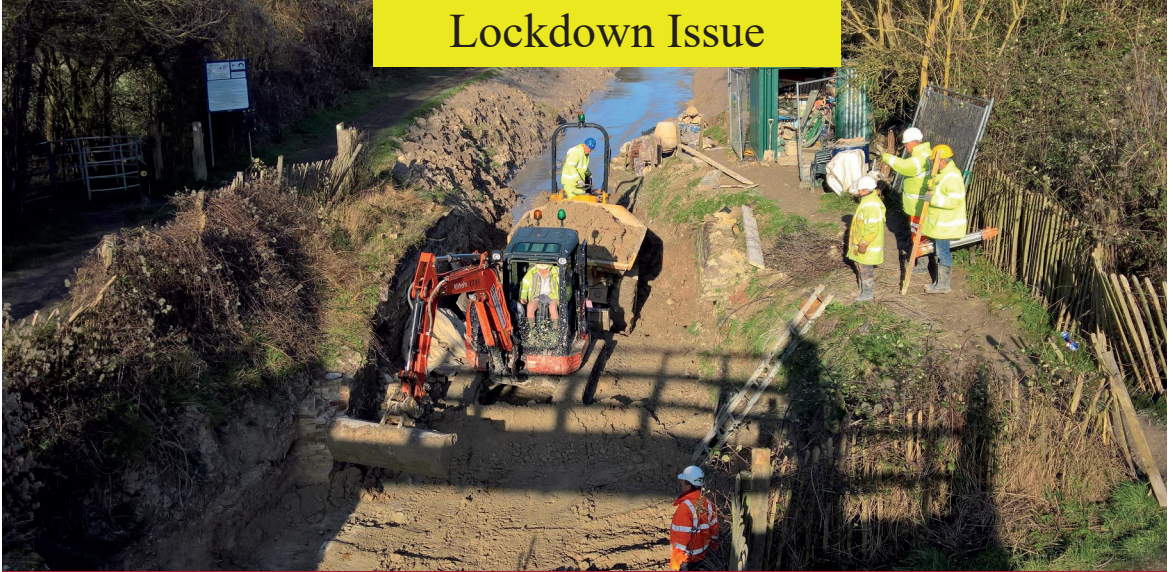


# WENDOVER ARM NEWS

## *Restoring the Wendover Canal*

Lockdown Issue



*Excavations between the new wooden Bridge 4 and the adjacent remains of the old swing bridge*



*Newsletter of the Wendover Arm Trust*

*2020 Spring  
Issue 1*

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# Lockdown Issue

## Contents



Chairman's Report	5	Events 2020	15
Operations Report	7	Work Party Schedules	16
Tidy Friday	11	Obituary - David Leeson	17
100 Club Lottery	12	Study Tour of the Lot Valley	19
Membership Handover/ Update	13		

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## Council members 2019-20

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- \* Leanda Richardson – Vice Chair & Fundraising
- \* Clive Wilson – Treasurer
- \* Tony Bardwell – Operations
- \* John Rowe – Honorary Secretary
- \* Peter Bird– Membership
- \* Bob Wheal – Sales
- \* Peter Lockett – Purchasing
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## Chairman's Column

Activities on site are currently suspended during the coronavirus lock down but much is going on in our "back office" to plan and prepare for the future when we can get back to work.  
The piece below was written earlier.

Visiting our site at the time of writing you could be excused for thinking we have already re-watered the next section following incessant rain which never seemed to stop !

Nevertheless, despite all that nature could throw at them our volunteers worked doggedly through a succession of storms and high winds to continue progress – at least one having boots full of water for a whole session. The only interruption to work was when the shelter blew away and some fencing came down. That's dedication - Thank you all!

We are very pleased to welcome Peter Bird who is taking over our Membership Secretary role from Katherine Deaney who has done a tremendous job for the past ten years – grateful thanks to her. The transfer over should be complete by Easter. Katherine hopes to continue to be involved in other areas.

