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Autumn 2023

The Wharfinger

HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST



New canal at Malswick



EDITION 157

REBUILDING A SUSTAINABLE CANAL BETWEEN HEREFORD & GLOUCESTER

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

Who does What?



To get in touch see "Contacts" inside the back cover

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Content Editor:	Ralph Barber
Layout Editor:	Nick Dymott
Proofreading:	Gillian Northcott Liles, Debbie Barber
Advertising:	Ginny Birkett
Distribution:	Janet Moulton

Digital Photo Library:

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Website

Web Master: Nick Dymott

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Canal Walks



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

**STAPLOW, LEDBURY
WITHINGTON WHARF,
DYMCK, ASHPERTON
LLANTHONY LOCK,
OXENHALL and OVER BASIN**

All proceeds towards the promotion and restoration of the Hereford and Gloucester Canal.


More details and ordering options available on the website.

Logs for Sale

Proceeds to Trust Funds

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

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

Your needs . . .

BETA MARINE

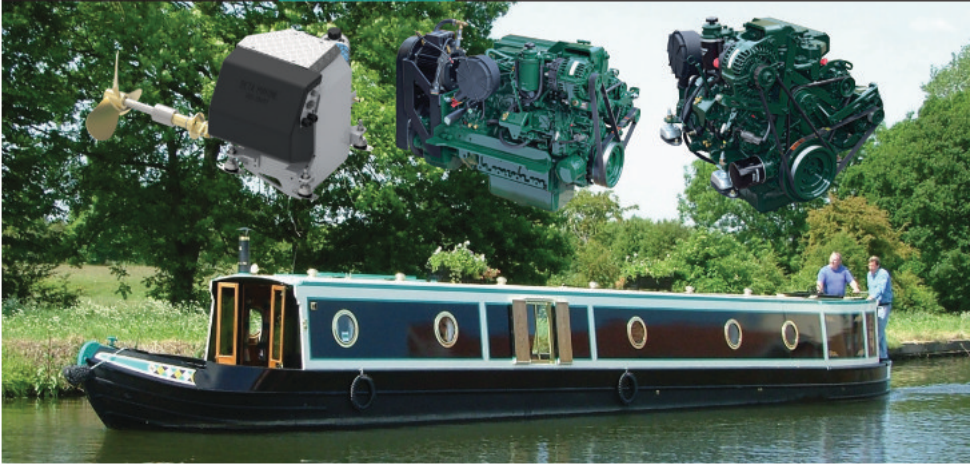
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In a previous Wharfinger I asked if we had a good year? - this was for 2022. The view was yes, we had.

2023 is looking good too with the canal now filling up with water at Malswick. Additionally, the new land allowing the extension down to east wood the Malswick Canal Park will have 600 metres of water in the next few years.

So how do we make 2024 a very good year?

- get Malswick down to east wood in water, obviously;
- progress the plans for Aylestone Park Community Basin,
- see the Bloor Homes site at Ledbury hopefully moved forward,
- Oxenhall, Over, Newent Station and others have all been highlighted, but these will not progress without volunteers to lead them.

I know I mention this in most Wharfingers – and sorry to sound like a stuck record – but we need project leaders to work things like the development of Newent Station. This could potentially give us a visitors' centre and a route for the inclined plane. We already have drawings for a potential building, and this needs a project leader to move it forward.

Please do think about this, is it something you or someone you know who could help with a project? As mentioned in the board report, we have a member investigating the connection to the wider waterways system. If you are interested in working as a project leader or if you would like to get further involved with a project close to your heart, please get in touch as the team is already very busy and we need support in driving the canal restoration forward.

Before I wrap up my update, a reminder of the Open day this year is at Malswick. We invite all members to come and see the great work that has occurred at Malswick. If you have seen the YouTube channel, I hope you have subscribed as this can help us in the longer term.

Come and see it for yourself from 14:00 to 17:00 on Saturday 23rd September.

Tea, Coffee and cakes will be available. Enjoy a walk by the side of the newest canal in Gloucestershire and then follow the route down to Road Lock. We are also hopefully that the 2nd edition of the Rescued from Obscurity may be available for sales at a members discounted price.

Ralph Barber

May's meeting reported that the other canal trust wishing to borrow the Bailey bridge are still interested, they're just aligning their funds and organising access to their site.

Work was done to the permissive path around Newent Station. It is now fenced, markers in place and looking very smart following work by the team in widening the path.

Malswick is going well. There has been some fun with old land drains that are now causing issues as we dig the channel out. We will only know if we have caught them all once the canal is filled with water. Those we have found have been dug back and sealed.

We are continuing to have meetings with Hereford Council and Bloor Homes in Ledbury. It is proving to be a very frustrating process. They could help themselves and lessen the impact to the site by working with us to dig the canal whilst they have heavy machinery on site, but they have chosen not to do so. Our concerns about Ledbury have been raised with the Council Planning Officers (and we are also discussing with them about the Holmer and Steel Holders sites).

The builder on the Holmer site has stopped trading. The landowner is now working to find a builder to complete the works and as part of this complete the handover of the canal corridor to the H&G.

The Chairman reported that the police had been in contact with him. Fortunately for the H&G it was not actually us they wanted to talk with, but the owner of the Wheely boat. The query was duly passed on to Sailing4Disabled. They confirm they have talked with Devon and Cornwall police about an incident in Cornwall that unfortunately caused loss of life.

Tony Higgins agreed to be the interface with the Dymock residents as we had problems installing the pump and the water level had fallen. The pump is now in place and is all looking good. Some further work will occur once the bird nesting is complete.

As reported in this edition events were held over the four days in quick succession to try and get further volunteers.

The AGM was in June and the next board meeting was in July.

As has become a tradition, after the AGM the Trustees are asked if they all wish to continue in their current roles. Ralph Barber was reappointed as Chairman, Philip Marshall as Finance, Robert Morland focusing on Government, Ed Helps to continue Health & Safety, Richard Appleton on Land, Tony Higgins on Membership, Debbie Barber on Promotions and Dave Goff on Site Operations.

As Eamonn McGurk, Vaughan Welch and Bob Hargreaves were not at the meeting Ralph agreed to follow up with them to ensure they had a focused area.

Other areas also discussed were finding volunteers or trustees for Fundraising and Press Officer. Waterways World have had material shared with them and from a social media view-point our YouTube channel is growing well.

As usual we then worked our way through the reports. Malswick is progressing very well. The current length being filled is 175 metres long, and a second length will be another section of 167 metres. Aiming for the end of the year to have 342 metres in water. With the extension down to East Wood the Malswick Canal Park will have 600 metres of water in the next few years.

The planning application covering the next stage is progressing with reports being created. These are then under review as we ensure we have all the answers for items raised. The route has already taken a slightly different path due to some oak trees.

At one of the volunteer days a long-term member approached the stand and was talking at length with Tony. He was keen to look at the connection to the main waterways system. A discussion at the board meeting supported further investigation into this as we had the IWA visit a couple of years ago and further details have been published in the Wharfinger previously.

A discussion was also held on the Canal and River Trust funding. Ralph reported he had been on the radio at Radio Gloucestershire talking about the impact of this reduction in the funding from the government.

