

The Wharfinger

HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST

Did you know that there is a Hereford Canal on which narrow boats once traded to Gloucester via Ledbury?

Want to know more?

Then come to the Inaugural Meeting of the

Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Society at the Red Cross Hall in Blackfriars St; Hereford 8:00pm on Wednesday, 13th April, 1983.

Mr. David Bick will be giving a talk with slides on the history of the canal.



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Trust Business



From the desk of the Chairman

Carrying on the theme from my last edition. My love of sayings. "If at first you don't succeed, you are running about average" or another one (my wife gave me) "If at first you don't succeed, try it the wife's way", but in this case I am going to go back to another version, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again".

The Trust is now 30 years old – or as someone reminded me the other day, it is 40 years this year since that first meeting was held with David Bick at the Red Cross Hall in Hereford to create the Canal Society. Then ideas and plans were developed, and these have gone through the changes several times over – just like Mill Barn (further news on that in this edition).

The aim of the H&G Canal Trust is to rebuild a sustainable canal between Hereford and Gloucester. With the work of previous Trustees and Members we have some sustainability with our properties that are being successfully rented out. Of course, a lot more is required, but it has been a good start as mentioned in my article from the Board with some nice donations and thank you very much to all those who have donated funds.

Some good news from the last editions request. I was very pleased to receive emails from a couple of members offering their help. They are now engaged in activities to help the H&G move forward. We are also seeing new volunteers on sites across the canal corridor, even in the winter, which is good. Two of them have been working the stop lock planks change over at Oxenhall. At the end of one day there a longer-term volunteer said, "that is the best day ever volunteering". As we haven't finished the work, I hope we can improve on the best day ever.

So, what about the trying again? Well as usual, more help is required. The Promotions Team are getting out and about this year at many events that are well worth visiting as well as promoting the work of the Trust. A list of the events can be found on page 18.

As we push forward with Over, Malswick, Oxenhall and all sites in Herefordshire, more help is required on site. We also want people willing to work to make the leadership of these sites more efficient and rewarding so we can open more areas of the canal corridor. The lack of site leaders is a blockage for us currently. The role of site leader does not have to sit with one person. The tasks can be broken up in to different activities with different people responsible for different tasks.

Please consider taking on some tasks on so we can move forward quicker. To find out more please give me a call or chat with Dave Goff our Site Operations Trustee.

All the best.

Ralph Barber

Notes from the Board meetings



A request via the website led me to me to look at some of the old Wharfingers which our web master Nick has put on to the website for all to read, and I noticed an article about board meetings. So, as I am always looking for material I thought, now that is an idea. So here it goes, an article on the last three months of board meetings.

I will try and keep this interesting – some board meetings can be hard work. However, as someone commented “you are keeping a lot of balls in the air”, so here are just some topics we are dealing with.

Malswick land purchase – known as Lot 1

We got news in March 2022 that we had won our bid. However, three items of land were being sold at the same time, and each sale had to be completed on the same day. We worked it all on our side, Philip Marshall did a great job of working with the lawyers and we transferred our funds to the solicitors in November, expecting completion shortly. As we close this edition of the Wharfinger I can confirm that it has completed! The new situation at Malswick is detailed in Philip's piece on page 20.



Pressing on, we already have the planning application in and a meeting with the Forest of Dean District Council (FoDDC) planners has also been held.

Gloucestershire CC Grit Store

GCC decided to dispose of the former Road Grit Store at Malswick, located on the Gloucester side of our 'East Wood' land. This small area of land (0.58 acres) includes a small section of the original canal route but the topography of the area has changed so much since the canal closed, with the construction of the railway in the 19th century and improvements to the main road in the 20th century, that it was going to be extremely difficult to restore the canal exactly on its original line at this point.

Trustees agreed that we should consider buying this land but given that the restored canal probably wouldn't require this tiny area, we couldn't justify paying a large sum. In the end, there was considerable competition at the auction and the site sold for £84,000; equivalent to an incredible £144,000 per acre, which was way beyond what we could afford."

Volunteers

The lack of volunteers was discussed at length. Many areas, and they do not have to be just site related. Help with planning applications, both replying to them when they affect the protected route to submitting them as we are working through Malswick with a second planning application. Support of promotion activities, both getting items on to the Web and Facebook as well as attending events. We have almost an event a month from March and some are a couple of days long, they all need supporting.

Having volunteers attend restoration sites, ensuring we have work for them which took us back to the concerns about site leadership. It was discussed about how can we make this easier. We already have the role split at Malswick, can we do the same sort of model elsewhere. A leader in name, with people supporting the other requirements, such as taking pictures for the Wharfinger, creating the ¼ article for the Wharfinger. Planning the work, tracking the volunteers so we can then note their hours.

At this time the Chair also highlighted this is across all of us, all volunteers, including Trustees should be tracking their time and supply it to the Chair for pulling together. Of course, the one area that volunteers do often do not want to get involved in is H&S. Ed, H&S Trustee, has done a lot to make this easier, but it still takes work.

Closing out, it was agreed that we would have a Volunteer Open Day on 8 May 2023. How it would look, who would be involved was then pushed out to the next meeting.

Finance

You may have come across issues with purchasing land that is then built on and the original landowner has an overage in the agreement – that they can receive part of the profit from any future sale. We had to contend with this when the Dymock house was sold. Philip has done all the chasing up on this and whilst it has cost us a considerable sum, it frees up the rest of the money we had put aside in an escrow account whilst the issue was being resolved.

Keeping on money, we have received several donations recently. Our thoughts and well wishes go to the family of a member who has recently died. The trust will be receiving a legacy in the region of five figures. Thanks also go to Dr Stephen Wright, who has paid for a new pump at Dymock at over a thousand pounds. Thank you also to all other donations that have come in and the donors wish to remain anonymous.

Ledbury

Our involvement is proving very time consuming and very frustrating, especially when you look at how other developers are engaging on other canal restoration projects. Due to the developer's anti-canal stance we have had to engage a specialised lawyer who is now in discussions with the developer's lawyers. We have our own pre-application meeting with the Herefordshire Council in February covering the canal at Ledbury.

