

The Wharfinger

HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST

HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST

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



165
EDITION

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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*Front cover image – A talk presentation in
St Mary The Virgin Church in Ross on Wye
- Ralph Barber*

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Canal Walks


Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust has produced a range of leaflets describing walks that explore various parts of the Hereford and Gloucester Canal.


**Staplow, Ledbury
Withington Wharf, Dymock,
Ashperton
Llanthony Lock, Oxenhall,
Over Basin and
Hereford**

*All proceeds towards the promotion and restoration of our local heritage 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 . . .

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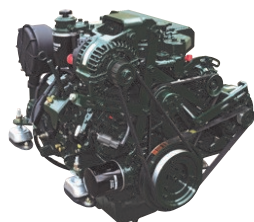
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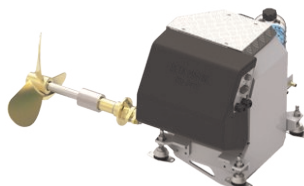
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From the desk of the Chairman

H&G have had a busy summer. As part of the Herefordshire Histories Festival week the Promotions Team arranged a couple of walks, a minibus trip and a very good exhibition in Yarkhill village hall. This also helped with my fitness as I was tail-end Charlie for the two walks.



June had me in Newent a lot, signing up several new members at the Newent Volunteer Day with help from fellow volunteers.

Then in the middle of the month we held an event about the work we are looking to undertake at Newent Station.

This was very well attended and received very positive comments.

Thank you to all the volunteers who helped with the day. It takes a work both in preparation and then on the day itself. The more volunteers involved the more pleasant the day can be for all, enabling volunteers to get a chance to rest, and get a coffee.

Still in June, the AGM took place. We had guest speaker Jane Hennell from the Canal and River Trust, and the bar was open. The minutes from the meeting can be seen on the following pages.

We will see where next year's meeting will be held as the Royal Oak is currently up for sale. Any thoughts on a location, please contact me.

The Promotions Team also visited Braunston this year. The weather was very warm, but they found a good location with a flow of air and, more importantly, people passing which helped increase the number of tickets sold for the Grand Holiday Draw – there is still time to purchase more tickets – see page 28.

Into July and we had several meetings with Herefordshire Council officers and also a very positive meeting with the Town Councillors at Ledbury. Both are helping to build on plans in Hereford and Ledbury.

You will see in this edition there is a lot going on – with potentially three planning applications coming up. At Malswick East we are hoping to hear the outcome soon. Newent Station will be submitted next year as we build up the reports required. In Ledbury we are moving forward with the S106 change (still awaiting final agreement) and then agreement with the developer to get some of the funds released so that we can start the more detailed engineering drawings and then a further planning application to be submitted.



Ralph Barber

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

25th June 2025 – 7.30pm

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 – 38, on Zoom – 3. Total 41 Proxies 12

Apologies: Robin Nicol, Mary Moreland and Vaughan Welch.

Minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting were approved.

Ralph Barber thanked everyone for supporting the Canal trust, trustees, volunteers, members and all their families.

General report: Volunteer numbers had increased on the previous year and consequently volunteer hours had also increased. Ten new members had signed up this June alone.

Walk leaflets – the series continues to expand with Hereford released a couple of months ago. If anyone is interested in developing another walk, to include a stretch of the line of the canal, please say.

The leaflets have sold well at events and talks – these plus other sales and donations at talks have raised approx. £2000 over the past year.

Income over the year has increased but also our costs. It is frustrating at how much the cost of planning has risen; £50,000 has been spent or earmarked for this.

Promotions – the events team have been out and about spreading the word. A new venture for us in 2025 was the new Herefordshire Histories Festival. H&G ventures of canal walks and a minibus tour proved popular.

Finance: The Annual Report and Accounts were available for all to read on the website since April 30th. There were no questions received on these before the meeting or from the floor or those on Zoom.

Financial Independent Examiners Griffiths Marshall were proposed for H&G for the next year. This motion was approved.

Trustees: Three trustees stood down as required by the Articles of Association. Ralph Barber thanked Richard Appleton for all his work over the past few years, particularly as our lead Land Trustee. Richard has decided to step down permanently from the role.

Under new rules from the Charity Commission each trustee now must be voted for individually.

Tony Higgins stood again. Tony has passed on the role of Membership Secretary to Nick Dymott and is looking to take over the role of Land Trustee. He was approved as Trustee by the meeting.

Bob Hargreaves agreed to stand again, looking at continuing his role as Engineering Trustee. He was approved as Trustee by the meeting.

Joe Davey was put forward as a new trustee. His main interest is looking at H&G archives. He was approved as trustee by the meeting.

Strategy: following discussion through the previous year and with an open meeting for members in March this year a strategy document for the trust has been put together, providing guidelines and guidance moving forward. The meeting gave its approval.

The annual meeting closed at 7.45pm.

After refreshments Ralph introduced the speaker Jane Hennell, a Canal and River Trust area planner. She told us that she had been working for CRT for 18 years.

Overall CRT deal with 177 local authorities that have a navigation within their boundaries and deal with approx. 2,250 planning consultations annually. There are two divisions – one deals with applications made by CRT themselves and the other deals with responses to planning applications put in by others. All consultations were responded to within the time allocated and approx. only 1% of applications received an objection from CRT. They always try and work with the planning authorities to find solutions, mainly seeking to protect the canal from inappropriate development or to maximise use of canals.

CRT is a statutory authority for consultation in planning. Most local authorities don't actually know who looks after canals! When they are consulted on anything that deals with restoration, local authorities are advised to contact the relevant local restoration society.

CRT is also on the list of 'other consultees' for local plans. 'Towpaths for Everyone' is a CRT policy on how towpaths are managed and the benefits of green infrastructure. They provide design principles for developments near and next to canals.

Ralph thanked Jane for giving us an insight into her work.

Ralph then gave an update on work on all the H&G sites, showcasing all the good work that the volunteers have been doing.

Over is looking spick and span, Malswick almost fully in water, plans and work for Newent station and Oxenhall and a good start on clearing of the canal at Monkhide.

Also shown was the canal corridor left around the new housing north of the viaduct at Ledbury.

He also showed the worrying situation at the unofficial tip beyond Vineyard – drone footage and images from Google Earth. An Environment Agency investigation is now in progress.

The meeting then closed.

Summer Update – Busy Months, New Faces, and Big Conversations

The summer sun hasn't just warmed the towpaths – it's had our Promotions team out and about, meeting people, making connections, and spreading the word. Their efforts paid off, with several new members joining us both at our events and online through the website.

Following our AGM, the board quickly got to work, assigning focus areas and diving into the business at hand.