Promotions highlighted a busy couple of months coming up, Tibberton in August and two days at the end of August at Gloucester Retro on the Water. We also had some communication about Ledbury Carnival, but at the time details had not been supplied. (We later declined to attend as it was on the Bank Holiday Monday after the two days of Gloucester on the Water, we had also attended the Ledbury Community Day previously in the year).

The next meeting was held via Zoom and dealt mostly with the up-and-coming events at Malswick. With the marquee up ready for the members Open afternoon we have taken the opportunity to invite some local landowners and councillors the day before to show off our good work and gain support.

Dave Goff reported that the changes at Over are continuing, and the containers were moving the following day with one being sent to Malswick.

Further discussions have been held about machines. We have some mowers that are causing issues and visiting the engineering team at Malswick far more often than they should due to a number of different issues. Further investigations to occur into how best to keep the grass cut across the sites with their different requirements.

Ralph Barber – Chairman

Minutes of the HGCT Annual Meeting



14th June 2023 7.30pm

Meeting held at The Royal Oak, Ross Road, Much Marcle

The Chairman, Ralph Barber, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Present: there were 44 members present.

Apologies were received from Ginny Birkett, Paul Brown, Wilf Jones, Eamonn McGurk, Janet Moulton, Penny Shetliffe, and Dick Skeet.

Approval of Minutes of 2022 AGM. Proposed acceptance by Anthony Higgins, seconded by Edward Helps. Minutes were approved by the meeting.

Chairman's remarks: Ralph Barber said he had been asked recently whether the trust had had a good year and he replied that yes, he felt that we had. He didn't want to go into details as all the reports were coming up in the presentation.

Annual Report and Financial Statement: The Trustees report was printed in the summer edition of the Wharfinger, Number 156 – for all members to read before the AGM. The Chair asked if there were any comments or questions on this. None had been received prior to the meeting and none were asked at the meeting.

Appointment of an Independent Examiner: an independent examiner for both the H&G Trust and The Wharf House Ltd accounts is appointed each year. Philip Marshall, treasurer, proposed Griffiths Marshall. This was accepted by the members.

Resolution: Due to further requirements from the Charity Commission a resolution was required around the changes submitted, and passed, last year for the changes for moving from 10 Trustees to 12 Trustees. This was put before the meeting by the Chairman. Approved by all.

Election of Trustees: Trustees standing down this year by rotation were Deborah Barber, Ralph Barber, Edward Helps and Philip Marshall. There were no new nominations received before the deadline of seven days prior to the AGM.

There was a query from the floor of how long each trustee had served. Due to different numbers of trustees standing down, or resigning, each year is different. Deborah was appointed in 2019 and re-elected in 2021. Ralph Barber was appointed in 2018, re-elected in 2020. Ed Helps was appointed in 2019 and re-elected 2021. Philip Marshall appointed 2018 and re-elected in 2020. Ralph said he felt that no one should serve more than three terms consecutively and should stand down for a minimum of a year after that. He will now be into his third term, if re-elected.

As there were no new trustees putting themselves forward for election and those standing down were willing to be reappointed then the meeting confirmed the reappointment of those four.

Ralph said if anyone is interested in the coming year in becoming a trustee, please contact him to find out about the role. He also advised that we are still looking for a Minutes Secretary for the board meetings. Query from the floor asking if there is any particular role allocated for another trustee? Ralph replied it depended on the skills of those offering.

Questions: There had been no pre-meeting questions submitted and no further questions were received from those attending the meeting.

The Chairman thanked his fellow trustees for the past year.

There was a round of applause for the trustees.

Then, the formal AGM being done, people had a chance to get a drink, and a presentation was then given by the the chairman during which he thanked all volunteers for both working on the canal and those who had shared pictures and videos that appear in the Wharfinger, on the website, on Facebook and on YouTube.

Volunteer Recruitment Days



We started with the Volunteers Day at Malswick on May 8th, chosen to be part of the Coronation Volunteering Day that King Charles promoted. In quick succession, we then had ...

6th June – Newent in the Co-Op car park on a cold but bright Tuesday in June. We tagged on to the Forest of Dean Volunteer Road Show van with our own banner and leaflets. Some interest from the locals and one person actually visited the Malswick site later that day.

7th June – Hereford Volunteer Fair was the day after Newent. This time we were in the warmth of the Courtyard Theatre, in late afternoon. Over forty organisations took part with stands over two floors. These included a motorbike used for the movement of blood supplies around the UK.



Other excellent charities were there trying to gain volunteers for their causes. Having a few minutes off from the stall, I was able to chat with other organisations doing projects that helped give us ideas and offers of support about our work in Hereford and Ledbury.

10th June – finally to close out a busy week was the Ledbury Community Day. The team had a number of people chatting about the canal and in all the sessions received positive feedback and some potential new volunteers who we are following up.

So, we are getting out and about. Please encourage friends and family to join as members and/or come and volunteer.

Ralph Barber

Oil tank

The trust has had a very old fuel tank used to hold red diesel for boat usage. A good idea at the time with bulk purchases of fuel without fuel duties, which was very cost effective. However, this year the government amended the duty free usages preventing canal boat propulsion from the list of approved use. With this there was little need to have the tank, which was in poor condition and costly to replace, so a decision was made to remove it, obtain suitable Jerry cans and purchase what is known as white diesel from the forecourts. The tank was removed, bricking recovered, cleaned of mortar and stacked awaiting reuse on the proposed new services housing.



More gravel for the basin tow path

From the knowledge obtained, the tow path around the basin had been sparsely supplied with suitable chippings some decades ago. With this the weeds were coming through quicker than they could be dealt with so more gravel was supplied and spread along the areas. Some five tons were used to complete the task.

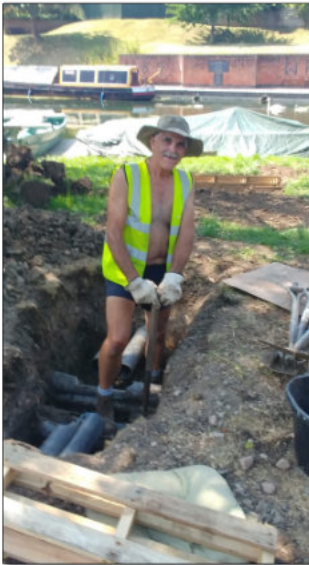


Container rearrangement and Portakabin reclaim

The site has been as it is for many years with all equipment, storage and welfare amenities remaining the same but getting worse in status. The idea of their replacement with a new build (Mill Barn) has been mooted for many years, with the first inclination drafted and submitted for building application to the local authorities – but not pursued. This request unfortunately has now expired and a new one will be required.

One of the outcomes of the initial request was that a flood report would be required. This has now become available and as reported previously in the Wharfinger the location for a new build is where the existing containers are now. So, to do a build first we have to move the current container locations. You would think this would be easy. Well, when you dig into what is required it has become a big task!!

Firstly, finding where the services to the existing Portakabin are fed from and how they get to their destinations – with little to no documentation. This has now been completed and re-engineering the route to be diverted to the new one is underway. Diggers to create new service duct trenches, new service chambers created and a new services building similar to the ones existing provided are all to be undertaken. Then alteration and provision of appropriate water and electrical pipework and cabling all before we activate a suitable company to assist with the lifts.



