



WENDOVER ARM NEWS

Newsletter of the Wendover Arm Trust



*Issue 2017/1
Spring 2017*

*Price £1 where sold
Free to members*



Shooting Little Tring Bridge



A brief pause before the return journey to Bulbourne

Nutfield on the Arm

On 19 February the Friends of Raymond took their wooden working boat, Nutfield, up the Wendover Arm as far as the winding hole at Little Tring.

The butty Raymond remained at Bulbourne

Nutfield was built by Yarwoods for the Grand Union Canal Carrying Company and was launched on 22 July 1936. For many years the two boats carried coal from Atherstone to the Kearley & Tongue jam factory at Southall, called the 'Jam Ole Run', until carrying ceased in October 1970.

The boats were making their way back to Braunston but work on the Stoke Bruerne lock flight was underway with its reopening unlikely until March. As a result the crew had some time on their hands and the Wendover Arm Trust was delighted to welcome this historic narrow boat. A group of Members took the opportunity to travel in the hold up the Arm to the winding hole and return.

Through the stop lock and a mallard gets out of the way quickly – expect he thought he'd have the water to himself on a Sunday!

Trust members presenting a 'Navigation of the Arm' plaque to Nick Scarcliffe our excellent skipper



Your contacts on the Trust

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Copy deadline for the summer 2017 edition: 19 May

Chairman's column

The new year started with an increased level of activity in terms of our stage 2 joint lottery funding bid preparations with CRT and a push to advance pre-lottery restoration work of lining towards Whitehouses forward with urgency.

Having secured stage 1 approval with Heritage Lottery Fund, current priority is to prepare for stage 2 submission by the end of this year – with hopefully a favourable decision from them in late spring 2018.

Stage 2 involves detailed surveys on site e.g. to re-establish precise boundaries, identify any ecological issues and prepare outline engineering specifications for contractors to tender against, all of which are being coordinated by CRT with ourselves.

As required by HLF, consultants have just been engaged to produce activity plans towards increasing community awareness, involvement in and usage of the Wendover Arm, especially among young people, the next generation. This will be funded out of the HLF development grant money awarded following stage 1 pass and involve WAT to a high degree.

We must keep our £300k match funding untouched as to do otherwise would invalidate our bid – it is however the best investment we could ever hope for!

Think of it this way – if we spend the £300k doing work ourselves we get £300k worth of work done. If however



we invest the £300k in the lottery bid match funding and have a successful outcome we will get £1.9m work done – i.e. £6 for every £1 we invest. So despite possible frustrations along the way it is actually a very good deal in context of advancing the restoration project!

Following on from the above we urgently need to raise significant money in order to continue with the rest of the restoration outside of the 'Lottery Area' as our own funds will be seriously depleted.

It will be a busy year for the Trust and your help will be appreciated in all sorts of ways, be it with our events, trailer towing, school visits, Grand Draw sales and countless others. Do please keep an eye on our website for latest news and get in touch with ideas to help with fund raising and offers of help – thank you all.

Chris Sargeant

GRAND DRAW 2017

We are a bit ahead of ourselves this year and the tickets for this year's draw have already been printed so a book is included with this issue. Ah! those of you with long memories will say, 'We had two books last year so are we getting away with it this year?' No, is the answer because the tickets have been collated in tens not fives!

To repeat the message from previous years again we do understand that some people, for one reason or another, just do not buy lottery tickets but, it is easier to stuff a book into each Newsletter rather than operate an exception system. If you are one of these people please don't send the tickets back. But, if you'd like to send us a donation instead in lieu of buying tickets – particularly if it's GiftAided – then we'd be overjoyed.

Buy the tickets and persuade your family, neighbours, friends, colleagues to buy some too. Should you need more (and we hope you do) then just get in touch with the promoter – address below – and he'll be delighted to send you some.

