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Summer 2025

The Wharfinger

HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST



164
EDITION

REBUILDING A SUSTAINABLE CANAL BETWEEN HEREFORD & GLOUCESTER

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Who Does What?	IFC	Chris Phelps RIP	25
From the desk of the Chairman	3	A Tiger in the Sky	28
Update from the Board	4	Why I volunteer for the H&G Canal Trust	32
Over Update	6	H&G Canal Trust Archives	33
Monkhide	9	Where is that Towpath?	37
Malswick News	10	Promotion Events	39
Kymin	12	Gloucester & District Model Boat Club	40
Trustee Travels	14	Confessions of a Stamp Sorter	41
A Tale of Two Entities	15	Sailing4Disabled aka Rowing Pirates	43
Plant Operator Training	18	Site Days	44
Annual General Meeting 2025	19	Advertisers supporting The Wharfinger	44
Become a Trustee	20	Contact Details	IBC
Trustees Report	21	Canal Map	OBC

Canal Walks



Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust has produced more 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

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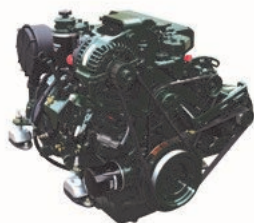
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From the desk of the Chairman



I hope this edition of The Wharfinger finds you well. There's a great deal happening across the Trust – and even more that could happen – with just a little extra help.

“Resources” might seem like a sterile word, but it's people – you – who are the most valuable resource we have. Without more helping hands, we may soon be forced to turn to paid services to keep vital projects moving. That would mean diverting funds away from what really matters: training our volunteers, buying equipment, and investing canal restoration infrastructure. I firmly believe that somewhere among our members lies every skill we could possibly need – or a connection to someone who has it.

There's reason for real optimism. We're hopeful that Malswick's second planning application will be approved later this year, marking another exciting step toward restoring more of our canal. Behind the scenes, work also continues on the planning for Newent Station and Oxenhall. We aim to submit those applications later this year or early next – if we can prepare all the required documents in time. This is an area where we urgently need help. You don't have to get muddy or lift heavy tools – just a few hours behind a computer could make all the difference.

Of course, we still need boots on the ground too. I recently spoke with one of our site leaders, who shared how much they'd value volunteers willing to simply mow, paint, or lend a hand however they can. There is truly plenty to do.

As we approach the AGM, you'll read in the Update from the Board (page 4) article that fundraising is a top priority. Even if you're less mobile, you can help by reviewing the numerous fundraising emails we receive each week. We need people to scan through them and flag any opportunities that might fit our goals. Better still, imagine a small team dedicated to this work – compiling the necessary data from our existing records and pulling together strong submissions. Every success here brings us closer to a fully restored canal.

I know this call for support appears in nearly every edition of The Wharfinger, but that's because the need is real – and ongoing. Whether it's you, or someone you know who might enjoy being outdoors, researching funding, or even visiting our sites to capture photos and videos for social media, your involvement could be transformative.

In a recent chat with Nick, our web expert, I mentioned how often our names appear on the inside front cover – mine shows up nine times, and his not far behind. I'd love nothing more than to reduce that number, to focus more deeply on fewer roles, and find a bit more of a “Trust / Life” balance.

Please help us continue this journey – with your time, your skills, or your voice.

Ralph Barber

As mentioned elsewhere in this edition, I recently attended a meeting of the Northern Canal Association (NCA), where we were asked whether we could host an event on the canal in October 2027. After some discussion, the Chair agreed to explore the potential costs and requirements, though we also considered 2028 as a more feasible option. However, following further review, the Board concluded at the April meeting that we are currently not in a position to host such an event.

Instead, we revisited the idea of hosting a **Wilderness Boat Meet**, similar to the successful gathering held at Aylestone Park in 2011. It was agreed that we aim to organise this event in 2027. While Over is a possible venue today, we are hopeful that **Malswick** might be ready by then.

On the topic of Malswick, **Courtabovethecut**, with the help of Mark Atkin, visited the site last month and produced a fascinating video titled ***Digging Out an Abandoned Railway and Canal***. Another excellent video from the same creator, ***How to Restore a Canal***, is well worth watching, as it highlights many of the challenges faced by canal restoration groups (link to video details at bottom of page 10).

We briefly discussed the **Annual Report**, which must be reviewed and signed off at the next Board meeting, along with the Trustees' Report, before being published online at the end of April. The **Annual Accounts** were signed off at the April meeting and are already available on our website for those who wish to review them ahead of the AGM. As in previous years, we will not be printing copies for the AGM.

Regarding web content, we have approved and published the **Updated Strategy Document - Joining the Dots**. This reflects feedback from both our February site leaders' meeting and a subsequent members' meeting in March. It's available on the downloads page of our website. This document will also be formally presented at the AGM for member approval.

We also held a wider meeting in March to discuss the **Newent Bridge Street Crossing**. Thank you to all the volunteers who attended. It was agreed to proceed with the **Inclined Plane Crossing** design, though final design work will follow later. A **public meeting** will be held on **14th June** at Newent Memorial Hall from **10am to 3pm** to present plans for Oxenhall, Newent Station, and Bridge Street. Refreshments will be provided and all are welcome.

In other updates:

- We are working on an agreement with the **Model Boat Club**, which will support future grant applications. A meeting was held in early April, and some refinements to the agreement are still needed.
- As we've finalised the accounts, we are also reviewing the **Trustee Board** composition. Three Trustees are due to rotate off under the three-year rule.

- **Richard Appleton** will be stepping down as a Trustee but will continue contributing to specific projects. His **Land Portfolio** will be taken over by **Tony Higgins**, with support from Richard.
- Tony will therefore continue as a Trustee. We're pleased that **Nick Dymott** has offered to take on the **Membership Secretary** role. He'll be supported by Tony, Ralph (for new member outreach), and Janet (mail order process).
- **Bob Hargreaves** has agreed to continue as a Trustee with a focus on **Engineering**.
- In addition we are pleased that Dr Joe Davey has been nominated as a potential new Trustee.

We are still seeking new Trustees. In particular, we need one focused on fundraising to support large-scale projects like the Newent and Over restoration and another to help oversee site operations and support our site leaders.

We continued aligning our work with the updated strategy by reviewing parts of the Business Plan.

Site Updates:

- **Over/Rudford:** We're exploring the next phase of restoration at Over Lock and discussing potential project leadership. Tony, in his role as Land Trustee, is engaging with the landowner. A related issue is the **Lassington Solar Farm** proposal. We've raised concerns with developers, as their suggested access route crosses a **protected canal corridor**, contrary to local council policy.
- **Malswick (East):** Environmental assessments (covering bats, newts, etc.) are underway. These will take several months before being submitted to the planning officer.
- **Newent:** A potential user of the old Ladder Factory site has been in touch with plans to open a motorcycle shop, workshops, and café. Philip, who knows the site well, will follow up to ensure any access issues are addressed as part of our own planning application. These plans will be shared with the public at the **14th June event at Newent Memorial Hall**.
- **Ledbury:** A change to the S106 agreement has been submitted to Herefordshire Planning. We support the change, as it affects the canal route. We await approval before moving on to the next steps.
- **Hereford:** We're still waiting for a land transfer update from the Holmer landowner. There are some contamination concerns being investigated.

On a more positive note, I've begun a conversation with a representative from **NMITE** (New Model Institute for Technology & Engineering), based in Hereford. We're planning a follow-up meeting to explore potential collaboration.

Ralph Barber – Chairman

Heritage Boats – Renton

We have decided not to do any further work with this boat until we have completed Alder refurbishments. The reasoning is to not split the valuable volunteers' time between the boats and to concentrate on Alder.

