug in" all electric system.



Alan's latest project is an all steam-powered dinghy, which had its trial run on the water in July, and is shown here passing "mother" Susan.

Renton, Alder and Bosley

These all remain in working order and are run whenever possible as part of the means to try and keep the Vineyard Hill section in a navigable condition.

Andy Fowler

Update from Oxenhall



The team at Oxenhall have been busy recently. Rebuilding the retaining wall immediately below the lock-keeper's cottage has been occupying Keith, Martin, Ralph and Derek. Richard has been keeping them replenished with tractor loads of sand, cement and large stones. Penny and Ralph have managed to clear vast swathes of encroaching bramble, nettles and branches from the far bank, thus enabling safe access to areas requiring maintenance and repair.

After conducting a number of detailed ecological surveys, we were able to determine that the stretch known as lock No. 2 was free from nesting birds and any red or amber list plants or invertebrates. We were then able to take advantage of a generous offer by Paul Gurney to hire an excavator and dumper truck to clear and remove most of the invasive bull rushes that were choking the waterway. Our stalwart digger operator, Malcolm, was able to demonstrate his superb dexterity and skill with the excavator and re-profiled the banks adjacent to the cascade, remove a number of stubborn tree stumps and open the semi-stagnant waterway.

Within two weeks of completing this long overdue maintenance of this stretch of water we have recorded no less than three pairs of Moorhens with their young, two families of Mallard, a single Grey heron, a visiting Kingfisher – known to have nested further upstream of the lake – and regular visits of Dragonflies and Damselflies depositing eggs on the semi-submerged vegetation, confounding some local criticism that we were doing the work at the wrong time of year. We chose this period during dry weather in order to restrict the amount of collateral damage to the towpath, rather than wintertime when weather conditions would be difficult. Sadly, we have no water voles, possibly due to the presence of Mink or the single Otter seen at the Willows.

We have been asked to accommodate the local air cadet force in order that they might learn and experience camping and country survival skills, and we look forward to seeing them there.

The threshold of the outfall into the Eil Brook has been raised in order to achieve a reasonable level of water up to the cascade. Further excavations are required below the cascade to maintain a reasonable depth of water and also to establish the origins of the original lock. We are planning to replace the very rotten stop boards retaining water in the top lock as soon as we can build a substantial cofferdam to hold back the water. The oak boards are an expensive item and we are saving our pennies in order to purchase them. The coffer dam too will need to be financed from our meagre funds, donations are most welcome.

The enormous log jam of storm-damaged trees that were blocking the Eil Brook close to the Aqueduct has also been cleared. Whilst there, Martin rebuilt a section of retaining wall which was in danger of total collapse. Our immediate task now is to remove the vast amount of blanket weed and other weed choking the locks.

We will of course, leave in some weed in order to facilitate oxygenation of the water in which there is a healthy population of Rudd (fish) – let's hope that they continue to breed.

The banks that we cleared have now regenerated plant growth along them and the canal is looking good.

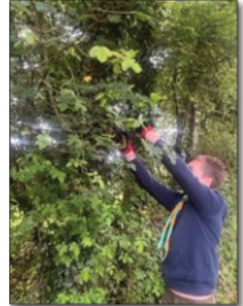
Further east we have also cleared the growth of annual weeds between the platforms at Newent station, so enabling the site to be accessible.

Roger Coombs

Getting others involved ... at Kymin



On a sunny evening in June, a new group of volunteers worked the canal corridor at Kymin. The aim is to get them young these days and the scouts from South Herefordshire did a grand job of cutting back some of the undergrowth. They enjoyed it so much they came back the following week and helped get the site ready for the walkers attending the Herefordshire Walking Festival the following weekend.

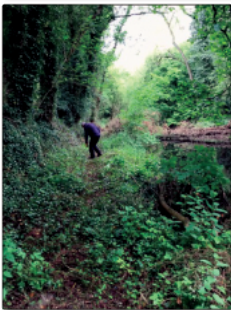


The pictures above show they did get involved and are a credit to their scout pack.