- Ralph was reappointed as Chair,
- Philip – Finance,
- Bob – Engineering,
- Roger – IWA,
- Tony – Land,
- Debbie – Promotions,
- Ed – H&S,
- Robert – Government,
- Joe – Archive.

One item that doesn't always make headlines – but keeps us connected – is the steady stream of enquiries through our Information email. They range from the unusual to the invaluable. Recently, one memorable message offered us the chance to invest in luxury flats overlooking a canal in Dubai (tempting, but we passed). Others, far more relevant, have helped drive forward our canal restoration work.

Progress in Ledbury

At the end of July, Tony, Bob, and I met with Ledbury Town Council and their councillors. The discussions were upbeat and full of possibilities for advancing the canal restoration in and around Ledbury. A key piece of the puzzle is the updated S106 agreement with Herefordshire Council – expected (fingers crossed) by the end of July 2025. Once signed, it will open the way for the next stage of paperwork, linking the canal's restoration to the Bloor Homes residential development.

Over Tip Investigation

In other developments, Over tip has been in the spotlight, and on 11 July we were advised on the following...

All,

Today at 10am Forest Neighbourhood, F&G Neighbourhood Support Team and Spec Ops attended the waste site behind Over Farm Market in support with Operation IVY led by Environmental Health (EA).

The purpose of the operation was to allow EA to gather detailed evidence from the site evidencing an illegal waste site, police were present to prevent a breach of the peace and allow the operation to proceed at a potentially hostile site.

The operation went ahead without issue and concluded around 12 o'clock.

While at the site police collected intelligence concerning a number of vehicles linked to companies attempting to tip at the site, EA will also follow this up.

EA plan on further enforcement activity at the site and police are in liaison and will support.

While activity on the site has since stopped, huge amounts of material remain – material that should never have been there in the first place.

Land Transfers and Consultations

Tony reported movement at last on the Holmer development land transfer – something we've been waiting on since 2008 – and we're hopeful it will be finalised this year.

We've also been engaging with Hereford Council as part of local development consultations. In July, Tony and I met with them to discuss Merton Meadows. This was followed in August by a walk along the canal at Aylestone Park with council officers, exploring the vision for a Blue/Green/Blue way linking the park to the city and the emerging Transport Hub at the station.

Tony has also been busy in the media, securing positive coverage on the BBC website and on Facebook about our work in Hereford.

Uncovering Hidden Assets

Over the years, we've acquired many assets – some large, some small, and some... forgotten. A prime example is the up-and-over railway footbridge from Llanthony, which ended up at Newent. Hidden under growth for years, it recently came to light during site clearing. Since it's not historically tied to the station, the board agreed to see if we could pass it onto another organisation that can put it to good use.

Engineering Updates

Bob raised two engineering matters. First, Dave Goff (Over Site Leader) reported progress on the new stop planks approved last month. Second, there's the matter of the gabions, which have failed after 25 years in the water – a safe replacement plan is now under investigation.

Events and Volunteer Challenges

Debbie highlighted a growing challenge: a lack of volunteers to support promotional events. One July event had to be cancelled, and another could only be staffed for one day instead of two. The board discussed how best to match our resources to our commitments, and the reality is we may have to reduce the number of events we attend. Without more volunteer help, our ability to share our message widely will inevitably be affected.

Ralph Barber

The Annual General Meeting at the Royal Oak in full swing...





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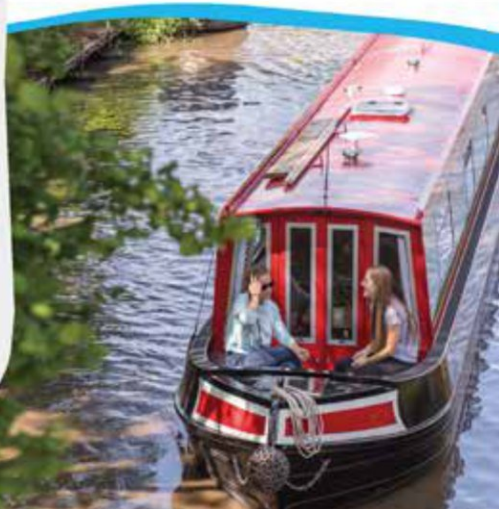
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Heritage boats – Alder

The team have had many challenges with the new tank installation. Various new couplings and pipework had to be sourced and installed. Once fuel was added to the new tank, via a new entry hole cut in the foot plate, a number of leaks were found.

These leaks, some on the new fittings and some on historic couplings, have been timely to resolve, but we seem to have had success.



With this work we have been able to fuel up and fire up the recently serviced Lister engine. Sounds easy, but the team had much to do to remove air locks in the pipework before the sound of the engine purring was heard. The new tank was supplied with an integral float level system, which the previous one did not have, and so a new gauge was sourced and installed, which might sound straight forward but it was not.

We think now a clean-up of the engine compartment in preparation for a coat of paint is next. A new bilge pump has been installed and tested in this engine compartment, and another is to be installed in the bow compartments with a new sub fuse board to be installed to serve other electrical items. We go one step forward and then we have a hinge on the engine compartment door fail which required resolving. All takes time.

Externally. The team have worked wonders on the removal of the old paint on the upper superstructure taking it back to bare metal with a plan to have new paint applied before the winter in H&G colours.

...and Renton

No progress on this; however, we do plan to investigate the Lister engine as soon as possible as we have filled the engine with diesel to prevent internal rusting after its submersion in water when we nearly lost her to the waters of the basin.

Site Maintenance

Weather!! Yes, the weather has had a major factor in what was undertaken this summer. With the rainfall being next to nothing we have lost some 32 cm of water level and this was from a starting point that was higher than previous years due to the overspill wear work that was undertaken last year.

It was mentioned in the Wharfinger 164 article that with the levels decreasing, water leaks

and areas not normally fully visible had been uncovered. The old lock entrance and the lack of workable stop planks has continued to show water is leaking through the soil dam under the bailey bridge into the lock itself. Time and effort have been taken to work on a plan to remove this leakage and it has been agreed that new stop planks will be sourced and installed. Sounds easy?!!

Not so as we still have 1.5m of water within the basin and much rubble and silt on the sill where the planks slot into the lock walls. Too much to work on without draining the area. To remove the water a company has been engaged to create a coffer dam at the lock entrance allowing for water to be drained, silt and rubble to be removed and the new planks to be installed. A costly activity with planks to purchase and a dam to install and hire.



Much thought was given as to whether the trust volunteers could construct a dam internally, but it was decided to engage an external company mainly due to the safety of the team.

Other areas have become more apparent and clearly in need of investigation and repair or replacement. The main one is the failing gabions on a stretch of some 30m basin walling. The metal has been submerged in water and rusted away allowing the loose brick rubble to fall into the silt. The investigations have concluded that this length of basin walling is also another area of water loss. This has been added to the list of activities to be resolved, but this one is major and one for after the stop planks are replaced.