If you buy tickets please keep the counterfoils (the purchaser's receipt) and send the ticket stubs back with cheques to be made payable to *Wendover Arm Trust* and please put your address on the back of the cheque, any problems we can then resolve with you. Please don't send cash through the post. There is no need to return unsold tickets

This is the prize list, there are more cash prizes this year and fewer in kind:

- 1st Prize: Week on a Canal Boat**
donated by Wyvern Shipping Co Ltd
- 2nd Prize: A Day Boat Hire for up to 10 people**
donated by Kernal Cruisers
- 3rd Prize: Virgin Experience, visit the The Shard (for two)**
- 4th Prize: £100 Cash**
- 5th Prize: £50 Cash**
- 6th Prize: Swan Chocolate Fountain**
- 7th Prize: £25 Garden Centre Voucher**
Donated by Mrs G Wright
- 8th Prize: £20 Cash**
- 9th Prize: Lady's Fashion Necklace**
- 10th Prize: Two Cushions**



The **DRAW** will take place on **Sunday 3 September 2017**

Draw promoter:

Michael Wright, 54, Meadowcroft, St. Albans. Herts. AL1 1UF ☎ 01727 860137

A Grand Day Out . . .

BOAT TRIPS

The Trust is making arrangements with Paul Kerr of Kernal Cruisers at Cow Roast to hire one of his day-boats on one or more occasions to take members on a cruise from Cow Roast, through Tring Cutting and along the Arm to its current terminus at Little Tring.

We've made a booking for the first trip on 24 May 2017 depending on the level of interest. The expected cost for the day (and it's a full day) is around £30 per person including a buffet lunch on board. There will be plenty of time for participants to go on a guided walk along the towpath from Little Tring to the restoration works. There will be plenty of opportunity for those who go on the trip(s) to 'have a go' at driving the boat, under instruction of course if you are a novice.

TRINGFORD PUMPING STATION TOURS

The Trust is trying to arrange with CRT for tours of the pumping station

(separately from the boat trips). The first of these was planned for 22 April but has been postponed. The new plan is to link the tour with a WAT day at the winding hole. More in the Summer Newsletter.

If you know the current pumping station, either through local knowledge or from pictures, you might be led to think it's insignificant; go inside, it's like a TARDIS!

INTERESTED?

Then contact Membership Secretary, Katherine, by email (see p3 for address) or telephone the Trust's general number 07547 181857 stating which one interests you and how many places you'd like to take.

Please let us know as soon as possible for the boat trip. Those of you who expressed an interest in the (now postponed) pumping station tour, no need to apply again as Katherine will have been in touch with you.

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RESTORATION NEWS

Adapted from Roger Leishman's restoration group's newsletters and other sources

December 2016

The December work party began with a day spent removing several dumper loads of ice from the area and pumping out the excess water in order to make the site as dry as possible to allow the Bentomat® to be laid. However good progress was made following this exercise resulting in a complete 20m length of Bentomat® bed lining being laid and back filled. The result is that a further 20m of canal has now been completed in full

With an excavator we helped CRT to investigate ground conditions round the manhole at Whitehouses. The concern is that there may be loose fill around the manhole and between the manhole and the wharf wall. This may date from around 1911 when the 18" pipeline was laid and connected to the former pumping shaft to allow discharge into Wilstone Reservoir. If there is loose fill then this will be removed and replaced with weak mix concrete to ensure the stability of the new lining in this area.

January 2017

Again, typical English winter conditions: mud, mud, glorious mud that made for difficult working conditions. As a result we could not carry out any final profiling or lay any Bentomat® so the work concentrated on rough excavation. Just over 80m of canal was excavated the spoil being used to complete the back filling over the pipe-capping to within a few metres of Whitehouses.

This then leaves only the final profiling and lining to continue when conditions allow. Completing the rough excavation in this way will enable the final lining operation to be carried out without the need for major excavation work thus hopefully speeding up the lining process.

The final length (6m) of pipe capping, to the Drayton side of Whitehouses was prepared for concreting in February. The pipe capping will then be complete right up to Whitehouses and work on the remaining section of capping there in front of the culvert awaits CRT's design for the 'outflow/weir' construction.

Another task carried out was to make a start on clearing the area around the old swing bridge abutments adjacent to Bridge 4 in order to get a better idea of what work will be needed in this area. This has already shown that the old abutments will require complete removal as they seriously encroach on the line of the canal, a task that can be carried out over the future months when suitable opportunities present themselves.

On the Sunday of the work party we had a return visit by members of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society to continue with their survey at Whitehouses that will be used for the HLF bid in conjunction with developing facilities for visitors there.

Also, at CRT's request, they will be back later to survey the walls of the old swing bridge prior to its removal.