Much is now done but probably 50% of the project is still to be completed before we are fully embedded into the new welfare location, with three, dry, containers to house the equipment required to keep the site looking as it should.

The current team here are all in awe of the achievements the previous H&G volunteers have done which must have involved working many thousands of hours to bring the canal terminus back from the grave, literally.



Water pump

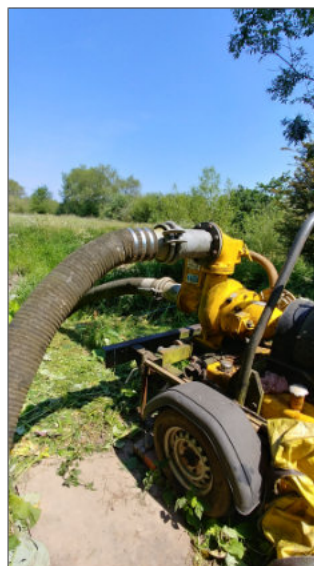
During the winter the water levels in the basin are from good old nature; however, with the summer brings potential for human intervention and in our case this means a diesel powered pump. The pump is stored in a flood free area during the winter and installed to a tried and tested plan of pipes, flotation devices and ropes when the summer progresses.

With the wonderfully dry May and June we have had, the water levels required the pump. The team towed the trailered pump to the Leaddon bank and duly installed all the pipework etc. Fired the machine up, the diesel fired into action and then nothing!

No water was pumping, now what is to be done?!! The team worked together to see what the problem might be. A few phone calls were made, knowledge gained, and an internet obtained manual with illustration of parts offered us more to work on. It appeared the automatic vacuum system was not working and so a strip down and clean of the diaphragm and associated valves was completed.

Rebuild and fingers crossed the diesel burst into life and moments later the water gushed into the cut at an amazing rate. Job done for now.

The next problem encountered was that the newly fettled vacuum system was now operating at such a rate that it imploded one of the old system pipes. So, when a quote was obtained from the manufacturer at £250 for less than two metres of reinforced pipe an alternative was needed.



Once again phone calls were made and a local supplier in Ross suggested with a suitable replacement found and installed for £17, amazing what can be achieved!!

So, all is working and then what, the rains came in July negating the need for weekly water pumping, but I suppose we the team have greater knowledge of another piece of equipment required by the H&G trust.

All of the above was undertaken by a few loyal volunteers that the H&G trust thank enormously.

The tasks illustrated are as well as the general site upkeep. If you fancy joining us, then please contact me.

Dave Goff



Malswick News



Several weeks of fine weather enabled the Malswick team to make great progress.

The next section of the cut was excavated and partially filled with water. The sides were smoothed to help make them watertight by Malcolm Clivery using a 13 tonne machine from 1st Call. The length achieved so far is best seen in the drone picture from the west end of the site.



The next section of the Malswick project involves placing a bridge across the canal to enable farm traffic to access their fields.

It will be positioned close to the centre of the field between our two woodlands. The bridge was bought some years ago (£1) and was stored at the Keyways compound about a mile away. A 32 tonne excavator was used to carefully lower the bridge onto sleepers ready for our team to inspect and make it ready.





In addition to all the digging and shaping of the canal, many other essential tasks have continued in the background; mowing, strimming, watering hedging, logging up, surveying, machine maintenance and preparing planning applications. Our mission would surely be impossible without these activities.

Bob Hargreaves checks the levels with his trusty laser sensor:

A geological survey professional assesses the soil structure at what will be canal bed level.



Throughout the dry weather lorry loads of material were brought on site to fill the large dip over the big culvert. This was spread and compacted by Keyways operators, so that there is little sign of the big culvert put in last summer. Given a run of dry weather the western end of the cut could be in water by autumn.

The final leg of the present phase beyond West Wood needs careful, often complicated and time consuming consideration, but despite the many frustrations we hope to start digging this later in the year.

An overview of the next section can be seen on the drone photograph of West Wood and field that will form part of the next planning application. Photographs by Mark Atkin and Alan McBride - drone images by Steve Wright

Members Open Afternoon at Malswick



Come along and see for yourselves how the new section of canal is progressing.

On Saturday 23rd September the site will be open to all from 2 – 5pm. Volunteers will be there to help you walk the site to explain all that has been going on. There will also be access to the newly purchased land so you can see the next section. Refreshments will be provided, in a marquee, just in case there are some showers.

The Malswick site is along the B4215 (Newent to Gloucester Road), around 500 metres beyond Malswick House if coming from Newent, just opposite All About Dogs on your right. Coming from Gloucester up the B4215, just after TRAC (Tom Roberts Adventure Centre) just opposite All About Dogs on your left. Please pull into the site entrance on your right and you will be directed where to park. Please wear sturdy shoes as the site is still uneven.

Debbie Barber

Aylestone Park



On a fine day in May, Tony, Chris and I set up an information stall by the slipway to gain opinions of the community basin. We had a number of people drop by and all positive about the idea of developing part of the park into a basin for all to use.



Even the local Fire Service came to have a look. As the access to water is so good at Aylestone Park with the slipway, the Fire Service use it to check the pumps out.

They suck water from the canal via the fire engine mounted pump and then pipe it back into the canal. The picture above shows them using a pump that if required can be carried directly to an incident.



Ralph Barber

Yarkhill



We were saddened to learn of the death, on Saturday the 24th June, of John Kilpatrick.

Besides being a volunteer at Yarkhill, valued by us as much for his company as for his knowledge and drive, he will be known to many through his active membership of the Trust Board.

I am however happy to report we now have our mower up and working again. After trying various options our volunteer Harold made a suggestion which finally did the trick. It has since been put to good use dealing with the sudden growth spurt of the vegetation.

As with Oxenhall in the last issue of the Wharfinger, we have had a bench donated, this time by the family of Paul Hatt. A concrete base has been built along the towpath into which the bench has been fixed securely after an application of preservative.



Bob Comba

Kymin

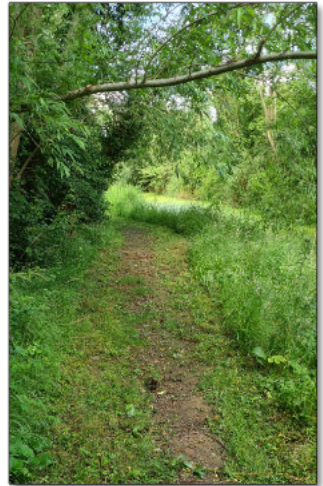
The Kymin site enables a nice walk along a nature corridor with fish in the canal, wild flowers and lots of bird life.

On a non-work party day I was walking down the towpath and spotted this buzzard in the undergrowth – keeping very still so he wouldn't get scared off from what I assume would be his catch of the day.

A small working party normally takes place on the second Sunday of the month.

In July this was put back a week due to the weather forecast – only for it to turn out to be a lovely day – and of course it drizzled the following week! A short visit ensued with some branch removal and a run up the tow path with the mower to keep it nice and trim.

Ralph Barber



Social evenings

After a very successful look back at 40 years of the Society we went even further back. Nick Haynes came and told us of the restoration of FMC President, the only steam powered narrowboat in existence.

After the AGM in June, our July speaker was Meyrick Brentall, who is involved with many projects to establish Nature and Eco parks in the Severn Vale, with particular reference to Alney Island and Llanthony lock areas of Gloucester.