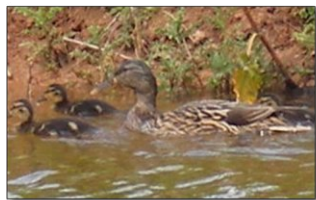
Other site duties have continued with the basin and the Lock Keepers' garden attended to and a brush/tree tidy up, but not so many times for grass cutting for obvious reasons in a drought. Oh, nearly forgot three tons of loose 20mm River Wye gravel was delivered and distributed on the basin paths.

That is about it from the Over basin and the few loyal volunteers.

Dave Goff

Since the last Wharfinger the winding hole nearest to the site hut has been completed.

With the sun shining it begins to look a real picture.



Once greened up, wildlife is sure to find it attractive.

More seepage than a leak, but still a problem. A puddle has been forming on the far side of the towpath. After digging a trench to try to discover the exact source, a layer of railway ballast was discovered.

Graham inspects the extent of the ballast layer



To staunch the flow it was decided to dig out the area around the seepage and backfill with clay – rolling it in as it was deposited. On the other side of the cut a similar and much less accessible seepage was found. Much digging, dumping and rolling by Malcolm Clivery and Steve Delacourt later and a similar solution was completed. We now watch with interest!

Creating barriers around both ends of the big culvert has kept us busy during the early summer. Once the extra lintels were put in place and the canal banks were graded back to them, scaffolding pipe was used to create a very sturdy barrier. To finish the job wire mesh will be secured around the pipework. Of course the work needed inspecting and a large number of the Malswick team seemed pleased to take part.



Managing the levels between the various levels is important so that any problems can be identified. The method that Bob Hargreaves uses is the adjustable right angle pipe. He got his feet wet more than once doing the adjusting.



Away days for the Malswick team include work on the restoration of the station at Newent. The platforms had been used to deposit spoil from previous works. Now the job has been to remove the spoil and deposit it in a much more suitable place.



Once the area between the platforms had been thoroughly strimmed, Malcolm used a smaller than usual excavator to clear debris to get back to an asphalt platform. Bob can be seen helping remove material from the platform, and yes, that is our old dumper. Like a phoenix it has been returned to service thanks to the efforts of Roger Coombs, Steve, Malcolm Neil, and Kevin.



Creating towpaths that are sturdy and suitable for wheeled transport has been an ongoing activity. Road planings have been found to produce an excellent surface. Ian and Mark seem to be enjoying the task of levelling the material prior to rolling.

Alan McBride



We do listen. Last year a member highlighted that they could not read the signs at Oxenhall. The signs had talked about the work that that happened over the years, but they had slowly faded over time.

New signs were created, and the current local team put them up.



An extra sign was created for the entrance to help direct people along the Geo Park Way, one of a number of national footpaths that go along parts of the canal.



The team have also added ballast to Lock Cottage Lane, duly laid and are awaiting a further final load to complete the job.



The temperatures have reduced the need to mow, and we have cleared up a couple of large boughs that fell across the pathways.

We'll be keeping an eye out in case any others show signs of coming down.

As with a lot of the canal system, the water flow has also slowed at Oxenhall to around 50%. To keep the canal levels, the drainage has been reduced. The ducks and their chicks still love it.

Martin Bolton

The Yarkhill Team at Monkhide



There has been a change in our approach. No water! No boat! Ah! but there is a good layer of very soft silt. So initially access was via the trees and debris in the canal. We are still using the debris, but a very crude pallet walkway has been added. This has not only enabled more of the team to access the wild side, it has also made it a little easier to secure ropes or hawsers to the branches and trunks to be removed.



Every element of help, however small, is gratefully accepted as we are currently tackling a very dense, vertical and horizontal, wooded stretch of canal.

By the time most items being extracted reach the tow path they have collected a considerable coating of black silt.

Chris High



Digital Image Archive



As has previously been reported in the Wharfinger, the Trust has a large archive of digital images. Whilst composed predominantly of photographs, the archive also includes a wide range of documents in PDF format, as well as a variety of other material in varying formats.

The photographs (roughly 27,000) have now been individually tagged to assist in searching for images showing a particular aspect of interest, and uploaded to a cloud server to make the archive more accessible to a wider range of users.

Access to the archive (currently photographs only) may be made available to those with a genuine interest – please email a request to the Chairman in the first instance, with your contact details and your points of your interest in seeing the archive.

Nick Dymott

A long heralded work party for the Hereford end

*For a while there's nothing's there,
Just some castles in the air.
Or some might see, a flying pig,
So this announcement's REALLY BIG*

*Long time past, the H&G
would be on site for all to see
but due to age, to wear and tear
the good souls were no longer there.*

*But Naiads will, where ere there's water
stir the souls of those who oughter
tend their waters and their streams
and so it will be, so it seems,*

*On August nine in twenty five
Those Aylestone spirits came alive
and egged reluctant navvies in
a working party to begin.*

*So now there's Jeremy, Tony, Dave
To start a movement of the brave.
The Aylestone Naiads to delight
To cut and clear, a wondrous sight.*

*Some nasty balsam, Himalayan,
was spotted at the eastern end
It's now cut down; greatly diminished,
This is a start but there's much to be
finished.*

*Already there are others keen
To join the Naiads, make the scene
At Aylestone Park, time TBA
Just say you will and make my day.*

Tony Higgins

Get Involved...

www.h-g-canal.org.uk/support/volunteer/



Would you believe it? 25 Years at Over!



2001 – action slot

2002 – time for a tea break

2003 – view from the air

2004 – starting the otter holt

2005 – great reflections

2006 – is it deep enough??

2007 – still operating a wheelbarrow in 2025





2008 – another way of weed clearing

2009 – water looking low but the swans are happy!

2010 – it snowed a lot

2011 – the basin in the mist

2012 – Tim and Pru open the next bit

2013 – no parking in the lower car park

2014 – a peaceful time at the basin

2015 – dismantled lock gates

2016 – paddle harder...



- 2017 – it's in here somewhere
- 2018 – will anyone read it?
- 2019 – a new tool for us to try
- 2020 – Heritage Narrowboat Alder on the water
- 2021 – Girl Guides on the water
- 2022 – Steam on the water
- 2023 – Always something to be done
- 2024 – Over Basin flooded by high river levels
- 2025 – Alder off the water !



20th Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rally

Turning up to set up at the event proved a little stressful as it was a much smaller marquee than previously. Expecting our usual placement, we discovered we had been allocated a central position rather than at the side. With help from the organiser, a U-shape of tables was in place by the entrance – good news with a through breeze on a very hot weekend.