February 2017

'February fill-dike' is the old saying and it was quite true with the site being six inches under water and no final profiling or Bentomat® laying could be done. The final six metres of capping mentioned in the January report was laid

The area on the offside bank around the old swing bridge abutments was finally cleared and fenced off.

This was necessary due to the fact that CRT now wish for an archaeological survey of the old bridge walls to be carried out by the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society. This survey will be used in the HLF bid. For this reason the area had to be made safe for the Society to work in.

The old bridge abutments will eventually require complete removal as they seriously encroach on the line of the canal, a task which was to be carried out over the future months when suitable opportunities present themselves and when conditions prevent the work of lining to continue.

However this task has now been put on hold at the request of CRT until further notice.

Plant hire costs

We now have a measure of the extra costs arising from the demise of Morgans. Excavator hire is much the same as before but the hire of a 6-tonne dumper is now costing about £400 extra per working party, £300 for longer distance transport that under Morgans was included in the excavator transport and around £100 extra for a

much more modern dumper (but not so useful as Morgans' 'Morooka' for handling the ready-mix.)

CRT works

CRT has allocated £280k of its own funds for dredging and for weed clearance and removal of tree roots further towards Wendover. Samples of silt will be taken to test for contaminants; there were gas works along the Arm and these may have leaked persistent organic pollutants into the water. If not then the dredgings can be distributed, if there are then they have to be carried away to a 'special waste' tip, a much more costly task than 'distribution'. The plan is to dredge a 3 square metre cross-section channel in winter 2018-19 from Wendover to the pipe entrance; this is not so much about navigation (although it may help) but to improve water supply, what the Arm is currently about.

As we go to press CRT has inserted the first of the stop planks at Drayton Beauchamp bridge, Stable Bridge and Hare Lane bridge with the intent of raising the water level carefully between Drayton and Wendover to check what impact this will have when the Arm is fully re-watered, i.e. are there any leaks?

At present those stop planks placed are below the current water level but as more are placed and break the surface we'll publish pictures of this exciting progress towards the full renewal of the Arm

Restoration objectives

Having to ring-fence £300k of our reserves as the Trust's contribution to the (hoped

for) Lottery Grant this has left us around £100k short of the monies needed to complete the restoration to Bridge 4. Council is thus considering what its objectives are before submitting the substantive bid to HLF, for once the contractors start the Lottery-funded work the restoration group will have no access to site.

The options on the table are:

1. Line as far as Whitehouses (200metres)
2. As 1 plus complete the works at Whitehouses (300 metres)
3. As 1 plus 2 and line to Bridge 4 (450 metres.)

We have enough money and time to complete option 1. Depending on the complexity of the work at Whitehouses – and available effort and the weather – option 2 should be within our grasp. We need the combination of additional funding, good weather and workforce to fulfil option 3 and although that would leave everyone with a feeling of great achievement it may not be totally realistic.

Work Party Dates

The dates for the next three months are:

- Friday 31 March —**
Thursday 6 April
- Friday 5—Thursday 11 May**
- Friday 2—Thursday 8 June**

The work is continuation of the lining back towards Whitehouses. Sunday 4 June is the Restoration Open Day.

On 10 and 11 June BITM are with us for lining and block-laying

To volunteer contact Ray Orth:
restoration2@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk

Tidy Fridays

The regular schedule is now established. If you'd like to join in (and you'd be most welcome to do so) please get in touch with John Reynolds beforehand, particularly if you are new; his contact details are:

☎07787 355515 📞01442 824454
✉scubajr@tiscali.co.uk

The February gang (see picture p10) completed the clearance of the area behind Bridge 4 adjacent the mooring wall which, once hand-levelled is ready for the promised picnic table. The clearance also revealed a 'crowd of golden daffodils' at the rear by the farm's fence. Ray Orth reckons they were planted some years back but they've been hidden by scrub in later years.

The plan for the area between the bridge and Whitehouses is shown on p10. We will set new deciduous trees at the rear of the area, initially where marked on the plan and later to replace elder trees further towards Whitehouses and we are looking for sponsors to 'plant a tree' (cost likely to be around £25 each) and we already have an offer of four, sponsored by a member who said, 'Will happily sponsor 4 trees in lieu of actually managing to turn up for a working party!'