We also discussed pushing further on opportunities at Monkhide and at Aylestone Park, based around the proposed Community Basin.

Holmer

When the site is finally passed over, we will put it into a new company owned wholly by the Trust, and we have agreed three of the Trustees will be directors of the Holmer Land Ltd.

Mill Barn

The flood assessment has now been received. The welfare unit desperately needs renewing. It was agreed that purchase of a new welfare cabin, the tidying of the site and reduction and moving of containers would leave the site ready. This will take some time as not so many volunteers at Over these days.

Other matters

Health and Safety had no issues to report. We discussed first aid requirements on sites that must be renewed every three years. A couple of sites need looking at to improve their coverage. We track certificates on the H&S Dropbox.

And finally, we agreed the AGM would be on 14 June at 7:30 in the Royal Oak, Much Marcle.

I hope you found something of interest in this report - feedback is always welcome, positive or negative.

Ralph Barber

Annual General Meeting



Formal notice of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust AGM. Further details will be in the next Wharfinger including how to pre-submit questions.

The Accounts will be on the website after 30 April - please check the website accordingly.

**2023 Annual General Meeting will be held on
Wednesday 14 June at 7:30pm.**

The Royal Oak, Much Marcle, Ross Road, Ledbury HR8 2ND

The meeting will be open to Member's only.

Agenda

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

After a break of 15 minutes, to enable you to get a drink, a slide show will be presented covering the past year and what next.

Malswick News



The winter snow made the Malswick site look very pretty but left the ground conditions completely opposite to those in the dry days of last summer. Any movement of machinery on site risked churning what was dust into mud.



So, chopping up logs and hedge planting were this winter's main tasks.

We have had several donations enabling us to continue the planting of the mixed hedging at Malswick. By the end of February, the team will have planted over 250m.

Thank you to Newent in Bloom who recently supplied several trees which the team added to the other donations we have had in hedging plants as well as a couple of trees along this part of the canal.

The log splitting machine mentioned in the last Wharfinger was great for splitting big logs, but for speed (and keeping warm) the axe proved just as good for smaller logs.



Alan McBride

Photographs by Mark Atkin, Bob Hargreaves and Alan McBride



Moat Farm



Members of the Malswick team visit the Moat Farm stretch of canal at times for maintenance. In recent years we have been concerned at the lack of water in one section. It was thought to have been because an old land drain caused water to leak out. Last year the remains of the drain were completely removed, and we waited for rain to see if the problem was cured.



The latest inspection revealed that after all the recent rain the upper pound was full and overflowing into the lower pound. The lower pound is also full with a good three feet of water. Robert carefully tested the depth, whilst trying not to slip in. There is very little reed growth which indicates that the removal of the pipe and blocking of the old outfall has been successful and the team could float a boat down the channel.

Alan McBride & Bob Hargreaves

Oxenhall Lock



Roger Coombs raised early concerns over the condition of the stop lock planks at House Lock and, after further visits by Bob Hargreaves, it was agreed they needed replacing.

So how to go about this?

Looking at the wider environment issues we contacted the Wild Service, an accredited wildlife consultancy, and a site visit was arranged ...

After this a report was created by the ecologists ...

Then the plan of action ...

Preparation of the site – some signage was installed to inform the local walkers – a public footpath goes right past the work site.



Needing to lower the water, we first had to create a newt shelter or a hibernaculum. This was created by a bit of digging, but Bob had some help. You can also see how cold it was as the base of the hibernaculum came together – see pictures below.



Another job under way was the sluice gate at the bottom of the middle pound, working under Martin's direction.

Flag stones were used along the face and inside the channel to stop the washing away of the bank, and with the excavator on site the opportunity was taken to level the towpath and then a well earned tea break.



Not forgetting Health and Safety, a barrier was installed.

We didn't want anyone walking back to admire the work and fall into the lock itself.



Starting the work. We installed a net so that as the water was reduced in the top pound, we could ensure nothing apart from water was washed down – you can also see the thickness of the ice, another very cold day.

Then off we went for a tea break while we waited for the ecologist to arrive, they needed to check the cill before we could do any further work.

Once we had the All Clear – i.e. nothing special found by the ecologist, we cleared the cill in double quick time and moved the material to the hibernaculum just in case something was missed.



Then we removed the first stop plank to start the process of lowering the water. The first gap was created, and after the OK from the ecologist we increased the flow. We continued by removing the next plank and at the end of the day the water level was reduced, and the net had done its job ... only four more planks to go!



Next week arrived – no ice this time.

We could clearly see that lowering the water to the agreed level could continue with the removal of the last plank.

Much discussion ensued about the 'dam' over another coffee break – when to install it and what it should consist of. Eventually it was time to experiment – four planks, two fence posts and a square post made up a dam to slide down the face of the lock. Once done, the water flow almost stopped.

Then further investigation was made of the material behind the remaining stop planks. With waders on, Graham started to dig this from between the stop lock planks and the dam. Once this was completed, we reset the dam to ensure the level stays at the agreed lower level for us to be able to continue the work when the planks arrive.

To be continued

Ralph Barber



Over during the winter



During the winter months there does seem to be less to be done at Over. No grass growing so no need to mow, no water level dropping on the canal so no need to run the pump, but still things are found to occupy the willing volunteers who attend on the regular Thursday.

I am pleased to report that the team regulars have had two new people attending in recent months, which was very welcome, with different discussions when a break is taken. A vision for the location is being constructed with much input from the team involving many actions with a few described now:-

- Continued repair of the trailer for fuel transportation.
- Clearance of some dead trees around the canal basin – see picture
- Continued work on the Lock Keepers gardens and car park. Clearing of weeds, leaves and general management of the bushes etc thanks to Mike's experience. With his knowledge the team cleared the piles of cuttings he created for disposal. Pleased to say the general appearance of the building is improving.
- Continued creating an inventory of "items" throughout the site and inside containers. Much found to be cleared and disposed of if unwanted by the trust in other locations. The trust board have agreed that any unwanted items that have value can be sold on.
- The vision for the site and the proposed Mill Barn is still ongoing. A recently supplied flood report illustrating the high points for the location where the Barn would be built is exactly where the existing portakabin and containers are. So, the first action for the project is for their removal/relocation, which is not a small undertaking but a challenge for the team.