Yarkhill News



With the advent of some drier weather, we were able to assess the state of our damaged sleeper bridge. As anticipated, the transverse supports needed to be removed and replaced as did a number of the sleepers. Using available on-site stock, we were able to replace the transverse supports and some sleepers, so that it is usable with care. A delivery of supposedly grade A sleepers was found to be decidedly substandard and returned while the basic construction is reassessed.



The clearing of fallen trees and other growth in the field adjacent to wild side has taken longer than anticipated due to the density of the growth and the continuous discovery of evermore fallen wood in the overgrowth. The team have worked steadily and the end is now in sight.

Mr Barnes, having seen the work done by the team on his section of the canal north of the A4103, has agreed to us clearing and maintaining his other two sections on the south side of the A4103. The furthest section was in a very overgrown state so a team of our latest (and fittest) volunteers, under the lead of Dave Goff, was tasked with clearing the section,

The before and after photos show the state of one part the section.

Bob Comba

Tales From the Workshop

This quarter has proved a challenge for the trio. The progress of several big projects has been far from smooth and tested the patience of the best.

The Sellwood pump electric start conversion was progressed to test running of the Lister diesel which went well, just a case of fitting the engine to the pump and wave goodbye. Not so, on completion of build the button was pressed... great expectations, nothing. A raft of avenues explored and many tests later it was found the newly installed starter motor was butting against the pump bell housing inhibiting engagement.

So, it all had to be stripped again and the pump bell housing machined out to permit the starter nose to extend into the flywheel, a long and difficult job but no choice if it is to perform as electric start. Then a laborious rebuild, and with trepidation the button was pressed, sadness, whirrs and purrs but no start. It could be end of life batteries, so off to beg batteries from the farm and hope that's it cracked.

The ATV had run well since its major rebuild and all were quite pleased until the heart-rending crunch of the rear drive unit letting go. This unit had only served 10 working days and was supplied as a serviceable used part. Greatly displeased it was returned to the supplying dealer who supplied a brand new unit at a massive discount, a solution agreeable to all. Work progressed to rebuild, but on inspection the front drives looked poorly and warranted further inspection, so yet another ongoing project.

For some time the Trust has been in the market for a high-capacity dumper and one presented itself at a price that seemed to be too good to be true...and it was. On delivery it was quoted as less than half price and lifting the hood revealed half an engine. A contact of Chris' provided a complete engine that nearly worked but didn't. So, faced with a monumental task it was all hauled up to poor old Kev for a mate's rates sort out.

One and half engines were completely stripped, the best cylinder block receiving new crank bearings and new liners pressed in together with new pistons. The contact's engine provided a cylinder head, fuel pump and upper ancillaries. The head was torqued down, and the head studs shot up.



Phoenix in Hereford helicoiled the block and insisted on new studs. Then came harvest and all work stopped as everyone raced to beat the rain...

...harvest in and work resumed. The engine was built up and slotted back in with more than a little colourful language as it fought back valiantly but had to surrender eventually. As there was just a void up top all pipe work had to be created from scratch.



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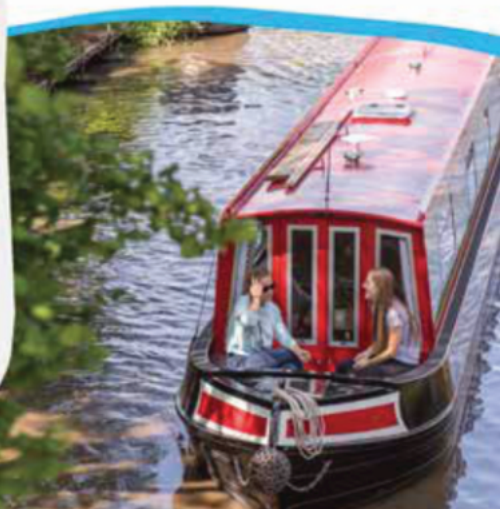
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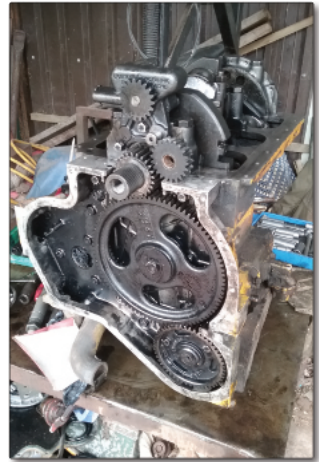