We are looking for someone to look after the tech requirements of the speaker – the Trust has its own projector and screen – many of the speakers are self-sufficient.

Please give this some thought – many thanks – our upcoming socials are listed on p27.

Janet Moulton

Tales from the Workshop

Things have bucked this quarter, as reported at the AGM the feared biogester has been returned to service and up to this point appears to be working and is fragrance free.

Kee, the manufacturers, were called in to sign the project off, they reset some critical sensors and checked the operation which they were quite happy with. It still lets out soft pitiful cry every revolution, but Kee says ignore it and things should improve.



The Kubota tractor is now battle ready, its transmission woes now hopefully sorted and the electrical gremlins slain after a ferocious fight. Blown fuses, chafed wires and faulty units presented the biggest challenge. A small chunk of plastic was the only clue to a disintegrated interlock switch, but Hopkins at Gorsley were able to furnish a new one so off to fight another day.

The Grillo has been migrated to Over to cover the loss of stationing the Kubota full time on site. With the acquisition of additional acreage at Malswick House and the onerous demands of Dymock the Kubota is now heavily committed. It was tenderly uplifted at Malswick House where upon it promptly died.



The poor thing was transferred to Longhope for a week's strip down and trace of its electrics. We have never been able to conjure up a wiring diagram for this machine so it's painstaking hand over hand ring throughs.

Lack of chassis continuity was corrected by a 10 mm earth return cable and moving the earth station. It came back to life but the level of strip down needed can be seen in the pic.



The Lister / Sellwood pump has performed sterling work in charging the newly constructed canal but has been taken seriously ill. Overheating and consuming vast quantities of lubricating oil, has been being rushed to the workshop for a major strip down.

Piston ring failure is suspected. The Sellwood water pump side was extensively rebuilt last year and worked really well so a bit of a blow.



The Dymock pump is now back in service and performing well. The site has permanent observation status, therefore we are reliant on Roger, a highly competent wildlife and bird expert with links to the RSPB, to ensure we stay well within official guidelines.

We have now fully automated the pump and pool levels and together with its smart meter supply we should be able to breathe easy.

Chris Phelps

H&G Stamp Appeal



– how we turn old postage stamps into CASH!

I'm often asked how I convert the donated stamps, especially the common ones, into cash for the H&G, so let me explain:

1. The on-paper stamps are separated from any off-paper ones, throwing away any that are damaged.
2. The off-paper stamps are made up into 250gms bags of GB or the rest of the World.
3. The on-paper stamps are trimmed as necessary and made up into 1kg bags of:
 - a) GB definitives (the common sovereign's head type);
 - b) GB commemoratives / special issues; or
 - c) the rest of the World.
4. The off-paper bags usually sell for £5.00 each.

5. The on-paper bags sell for: GB definitives @ £1.50; GB commemoratives @ £5.00 - £10.00*; World @ £10.00 - £25.00*.

* The eventual prices of these are individually determined by the quality of the content and whether the customer is one of my “regulars” or a one-off buyer.



Before packaging



After packaging

Fortunately, I have several customers who will take anything and everything of the above, so supply of the raw materials (ie your stamps) is the only limiting factor.

Likewise, I also have customers waiting for old albums, whole collections etc, although the more valuable items may also be sold via a specialist philatelic auction.

So you see, nearly everything even vaguely philatelic has a value and can be turned into cash for the H&G.

Either hand in what you've got to Janet at any social meeting or send them directly to me, Steve Bence, H&G Stamps, 35 Lime Road, SOUTHAM, Warwickshire, CV47 1EQ

Many thanks for your continuing support – Next Stop £5,500.

Steve Bence

Swans at Over



Sam the Over Swan - Three lonely years after losing his family, I'm pleased to say Sam has finally found happiness again. He's been coming and going from his resident home at Over, sometimes staying away for months on end, then returning lonely and occasionally battered and bruised by other swans.

But in January this year he returned with a new Pen. A petite little female that wouldn't come anywhere near us. Hesitant at first, she started to gain our trust and eventually joined Sam at his feeding station. I noticed she had been ringed, so after several attempts I managed to get the number from her tag.

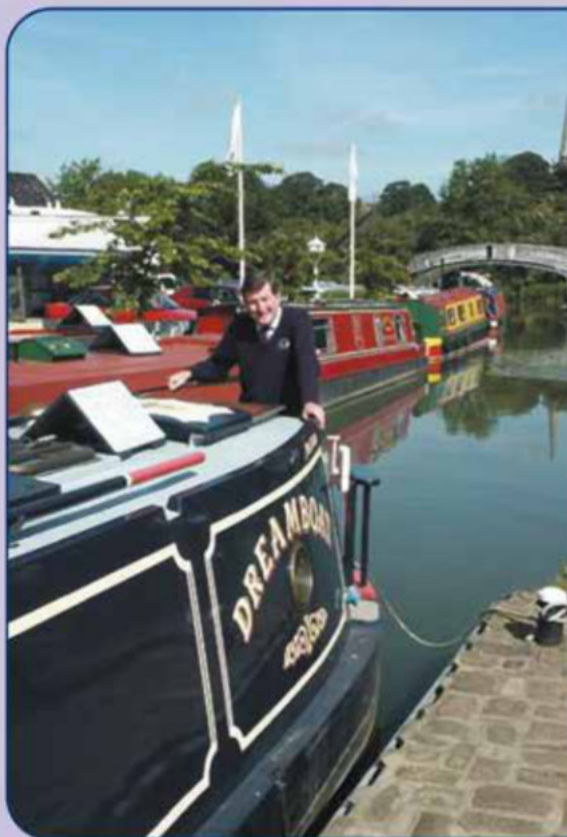
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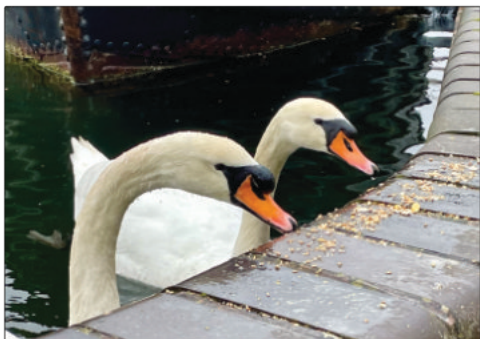
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I rang the BTO and they were able to tell me, she is a grand old age of seventeen and was ringed as a yearling at the Slimbridge Wetlands. She left the Wetlands at the age of three in search of a lifelong partner. She would have had many years of breeding until eventually her partner probably died.

In April the two Swans started to mate but Sam was understandably wary, he wasn't able to find a suitable nesting spot on the canal, so they disappeared along the Leaddon for more privacy. At the end of May they returned to the canal with just two baby cygnets.



It's a delight to see two ageing swans, both having lost previous partners, finding a new life together. Sally (as I've named her) has become a perfect addition to our canal and a brilliant mother to her young. We can but hope that visitors to Over respect these beautiful Swans and if they do, I'm sure they will go on to live a few more blissful and untroubled years.