During the cold spell we did have the misfortune to have a minor water leak in the portakabin, which fortunately did not cause too much damage as we had turned off the water supply at the stop tap. Well, we thought we had but clearly not fully as when the water defrosted it did create a leak which was managed and repaired.

The work done to ascertain the location of the tap was clearly beneficial even though timely to find as it was in a service chamber in the road – see picture. The remedy did uncover another skill within the team to repair the damage and restore running water, thanks Simon.



The location had a good covering of snow and much ice forming over the water. The site did look very impressive with blue skies and sun reflecting off the ice.

Finally, the one thing that the team did during the Christmas period was to have a lunch.

The Lock Keepers put on a great spread for us all which was a great time.

Dave Goff



Willow at Over



You may remember reading in the Wharfinger quite a while ago about basketry willows being planted at Over. Mike Bowden with two other volunteers planted them up after reading Nigel Baileys book "Over and Over Again". In the book Nigel quotes from the original canal minutes, as researched by Roy Jamieson, that in November 1794 the decision was made "to buy a quantity of soft red osiers ... not exceeding 20.000and to plant them in the Vineyard Hills.

Mike has been keeping the modern planting maintained all this time – pollarding them each year and selling willow rods to interested parties. A small but steady contribution towards funds,

The named willow cultivars have wonderful names such as Black Maul, Green Dicks, Flemish Red, Leentjes and Zwarte Dribast and all were chosen for their different colours.



I was down there in January helping to start the harvest. A cold but beautifully sunny day. The willow is cut through the winter when dormant. Mike likes leaving them as long as possible to show off the wonderful colour stems, especially in the sunshine.

Debbie Barber

Kymin



I do wish the weather forecasts would get it right. The weather was due to be cool, above freezing and no rain. The temperature bit was correct – but it was hot work trimming a tree and keeping dry.

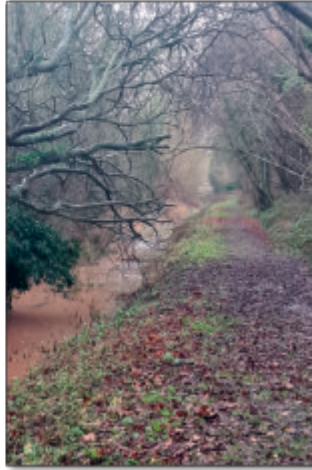


Luckily it was just a quick visit down the canal at Kymin. A tree was slowly falling across the canal and had come to rest with sufficient branches across the towpath to need a visit by the H&G Hereford roving team.

So two of us trimmed the tree and now the local walkers can enjoy their walks.

Pics before and after.

Ralph Barber



Yarkhill



Not a great deal to report this quarter as it was essentially maintenance work as normal. We continued logging up a number of wind-fallen trees as well as felling some.

The exercise to log-up all the trees that had fallen into adjacent field has now been completed, though there are still a number which will be monitored for signs of decay. Such was the speed of Robin with his chainsaw that there is still good deal of wood to be brought out of the field and brush to be burned off before we can say job done.

Unfortunately, the mower, which also tows the trailer to transport the logs, has been playing up. After several weeks of trying various options to coax it back to health we have had to admit defeat and call on Chris Phelps services down at the workshop.

Bob Comba



Tales from the Workshop



The Malswick House is not on the main sewer system but collects sewage in a vast low level tank the size of a railway tanker truck. Inside is a vast drum over 2 metres high and about 7 metres long weighing several tons called a biodisc which slowly rotates and processes the poo.

When the Trust took on premises it was seized solid, the manufacturer was called in to give a quote at which point everyone fainted (finance not fumes).

The team were coaxed down into the pit to take a look, which revealed the main carrier bearing had collapsed and had grabbed the 80mm drum shaft. The high reduction gearbox and motor were removed, the failed bearing cut away, a thinwall sleeve made up to cover the damaged shaft and a slightly bigger bearing fitted.

This has lasted a few years, but intermittent peaks on the power meter alerted the reluctant heroes their fresh meadow lives were about to change and the dreaded bearing was again in distress.

Back to basics and the motor and gearbox were hauled to James at Delta Cinderford for full overhaul. James looked kindly on us but the bill was still a whopper and the unit hangs in the Malswick House shed, ready for refit. Consultation with AC bearings Kingsholm came up with a double capacity bearing at sadly double the price. As everything now is twice the size, a canal friendly Mr Pompjoy machined up a bush to pinpoint accuracy to carry over the distressed shaft and accommodate the monster bearing.

He also machined an enlarged landing to accommodate the monster pillow block bearing. At this point the boys are grabbing a breath of fresh air before donning waders and returning to their subterranean dream as you may gather this is a monster job and dominated their time.



The biodisc unit with distressed 80mm driveshaft and drive train removed and the drive train ready for refitting.

In addition to the Pooh Ha at The Malswick House, the ATV managed to indicate left when turning right and not at all in the other direction. As this was a safety issue a bitterly cold day was spent tracing and refixing misdirected wiring until success touched their frozen fingers and no more shaking fists and hooting horns – see picture.

Concerns about the fitting folk fading away have been addressed with the repatriation of the Massey Marquee to Oxenhall in order to protect our treasured toy. This has allowed construction to begin on a covered workspace alongside the shed to shield our perky pensioners from the worst of the elements. It will be gratefully received when complete – see picture.



The Yarkhill strimmer expired and also found itself in the shed. A quickie was hoped for, but it was not to be – a strip down revealed a broken internal wire, still no spark, no parts available produced a nearly fitting coil that nearly worked but didn't!

