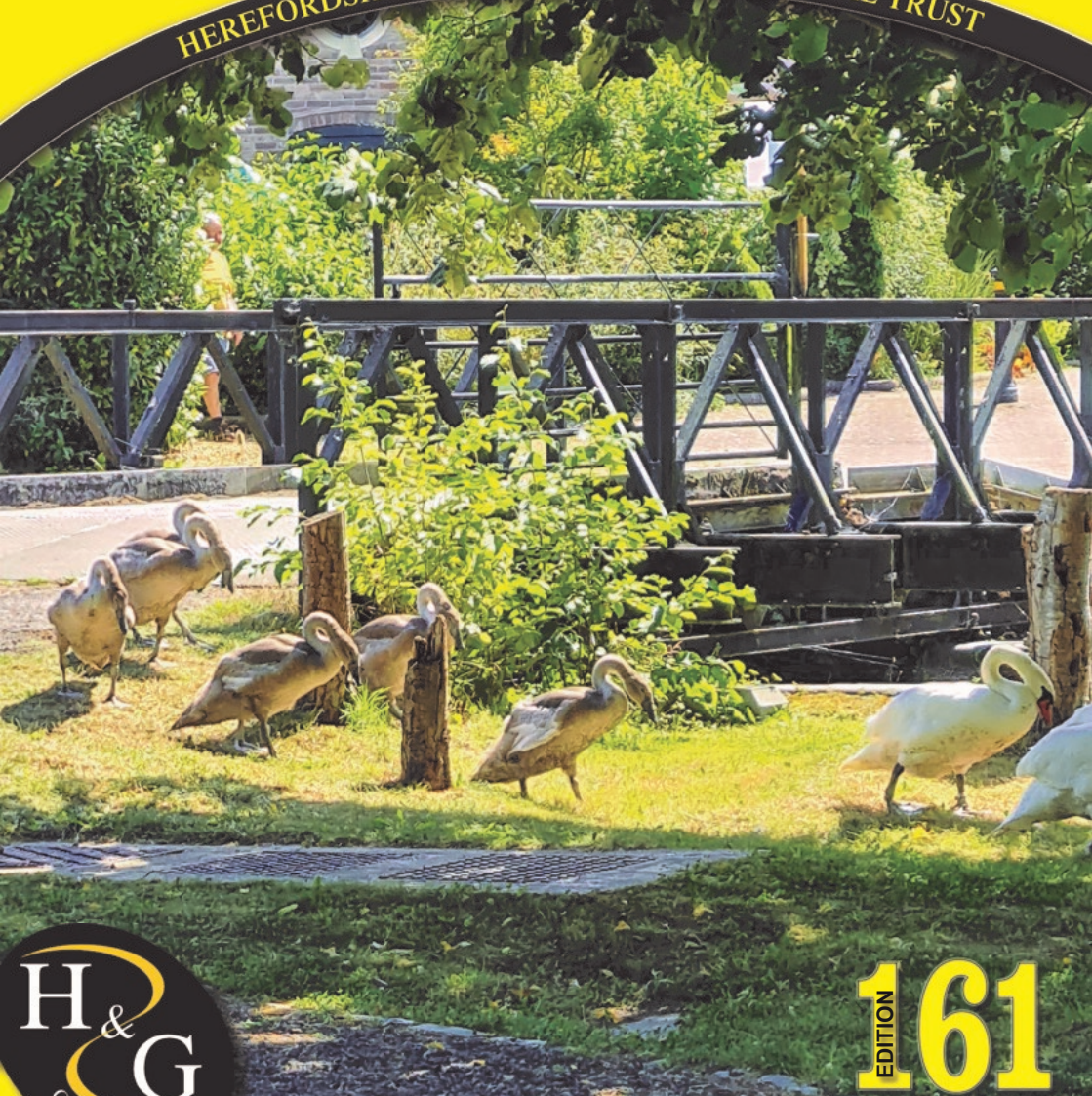


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Autumn 2024

The Wharfinger

HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST



161
EDITION

REBUILDING A SUSTAINABLE CANAL BETWEEN HEREFORD & GLOUCESTER

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Front cover image – Crossing the bridge at Over
Pic from Ralph Barber

What's in Edition 161...



Who Does What?	IFC	The Next Stage at Malswick	23
Trust Business	3	Walking the canal from end to end	25
Minutes of the HGCT AGM 26 June 2024	4	Sam and Sally the Over Canal Swans	26
Yarkhill News	6	Introduction to... Roger Morgan	29
Over News	7	So, what does the chair get up to?	30
Malswick News	10	Gloucester & District Model Boat Club	36
Oxenhall News	11	Fundraising with Used Stamps	37
Kymin News	11	Promotions Team Outings	37
Monkhide News	12	Xmas Cards	39
Tales from the Workshop	13	Upcoming Monthly Socials	39
Boat Trips at Over – Refreshments	15	Site Days	40
Sheila Walshaw RIP	15	Advertisers supporting The Wharfinger	40
More on the Braunston Historic Boat Rally	17	Contact Details	IBC
Promotions Team at Braunston 2024	21	Canal Map	OCB

Canal Walks



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

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Logs for Sale

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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

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I hope you enjoy this edition of the Wharfinger. You will see a lot is going on, boats on the canal in several places, see our YouTube channel for a great video of the lifting out of Alder, the first time in almost twenty years. It was good to hear that the hull is in good state – even for a boat that was first launched in 1931. A lot of discussion has occurred about the boats and plans are developing, more news on this next time.

Whilst on the boats, the trips we have been running every second Saturday of the month at Over have proved very positive with volunteers and passengers enjoying time on the water, with a few passengers coming back to enjoy the trips again. Discussions occurring about next year's trips ...

You will also find in this edition some great work completed by the team at Malswick to get us to the point where a planning application has been submitted to Forest of Dean District Council (FoDDC) for the next length of canal at Malswick.

Malswick: with all the work that has happened this year we have decided to hold an Open Event – this time including the general public – on the afternoon of 29 September between 2pm and 5pm. I hope that you will all come along and enjoy the site and see the progress that the team have made, as well as see the plans that are going through with the FoDDC as mentioned above. The plans will be easier to read than the descriptions in this issue due to the limited space/size we have in the Wharfinger.

We may also have some further news on Holmer, Monkhide and further ideas around Newent and Oxenhall that are being worked on.