Monica Hamer

Tow to Go

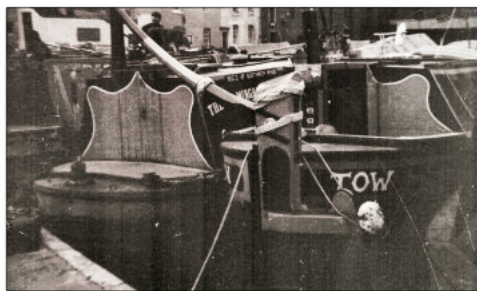


This is the continuing story in the life of Tow. Tow started life as a River Class butty, built by EC Jones & Son of Brentford in 1961 for British Transport Waterways, a division of the British Transport Commission.

The River Class boats were a new design of narrowboat, designed to be cheap and simple to construct and to have 20% extra carrying capacity over more traditional boats. They were built of welded steel sections and used blue glass fibre hatch covers instead of cloth covers.

Tow would have worked carrying cargo as required, but after the disbanding of the British Waterways carrying fleet in 1963 it would have passed into maintenance work. At some time after that, possibly in the 1970s, Tow's cabin was removed and it was converted into a mud hopper based at Icknield Port in Birmingham, it is in this form that we see it today.

This first part of the article was first published in 2016 on the trust website...cont



These pictures, believed to be the same Tow in Gas St Basin on the BCN, are from the Trust archive.

Through the curlicued mists of time, Tow came into the ownership of the H&GCT but we, having little navigable water for her to exercise her bargista skills, ended up lending her to a chap who used her for storage for his canal-side business. As the business was wound up, Tow was returned to our trusteeship and moored, 'temporarily' at the Alvechurch wharf. Since her early days, the rules have changed and two weeks is now the most that a craft can remain 'temporarily' moored. Moving Tow became a necessity for the Trustees to arrange.

Being a bit slow on the uptake when all other Trustees had provided quite plausible excuses as to why they were unmoved with respect to moving Tow, it fell to your correspondent to perform the appropriate offices, and so a family party set out for Alvechurch with rope, hope and anchoring capability one sunny Sunday. Tow has no engine, canal tugs are these days in short supply, and none of my friends seemed to have an appropriate horse for drawing.

A bow haul was therefore the indicated form of the required movement. To be honest it was actually rather fun, a definite case of 'one each end and steady as she goes'. With my son and his new fiancée on the bow rope, me gently controlling the stern and wife on camera duty, Tow slid easily away from the bank and past the marina moorings, round the bend, over the aqueduct and so to a new 'two week' spot to stay.



So long as you are not trying to get anywhere quickly, bow hauling was not as strenuous as it might sound. No brakes and control by gently tugging on the stern line to keep the bow pointing down the cut seemed to work just fine. Stop pulling and she quietly slows to a

stop in around two barge lengths. In these days of exercise holidays, I am beginning to think that noisy diesels are no longer necessary and battery power will now do for the non-pullers. A suitable spot of bank was found and after banging in a couple of mooring pins and making her fast, a slightly faster retreat to the pub for necessary refreshment was a fine end to a good pull.

Tow was and is a working dumb barge, 70 feet by 7 (ish) her steel hull is sound and the 30 foot hold in the middle keeps water and mud in, as you can tell from the few inches of rain water in the bottom. Either end the deck is plated with a few holes around the edges and there are hatches leading to the sort of dark dank compartment where James Bond villains keep their unfortunate enemies. Eeek!



If you are now thinking, 'this would make an interesting restoration project' for a college, student or historic group or indeed a dedicated individual then please make yourself known to the Trustees. Interest in restoring heritage boats from around the turn of the 20th century is now strong and who is to say that in 50 years time, boats built around the middle of the 20th century will not attract the same interest! For now the Trust has no immediate use for a mud hopper barge and so the decision of the Trustees is that Tow should initially be offered to other Trusts on a lease basis and if there is no interest, eventually sold. So if you have a good use for a 'Tow' or know someone who has, please get in touch as she is now on the 'disposal list' for the Trust.

Tony Higgins

Braunston Historic Narrow Boat Rally



They say nostalgia ain't what it used to be, I beg to disagree. The range of fabulous boats and fabulous bits on display and on offer was wonderful to see at the Rally, which took place at Braunston Marina on 24 & 25 June.

But first, thanks must go to the core promotions team of Janet Moulton, Ginny Birkett and Steve Bence, assisted occasionally by Penny Shetlife (Sunday) and your author (Tony Higgins – Saturday), who between us staffed the stand making sales of £140.00 and many friends.

Following the not quite seasonal heat of mid-June we were hoping that it may be a bit cooler for the event as our stand was set within the main marquee at Braunston Marina. The core team did a great job of setting up the stand ready for the onset of people. As I arrived at 9:30 Saturday, everything was done and it looked just fine, see photo.



Around us were a couple of other restoration sites, including The Friends of President (the last remaining steam-powered working boat) and a number of stalls selling local crafts, such as wooden bird boxes in the shape of canal locks or boat sterns, a canal book stall and a canal based clothing company.

Interestingly there was no Inland Waterways Association in our tent this year – they had their own cosy billet outside in their own tent.

After an initial coffee, Janet and Steve kindly volunteered to take first shift allowing Ginny and I to have a wander. Apart from the usual food and drink outlets there was the opportunity to look over an historic boat which was available to hire, some beautiful old diesels on display with examples from Gardner, Lister, Russell Newbery and even Ailsa Craig – who knew they made diesels in the early days?



The Association of Canal Artists had a tent to themselves and there was a fiercely expensive leather clothing stall.

The number of historic boats was impressive, moored three or four deep along the tow path of the main canal.

Next up was the procession, led by Pete Waterman (music entrepreneur and steam engine enthusiast) on the helm of steam-powered tug 'Hasty' close coupled with butty 'Kildare'. Hasty is a remarkable piece of kit being designed and built in modern times as a replica of a 'tunnel tug'. Swinging a massive prop and with the power of steam some impressive manoeuvring was observed. As they entered the marina the brass band struck up playing their take on 'Baggy Trousers', originally by Madness. Great noises.

Whilst I was out and about, I missed the presentation of a £200 cheque to the trust from Tim Coghlan, presented by David Suchet!

Back in the main tent it was definitely warming up, there was a particularly smokey traditional diesel outside.

Nice noise, shame about the

smell, and so the exit door by the stand had been shut to keep out the fumes. Luckily it stopped and all doors opened. Ginny did a fine job of dismantling the side of the tent by our stand and a reasonable breeze made the afternoon bearable, if still seriously warm. There was a constant flow of people visiting the stand providing conversation and entertainment and even buying stuff. Many boat owners, who were prone to asking when they could use the H&G, but also local people and families just interested in canals. The time passed quite quickly and ice creams were had for tea.



In the 1970s when I first got interested in canals, it was the norm to convert old working boats to provide a full length cabin and comfortable living space. Nowadays many historic boats have been converted back to have a traditional stern cabin and 'cloths' covering the hold. President's butty 'Kildare' was in port and I was lucky enough to be given a guided tour under the cloths to see how the Friends of President live when crewing. Bunk beds and stainless galley looked utilitarian, but after all when out on the cut you are out in the open air for most of the time. Kildare's traditional stern cabin had been restored a while back to original specification and looked wonderful with great attention to detail, letting one's imagination slip back to the early days of the last century when the whole family would have made a home in that small space. A certain amount of patination due to use added to the authentic feel.