Bosley

We have not done that much with this vessel; however, we did take a day to check over fluids etc. and took it for a trip or two down to the Vineyards. The battery when charged kicked the engine over first time after many dormant months. They do not make them like they used to !

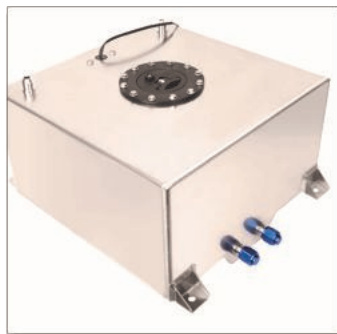


Alder

With Alder now in the water, various activities were undertaken to stabilise the vessel levels. This was undertaken by applying ballast to the bow and removing the original large 100 litre diesel fuel tank at the stern and replacing it with a smaller lighter aluminium one.

The new 40 litre tank has been obtained and installed in the same stern location;

however, much has to be done to connect to existing feeds, with new pipe work and ingenuity required to achieve the end goal. The lower weight will assist in the vessel's level in the water as well as now knowing what fuel is onboard as the new one has a fuel-level gauge.



The old Lister engine has been fully serviced with new oil, oil filter etc. and is awaiting the final fuel connectivity before a start-up test.

The bilge pumps are being wired in to offer water removal from the internal hold, and the plan is for a new bespoke cratch cover to be created to prevent water ingress.

All is looking good with the engine and a start has been made on removal of the old external paint. The removal of all the old paint returning to bare metal is to be undertaken in the coming months with a view to having the painting completed by June/July this year.

Mister Maysey

The boat has been checked over in readiness for the first boat trip in early May 2025.

Not much was required fortunately, just some minor painting, varnishing and engine fettling. So all is well.

Site Maintenance

The site has had a new sign illustrating the lay of the land and what the site is used for.

A new mower has been procured to add to the ride-on obtained some eighteen months ago now. We looked into a Husqvarna to match the ride on but decided on a Honda with the HRG466 SKEP model chosen as it has the self-drive and mulching capabilities.



General site work has been undertaken in recent weeks with the warmer weather, with bush/tree pruning and the inevitable grass cutting. I am pleased to say with the new equipment we can start on the cutting straight away and not spend hours trying to bring old equipment back to life!!!

Basin Water Level

With the warm and drier times in recent months we have noticed the basin water levels dropping. We have lost some five inches from its winter start point and this has led us to investigate any obvious major water leaks.

The one that has become apparent is at the lock entrance...

There had been stop planks to hold back the water but clearly in recent years these have failed, now leaving water up against a dam under the bailey bridge. With work done on clearing the lock undergrowth it has become clear this dam is porous.

We now have water entering the lock from the basin and then spilling into the River Severn. Not ideal, so a plan is being created to reinstate the failed stop planks with new ones to prevent the water reaching the porous dam.

Dave Goff



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Monkhide

Work has continued removing tree debris from the canal. This is hard and demanding work and at times it is difficult to take convincing photographs of the progress being made.

In the photos I have tried to show the progress we have made so far.

Chris High



Some clearance achieved. Canal water is actually visible. Still lots to do.

The stretch down from the winding hole that has been cleared so far.



The stretch of dry and sunny weather during spring has enabled the Malswick team to really crack on. The length of the canal has been dug out, mostly to the correct depth, and the winding hole near the site hut has been finished. However, there is still much to do. The extent of the layer of mudstone that has been causing leakage problems needs to be identified, and once this has been done, clay can be used to seal the banks.



Filling most of the canal to the correct depth is planned next; but until it is clear that there are no leaks we will keep the dams in place.

Steve Court came to visit our site earlier in the year; he runs a YouTube channel called Court above the Cut.

This drone image shows West Wood in the bottom right, and the new canal channel extending westwards towards Newent beyond.

A further view of this end of the cut is seen in the image below.

Steve's drone footage clearly shows how much work has been done at Malswick. It can be seen on one of his many YouTube presentation on the web:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wsEFfz-zGHw>

How to Restore a Canal

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jK6TsBVjcQU>





The big culvert that was installed some years ago required a chamber on the western side of the canal.

As there is not much room available for the embankments at that point, the chamber walls had to be made higher and reinforcing lintels put in position. Graham and Philip can be seen here laying the first of six very heavy lintels.

We have had several species of birds visiting the site: the cormorant shown in the previous Wharfinger, some Canada geese and this pair of ducks.

Wagtails and blue tits have also been spotted.

The last dam that will be removed is actually a land bridge that will allow machinery to get to the far side of the canal.



Access will be needed mainly for landscaping, and the “borrow pit” behind West Wood will be filled at some stage so a route over the canal needs to be retained.

Words and photographs Alan McBride



The Kymin site has been closed throughout the winter due to some trees leaning over the towpath. Following discussions with the landowner, a team was pulled together to clear some of these so that we can look at tidying the towpath and get the site opened again.

Please note it is still currently closed even with all the tree work that you see here progressed.

Fortunately the landowner, with some help, mainly the tractor, did some pulling of the trees as some were hanging in challenging positions. The storms we had running up to Christmas 2024 and afterwards created some trees that had fallen on each other.

Once Matt had got going with the chain saw, a well-thrown rope connected to the tractor soon meant that the main tree that hung over others could be pulled free, and then back and over the ditch.



Next the leaning tree had to be addressed...





... after a bit of climbing (rather him than me!), Matt undertook the felling, with a few people on a rope to help guide it through the gap, and after the branches were removed, the tractor came and removed the all the wood.

A successful session thanks to Matt, Dave and George as well as the Landowner.

Thanks also to the landowner for permitting us to run two walks along the Kymin stretch during the Herefordshire Histories Festival in May.

Ralph Barber



Over the past few months, the Trustees have covered some serious ground of late – northward and beyond. From a visit to Ellesmere (see Tony’s article on page 15 for more), to representing our cause at the Northern Canals Association (NCA) meetings, it’s been a season of insight, connection, and inspiration.

You might ask – why the North? Once upon a time, there was a Southern Canals Association, but it ceased operations some years ago. So, these days, as long as you’re north of the English Channel, you’re welcome. And so, off I went – bright and early – to the historic Cromford Canal, where the latest NCA meeting was held.

Our hosts had arranged everything beautifully. The meeting took place in a lovely, modern church hall equipped with excellent sound and projection systems – and even a carpeted floor! The setting was ideal: just a short walk from the canal itself, so no need for car transfers as on previous excursions.

The Friends of the Cromford Canal (FCC) offered a series of insightful talks. They shared how their volunteers work and thrive, including their now-traditional volunteer appreciation event – held in Matlock, complete with food, drinks, and a “plus one” for every volunteer. Their gratitude was both practical and heartfelt.

FCC has seen its challenges. A few years ago, they experienced Trustee-related difficulties, but the pandemic gave them the space to reorganise. Since then, they’ve emerged stronger, more focused, and better structured. One of their key learnings? The need to separate operational discussions – particularly around their highly successful boat trips – from strategic governance. Now, a dedicated committee manages boat operations, allowing the board to focus on broader goals.

Their efforts have paid off. Income from boat rides and the adjacent shop reached an impressive £75,000 last year – with 25% from book and merchandise sales alone. Their historic canal boat, Birdwood, once horse-drawn, now runs on electric power to comply with environmental protections in the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). As a larger vessel, it requires Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)-qualified crew, further highlighting their professionalism.

Chris Broome, the FCC’s engineer, delivered a compelling final talk on the Beggarlee Extension – a subject we explored in person during a walk following a delicious lunch. He covered planning hurdles, cooperation with the Canal & River Trust, and the group’s strong ties with the Waterway Recovery Group (WRG). We also learned about their delicate work managing the habitat of white-clawed crayfish, a native species under threat from invasive counterparts along the canal.