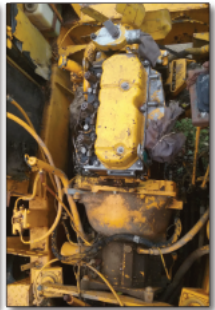
Heating the engine block to receive liners



Liners being pressed in



Fitting the fuel timing gears



The engine re-assembled, hoisted up and back into place awaiting re-connection of fuel system etc

On refixing the leaking back piping from the injectors it was found they been previously tightened by a gorilla and wrecked, so off to Yate diesels to scrounge injector caps, but its looking much bigger than it was. Still an unfinished project, but nothing a couple of weeks of slavery will fail to overcome.

Our trusty excavator has suffered a track motor failure and all attempts to extract the heavily rusted-in motor have succeeded only in self-harming the fitters. Gareth the good has been approached as he owns a fleet of the things and has amazing kit that works miracles, let's hope our faith is not misplaced. Gareth the good was too busy to save us but Roger morphed into a caped crusader and managed to strip the hydrostatic gearbox revealing a most awful sight. Locating parts looks an uphill task but we refuse to be defeated so stay tuned for the next thrilling instalment.

So, a challenging and frustrating quarter but our tails are not down, and all are confident of a flood of good news in the next issue.

Chris Phelps

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Why is the Over “The Vineyards” called so?

I have always loved history and with this, have been interested in why areas or locations are known by name with some having no seeming relevance. Having recently joined the Trust and volunteering within Herefordshire on its restoration I have been working my way through the canal route from Gloucester to Hereford on old historic maps and referring them to present days. With this I started on the “Over” basin and went north only to stop at the next section. Vineyard!! Why Vineyard I thought. A quick internet search has provided the following I thought maybe of interest to others.

The Vineyard as it is known as has a location close to it that has great history. The map attached will illustrate the area close to the canal bed. This is a snip from an early 1800s OS map clearly indicating a moat but no buildings. It appears the residence was first built by Abbot Staunton 1343–1351. It was believed to have been a temporary structure with a parlour, but it had a surrounding wall. Abbot Frocester 1381–1420 replaced it with a stone house and enclosed it with a moat. The abbots used this large stone house to retire from duties.

The Vineyard, house of the Abbots of Gloucester, afterwards the Bishops’, was demolished in the Civil Wars and was one of the original vineyards mentioned by William of Malmesbury. Vineyard House was first plundered in the Christmas holidays in 1641 by Lord Stamford, who supported the Parliamentary cause, and left the building so dilapidated that stone was hauled from it in the Mayoralty of Walter Clutterbuck 1647–1648.

We are now closer to understanding the reason for the naming. There is also reference by William De Malmesbury (1095–1142) stating that the vineyards in the Vale of Gloucester were producing as good a wine as many from the provinces of France.

We now have the answer. There were vineyards somewhere in this location. I will leave it there as I am not searching for any vines dating 1300!!!