Peter is a long time volunteer on site and brings a wealth of first hand experience of the trust with him. He can be contacted at [membership@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk](mailto:membership@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk)

I am pleased to report that John Reynolds who leads our Tidy Friday team as well as working on site is now recuperating well following a recent hip replacement.



Current priorities on site are to complete works at Whitehouses and around bridge 4 plus restoring the adjacent old swing bridge abutments. Once this is done we can re-water the section between bridges 4 and 4a.

Away from the site we are planning how we complete the section from Lt Tring through to the A41 and Buckland plus the funding required to get there.

Since this includes dealing with the infill at Lt Tring the likely total cost could be up to £5 million, far in excess of our current resources and will require a major fund raising campaign.

In order to attract funds we need to demonstrate major public benefit and support and have the backing of local councils at all levels. We also need to be in touch with building development plans which may lead to section 106 funding opportunities from developers, especially following the closure of RAF Halton.

We are grateful to John Hinton and Peter Elwin who are helping develop our strategy in this area together with vice chair Leanda Richardson.

Any further offers of help in these areas will be greatly appreciated.

As you can see we have major challenges going forward and are comparing notes with other organisations in order to learn from their experience and advice.

Four members of WAT Council have just visited the Cotswold Canals Trust to see the dramatic progress they have achieved with their restoration around Stroud, Gloucestershire.

They also met a representative of Stroud Council who are enthusiastic supporters of the restoration.

We'll be reflecting on the many lessons learned from them, and you may see changes over the next few months.

Thank you

**Chris Sargeant, Chairman**

[chairman@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk](mailto:chairman@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk)

Mobile: 07547 181 857

Could I please ask that if you are sending money to the Trust for subscriptions, 100 club renewals or donations would you please use on line payment systems if at all possible particularly during Lock down with cheques as a last resort only Methods to pay can be found on our website [www.wendoverarmtrust.co.uk](http://www.wendoverarmtrust.co.uk) under the DONATE tab.

Thank you for your help. Chris

## **Hollywood comes to Tring.** It could form the basis of a movie plot..

The couple became friends, and in true Hollywood fashion matters progressed with David and Sylvia marrying and then later settling down in a bungalow close to the Arm. The couple enjoyed many walks along the Arm, but these were curtailed when a move to Alnwick in Northumberland took place.

Eventually Sylvia sadly passed away but David regularly interrupts his retirement to make the long journey South to visit friends and family. He always makes a point of visiting the Wendover Arm to check on restoration progress and to relive old memories by once again walking the Arm, just as they once did years ago.

The latest plaque on Bridge 4 refers to the story, and helps keep David's memories fresh. It reads:

'David & Sylvia Brackley, from Wendover Tring & Alnwick, Many enjoyable walks'

Go to [www.wendoverarmtrust.co.uk](http://www.wendoverarmtrust.co.uk) and look under shop for more information about bridge plaques



## Operations Report - March/April 2020

This is an updated report written at the point when we should have been starting the April work party.

In accordance with the COVID19 advice from the Government and the Canal and River Trust all work on site has been postponed until further notice.

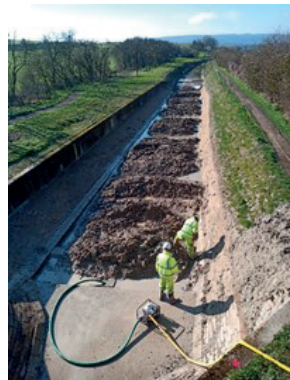
The physical restoration programme has not moved on from where we were at the end of March, as reported below. However, the confinement to our homes has not stopped the background work of meetings with CRT and the purchase of new equipment, for example, due to the ease of use of the internet and web-based meetings. The Website has also been updated with even more to see.

### Work Party progress overview

The start of this working party was originally planned to get going on the Wednesday before the plant delivery day. Concrete was planned to be delivered and poured on Friday. Storm Jorge and the other wet days forced us to change our plans and abandon the Wednesday workday and move the concrete delivery and pouring until the following Monday. This gave us more time to pump all the water out and finish the reinforcing mesh for the concrete slab.