Following the walk, I gave a brief five-minute update on the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust. A few other Trusts also shared their updates, including one currently wrestling with licensing issues for a new trip boat. In contrast, Tewkesbury Borough Council – has shown little concern when we discussed the

boat trips at Over with them. As we look ahead to running trips at Malswick, we'll need to contact the Forest of Dean Council for their view.

Looking forward, the next NCA event will take place at Norbury Junction on 5th October 2025, followed by another gathering in Chesterfield on 22nd March 2026. Interested in attending? Please contact me at chairman@h-g-canal.org.uk and see what other Canal Trusts are doing.

Ralph Barber

A Tale of Two Entities



Have you ever been to the Waterways Museum at Ellesmere Port?

If not, I can indeed recommend that you plan a visit as I have been fortunate enough to go there to attend the recent Annual Restoration Conference which took place on the 26th April.

As a Trustee of the H&GCT I believe it is important to keep in touch with what 'the others' are up to and probably just as important to understand how we can be supported by the Canal & River Trust (CRT) and the Inland Waterways Association (IWA). I was pleased to be joined in this endeavour by our political relations Trustee, Robert Moreland, who will have his own take on the activities here reported.

The format for the day was based around a number of presentations on specific topics for the whole audience, whilst break-out sessions for smaller groups took place. All were followed by a guided tour of the Museum, plenty there in which to be interested.

First, I must say a word regarding the 'compère' (their word by the way) for the event, Paul Rogers, who was excellent at corraling and controlling both the event and the around a hundred restoration oriented attendees and helpers.

One of the first and continuing things to impress me was the clear co-operation

between the IWA and the CRT. Both organisations have been undergoing major change recently, of both funding and personnel, and it was good to see the most senior figures from each attending the conference. Co-operation between these two entities is essential for the continued prosperity of our UK canal heritage.



Presentation 1 was all about the innovative project to use the existing canal system to move volumes of water from east of Birmingham (Minsterworth) to the South East. The speakers were the Peter Walker – Head of Strategic Infrastructure Projects at the Canal & River Trust

and Sarah Jayne O’Kane – Stakeholder Engagement Lead from Severn Trent Water. I have to say that their main thrust appeared to be in defence of the project, though they included some fascinating details of how it will all work.

The primary funding was coming from a water company supplying the South East and should require minimal financial input from Canal & River Trust who will stand to accrue regular income from this use of the waterway for many years to come. More detail can be found by looking for ‘Grand Union Water Transfer Project’ in your favoured search engine.

Presentation 2 on Restoration: Moving Forward was led by Mike Palmer from the Waterways Recovery Group (WRG) and Hugh Pearman, Chair of the Heritage Advisory Panel at the Inland Waterways Association, and confirmed how effective, essential and worthwhile restoration has been and will be, encouraging everyone there be proud and happy to continue unabated. I asked him whether the increasing emphasis on Health and Safety, over the years he has been involved with restoration, had had an impacted on the WRG? His answer was, it is very straight forward, you just follow the rules.

Following a coffee break Robert and I attended different breakouts, Robert’s being a Q&A session with the CRT whilst I attended a presentation around the heritage of the canals.

The speaker was the chair of the Heritage Advisory panel for the IWA but also an acclaimed architectural historian and journalist. His theme highlighted that in restoring fixtures and buildings, we are also creating heritage for the next generation.

Heritage in use, even if it is almost newbuild, is more valuable to society. He also pointed out how many successful restorations are usually the result of co-operation between different bodies with a different focus on heritage but a pursuing a common goal.

After a tasty lunch of sandwiches and nibbles, Presentation 3 focused on Working with Young Volunteers and given by Kate Simons – National Volunteer Manager of the Canal & River Trust and Christine Howells – Communications and Marketing Trustee at the Lichfield and Hatherton Restoration Trust, who has been working with the DoE Award scheme, very successfully, for some time.

The benefits of getting young people involved were most ably presented and it is certainly something to put on our wish list for the H&GCT, though it was also clear that it required many hours to provide the structure and leadership required which would at present make it hard for our current team to undertake.



I am a firm believer in the DoE scheme, and should a person come forward to lead this initiative she or he will find full support from the Trustees.

Again, with admirable organisation, those of the attendees who were interested were provided with a very professional guided tour of the Ellesmere port site with its buildings, basins, locks, boats and many artefacts in the Museum

itself. Hats off to our guide who entertained a probably quite tired group with a fascinating tour. The basin served primarily as a major transshipment base and as such there are sea-going wide, long barges alongside our more familiar traditional narrow boats providing an insight as to how life was 200 years ago.

If any of the above has piqued your interest, please do contact Robert or myself and we can provide a more in depth conversation than that allowed in a short article.

Tony Higgins – Trustee.



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Plant Operator Training

We had an excellent day's training in April.

All the trainees passed: all are now qualified to drive diggers and/or dumpers.



Many thanks to Adrian Sturgess from the Inland Waterways Association for his time and expertise in providing the training.

Congratulations to all concerned.

Paul McClintock – Yarkhill; Martin Bolton, Paul Voyner and Nigel Lane – Oxenhall; Alan Adanis and Dave Palmer – Hereford; Andrew Holmes and Simon Frost – Malswick; Graham Watling – Over.

Simon Frost is now qualified for Malswick on both, which was a bonus as he was originally only planned for one.

Both Graham and Simon had previous experience which did make the training much quicker.

Words and pics – Alan McBride



Annual General Meeting 2025



The 2025 Annual General Meeting of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust will be held on Wednesday, 25 June 2025 at 7:30pm in The Royal Oak, A449 Ross Road, Much Marcle, Ledbury HR8 2ND

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Apologies for absence
3. Approval of minutes from 2024 AGM
4. Chairman's remarks
5. To receive the Trustees Report and financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2024.
6. To approve the appointment of an Independent Examiner of all the Trust's accounts.
7. To re-elect Trustees standing down by rotation and nominations of new Trustees
8. Formal acceptance of the Strategy
9. Questions from the Audience.
10. Close of formal business.

After a break of 15 minutes to enable you to get a drink before two presentations.

Our guest speaker from Canal and River Trust.

Jane Hennell, Area Planner with the Canal & River Trust for 18 years, before that a Principal Planning Officer at a Local Authority in Gloucestershire (Stroud). Jane used to live at Nutshell Cottage in Stonehouse on the Stroudwater, so canals are important to her.

Jane covers Wales and South-west region, so a mix of slightly more urban locations such as Bath, Gloucester and Worcester as well as rural areas such as Somerset and Wiltshire.

She will be talking about their role at the Trust as a Planner, how the Trust considers and responds to planning applications and planning policy and how this may change as the Government are reviewing the role of statutory consultees.

This links very well with our strategy direction of ensuring the route is protected and of continuing to restore the canal corridor.

The Chair will then run a presentation of the work over the last year, well may drift into this year as well.

Notes for AGM

The formal notice of the 2025 AGM was published on our website as required under the Articles 28 days prior to the above date. The Agenda, the Annual Report, Accounts and Finance Statements can be found on the website. In accordance with the H&G CT's Articles and Memorandum of Association, those members of the Board of Trustees who are retiring on rotation but offering themselves for re-election do not require to be formally nominated to serve an additional term.

New Nominations

New nominations to serve on board of Trustees are welcome. Requests for a nomination form should be made by the person making the nomination by email to agm@h-g-canal.org.uk. Nominations should be submitted seven days prior to the AGM.