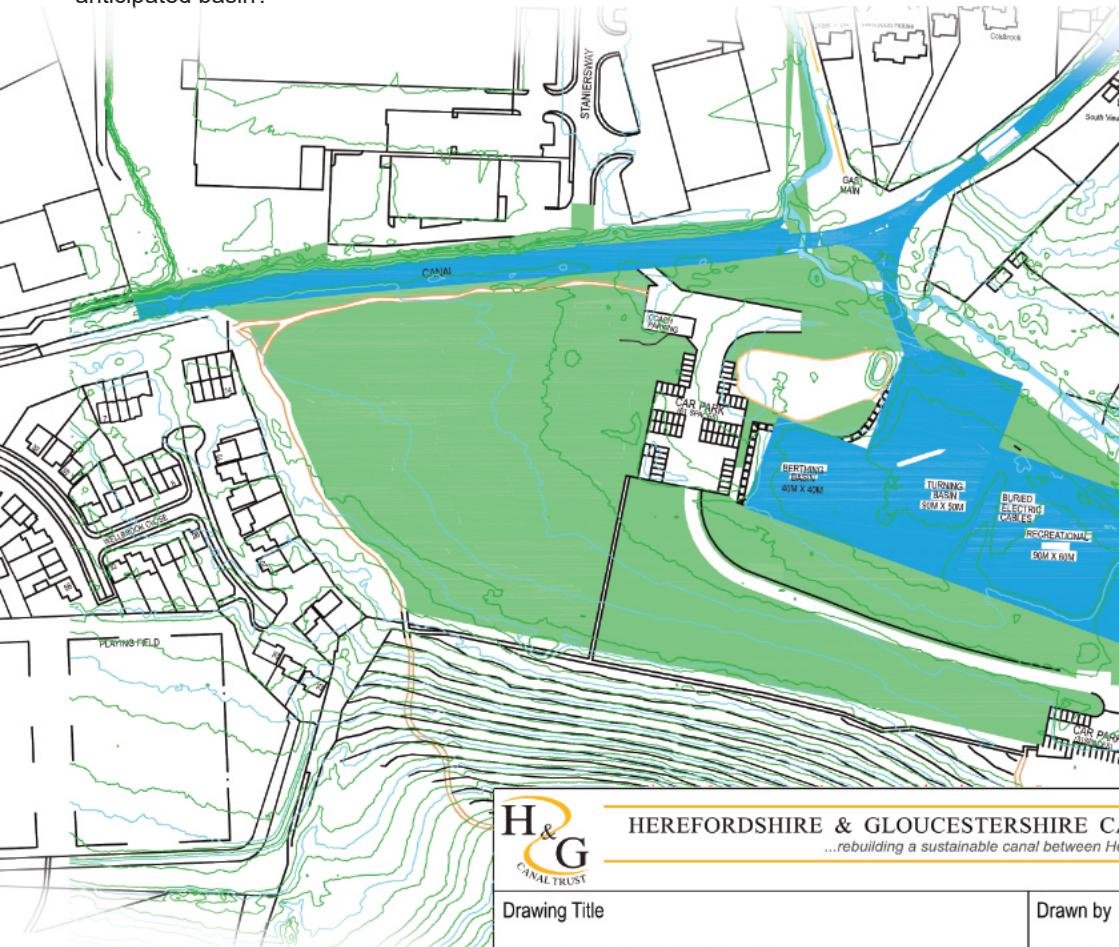
Dave Goff – Yarkhill/Monkhide lengthsman.



Change happens

Over the last 30 years the H&G has done lots of wonderful things. The basin at Over is one example of what a canal should look like, with the team keeping it smart and tidy for members and the public to enjoy. I do get asked how we are going to connect to the River Severn. If we locked down, we would be looking at a lock of around 30 feet deep. This would create the deepest lock on the canals in England, Wales and Scotland. (One canal in Ireland has a deeper one.) We are investigating options here and I hope to share these in the coming editions of the Wharfinger.

And at the other end of the canal at Hereford we also get asked how you are going to finish in Hereford, given that the new inner link road prevents the canal from going into the long-anticipated basin?



Well, we are currently in discussions with Herefordshire Council and a developer. They are looking at developing some student accommodation next to the inner link road. This would support in part a terminus at the new end of the canal, although some further land will be required. In particular, space is required to turn a 70-foot boat!

We already own the next part of land going out of Hereford and then the line is secure around the business park that houses PC World and Curry's. Further out there are several landowners and Aylestone Tunnel. We believe that the tunnel is still sound and even recently light was seen at the end of the tunnel.

At the other end of the tunnel is the land currently under development with 120 affordable houses. The canal route land is due to be passed to us soon.



We then get to Aylestone Park – where we had the wonderful Water Festival in 2011 with a number of trail boats visiting.



Looking at Aylestone Park and the opportunities of moving the canal out of Hereford, the H&G board have had discussions about an idea – this was shared at the AGM.

How about an Aylestone Park Basin, not the terminus, but a community basin? Look at what occurs at Over – Model Boats, Sailing4Disabled and paddle boards, not forgetting paddle boarding yoga! Could we develop the same opportunities here in Hereford?

Aylestone Park has an unused very wet area that could be used to create a community basin that would support many water-based activities. In the future, part of it could be used for moorings for narrow boats travelling on the canal.

So, the drawing shown is the first concept of this. Some meetings have taken place – with a mixed response. We will keep you informed as things move forward.

