

WENDOVER ARM NEWS

Newsletter of the Wendover Arm Trust



*2019 Issue 3
Winter 2019*

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Your contacts on the Trust

Chairman	Chris Sargeant	Sales Director	Bob Wheal
chairman@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk		sales@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk	
Vice-Chairman	Leanda Richardson	Webmaster	Clive Johnson
funding@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk		webmaster@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk	
Hon. Secretary	John Rowe	Minutes Secretary and IWA Nominee	Jenny Brice
honsec@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk		events@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk	
Treasurer	Clive Wilson	Newsletter Editor	Carol Williams
treasurer@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk		newsletter@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk	
Operations Director	Tony Bardwell	Purchasing Director	Peter Lockett
operations@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk		purchasing@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk	
Publicity Director	Nigel Williams	Social Media Director	Ben Grinsted
publicity@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk		socialmedia@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk	
Membership Secretary	Katherine Deaney	Fundraising Director	Leanda Richardson
membership@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk		funding@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk	

Trust Vacancies - Urgent

Membership Secretary

This entails maintaining and updating the database and records. Also receiving subscriptions. This can be done from your own home in just a few hours a week. Full training and handover will be given. Please contact Katherine Deaney for more information:
membership@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk

Council members 2019-20

- * Chris Sargeant – Chairman
- * Leanda Richardson – Vice Chair & Fundraising
- * Clive Wilson – Treasurer
- * Tony Bardwell – Operations Director
- * John Rowe – Honorary Secretary
- * Katherine Deaney – Membership
- * Bob Wheal – Sales
- * Peter Lockett – Purchasing
- * Clive Johnson – Website
- * Carol Williams – Newsletter
- * Nigel William - Publicity
- * Ben Grinsted – IT and Social Media
- * Jenny Brice – IWA Nominee & Minutes Secretary

Chairman's Column

Its been a busy time down at the canal - restoration has now reached bridge 4 and plans for canal bed works to complete Whitehouses are now agreed with CRT ready for work to take place next spring once ground conditions are favourable,

Works to preserve the old swing bridge abutments by bridge 4 and to build stop plank grooves are also agreed right down to the colour of the bricks and will start immediately.

Huge thanks to Tony Bardwell and our volunteers for all that is being achieved and to Mikk Bradley and CRT for getting plans completed.

We are mindful of our responsibilities to protect and develop the environment and natural habitats along the arm.

To this end for example the offside bank area including Whitehouses visitor area and along to bridge 4 is being developed as a nature area for visitors to enjoy with over 120 new trees due to be planted in November. Clearance and landscaping is largely done with levelling and application of top soil completed.

A family camp took place at the end of October in conjunction with WRG when youngsters enthusiastically got involved with making and installing bird & insect boxes, planting 2000 snow drops and cutting up branches for a bonfire – not an iPad in sight !

Grateful thanks to Alex Melson of WRG and our own Jenny Brice for organizing. Everyone had a fabulous time.



I now need to ask for your help – we still **urgently** need a new Membership Secretary to take over from Katherine who has done a magnificent job for the last ten years – frankly we cannot run the trust without this position so do please help us. The role can be done from home and needs just basic computer skills and requires just a few hours per week.

Katherine will be pleased to give more details so please do get in touch at membership@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk or ring 0757 181 857.

Thank you

Chris Sargeant, Chairman

Email: chairman@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk
Mobile: 07547 181 857

WAT AGM Oct 30th 2019

Our AGM on Wednesday afternoon October 30th attracted possibly a record attendance with over 70 packed in to the Anthony Hall in Aston Clinton. The full report and accounts can be viewed on our website at www.wendoverarmtrust.co.uk

This was our 30th AGM, the Trust having been founded in 1989 superseding the earlier Wendover Arm Group.

We were pleased to welcome Sam Anderson Brown, CRT's Partnership and external relations manager who spoke about their recent reorganisation and moves towards making waterways a "well being charity", providing added value and public benefit to a much wider community outside of boaters and waterway users. Sam commended our support and enthusiasm.