The stand was set up within the hour with our pull-up canal map banner in a prominent position, catching the public eye as they entered the marquee. Information on one side and sales on the other. We were somewhat short staffed this year with only three people a day. Thank you so much to Phyll and Phil for volunteering their invaluable help – it makes such a difference when you have extra help, allowing you to operate different ‘shifts’ and letting you get out to enjoy the show at different times. This year one looked around the show, one dealt with sales and one with information. Lots of Grand Holiday draw tickets were sold!



The interest level and discussions kept us busy – Saturday being the busiest day. Both days were very hot and dusty, an extra person would have helped to give some more cooling off time outside the tent.

Braunston Marina kindly presented us with a cheque for £200 courtesy of David Suchet. David was spotted later on having some social time. Nothing like a bit of celebrity stalking. Tony was a stalwart bringing all the items for the stall – props and stock - and taking them home again after the weekend. Also taking all the tablecloths home to wash as it was so dusty. Still – better than rain! An enjoyable weekend.

Ginny Birkett

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Introducing – Joe Davey

As the newest and apparently the youngest Trustee, Ralph has asked me to introduce myself to HGCT members and provide a photo of myself that shows me doing something that I like.

The latter is tricky because it would probably show me doing something sporty and I wouldn't want to emphasise my relative youthfulness with a shot of me finishing the London Marathon, or ending a bike ride from Lands End to John O'Groats or paddle boarding the length of The Wye before breakfast last Tuesday. Such photos would be insensitive and boastful, and anyway total fabrications. They would also be irrelevant because having a genuine interest and a wish to do something worthwhile are the only qualities needed when volunteering.

Eighteenth and nineteenth century transport has held a fascination for me since teaching about it in schools and at university level in more recent years. Further interest was piqued by living close to the River Lea Navigation in London and more latterly near the Kennet and Avon in Bath.

It's taken me six years living in Hereford to realise that there is canal here too, and furthermore that there is a Trust hoping to restore it. Having a bit more time on my hands nowadays means that I can indeed get involved in a worthwhile project. There was no real plan to come to this part of the country, in fact the only criteria was that we (my wife and I), wanted a house with a garden, something that we have never really had. To this point, and in true canal fashion, we have meandered slowly from London to Hereford via London, Glastonbury, the Isles of Scilly and Leeds. Interspersed with teaching History and PE in these places has been school leadership posts overseas in Pakistan, Zambia, Sudan, Thailand and Tanzania. Then, after doing my Doctorate in maritime history, I fell into being a lecturer in History and Education at Portsmouth University, where I still am but in a very part time capacity.

My working life is more accurately termed as a series of adventures, rather than a proper career. It is coming to an end now and looking back it has been interesting and rewarding and on the whole, worthwhile. Winding down means I have time to give to the Trust, especially in getting its physical archives in order. I am also a Governor of Hereford, Ludlow and North Shropshire College, I am a Trustee of the Friends of Herefordshire Museums and Arts, a Director of Herefordshire Histories Festival and a member of a few other local organisations and societies. I am also involved in a charity called Red Earth Village Schools in Uganda.

So, what picture might I find to represent all that? I couldn't possibly decide so just a mug shot will have to do.



Joe Davey

The Trust played an active part in contributing to the Herefordshire Histories Festival (HHF), which was a celebration of Herefordshire's History involving many events throughout the county. Three activities were undertaken by the Trust to increase awareness of the canal in Herefordshire and show restoration work underway.

There was a good attendance and everyone enjoyed it although it was hard work for the organisers.

The three events were – a minibus tour, walks along the towpath and a display on the history and restoration of the canal.

Minibus Tour

To try to bring some awareness of sites along the route of the canal, a minibus provided by Bromyard Community Transport and driven by volunteer Phil, was arranged with detailed explanation provided by Tony the 'tour guide'

The tour started in Aylestone Park in Hereford where restoration work has been undertaken, with a visible short stretch of canal leading to Aylestone Tunnel. Tony has recently completed the Hereford walk leaflet which guides people along the canal route past the tunnel and into Hereford city centre, indicating where the original route ran.

A short walk was undertaken from the park towards the tunnel entrance before driving on to the next stop at Withington Wharf, where the route of the canal is just visible. Several canal buildings are still at the site in their distinct H&G style – now all private properties.

The next stop was at Tunnel Cottage in Ashperton where the supportive owners allowed us a good view of the top of the tunnel and the long cutting leading up to it. Some of the vegetation in this area has been cleared.

An early lunch was arranged at The Oak in Staplow where a choice of sandwiches and chips were included in the price of the tour. Food was efficiently served in a friendly atmosphere. Our chairman joined the meal to meet the travellers and explain about the work of the Trust. Staplow also had a wharf and a circular walk including the canal towpath is described in the Staplow walk leaflet.

The next stop was specially arranged through the Scout organisation at Warren Oak campsite. We were greeted by the campsite organiser, who led us to the canal aqueduct at the back of their site at the bridge over the River Leadon. We got a good view of the aqueduct, and we could see steps up to the top on the Priors Court side.

On to Ledbury to see the impressive double tunnels in Ballard Close – one for the tow path and one for the canal. En route we passed the new housing development where the line of the new section of canal will be dug out.

As we left Ledbury various sites of the canal were pointed out. The next stop was Crews Pitch where the canal wharf and buildings are obvious and there is water in the canal. Some people walked the towpath to Skew Bridge, where the minibus picked them up. The

bridge was as beautiful as ever and a good place for the team photo. Further along the road more evidence of the canal was pointed out.

The tour ended back at Aylestone Park. The passengers seemed pleased with the day and purchased some canal literature.

Canal Walks

Two circular walks of around 4 miles were undertaken led by Phil in the morning, and Tony in the afternoon, starting from Yarkhill Village Hall. The route followed footpaths up the hill to give wide views across the countryside and the line of the canal, carrying on through Westhide and on to Kymin.

With permission of the landowner we joined the canal towpath past the enigmatic Barrs Lock to Crews Pitch with interesting buildings and evidence of the wharf and winding hole. We continued the walk with the permission of another landowner to the beautiful Skew Bridge at Monkhide.



The walk continued back to the village hall for revitalising tea, coffee and cake!

Canal Trust Display

Debbie and Ralph set up an impressive and comprehensive display of historic and recent photos, details of the route through the county, and current state of restoration. Canal literature was available for purchase. Tea, coffee and cake was partaken by visitors for a donation.

Overall, the HHF events worked well with people enjoying the experiences. A life member was signed up and a potential volunteer is interested in joining a work party. It is planned to support HHF next year.

The Trust is willing to support other groups which would like to go on a similar outing - see more on such an occasion on page 36.

