

# The Wharfinger

HEREFORDSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE CANAL TRUST



*going, going, ... gone!*



159  
EDITION

REBUILDING A SUSTAINABLE CANAL BETWEEN HEREFORD & GLOUCESTER

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

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To get in touch see “Contacts” inside the back cover

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*Front cover – Removal of redundant welfare unit at Over*

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## Canal Walks



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

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

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

*More details and ordering options available on the website.*

## Logs for Sale Proceeds to Trust Funds

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

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



**Purchases can be arranged by contacting our Malswick site team by email: [malswick@h-g-canal.org.uk](mailto:malswick@h-g-canal.org.uk)**

**Your needs . . .**

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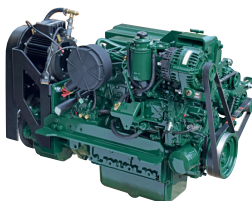


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Our members and volunteers are great...

We have received several large donations for the work underway at Over Lock.

Also, donations for trees at Malswick, tree work and equipment at Yarkhill.

Recently we received notice that we had gained £19.69 via [easyfundraising.co.uk](http://easyfundraising.co.uk) for the last quarter.

While that is not a lot, every little helps. If you haven't already joined, please do - a couple of percentages on an order for that new kitchen or bathroom would give us a further donation to the much-needed funds.

Further news about the donations within this edition.

Of course, donations are not the only way we gain funds. Applying for grants is becoming more important. We recently applied and failed for a grant for some machinery. We have several projects that we will be looking to apply for further funding. We need someone to work the grant application process. Finding a suitable grant supporter as many exist but it is finding them at the right time, so we can apply and gain some much-needed funding for the many projects. With out someone to help with this - even just checking the various resources - and helping to start the process off we will not move forward as quickly as we have been. Please do consider if you know anyone who could help. This is the sort of role that can be done from home as a lot is checking websites, creating documents, and awaiting the feedback.

We are currently in need of monies for training, we have a number of trained volunteers in many areas, but further volunteers need training on specialist equipment. We need to replace the digger at Malswick, it has done use a great service, but it is time for its retirement. As we look at the restoration of the canal from Oxenhall to Bridge Street at Newent we have need for funds to do all the surveys that have to be completed as part of the planning permission.

We also have a need for equipment that can be moved around easily for continued maintenance on the sites that are not visited every week. We are also looking at starting a new site at the weekend and this needs a Welfare unit. With potentially three sites in water that can operate a narrow boat we also need to consider the boating fleet and how we can make more use of them. More news about the boats further with in this edition.

As always - and I do not apologise for asking this - we need more volunteers and with the AGM coming up a chance for people to consider a role as a Trustee. Please do reach out to me if you are interested in becoming a Trustee. Details for contacting me are in the side back cover.

*Ralph Barber*

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# Update from the Board meetings

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## January

Our first meeting of the year was held on Zoom with eight Trustees attending. We confirmed the final changes to the budget. Our two pubs' businesses are working very hard at trading in these difficult times.

First Aid - a course for volunteers was confirmed for the 12th April and this time is being held towards the southern end of the canal, at Rudford Village Hall.

Holmer development - much reported on previously in the Wharfinger starting around 2014. The most recent news is that Stonewater Housing Association purchased the land and hired a contractor to build 120 affordable houses. This contractor went bust. Stonewater have now appointed another to finish the work. We are now booked in for a meeting in April with the council, the landowner, and the contractor so we can agree the timing for the transfer of canal land between the end of Aylestone Tunnel and Aylestone Park to the Trust.

Ledbury development - lots of work and unfortunately costs for legal fees as we focus in on getting a lease signed with Bloor Homes. This is proving very time consuming, and we have escalated this to Herefordshire Council with a meeting planned in February.

Tow - moored currently on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal, has not attracted anyone to lease it. We now need to look at selling it, as the board agreed last year.

Malswick – do we or don't we have another open day this year? The board agreed to have one open to all - public as well as members. No date fixed yet but likely the end of September.

Over – Boat trips in the summer. Extra lifejackets for children have been purchased. Further work on the boats still required to ensure we meet the current requirements for boats to carry passengers.

## February

Another Zoom call as the weather was proving very wet. Six people attended - we had changed the date late last year, so some Trustees already had previous engagements.

Ledbury development - legal fees are mounting so a new budget increase was agreed.

Oxenhall – despite signage explaining what is going on we had a complaint from the local council. Our new Tree Officer was able to confirm that all work had been approved on the legal side. Unfortunately, it is always the case that if you want to change something, you are going to upset someone. We had to remove some trees, prior to bird nesting season, to enable the canal route to be marked out and some material brought in - when the ground surface allows it.

We also had a case of do nothing and get complaints and do something and get complaints. With very wet ground conditions the removing of the reeds at Dymock caused more mud and ruts than we would have liked. The team continued the following week, and the site was a lot tidier after the rain had stopped. Thanks to a fellow Trustee who spent a lot of time with the local residents in communicating the work that was being undertaken.

*Ralph Barber*

# Aylestone Park

Over the Christmas holidays a lot of news was published about our idea for a community basin in Aylestone Park - see the web site for further details.