During the afternoon we were pleased to honour Roger Leishman who retired from the role of Restoration Director at the end of the financial year aged 87 having devoted over 20 years to the

restoration. Following a unanimous vote in Council, Roger was given the title of Honorary Vice President in recognition of his service.

Roger's greatest achievement was the re-building of Little Tring bridge without which the canal would have been forever severed and restoration impossible.

In a second ceremony Dave Chapman, Chairman IWA Chiltern and now an IWA Trustee presented Roger with the Christopher Power Prize recognizing his outstanding contribution to the restoration,



As part of the award the Trust also received a cash donation for which we are grateful to IWA.



Chris Sargeant, Chairman

Operations Report - October 2019

Health and Safety

We had two incidents this month that I witnessed. The first was a “near miss” involving solid concrete blocks falling whilst we were unloading them from a dumper bucket. This process has also been identified as a working at height hazard and we need to change how we do this. It is possible to have “crash mats” around the working area to cushion any persons falling but the amount of mud in the work area would soon cover them plus they would be another thing to walk round when carrying a block. Any further ideas on transporting and unloading blocks would be welcomed.

We do load the blocks onto the transport using a hydraulic grab on an excavator. Once they are in the transport the blocks generally move and are no longer in neat piles that a grab can lift.

The second incident was a simple cement splash into an eye when using the concrete poker. No lasting harm done. This should serve as a reminder to all volunteers that we do have new safety glasses and appropriate face masks in the Green Hut. We can't make you wear them, but the Team Leaders may ask you not to perform various tasks unless you are wearing the correct safety equipment.

Construction (Design and Management) 2015

I am pleased to announce that WAT have been issued with a Certificate of Appointment that makes the Trust a “Principal Contractor”. The certificate covers the whole of the restoration activity for a financial year. The Canal and River Trust has appointed itself as the “Client” for the restoration activity.

Without going into a lot of detail, this brings both WAT and CRT in line with the Legislation relating to the restoration work that we do.

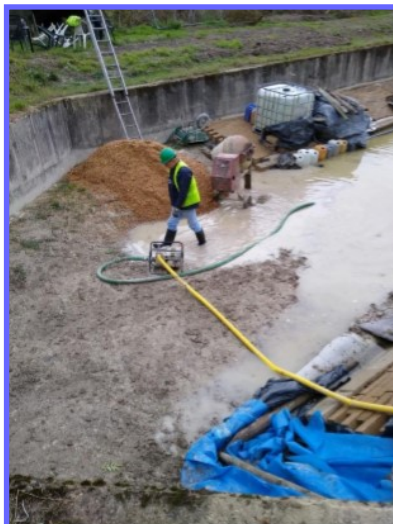
We have had several of our volunteers attend CDM training courses provided by CRT, and we are grateful to them for spending their time to train on our behalf. The more people we have trained (even to a rudimentary level) the better WAT will be at understanding its responsibilities and required actions.

This is about keeping our members and volunteers safe on the worksite and being seen to do so.

Pumping out

It has been raining! There was water in front of the mooring bay wall. First job on Friday was to pump it out. This took most of the day but whilst that was going on three more Bentomat bank mats were cut and the bank vegetation from the length between bridge 4 and Little Tring was further cleared.

The rain did do some good as well!
This is the view from the mooring wall looking towards Whitehouses.



Apparently, there was a third "incident" when Peter Bird's phone was found underwater. This picture survived from his wet phone but a new (waterproofed?) phone has been purchased.

During the rest of the week the last part of the mooring wall blocking was completed (with reinforced concrete strip beam) , the last part of the offside bank was hollow blocked, concreted and solid blocked and then the join between the bank and mooring wall was finished off with a concrete infill.



Last part of Mooring wall, Bentomat being tailored to fit (Photo Tony Borrill)



The last part of the concrete join infill.
(not much more to do Peter!)

After all that excitement we carried on with uncovering the bed Bentomat that was already in the bed from some months ago and starting a new roll with a concrete policeman. This area was backfilled with spoil, the mat gradually unrolled more and so on. At this point we were able to backfill the offside bank with spoil.