Date	Scale
21 03 2022	1: 2500

Ralph Barber

An Unfortunate End

Mr Philip Ballard born on the 18th of January 1800 to Philip Ballard and Charlotte Baylis in Great Malvern, Worcestershire, had progressed to engineer status and married Ellen Luckock in Madeley, Shropshire on the 4th May 1830. They had no children by all accounts and were living at 167 Widemarsh Street, Hereford, in the 1850s moving to The Knoll, Tupsley, near Hereford by 1861. He had younger siblings, Robert (b1802) and Stephen (b1804).

The Knoll was a grand house located opposite to the main St Paul's church entrance and the old vicarage on Church Road, Tupsley. Unfortunately, the house was demolished in the early 1960s with the area developed into a small community of ten houses. I was a young boy when my parents moved into a newly constructed semi in the mid 1960s and I came to know the following events then but not all.

You will probably have put the pieces together to know these were the Ballards who were instrumental in the Ledbury to Hereford section of our H&G canal. Stephen was the lead engineer and Robert was the brick manufacturer, and keeping the family involved Philip junior was the Clerk and Manager of the H&G canal (illustrated in 1861 census).

Philip's wife Ellen has passed in 1869, leaving him to live alone, along with his two servants, until the fateful night of the 19th October 1887, when, whilst sleeping at home, he was attacked by two burglars, Alfred Scandrett and James Jones, both aged twenty-three. Ransacking the property, taking jewellery, they entered his bedroom and dealt several blows to Philip's head with a hatchet. The pair left the scene but were arrested later for the death of Philip who had succumbed to the injuries on the 24th inst. His probate states his estate amounting to £10,207 was acknowledged by two brothers Stephen and Thomas.

The perpetrators of the death were caught and were both sentenced to death at Hereford Assizes on the 28th of February 1888. The execution took place in March 1888.

A not so nice end to a Ballard who had obviously spent much of his life working the H&G canal. God bless his soul.

Dave Goff – Yarkhill Lengthsman team H&G Canal

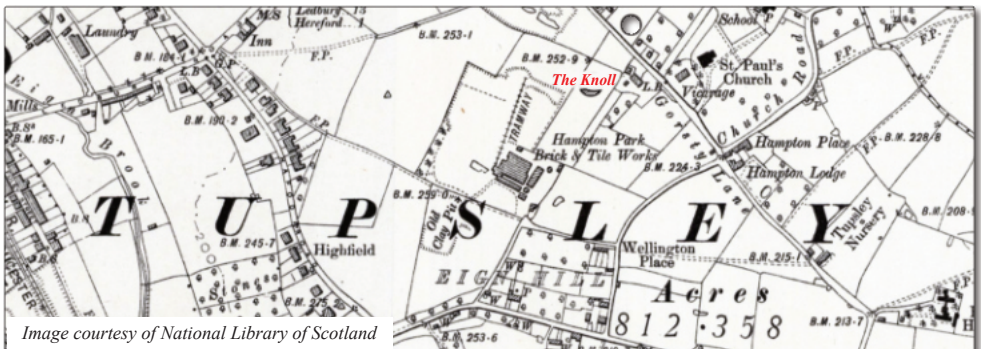


Image courtesy of National Library of Scotland

Social Evenings

In July Michael Limbrey, chairman of the Montgomery Waterway Restoration Trust, gave us all an update on the restoration of the Montgomery Canal. It was interesting to compare their challenges with ours. H&G is 34 miles, theirs 35 miles. They do have more in water than us. A few more locks to complete at 27 locks overall.

The number that caught my ears was 128 listed structures, the biggest – Vyrnwy

Aqueduct being Grade II* listed. Thank you Michael for this image of the Vyrnwy Aqueduct.



In September our own Dick Skeet will talk about retracing the Jam 'ole Run.

In 1913 Kearley and Tong (allegedly?) opened a jam factory on the Paddington Arm of the Grand Union Canal. It burned coal which was carried by narrow boats 121 miles from collieries at Atherstone in Warwickshire. The traffic continued until 1970, the last regular narrow boat trade run on our canals.

The Jam 'ole was the entrance to a short arm from the Paddington Arm into their factory – or was it actually the entrance to Tickler's Dock?