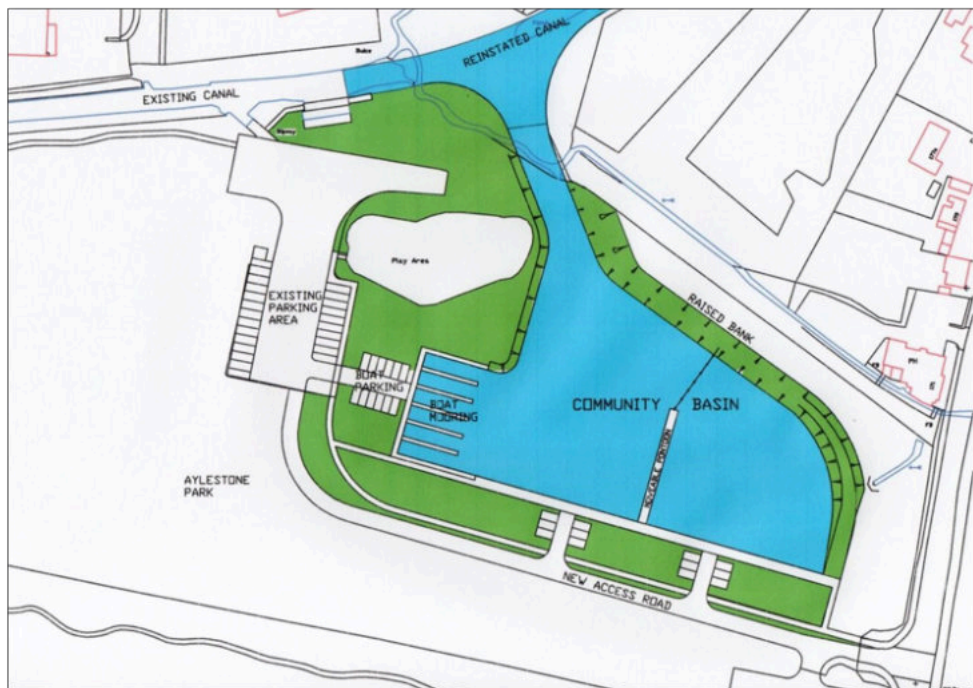
We are currently completing the Expression of Interest (EOI) documentation, and this will then be submitted to Herefordshire Council

We then must await a go/no go. This is to then submit a business plan around the community basin, not immediately to set about digging. If the business plan gets approved then we still have to apply for planning permission and after that then hopefully be given permission to start to dig the basin. There will be a fair amount of paperwork to be completed.

If there is anyone who would like to volunteer to help with the process of creating the community basin please contact me at [chairman@h-g-canal.org.uk](mailto:chairman@h-g-canal.org.uk).

*Ralph Barber*

*Bob Hargreaves showing the plan.  
Picture courtesy of the Hereford Times.*



## Over and Gone

Finally, the day came for the old Portakabin to be removed. This day had been postponed for several weeks due to other activities taking priority but as stated it finally happened. A safety programme had been thought through and discussed with the team before starting. This was deemed necessary as it was believed the unit would collapse on us by “leaning on it” as we thought it would be completed by morning teatime!!



It started well but the “old girl” put up a better resistance than thought but it was cleared just after lunch. All cleared and the ground tidied up and even new ballast laid by the end of the day. A great job done and already the residents have commented how much better the view from the site entrance is which is good to hear.

## Over Basin

All the work described is in addition to the basic responsibilities the trust has for the location. The winter is a period of minimal growth however it does bring work with leaf shedding and dead branch fall etc. The team has continued to work on general appearance of the Lock Keepers garden, car park and the basin gardens. A big thank you to Mike and Tim.





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## Over Containers

Much work has been done to create a welfare container incorporating a new Kitchenette to replace the old Portakabin. The recently purchased container from the paddle boarding company, who had stopped trading, offered us a good clean and dry base to start from.

The kitchen units were obtained from an online market place and work surfaces, sink etc from Steve Clark (Newent cabins) was much appreciated. Simon, a volunteer, was able to construct the kitchenette with new water and electrical supplies etc, a big thank you to him. Additional work has been done to make all other containers dry which is ongoing with one having new metal reinforcements on its shell to hopefully extend its lifespan.

The Sailing for Disabled (S4D) volunteers have created a new storage area for their equipment within the space between the row of containers. Large metal doors have been hung offering access to the dry roofed area. Good job done enabling the old tarpaulin area previously used to be demolished

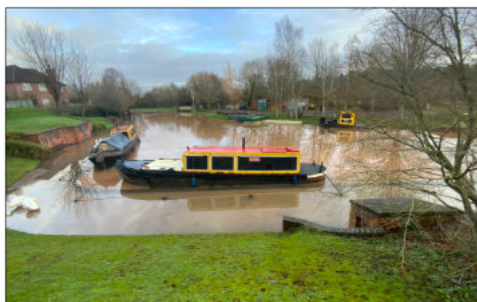


## Over Kubota B2530

Ongoing repairs to the old tractor have been undertaken. The PTO (Power Take Off) engagement hydraulic switch had failed and a full strip down and repair was completed by volunteers to return to normal operation state. This then allowed for further investigation and repair of the Agrimaster flail which had dispensed all of its lubricating oil. This Italian built unit was not as easy to find information for and direct contact with the manufacturer was required to progress the repair. They supplied suitable documentations and the contact details for the UK importer which was in Evesham. Contact with Weaving Machinery Ltd and discussions offered us the opportunity to strip the bearing unit and take it to them for a full service of new bearings and associated seals etc. We are all pleased to say that once reinstalled all was operational, and we now have a fully working tractor and flail. Thank you to Bob and Bruce for their ingenuity.

## Over Floods

The severe weather we had in early January 2024 made the river flood to a height causing some concern for all. Most of the lower areas of the site were under water. An area of the canal at the far end of Vineyard actually having flood water from the river Leaddon flowing



into the canal. The canal basin over flow system was also working in reverse with flood waters entering the canal, but all has now receded and we are back to normal. Glad to say the positioning of the new container row was not affected by the high levels. Some further pictures of the flooding can be found on the web site.