Phil Platt, Tony Higgins, Ralph and Debbie Barber

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Newent Canal Project - Update

Preparations for an eventual planning application to be made late 2025/early 2026 are very much under way.

The amount of work required for the application has been re-assessed, and not surprisingly, has turned out greater than anticipated, The H&G Canal Trust Board has recently approved an increase of funds available for obtaining planning permission to £50K.

Most of these funds will be consumed by consultants, who have already started their work on the site. They are assessing the wildlife, the trees and the landscape, including the visual re-creation of the old Newent Railway Station. The results of this work will be required by the Forest of Dean DC planning department to ensure that our development plans will leave the site better off in terms of wildlife habitats, ecology and biodiversity than it is today.

Several of these challenging assessments were introduced by the government early in 2024 and were brought in to turn potential ecological harm into ecological benefits.,

In the 20th century, the Newent to Dymock railway was known as the “Daffodil Line”, and we can expect the re-emergence of daffodils in the new landscape scheme.

In June of this year, a public exhibition of the plans for the canal was held in the Memorial Hall at Newent. A total of 70 visitors attended throughout the day, and all were supportive of the project aims. Visitors’ views were collected, with the few criticisms taken on board resulting in amended plans – more on this on page 26.




The Inland Waterways Association guidelines for canal sites has highlighted the facilities expected by 21st-century boaters and these will be taken into account at the detail stage.

Old photos of Newent Station continue to appear. The most recent discovery being one taken in 1955 showing the distinctive curve of the old platforms and the Corsican Pine trees that dominated the background view. Recent excavations at the platforms show a broken tarmac surface and the absence of coping stones, but of course the original Pine trees are still very visible.

Richard Delahay

Newent Project – Public Consultation





HELP RESTORE NEWENT'S HISTORIC CANAL !

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LINKING OXENHALL LOCKS, ELL BROOK AQUEDUCT AND
NEWENT STATION**

**We're thrilled to be progressing this ambitious project:
The restoration of the historic canal route through Newent!**

This isn't just about preserving history - It's about boosting biodiversity, enhancing tourism, and creating new spaces for recreation, learning, and community pride.

WHY IT MATTERS

- ✔ Enhances local wildlife habitats
- ✔ Revitalises community spaces
- ✔ Celebrates Newent's heritage
- ✔ Offers volunteering and learning opportunities

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Whether you have the skills in planning, engineering or construction, can offer financial support, or want to volunteer your time and enthusiasm - YOU can help make this happen!

SEE THE VISION FOR YOURSELF!
SATURDAY 14 JUNE 10:00AM - 3:00PM
NEWENT MEMORIAL HALL
(NEXT TO MARKET HOUSE GL18 1PT)

Come and see details of the five part Newent Station Project, meet the team, consider our restoration plans, ask questions and contribute your own thoughts to the mix.

Refreshments will be available.

**LET'S BRING THIS VITAL PIECE
OF NEWENT'S HISTORY
BACK TO LIFE - TOGETHER.**

www.h-g-canal.org.uk



The H&G Canal Trust is excited to share our plans to develop the old Newent railway station into part of the restored canal. Its is a large engineering job with much to do at the planning stage, so our Chairman wanted to consult with the good folk of Newent.

We hired the Memorial Hall in Newent and filled it with displays, plans and pictures of what we think is possible. H&G volunteers were there to chat with visitors. We had our information/sales stand on hand and provided some refreshments too.

We set up some advertising outside and, having distributed posters and local Facebook postings, we were pleased to see a steady stream of locals come in and show an interest in our proposals.

The Chairman needed a constant supply of his favourite black coffee to keep his vocal chords going, as he and others explained

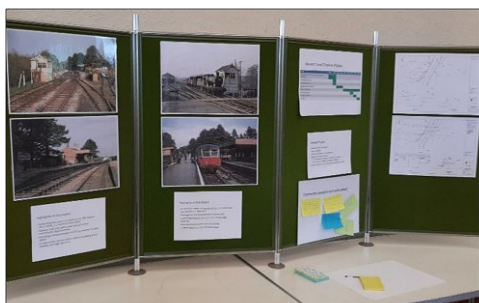
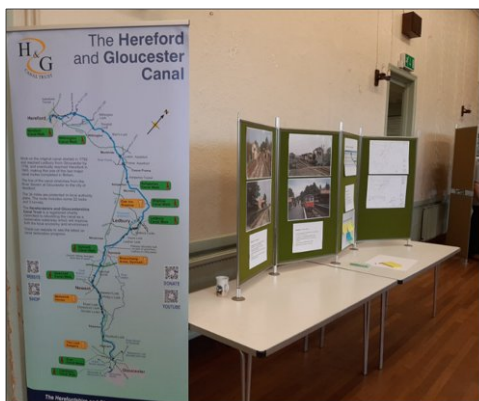


the plans laid out on a large table.

The ladies in the kitchen offered drinks and biscuits for volunteers and visitors alike.

It was a good event that will increase awareness of our canal restoration in the Newent area, as well as raising some more funds for us, in sales and refreshments.

Ginny Birkett



Railway mystery at Newent recently resolved



Railway enthusiasts have often speculated about the construction of the original station complex at Newent. One of the remaining unanswered questions has been: Where did the material for the substantial embankments on both sides of Bridge Street originate?

Preparations for the canal planning submission for Newent may have allowed the answer to this question to be revealed.

Normally, railway embankments were constructed using material excavated from local cuttings, a process of levelling out the terrain to keep the track as level as possible. But there were no railway cuttings near to Newent, so in the era dominated by horse transport, an alternative local source of material was required.

Newent topography shows a depression (Newent Lake) in the grounds of the now-demolished New Court. The Ordnance Survey map of 1884 details the lake at its current size, and this is the timescale of the railway construction, so it is unlikely that this lake on the New Court Estate provided filler for the embankments, another source of aggregate must have been used.

Tomos Eaves of AA Environmental, who has been assessing the Newent site in preparation for planning submission, quickly spotted samples of 17th/18th century glass

and slag on the embankments, explaining that these pieces are typical of old blast furnace dross.

Local history tells us that the Ellbridge blast furnace was operating from 1639 to 1751 at Newent and Furnace Lane still exists adjacent the railway. The lack of any slag heaps around Furnace Lane leads us to assume that the Victorians recycled the accumulated dross by moving it 300 metres to create the railway embankments.



Glass residue



Slag with outgassing vents

The iron ore feed to the Newent blast furnace came from the Foley estate land in Aston (Ingham), some 3 or 4 miles away west of Newent. Wood and charcoal would have been readily available from the Foley estate nearby. Coal from local Newent mines could also have been used, although records show that these mines were financially unstable. Supplements from the larger Forest of Dean mines could have kept the blast furnace burning. (Acknowledgement: the late David Bick of Newent.)