In this talk we trace the route along the Coventry, North Oxford and Grand Union Canals as it is today with some glimpses back into the past. We might try to unravel some of the mysteries about this trade – but maybe end up more confused than we were before.

Upcoming Socials

15 September 2022

Dick Skeet – Retracing the Jam 'ole Run
and the Grand Holiday Draw

20 October 2022

Claire Spicer – The Health of the River Lugg
Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and the National Highways Network for Nature project in the Lower Lugg.

17 November 2022

Martin Connop Price – Railways around the Cleve Hills.
Another of Martin's talks on local railways – this time in South Shropshire.

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David Goff ... who is he?



I am now approaching the dizzy heights of 65 and have been retired for some years, living in the village of Sutton St Nicholas, north of Hereford. My work background has been in communications, starting as an apprentice with the old Post office telephones, moving through to computer networking. The later part of my career has been in full renewal and integration of business networks throughout the world. Many weeks were spent away from home with the pressures of delivery dates always challenging. Thankfully now a more peaceful life.

I have always been interested in history and I had knowledge of the H&G canal passing through the parish at Sutton Marsh. I walked its length through the local area, amazed at the historic engineering required, like looking at the old stone bases for the river Lugg aqueduct and trying to visualise what it was like when fully operational.

Memories are etched in my mind of standing with my Dad at the eastern Portal of the Aylestone tunnel many decades ago.

When Covid was lifting last year I, like many, was interested in starting something afresh. The volunteer form on the H&G website was completed and within two days I was introduced to the team at Yarkhill. I had walked this area before but had no knowledge of who had been and who was involved in the upkeep of the canal length. This is now known to me, and I have been attending the Thursday gathering for nearly a year. My interest grew with the trust and what else I could do to assist?!!

A new trustee post involving coordination of the multiple teams and their volunteers was suggested by board members. The application form was completed and at the 2022 AGM I was successful and the position of "Operations Trustee" throughout the canal corridor was to be undertaken by me.

The role has been outlined but I am sure it will evolve as time goes on. Maybe my "peaceful life" has been curtailed somewhat!!

Thank you all for having me on board.



Dave Goff

Canal, countryside & cake – a celebration walk



The weather was perfect for the walk around the Yarkhill area of the canal celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Trust. The walk, part of the Herefordshire Walking Festival, was a sell-out event with around 25 people participating. Staging the event involved getting special permission from five landowners for this one-off walk.

At the starting venue, Yarkhill Village Hall, the festival organiser, Liz Hill, welcomed everyone to the event and emphasised the importance of getting out walking, especially with an interesting subject as the canal. As walk leader, I gave a short introduction to the background of the canal, its restoration and details of the route.

We were fortunate in having Major Barnes, a local landowner, join us for the walk, with his long support of the canal and his family connection to Stephen Ballard, who was important in completing the canal from Ledbury to Hereford. In addition, Dave Goff, a volunteer working on the section we walked, added his considerable local knowledge. The route had been made passable by the hard work of the canal volunteers.

The walk started by climbing Shucknall Hill from where we had panoramic views over Herefordshire countryside, the line of the canal and The Wharf area at Crews Pitch. We continued down to the pretty village of Westhide and stopped at the home of our Chairman and the Promotions Trustee Ralph and Debbie Barber respectively, for a comfort break. Ralph joined us for the rest of walk to add his local knowledge. We reached the canal at Kymin and walked along the towpath, much of which was in water, to Barr's Lock.

Considerable imagination was needed to visualise the lock as all that is there now is a watery pit, but it is hoped a more representative structure can be built as part of the restoration. The lock was built at the Hereford side of a ten mile summit section from Ledbury, although little remains now. Detailed information was provided by the Major and Dave Goff.

We continued along the towpath to the busy main road (A4103), which we crossed carefully to gain access to the Wharf area at Crews Pitch. Some interesting rusty corrugated sheds are prominent here, and we discovered from the Major that they had been used by farmers for the storage of cider. The farmers preferred to store their own goods before shipping on the canal rather than pay canal company charges. Nearby, the Wharf buildings can be seen together with an interesting turning circle in the canal for the narrow boats.