*Dave Goff*

## Yarkhill



Logging up following the previously reported tree work took place along with resulting logs being removed to storage by the site hut. Whilst this happened the fire team got to work burning the brush. The wet weather caused us to store some logs short of the site hut as ground conditions became muddy and traction was lost.



The old fire site area by the lock was cleared and brush burnt. More snowberry clearance took place and yes again, the brush was burnt.

No work was carried out on our first visit in the New Year as exceptional rainfall had filled the canal to overflowing.

Instead we took a walk around the site enjoying the view, of what is usually a well defined canal cut, but now was looking like an actual canal - briefly.

*Group Photo: Chris High Canal photos: Bob Comba*

Maintaining the site continued. The weather had gone from wet to cold. Now the fires were essential. Not to just burn brush but also to keep us warm!

*Chris High*



# Yarkhill Funding



In January the Yarkhill Team were delighted to receive some very generous funding from a local charity, aptly named the Yarkhill Charities, whose remit is to assist projects which benefit the residents of the parish. The Yarkhill section of the canal is very popular with walkers, particularly dog walkers who use it on a regular basis.

One of the Canal Trust's volunteers on the Yarkhill site learnt of the funding opportunity through an old colleague who he occasionally visits after work, so to speak, and it was realised that our interests could be aligned. The money will go towards professional tree surgery, which is beyond the capabilities of the Yarkhill Team and on environmental enhancements including more native trees and hedge planting.

Some of the work will not be done until the coming winter because of seasonality issues but what an opportunity to have a conducted canal walk for local people some sunny summer's day in 2025 when the Yarkhill Team can say a proper 'thank you' to the Yarkhill Charities!

*Robin Nicol*

# Malswick News



On 28 November, Anna Mayall (Learning and Development Coordinator at RSPB, Newent) helped volunteers at our Malswick site to plant trees.

*Anna Mayall and Graham Lammond are putting the last touches to planting before a final biodegradable mulch mat is placed round the tree.*

Despite temperatures near freezing, a gate into the recently acquired field was also upgraded.



*The gate has a footpath stile next to it which needed completely reinstalling.*



*Mark Atkin is putting the finishing touches to the stile before testing it for ease of use.*



People passing by the Malswick site have surely noticed the mountains of spoil stacked near the entrance. They can be forgiven for thinking that this is spoil that we have dug out to make the cut. However, quite the opposite is the case. At the west end of the site a large amount of soil was removed from where we now plan to send the canal.

In order to fill this huge dip large amounts of clay/soil were brought from another site by 1st Call.

However, the ground conditions were so bad that the lorries could not deposit them in the right place. Hence the Malswick Mountains appeared. As soon as the ground conditions allow the heaps will be removed and taken to their proper place.

*Alan McBride*



## Oxenhall



Unlike the other sites flooding was not an issue at the start of the year at Oxenhall. This raises a question of where the water is going. The stop planks put in last year are looking very good a year on.

A constant flow of water goes around the lock via the spillway that goes under the cottage by Oxenhall lock. It then flows down the cascade where the next lock will go but does not overflow onto the tow path. We do have a couple of overflow pipes enabling the water to go down into the Ell brook. But that does not balance against water coming in. So, leakage is something we are starting to look at along the current canal as it is believed that we are losing the water along the wild side.

We know this in part as the work that was required to remove a fallen tree, to enable us to reopen the permissive path down the wild side, was a little damp underfoot when



the rest was reasonably dry. The tree was covered by a TPO but in discussions with the FoDDC Tree Officer he confirmed we could remove the tree, as can be seen in the picture. The path was blocked due to the size of the tree.

With the support of our new H&G Tree Officer (see page 15), a visit was also arranged with FoDDC's own tree officer to look at several trees at Oxenhall and down towards Newent Station - where a number of trees are also covered by a TPO.

Agreement was made about removing several trees by the yard at Oxenhall as we continued to mark out the canal route across the Willows. This was not straight forward as within the group of trees were lots of large stones that had been put there some years ago. The stones were moved allowing work to progress on the trees earmarked for working on.



The work has been undertaken to show the correct line of the permissive path and its routing as well as seeing where we can plant extra trees, as part of the Plant a 1,000,000 Trees in Gloucestershire campaign.



*The canal route marked by white posts can be seen in this picture showing the route through an area called the Willows.*

The next task here is to complete the work on levels and dig some trial pits to check out the status of the ground and its ability to hold water.

As the weather warms, the team will continue to work on replacing the wall by the aqueduct over Ell brook.

# Dymock



Much discussion has taken place on the best way to maintain the banks of the Pool at Dymock. The approach agreed has seen an excavator working from the bank to remove a large growth of reeds prior to the nesting season.

In difficult conditions with the very wet ground the team managed an excellent job of removing a large amount of reed. These were laid on the bank to allow any pond life to get back into the water. Some reeds were left standing for the local bird life.

A further visit saw the path reworked and new side barriers installed.

*Tony Higgins*



## Interesting craft at Moat Farm



Over the past few years, we have had an interesting mix of craft on the H&G.

The reed cutter boats at Over and Aylestone Park that used a mixture of paddle wheels and a large-bladed device to cut the reeds. Then a craft that looked like it would capsize at any moment would pick up the cut reeds from the water surface and move them to a suitable location on the bank.



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This year the team discovered a new device from a local firm that we wanted look at. After they visited several sites, it was agreed that we would trial it on the largely restored section of canal at Moat Farm.

The team met on a wet day in February and after a lot of moving of trailers and other vehicles the machine - a Truxor T50 - was on the bank ready to start work.

It worked its way along clearing the reed. We will have to wait to see how successful it was after the growth this summer.

But what about the other sites?

At Over we are addressing the issue of slippage at Vineyard Hill in a different way and hopefully will have a report on that in the next edition.