Proxy voting

Every member who is entitled to vote at an AGM may appoint a proxy to vote in his/her stead. A proxy must be someone entitled to vote at the AGM. Proxy forms are also available on request and should be completed, signed and returned to arrive at least 48 hours before the start of the AGM.

The AGM will be paperless, so we will not be supplying copies of the Accounts, Minutes or Agenda at the door of the meeting, and the meeting will be shared via Zoom for those who are unable to attend in person.

Questions and Remote Access

Please submit questions for answering at the AGM or requests for access by Zoom in advance by email to agm@h-g-canal.org.uk and further details will be supplied. The Trustees Report produced for our members and supporters, Companies House, the Charity Commission and stakeholders appears on the yellow pages herewith.

Become a Trustee



... and Help Restore the Canal Faster!

Are you passionate about seeing the canal restored more quickly? We're currently short of Trustees and are looking for committed individuals to help drive our projects forward.

While we especially welcome those with skills in fundraising, community engagement, and strategic planning, we're also keen to hear from people who can dedicate time to short-term, focused projects. By strengthening our team, we can accelerate the restoration process and open up more stretches of the canal for everyone to enjoy.

If you'd like to play a part in this important work, we'd love to hear from you.

Please contact: chairman@h-g-canal.org.uk for more details.

Trustees Report



THE HEREFORDSHIRE AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST LIMITED TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 December 2024

The Trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2024 for the Trust which is a non-profit distributing company no. 2704407, formed in April 1992, and a registered charity no. 1010721, which replaced the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Society launched in 1983.

Governing document

The charity is a company, limited by guarantee as defined in the Companies Act 2006, and as such is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Organisational structure

A team of volunteers runs the charity. It is managed by the Trustees who meet regularly, supported by site-based groups of volunteers and committees responsible for promotion and other commercial activities. The Board appoint trustees to run The Wharf House Co. Ltd. The Articles of Association allow for up to twelve trustees to be in place but allows for the co-option of two more to cover special projects. One third of the trustees stand down annually by rotation but can apply for re-election. Potential new trustees can be elected at the AGM or are co-opted during the year, but they must stand for formal election at the next AGM. When new Trustees join, they are provided with the information they need to fulfil their roles, which includes information about trustees and charity law.

Risk management.

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are put in place to reduce risks of fraud error or unsafe acts.

The Board of Trustees are aware of the general guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit. The Trustees have regard to this guidance and consider the activities of the charity are conducted demonstrably for the public benefit and this applies also to their plans for future action. The charitable objects are the rebuilding a sustainable canal between Hereford and Gloucester.

The Trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year were:

Richard Appleton	Tony Higgins
Ralph Barber	Phillip Marshall
Deborah Barber	Eamonn McGurk (resigned Aug 2024)
Dave Goff (resigned June 2024)	Robert Moreland
Bob Hargreaves	Keith Vaughan Welch (resigned Aug 2024)
Edward Helps	Roger Morgan (Appointed June 2024)

Objectives and activities:

The trust espouses the following core values: -

Restoring, enhancing, and protecting the canal for all

Integrating the canal corridor as a sustainable resource into the life of the communities along its route. Endeavouring to complete the work in partnership with all other interested parties.

Interested Parties

This reporting period we have engaged further with the neighbourhood in Newent. Also, further engagement with councillors in local, district and county wide government including an open day for members and the public at Malswick.

Voluntary help and gifts in kind

The volunteers form a critical part of the trust, not just in restoring the canal but also maintaining the restored sections and promoting the restoration widely through local and national events. All these aspects have continued throughout the year in question and are set to expand. The monetary value of the volunteer work that we have recorded in the year adds up £232,850 but we know this does not reflect all the time dedicated to the business of H&G CT by all our hardworking volunteers.

Risks to the Charity

The Trust continues to negotiate new sites and to rejuvenate former sites with developers and landowners at various places along the line of the canal - including locations in Hereford, Ledbury and Gloucestershire. These can take years to conclude but we continue with an on-going diverse portfolio of negotiations so that a flow of announcements can realistically come over the coming years.

Reserves Policy

The charity aims to hold funds that are to cover the normal operating costs for 12 months.

Charitable activities and achievements

Chairman's Report:

My thanks go to all Trustees and Volunteers for their ongoing support and involvement in the Trust.

We have had a year of working parties at restoration sites, promotional events attended, and social evenings. The AGM in June was held at the Royal Oak, Much Marcle, with some members connecting over the internet.

We also celebrated further opening of new canal at Malswick with a Public Open Day held there in September. It was good that so many people came to see the work that had occurred and take a walk along the new canal, then enjoying a chat whilst having a cup of tea (with cake) and review the plans going forward for the site.

This report now covers both the complete calendar and Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust Financial year.

With a new trustee joining the board we continued the work on the strategy. The Board signed off on a high-level strategy of 'joining the dots' - looking at the sites, connecting them and further restoration on the sites that we have control over. As the year finished, we started pulling together the project plans to support the strategy and this will help support the overall business plan for the next period.

Work continues in many areas. A planning application has created an opportunity to look at the terminus of the canal at Hereford, the planning for which is now going ahead, and some funds have been assigned to the H&G Canal Trust. Work is ongoing with the planners as to how we can develop the basin in Hereford. The housing development at Holmer has restarted after the site owner appointed another construction company, and we will be following up with them to ensure the line of the canal as agreed in the initial planning application is to still be transferred to us. We continue to develop plans around Aylestone Park. Discussions are ongoing with the council linking in with their city plans for the development of a Green Corridor along the canal line out to Aylestone Park and ensuring the route continues to be protected in the Herefordshire Local Plan that is currently under review.

Kymin: Ongoing site maintenance continued.

Yarkhill: Regular maintenance and vegetation clearance continued to keep the volunteers busy on this stretch of canal.

Adjoining Yarkhill: The team have gained access to the site next to Yarkhill and have done an excellent job of clearing the site. Unfortunately, we are finding that several landowners are happy to let us work sites but are not allowing the general public on to the site.

Ledbury: As mentioned in the last annual report the planning decision for the development of 625 houses and several factory units was given the go ahead to the north of the viaduct. Support for the H&G Canal Trust in land and money was also awarded. However, discussions are still under way with the developer and Herefordshire Council to agree a way forward. We have had progress, but it is proving to be very slow.

Dymock: Following issues with the pump reported in last year's report this has now been resolved, and the water level has been maintained to a suitable level and is continuing to be monitored.

Oxenhall: A small group of volunteers with help from Malswick volunteers are keeping the public footpath and the permissive way clear for the local walkers.

Newent: Whilst not a lot has happened on site, we now have a model of the proposed inclined plane that has proved to be a good discussion point at several of the shows the promotions team managed to get to throughout the year. We are also starting the process of applying for planning permission along this length of the canal corridor, having now had pre-application advice from the Forest of Dean District Council planners.

Malswick: Work has continued with new canal coming online and filled with water. We have submitted a planning application for the next length of canal to be restored that will create a long length of canal in water.

Moat Farm: Routine maintenance, including mowing of the grassy areas, continued to be the focus of work here. The 'wilder' areas occasionally needed intervention to enhance the habitats that have been created.

Over: The land slippage at Vineyard Hill - the area is pegged out and continues to be monitored. Last check showed the slip was occurring, but not into the canal. There is a plan to improve the ability to get boats along the section of canal at the bottom of the hill. The team is working with the other users on site. Several of the containers have been moved to enhance the look of the area as well as improving the storage of equipment for the H&G Canal Trust and Sailing4Disabled and all of them painted making the site very presentable.

Heritage Boats: Alder was lifted out of the water this year. The hull, for a boat almost 100 years old, was in a very good state. The team at Over cleaned and applied several coats of blacking. The aim was to then work on the cabin. Unfortunately, Renton had an issue taking on water and sinking. The team quickly responded to the issue, and we lifted Renton out in the New Year as we put Alder back in and work is planned to check the hull once Alder is completed.