We stopped for lunch on the towpath next to the beautiful Skew Bridge built by Ballard. This must be one of the most technically challenging and beautiful structures to cross any canal in the UK.



A team photo taken at Monkhide's Skew Bridge

We continued along the towpath, especially cleared for the walk, under the 'Access Bridge' at Monkhide to less obvious sections of the canal.

Dave pointed out many interesting features around Monksbury Mill once fed directly by the River Lodon, and this service had to be retained when the canal was built directly alongside.

We left the canal to join Watery Lane passing Yarkhill Church, which is an important site for campanologists as the "Father of Change Ringing" Fabian Stedman was born in the village and was christened there. Arriving back at the village hall after the 7.5 mile walk we were treated to well-deserved homemade cakes and teas courtesy of Debbie Barber and Jo Wells.

A display about the work of the Trust was on show together with walk leaflets and other Trust information. Donations to the Trust were given amounting to over £50. The walkers seem to appreciate the event along hidden parts of the canal.

Phil Platt

300 Years of Volunteering



We have four regular volunteers at Yarkhill who are all celebrating their 75th birthdays this year.

Robin (our chainsaw hero) turned 75 in January, followed by Bob (our unflappable Second in Command) in March, Ralph (Ward, not Barber) our bonfire expert in June and finally Harold (our Mr. Fix-It wizard) in July, making a grand total of 300 years between them!

We also raised our glasses to Paul, our oldest volunteer at Yarkhill, who celebrated his 86th birthday this year. Paul does an excellent job of levelling after the digging team have been and meticulously tidying up after most of us and has no intention of hanging up his canal gloves any time soon!



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To celebrate this milestone we had a small celebration in July with bunting, balloons, birthday cake and “bubbly”.

Penny Ward.



The Yarkhill Birthday Boys – left to right Bob, Ralph, Harold and Robin.



Paul

Thank You Day



Saturday 24 September 2022 11am to 4pm

A thank you day for all our Members, Volunteers and supporters for the last 30 years of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust will be held at Over Basin, just outside Gloucester and next to The Lock Keepers GL2 8DB.



Take a boat ride on Mr. Maysey and enjoy other water activities. Meet new and old friends and get the most up to date information about the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal and the next 30 years. Bring your children and grandchildren so they can enjoy the water and maybe help with the restoration in the future as we restore this beautiful canal for them.

At 10:30am we will have an unveiling of some memorial plaques for Brian Fox and Ted Beagles, who gave so much to the work of the H&G Canal Trust.

We will start the boat trips following this, until 4pm. There will be tea and cakes for sale as well as other canal items. Come and buy additional Car Stickers.

Car Parking – please drive slowly onto the site and park as directed in the lower car park. The Lock Keepers will also be open. Please only park in their car park if using their services.

Debbie Barber

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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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.

After April 2022 each log order will need to be 2 cubic metres or 3 dumpy bags @ £75 per bag



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

Upcoming Sales and Promotion Events

Saturday 24 September 2022

30th Anniversary Over Members Day, Gloucestershire

Saturday 12 November 2022

Winter Fayre, Newent, Gloucestershire – see right



Raising funds for and awareness of the Trust's work is vital in maintaining progress with the Canal's restoration. Our Sales and Information Stand can be seen at many Waterways and Country Shows during the year.

We have just two small teams of volunteers to cover both local and national events. Come and visit, or better still, join us on the stand – we urgently need additional volunteers to help us at these interesting events.

A splendid image of a cheque presentation to Ginny Birkett and Tony Higgins, the Trust Sales team of the day at Braunston Historic Boat Rally in June, with long term trust supporters Prunella Scales, Timothy West and of course Tim Coghlan of Braunston Marina, whose ongoing generosity is so much appreciated.

Winter Fayre

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Gloucester & District Model Boat Club

In the Spring Wharfinger I briefly reported on the unveiling of Robert Strong's bench. The chosen day, May Sunday 22nd was the only sunny Sunday in May. Robert's partner Kath, a chef by trade, had prepared the most wonderful buffet, guests' eyes stood out like organ stops. Fifty-eight guests attended the unveiling.