Oxenhall is awaiting a digger to help do some further work, as mentioned in the Oxenhall report about trial pits.

*Bob Hargreaves*

## Kymin



With the start of a new year, we had a new Volunteer join us. Whilst Matt and Debbie worked their way to the end of the Kymin corridor removing fallen branches and cutting back encroaching bushes, Ralph and Julian started work on an awkward fallen tree.

A large tree had fallen across the canal from the wildside, over the towpath and further on into the field through the hedge – a big tree! A lot of bushes made it difficult to get to the trunk. After a careful climb up the bank and clearing of the bushes hampering the work, the chain saw could start up. A few hours of heavy work later, walkers were then able to use the towpath. The remainder of the trunk lying across the canal will have to wait until the level of the water has gone down.

*Ralph Barber*







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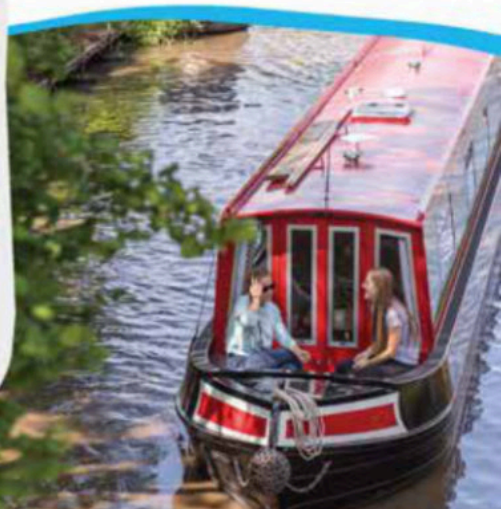
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## Introducing new volunteer Richard Delahay

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In the summer of 2023 I visited the Malswick canal site on their Open Day and was so impressed with the achievements on show that I decided to join the group of volunteers. I already knew several people there, and after explaining that I would fail any proficiency test that involved a shovel, I was asked “do you like trees?”

As a result of that conversation I attended a Basic Tree Surveying course at the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester, and then in December 2023, I took on the role of *Tree Officer*.

My previous life in the aerospace and electronic manufacturing industries did little to prepare me for the wondrous experience of walking through wild woodlands in winter and spring weather.

What is a Tree Officer? - The Trust owns significant areas of untamed woodland and the Trustees, ever mindful of their statutory obligations, need to manage these areas in a manner that protects volunteers and public from potential tree hazards.



A Tree Officer will assess and identify potential tree hazards, and recommend actions and priorities required to ensure the safety of all personnel.

My first task was to survey the Newent site which is completely wooded and has largely been left untamed for 65 years since the railway vanished. A footpath runs through the site and part of the boundary is against public roads.

A survey will generally focus on two themes:

1. A Tree Officer's initial approach to a living tree will usually be “leave it alone and let nature take its course”. Only if a real hazard is identified is action necessary. Statistically, in any one year, only one in ten million people will die from being struck by a fallen part of a tree
2. Dead wood is a different matter. Dead wood is guaranteed to fall down, so frequented areas are to be inspected systematically, bearing in mind that preference is given to retaining dead wood as a natural habitat for all kinds of birds and creepy crawlies.

I soon came up against Government Rules, in other words, Tree Preservation Orders. The whole of the Newent site and part of the Oxenhall site are protected with these orders, meaning that official permission must be sought before any tree work can be carried out. Even dead and fallen down trees require this permission.

Seeking permission from the Council is similar to seeking planning permission for a house extension, for example, Tree identification, Location Plan, justification and description of work, tree replanting programme, etc, etc.

In January 2024 storm Henk travelled through Gloucestershire and blew over a tree at Oxenhall. Council permission was received, allowing the chainsaw gang to move in.

I am looking forward to seeing more of the 34 miles between Hereford and Gloucester.

*Richard Delahey*

## A Huge Thank You ...



... to one of our life members - who has very kindly donated to the Trust the compressor and tools shown here ...

Donations of tools and equipment like these are always very welcome.

## Tales from the workshop



This quarter has been blighted by inclement weather which has certainly hampered progress but then it is bleak mid winter.



Our foremost task has been the Kubota excavator which decided to cascade oil from its centre pivot hydraulic manifold.

Located deep in the most inaccessible depths under the cab extraction took many cold and wet Tuesdays.

On stripdown every seal, of which there are many, were broken so a complete seal kit was purchased and fitted allowing the unit to be struggled back in.

Total cost of the seal kit was £250.00 so quite an undertaking.

To gain access to the pivot the cab had to be stripped and the slewing motor removed along with about 35 pipes so now the process of refitting it all can begin, many bleak Tuesdays lay ahead.



The large diesel Sellwood water pump again developed severe home sickness and had to be recovered back to the Malswick House workshops.

Its first ailment was a repeat failure of the main water pump seal. It was stripped and returned to the original repairer who was tracked down to a remote site in South Wales.

Reassurance was given it will be OK now so we can only rebuild it and hope he is right.

The diesel had suffered strange stops and even stranger goes. After much head scratching and more stripping the fuel injection pump was found guilty.

Dismantled and corrected a test run returned the beast to full health, let's hope for some longevity this time as it is returned to the limelight.

The picture shows the Sellwood pump awaiting transport back to its vital job of high volume water transfer to the new canal length.



*Chris Phelps*



*Tales from the Workshop -shelter lighting and sockets, new pillar drill and 3 phase power being installed*

## Swans at Over



The new partnership of Sam and Sally has had a very productive year raising two beautiful cygnets that have now left the canal to make a life of their own

We're looking forward to spring and hopefully another family.