The main work planned for this month was to cast the main reinforced concrete slab that will eventually support the new stop plank channels and the rebuilt section of the Old Swing Bridge walls.

This work was done in several stages including casting the “upstand” where the stop planks will meet with the bed, and casting in an expansion joint with the existing concrete slab under bridge 4.



### Thursday 5th

The plant machines arrived early, and this was a big bonus for us in terms of getting the water pumps in place to pump out the rainwater. The work area was pumped out quickly, so the opportunity was taken to pump out the large lake just before the work area and the semi-finished bed and concrete policemen on the other side of bridge 4

### Friday 6th

Work commenced on sorting out the various pieces of the reinforcement puzzle including cutting the reinforcing sheet meshes and specially bent shapes to get the fit and height that was required.



## Friday 6<sup>th</sup>

Work commenced on sorting out the various pieces of the reinforcement puzzle including cutting the reinforcing sheet meshes and specially bent shapes to get the fit and height that was required.



## Saturday 7<sup>th</sup>

Whilst the on-site team carried on with the reinforcing, Tony went to look at a 2-tonne dumper that could be potentially donated to WAT and I decided straightaway that it would be a benefit to WAT for various duties.

We had 4 volunteers on this day and concentrated on getting the reinforcing etc. finished. We continued with attaching the 20mm dowels which will firmly locate the block walls whilst the central area of mesh was finished off. Meanwhile there was some more pumping out of the large “lake” nearest the worksite. After this we all moved on to installing wooden shuttering which took a while to get to the correct height and needed extra timber to fill gaps underneath. We had a visit at break time from our Chairman, Chris Sargeant, with cake! Very nice! (the cake that is!)

## Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> - Dumper day.

Transport for the dumper was arranged over Saturday evening and Sunday morning and the Dumper arrived by trailer on site mid-afternoon. We will need to add a roll bar and seat belt (maybe add some paint) but the dumper should give us a safer way of transporting and offloading the many concrete blocks that we handle. Although the machine is smaller than the 6 tonne dumpers we normally use, the bucket is much lower to the ground.



Due to being lighter and smaller the “new” dumper may be able to travel back to Whitehouses along the bed where the larger machines would bog down due to the winter water in the bed spoil.

*We are very grateful to the donor Ellen Hawes whose father loved and cherished it over many years - we will promise to look after it for many more Thank you*

## Monday 9<sup>th</sup> - Concreting day.

We had rain overnight so there had to be yet another “pump out” before work could start. The plan was that the ordered 12 cu m of concrete would be delivered by 3 ready mix lorries. Then, with each dumper loaded as high as we could, considering spillage due to the rough ground and slopes, there would be many shuttle trips.

delivered by 3 ready mix lorries. Then, with each dumper loaded as high as we could, considering spillage due to the rough ground and slopes, there would be many shuttle trips.

We were all ready to go earlier than expected so arranged to bring the deliveries forward by half an hour. We should have organised a bigger time gap between the deliveries to compensate for the dumper transport distance from the Little Tring carpark to bridge 4!! Things soon developed into “a busy time”. The volunteer-suggested method of tipping the concrete into wheelbarrows directly from the dumper worked well provided we didn’t completely fill them. It is not easy to control concrete being tipped out of a dumper! To the team on top of the reinforcing, the flow of dumpers appeared to be relentless, and there was little time to recover between deliveries.



The whole of the concrete mass was de-aerated with a vibrating poker. This tended to allow the wooden form work to float up and some time was spent putting in more pins in strategic positions to show what the concrete level needed to be.

Fatigue amongst the volunteers was beginning to set in and more minor trips and incidents were seen to be

happening. Adding more volunteers probably wouldn’t have helped much (due to getting in each other’s way), other than allowing more rotation of staff. We did rotate the dumper driving to give people a break. Each dumper was pressure washed out. Everyone worked hard on what was a very busy, tiring day.