Some disappointing news now, within this edition are the AGM minutes. I personally was disappointed at the turnout at the AGM. We just managed quorum. If we had not, it would have been delayed at least a week, then attempted again with extra cost to the H&G Canal Trust. While we must have an AGM as a charity, it is also an important meeting for the members as you get the chance to ask questions. The number of the questions asked have started several mini projects that I hope we can show you the results of in future editions.

Unfortunately, some very late news, at the last board meeting Eamonn McGurk stepped down followed by Vaughan Welch a few days later. They have both helped the H&GCT move forward while in post. I wish them and their families best wishes in the future.

I know I comment every time in the Wharfinger about always needing more volunteers and in the case of the board, more Trustees, and this time is no different. We need someone who will look at fundraising for us. This can start with looking at the many emails that come in and see if we are eligible and have an opportunity to apply for some grant monies. Once this filtering has occurred, we can then see what extra work is required to apply for the grant. Even a small grant will help us move the restoration forward of this beautiful canal across Herefordshire and Gloucestershire. Please consider if you can help.

Ralph Barber

Minutes of the HGCT AGM 26 June 2024



Meeting held at The Royal Oak, Ross Road, Much Marcle and on Zoom.

Chairman Ralph Barber welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Members Present at meeting:

In the room – 30, on Zoom – 3. Total 33

Apologies for absence:

Apologies received from Paul Brown, Clare Church, Gordon Lowthian, Eamonn McGurk, Margaret Orritt and Vaughan Welch.

Minutes of 2023 H&G AGM:

Richard Appleton proposed acceptance of the minutes, Tony Higgins seconded the proposal. The meeting approved.

Ralph Barber thanked everyone for attending and enough present to reach quorum.

Annual Report and Financial Statement:

The Trustees' report was printed in the summer edition of the Wharfinger No. 160 and sent to all members. The Financial Statement had been available to all via the website and on direct request for over six weeks. It was asked whether there were any queries or observations from the members – no questions had been received prior to the meeting. No questions were asked.

Appointment of an Independent Examiner:

Philip Marshall, Treasurer proposed that Griffiths Marshall, Gloucester continue to be the Independent Examiner for H&G Canal Trust and The Wharf House Ltd. The proposal was seconded by Ed Helps. The meeting agreed and Griffiths Marshall were approved.

Articles of Association:

Last year at the AGM it was agreed to update the articles as recommended by the Board. Unfortunately, the correct process was not followed. The meeting had to agree by Special Resolution the changes approved last year. Details of this will then be passed to Companies House for their approval and from there they can be passed on to the Charity Commission to close the matter off.

Special Resolution:

It was proposed that the H&G Canal Trust Articles be changed to the following –

- 24.1 to change the 'not more than 10 Trustees' to 'not more than 12 trustees'
- 24.2 to change the 'maximum number of Trustees to 12' to a 'maximum of Trustees to 14'
- 24.3 to change 'number of Trustees to 12 or to reduce it to 10' to 'number of Trustees to 14 or reduce it to 12'
- 25.6b to change requirement that nominations be submitted between 42 days and 18 days before the date appointed for the meeting to 7 days before the meeting.

37.2 to change the quorum for a general meeting from twenty-six to thirty.

The Special Resolution was passed by the meeting, with no objections.



Election of Trustees:

As per the Articles a third of trustees were standing down by rotation.

Dave Goff is standing down permanently. He has taken on the task of Site Leader at Over and wishes to give all his attention to that role. The Board thanked Dave for all his hard work on the Board over the last two years and are sorry to see him leave the Board but recognise the good work he is doing at Over.

Richard Appleton, Eamonn McGurk and Robert Moreland are all willing to stand again and we had one new member put forward to be trustee, Roger Morgan. Voting took place on each person individually, following a general recommendation from the Charity Commission.

Richard Appleton currently supports the role of 'Land' trustee – he has a great background in dealing with landowners and farmers and the environment.

Proposed that he be accepted as Trustee – accepted by meeting. No objections.

Eamonn McGurk currently supports the role of 'Projects' trustee. He does sterling work, in particular currently helping the Malswick Project.

Proposed that he be accepted as Trustee – accepted by meeting. No objections.

Robert Moreland currently supports the role of 'Government' Trustee. He has a great background in politics and supports us in being our contact with MPs and local government.

Proposed that he be accepted as Trustee – accepted by meeting. No objections.

Roger Morgan has owned his own narrowboat for over 30 years. He was Chairman of the Narrow Boat Trust and is currently Chairman of the IWA Gloucestershire and Herefordshire branch. He was Chairman of the Courtyard Trust, Herefordshire's Centre for the Arts for 10 years gaining experience in being responsible for a charity.

Proposed that he be accepted as Trustee – accepted by meeting. No objections.

Ralph thanked all his fellow trustee for all their hard work over the past year.

Questions from the meeting:

Observation: Tony Lenten was new to the area and would like to know what the trust is doing. Following parts of the canal he said some signs were excellent but elsewhere there were hardly any signs – he felt that they would be useful to promote the canal. Also, some plans in the Wharfinger or other literature would make the canal line easier to follow. Could we even get sponsorship for the signs? Advised that the trust doesn't own much of the line and can't just put signs up without permission from landowners, but a good observation and will look at literature.

Question: Should we concentrate on Malswick and Newent as it will be likely difficult to get

to Hereford, keep that for later? Lots of work is going on in Gloucestershire but can't ignore Herefordshire especially sites we have worked on – if left will be to have to do it all over again when get back to the sites. Don't really want to start from scratch on sites already worked on.

No other questions and none sent in beforehand.

The AGM closed at 7.50 pm.

Yarkhill News



We all know of the effect of the repeat cycles of rain and sun ... growth. I am, of course, talking about vegetation. We missed a couple of weeks working on site, so it was three weeks of growth we had to tackle when we returned. The team took on the challenge, but it took two to three weeks before they could move on to other tasks.



So, moving on, the log storage area has been enlarged and various interim log piles have been brought in. Meanwhile the side growth of the towpath hedge has had very good cut back, a very necessary action to save mower operators from cuts and scratches from brambles, dog rose and hawthorn. The transport section was called upon to remove the debris.

Words and pics from Chris High

Painting

Work on the “suite” of containers is near completion BUT their appearance is in need of attention. The multi-coloured brown and rust patches were challenging to paint, but the team has worked wonders again. Paint was obtained from a UK manufacturer specifically for container coverage but would also cover timber and even stone.

The coverage required many litres of paint, both primer and topcoats amounting to a cost over £300 including the dreaded VAT. A colour was chosen to attempt the best blend in with the foliage which in time will be achieved.



Another action required before the winter is to find and repair the few water leaks with a couple of containers. There is always something to be done!!