*Monica Bayle*

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# One to add to the RAMS

All site leaders have to do RAMS. A RAMS in this context is a Risk Assessment Method Statement. It is to ensure when out on a restoration site that work is broken down and understood so that the steps are clear, hazards identified, analyse the risks and put measures in place to ensure working can be safe.

A working party was arranged to work on Crews Pitch. This is the same car parking area that the Yarkhill team use when the ground is too soft. Parking is required to be tight and requires you to reverse back in along a busy main road. So, all informed and aware of the parking requirements.



Unfortunately, no one told the police. When we arrived, most of the parking area was taken up by two police motorbikes, blue lights a-flashing, and an unhappy gentleman and his car in discussion with the police. Fortunately, they stayed only a short time, and we could get all the cars in. Those with sharp eyes may see a space, this was a dog walker who had also parked there before we all arrived.



Luckily one of the volunteers came back to his car just as the dog walker wanted to leave, so we could allow him to get out.

Yes, all the cars in the picture are volunteers' cars, so we had ten of us working the length of canal from the road to Skew bridge.

The work involved clearing a couple of trees that had come down. and the clearing of the slipway. The work on the slipway was clearing all the moss and weeds that had grown over it and a number of smaller trees next to it.

As in the picture we have a couple to get out before we can look at using it for launching a boat.



*Ralph Barber*

**2024 Annual General Meeting will be held at  
The Royal Oak, Ross Road, Much Marcle, Ledbury HR8 2ND  
on Wednesday June 26 2024 at 7:30pm.**

This meeting is open to Member's only.

**Agenda**

1. Welcome
2. Apologies for absence
3. Approval of minutes from 2023
4. Chairman's remarks
5. To receive the report of the Trustees and financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2023.
6. To approve the appointment of an Independent Examiner of all the Trust's accounts.
7. Proposal by Special resolution to accept the updated Articles.
8. To re-elect Trustees standing down by rotation and nominations of new Trustees
9. Questions from the Audience.
10. Close of formal business.

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

The Accounts will be on the website after 30 April 2024.

Please do check the web site after this date.

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## Going the extra mile...

As mentioned in the previous edition the first order for **Rescued From Obscurity 2**



came all the way from New Zealand. What a photo opportunity to have someone deliver the book and hand it over personally! Contact was made, but unfortunately customer Colin was going to be away when the 'post lady' came calling. We still got the photo of the box at the mailbox - yes in New Zealand, on South Island, just a few hundred yards from Cooks Strait.

Don't forget to get your copy at any of the Promotions events or by mail order via the website.

*Words - Debbie Barber Photo - Ralph Barber*

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**As part of the Annual General Meeting, we will have some formalities to complete.**

You may remember that I asked for the Articles to be changed so that we could have a core of 12 Trustees and an option of an extra two if required. This was agreed, and since then I have been working with the Charity Commission to get these formalised.

The process will require a special resolution to be presented at the 2024 AGM details of which are as set out below;

### **Special Resolution for Amending Regulated Clauses**

Company number 2704407 Charity number 1010721

That with effect from the conclusion of the meeting the Articles of Association amend the regulated clause -

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

*Ralph Barber*

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## **Dymock Poets**



On Saturday 23 March 2024 we will be holding our meeting at **Kempley Village Hall** in the afternoon.

In the morning there will be a short walk leaving the hall at 10:30am, finishing around 12:30. This will visit St Mary's Church with its medieval frescos and a churchyard full of daffodils and on the return to the village the opportunity to see St Edwards Church, an Arts & Crafts building with connections to our poets.

The Hall will be available for attendees to eat their lunch.

All welcome!

*Robert Moreland*



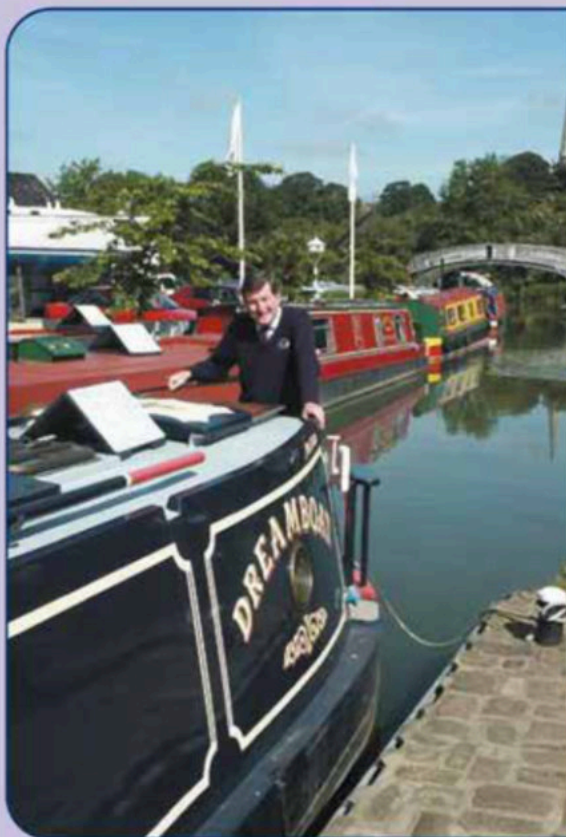
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## Getting on the water - Part 2

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In issue 158 I wrote about running trips on the canal at Over in the summer months.

What do we need in place to do this safely? Fortunately, a couple of the Trustees have a lot of experience with narrow boats and their operation as passenger boats. Ed Helps has been involved in the boating business for many years and with his wider industry connections he was able to assist in ensuring that we get the right operational procedures in place. Part of this was dealing with the ability of the boat and its crew.