### **Tuesday 10th - Mind the Gap!**

On Tuesday we witnessed the amazing ability for wet concrete to attract footprints. But before all that, we had to strip out form work on the new concrete slab and pump out the area between the new slab and the existing slab under Bridge 4. As part of the preparations the “tail end” of the Bridge 4 slab reinforcement had to be uncovered and cleaned up.

A foam expansion strip was assembled to the face of the new slab to allow each slab to “move” or settle over time.



A Memorial bench, dedicated to “Mavis Hunt”, was installed and bolted down.

So, we “set to” on mixing concrete with our onsite mixer and filled the gap and de-aerated with a poker. This was followed by careful smoothing and lavish “finishing” by trowel.



All that smoothing was obviously vulnerable, so the area was covered with raised boards whilst we got on with the next bit. The boards soon got in the way so were removed and everyone was told to keep away. That lasted about ten minutes when I was the first to “make an impression”. Smoothing was difficult whilst laughing! Three more feet marks duly came and went. Then we had a volunteer who apparently wanted the shape of his face recorded for posterity He managing to stumble and almost perfect a “face plant”. No injuries, lessons learned and more laughter!

The task that was causing the footmarks next door was to fabricate and assemble the form work for the cill that will be the sealing face for the stop planks when they are assembled. The form work was again set up using the surveying level. Extra reinforcing was added and then the form work filled with hand mixed concrete.

Vibrating the concrete to de-aerate it caused yet more problems with the form work (we really should know by now?) and more time was spent correcting the movement and settling the concrete down again.

### **Wednesday 11th - Strike Day (Not what you think!)**

First task was to “strike” and clear away the various form work and boards. Work started on the first course of hollow blocks which were placed over the dowels cast into the concrete bed.

### **Thursday 12th**

As a continuation of the expansion joint between the two concrete slabs, some more plastic foam was affixed to the bridge abutment wall. Work started in earnest on the hollow block work. Most of the block work on the offside was completed. Survey checks were done throughout the build.

The cill “upstand” was surveyed for flatness and height and was found to be satisfactory.

A bund was reinstated just beyond the old swing bridge walls to keep some of the water out.



## **Friday 13th - Tidy Friday and plant return day**

The team had a new volunteer who came to us via a local university scheme. The day's work included picking up the various branches and debris from the recent high winds, tending to the various trees and bulbs already planted. We have been informed that there will be 450 more trees available to plant in the autumn!

Despite the wet and slippery conditions there were no reported injuries or incidents. We did have a few wet feet due to "water over the boot top" incidents which again highlighted the need for better shelter and drying facilities for the winter months.

*Tony Bardwell*  
Operations Director

## **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 and good company keeping our canal, bridges and towpath looking spick and span and cared for.

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

<b>10th April Cancelled</b>
8th May
12th June
10th July



Please check our website for any changes to the above dates occasioned by the coronavirus situation.

Thank you

## Club 100 Lottery

The Winter draw was made at the January council meeting. There were 208 subscribers in this draw.

The winners were....



Mrs Christina Lynch, £249.60



Mr Roger Leishman, £104



Mr James Griffin, £41.60

Congratulations to our winners and thank you to all members who take part in the Club 100 lottery. Thanks to your support the scheme has raised well over £20,000 for restoration funds since it began in 1997.

If you would like to be in with a chance of winning next time, joining Club 100 couldn't be easier. Simply complete the application form and arrange payment (cheque, BACS transfer or standing order). Each lucky number costing £15 per year is entered into 4 quarterly draws. The jackpot is directly proportionate to the number of subscribers.

Remember you have to be a paid up member of the Trust to enter Club 100, each lucky number costs £15 per year for 4 prize draws. The prize fund increases with every new subscription taken out. **Join today** - the application form can be found on the website.

**The next draw will be in April 2020.**

## Membership Handover

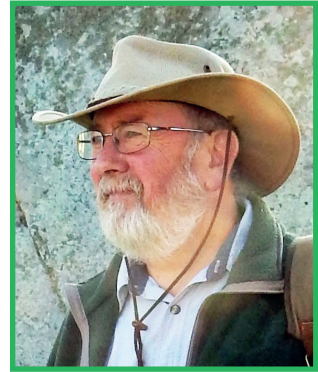
We are delighted to announce that Peter Bird, a long standing restoration volunteer from Princes Risborough, has stepped forward to take on the role of membership secretary from Katherine, who has done the role for over 10 years.