Water levels

The canal basin and the Vineyard stretch water levels are always of concern for the team during the summer months. Historically the levels have to be supplemented by the use of a diesel pump bringing water up from the adjacent river Leaddon. Unfortunately reports of the water company discharging untreated sewerage into the river upstream from the extraction location is of concern to us, let alone the cost for white diesel and the environment, and has made us consider water management more.

The developers, when building the adjacent houses, did bring all surface clean water from appropriate drainage into the canal basin which helps tremendously but maybe not enough? To assist this is we are intending to lift the water spill level slightly to make the winter start point higher. This is to be done during the Autumn.

Swans

Recently the old swan brought his entourage to the basin. It was so uplifting to see how proud the parents were bringing their six cygnets to the site. They are happily eating the duck weed and have a lot to clear for us!!



Road traffic accident

You would think the trust volunteers have enough to do to keep the location looking as good as it can without additional circumstances. This would be in the ideal world which unfortunately we do not have.



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I entered the location off the A40 one Thursday to find all the Lock Keeper's road side signs destroyed. Investigations to find what happened uncovered that a car seems to have slid along the fencing and hedgerow taking the signage with it, coming to a rest by the roadside tree. All the emergency services attended with the driver requiring extraction by the fire crew. I am pleased to hear the driver survived but the vehicle came off worst. The result required a make good quote for the repairs to be created and sent off to the driver's vehicle insurers. We shall see if the claims are successful!!!



Alder

The trust has a fleet of historic vessels which are all moored at the basin. The sight of them certainly enhances the location's historic feeling but also additional workloads when repairs are required. It was decided that as the main undertaking at the location was nearing completion time and effort should be made on the fleet. The boat Alder had not been out of the water since 2007 and did not look level in the water. With this a plan was undertaken to bring it out of the basin for repairs. An appropriate location for the vessel was found, piles of sleepers created and levelled in readiness. A local company was involved with the task of a lift out of the water and a move to the resting place. I am pleased to say the task was successful without any mishaps.



The next step was visual and technical inspection. Water pressure washing undertaken and a local professional engaged to do electronic hull inspection for possible weak spots and metal depth. The initial findings are positive, I am pleased to say but we have a lot to do over the winter time and you will have to await the next Wharfinger issue for these!!

Video footage of the lift can be found at
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfMNv74Wnjs>

Words and pics from Dave Goff



So dry was it that Mark Atkin devised a sprinkler system to keep the dust down.

This should make it rain!

True to form, the next day heralded the start of three weeks of off-and-on rain. The moving of the remaining material to the end of the site was halted.

The mud couldn't keep the Malswick volunteers from progressing a modified design to the big culvert at the west end of the site. The new design allowed the reconstructed culvert wall to be more clearly seen.

Rather than cover the culvert it was decided that securely fencing off the area would be more appropriate.

We've often said at Malswick that we've been lucky with the weather, but not, so far, this summer. On the few dry occasions earlier in the season our "mountains" were reduced to plateaus.

The mountains are getting lower



We were able to prepare the west end of the site to the required level. This was to help the contractors filling in the huge dip; it gave them something to aim for.

Graham and Malcolm discuss levels

Members of the Malswick team have also carried out a variety of off-site tasks; maintenance at Moat Farm involved the usual grass control and the, thankfully less

common, removal of small willow trees from within the cut.

The Malswick "longboat", featured in an earlier Wharfinger, was used at Dymock pool to allow Chris Phelps to adjust the level settings on the automatic pump cut-off...

... and at Oxenhall volunteers helped with scrap removal, strimming and test hole digging.

Mowing, strimming, logging and general maintenance has continued at Malswick - at the time of writing the weather seems set fair for the next fortnight.

We're all looking forward to "no mountains" so we can resume digging out the rest of this section of the cut and getting it in water.

Words and pics from Alan McBride

Oxenhall News



The small team at Oxenhall are working hard to keep the site neat and tidy. Site improvement includes the planting of a small cob nut tree.

The major job on site currently is the building up of the wall by Ell Brook. It has already taken over 4m³ of stone and sand. Hadrian would be proud. As the picture shows they have almost reached the level of the current towpath.

The small team would like to be bigger – so if you have some time free to volunteer on Tuesdays please contact oxenhall@h-g-canal.org.uk to find out what's what.

Oxenhall Team



Kymin News



June's working party found one volunteer working the towpath with the mower. The rest of the working party started work on removing the willows from the canal bed. Fortunately, they could be reached from the towpath. The first one came out easily with the winch. The second one proved an engineering challenge with an extra side line used to help get the tree and a very large root ball out of the canal.

With the success of the second tree, we moved on to remove a further three trees. Finally leaving the next one until our next visit as a bit more equipment may be required for the last couple of trees.



July only had two volunteers working the canal. So, one on the mower and another on the brush cutter. A couple of hours shows a lot of difference and next month back to extracting those trees.

Words and pics from Ralph Barber

Monkhide News



Picking up on the item that Richard Appleton supplied in the last edition about Monkhide, we have now received approval for the work that is required on the trees on the wildside of the canal.



We have visited the site a couple of times to start the work on making access a little easier and to clear the towpath. Pictures show the before and after.



One of the jobs is to clear the undergrowth to find a boat – the Steamboat Brindley – and to judge her seaworthiness – or not...

...it may take some time!



SB Brindley at Monkhide in 2024



... and an image of her in her prime

The image of “Brindley” in action was taken on the Grand Union Canal in the 1970’s where her owner often cruised her to Kingswood junction (courtesy of the “Our Warwickshire” website).

Please note that there is currently no public access to Monkhide.

Words and pics from Ralph Barber

Tales from the Workshop



The Over team has a new ride on mower and the superseded model is being assessed. The engine has been brought back to a semblance of life, but the brakes fill the operator with fear and steering is a challenge.



This is down to a twisted axle and axle landing. Attempts to straighten the bits and get it steerable are proving a challenge and hope is fading.

It was hoped to migrate it to Oxenhall, but although hopes could well be dashed we will keep trying.

The Kubota excavator is finally back in service after its mammoth repair to replace

the main swivel seals. This involved craning out various motors and a myriad of pipe work plus stripping out the cab. Finally new oil and a test run fault cured.



Tracking back to site Malcolm noticed the tracks binding, so back to the workshop where three track idlers found to be seized. New rollers called up and fitted and this time a successful track to site and off to work.



Our dumper's hydraulics finally ground to halt. As we have replaced/reworked just about everything, the main pump was popped into Suttons for a pressure test, which it spectacularly failed, so a new pump was called up.