In 2007 a document was produced by the MCA, Maritime and Coastguard Agency, the ones who investigate incidents at sea and the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities. The document is called the Inland Waters Small Passenger Boat Code and aims at a code of best practice for vessels operating in Category A, B, C and D waters. For avoidance of doubt, we are category A at Over, canals where the depth of water is generally less than 1.5 metres. The code covers the construction, equipment, stability, operation, staffing and maintenance of vessels that carry no more than twelve passengers.

Whilst the code is a best practice guide and not a statutory code it is something that you will be measured against if an incident occurs. The Trustees believe we should be aligned to this code for the benefit of our volunteers and the safety of the passengers we will be taking along the canal.

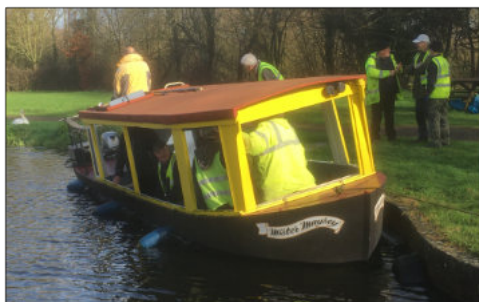
Focusing on Mister Maysey, several things need to be in place.

- A BSS Certificate (a form of MOT) every four years.
- Suitable Risk Assessments
- License
- Insurance
- Alignment to the Small Passenger Boats code.

One of these is the stability of the boat. For those of you who have been on a narrow boat, you will know they can rock, and Mister Maysey does as well - but to what extent if all the passengers decided to look at the swan on the port side at the same time?

Within the code are several tests that you should do. So, on a cold January day, this was tried. But to do the tests the boat needs to move, somewhat difficult when the canal is frozen. So, another day was arranged, with volunteers from far and wide attending. The first task was to weigh the volunteers involved. Under ISO12217-Part 1:2002, we had to get passengers that weighed at least 75kgs each, so out came the bathroom scales. Some were a few over and a few under, but overall we covered the 75kgs easily.

Once the boat was level, further measurements were taken. You must ensure down flooding doesn't happen when fully loaded - that is, for example, water coming in the external holes such as an exhaust outlet. Instructions were given to move two willing passengers at a time to one side as the inclinometer was observed.



*A port side list, and then a starboard side list, both recorded by the inclinometer.*



As the list recorded exceeded the permitted amount a couple of passengers left the boat.

Finally, the test was passed with eight passengers and two crew members, which suits the size of the boat and our ability to do trips this summer.

Next, we have a bit of further training to do, get all the paperwork aligned, and setup the web site for selling tickets for the boat trips.

Boat trips will be occurring on 11 May, 8 June, 13 July, 10 August and 14 September.

The plan is to start at 2:00pm with the first trip on Mister Maysey and then at 2:15pm the Sailing4Disabled boat will set off. Each craft will run each half hour until the last trip at 4:00pm for Mister Maysey and 4:15pm for the Sailing4Disabled boat.

By working with Sailing4Disabled we can offer trips for those that cannot manage the steps on Mister Maysey.

Teas and cakes available as well as drinks and meals at the Lock Keepers.

### **Proposed Pricing (applicable to both boats)**

Baby in arms (under 1) no charge Children up to 16 years old - £2.00

Adults/over 16's - £4.00

Maximum of passengers is eight on Mr Maysey and seven on the Sailing4Disabled boat.

All funds generated will be shared between the H&G Canal Trust and Sailing4Disabled Arrangements for purchase of tickets via the web site should be available in late April.

Lots to do....

*Ralph Barber*



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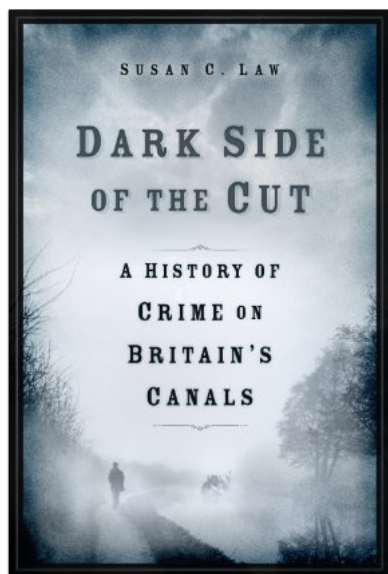
## Dark Side of the Cut

Some of you maybe interested in a new book exploring the sinister history of Britain's canals ...

Canals were the lifeblood of the Industrial Revolution, but prosperity had its price: crime. From the earliest days, canals had a shady reputation, and in Victorian Britain disturbing facts emerged to reveal the hidden dark side of the water, where dangerous figures lurked in the shadows.

When a brutal murder in 1839 created a national outcry, it seemed to confirm all the worst fears about boatmen – a tough breed of men working to survive in harsh conditions, who lived by their own rules, and were swiftly branded as outlaws by the press.

Drawing on a rich collection of original sources, *Dark Side of the Cut* is a new study by historian and journalist Dr Susan Law, which brings to life dramatic stories of alcohol abuse, theft and violence.



These evocative snapshots of rough justice, uncover the secret world of the waterways set apart on the edge of society, and reveal the real human cost of the Industrial Revolution.

Available from The History Press [www.thehistorypress.co.uk](http://www.thehistorypress.co.uk), good bookshops and online retailers.

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## Stamp Collecting Update

A quick reminder that old stamps are always worth something and a big thank you to all who have made donations in the last few months.

They are with our stamp master see if he can find a British Guiana 1c magenta - the current record price for a single stamp is US\$ 9,480,000 paid for the British Guiana 1c magenta - who knew - you can learn a lot by reading the Wharfinger.

Any old GB or foreign coins, banknotes or medals would be most acceptable and, like the stamps and postcards, can either be handed to Janet at any social meeting or sent directly to me at: H&G Stamps, 35 Lime Road, SOUTHAM, Warwickshire, CV47 1EQ.