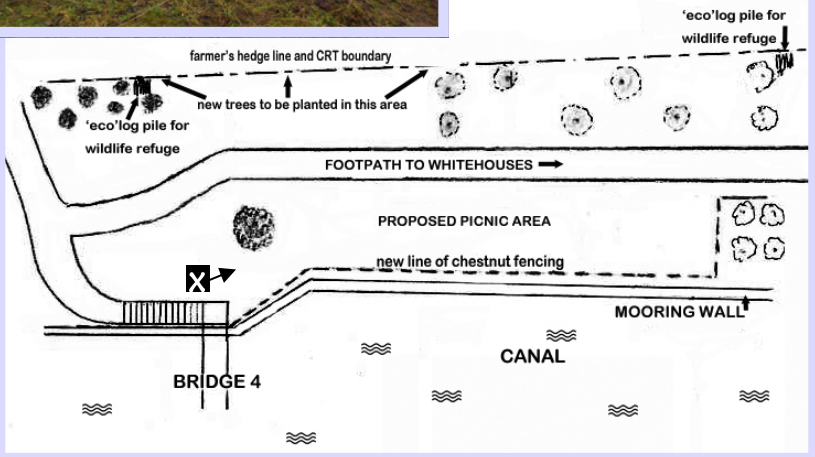
'Tidy Fridays' Dates

- Friday 7 April**
- Friday 12 May**
- Friday 9 June**



The 'Tidy Fridays' gang pose in front of the tree having cleared all around it during their February session. The tree is marked 'X' in the sketch plan below

This is the sketch of the proposal for improving the ambience of the mooring wall area at Bridge 4



New leaflet boxes.

John Reynolds has built (at no cost to the Trust) a transparent-fronted leaflet box that is now in place at Bulbourne at the entrance to the arm.

This takes our four current leaflets – Fishing, Visitors Guide, Restoration and Cruising – and makes them available to anyone. You couldn't see into the previous box and it needed a BW key to open it, OK if you

were a boater but not otherwise! On the basis of experience with this first one, others may be made and placed strategically along the Arm.

Fund-raising news

Donations

Recently we have received:

£300 from **Milton Keynes IWA branch**, 'continuing their tradition of support for WAT' as they wrote in their covering letter.

£2000 from someone who also took out life-membership and who wishes not to be identified.

£500 from a member who also wants to remain anonymous

£142.09 from **Rose Bennett's** bric-a-brac stall at Dunstable and District Boat Club (total now £2841.)

£100 from **David Gibson** – see Ray's piece below*

Easyfundraising

At the time of going to press this had raised £1324 and we now have 59 supporters. Using easyfundraising, as the name suggests, is EASY. The little ad below reminds you of how to do it. It costs YOU absolutely nothing all the donations coming from companies that have the social conscience to support charitable activities.



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easyfundraising
org.uk

My Donate

Another way you can support the Trust is through Ray Orth's '**My Donate**' page: (www.mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/restoration) on the web.

*Hi, my name is **Ray Orth** and I have been a*



Ray reminds us: 'I was much younger then!'

volunteer with the Wendover Arm Trust since 1993. The aim of the Trust is to restore the 6¾ miles of the Wendover Arm of the Grand Union Canal, which runs from Wendover in Buckinghamshire to Bulbourne (near Tring) in Hertfordshire. All the work is carried out by unpaid volunteers so there are no labour costs however, the current cost of restoration is £500 per metre of canal which includes cost of equipment hire and materials etc. We have already been successful in restoring a 1/4 mile section which is in use and bringing pleasure to a great many people. The canal will also provide a unique educational and leisure facility for local schools and youth groups of all ages. Please help us to continue our work in restoring this beautiful and historic waterway, which meanders through the lovely Chiltern countryside.

For your information my 'My Donate' page has earned £1660 plus £415 in gift aid with £100 plus Gift Aid in the past month.

Ray

Membership Update

New Members

The Trust extends a warm welcome to the following new member who has joined us since the autumn Newsletter:

Graham Thirkettle

from Aston Clinton

and welcomes back:

John Wintle

from Wendover

Farewell to

Elaine Edwards

a member since 1999

Apologies

The family has asked us to point out that Phil Wareham died suddenly of a heart attack, nothing to do with MS. We are sorry for the error, caused by our misunderstanding of the obituary notice.

News of Members

Robert Harrild, one of the restoration volunteers has been awarded the MBE for his police work. He was invested at Buckingham Palace by Her Majesty the Queen who mentioned his involvement with WAT. More and a photograph in the Summer issue.