The team allowed me to leave before the end to get back to an event in Ledbury and I just had time to pop in and brief Penny for her stint on Sunday, which I gather went well.

Though Braunston is a long way, by boat or car, from Hereford and Gloucester it is useful to keep our name out there in the canal world and I look forward to next year's event. The last chap I spoke to lives in Malvern and is looking to buy an historic boat, he was hoping there might be somewhere to moor on the H&G. We live in hope.

Tony Higgins





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Grand Holiday Draw - Winning Holiday Trip



Firstly – a big thank you to my mum for entering me into a raffle where the 1st prize was a canal holiday for one week. It was donated by Black Prince Holidays based in Stoke Prior, Worcestershire and as unbiased as I can be they treated us with warmth, professionalism, and a real sense of passion for the canal way of life. I couldn't recommend more highly going with them if you are considering chartering a boat.

It was a complete shock when I got a call from Janet Moulton from the H & G Canal Trust to say that I had won the raffle and a real gift from the universe as living on a canal boat has always been a long-term goal, but I'd never set foot on one before now. It was, as they say, a 'Baptism of Fire'.



Dan and Alex at Droitwich Spa

However, due to the school holidays and the fact that we were unable to take the prize in the peak season, it meant taking our chances with the weather and heading out over the Easter holidays.

As it happened we started out on the worst possible day in the history of canal boating. 2 men, 2 boys, driving rain and gales so strong that they were blowing this mini tanker like a sail into the banks with any slight movement of the tiller. No previous helming experience, 7 locks to get through and no one on board having ever operated one before.

By the second hour my eldest son was in tears demanding that we turn the boat around and head back to base. Of course what you don't give a thought to was that even if we wanted to do that, we couldn't as there's only a few places you can turn on this one-way street and the next point to do this was our destination for the night at Hanbury Junction, where we would be going right in the morning towards Droitwich and starting the Mid Worcestershire ring along to the River Severn and down to Worcester, before completing the circle and coming back to base.

But more important than any route plans was getting to The Eagle pub, Hanbury by 7:30pm as Tuesday was 2 for 1 carvery night. We arrived soaked with 10 minutes to spare and stuffed ourselves stupid. Nearing a comatose state with excess calories, my sons were happy and tired enough not to talk about returning anymore.

And in the morning, a real highlight, with bright sunshine and opening the rear hatch, ducks swimming past the boat. That day we made our way to Droitwich Spa to be met by members of my family to come on board and hang out on a real live, moored canal boat.

On day three we head towards the River Severn. We don't see a single boat coming our way. It's still very gusty and we travel through reed beds that look like they're from a Louisiana swamp. As we approach the junction to the Severn, we're actually quite nervous. What would the water be like with all of the rainfall and winds of the previous days. Luckily there was a break in the weather and beautiful sunshine emerged. A chance to have a snooze at this tranquil junction to the Severn.

We had a bit of trouble getting in contact with the lock keeper of the manned Belvedere lock which is a big feature on this part of the Severn (presuming that this was down to the lack of traffic and the need for it to be manned at this time of year), so we were stuck at the junction for an hour and a half before getting permission to proceed down to this whopper of a lock.

We entered with trepidation, we shouted a bit – too close to the gate, move back – no I can't/won't – why not? – it's not easy you know – that kind of thing, and then we were through, and we sailed down the river into beautiful Worcester.

That journey through to Worcester was certainly the boating highlight for me for the week. So peaceful and lovely on the Severn and we saw lots of different water-based activity from paddle boards to canoes and even girls sitting on the banks singing songs to the boaters (well – only us really)!

It was dusk as we came out of the river into the canal system and there was plenty of space to moor up in Worcester and grab a pizza. It had been an exhausting day but we felt a real sense of achievement.

Worcester is a beautiful city and it's incredible to be on the canal section hidden away from the traffic and to be able to make your way through, tucked away in peace. This is what has always attracted me to canals as it is such an escape route from busy life (cliché I



Dan's boys on lock duty

know, but as someone who spends half of his life in traffic, it was a relief to just be slow).

From Worcester it got a bit messier with a stop at The Bridge pub in the village of Tibberton on the way back to Hanbury where we met up with some old friends and spent the night moored up at the side of the pub.

Back to Hanbury now – most of the guests have left but there's still time to squeeze in some more friends who visit for the last day and we all make our way back to Stoke Prior like experts, exhausted but definitely wooed into this new way of life.

Jolly good.

Dan Church

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. We couldn't do it without you.

The winning tickets in this years Grand Holiday Draw will be drawn at the Social Evening at The Royal Oak, Much Marcle, on 21 September 2023.

Editor

Upcoming socials



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

21 September 2023 **Dick Skeet – Stephen Ballard**
and the Grand Holiday Draw!

19 October 2023 **Stephen Chown – a light-hearted quiz** built around waterways and transport and, in the main, illustrated by slides. We aim for a welcoming and informative atmosphere for new and existing members alike.

16 November 2023 **Harold Armitage with more tales from South America**
who knows where Harold will take us this time!

Winter Fayre

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CANAL TRUST



Winter Fayre – Would you like to help?



Our Winter Fayre is one of the big events of the year for us, where we showcase our projects and raise much needed funds in an enjoyable way.

Pat Skeet, with help from hubby Dick, has organised this successful event for many years, but they are now ready to move nearer to family away from our area. Pat has asked me to take on organising the Winter Fayre, and of course I said yes to such a lovely lady. I really appreciate her work over the years and wish to repeat its success. She is a hard act to follow, but I shall do my best to keep up to her standards and efficiency – so, thank you, Pat, for being an H&G Star and I wish you both a happy retirement.

When I first joined my local canal trust back in the 1970s, I wanted to be involved but was not confident to take on a big task. So, I put my toe in the water by helping our sales stand, knowing others around me knew their stuff, so I would not embarrass myself.

Subsequently, I have been involved in canal restoration (in a no dig way!) for many years and have found it very satisfying to feel part of an extended family all wanting to achieve a navigable canal in their area.

... so here I am taking on one of the big events and I would like to extend an invitation to new members of H&G, especially in the Newent area, to step a toe into volunteering, by joining me to make this year's Winter Fayre another success.

WHY NOT GET INVOLVED ?



I am happy to discuss possibilities with you before you commit but, please, give it a try? If you are a longstanding member who now has some time to help I would love to hear from you too!

I look forward to hearing from you by email to me at ... winterfayre@h-g-canal.org.uk

MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK

Ginny Birkett – 2023 Winter Fayre Organiser

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.. and from our colleagues at the Inland Waterways Association with their response to the proposed government cuts in funding for the waterways. Please take time find out more and consider supporting the campaign.

<https://waterways.org.uk/fund-britains-waterways>

The Brian Sheppard Award

Brian Sheppard was born in Pontypridd near the Glamorganshire Canal in which he became interested at an early age. He became an IWA member and had an absorbing interest in canals – in their history and engineering and in cruising widely over our waterways system. An engineer by profession, Brian and his family lived for many years in the Bridgend area and, latterly, after retirement, they moved to Llansawel, Carmarthenshire, with Brian retaining his waterways interests.