Refitting was straightforward until we were no longer able to hold it aloft and 25 litres of hydraulic oil rained down totally soaking us, nonetheless we got it fitted, still a bit wimpy

but now usable. Problems with the instrument alarms have had to go on hold as the beast has to return service, the eager beavers wait for no one.

Chris H. at Yarkhill kindly thought of us when disposing of their diesel generator.

We dispatched a trailer and recovered it back to Malswick House. It had to be re-piped and fluid levels checked. On turning the engine over on the starter a bit of donk was observed, accompanied by a total lack of compression. This gave rise to great angst, and a perfunctory check came up with valves jammed open at the very least, maybe further grief.



First thoughts are to strip the top end to assess the carnage, but attempts to identify the manufacturer in order to call up parts have proved fruitless and there are no legend plates or makers name, so no one has any idea who built the thing so for now it has go into the archives until someone can identify it and we can call up parts. Lovely thought though, but a substitute is in the offing and could well fill the gap.



The Winding Pool at Dymock is a constant challenge to keep maintained and requires regular attention. It has been automated to contain costs but still needs regular visits.

The last visit revealed the high-level float switch sledge wildly off station resulting in uncontrolled pumping, no doubt the attention of inquisitive school holiday adventurers.

The Malswick House maritime patrol squad consequently swung into action, launching their recently acquired supershhip onto the A4236 and then spectacularly into the Dymock pool. Mark was allowed to dangle over the side re-positioning the float switch until the optimum level was achieved using the indicator panel lights in the the little kiosk.

Once tested and everything checked a ceremony row round the pool rounded off the day.

Words and pics from Chris Phelps

Summer Boat Trips at Over – Refreshments



I was asked to lead on the refreshments at Over Basin, in support of the summer boat trips on 13 July 2024. It was a basic and modest set up, not knowing how many people would attend, with equipment and refreshments provided by H&G Over, Debbie Barber and Ginny Birkett.

We arrived at 1pm and were ready for the first boat trip at 2pm. A gazebo was set up at the entrance to the welfare unit, with a table facing the entrance for the welcoming team and the refreshment table facing the boats.

I appreciated the active help from my two assistants Pat and Liz. Liz created a lovely Victoria sponge cake that was very popular! I don't yet know the final tally, but I estimate we had about 25–30 customers at the refreshments table.



It was good to combine with the Sailing4 Disabled team to welcome young families finding out about our canal for the first time, with the draw ticket first prize of a canal holiday being a selling point for many!

Ginny Birkett

Sheila Walshaw RIP



We wish to share the sad news that Sheila Walshaw died peacefully in a nursing home on Friday 23 August as a result of complications following a severe chest infection.



Both David and Sheila were much involved with the sales side of the H&G for many years, and will be remembered in particular for manning the door at a great many socials.

A funeral service was to be held at Walford Parish Church on 5 September.

Joyce and Mike Potts

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More on the Braunston Historic Boat Rally



The 20th Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rally was as popular as ever.

Despite so many other events going on nationally, including the European Cup, and just down the road the Silverstone Grand Prix – and not to mention either the then impending General Election, or the poor weather forecast for the Sunday – this year's Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rally remained as popular and successful as ever.

Held in its traditional slot over the last weekend in June, a total of 74 historic narrowboats attended, versus 82 last year. Originally there were 84 booked in for this year, but with the boats coming from all corners of the waterways, there were some unforeseen emergency stoppages to contend with, as well as mechanical problems – perhaps to be expected with these old canal leviathans.

The boats that have attended our Rallies over the years represent about two-thirds of the entire fleet of historic narrowboats now surviving on the waterways which are in reasonable-to-good order. The overall total is estimated at only about 250 of them, versus the 35,000 modern narrowboats. This emphasises the fleets' historic importance – almost an endangered species – and also the vital roles that museums, canal societies and private owners perform in their preservation for the future.

It is rewarding for the Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rallies that it continues to inspire new restoration projects with the intention of showing them at our rallies. The latest of these, seen at this year's Rally, is the former GUCC's Town Class Bristol. Its encouragingly young owner Darren brought it to the Rally for the first time – only arriving just in time. This followed its restoration at the nearby Warwickshire Fly Boat boatyard. The boat is again 'Bristol fashion' – though still in undercoat, the proper topcoat of paint, in the full glory of the Colours of the Cut, still to come.

On the good-news side, the Coventry Canal Society's working narrowboat Panther was at last able to rejoin the Fleet, having failed to attend the two previous rallies due to various problems, and thus also for two seasons to carry out its important work on the clean ups on the Coventry Canal.

Most disappointingly for this year was the absence again of President, the last surviving coal-fired steam narrowboat. The problems of building a new steam boiler to modern standards have at last been resolved and reconstruction is now underway. It is hoped that the boat will be back in steam by the end of this year, and fully restored in time to lead the parade at the 2025 Rally. If so, music legend and steam enthusiast Pete Waterman will be onboard to open that year's Rally – something he has been waiting patiently to do since 2020. They say that things come to those who wait – so fingers crossed.

The annual Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rallies remain by far and away the largest gathering of these historic narrowboats anywhere on the inland waterways, and best place for gongoozlers to be seen in great numbers, of which there about 5,000 attending the rally, coming from all parts of the UK and abroad.



President with its buttly Kildare were to have been the stars of the Rally, leading the opening parade, with actor and canal enthusiast Sir David Suchet (POIROT) at the helm. Then by something of a double whammy, David had an unforeseen change at short notice to his current filming schedule, and had to cancel coming – for the first time since he has been involved with our many waterway events since 1999.

Instead by way of 'Plan B', his wife Lady Sheila, a great canal enthusiast with David since the 1970s and now co-Vice President of the IWA – accept our invitation to do the honours on the Buckingham Canal Society's 'Diana the Dredger,' which had already been scheduled to attend the Rally for publicity purposes. David had presented it to the Buckingham Canal Society in October 2023 in memory of my late wife Diana, who had died of cancer in 2014. Given Sheila would be seen on a dredger, she put her designer clothes to one side and opted for the sort of overalls that the WWII Idle Women wore, together with a boatman's red scarf I gave her, and a cap loaned to her by David.