The backfilling frame being moved to the next section. Early morning sun not helping! (Photo Tony Borrill)

Shortly after that was completed, another 40m Bentomat roll was brought to the work site and connected to the existing bed mat. This mat join

coincided with the start of the mooring wall blockwork so was an ideal point to make our first reinforced concrete policeman.



The bank formwork was used to hold the side planks at 45 degrees. Note the three reinforcing rods.

As can be seen in the picture, we were able to cut two planks to fit between the bank blocks and support them with the formwork we generally use on the bank hollow block concreting. This arrangement allowed us to use the vibrating poker to de-aerate the concrete and get a 45-degree slope on each side. The concrete needs to be de-aerated to give the reinforcing a longer life and the concrete a higher strength.



The finished reinforced concrete policeman.



There will be several other reinforced concrete policemen along the front of the mooring wall blockwork. This is to brace the blockwork against the towpath blocks and ensure the mooring blockwork does not move away from the mooring wall.

So, here is the view from bridge 4! The casual observer (Brian) has come along to admire the handiwork before he takes over with the Tidy Friday operation next day.



The reinforced concrete policeman was completed on Thursday and the afternoon was taken up with cleaning the tools and tidying the site.

A few “happy” hours were expended on getting the mud from the excavators and dumpers. This was difficult to do, and we may have to start using a pressure washer to shift the worst of it next time.

Whitehouses

We now have a Canals & River Trust (CRT) approved set of drawings for the Whitehouses restoration/build. The special bricks required have been identified and are due to be ordered soon. We also have method statements and risk assessments due to be completed soon. We will be appointing a Temporary Works Supervisor and Temporary Works Co-ordinator. I am now the Designated Individual who will oversee the Temporary Works team. We now have two volunteers who have been on the CRT provided training courses who will guide us through the requirements of the Construction & Design Management (CDM) Legislation.

Lastly

You will probably have noticed that there are more pictures in these reports than we used to have. The feedback I get is positive for more pictures and less words! Just before the work party I had a cruise along the Manchester ship canal. According to the history books the Canal was completed in just over six years! Now that is inspiration!

Tony Bardwell, Operations Director



Offside bank work linking the lining to the mooring wall.



Final levelling of the track on the offside area near Whitehouses.



Final levelling by hand using rakes prior to seeding at the Whitehouses site.

Tidy Friday; 8:30am - 4pm

If canal restoration sounds like hard work, then joining our Tidy Friday group might be for you. This entails light work keeping our canal, bridges and towpath looking spick and span and cared for.

13th December 2019

10th January 2020

14th February 2020

13th March 2020

This is organised by John Reynolds, for further details or to volunteer please phone John on 07787 355 515.



Membership Update

The summer months have born fruit and we have recruited 6 new membership households, including 2 life memberships.



Club 100 Lottery

The Autumn draw was made at the October council meeting. There were 202 subscribers in this draw.

The winners were....



£242.40 John Henderson



£101.00 James Brown



£40.40 Graham Watts

This is a members only draw.

A £15 subscription gives you 4 chances to win a year. Approx. 50% of the money subscribed is redistributed as prize, the remaining money will be used to restore the Wendover Arm.

If you would like to take part, please visit the website,
www.wendoverarmtrust.co.uk



The next draw will be at the January council meeting.
This will be the 90th draw since it started over 25 years ago.

Pull-Stamp-Stomp / Himalayan Balsam Bash

The official report of this event was included in the previous newsletter, but the reality was more about shoulder high robust nettles waving in the wind. Luckily, I had the nod from the organiser that long trousers would be best and Jo from the Inland Waterway Association (IWA) also came with shears and other gardening implements to attack these beasts.



When we arrived, we were kitted out with fishermen's waders (if you wanted to attack from the water) or gardening gloves. The male contingent were not too impressed with these as they were **bright pink** like the Balsam flower. Fourteen volunteers in all, including Archie Morris age 16 months in his High Viz. Obviously being trained for his future in the Waterway Recovery Group.



The theory why we were at the Bear Brook the start of a small tributary to the Thames was, because when the Balsam pods are ripe and ready they explode and can be carried downstream, so extermination must always be on the upstream patch first.