Golden Giving

In January the Trust was informed that Golden Giving is changing the way it operates from 16 February.

The Trust has been working with Golden Giving for a number of years as

it can provide online payment facilities that enable us to receive donations online by credit or debit cards, a service that we could not operate on our own without a partner.

Golden Giving is a Tring-based philanthropic charity that has always promoted itself as being a low-cost option for charities to receive donations and subscriptions on-line. It also provides on-line software and web tools for logging supporters and the transactions they make. Unlike the big players in the market, Just Giving and Virgin Money Giving, the Trust pays no monthly fees to use the service. The only fee has been the bank processing fee which the bank charges for the card payment.

So, what is changing?

Golden Giving will be charging a service fee of 1.75% + VAT on each card transaction. This service fee is far lower than Just Giving and Virgin Money Giving who charge 5% and 2% respectively. The fee is deducted from the donation and the balance is transferred to our bank account.

In short, it will mean the Trust receiving slightly less from donors than it has done previously. However the volume of on-line transaction that will be affected is very small. The vast majority of the Trust's membership and donations income comes in the form of cheques, standing orders and BACS transfers.

How do you make sure that the Trust receives 100% of your subscription or donation? Pay by cash, cheque, standing

order or BACS transfer not credit card.
Simple!

Moving?

Katherine continues to keep the members database up to date, so if you have moved house or changed your email address, please don't forget to let her know – promptly would help so that missives don't come winging back to her with one of those helpful (?) Royal Mail labels that tell her it wasn't deliverable. We can then make sure we keep you informed of Trust activities and your membership.

WAT AGM 2017

18 October
venue to be confirmed
With a meal and speaker

Details in summer Newsletter
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CLUB 100

Winter draw

This was made at January Council meeting with 209 participants, four fewer than the record 213 in the autumn draw 2016.

The prizes winners were:

- | | | |
|------------|---------------------|----------------|
| 1st | Roger Davies | £250.80 |
| 2nd | Donald Smart | £104.50 |
| 3rd | Chris Webber | £41.80 |

Chris has donated his winnings back to the Trust in Gift Aid – thanks, Chris

To repeat the message that was in the Winter 2016 Newsletter:

*'As you'll note elsewhere in the Newsletter we have to raise additional funds over the next three years to be able to complete the restoration back to the A41. While **Club 100** won't get the big sums we need it's an easy way for you to help with regular small donations with the possibility of winning prizes!*

*To remind you, **Club 100** is a **members only** draw. A £15 subscription buys you four chances to win in a given year. About 50% of the income is redistributed as prizes. All you have to do is to contact the Membership Secretary and she will send you the subscription form. Complete and return and, hey presto, you'll be in the next four draws'*

Still a completely valid and necessary message!

The Spring Draw will take place in April. As the Lottery motto goes, 'you've got to be in it to win it' so don't be bashful – sign up!

Events Update

The CRT event at the Tringford Pumping Station on 11 March was hugely successful with around 800 visitors. We gave out loads of our brochures and flyers for the June Restoration Day, and Michael and Greta Wright in authentic canal costume sold £120 worth of Grand Draw tickets. The visitors were ferried to the pumping station by the Community mini-bus (only very limited parking at Tringford) and we are considering contacting them for WAT's use at future events.

We visited Goldfield Primary school on 22 March as part of the HLF Activity Plan. There were four of us: Jenny Brice, Beryl Hunter, Pat, and John Reynolds.

Although we've been fortunate enough to find volunteers to tow the trailer to events we still need volunteers to man the stand at them.

The current list of events is:

May 1	Aldbury Spring Fair
20-21	May Rickmansworth Canal Festival
18 June	Marsworth Steam Fair
24 June	Tring Festival
29 July	Linslade Canal Festival (expected date)
10 Sept	CRT 2Arms on 2Legs Run

If you can spare an hour or two at any of these send Jenny an email:

jenny@johnbrice.co.uk

or call her on ☎01494 873298 or 📞07841 168043.

She'd be delighted to hear from you. You don't need to be an expert on the canal to be of great value to our cause.

IWA Chiltern Branch

This year's 'weekend away' will be from 29 September to 1 October inclusive. The Branch has not yet defined the full programme this year but it can assure everyone that it'll be fun-filled and instructive and, in essence is likely to involve the Caldon Canal and the Churnet Valley Railway.