In January 2001, Brian died suddenly whilst abroad on holiday. A substantial sum of money, donated in lieu of flowers by many people attending the funeral, was given to the IWA South Wales Branch by the family. The Branch Committee decided it would be appropriate to commemorate Brian's life and his contribution to the waterways cause by making an annual award.

After discussion with Brian's family, it was decided that the award should take the form of an authentic model of a Glamorganshire Canal Boat designed and made by John Burden, who is an acknowledged expert in this field.

The Award is made on an annual basis to a member, or members, in recognition of a significant contribution to the Association's campaign in the Region or some part of it.

The IWA South West & South Wales Region Committee were delighted to award the Brian Sheppard Award 2023 to Joyce Potts, in recognition of her work as Editor of the IWA regional newsletter 'Sou'Wester'. Therefore, as she is stepping down from the role, this is a very well deserved time to receive it! The circulation of the Sou'Wester is such an important way we stay in touch with our members in the region and the time it takes to put it together often goes unnoticed behind the scenes.



*Photo: The IWA South West & South Wales Chair Hannah Sterritt presenting the award to Joyce Potts aboard the MV Balmoral with IWA West Country Branch Chairman, Ray Alexander in the background.
Photo Credit: Mike Potts, H&GCT & IWA member*

She has been the Editor since August 2015 and is currently working on her last issue before the new Editor, Sandy Wright, takes over the role.

Joyce joined the H&GCT when it was still a canal society in 1990 and has served in a number of different roles ranging from a Director of the Sales Company 1992–98; Trade Liaison officer; Craft Fair organiser; and also Outings & Weekend Breaks organiser with her husband Mike; but has been an armchair member since 2003.

She says she is absolutely shocked and delighted to be given this award. She added that she never knew Brian Sheppard but knows his daughter, Caroline Jones, who is also a member of the H&GCT.

Joyce Potts



**HEREFORDSHIRE
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**CANAL WALK No.8
LEDBURY**

This walk starts at the Leaden Vale car park near the Ledbury bypass (Leaden Way). It incorporates the route of the original canal through the town then turns back into the town, then taking a section of the Herefordshire Trail back towards the River Leaden where the canal may be re-routed around Ledbury to join its original route at the Old Wharf. It is a dog friendly walk with only a short run of wooden steps towards the end of the walk to navigate. There are no stiles. The walk can be muddy in places

Location:	The start of the walk is
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	What3Words //passenger.fizzled.observers
Parking:	There is limited parking at the Leaden Valley picnic site.
Distance	4.2 miles
Time:	2 hours (approx.)

New Canal Walk Leaflet



Our range of Canal Walk Leaflets now features a new addition, this time covering a walk within the town of Ledbury.

There are now eight walks covered by this popular set.

This one takes in sections of the old line that were lost beneath the railway, gives an opportunity to see some of the remaining infrastructure, and passes along the line that the restored canal will take west of the town centre.

Copies of the new leaflet are available from our sales and promotion team, or as part of the full set from our online shop at www.h-g-canal.org.uk/shop.

We hope to add further walks in due course, and would welcome ideas for developing new ones.

Nick Dymott

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Want to know more about what is going on? Help the board move further forward by taking the minutes at the H&G board meetings and AGM. We typically meet on the second Wednesday of the month from 2pm to 4pm. We meet at different venues along the canal corridor as well as holding digital meetings around 11 times a year. If helping the H&G by supporting the board and getting to know what is happening first hand is something that could interest you, please get in touch.

Project leaders



We have a number of projects that we are wanting to move forward, but they need people to lead them. Along the canal corridor we have plans that are at various stages of development and need project leaders to take the leadership of them. Without leaders these projects will only drift along slowly as current leaders in the H&G Trust are already overloaded. Interested in leading a project and helping the H&G Canal Trust restore further lengths of canal?

Fundraising



Working with leaders of the trust in understanding the projects we have going on and wanting to start up will help a fundraiser to investigate possible grants. A number of sources exist with grant information. We need a volunteer to investigate these for possible grants that we could be applying for. The volunteer doesn't necessarily have to be getting out and about, or could live well away from the canal but does need to be comfortable at using a computer to investigate grants. Once a potential grant is found and a project aligned with it, they could assist the leader further by working together to help make the grant application successful.

Community



We are improving our updates to the community by more posting on Facebook, updating our website and our YouTube channel is going very well. A number of sites have regular updates to the signage to keep the local walkers and others informed. To develop this further we need someone who is willing to engage with community groups to get them involved in the sites, e.g. Duke of Edinburgh Award groups can add value to sites by helping to clear bush and paint bridges – we have a few that need doing. Scouts have also worked at Kymin. We need someone to help develop these relationships so that we can develop the volunteers of the future and help push forward projects like the Community Basin at Aylestone Park.

Anyone interested in assisting with one or more of the above roles should get in touch with Chairman Ralph by email at chairman@h-g-canal.org.uk or phone on 01432 853086.

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A New Boat at Malswick

Over 13 years ago the branch of Cotswold Canals Trust (CCT) was donated a fine wooden rowing boat which they kept in storage at their Eastern Branch depot. However, the depot had to be moved and the boat was left in the open.

Mark Atkin, a member of the CCT and H&GCT asked if it was possible for the boat to be given to our trust, and through Robert Lindsey of the CCT Eastern Depot it was agreed that we could have the boat. Mark made a generous donation to CCT and the task of transporting the boat to Malswick began.



Many thanks are due to the volunteers at the Eastern Depot for their help in getting the boat onto Robert Heigham's trailer.

At Malswick, to much laughter, communal advice and a degree of acrobatics the first boat in 150 years was on this section of the cut.

Photographs by Alan McBride and Mark Atkin

Rumour has it that there might be some video footage of the Malswick Red Boat actually moving around on the water, but you have to know who to ask in order to see it....

Editor



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At the time of writing, it is early June, the Over site looks a picture from the quay wall or once you have passed the rusty containers.

The Model Boat Club has had some fine sailing this spring and sparked a decision to re-introduce our pre-Covid Fun Day. Sunday June 4th was the selected day. Members joining the Club in recent years had never enjoyed a social gather fun day. Fingers crossed the weather would brighten up and members would attend.

The Club set about the basin for a serious weeding day, rakes, draglines and wheelbarrows were put to good use. Tea, cake and sausage rolls kept the workers in motion. A few days later the murky waters were looking splendid. The unfortunate lack of barge movement has certainly allowed the weed to take hold.



A few days before the anticipated day the Friday Micro Magic racing took place, nineteen yachts, our biggest ever competitive sailing fleet raced with hardly any weed interference. Even the breeze played its part.

The appointed day arrived with an inviting sunny morning. John our harbour master had already scanned the waters for any offending weed. Extra tables and chairs were laid out for the anticipated members. As mid-morning approached so did the members. Tables were soon festooned with cakes, coffee and tea flowed. Models were unloaded, the bring and buy table ever changed.

The sun was now good and bright as participants assembled for the steering competition. The sailing fraternity followed for their competition. Members along with family picnicked on the bank side. The afternoon competitions continued while a strong resonance of chatter competed with nature.

A bring and buy stall saw various components and finance changing hands. Alan Drewett from the Jet Age Museum had laid out a factual diorama of a vintage plane crash, fine details were observed, fire tenders distributing foam over the burning plane. Throughout the day a steady stream of visitors to the site admired the Club's activities. As tea time called the competition winners received their prizes although I think the prize must go to all the Club members who turned out.