Everyone enthusiastically went into action sending nettles to the floor when in our path. The actual removal of the Balsam can be quite satisfying

as they are easily pulled up by their roots, stems bent and laid in a heap. Another member of the team carefully pulled off the flowers which were going to the Gin Distillery. The heap is then jumped on, Archie with the help of his Dad was brilliant at this and loved the resulting squelchy sound of the fleshy stems as they were stomped on.

We made good progress along the riverbanks with great results. The devastation of the deadly plant was total, although I am not sure what the local's thought was happening when all these noisy adults suddenly appeared out of the undergrowth at lunch time. We adjourned to a quiet grassy corner

where we all had a picnic lunch and a well-earned rest.



A satisfying way to spend a morning which, although manual work was involved, was not too back breaking. No doubt we will get a call next year from the River Thame Conservation Trust to continue with the extermination of the Balsam further downstream.



I attended the IWA Festival of Water at Waltham Abbey, on arrival I set up my tent and then joined the fellow attendees at the bar. At this point there was many comments saying "you are everywhere" what did they mean? In my unobservant state, I had driven past many large banners showing me on the Balsam clearance work party.

Jenny Brice
Minutes Secretary & IWA Nominee

Work Party Dates

Restoration working parties are held throughout the year, and typically take place from Friday to Thursday around the first weekend of each month. Please see the dates below:

Friday 6th December - Thursday 12th December 2019
Friday 3rd January - Thursday 9th January 2020
Friday 7th February - Thursday 13th February 2020
Friday 6th March - Thursday 12th March 2020

For further information please contact Tony Bardwell via email, operations@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk or 01296 634 973. Any help will be greatly appreciated.



Waterways Recovery Group Family Camp - October 2019

Coloured Cane Toppers adorn the Wendover Pocket Park

Thirteen children and guardians arrived on Friday evening at Green Park with the purpose of beautifying the new parkland alongside Whitehouses.

First task was to produce some model clay toppers for the bamboo canes, this was enthusiastically done, with the resulting multi-coloured models of – animals, boats, flowers and many other cartoon characters coming to life.



Next morning the weather was not looking good, but nevertheless the planting of the 2000 snowdrop bulbs started. Meanwhile the bonfire was lit to consume the branches left from the recent adult work party.

At 1pm we made a hasty retreat by minibus back to Green Park. Included in our facilities was a large bubble room which we used to assemble the bird boxes/bug houses.



As a granny, this is not an easy task, so I left the instruction on sawing and nailing to Alex and any other parent willing to help.

Sunday proved sunny so the rest of the snowdrop bulbs were planted, and an enormous bonfire built which enabled marsh mellows to be toasted. All six bird/bug boxes were nailed to available trees to encourage more wildlife in future.



In the afternoon the scrubland along the towpath was cut or sawed back to give more room for passing. Many walkers paused to thank us and enquire which group we were from. All this gives good publicity to the Trust.



The Family Camp is led and sponsored by the team from the Inland Waterways Association Head Office which is based in Chesham.



Jenny Brice, WAT Events Team

The Last Cargo by Water from Heygates Mill?

My wife Sara and I became members of Dunstable & District Boat Club (DDBC) when we first started boating nearly forty years ago. We first navigated to the then end of the Wendover Arm at the pumping station in 1982; my log notes that it took an hour from the Main Line because of dense weed and that we only just made it! Later that same year we attended an early Boat Rally opposite Gamnel Wharf and the Mill organised by the GUCS to publicise the Arm and its possible restoration.

At DDBC we got to know Roger and Sheila Lewis supported him in founding WAT in 1989. We got involved in scrub bashing work parties and took part in all the Wendover Arm Rallies from the first in 1990 until 2000 and treasure the commemorative plaques from those great occasions. Five years after retirement we moved our boat Sara No5 from DDBC to Brass Knocker Basin on the Kennet & Avon Canal and direct involvement with WAT was no longer practical but we were delighted in 2004 to recover, restore and put back in its original place the original cast iron

GJCC milepost at the Arm's junction with the Main Line at Bulbourne.