A scrabble around Solent Parts found one that did. This has got to be it, the cry went up, but it wasn't. Desperate searching found all the internal fuel pipes encased in the fuel tank had dissolved into the fuel. A thorough clean and new pipes saw it returned to Yarkhill with a note attached – "if it does it again ... burn it!"

Chris Phelps

Need to keep those legs moving?



Many of you will be aware that the Trust produces an increasing number of walks leaflets (currently seven), but may not appreciate that the route or conditions along a walk can be changed as a result of development, lack of maintenance, land owner issues and so forth.

As a result we need to review each walk on at least an annual basis to confirm that the walk as described is still possible and easy to follow, and if needs be update the walk leaflets accordingly.

So, we are looking for people to try the walks as described in the leaflets (copies will be provided) and report any issues to our production team at information@h-g-canal.org.uk.

Any feedback so received will be collated and made available to others via the website and as addenda to the current leaflets until we are able to properly update and re-print them.

We are currently also developing plans for a couple of new walks, so if anyone would be interested in test walking the proposed route before publication, please contact us at information@h-g-canal.org.uk



Yoga on a Paddleboard



Well, I thought I had seen most things happening on the water but yoga on a paddle board is a first for me.

It is good to see the water being used at Over and Discover Paddleboarding is the latest group to do so.



Apart from the usual Saturday groups through the summer, a regular weekly evening class for yoga devotees took place on the canal in the tranquil surroundings of Vineyard Hill – a sheltered spot.

Debbie Barber

Promotions



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

Oxenhall Daffodil Day	11 March 2023
Hereford Waterworks Museum Steam Up Open Days	26 March 2023
Ledbury Community Day	10 June 2023
AGM The Royal Oak, Much Marcle (7:30pm)	14 June 2023
Braunston Historic Boat Rally	24–25 June 2023
Tibberton Show	19 August 2023
Gloucester Retro on the Water	26–27 August 2023
Land Fund Visit, Malswick	22 September 2023
Members Day, Malswick	23 September 2023
Newent Winter Fayre,	11 November 2023

Come and visit, or better still, join us on the stand. We cannot promise that you will see the world with us, but you may visit an area that is new to you – and we always do our utmost to ensure that you have some time to look around – and your admission to the event will be free!

Please do have a look and if interested in helping, please do contact me.

Debbie Barber, Promotions Trustee



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Community



As part of our strategy for starting to engage more with local communities, two of our members, Tony Higgins and Heloise Kirby, attended a meeting at the end of January at HVOSS (Herefordshire Voluntary Organisations Support Service).

Below is Heloise' report.

Tony and I attended a Youth Provision Forum hosted by HVOSS at the Kindle Centre on a very cold January morning. We went with the intention of exploring the possibility of finding and engaging enthusiastic and willing young volunteers with the H and G Canal Trust.

The room was packed with youth-work professionals, all providing services and support for young people in Herefordshire. There was an abundance of dedication, passion and commitment to their work, albeit slightly jaded at the edges.

There are a lot of existing services for young people which help with improving physical and mental wellbeing, providing family support and encouraging community engagement.

The Trust's ethos and purpose ticks some of these boxes.

For us, it was a first step into this arena and, although we didn't come away with fixed certainties about who might help us and when, it was a very promising start towards what will hopefully provide some much needed additional interest in the Trust's work now and in the future.

Watch this space!

And if there are any members who would like to help with this, please contact Tony for more information.

Heloise Kirby

More on HVOSS can be seen online at www.hvoss.org.uk/



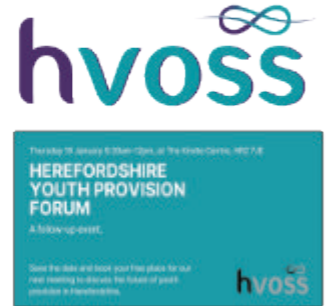
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Malswick Spreads East and West

In November 2021, after a prolonged battle, the Trust was granted planning permission to build out a 600 metre section of canal at Malswick. Excellent progress has been made in 2022 and the team at Malswick is hopeful that further significant steps can be made in 2023.

In February, again after a prolonged campaign, another section of land completed its legal process and became the Trust's. This had been started when Richard Appleton (our Land Trustee) approached the then owner and after initial resistance convinced him to sell the field on the Gloucester side of the present site. This included a 200 metre section which connects two pieces of Trust-owned land.