Robert's sister along with family travelled up from Basingstoke. Robert was into fast cars and motorbikes, so yes we had a fine contingent of his motor cycling buddies. They came from Devon, Cardiff, Newport and further towns in deepest Wales. Sister Pat was very touched by the effort the Club had made to honour Rob. I hope the photograph taken from the far side of the canal at Over does justice to the day. There was a variety of donated savouries, luckily unopened, which were donated to the Tuesday disabled sailors. A big thank you was received.

Now we have the chance to view launch day at Over of HMS Duncan. HMS Duncan (D37) is the sixth and final of Type 45 or Daring class air defence destroyers launched in 2010.



HMS Duncan was launched at Over on Wednesday 15th June 2022. The model, 1/72 scale, has an overall length of seven feet with a beam of 9 inches hence the launching trolley. The hull is moulded from GRP, as are the major above-deck structures. Most of the detail fittings are resin and in this modern age 3D printed. She is powered by two brushless motors. She is now being fitted out by club modeller Philip Tyson. Philip is a wizard with

electrical gadgets, I dread to think of the workings Phil will incorporate. I hope in the next edition of the Wharfinger to be able to show some on the water shots and describe some of the working features. If you wish to see a video of the sea trials go to

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jnmM9ywfR0>

Sailing at Over has been very well attended, but as I write this report, early July, fourteen club members, including three ladies, have been very busy weed clearing the canal basin. This totalled around forty man hours, about eighty wheelbarrow loads of weed. We model boaters, the disabled sailing group, paddle boarders and the canal volunteers should be able to enjoy a reasonably few weeks weed free sailing.

Ted Tedaldi



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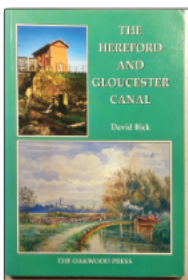
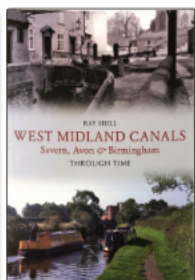
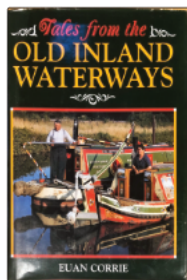
Well at the moment there's not much news from Sailing4Disabled except that three of us have been on a transition course enabling us to helm larger narrow boats on the Hereford Gloucester canal. The boats include Mr. Masey and then we got our own back when they came on our Wheelyboat.

Then a long break before we had a group of Brownies, who funded their trip by a sponsored silence! They certainly made up for it when they were on the boat, but a great evening. Another first was that a sailing session on Tuesday was cancelled because of the heat, a first time ever for me. But as to all English weather it will rain soon, but we won't cancel.

Stay safe more boosters on the way.

Pete Long Gone Silver

Books for Sale



A large selection of good condition second-hand books – plenty more to choose from – available on our online shop.

<https://www.h-g-canal.org.uk/shop/>

All proceeds to support the Trust.

H&G Stamps Appeal



Once again, please don't forget that we can turn anything vaguely philatelic (any used and unused stamps, old postcards, old stamp albums etc) into cash for the H&G. So, save all your used stamps, even the common ones, and hand to Janet Moulton or send direct to Steve Bence at:

35 Lime Road, Southam, Warwickshire, CV47 1EQ.

Steve can also now be reached by email at stamps@h-g-canal.org.uk.

We have recently received some sizeable collections and the sum raised keeps going up and up.

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
Roger Coombs 07801 455779
oxenhall@h-g-canal.org.uk

Ad Hoc

Hereford Roving Team
John Pritchard 01432 272972
hereford@h-g-canal.org.uk

Thursdays

Over Basin/Vineyard Hill
Andy Fowler
overbasin@h-g-canal.org.uk

Yarkhill
Chris High 01568 615 575
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Second Sunday each month

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Wharfinger

EDITION 154

Please submit your copy for Edition 154 to the magazine editorial team no later than 28 October 2022.

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

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As ever, we are grateful for their support, without which publication of **The Wharfinger** would not be possible.

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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 form is available online or from our Membership Secretary.

H&G CT UK 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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All application forms and payments by cheque please to:
Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust
6 Castle Street, Hereford, HR1 2NL

Visit our website:

www.h-g-canal.org.uk

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

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

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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.