Last year, as an example, for the cost of around £250 per person for the three days with the attractions, coach fare, driver's tip and half-board included, we had a trip through the whole length of Dudley No1 canal tunnel, a half-day

at the Black Country Museum, a rather damp but interesting day on the Ashby Canal looking at their restoration (with a lovely lunch included!) then a full day on the Severn Valley Railway in glorious autumn weather.

Even if you are not a Chiltern Branch member we extend a warm welcome to join us. Why not come and have a great weekend away – it's not all looking down holes and wondering what they'll be like when full of water and populated by boats.

Details of this year's trip in the Summer issue of this Newsletter.

News from our Neighbours

Buckingham Canal Society

CRT has given the OK to excavate the remains of bridge 1 at Cosgrove demolished in the 1970s (where have we heard that before – Little Tring come to mind?) and with the help of their own excavator ‘Blue’ and the recently purchased dump truck ‘Marigold’ work on what the Society is calling the ‘The Gateway to Buckingham’, has begun in earnest.

The Society is finding that there’s more of the bridge there than was thought so it’s a reconstruction job rather than a complete rebuild. If you are at Cosgrove, go have a look, it’s only a short walk from the main line.

Aylesbury Canal Society

The 2017 edition of their Laundrette List is now available at a cost of £4.50 post-paid on line from www.iwashop.com or by post from IWA Sales, Island House, Moor Road, Chesham HP5 1WA

The Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterways Trust

records that their trip boat, John Bunyan has carried over 23,000 passengers since it was brought into service. The Trust boasts that the boat is ‘possibly the biggest tourist attraction in Bedford’ and that it’s success has allowed the initial loans of £68k to be paid off in five years. It’s 2017 season begins at Easter.



Tring Lions Club

Serving the community

Tring Lions have kindly agreed to sponsor a set of direction boards that will identify the footpath diversion at Little Tring around our work-materials compound. The diversion often confuses people who are not totally familiar with the canal and the work the Trust is doing as it involves diverting from the towpath at Little Tring bridge, walking through the hamlet, going behind a hedge then popping out onto and across the road and up the cart-track to get to the towpath again!

We are sure that the signs will reduce the number of walkers who scratch their heads and wonder where on earth the footpath has gone. The boards will be in place soon with the Trust’s grateful thanks to the Lions

All Aspects of sign making and design undertaken

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From the Archives

FUNDING THE FUTURE

Part 4 of Mike Chessher's reports on his attempts to put together a Millennium Lotttery Fund package to finance restoration (Wendover Arm News No 21 Autumn 1995):

The letter arrived on 14th June.

'Thank you for your application for Millennium Commission funds for the Canal Restoration project. The Commission received 550 full applications in its first application round, with almost £6 billion sought in grants, significantly more than the Commission can distribute. The Commission has now selected the applications to go forward to the next, detailed appraisal stage, from which the successful projects will be chosen.'

'The Commission considered that your project demonstrated some potential to achieve such impact, but that by refining the elements of the project or its scale you would secure a more distinctive focus. Your project has not therefore been selected for further examination.'

So that seemed to be it! We hadn't won the lottery, although I was not all sure what they meant by 'refining' Did they want us to plant trees on the towpath and turn the canal bed into a cycle track?

The next day, when the list of successful and unsuccessful projects was published, it became obvious that trees and cycling were the in things but I was somewhat encouraged to see that it was divided into 4 categories. 'Section A' was the 83 'long-listed' projects which included the Rochdale Canal and a new lock on the River Stour. Then came 'Section B' with 76 projects 'not sufficiently focused'

but which could be long-listed in a future round and this included us along with the Millennium Link and the Ribble Link. 'Section C' listed 39 applications which did not 'meet the Commissions' criteria' did not 'have sufficient quality' or whose 'viability not proven'. Six waterway projects here including Bedford & MK link and the Huddersfield Narrow. Finally, came the rest of the 1378 initial proposals which never became full applications.

Viewed from the point of view of that lot, we'd done quite well – but coming second was not good enough. The question was, was it just a polite way of saying no or would there be a worthwhile chance next time round? Discussing the matter with our Case Officer revealed that there was very little wrong with our application, there was just no strong Millennium element. Remember, the Commission is looking for innovative ideas. Choices had to be made and we weren't chosen!