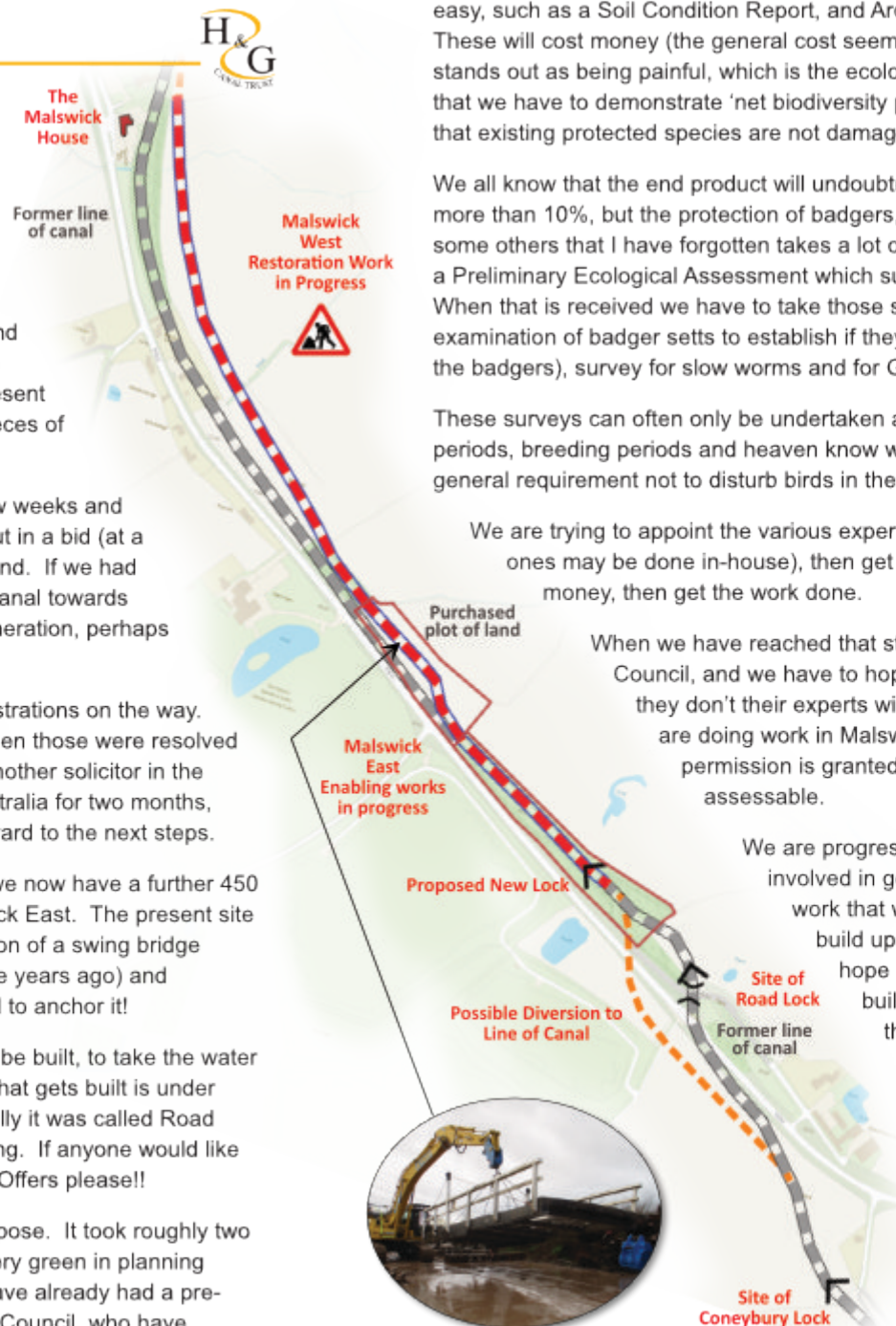
The land went to an effective auction, and following a tense few weeks and much soul-searching among the Board of Trustees the Trust put in a bid (at a much higher level than we wished to pay) which secured the land. If we had failed it is perfectly possible that all progress in rebuilding the canal towards Gloucester would have come to a dead stop, perhaps for a generation, perhaps forever.

The bid was accepted in March and there have been many frustrations on the way. First the financial situation of the seller created issues, then when those were resolved there was another delay caused by the apparent absence of another solicitor in the chain. Then when he was ready to go our solicitor went to Australia for two months, which delayed further. But now we are done and can look forward to the next steps.

This new section joins with another owned parcel of land and we now have a further 450 or so metres of canal to develop which we are calling it Malswick East. The present site is now Malswick West. Malswick East will include the installation of a swing bridge across the new field. We have the bridge (it was donated some years ago) and engineering plans for its construction. Lots of concrete needed to anchor it!

At the end of this section a new lock will in due course need to be built, to take the water level down to enable the canal to go under the B4215. When that gets built is under discussion. There is also discussion as to the name. Historically it was called Road Lock but it has been suggested that this is a little underwhelming. If anyone would like to sponsor this lock they could ask that it is named after them! Offers please!!

We now have to apply for planning permission for what we propose. It took roughly two years to get permission for Malswick West but the team was very green in planning terms and we hope that it will not take so long this time. We have already had a pre-application exchange of letters with the Forest of Dean District Council, who have helpfully advised the supporting documents that will be required. Some are relatively



The Swing Bridge

easy, such as a Soil Condition Report, and Archaeology Report, a Flood Risk Assessment. These will cost money (the general cost seems to be about £2500 per report). But one stands out as being painful, which is the ecological assessment. New guidelines indicate that we have to demonstrate 'net biodiversity plus 10%'. On the way we have to ensure that existing protected species are not damaged in the transition.

We all know that the end product will undoubtedly result in net biodiversity plus a good deal more than 10%, but the protection of badgers, slow worms, great crested newts, bats and some others that I have forgotten takes a lot of effort – and probably money. We start with a Preliminary Ecological Assessment which summarises what steps needs to be taken. When that is received we have to take those steps, which can involve bat surveys, examination of badger setts to establish if they are live (if they are we may have to relocate the badgers), survey for slow worms and for Great Crested Newts.

These surveys can often only be undertaken at particular times of year to avoid hibernation periods, breeding periods and heaven know what other periods. And I have missed out the general requirement not to disturb birds in the breeding season.

We are trying to appoint the various experts to undertake these tasks (some smaller ones may be done in-house), then get approval from the Board for spending the money, then get the work done.

When we have reached that stage we can make the application to the Council, and we have to hope that our experts and their experts agree. If they don't their experts will win, so we must hope. In the meantime we are doing work in Malswick East that can be done before planning permission is granted, clearing a lot of scrub to make the site assessable.

We are progressing this now because of the long lead-time involved in getting permission. At Malswick West we have work that we can do, and when material is brought in to build up the canal banks by the new culverts (we hope in this Spring) there will be further work to build the towpath and finish the site. But after that it will be great if we have the next site to move to.

We hope to be able to do much work out of present Trust resources and income, but it is likely that we will run short of funds.

Philip Marshall



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 - 3RD PRIZE** **ONE NIGHT BED & BREAKFAST for TWO**
at The Lock Keepers, Over Wharf, Gloucester. *Donated by The Lock Keepers Company*
- Ticket printing kindly sponsored by Westons Cider*
and... Yes – tickets are still just £1.00 each!!



The prize winners will be drawn at the Social Evening at The Royal Oak, Much Marcle, on 21 September 2023.

Our thanks to our friends and supporters **Black Prince Holidays**, **ABC Boat Hire** and **The Lock Keepers** for donating the holiday prizes – every pound raised is a pound towards restoration of the Canal.