The opening took the now well established format of the chosen boat – in this case the somewhat unusual Diana the Dredger – leading the Parade of Boats. It entered the marina from the canal under the famous Horseley Ironworks bridge to a recording on the public address of Bernard Cribbins' early 1960s hit – 'Hole In The Ground', and its famous refrain

'Don't dig here, dig it elsewhere', which many bystanders joined in. The 'Arrival of the Queen of Sheila' was also accompanied by a peel of bells from Braunston Church – 'the Cathedral of the Canals', and fine music from Daventry Brass. As Sheila passed under the entrance bridge, she declared the Rally open, which she did with great theatrical aplomb – she is after all a retired great actress in her own right.

'Di the Digger' – as the dredger she has come to be called – then only made a short journey to her allocated mooring on the old Oxford Arm steered by the Buckingham Canal Society's multitasking CEO Terry Cavender. From here Sheila visited the various stands taken by a number of canal societies, where she presented cheques to them from the Rally. The largest of these was £1,000 to the Buckingham Canal Society. In all some £5,000 was donated to canal and local causes.



Meanwhile the Braunston-based historic pair of boats, the Nutfield and Raymond, which had followed 'Di the Digger' in, then led the traditional parade though the marina and round to the Braunston Turn and back. In the Raymond's hold was a precious cargo of celebrity guests, including Richard Parry, CEO of the Canal & River Trust, and Tony Hales OBE, retired Chairman of the Canal & River Trust. Tony still continues his passion for the waterways and has attended every Rally since 2009 and hopes to continue doing so for as long as he can.

An hour before the Rally's formal opening, music legend and steam enthusiast Pete Waterman unveiled the Red Wheel plaque that Braunston Marina had recently been awarded by the National Transport Trust – largely on his recommendation. Present were several members of the National Transport Trust, including Jerry Swift, its Deputy Chairman. Also present was the CRT CEO Richard Parry. The plaque had been fixed on the wall of the former engine shop, which faces the marina entrance, where it is now highly visible. Tradition holds that the engine shop was built by the Women's Land Army during WWII.

The winning historic narrowboat for this year's 'Nurser Award Buckby Can for the Best in Show' as voted by the historic narrowboat owners, was to Michael Pinnock, for his magnificently restored EMU. The boat was built for FMC by Yarwoods in 1926, and fitted with one of the then new Bolinder semi-diesel engines. The boat is now only two years from its centenary. Michael acquired it in 2009, and fully restored it to carrying condition. It has been operating as a fuel boat in the London area ever since. As well as that Buckby can, to be held for a year, Michael also received £250 worth of Midland Chanders vouchers, generously sponsored by them.



The Guild of Waterways Artists were again provided with their own marquee, sponsored by Braunston Marina, and ten of its members had their works on display, including the great canal artist Dusty Miller, who at the end of the Rally presented to myself, on behalf of Braunston Marina, a large painting he had made of Braunston Bottom Lock in its working days.

The Rally is also billed as a canal festival – in the fine tradition of the first IWA Rally held at Market Harborough in 1950, inspired by its co-founder Robert Aickman. Entertainments included the canal-travelling Alarum Theatre, with their new show, a bitter-sweet comedy with song, about working women of the canals, and the tough lives they had led.

The Rally's resident music-impresario Janul for some years now, produced the amazing musicians she finds each year for the beer tent – a mini-Glastonbury, without the mud. On the Saturday, children were entertained by Professor Diamond's Punch & Judy Show. On the Sunday evening, to close the event, the Rally sponsored a candle-lit choral concert by Fiori Musicali of Renaissance music. The venue was across the meadows from Braunston at the ancient church of Wolfamcote. This was to raise awareness of this redundant church and the funds needed for its preservation.

Braunston Marina will be hosting the event again next year on the same last weekend in June, 2025, with hopefully Pete Waterman opening it on the restored President, towing its butty Kildare. Here's hoping we see you there!

Tim Coghlan – MD Braunston Marina

The Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rally is sponsored by Braunston Marina and Towpath Talk, and is supported by the Canal & River Trust. More images from the Rally and captions for them all can be found on the Latest News pages of the H&G website.

Promotions Team at Braunston 2024



The annual Historic Working Boat Festival at Braunston is a celebration of the national canal system's heritage, it is a tradition of ours to attend. Janet Moults has overseen our sales stand at Braunston for years and has built up a lot of goodwill so presence was appreciated by the organisers. Sadly, Janet couldn't make it this year, so Tony Higgins and I agreed to 'lead', with her guidance.



Debbie, Ralph and Phyll kindly volunteered, so we could all enjoy the show, as well as being on the stand. This sharing made it a pleasant weekend for us all. Thank you!

We were kept busy raising awareness and explaining our project to interested visitors and fellow boaters. The soft toys attracted the kids, who pulled the adults over, so we could engage with them.

Tony, Ginny, Phyll and Debbie doing the promotions thing for the Trust at Braunston...

The book boxes were popular and even a bundle donated on the day was soon sold. Our stand sales were over £300.



70 footer historic narrowboats were moored four abreast, so the parade proved challenging, with all the congestion, but good spectator sport!

The parade made its slow way up to the double bridge Oxford Canal junction, where they entered it under the first bridge and then reversed back into the main cut under the second one.

You need to come along next year to see how they do it!

Ginny Birkett



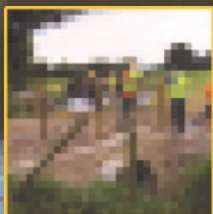
Malswick Project PUBLIC OPEN DAY

Come and see all the
progress we've made
in the past few years

29 Sept 2024

2pm to 5pm

Refreshments available



Directions

Coming from Newent along the B4215, pass Malswick House on the left and continue 150m to the site entrance which will be marked on the day - just opposite All about Dogs.

Coming from Gloucester along the B4215, the site entrance is on the right just after the Tom Roberts Centre.

Nearest postcode: GL18 1HE OS Grid Ref: SO 74227 25127

What3Words: /// ///rooster.newsstand.reworked

Existing site

While the work has been ongoing at Malswick to build the new section of canal and is progressing well, the Project Team have been looking forward to the time when it is finished, we hope within a year or so. The remaining work on the present site is first to complete the new embankments over the large culvert. Keyway have moved much of the clay needed already and we hope the rest will follow soon. We can then dig where the clay heaps have been and finish off the partly dug stretch in West Wood including digging the new winding/launching hole. There is then the towpath to be constructed – we have material on site for the some of the top dressing. And, of course, we have to tidy the site and decide how to finish the entrance.

Malswick East

In winter 2023 the field previously owned by Mr Midwinter was bought by H&G enabling the site to be extended down towards Gloucester, before it crosses the road at Rhymes Place. We are calling this site Malswick East, distinguishing it from the present site now called, unsurprisingly, Malswick West.