*Steve Bence*

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# Grand Holiday Draw 2024



Friends and colleagues will be eager for the chance of a great holiday for just £1!

Once again we have some great prizes, so let's make this another successful fundraising event!

**1<sup>ST</sup>  
PRIZE**

## **NARROW BOAT HOLIDAY for FOUR**

ONE WEEK PRIOR TO 31/5/25 excluding Bank Holidays. *Donated by Black Prince Holidays*

**2<sup>ND</sup>  
PRIZE**

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

March – October 2025 for eight people from Goytre Wharf. *Donated by ABC Boat Hire*

**3<sup>RD</sup>  
PRIZE**

## **ONE NIGHT BED & BREAKFAST for TWO**

at The Oak Inn at Staplow. *Donated by The Oak Inn at Staplow*

*Ticket printing kindly sponsored by a generous donation  
and... yes, yet again – tickets are still just £1.00 each!!*

The prize winners will be drawn at the Social Evening at The Royal Oak, Much Marcle, on 19 September 2024.

Our thanks to our existing friends and supporters **Black Prince Holidays**, **ABC Boat Hire** and new supporter **The Oak Inn at Staplow** (recently voted Best Restaurant in Ledbury on Tripadvisor!) for donating the holiday prizes – every pound raised is a pound towards restoration of the Canal.



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

**Thank you.**

*Janet Moulton*

Promoter: Mrs J Moulton, 18 Coningsby Court, Coningsby Street, Hereford, HR1 2DF.  
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## Upcoming Monthly Socials

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We start our new season in March and will convene at our regular haunt, The Royal Oak, Much Marcle, HR8 2ND - 7.30 for 8 pm.

- 21 March 2024      **Alan Keef will talk about the Bristol Channel:  
a crazy place to go boating**
- 18 April 2024      **Our natural history talk with Ken Fortescue  
Butterflies - Looking forward to summer**
- 16 May 2024      **Paul Barnett with Port to Port:  
A historical journey along the length of the Gloucester and  
Sharpness Canal**

More meetings and speakers will be arranged for later in the year.

Please come along and bring your friends.

We cannot invite speakers to travel long distances for a small audience.

Ideas for speakers or topics would be very welcome

*Janet Moulton*

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## H&G on YouTube

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Many readers may have seen that YouTuber Steve Court has added another fascinating video to his “Court above the Cut” YouTube channel series.

This one features a walk along the side of the River Severn past both Llanthony and Over Locks to the west of Gloucester Docks and the City Centre.

See it online at <https://www.youtube.com/@CourtAboveTheCut>

The video includes some great aerial footage of the river and both lock locations, and is accompanied by a wealth of additional information on the voice over.

The route taken during the walk is covered on two of the Trust’s Canal Walk Leaflet series, titled (unsurprisingly); Canal Walks No 4 – Llanthony Lock and No 6 Over Basin.

The full set of currently eight leaflets can be obtained from our Shop Page on the website.



More YouTube coverage of the work being undertaken along the canal by our volunteers can be seen on our own YouTube Channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/@herefordshireandgloucester1720>

# The Over Link Project

We have been making steady progress in the background on work required to make the restoration of Over Lock a reality.

Although access to the lock has been difficult over the winter months with extremely high river levels, a local volunteer has cleared much of the vegetation and the lock location is now clearly visible.

We have also received a quotation for the detailed engineering needed to create the drawings which will be required as part of the planning application.



As expected, it is a substantial sum of money, but at least we now know the scale of fundraising that we need to undertake before making a funding application to appropriate Trusts/charitable foundations.

Following the article in the last Wharfinger, a number of Trust members have made substantial donations towards the cost of restoring the lock and we are very grateful to them. We have also received a commitment to fund a substantial part of the cost of the construction of the bridge over the lock in the name of a local family.

However, much more is needed and as part of the fundraising efforts we are hoping to install a notice board besides the lock by Easter to encourage donations from visitors to Over basin.

A sketch has been commissioned for use in our fundraising efforts – the idea being that it can be reproduced on a range of memorabilia such as plaques, medals, etc.

If any members have thoughts on avenues to raise funds, please get in touch with me at **[over-link@h-g-canal.org.uk](mailto:over-link@h-g-canal.org.uk)**. As always, funds specifically for the project can be sent to the Trust's bank account 11600694 sort code 16-21-20, marking your donation to be for the Over Link Project. All donations will be gratefully received.

As the days lengthen and the weather gets a bit dryer (hopefully), our thoughts are turning to carrying out further clearance of the site and preliminary excavation to see how much of the original lock remains, together with an assessment of its structural integrity.

More news in the next Wharfinger!

*Roger Morgan*



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# Promotions



We are hoping to attend the following events this year - not all are confirmed yet.

Oxenhall Daffodil Weekend (in Newent and Oxenhall)	23-24 March 2024
Ledbury Community Day	8 June 2024
Braunston Historic Boat Rally	29–30 June 2024
Evesham River Festival	12 July 2024
Hereford Waterworks Steam Day	21 July 2024
Tibberton Show	17 August 2024
Gloucester Retro on the Water	24–25 August 2024
Open Day	September TBC
Newent Winter Fayre	16 November 2024
Gloucester Archives	7 December 2024

As with every part of the organisation we would like some new helpers – PLEASE!

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

*Debbie Barber, Promotions Trustee*







### **Team Leadership**

We need volunteers willing to work as part of a leadership team to restore a site. Working together to agree the work required, track the hours of people on site, take pictures and create news for the Wharfinger and submit news items for the Facebook and website.

Interested, or know someone who could help? Please get in touch - details below.