Should we be 'refocusing' on the whole canal? Obviously that would make a stronger project, if we could fund it – the Commission is definitely limited to 50% – but my own feeling is that it is much better to stick with what is credible rather than risk falling into the 'viability not proven' category. If the Arm can be restored as far as Green Park, the rest will follow, a bit at a time if necessary.

So the fight goes on!

Mike Chessher

Interesting to note from Mike's words above which Millennium bid projects have and have not come to fruition in the succeeding 18 years, Ed

RAF Halton

We brought you the news at the end of 2016 that the RAF was to end the use of its base at Halton in 2022. We understand that the Recruits Training School will move to Cranwell in Lincolnshire, joining the RAF's Officer Training School there.

We reported rumours that the base was leased from the Rothschilds and would revert to them when the RAF left but the Trust's Archivist, Barry Martin, has put paid to those rumours; he says that the truth is contained within the book *The Story of Halton House – S/Ldr Beryl E. Escott 2003* and the following is a very brief summary of what it records:

'Just before WWI Alfred de Rothschild willingly loaned part of the estate to the military and in September 1913 2,500 men, 150 officers, 3 aircraft and an airship arrived at Halton park.'

'With the outbreak of WWI, eager to help, Alfred offered via his friend Lord Kitchener the use of his Halton Estate – hoping perhaps that the war might be shortened. The army arrived late in 1914 for training and also in the Aston Clinton House Estates owned by his cousins – (now Green Park).

Throughout the war a vast area of tents and buildings were centred in Halton and by the summer of 1917 the School of Technical Training emerged to train

mechanics for the Royal Flying Corps. On 1 April 1918, the Royal Air Force was formed and tents were replaced by permanent buildings and in 1919 the first Hospital was set up in Halton.'

'Alfred died in 2018 and the house and its estates passed to Nathan de Rothschild. The contents of the house were sold and the whole of the estate was sold to the RAF, 'after much bargaining' for £112,000, about 1/3 of its probate value, which undoubtedly saved the War Office vast sums in reparation.'

There you have it – it's owned by the MoD not leased by them. Which brings another thought; when the RAF leaves the site it will, presumably, need remediation. . .wonder whether this remediation could extend to Halton Bridge? Martin Wood's photograph of the old Halton Bridge and the new lower one being built are shown below and, should you have the odd £1.25M to spare, you could buy the mansard-roofed cottage behind the old bridge, its on the market at present.



Photo: Martin Wood



WENDOVER ARM TRUST

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To promote the restoration and maintenance of the Wendover Arm of the Grand Union Canal, (including all waterways, buildings, and related structures), to good and navigable order and to promote the fullest use of the waterway by water-borne traffic (subject to the regulations of The Canal and River Trust) and for local amenity, recreational and water related activities for the benefit of the public.

To restore, preserve, maintain and to educate the public in the history, use and associated wildlife, of canals and inland waterways generally and the Wendover Arm in particular.

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From the Editor

Thankfully our appeals over the past few issues have borne fruit and we now have volunteers to take our trailer to and from events but, I urge you, please don't heave a heavy sigh of relief because The Trust continually needs volunteers for all sorts of tasks, not just hardy souls to go out in all weathers to physically restore the canal.

The 2017 events season has started and it's one way in which we can fulfil one of the objectives of our HLF bid (community involvement) and we have just started another facet of the requirements of the bid, which is the activity plan and we have started to go into schools to talk 'waterways' to children. The substantive case to HLF for the money is still a few months away from submission but has to be addressed with urgency in order to meet the Fund's deadline. As the Chairman identifies in his piece if we can achieve the objective and get a grant then we get at least a six-fold return on investment; currently it takes us about £4000 each year to raise £14,000, around a 3½-fold return on investment – WAT, good, HLF, better!

Sadly this issue is rather slimmer than of late owing to a paucity of copy and as Editor I'd ask whether you'd volunteer an article or two – or even a 'Letter to the Editor' – on any subject but preferably something with a connection to canals and particularly the Wendover Arm. I'm waiting with bated breath for the blizzard of articles to appear!

David Page

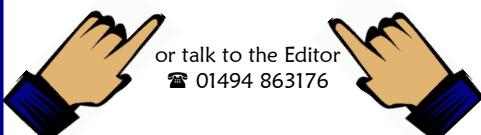


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