The FODDC was approached for Pre-Application Advice and they listed the requirements for reports and surveys to be attached to the new planning application. There are quite a lot, including:

- Archaeological report
- Ground condition report
- Flood risk assessment
- Ecological reports
- Tree survey
- Design and Access Statement and others.

BNG

As you will understand, these reports take a considerable time and, in some cases, expense. Most of these were required for the previous application site for Malswick West, but a new requirement has been introduced by the planners. In the past the ecological need was to not damage the environment, but now the need is to plan for the existing level of ecology plus an improvement of 10%. This is known as Biodiversity Net Gain or BNG.

This can be a not insignificant extra planning burden because there has to be sufficient area to allow for this 10%. In the case of this application there is some available area which can house some ditches to replace a lost ditch and some extra trees. We had already intended to plant some (now rare) Native Black Poplars and other trees and some new hedging. These were found not to be enough BNG and now, in some open ground, we will be planting some perry pear trees. One effect of these new regulations is that instead of planting trees in the manner and places that we think fit, we will need to save any planting to satisfy BNG, possibly on a different site.

The main part of this application relates to the area to the east of the present site and makes provision for the canal to be extended to the end of East Wood. In due course a new lock (previously called Road Lock) will be needed at the end of this run, but it is not included in this planning application which stops just short of that. Also to be installed is a

swing bridge to take the public footpath over the canal (the bridge is on site now, having been donated some years ago) and a further winding hole, with sloping sides to encourage wildlife. Part of this application is for another winding hole at the western end of the present stretch being built. The construction of these two winding holes will allow boats to travel up and down the completed canal turning at the ends.

What's next?

The planning application has now been submitted and the Council has already asked for a little supplementary data, which has been sent. We now must wait while the application is 'validated' by the Council whereupon it will be published on the Council website.

Comments can be made by the public and in due course the officers will decide whether our proposals meet their criteria. It is hoped that at this stage they will grant permission, but before building can start it is likely that there will have to be some ecological surveys conducted to ensure that we do not adversely affect protected wildlife such as Great Crested Newts (GCNs), slow worms, bats, badgers and others. Because GCNs can only be surveyed between April and July we are unlikely to be allowed to build until well into 2025 – best case!

This is not a problem since the Malswick team has plenty to occupy it for now! When this new section is completed, we will have 1 kilometre of canal in water, which is the longest stretch to date. We are working on other sections to join up with this, so we are very optimistic about the future. There is, however, a lot of work ahead of us.

Philip Marshall



The plan shows Malswick East in the lower right plus a section from Malswick West towards the football ground showing the proposed new winding hole.

Areas in red relate to the planning application submitted in early August 2024.

Walking the canal from end to end

Well not quite but in spirit. I led two walks in May, one at each end of the canal to promote greater awareness of our heritage. The first walk started at Aylestone Park and the second at Over Basin. The walks were part of the Leadon Vale Group of the Ramblers walking programme.

For the first walk I showed the 15 walkers around the Park including the section of restored canal, the possible route through Aylestone Tunnel into the centre of Hereford and the site of the proposed community lake. Some people were unaware of Aylestone Park itself let alone the canal section. We then set off across the water meadows – thankfully dried off – and along the bridleway past the quarry, crossing the railway track to find the bridge over the former canal which is still obvious. In the distance we could just make out Shelwick Court owned by the Landmark Trust. I have stayed in this beautifully restored medieval holiday house and notably the canal ran through its garden – the line can still be seen. The walk continued to Sutton St Nicholas hill fort for lunch and back to Aylestone crossing the canal bridge on the Roman road.

The second walk with 12 of us started at the Over Basin (having obtained permission from the Trust for us to park our cars in the lower car park. A donation parking charge was collected and sent to the Trust).



I started the walk by explaining the history of the basin and we walked along the towpath to the end and back admiring the abundant wildlife and plants as well as points of interest.

Reaching the end of this section of the canal is a very poignant point as the continuation of the canal towards Hereford would be an obvious benefit.

We continued the walk under the road bridge to the historic Telford bridge pointing out the bow in the side walls. Having crossed Alney island following the route of the canal we left inspection of the lock for the return journey.

We ventured into Gloucester visiting the cathedral and the splendid 15th-century New Inn considered to be the finest medieval galleried inn in Britain. We soon realised that the Tall Ships festival was taking place as most of the quay area was cordoned off requiring a considerable entry fee to gain access which we did not want to do. However we did manage to see some tall ships in the distance which was impressive.





We eventually navigated our way through crowds to the 12th-century Llanthony Secunda Priory for our picnic lunch with a view of the Sula lightship.

Our return to Over took us through the Llanthony Lock, which people found interesting to walk through, and along the Wysis Way back to the start.

Most of us stayed for a jovial post-walk drink at the Lock Keepers.

We were lucky to be able to sit outside on the terrace without any rain. All in all, more people became aware of the canal, had a good walk and a convivial day.

Phil Platt

Sam and Sally the Over Canal Swans



The Over canal swans never cease to surprise us. On a beautiful day in July the Over canal swans arrived back with six large cygnets that were about three months old.

In late March the pair left the canal to start a new family but returned in April due to the terrible flooding we had this spring, which probably washed their nest away. After the floods subsided they disappeared once again in early May to find a new and safer place to hatch and raise their young family, this time most likely on the banks of the river Severn.



Sam occasionally came back on his own, sometimes staying a day or so. That gave us great concern that something may have happened to his ageing partner – she is now 18. But surprise, surprise, on the 18th of July Sam and Sally walked proudly across the canal bridge, trailing behind were six very sizeable and confident cygnets.

The swans are once again a delight to the many visitors that come to feed and take photos of them. They brighten up the canal with their serenity and give us so much pleasure. Will they stay, probably not, but in the past Sam has always returned back to his home at Over Basin. Long may he do so.

Monica Hamer



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Introduction to... Roger Morgan



I have been a member of the Trust since its inception and was a member of the canal society before that. I remember fondly the open days at Monkhide celebrating the restoration of the canal from the Worcester Road under the Skew bridge and beyond. For a number of years, I was also responsible for the Trust's membership records in the 1990s.

My family have been narrowboating for nearly 50 years and in 1993 commissioned our own 60ft narrowboat which we named "Ballard" after the chief engineer of the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal, Stephen Ballard.

When she was floated in March 1993 at Hanbury Wharf, the hope was that one day we would sail her into a newly restored basin in Hereford. Thirty years on, the ambition remains to sail her onto the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal from the main system, which is one of the many reasons why I want to see the lock at Over restored.