Apart from the existing users of the basin, the model boaters and Sailing4Disabled, H&G have run boat trips at the weekend over the summer. Everyone involved enjoyed the trips up and down the canal either as a passenger or one of the crew involved.

Mill Barn: We have a design; the original planned location has had to change due to underground pipes. We are getting the paperwork aligned ready to apply for planning permission when time is suitable.

Llanthony: Both properties are let, and the lock basin is maintained by the Community Payback Team.

One of the keys to a solid restoration is the involvement of others - councils, locals, all types of groups. Work has occurred to continue to ensure the canal route is protected and supported by all.

Positive comments have been received about the change in direction the trust is now taking, after a few years of some negative comments. The sharing of ideas and use of social media with Facebook and the many videos that have been published on YouTube as well as extra local signage have helped with the messaging.

Membership: Although we sadly lose members each year, the overall figure has this year increased to 1132. With the ability to get out to shows to promote the Trust we have had a good increase in new members. We thank members for their generosity with all their donations.

Volunteers: A steady increase and interest in getting involved in the restoration work although we always need more. Volunteers who would be able to take on extra responsibility around the sites or get involved in the promotion of the H&G Trust at sales events or presenting at talks would be very useful. We have seen a big increase in talks this past year which has provided a useful income and also with getting the message out.

The Wharfinger: Its high standard has been maintained thanks to many volunteer hours given by writers, photographers, editors, proof-readers, layout and delivery. We have increased the use of electronic distribution of the Wharfinger to all District and Parish Councillors along the route.

Walks Leaflets: these have been selling well. A further walk leaflet was started and should be ready in the new year taking a walker around Hereford.

Website: This is constantly running behind the scenes. Queries are passed to the relevant H&G Trust member for a response. The work done by our webmaster with the tickets process for supporting the boat trips proved very successful in helping to get people to attend the boat trips.

Sales & Promotion: A very full calendar of promotion events, with visits to the Ledbury Community Day, Hereford Waterworks Museum, heritage events at Newent and Ledbury, Braunston Historic Boat event, and Tibberton village fair have all proved busy days. The Winter Fayre at Newent was a very successful promotion and fundraising event seeing so many volunteers being involved.

Socials: A number held with talks covering a number of areas. It was interesting to hear how a fellow Canal Trust was moving forward with their restoration.

The Grand Holiday Draw did well raising £1272 and our gratitude goes to those who donate all the prizes.

Financial review, Achievements and Performance

This was another good year financially. The income for the Trust and its subsidiary (The Wharf House Co Ltd) (excluding Restricted income) was £204k (2023 £180k) including rental income of £103k (2023 £110k). Costs were kept under control, with £107k spent including £62k on sites (2023 £62k). In consequence the companies recorded a useful surplus together totalling about £97k (2023 £75K). It should be noted that a one-off grant of £50k was received in respect of a site yet to be worked.

The Wharf House Co Ltd trades profitably enabling it to pass over £40k to the Trust during the year to further the restoration projects. The Balance Sheets of both companies continued to strengthen and bank debt in the Trust continues to be repaid, with the long-term bank loan being repaid by £16k during the year and which now stands at £101k.

We continue to build up the Land Fund towards land purchases that we are planning for as we join the dots.

Opportunities for land purchases do occur and we must have funds available, and it is intended to continue to build the Land Fund.

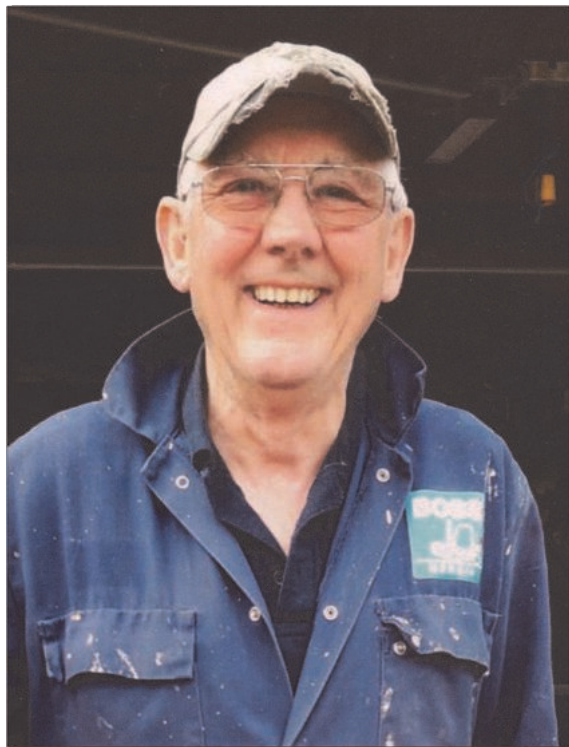
The Trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.

Ralph Barber - Trustee
14 April 2025

Chris Phelps RIP

Chris was a cheerful, helpful and generous man; his ingenuity knew no bounds.

After many years supporting the Canal Trust his loss is the cause of great sadness.



Chris was a Gloucester kid, brought up in Tredworth and as a boy the docks were always his playground. He was clearly drawn to boats as at the age of 15 he joined the Royal Navy.

After serving an electrical apprenticeship at Gloucester docks and the Generating Board in London he went back to sea with the Merchant Navy (preferring the bigger ships and an en-suite cabin of his own).

After moving to Longhope in 1981 Chris worked for Rank Xerox in Mitcheldean, Boss Trucks and Jungheinrich; retiring in 2010.

Chris and Jo were married in 2001 and after retirement enjoyed caravanning adventures as well as a busy social life in Longhope.

His contribution to the Canal Trust was immense; our diggers, dumpers, pumps and mowers have all been dismantled and reassembled by Chris and the team of engineers in their workshop behind the Malswick House Pub...

... and his *Tales from the Workshop* contributions to the Wharfinger were always informative and amusing; a difficult column to fill.

When Chris came to the main site to mend something that we'd broken he worked away without a sigh and usually fixed it. On these occasions his break-time ritual was predictable. We would hear the generator go on for 5 minutes and then in he would come with a mug of steaming tea - he insisted on a "proper cuppa".

In many ways Chris will be sorely missed by all, family, friends and all volunteers at the Canal Trust.

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Q. Need some fresh air?

Q. Like to enjoy some time on the water?

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

A. Come to Over Basin and see how the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust are restoring the former Hereford and Gloucester Canal and take a twenty-five minute trip along a re-created section of canal.

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

Trips on each boat will operate at 30 minute intervals on selected Sunday afternoons in 2025

1 June ♦ 6 July ♦ 3 August ♦ 7 September

starting at 2.00pm with Mister Maysey and at 2.15pm with Charles Morrison. The last trip will embark at 4.15pm.



**Wheelchair users are welcome on
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**All adult ticket holders will receive a 10% food and drink discount
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TICKETS



OVER BASIN



FACEBOOK

**As places may be limited we recommend
that tickets be purchased online in
advance –**

**www.h-g-canal.org.uk/shop
Terms and conditions apply.**

A Tiger in the Sky

“Lucky, lucky, lucky me, I’m a lucky son-of-a-gun”, as the Hyundai advert song goes, and it is sometimes bang on. One sunny Sunday I was privileged to join a pilot-licensed member of the Trust to enjoy a helicopter flight over our fair Herefordshire and Gloucestershire countryside so, of course, where else could we have gone except for following the line of our canal to see what it looks like from the air.