As usual, members are being sent two books of tickets to sell to family and friends. If you would like more books or as a non-member wish to purchase some tickets please contact Janet Moulton via the Contact Us page on our website.

Thank you.

Janet Moulton

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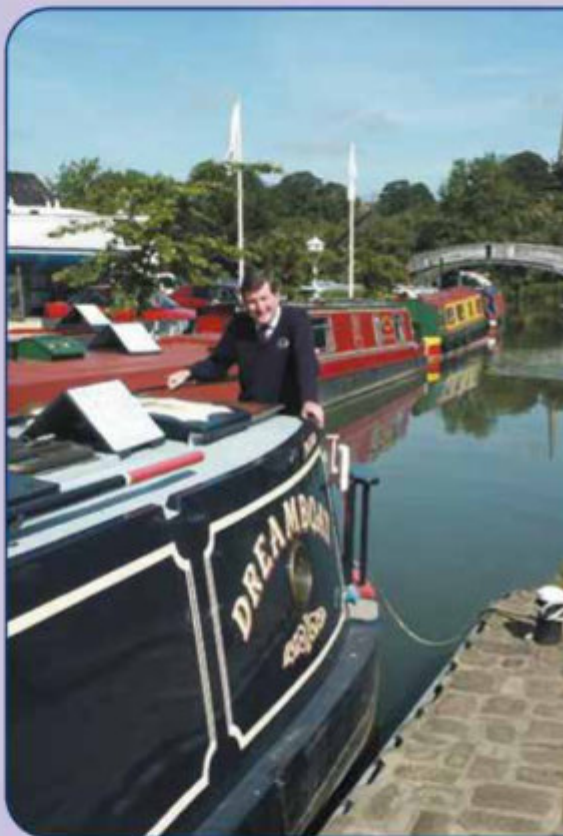
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Notes from our Membership Secretary



Well I never, it is now one year since I was, very gently, manoeuvred into the role of Membership Secretary of the Trust. In that year I have met and chatted to a lot of fascinating people and feel sure that the same will be true of 2023.

In 2022 there have been about the same number of good souls who have joined the Trust as those who have left, for a variety of reasons, including passing on to other interests or passing on to other realms. The point is that we are not growing; we are not shrinking, but not growing.

It is also interesting that there is nothing specific about the ways in which the Trust has come to the notice of all those lovely joiners.

There have been;

- knowing an existing member,
- seeing the website,
- seeing a notice by the side of the road,
- finding Dick Skeet's book,
- or just being interested in canals and then finding out there is one locally.

In order to grow our numbers and therefore our influence amongst local councils and local business, myself and fellow board trustees would be VERY interested in views and ideas from our varied and well-informed members on ways in which we might grow. If you have been, thank you for reading, and I look forward to a bulging in-box

Cheers,

Tony Higgins.

Upcoming Socials



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

16 March 2023 **Dick Skeet will give a talk on Stephen Ballard...**

Remember him – he had something to do with the
Hereford & Gloucester Canal!

20 April 2023 **Forty years on – reminiscences of the early days of the H & G Society**

Slides, archives and artefacts from the early days

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(Please clearly mark as yours any items you bring along)

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

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40 Years On...



Wednesday 13th April 1983 was when it all started, with the inaugural meeting of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Society.

Held at the Red Cross Hall in Blackfriars St, Hereford – Mr David Bick gave a talk with slides on the history of the canal ... what a lot has happened since then!

In addition to a great deal of early restoration work, the Society helped achieve the granting of Listed Status and thus the protection of a number of assets along the canal between Gloucester and Hereford.

Oxenhall – House Lock listed as Grade II in 1989

The listing states Lock. c.1795. Designed by Stephen Ballard; engineer, for trustees of the Hereford and Gloucester Canal. Built of limestone ashlar with later brick repairs and stone coping. The gates have decayed. 75 x 8 ft.

This is the last surviving lock on the Hereford and Gloucester Canal.

Oxenhall Lock Cottage – listed as Grade II Oct 1985

Its listing states House: probably early C19, for the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal. English-bond brickwork, slate roof. Three-window, 1 room deep, 2-storey, with single-storey extension on left. Pilaster buttresses, one brick wide, rise ground to eaves either side windows and doors, widening at window sill and lintel level on ground floor, lintel level only first floor. Buttresses wider each side front door, without widening at sill level.



Central door, plywood finish, covered simple gabled timber porch, corrugated-iron roof. Six-pane sash windows each side, ground floor, stone sill and lintel. Four-pane wide sashes first floor, with blind window in centre, stone sills and lintels. Moulded brick course at eaves, forms string course across gable. Flat wide soffit to eaves, wide verge: small rear chimney. Ply door with buttresses each side to right of centre in extension: clipped eaves and verge.

Sole surviving lock keeper's house in area, on canal closed in 1880's for conversion to railway. (C. Hadfield, *The Canals of South Wales and the Border*, 1960.)

Ledbury Railway Viaduct – listed in 1986

As you follow the route on into Herefordshire the Ledbury Viaduct shortly comes into view. Its listing on the Historic England site is of interest to us in that it mentions someone who engineered the canal from Ledbury to Hereford – Mr Stephen Ballard.

Viaduct. 1859–61, probably designed by Stephen Ballard; the contractors were Ballard and




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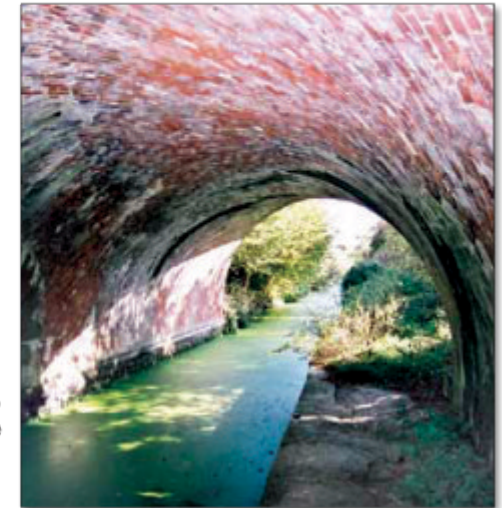




Thomas Brassey; the bricks were made by Robert Ballard. Built for the Worcester and Hereford Railway Co, later part of the Great Western Co. Red brick. 30 round-headed arches on slender piers. Continuous hood-moulds of dark brick over. Projecting cornice and plain parapet surmounted by C20 railings and broken by C20 refuges. The bricks were made on site from the clay dug out for the foundations.