I am proud to be a Herefordian and can trace my roots in the county through 14 generations to before 1600 where I have ancestors buried in Lyde churchyard, just north of Hereford. Educated locally, starting at Saint Martins school, I went to university in London to study chemistry before working for Shell and its subsidiaries until retirement in the mid-noughties as a Director of its synthetic elastomers business.

I have always believed that it is important for those that can, to give time as a volunteer to the community and when living in south-west London, I represented Teddington as a Councillor for eight years. During that time, as well as holding down a full-time job with Shell, I was asked to fill a number of positions on Richmond Council including Chairman of Recreation, Vice-Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee and Vice-Chairman of Education.

On returning home to live in Herefordshire after retirement, I was invited to join the Board of the Courtyard Centre for the Arts in 2007 and was appointed Chairman in 2009, a position which I held for 10 years prior to stepping down in 2019. As a passionate Herefordian, I was pleased to be asked to lead a multi-organisational bid for Herefordshire to be UK City of Culture in 2021, narrowly losing out to Coventry.

It was a proud moment for me to be awarded the British Empire Medal in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in 2017 "for voluntary services to the people of Herefordshire".

I currently live with my wife, Sue, just south of Ross-on-Wye where we work a nine acre smallholding and formal garden.

Roger Morgan

So, what does the chair get up to?

Monday

Started with a new toy. Over the last year we have been trying to ensure we can accept card payments at our various events. After a lot of investigation and having tried out one device that did not give us the details we wanted, we changed to use a setup that involved an application on a phone. This was installed on several phones – all but one that for some reason we could not get working. With the new toy, we do not even need a phone, although it still requires an internet connection, Wi-Fi, or phone signal.

Having charged the device and run an update, a support call to the supplier was then required to resolve a password issue. We received more instructions on how to connect and with our technical volunteer from the north and myself on the other end of the phone we finally got it working. Of course, the proof in the pudding is a field test.

Tuesday

A trip down to Oxenhall hoping to catch up with the volunteers working on the wall by Ell Brook. Arrived, cars present, even a small 90cc motor bike that has been restored by one of the volunteers, but no volunteers. Then one arrived and said hello – he did not know where the others were. So, we discussed plans and the status of an ongoing discussion with planning application and funding. As often happens, I walk away with yet another action, to create some items for the team to develop the plans on the ground. Then another volunteer arrives, still no sign of the others. They thought the others could be at the far end of the site so off they went whilst I carried on down to Malswick.



It was a day of mystery – what happened to all the volunteers? Again, cars present, doors open, mower missing, lunch bags in the cabin, but no volunteers. Took a picture to prove I had been there and that the Malswick mountains are disappearing slowly.

I continued my drive down on to Gloucester to give a talk at the office of a firm of architects. Signed in, met with my host, setup, a bit of further technical help required

and finally they found the IT guru. All set up for the talk with around twenty-five people in the office and a number from remote locations, Newport and London. It was a quiet audience and not one single question asked. I was told afterwards that seems to be the way with the young workers of the today. Once most had left there was a discussion about Holmer – this firm had been involved in drawing up the plans – and its changing status.

Into the evening, and I attended an event that Herefordshire Council was putting on and I was able to talk with a couple of planning officers. Both discussions were about Ledbury, the housing development north of the viaduct and then the diverted route of the canal working its way along down the river and the by-pass. I had walked this route several

times, testing out the Ledbury Walk that one of our volunteers had created, as well as walking it with one of the local councillors.

Wednesday

Preparation for the monthly board meeting, this time via Zoom. Several people away due to holidays and a Test match occurring in London. Our new trustee had his holiday cancelled due to catching Covid but as we were meeting via Zoom, he was able to join us. It was our first board meeting since the AGM.

A brief discussion about the AGM, how could we improve the numbers attending as we were only slightly above quorum. Maybe a guest speaker instead of the slide show? I would be happy with that as it saves me lots of work. We appointed focused positions with those present. Discussed the recent election and approaching the new MPs to see if we can get them involved in the H&G.

Progress with Holmer, ongoing discussions with Monkhide, water levels improving at Dymock, still waiting for the council at Newent to delivery scalplings for the footpath next to the yard (not owned by us but our volunteers will do the work), Malswick planning should be in this week for the next length down towards Gloucester, boat trips this weekend and further discussions on the lock at Over. All discussed and actions taken. Up and coming events discussed and the possible gift of a rescue boat and a 4HP engine as on the shopping list from Malswick. A long discussion about dates of meetings.

Thursday

Some desk time, I start writing this item and see if any others have come in for the Wharfinger. What is the weather looking like for Saturday's boat trips and bookings? Catching up on emails, a request from a scout group to come and do some clearing by the canal. I check the status of the volunteers coming on Sunday for a monthly working party, so I can then get the equipment ready. We had been donated a brush trimmer and part of the head had broken. Fortunately, in the garage I found a replacement device with some extra strong cord as a replacement head which would be good to test on Sunday. Checking what actions I collected yesterday at the board meeting and see if I could move them on.

We have typically been meeting on a Wednesday, unfortunately several people had other commitments on the day and my action was to sort out a new set of dates for the board meetings. A Monday proposed – will see what responses I get. Also, a request to a couple of Trustees for articles for the Wharfinger.

Friday

A different day. I was invited to give a talk at the Evesham River Festival to the Russell Newbury Register Boat Rally, who hold their annual event prior to the festival.

The presentation was outdoors under a couple of gazebos on a floating pontoon. The slides had been created earlier and then emailed to the organiser to create a number of packages – pdf, odt, and even a pps – so



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that people with all the different tablets, phones, and laptops, which are available these days could see the presentation. Of course, some had not, so a quick sharing of old Wharfingers enabled some linkages with the pull up banner and the pictures in the Wharfinger.

This time there were many questions about the canal, the width of locks. This started an interesting discussion about the width of traditional boats and their inability to use canals as they are just over 7ft wide. (I feel another paper to the board coming on about discussing the width we are doing, at present it is 7ft by 72ft. But Oxenhall is 8ft 6 so maybe we should consider traditional H&G width). Access to the canal via the River Severn was a lengthy discussion and the way the Ribble link operates. Some people came up afterwards to buy the RFO book and some walk leaflets – a member of the audience had commented on them being particularly good walks. Just managed to get back to the car before the rain came in.