First off it has to be said that in my three score years and ten I’ve never been up in a helicopter and so was full of anticipation for the day. It did not disappoint. The aforementioned helicopter is one of several based at Shobdon aerodrome with Tiger Aviation (<https://www.tigerhelicopters.co.uk>), whose buildings, and hangar are quietly impressive for a small airport in rural Herefordshire. These, coupled with the obvious professionalism of ‘my’ pilot, made the whole experience stress free and joyful.

The helicopter was a Robinson R22 a two-seat, two-bladed, single-engined, light utility helicopter powered by a horizontally mounted Lycoming O-320 flat-four, air-cooled, naturally aspirated, carburettor-equipped, reciprocating engine (according to Wikipedia!). As a bit of a petrol head I can confirm it is a lovely engine.



Prior to any flight there is certain paper work and log filling to do and a l-o-n-g list of pre-flight checks. As someone who claims some engineering knowledge it was fascinating to see how the checks are facilitated by the design and build of the aircraft. Once the in-hangar checks were complete the R22 is so light that it can be easily manhandled out onto the hard standing where the final checks were completed, and I could get seated. Being a warm and sunny day, Neil mentioned that they often fly without the doors on, though not on this occasion. Being securely belted in was, for me, reminiscent of my motor racing days and certainly comforting. One other thing was the donning of the headset to facilitate communication. The headset was hung on a hook behind the seats, just like in the movies. Engine on, ready to go.

Not so fast though, Neil waited while the engine warmed up and communicated with the control tower regarding a take-off. I was thinking that it might be nice to video the take-off and was getting my phone sorted when I glanced up and was surprised to find we were already four feet off the ground hovering gently. Full marks there to the pilot.

This is a lot less of an adrenalin rush than sitting on the grid at a race track, thankfully. In accordance with instruction from the control tower we moved gently out over the runway at about 15–20 feet before rising smoothly to view the surrounding countryside.

It was now that Neil explained that hovering is the hardest part of flying a helicopter and once moving forward, or backwards, it settles down though it is never easy. A further quote, “a helicopter is always trying to crash and control is always required to prevent that”!

As one who is regularly viewing Google maps I sort of expected the layout to look like one of those, but I can only describe it as more real and more confusing. Spectacular would be another description. The beauty of the fields hills and woods viewed from on high (around 500 feet) is truly inspiring.

At ground level navigation is just a matter of following the road, but from up in the air, the roads, and canals, have a habit of disappearing between the trees and it is necessary to look out for other landmarks.

From Shobdon, the town of Leominster is most obvious, so at around 60 mph across the ground we head in that direction, ready to turn south towards Hereford.

The pilot was looking out for the Cadbury factory on the A417 at Hope under Dinmore whilst I found that the forest on the hills at Queenswood Country Park stood out for navigation purposes. From there we headed SSE to look for Withington Marsh where we could pick up the line of the canal and head east.



Residential development north of Ledbury viaduct (top right) showing line of new canal route



Where the canal is ‘in water’ it is certainly a matter of picking out lines of trees rather than water and it was only now that my knowledge of the canal route came of use as I was able to guide Neil firstly over the Chairman’s house at Westside then over my own house at Whitestone.

From Yarkhill to Ashperton, Staplow and Ledbury I am very familiar with route of the canal and it was relatively easy, yet fascinating, to follow.

At Ashperton (above left) you can see the mounds of spoil from the original construction on top of the tunnel, whilst over the Bloor Homes housing development at Ledbury (top) it was good to see the intended new line of the canal laid out as a green band of grass around the new housing.

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*New canal channel part
filled with water clearly
visible at Malswick*

South of Ledbury the line is tricky to see as little remains in water, but Dymock village was easy to find ensuring we were on the right track for finding Oxenhall tunnel and so over Newent and Malswick where the latest work and new section of canal stood out (see photo).

Our pre-filed flight plan was from Shobdon to Malswick return so having photographed the works we turned around to retrace our route back north-westwards.

One obvious observation is that you do not see contours of the land when vertically above them but when looking sideways, the line of Hay Bluff to the west and of the magnificent Malvern Hills to the east still stood out. Herefordshire looked glorious in the springtime sunshine.

Once back within a few miles of Shobdon I noted Neil talking a lot to the control tower and as he explained, this fine Sunday meant a busy day at the airport so we had to 'hover' around waiting for our slot to approach the airport and land.

Neil had me helping to look out for other light aircraft that he knew from the radio chatter were in the vicinity. Against the sky they are easy to spot but against the ground rather less so. With calm aplomb the landing was as comfortable as the take off and the last 1 hour and 10 minutes had passed in a flash.

Having read the above I hope I've been able to convey to you the excitement, joy and good feeling that the flight engendered. I've always felt that when such flights are offered at events such as the British Grand Prix the cost outweighed the benefit. Now, I might make a different decision.

If you are inspired to take a similar flight please get in contact with myself, or Tiger Aviation direct. They have a 4 seater helicopter which, by splitting the cost three ways (3 passengers) makes a similar trip almost reasonable, and now they have a pilot who is familiar with the canal route.

Tony Higgins

Why I volunteer for the H&G Canal Trust



Well, it started in Fleet, Hampshire. As a child in the 50s/60s, most days, I walked our dogs along the Basingstoke Canal towpath between Pyestock (long gone) & Pondtail bridge. It was still in water but essentially derelict. I just enjoyed the peace and wildlife around me.

I joined the Basingstoke Canal Society in the 70s and found myself, along with many others, next to lock 28, creating a base for the narrow gauge railway they were constructing, to move material to and from the lock under restoration. Not sure I wanted to get involved with the hard graft, and so I offered to serve refreshments on their 70 foot trip boat 'John Pinkerton', which took visitors through countryside to Odiham & 'King John's' castle. The captain let me drive the thing a couple of times which was a happy challenge.

With my new 'canal' friends I was able to crew for them on various canals around the UK, and on the Thames. I was very lucky to be on one of the support boats escorting the Swan Uppers in the upper Thames. An old tradition, still carried out today, not to claim ownership by clipping their beaks, but to check the health of the current population.



But I was happiest on the promotions stand, attending canal events country wide. But where could I spend the night? At one in Birmingham, I found myself on a blow-up mattress, on the floor of a traditional working boat with tarpaulin cover. But we were literally under Spaghetti junction and I was kept awake with the continuous 'diddly dum' of lorries driving overhead. I felt part of an extended family, each with their own skills & eccentricities, but together we were slowly moving the canal forward to completion. Indeed the day came in the 1990s when a Royal cut the ribbon to officially open the Basingstoke Canal for navigation and recreation.

More recently I moved to Newent, because we heard that this local canal was being restored and we wanted to help. It is very similar to the Basingstoke Canal, being an arm of some 30 miles, that crosses countryside, and has the potential to enhance bio-diversity, offering a wildlife corridor between Hereford & Gloucester. It'll be a while before it is opened end to end, but I am happy to help the promotions team here to raise awareness of the canal's local restoration projects and recreational opportunities for families ... Come and join us?

A happy volunteer.

Ginny B

As a recent recruit to the Hereford and Gloucester Canal Trust, I have enjoyed meeting various trustees, reading of on-going projects in the Wharfinger and visiting some of the sites along the canal. Standing by the Canal's surviving architecture, its basins, locks and tunnels, I couldn't help thinking of the people who put all this through the landscape in the first place.

I'll need to read up on it, but were the navvies who dug the Herefordshire clay any more loutish than elsewhere; how much money was needed to grease the palms of Westminster legislators and what was heatedly shouted out at public enquiries into turning the Ledbury–Hereford section over to rail? It would be good to find out and it got me thinking about what archive material there is about the canal and indeed about by the H and G Trust itself.