It is plausible that blast furnace waste with origins in the 17th century still exists in quantity at the Newent railway site. The H&G Canal Trust plans for a visual re-creation of Newent Station show that the embankments on both sides of Bridge Street will be retained.

Samples found on top of the embankments are shown above.

Richard Delahay

Grand Holiday Draw 2025



**1ST
PRIZE**

NARROW BOAT HOLIDAY for FOUR

ONE WEEK PRIOR TO 31 May 2026 excl Bank Holidays. *Donated by Black Prince Holidays*

**2ND
PRIZE**

One Day's BOAT HIRE on the MON & BREC CANAL

March – October 2026 for eight people from Llangatock *Donated by Beacon Park Boats*

**3RD
PRIZE**

ONE NIGHT BED & BREAKFAST for TWO

at The Lock Keepers. *Donated by The Lock Keepers at Over Basin*

TICKETS STILL AVAILABLE – www.h-g-canal.org.uk/shop

Work Experience

Well work experience is something that we have all had, as all of us have seen many years of work in our careers.

I received a request to support a work experience student from the local college. The student was looking to do a degree in Geography and the college suggested we could show them about how this would work in the context of a canal restoration programme.

After a couple of initial emails and then discussions about timing, the week of the 23rd June was agreed.

On the Monday, I was going to be in another part of the UK so Tony Higgins kindly stepped in and met the student at Aylestone Park, going for a walk to the Holmer site and then off to Ledbury to explain the plans we have for that area.

On Tuesday the student was down at Malswick with Bob Hargreaves, our engineering trustee, working on some levels and seeing the great work creating the new canal channel there.



Wednesday is a day we do not have any working parties operating, so having spent a couple of hours the previous week with the student, they did some land searches for us in the Ledbury area. This involved looking up the Land Registry, checking the details and pulling the documents so that we can build a picture of the area of the land ownership along the canal from Bloor Homes to the Ross Road, around Ledbury.

Thursday involved a visit to Monkhide, with Chris High getting the student involved in winching trees out of the water and the feedback was that this was the best day.

Friday saw a wrap up meeting with feedback received and given. A positive experience for all involved as the student was from the RNC, the Royal National College for the Blind, Hereford.

Ralph Barber

The Lock Keepers – Review

It was our wedding anniversary on 6th June (D-Day), and I was looking for somewhere special to take my wife Marina for a celebratory dinner. Having seen an advertisement in the recent Wharfinger magazine, The Lock Keepers was fresh in my mind, so I booked a dinner for two via their website.

The booking system asks if the reservation is for a special occasion – birthday, wedding anniversary, etc. – so I ticked the anniversary box (good move!).

We were warmly greeted on arrival and offered a complimentary glass of bubbly, which set a lovely tone for the evening.



There was a great selection of dishes on the menu, and the mains we chose were generously portioned.

Despite being well fed, we couldn't resist dessert. I had a perfectly cooked steak, and my wife went for the chicken, followed by cheesecake and chocolate brownies respectively.

I can thoroughly recommend The Lock Keepers for their excellent service, delicious food, and welcoming atmosphere – not to mention the added benefit of supporting the H&G Trust by choosing to dine there. We rounded off the evening with a gentle stroll along the canal by the Over Basin, enjoying the beautiful sunshine.

Thank you and well done to The Lock Keepers!

Adrian Smith – H&G Canal Trust member, Gloucester.

www.thelockkeepers.co.uk/

eat@thelockkeepers.co.uk

01452 332900



In 1644 a cannon
was fired at St
Mary's Church
Steeple.....
Saturday 13th
September

Newent Town Centre will go back in time – with a 17th century Street Fair!

There will be music, and dancing, family activities and lots of fun.

The Sealed Knot Earl of Manchester's Regiment of Foote will be keeping order in the streets during the day and the following day 200 or more soldiers will re-enact civil war battles.

The Trust's Promotions Team will be present with the usual stall, and we really need some extra helpers for setting the gazebo up, taking it down at the end of the day, and talking to everyone about the canal restoration (even if it was started a bit later than the Civil War!)

To enter into the spirit of the weekend, I think our flat caps & waistcoats will do for period costume. Anyone with some sacking/hessian we can borrow, to decorate the gazebo?

Please can you spend some time with us?

Just get in touch with Ginny Birkett on ads@h-g-canal.org.uk to ask what you can help with. It should be a great day with lots to see.

Ginny Birkett

**Saturday 13th September - Street Fair
and Family Fun**

**Stalls and music through the streets, and
activities in the park.**

**Enter into the fun and come dressed for
the 17th Century— prizes for the best
costumes!**

**(Free entry to the town, car parking, all
day-£5)**

Sunday 14th September - The Big Battle

**The highlight of the weekend, experience
17th Century life during the Civil War in
the Living Village, and watch The Battle
for Newent.**

**A grand day out! (Adults £5, children £2,
Family tickets £10)**

**More information at
<https://newentonionfayre.net/>**

Severn Vale Vintage Show

Down a windy country lane to Fiddington, south of Tewkesbury, could be found a myriad of old vehicles and engines. A wonderful collection, all lined up and even colour coded in parts – a glorious sight.

This vintage show was a first for H&G. Promoting H&G, trying to catch some more volunteers and members from Gloucestershire, we chatted to people from Staffordshire, Worcestershire, Gloucestershire and Herefordshire. Such a friendly show. Nobody signed up on the day, but there are a few future hopefuls for us.



The show was a delight – hugely spread out, giving plenty of room for vintage cars, US military vehicles, tractors, steam vehicles, small lorries and even draught horses to manoeuvre easily as they paraded around. I learnt way more than I anticipated I would ever need to know about tractors – not sure I retained all of it! The demonstration of the steam engine working the threshing machine was lovely – a reminder of the past.

The lane was windy but the site was also windy – so windy that at one gust our whole gazebo moved back three feet! In the end we had to pack up early as we were getting quite tired with hanging on to the gazebo to stop it blowing away – despite all the weights we had brought with us, we hadn't brought the guy ropes this time.

A lovely day out and well worth attending.

Debbie Barber





Ledbury Community Day

A simple stand – we are getting good at setting up the stands quickly.

Debbie helped set up but then had to disappear to another event, leaving the Chair to man the stand – having allowed him to at least get a coffee first.

The day then got remarkably busy (especially considering how quiet it was the previous year in comparison).

Thank you to Tony and Debbie, on her return, who helped out talking to everyone who showed an interest, processing book and walk leaflets sales, and the start of an interesting month in getting new members.