Saturday

Fortunately, did not oversleep as I was on the radio at 7:45. BBC Gloucester kindly had a discussion with me, and I was able to highlight the boat trips. It worked as several people came who had heard me on the radio. In arranging this, the BBC also asked me to be on the radio a week later as well – covering Gloucestershire, Bristol, Wiltshire, and Somerset.

In preparation for the third boat trips day, running off the bookings already in place, looking good, second highest to start with, finally we hit the new highest number and the weather helped as well. The new toy was tried and worked well taking several credit card bookings. A group of visitors very kindly donated their refreshments to the crew of Mister Maysey.

Sunday

The regular monthly work session at Kymin. Unfortunately, with one volunteer on holiday, and another not well, the small team were only able to do a mow and trim of the undergrowth. The donated brush trimmer with its new head worked very well until the operator came across some fencing, but it proved its worth. So, interested in a bit of exercise, one day a month just for a long morning? Next time we hope to pull some willow saplings out of the base of the canal. Come and join us. The mowing will need to be done again but c'est la vie.



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Q. Need some fresh air?

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Q. Learn something new and entertain the kids for a while?

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See our restored heritage narrow boats, other craft, wildlife, historic sites and learn more about canal restoration on towards Hereford.

Trips on each boat have been operating at 30 minute intervals on selected Saturday afternoons in 2024, and our last ones for the year will be on 14 September starting at 2.00pm with Mr Maysey and at 2.15pm with Charles Morrison. The last trip will embark at 4.15pm.



Wheelchair users are welcome on Sailing4Disabled's Wheelyboat Sir Charles Morrison.

More information on the Trust and the Canal at www.h-g-canal.org.uk



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Gloucester & District Model Boat Club



The spring quarter has passed by but what frustrations for the Gloucester & District Model Boat Club. The canal at Over has been covered with duck weed. Its form is a very small leaf, about 6mm in diameter, unfortunately the leaves double in number every day!



The club has been weeding at least fortnightly but, even with resident John's wind forecast expertise, boom settings can go wrong. See the picture for a typical boom catchment.

To add to the frustration the Club has no on-site storage, shelter or tea-making facilities. Despite these setbacks we held a very successful club fun day on Sunday June 2nd. The weather was perfect with a

steering course competition and model boat free sailing. The club had its 'Have a Go' boats in operation which brought enjoyment to youngsters just passing by. The day was also a thank you day for Ted, that's me, retiring after 29 years as Chairman.



Richard built this model of the famed African Queen as his health recovery therapy, both now in fine fettle. The model is built from a kit, but his initiative and skills have enhanced the final build.

The original was steam-engine driven, but Richard decided to use clean electric power, the single cylinder steam engine turns over as meant to, the steam pipes are lagged and the boiler copper clad. The model

should be well and truly weathered, but that is not Richard's style. On the water she looks clean and refined.



Bryan has enhanced his fleet with a model of a Vosper 73ft Air Sea Rescue launch. The launches were built around 1943 and served in the western approaches, they had a top speed of 24 knots.

Bryan's model is twin screw brush-less motor driven. The model is kit built but with many details added.

Sailing yachts very much have a great club following, with some 30 registered in the club; Micro Magic yachts, two fleets of usually ten competitors in each fleet.



Much weather dependent, a good blow gives good exciting racing of two laps while light airs demand's concentration along with frustration. Why do we do it, we enjoy it. We often attract four spectators from the nearby estate although one is a dog!

Ted Tedaldi

Promotions Team Outings



More dates for the Promotions Team this year ...

Malswick Open Day	29 September TBC
Newent Winter Fayre	16 November 2024
Gloucester Archives	7 December 2024

If you would like to help out – even for just a few hours – at any of our Promotions Events, please email Debbie at information@h-g-canal.org.uk or ring 01432 853 086.

Debbie Barber, Promotions Trustee

Fundraising with Used Stamps



Please hand your donations either to Janet at any social meeting, or send them directly to me at:

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

Steve Bence, aka "The Stamp-Meister"

Newent auto centre

Newent Business Park
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To book, call 01452 332900, or email:
eat@thelockkeepers.co.uk

Horseshoe Drive, Over, Gloucester, GL2 8DG

Xmas Cards



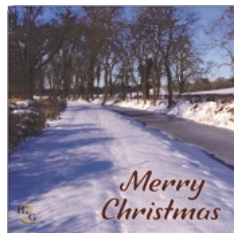
You can send a greetings card electronically to one or lots of people and donate the cost of cards and stamps so saved to the H&G.

We have an arrangement with a web service provider to do this and all proceeds will be passed direct to the Trust.

The opportunity applies to all occasions, not just Christmas or birthdays.



We are hoping to make a range of local canal scenes available as cards using this service, and would welcome any square(ish) images that you feel would make a good card for upcoming Christmas (yes - its still August as we prepare this!!). Images for any other occasion would be equally welcome.



Have a look at how this works at

DontSendMeACard.com

www.dontsendmeacard.com/ecards/charities/herfordshire-and-gloucestershire-canal-trust

We will post more on this on the website in due course.



Upcoming Monthly Socials



Unless otherwise noted, all meetings are at 7.30 for 8 pm in the The Royal Oak at Much Marcle, HR8 2ND

19 Sept 2024 Shrewsbury and Newport Canal Restoration

A talk by Bernie Jones, Chairman of S&NCT, will tell us all about how their restoration is getting on.

Also, on the night we will have the draw for the winning tickets of our Grand Holiday Draw. Fingers crossed everybody.

Please come along and bring your friends.

It has been decided that this will be our last social of the year. Feedback whilst trying to organise a Quiz Night for All, sometime before Christmas, has not been fruitful so this is now on hold.

Janet Moulton

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 07836 347427
hereford@h-g-canal.org.uk

Thursdays

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

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

As Required

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



Please submit your copy for Edition 162 to the magazine editorial team no later than 26 October 2024.

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

Advertisers supporting The Wharfinger



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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:
Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust
6 Castle Street, Hereford, HR1 2NL

Visit our website:

www.h-g-canal.org.uk

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

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

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The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service



The site can be found at Over, off the A40 just west of the A40/A417 roundabout – use postcode GL2 8BZ or What3Words ///branching.skirt.cringe – and follow signs for the Lock Keepers. Please do not block access to the site or The Lock Keepers when visiting. 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 H&G Canal Trust

The Canal Society, formed in 1983, became the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust, a registered charity, in 1992. 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.

Work on the original canal started in 1792 from Gloucester, reaching Ledbury by 1798, and Hereford in 1845 using 22 locks and 3 tunnels. It closed in 1881 to allow construction of the Ledbury-Gloucester railway which itself closed in 1964.