Ted Tedaldi

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Sailing4Disabled



Hi everyone,

Well as for rain stops play, this doesn't seem to be the case at Sailing. We now attract a regular 21 clients weekly with as many 37 a week ago, with all boats and the water-bike in great demand, as a full work out.

We have great news as Vince has at last had his heart surgery, and we can't wait to see him at Sailing.

We also have a new helper, Alan, who talked to a potential client on his first day on a stand who did not know of us or that Over Wharf was in Gloucester, and they were born in Gloucester! He turned up the next week to see if he would like being on the water, and has been every week since. Well done, Alan.

How many times have you tried to encourage a person to try your hobby and never seen them again.

Well, that's all from me, Pirate Pete and crew at Sailing4Disabled.

P S if I've missed anybody's achievements, send them to me on a Ten Pound note to Fundraiser Sailing4Disabled.

Pete Bisson



YouTube fans – this is for you.



As you may be aware, the Trust has its own YouTube channel from which it can derive a small income. To do so, we need to build our subscriber base.

Please consider subscribing (it's free), and sharing the channel with others to help us develop this opportunity.

Just scan this QR Code with your phone, and then select Subscribe on the pop up on screen, and just like that, you are subscribing (you can unsubscribe at any time).



Regular Volunteer Work Parties

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

Tuesdays

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

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

Second Sunday each month

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

Thursdays

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

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

As Required

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

Wharfinger

EDITION
158

Please submit your copy for Edition 158 to the magazine editorial team no later than 27 October 2023.

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

Advertisers supporting The Wharfinger

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

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Contact Details



Chair – Ralph Barber

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

Land and Environment – Richard Appleton

landandenvironment@h-g-canal.org.uk

Finance – Philip Marshall

01452 760301 finance@h-g-canal.org.uk

Projects – Eamonn McGurk

projects@h-g-canal.org.uk

Health and Safety – Ed Helps

07767 897861 healthsafety@h-g-canal.org.uk

Membership Sec – Tony Higgins

01432 850408 membership@h-g-canal.org.uk

Mail Order Sales – Janet Moulton

01432 264366
18 Coningsby Court, Coningsby Street, Hereford
HR1 2DF mailorder@h-g-canal.org.uk

Fundraising with used stamps – Steve Bence

stamps@h-g-canal.org.uk

Wharfinger Editor – Nick Dymott

07526 254809 editor@h-g-canal.org.uk

Advertising – Ginny Birkett

01531 820345 ads@h-g-canal.org.uk

Email Newsletter – Debbie Barber

newsletter@h-g-canal.org.uk

General enquiries –

6 Castle Street, Hereford HR1 2NL
information@h-g-canal.org.uk

Site Operations – Dave Goff

site-operations@h-g-canal.org.uk

Over Interim Site Leader – Dave Goff

overbasin@h-g-canal.org.uk

Oxenhall Site Leader – Martin Boulton

oxenhall@h-g-canal.org.uk

Malswick Site Leader – Robert Heigham

01452 790498 malswick@h-g-canal.org.uk

Yarkhill Site Leader – Chris High

01568 615575 yarkhill@h-g-canal.org.uk

Herefordshire Roving Team – Ralph Barber

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

Hereford City Team Leader – Tony Higgins

01432 850408 herefordcity@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?

Please support our voluntary work by becoming a Member of the H&GCT. A membership application form is available online or from our Membership Secretary.

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

PLEASE NOTE: All subscriptions and donations are treated as being made under the Gift Aid scheme unless you state that you do not wish us to do this.

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greatly assists us and payment remains under your control.

All application forms and payments by cheque please to:
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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.

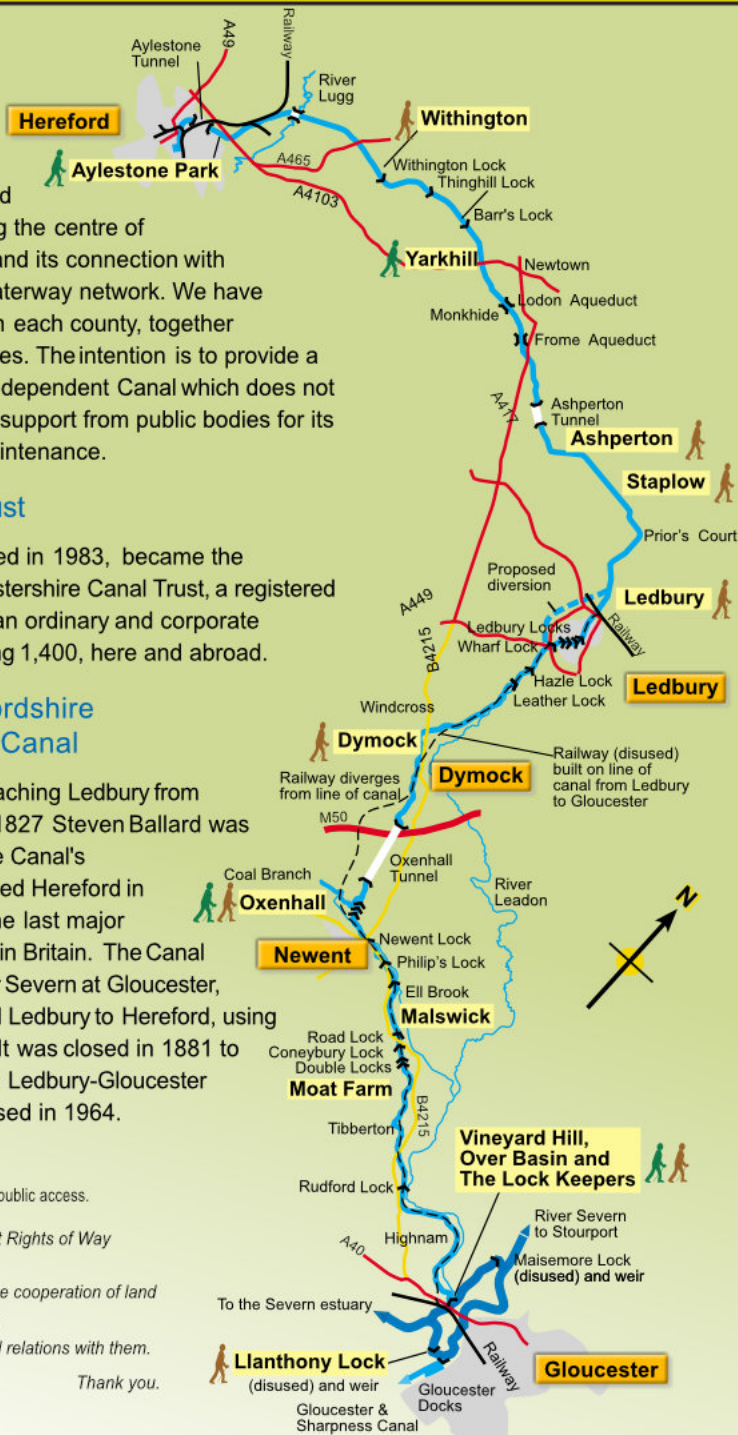
-  = Canal Walk leaflet available.
-  = Restoration sites suitable for public access.

*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.



The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service



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