Ralph Barber



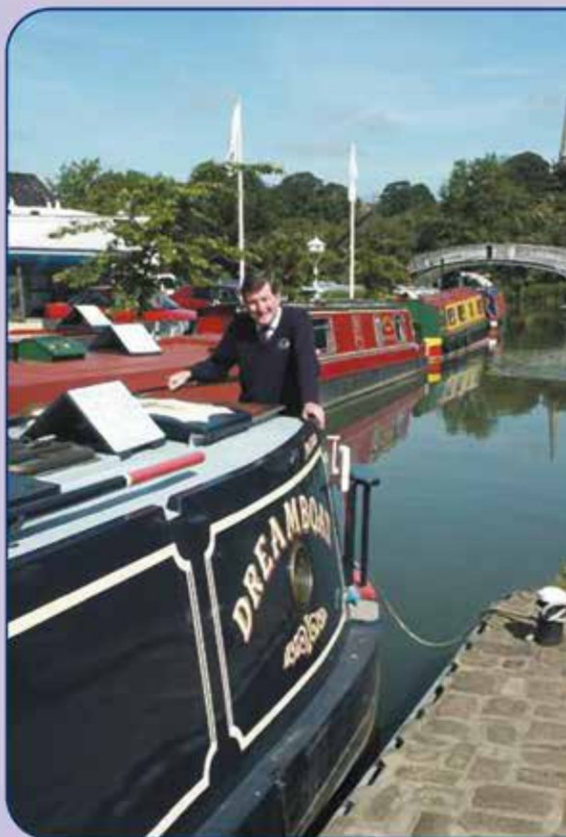
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Scouts on the Water at Over Basin

On the sunny evening of 7th July, the scouts gathered at Over Canal for a night of fun and adventure testing the cardboard canoes the scouts had spent the past two weeks designing and building.



Divided into five groups, the scouts launched their homemade canoes into the calm waters of the canal. Cheers and laughter echoed as two of the canoes impressively stayed afloat and sailed successfully across. The remaining three, despite brave efforts, didn't quite make it – sinking with a splash, but not without plenty of smiles and laughter.

Despite the mixed results, spirits were high and the atmosphere was full of energy and excitement. The scouts showed great teamwork, resilience, and enthusiasm throughout the evening. It was a night to remember – filled with sunshine, splashes, and unforgettable moments on the water.

Many thanks to everyone who helped us organise this memorable night!

Jeremy Gibbs – 1st Cheltenham Group Lead Volunteer

The Cheltenham Group have visited Over before – they had another evening of water-based activity back in September 2021.

For my sins I co-ordinate (I prefer to say hold together) a merry band of retired and semi-retired individuals known at the Hereford History U3A Group. We all enjoy sharing experiences and knowledge of the past in a group setting, keeping our brains active and stimulated and sometimes even having some fun. For the better weather we thought it might be interesting to get out and about.

We had a tip-off from a U3A member in another Hereford U3A group about an interesting trip she completed during the Herefordshire Heritage Week. It involved a minibus and a couple of Canal Trust volunteers and she made a strong recommendation that it would be interesting trip for the U3A History Group and she left me a name and contact number. Intrigued, I rang this number and spoke to the good Mr Tony Higgins of the Canal Trust.

Next thing I know its 10am on a scorching July morning and the Hereford U3A History Group are in the Car Park of Aylestone Park, waiting, like excitable (75 years old) school kids for a summer day trip out. Tony and Phil gave out a small information pack with map, notes and a printed copy of the Wharfinger and we were all ears, taking in lots of information about the Canal in Aylestone Park and even asking some nervous amateur and slightly naive early questions such as “Steve, – Where’s our Canal Boat?” Seven hours later that question had been well answered after a fantastic tour of the Herefordshire route of the Canal from Hereford to Ledbury.

None of the U3A members had any real previous knowledge of the Herefordshire to Gloucestershire Canal or even canals full stop, but that made the tour even more interesting. We learnt about canal gradients, locks and water levels. About navvies, engineers, bricks, the shape of bridges and tunnels. About how to spot a Canal building, about how few records have been left of the Canal’s operations. About the route and how some current property owners are Canal friends and some are not. Friends allowed us into the their gardens to view canal features, while other properties we just drove past, without even slowing.

The weather become hotter and hotter and we saw the Herefordshire countryside at its best. At Aylestone Park we observed a hidden tunnel amongst several hundred new affordable houses on the site of a former Victorian tile works; how times have changed. Then onto Merton Meadow, part of which was the basin for the end of the Canal and is now Jewsons. I didn’t dare tell Tony that the Canal Street sign for many years had lost its C and its how it stuck in my mind.

Withington Wharf next and first stop was the toilets in the Julian Brown’s Furnishings shop for U3A members on water tablets, younger readers have this delight to come in their lives. I later found out Julian is the son of the Brown Furniture family who maybe made classical English Furniture in Hereford when the Canal was still running.

The old Canal warehouse buildings and office are still intact and through the ages of time, the Victorian sign proclaiming Salt for sale was just visible which gave a clue to what was transported to the farming communities of Herefordshire, before there was a Tesco.

Interesting to see a style of building and brick unique to the Canal still clear today, over 140 years since the Canal closed.

On to Ledbury and how the railways started to mix with the Canal under the imposing viaduct, which we were told was a Ballard Brothers co-production. Past the newly created Canal route by the side of a recently popped up housing estate, where the Canal is currently a wildflower bed and then onto a much anticipated pub lunch at The Oak in Staplow, A very good choice by Tony.

After lunch, on to the much talked about Ashperton tunnel and Tunnel Cottage. The road and parking became more tricky, but Phil manoeuvred the minibus perfectly above the Tunnel escarpment. Today it's a different sight to the 1840s when it must have looked like an HS2 cutting with an army of navvies possibly refreshed on hot days by "Cider Annie". Across to the village cricket pitch which lies on top of the Canal tunnel. I wondered if there was a Tunnel End?

Next, on to the gem of the tour, and the Skew Bridge at Yarkhill. What effort went into this beautifully engineered brick and stone bridge and for it to be fully used for only 32 years? It almost stands as a grand folly, but deserves to be called one of the seven wonders of Herefordshire. Tony got excited after a conversation with a landowner about another bridge over the Canal at Monkhide and we saw the remains of a Victorian drive/ride thru, where a water mill bordered the Canal and boatman could purchase a loaf as they passed by.

All in all a very pleasant day for all the U3A History Group, who learnt so much about the Herefordshire to Gloucestershire Canal, as it operated between Ledbury and Hereford.

Who ever came up with the idea of the Tour deserves a medal, its a great trip for people who are interested, but know little about the Canal. The surplus from the fees will have helped the coffers of the Trust too.

Thank you again to Trust Volunteers Tony and Phil who did a great job.