Canal Bridge

The official title does not do it credit. Listed in 1986 with the words: Canal bridge. 1843 for the Hereford & Gloucester Canal. Red brick with stone dressings and large engineering brick copings to parapets. Bridge on 60° skew with dressed stone intradoses to arch, through internal arch of rubbed brick. Stone drip-mould to arch and stepped drip below parapet. Parapet with coping of large black engineering bricks, on edge, stamped 'B W Blades/Maker/West Bromwich. Parapets stepped down slightly to east on south side and west on north side, both stops being at points where arms cease to be matched by arms opposite. Low square piers at ends of parapet.



Of course, we all know it as The Skew Bridge at Monkhide.

Withington Canal Bridge – listed as Grade II in 1985

Bridge over stream adjacent to Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal. Circa 1843. Coursed sandstone, flat copings; semi-circular headed arch with square section label.

Withington Lock and Cottage – listed as Grade II in 1985

Lock keeper's cottage, now dwelling. Circa 1843. Coursed sandstone, slate roof, brick stacks. Rectangular plan aligned east/west on north side of former Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal. Two storeys, three windows. South elevation has glazing-bar sashes, the central first floor window being blind. Entry from north side. East cross-wing is not included. Immediately to the south is the site of adjoining lock which forms the present terrace.



In 1992 the Society became the **Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust** – with charity status to enable us to access funds and continue the process of restoring the canal. So many things have happened since then it is difficult to select a few from the many to write about in particular.

Why not make your own mind up and look at past editions of The Wharfinger Magazine online at <https://www.h-g-canal.org.uk/news-and-events/the-wharfinger-magazine/>



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Keeping in Touch



To assist us with keeping in touch please send us your current email address to our Membership Secretary Tony Higgins.

Please, also let him know if any of your contact details change - thank you.

membership@h-g-canal.org.uk

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

Canal Walks



Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust has produced an expanding series (currently seven) walk leaflets which explore various parts of the Hereford & Gloucester Canal.

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Each log order will need to be two cubic metres or three dumpy bags @ £75.00 per bag.



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

Gloucester & District Model Boat Club



The Gloucester and District Model Boat Club's Autumn sailing was quite pleasant in warm conditions. December changed the site to a frozen waterway; however on Sunday January 1st eight hardy souls turned out.



We are off, the first round of Micro Magic racing took place on Friday January 6th at Over basin in pleasant conditions with a good south west breeze.

Fourteen yachts faced the starter for an afternoon of ten races.



To continue the sailing theme we view Steve's gaff rigged cutter "Antares" cruising at Over canal basin.

She is five feet overall with a beam of nine inches.

Why not relax and view her on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xiU48WE0izs>.

We must not ignore our naval craft. Here we see a model of a Halvorsen sea plane tender. Halvorsen built 237 of the craft for Royal Australian Army and Airforce. The model is 1/12th scale approximately 24 inches long. Construction is mainly plywood with many separate fittings.



Today many modellers have invested in 3D printers. These enable you to design your fittings and eventually produce them or purchase software to produce your fittings. The debate is, is this modelling?

The model has twin propellers which well replicates scale speed.

Here we see Simon at Over preparing for his afternoon sail.

Notice in the background a couple of relaxed club members.

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HMS Triton – she was a prototype trimaran hulled frigate designed as a technology demonstrator for the future but not accepted by the Royal Navy. She was sold on to the Australian government for customs and border control.

If you look closely at the model you will see one of the two outriggers to establish the trimaran form. The model is constructed from plywood. The hull build became a little

exciting as it required the centre hull to be constructed first, the outriggers then needed to be built straight onto the hull individually.

The model is 54 inches overall with a beam of 12 inches. She is powered by two brushless motors. The model is still under construction but is very much in a sailing condition.

The Club is spoilt for choice with naval vessels.

Here we see HSwMS Helsingborg, the first of three Visby Class Corvettes for the Swedish navy, having been in service since 2009. She is designed for coastal warfare. The hull is built from a carbon fibre composite material. The deck is kept clear of any deck clutter, all being stored inside the hull.



The model, far from finished, has an overall length of 40 inches with a beam of 6 inches, in other words, looking very sleek. Construction is from plywood. Great care has to be taken with straight sides that they match to produce the stealthlike appearance. She does have a helicopter deck. She is powered by two water jets.

The whole world requires coasters, the workhorse of any country, they would transport anything, rocks, stones, clay to scrap metal.



The model Cranbourne is a typical two hatch coaster. The hull is an unusual build of plank on frame, very time consuming although satisfying, the hull is then externally fibreglass tissueed.

Above decks is of plywood construction.

She is 43 inches overall with a beam of 8 inches powered by a single propeller.

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Sailing4Disabled



Hello everyone, welcome to a new year, new news.

Well, not such a good start to 2023 as we had hoped. All Tuesday sailings have been cancelled due to either cold or wet, then even when the sun came out the canal was frozen hard – even the boat wouldn't rock as it was frozen solid. So, we tried to put the world to rights with all the knowledge that we've stored in our over-filled brains, but gave up after two hours as all the heat that the sun had beamed on us had been dispersed in our conversations, and we went home to warm up.

I would like to thank my good lady for packing me off on the sailing days with a mug of hot coffee. Nothing remarkable about that, except that this time it came in very handy as the only way to unfreeze the bollard lock so that we could enter the site. This was on the off chance that someone may turn up, but alas only the helpers were dedicated (or just like being packed off with a mug of hot coffee). As one said, "I'm here because my shed needs a clear out and its cold in there", an hour later he wished he had stayed at home!