A quick search of the National Archives indicates there are plenty of historical sources held at Kew, Gloucester and Hereford Archives and in other odd places (Lambeth Palace, for example), about the origins and development of the canal.

These are in safe keeping, but for the Trust, asking around some of the trustees, it transpires that maps, photos, minutes, letters and other sources of evidence are scattered all over the place.

These may not be worthy of a place in nationally held archives, but they are important for knowing about how the Trust has evolved and what might be helpful for the future development of it. I have therefore volunteered to oversee the Trust's archive material, which in practical terms means making a start on getting all that is out there in one place.

In the first instance, I have a garden room that can be used for storing items and in which I can start cataloguing what's there. I'll use the standard methodologies of archiving: cataloguing according to provenance and date and filing down from series to item. A small outlay to pay for watertight storage boxes and shelving will be needed, and also for a decent lock on the door, although a determined, strangely inclined thief would likely be able to get in.

Perhaps in time it will be decided to hold the archive material elsewhere, in a brick building at one of the Canal's sites perhaps, but in the meantime, it will suffice as a temporary repository.

The paper cataloguing of the material will be the start and then it will need to be processed electronically. This will add to the previous efforts of others, especially Nigel Jefferies, Colin Dymott and most recently Nick Dymott who have over the years compiled around 30,000 files for the Trust's digital archive.

Nick has been working on ways of searching the digitised sources, but there is more to be done to make what's in it accessible to potential researchers and of course members of the Trust.

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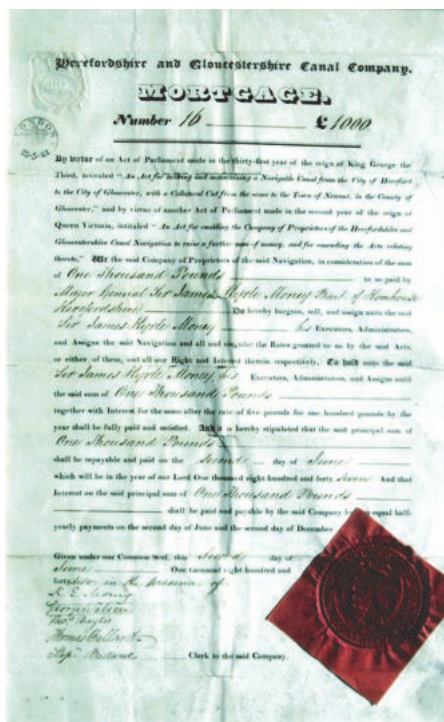
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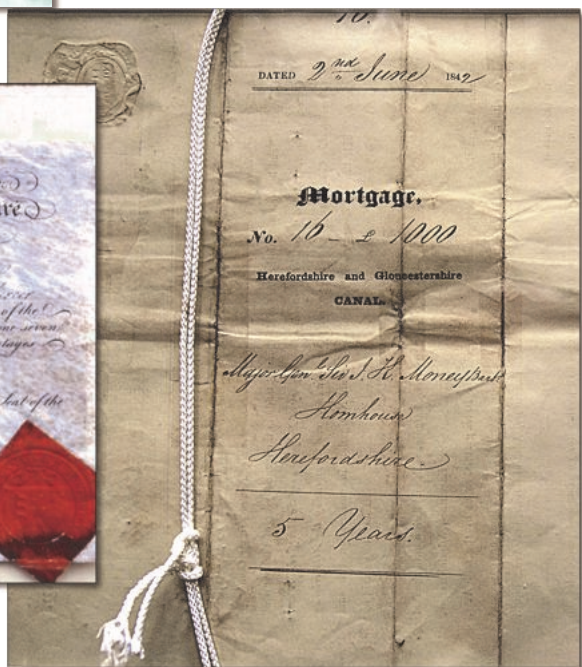
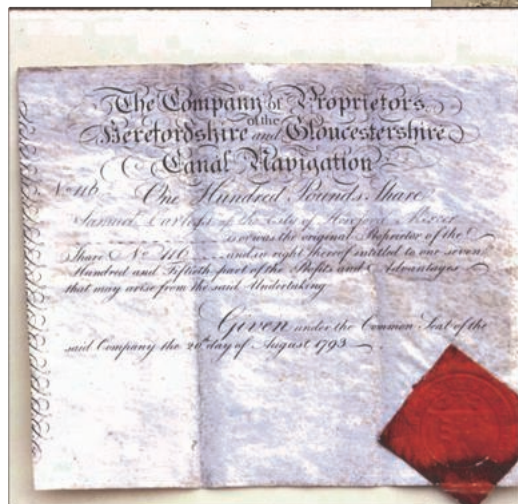
In time, what I find in the physical archives will also need to be digitised and catalogued. This endeavour, however, is beyond me and it may well be that we will need to employ a specialist archivist to do this job.

In the meantime, I have been asked by the Chairman to request that you search under your beds and behind the radiators for anything that is remotely to do with the Trust and with the actual Hereford and Gloucester Canal.

If you find anything then please let me know and we can arrange to get it to me.

I hope that you agree that this is a worthwhile thing to do and at the very least, it will give me a good excuse to get out of the house on a wet Wednesday afternoon in February, albeit only to the bottom of the garden.

Dr Joe Davey



Just some examples of the archive items
Joe has in mind...



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Where is that Towpath?

At first sight this may seem an obvious question but when the canal concerned is flooded to some feet above the natural water level and is at the bottom of a deep cutting you can begin to appreciate the problem.

For additional intrigue there are rumours of a wager concerning whether it is “left bank” or “right bank”, the winner of which could benefit from a bottle, which as we all know, is usually thought of as a good thing.



So it was that with the titular question very much in mind a couple of intrepid investigators joined our host on sunny Friday morning armed with a couple of old pallets, a small variety of six foot poles, a medium sized mallet and a tape measure.

As you may by now have guessed, the place in question is at the eastern portal of Ashperton Tunnel. Over many years, the cutting here has been silting up from a stream that comes into the canal from the fields above the cutting and the local land owners have put dams into the canal at each end of the cutting such that the water level has been consistently above the original level of the canal.

This works because the canal in this section is entirely within two long cuttings either side of the tunnel, which in itself is normal for a canal! The impact of all this is that the water level is way above the towpath and over the years the silt has filled the area such that there is no sign of any towpath by the tunnel portal.

A few months ago one of the farmers had a go at clearing the overflow pipe in his dam which meant the water level dropping a foot or so and revealed mud banks on both sides of the canal next to the portal.

So, allowing the following thinking...

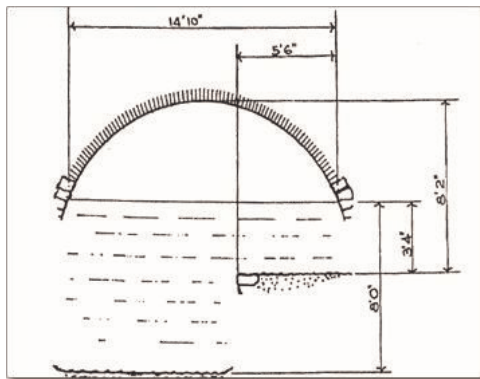
1. The top of the tunnel to be around 7 – 8 feet above canal water level
2. The towpath to be around a foot above canal water level
3. The current water / mud bank level being 3 feet from the top of the tunnel

... the able mathematicians amongst you will, like us, have concluded that we could expect a towpath to be 3 – 4 feet below the mud.

Our task therefore was to use the pallets to 'walk' out onto the mud and use the poles in a manner similar to a mountain rescue worker looking for bodies in the snow after an avalanche.

At this point it is worth noting that the sides of the cutting are well covered in vegetation such that the risk of a mudslide replicating the effects of an avalanche were extremely low. The cutting has survived nearly 200 years without sliding. Ballard and his crew did a great job!