Steve Ramsdale – Hereford U3A History Group



U3A, which stands for the University of the Third Age, is a UK-wide movement of locally run interest groups that provide opportunities for older people to come together and learn for fun. It's a network of groups where members share knowledge, skills, and interests in a social environment. There are no exams or qualifications required, making it a relaxed and enjoyable way to stay active and engaged.

For those who like the sound of this more about Hereford and District U3A History Group can be seen at https://hereford.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/history/ or more general details on the wider U3A offering can be seen at <https://www.u3a.org/>

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Stamps don't take a holiday!

No folks, while many of you may have been sunning yourselves on the beach (or in your back garden) the stamps appeal beastie's need for sustenance has continued unabated, so many thanks to those who have donated "stuff" over the past few balmy weeks.



And while all of your sendings are very much appreciated, I particularly liked the large lot of "slogan postmarks" that were waiting for me when I too returned from my recent holiday on some distant, tropical shores.

So please keep them coming; stamps, stamp albums, postcards, coins, banknotes, medals, etc can all be turned into much needed funds for the dear old H&G.

Either send them directly to me: STEVE BENCE, at H&G Stamps, 35 Lime Road, SOUTHAM, Warwickshire CV47 1EQ or email to information@h-g-canal.org.uk to arrange for collection or delivery.

Steve Bence

Anyone interested in a talk?



It is not just all talking, the presentation shows the history, the recent history and what is now happening on the restoration with many pictures and videos showing the sites as they are restored.

Recently, as the picture shows, a talk was given at St Mary's Church, Ross on Wye.

The speaker is happy to travel around the countries of Herefordshire and Gloucestershire and has even drifted into Worcestershire a couple of times.

Please contact chairman@h-g-canal.org.uk if you would like a talk about the great work that is happening with the Hereford and Gloucester Canal.

Ralph Barber

My previous report started with how the weather, wind and rain had favoured the yachting fraternity. Generally, throughout the year the atmosphere has been warm, certainly since May. These very high temperatures and lack of rain has certainly changed the appearance of the canal.

Gradually the weed growth at Over basin has accelerated and the water level is rapidly falling, mid-July to the tune of six bricks. No longer are we allowed to top the canal water level with water from the River Severn or from the adjacent River Leadon. Already some canal activities have been cancelled, our first event to be cancelled being a normally well attended fun day. We will endeavour to sail as long as possible before exploring other uses for the canal.



Our sailing days have been put to good use. I reported in the last issue of our first ever sinking yacht, yes, this was soon followed with a further yacht sinking. The photograph shows the bow of one of our micro magic yachts badly damaged.

The water level being low coupled with a strong tail wind the yacht collided with an unknown object. The model was retrieved, quickly bandaged with insulation tape and was soon back in action.

The unknown underwater object was soon removed by our harbour master.

A further picture, a different day to above, windless and relaxed illustrates a tranquil scene of micro magic racing, possibly the lull before the storm.

The motor boaters have not been forgotten. The club has a motor boat trophy which is keenly competed for.

Fifteen models competed in the first round of two events, the competitions are usually quite straight forward to enjoy on a Sunday afternoon. Competitors age, gender and size of model are accounted for.



Bryan Evans of naval fame is leading the competition with one of his motor torpedo boats. David Exell, who models to vintage extreme, is placed second with his scratch-built model of a gondola.

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Gondolas are thought of as the water taxis of Venice – on Lake Coniston there is a steam yacht Gondola based on the original gondola design on which David's model is based. In



third place is Simon Frost with his much detailed pilot boat.

The men are being chased by two junior ladies, Charlotte in fourth place with sister Jessica just a few places away, both sailing similar lifeboats with pride. They were constructed from very basic kits which required a fair amount of head scratching. Grandfather Chris kept an eye on them with the finished models being very presentable.

Ted Tedaldi

Sailing4Disabled



Hello everyone, I have come to the conclusion to never complain about the rain again. At the start of this year we lost so many days because of the rain, but now it looks like we will lose a good few weeks because there's no water in the canal at Over! Well, to be honest, the water is that low that at the far end the Wheelyboat is scraping the bottom!

With all this at least it has allowed us to get the new addition to our fleet off the trailer. After a long process of tests and welding pressure testing, we found that there was 6 little pin size holes in the deck. This then had to go back to our very understanding welder, who was relieved when he was informed that it was not his welding. Once done more pressure testing was undertaken and it passed!

A name was chosen by the volunteers, to my astonishment, it has been named "Sir Pirate Pete", apparently after a famous Jersey pirate who was banned from returning to his homeland.

The storyline was that all the pirate caves had been spoken for, so he ended up in Gloucester to do good work with the disabled of Gloucester.

This was short sighted of Jersey, as he has been providing the figurehead for boating for the disabled over the past 40+ years in various classes of disabled craft. As he said when the water is in your blood, it's hard to get rid of!

A sincere BIG THANK YOU, to everyone who got this project "off the trailer".



Pirate Pete.

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**](mailto:malswick@h-g-canal.org.uk)

Oxenhall/Newent Station
Martin Bolton
[**oxenhall@h-g-canal.org.uk**](mailto:oxenhall@h-g-canal.org.uk)

As required

Herefordshire Roving Team
Ralph Barber 07836 347427
[**hereford@h-g-canal.org.uk**](mailto:hereford@h-g-canal.org.uk)

Thursdays

Over Basin/Vineyard Hill
Dave Goff
[**overbasin@h-g-canal.org.uk**](mailto:overbasin@h-g-canal.org.uk)

Yarkhill
Chris High
[**yarkhill@h-g-canal.org.uk**](mailto:yarkhill@h-g-canal.org.uk)

As required

Hereford City Team
Tony Higgins 01432 850408
[**herefordcity@h-g-canal.org.uk**](mailto:herefordcity@h-g-canal.org.uk)

Wharfinger

EDITION
166

Please submit your copy for Edition 166 to the magazine editorial team no later than 31 October 2025.

Ideas, text and images by email to [**editor@h-g-canal.org.uk**](mailto:editor@h-g-canal.org.uk).

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Want to Help?

The Canal Trust is always in need of new volunteers as our activities continue to expand. We can normally find a use for any skill from gardeners to first-aiders, brickies to those willing to help with a shovel, pen, 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
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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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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



Over Basin Project

Over Basin was created in 2½ years after an agreement with a local housing developer. The basin, the perimeter walls, slipway, and surrounding grounds were created by local volunteers and the IWA WRG volunteers. Work continued by the H&G volunteers to develop and fit out The Wharf House, now The Lock Keepers Bar and Restaurant. The basin is the home of the Trust's heritage fleet - now comprising of Renton, Bosley, Alder, Mister Maysey and Susan-E. It is used every week by walkers enjoying the canal side towpath as well as Sailing4Disabled, a local model boat club has a number of sessions each week. Even the Fire Brigade have been to practise their skills on the canal.

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.