### **Getting the message out**

Our Sales and Promotions Team are attending a large number of events this year and ideally need at least two persons to run the stall at any one time. Please consider if you could help with the stalls we have planned across the area - these start at Newent in March and run through into December. See page 31 or the calendar on the website for more details.

### **Giving Talks**

With Dick Skeet moving away we have lost one of the people who gave talks. As we get the message out, we have a need to ensure we can support requests for these important events. Recently over 160 people attended one of our talks!

### **Trustees**

With the AGM coming up, please consider if you or someone you know would be a Trustee. We meet along the canal corridor each month and our meetings are usually less than a couple of hours. Of course work is required between the board meetings and as a board we have focus areas for each Trustee to move forward.

For all of the above, please do contact Ralph at [\*\*chairman@h-g-canal.org.uk\*\*](mailto:chairman@h-g-canal.org.uk) for further information.

As I write the quarterly happenings of the club the wind is howling and the local waters ever rising. There is every chance you will be sat reading *The Wharfinger* in a comfy chair, the sun shining with a rewarding cuppa.

A few statistics on our year 2023, we had around 1420 sailings. We did have to earn these day - six working party days occupied seventy-two members. Of course, we are all aware of our Harbour Master John whose countless hours benefit not only the canal users but also any visitors to the Over site.

As the year begins much chatter is about how the winter projects are progressing although electrical parts from motors to batteries are proving difficult to purchase.

One of our members latest models is a free-lance tug boat seen here on the Over launching platform. The hull is built from a plan but the superstructure of the model is based on various thoughts and photographs using this hull design. A fine feature is the men working on the mast. Except for a few obvious parts the model is of timber construction. The building of the hull is of bread and butter construction. A brief explanation, planks around 10-15 mm thick are marked and cut internal and externally to form an oval shape, bow and stern. They are now glued face to face to form the hull, hence bread and butter.

Shaping of the internal can now begin, favoured tools being chisels or a mini rotary drill sander. The external hull shape is much more intricate following the model's drawings.

No, this model was not found at a car boot sale. Club members Mike and Trevor travel over from Hereford to sail at Over.

This fine model of an Envoy Class Admiralty Tug is 43in overall with a beam of 10in. The actual tugs were completed in 1944 and used as fleet tugs in WWII. They were equipped with 12 pounder Deck Guns, Oerlikon



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Horseshoe Drive, Over, Gloucester, GL2 8DG

depicted in Mikes model.

You should now have finished your cuppa so why not come along to Over and view our models on the water. Six sailors met today at Over - January 3rd. We had a choice of sailing the H & G canal or the flooded lower Over car park. Attendees for Friday's Micro Magic yachting are always in double figures.

*Ted Tedaldi*

## Sailing4Disabled / Rowing Pirates



Hello, my faithful readers. Happy New Year, trust you are all keeping well.

Over had a visit from Santa and had his photo taken on Mister Maisey (an H&G boat). We also had the canal refilled with dirty water. That was our first sailing day cancelled, so the time was put to good use in removing our boating items from the old boathouse to the new boat house. The old temporary shelter had been in use for 12 years?

The second sailing day was also a problem as the canal was frozen! The Wheelyboat set off to make a channel with a crew of four to help break the ice. I noticed that there was two biggish stones sitting on the ice.

A voice shouted to me "the ice is thick, just release the swans". The swans had managed to break a small area of ice in the middle of the canal.



Just as we finished clearing a channel a new group (who I had given our details too, before Christmas) turned up. After two five minute very slow short journeys, they came off the boat full of chatter (well it was very cold) and promised to bring the rest of their clients (9) every week! That's if they've defrosted?

Our diary is starting to fill up with sailing dates, it must be the offer of our new hot drinks' facilities. Until the next write up - stay safe and enjoy yourself.

*Pirate Pete and our volunteers.*

**Sailing4Disabled are at Over Canal Basin from 11 - 2 every Tuesday.** The group runs a number of craft on the Over Basin including Kata-canoes and a wheelchair-friendly Wheelieboat. Full assistance is provided to all to enjoy the water experience including lifejackets. Contact them on 07913 015018 or email [peterwb49@hotmail.com](mailto:peterwb49@hotmail.com).



## 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 Boulton  
[oxenhall@h-g-canal.org.uk](mailto:oxenhall@h-g-canal.org.uk)

### Second Sunday each month

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 01568 615 575  
[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)



Please submit your copy for Edition 160 to the magazine editorial team no later than 26 April 2024.

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

## Advertisers supporting The Wharfinger



As ever, we are grateful for their support, without which publication of **The Wharfinger** would not be possible. Please support our advertisers but note the Trust accept no responsibility or liability for the actions, products and services of these third parties.

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New advertisers are always welcome – rates start at £39.00 per issue and include artwork if needed. For information on advertising in **The Wharfinger**, please get in touch with Ginny Birkett – see opposite page for contact details.

# Contact Details



## Chair – Ralph Barber

07836 347427

[chairman@h-g-canal.org.uk](mailto:chairman@h-g-canal.org.uk)

## Land and Environment – Richard Appleton

[landandenvironment@h-g-canal.org.uk](mailto:landandenvironment@h-g-canal.org.uk)

## Finance – Philip Marshall

01594 540844

[finance@h-g-canal.org.uk](mailto:finance@h-g-canal.org.uk)

## Health and Safety – Ed Helps

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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
Joint/Family	£20.00	£400.00
Electronic	£10.00	-
Corporate	£40.00	-

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greatly assists us and payment remains under your control.

All application forms and payments by cheque please to:  
Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust  
6 Castle Street, Hereford, HR1 2NL

## Visit our website:

[www.h-g-canal.org.uk](http://www.h-g-canal.org.uk)

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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.