Apart from the tunnel portal, there is no clear indication of where, historically, the bank ends and the canal begins.



As a result, some trial and error was considered the best approach: testing spots by driving in a pole to see where it hits something solid – possibly the stone capping of an old towpath – and where, further out toward the canal's centre, the pole sinks deeper with no resistance, until continuing would risk losing it altogether.

Confirmation (more or less) on this sketch from the archives...

Hammering a pole into silt turned out to be easier than it could have been, though a lot harder than snow I suspect and of course getting it out again required a lot of 'activity'.

So, did we find the towpath and settle the wager? I'm not sure I should say and so hold on to the suspense for next episode. If anyone reading this knows the answer, then drop a line to the 'chairman' who has a particular interest in this. Let's just say that it is not actually easy definitively to determine what is happening beneath an indeterminate depth of mud.



Following the probing of the mud, a coffee break and then the intrepid team were able to continue their work and made a start on clearing some of the accumulated tree vegetation debris from the shallow water close to the tunnel portal.

This included the well practised use of a tirfor winch to pull the material to a point where it could dry out and be divided up to assist with its removal further away.



The stonework forming the end of the arch barrel (voussoirs) clearly needs some work by a team of masons



Chairman getting ready to winch, well he had his hand on the handle.

Thank you to the landowners for their support as we do special events and they allow us to drop by with a minibus full of people to see the canal and the tunnel entrance.

Much work remains to be done before a boat can enter the tunnel...!!

Words and pictures from Tony Higgins

Promotion Events



Diary to date – as far as we know it!

Ledbury Community Day	7 June 2025
Come and see our plans for the Oxenhall – Newent Station canal corridor at the Newent Canal Projects Showcase Event	14 June 2025
Braunston Historic Boats (extra volunteers needed)	28 – 29 June 2025
Hereford Waterworks Steam Day	27 July 2025
Severn Vale Vintage Show, Fiddington, Tewkesbury	9 – 10 August 2025
Heritage Week – displays in Ledbury and Newent	12 – 21 September 2025
Newent Celebrates the English Civil War	13 September 2025
Newent Winter Fayre	8 November 2025

We will provide updates on the website and on the email newsletter.

As always – volunteers to assist us with promoting the work of the Trust at these events will be very welcome.

Debbie Barber

Gloucester & District Model Boat Club



The first quarter of the year has generally been very kind to the sailors of the Gloucester & District Model Boat Club. Ice has not been a problem just the usual wind and rain.

These conditions have very much suited the yachting fraternity. The Micro Magic yachts, 20in overall with a deck to mast height of 31in are absolute fun to sail. The club has over thirty registered with a regular Friday turnout of sixteen on the water.

Race days are quite spectacular, the canal width being such we have a two-fleet start line. At times the slight breeze makes it a challenge to achieve forward momentum. The flip side being the penultimate winter sailing saw gale-force winds. The fleet of around sixteen was soon reduced to single figures with various mishaps, mainly rig failure. Most yachts at some time were literally on their sides.

The final winter race day, late March, was somewhat hampered by the early weed growth, yet another species to add to the list, blanket weed.

Yachts are more or less unsinkable, but on a Sunday sailing day recently a yacht with a loose hatch cover, not ideal in a strong wind, discovered the canal depth, thankfully she was recovered.

The motorboaters have been enjoying themselves with the first navigation to the winding hole, approximately a third of a mile transit taken late February. The water level has never remained this high as the winding hole landing stage is still under a few inches of water.



Members have been busy building models, but rather pleasingly two more models belonging to our deceased member, Barry Phillips have taken to the waters.

One is Danie Hugo – a fine model of a steam tug.

When he fled South Africa, Barry had to leave his initial model behind, but he was so enthused about the tug that he repeated the exercise once settled in England. The hull is balsa wood with plywood bulkheads coated with glass cloth and fibreglass resin.



The superstructure is constructed from plywood and plasticard, the funnel from cardboard. The model is 43in overall with a beam of 9in. She has two independent propellers.

The actual Tug was built in 1959 by Ferguson Brothers Ltd at Port Glasgow. She worked at Cape Town South Africa. She was broken up in in 1985 but her superstructure lives on as a restaurant, “The Tug”.

The second example of Barry’s models is Motor Torpedo Boat MTB224 - based on a Deans Marine kit driven by two propellers. The paint scheme is as applied to MTB224 in July 1943. The model is 20in long with a beam of 7in.

The real boat was a Vosper design built in 1943 and survived the war. She had a top speed of 37 knots, carried two 21 inch torpedoes and was armed on bow and stern.

Ted Tedaldi



Confessions of a Stamp Sorter



Yes folks, I have to admit it, for over twelve years now I’ve been living a double life as during this period I’ve not only been handling stamp donations for the H&GCT, but also for the British Hedgehog Preservation Society!

This may explain why some of you may have erroneously received a thank you note from me on a BHPS letterhead instead of an H&G one.

“But how does this happen?” I hear you ask. It’s usually because the package doesn’t include “H&G Stamps” either in the address or a reference to it in an accompanying note which then plunges me into a mental conversation with my old adversary “Mr Guesswork”.

Unusually, the last time this occurred was due to the unfortunate added coincidence of me having previously received donations for both the H&G and BHPS from people with identical surnames and initials – spooky eh? Of course, sometimes it may be just down to me having a senior moment and for this I humbly apologise.

Meanwhile, your donations of stamps, stamp albums, postcards, coins, banknotes, medals etc will still all be very gratefully received. 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

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Hello, my readers, who said there's no Father Christmas?

After a chance phone call to a dear friend of mine, a hint was dropped that my search for a second Wheelyboat Mk 111 could be over. With a quick courtesy call to the person who might have a Wheelyboat and the reply was "I think we have one that we're not using", those words certainly lifted my spirit. The next question was are the group willing to let it go? "Well, it's not been on the water since 2019 I think" came the reply, I will raise this matter with the committee and get back to you.

It seemed years before I got a phone call to say, if you are still in need of this boat you could be the new owners! But we will have to put a cash transaction involved? Sure, what would the cost be? The obligatory £1.00 and you will need to transport it from Cornwall plus get a full marine survey before it's put to good use. That is in hand. My next task is to find/fund an electric motor, but we still have a surplus £19.00 to play with.



Alan parts with a hard earned £1 as payment ...

A Big Thank you to James Platts, CEO South West Lakes, Neil Reeves Director Stithans Lake and Matt for the sale and safe transfer of money and proof of ownership. I'm positive that this addition to our fleet will enable lots of users many hours of pleasure on the water.

Thanks also to Ade and Alan who transported the boat safely to its new home at Over Basin.

A very pleasing sight after so many sleepless nights.

Apart from that, our Tuesdays have been hit and miss so far this year, with rain swept days water leak shutting off roads to Over. As expected, numbers are down, but that's not the reason that we volunteer, now the sun is out so are the users!

POI, you know the saying, when waiting for the bus, then two come along ...

... well I was also presented with a Pirate Ship, it doesn't float? But it's a great conversation opener...

Thanks for spending time reading this, the wife should have washed the dishes by now ...



Pete R W Bisson aka 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

Oxenhall/Newent Station

Martin Bolton

oxenhall@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

Second Sunday each month

Herefordshire Roving Team

Ralph Barber 07836 347427

hereford@h-g-canal.org.uk

As Required

Hereford City Team

Tony Higgins 01432 850408

herefordcity@h-g-canal.org.uk

Wharfinger

EDITION 165

Please submit your copy for Edition 165 to the magazine editorial team no later than 25 July 2025.

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

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Hereford City Team Leader – Tony Higgins

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herefordcity@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.

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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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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.