Well that's it, a Happy New Year to you all. I wish health, wealth and happiness to all dedicated sailing helpers.

If your winnings are too much for you to handle, Pirate Pete has a treasure chest that needs visiting in a far off island very soon, and is willing to stop the tax man getting to know about your wealth.

From all at Sailing4Disabled and Pirate Pete, take care and see you soon.

Arrrrrr me hearties.

Sailing times Tuesday 11am to 12pm ish. Monday by arrangement only. 07913015018

Pirate Pete 

H&G Stamp Appeal



The H&G Stamp Appeal enjoyed one of its most successful years in 2022 thanks to several significant donations, as a result, we are confident of passing the next milestone, that of £5000 raised, early in 2023.

Indeed £300 has been raised since the New Year with the sale of two collections kindly donated.

So many thanks to all who have contributed and keep those stamps a comin'!

Steve Bence

Site Days



Regular Volunteer Work Parties

Volunteer work parties regularly convene at restoration sites as listed below. Please contact team leaders to check for latest situations.

Tuesdays

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

Thursdays

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

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

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

Second Sunday each month

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



Please submit your copy for Edition 156 to the magazine editorial team no later than 28 April 2023.

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

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Herefordshire Roving Team – Ralph Barber

01432 853086 hereford@h-g-canal.org.uk

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?

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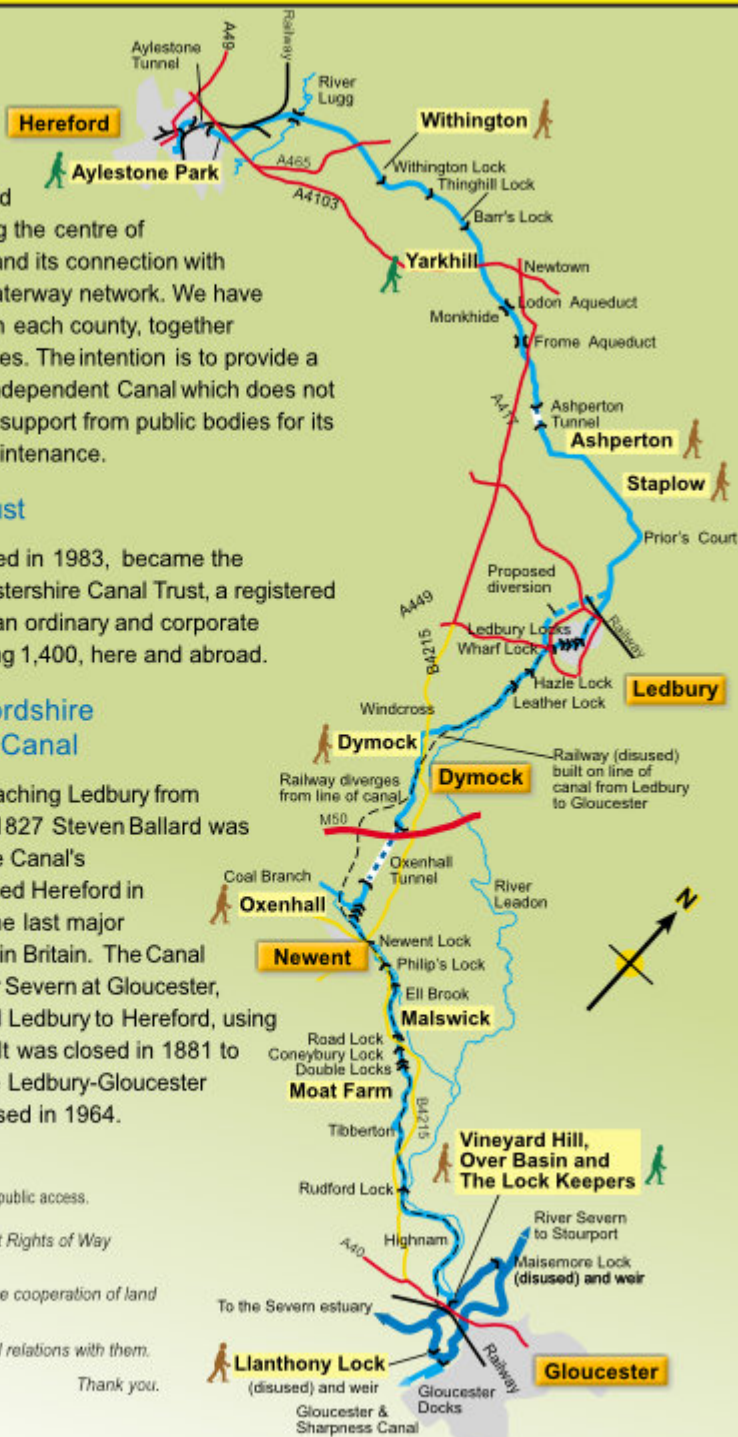
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We try to ensure details of talks/events are correct – please verify with the relevant organiser if travelling long distances.

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Our objective is to rebuild the 34 mile Canal linking the centre of Hereford to Gloucester and its connection with the 2,500 mile inland waterway network. We have major restoration sites in each county, together extending to some 4 miles. The intention is to provide a financially sustainable independent Canal which does not require regular financial support from public bodies for its future operation and maintenance.

The H&G Canal Trust

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

The original Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal

Work started in 1792 reaching Ledbury from Gloucester by 1798. In 1827 Steven Ballard was appointed to oversee the Canal's completion, which reached Hereford in 1845; this was one of the last major canal routes completed in Britain. The Canal stretched from the River Severn at Gloucester, via Newent, Dymock and Ledbury to Hereford, using 22 locks and 3 tunnels. It was closed in 1881 to allow construction of the Ledbury-Gloucester railway which in turn closed in 1964.

- = Canal Walk leaflet available.
- = Restoration sites suitable for public access.

It should not be assumed that Rights of Way exist.

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

Please help us maintain good relations with them.

Thank you.