A very special highlight of our long association with WAT was in 1996, the Golden Jubilee Year of IWA when its National Rally was to be held at

Windmill End on the Dudley No2 Canal. Roger Lewis came up with the idea that we could mark the occasion and gain some very useful publicity for WAT by getting the Mayor of Tring to send as a gift to the Mayors of

Dudley and Sandwell, in whose districts the Rally was being held, two sacks of flour from Heygates Mill for charitable distribution.

The Mill had, of course, ceased using the canal to carry its cargoes soon after WWII. But now, why not revive for one last time the very reason some 150 years earlier a mill had been built at Gamnel Wharf in the first place – transport by water? The bare hull of Sara No5, our dream trad Josher style narrow boat, had been built for us in 1991 by that out-standing craftsman in steel, Simon Wain. Powered by a Russel Newbery DM2 in its own engine room I was five years into what turned out to



Loading at Gamnel Bridge Roger Davis Roger Lewis

Sara Davis & Mayor of Tring

be an eleven year DIY fitout. I had finished the traditional Back Cabin so it was habitable and externally it looked the part.

Loading at Gamnel Bridge Roger Davis Roger Lewis The Presentation by Roger Lewis at Windmill End Sara Davis & Mayor of Tring Roger asked Sara and I if we would like to carry that “last cargo of flour by water” from Heygates Mill to the IWA Golden Jubilee Rally for formal presentation by him on behalf of the Mayor Tring to the local Mayors. Well who would turn down such a privilege?



The Presentation by Roger Lewis at Windmill End

On Tuesday, August 13th at 2.30pm the Manager of Heygates and two members of staff duly loaded two 1cwt sacks of flour (one wholemeal, one white, suitably protected from the weather) onto the front cabin roof of Sara No5. This was done in the presence of the then Mayor of Tring, Councillor Olive Conway, and Chairman of WAT, Roger Lewis who had a sign **“A Token Cargo of Flour from Heygates Mill (Tring, Herts) to The Black Country National Waterways Festival and The Mayors of Dudley & Sandwell”**. The board also noted The Wendover Arm Trust and IWA Golden Jubilee.

The Mayor handed over a letter to be given to her recipient Mayors. We set off with Cllr Conway and Roger on board and gave them a cruise along the summit to Cowroast and back. Having bid them farewell we set off for the Festival.

En route at Grove Church Lock No 29, GU—cargo on roof It was a fairly leisured nine day cruise via Kingswood Junction & the South Stratford Canal to Tewksbury on the R. Avon, the R. Severn to Stourport, Staffs and Worcs Canal to Stourbridge Junction. Finally the Dudley No1 to the

National Rally Site at Wind-mill End, exactly 200 miles & 201 locks with our cargo. A warm welcome (including a hot shower !) beckoned as we carried on through Gosty Tunnel for a peaceful night in Hawne Basin.

The following morning arrangements were confirmed for the formal presentation of the cargo of flour by Roger Lewis to the two local Mayors.

We have been retired down West over twenty years now but we continue to closely follow WAT's great progress.

We are delighted that both our children, Elizabeth (Dr Liz) and Stephen together with Ian Williamson, our son-in-law, have been restoration “hands on” through WRG and Kesrg. So it was a special pleasure to come to the Open Day in July and see for ourselves the amazing progress made since we last visited nearly 20 years ago.



En route at Grove Church Lock No 29, GU—cargo on roof

Now, I put a question mark at the heading of this article. I believe we carried the last ever cargo of flour by water from Heygates Mill - unless, of course, you know different! Further, and we don't want to boast, but I am pretty sure we also carried the last flour away by water from the Hills & Partridge Mill down the Aylesbury Arm. The Aylesbury mill closed through insolvency in 1992 and is now, I believe, derelict. So, can we also claim a “last cargo of flour” for that one too? I'm sure WAT readers will put us right if we shouldn't!

By Roger Davis



And a Happy New Year!

From Wendover Arm Trust



Regards from your Editor
Carol Williams (left)
Assisted by Janine Jones (right).

Deadline for the
next newsletter is
29th February 2020



WENDOVER ARM TRUST

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David Suchet CBE

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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.

General telephone number: 07547 181 857 **Website:** www.wendoverarmtrust.co.uk

Advertising Enquiries:

Contact the Publicity Director, (Email addresses on p3)

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