Thank you Peter and welcome to the Trust council.

We would also like to thank Katherine for all those years of hard work as membership secretary and the hours she has put in to welcome new members and keep our existing ones, as well as collecting subscriptions and donations and operating the Club 100 lottery. All of these are crucial to the trust's aims of, among other things, promoting the restoration of the Wendover Arm and its use.

Peter (usually known as Pc to his friends) and Katherine are going through a period of training and handover, it is anticipated that Peter will be flying solo after Easter. In the mean time, there will be a few changes to the ways of working.

Contact details – email and mobile number will remain the same, i.e. [membership@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk](mailto:membership@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk) and 07547 181 857.



Postal address :

**Mr P Bird,  
Membership Secretary, Wendover  
Arm Trust, Island House, Moor  
Road, Chesham, HP5 1WA.**

Any mail will then be forwarded to Peter.

In this era of technology, can you help make Peter's job easier e.g. – please provide an email address and make sure we have your email current one?

As mentioned earlier we would appreciate any payments be made on line if at all possible.

See the DONATE page on our website  
[www.wendoverarmtrust.co.uk](http://www.wendoverarmtrust.co.uk)  
or options Thank you

- Email is free, whereas postage & printing costs money



- If you are not on email (we know a few members don't have computers) do you have a mobile that we could send text messages to about membership? This option is much cheaper and quicker than post.
- Would you take out a life or block membership? This reduces admin time and saves you money in the long term. Remember it is the donor's responsibility to inform an organization if they are no longer eligible for gift aid.
- GDPR – have you completed *and returned* your declaration?
- Contact details – do we have your up to date name, postal address, email address, mobile number?
- Life membership is £250 for joint members and £150 for single members. A one off payment for life, job done!
- Block membership – 5 years for the price of 4 years, ie £60/£40
- Standing order – could you pay annual subs by standing order directly from your bank to ours? The details are on the website or ask for a mandate to complete. Then you'd never need to remember to renew as it is done automatically
- Could you pay online using a credit / debit card through Golden Giving?
- Could you receive the newsletter as an electronic copy? Sign up by emailing [membership@wendoverarmrust.co.uk](mailto:membership@wendoverarmrust.co.uk)
- Gift aid – are you signed up if you are eligible ? Have your tax circumstances changed ?

*Thank you for your help*

## Membership Update

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



## Events 2020

Attendance at the following events depends on volunteers being available so why not contact Jenny on [events@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk](mailto:events@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk) with offers of help, it is great fun being involved.



- ◆ Rickmansworth Canal Festival 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> May  
*IWA stand*
- ◆ Wendover Celebrates 24<sup>th</sup> May Sunday
- ◆ Restoration Open Day TBA
- ◆ Tring Carnival
- ◆ Wendover School Street
- ◆ Linslade
- ◆ 1<sup>st</sup> August
- ◆ IWA 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> August on  
*IWA bottom lock*
- ◆ Aylesbury Waterside Festival 12<sup>th</sup> September
- ◆ Whitehouses Rewatering/Pocket Park TBA
- ◆ IWA Family Camp 23<sup>rd</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> October
- ◆ AGM 27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> October

All subject to change or cancellation  
 due to Coronavirus situation  
 Please check our website for updates

Log on to the WAT's website to keep up to date with future events.

Jenny Brice



## 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 May 1st - Thursday May 7th, 2020	TBC
Friday June 5th - Thursday June 11th, 2020	TBC
Friday July 3rd - Thursday July 9th, 2020	TBC

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





## Obituary - David Leeson

David passed away on July 31st 2019 at home after a long battle with cancer with all his family around him.

He was a member of the Wendover Arm Trust for many years. He then became Harbour Master which he enjoyed and made many friends at the festivals. He will be sadly missed.



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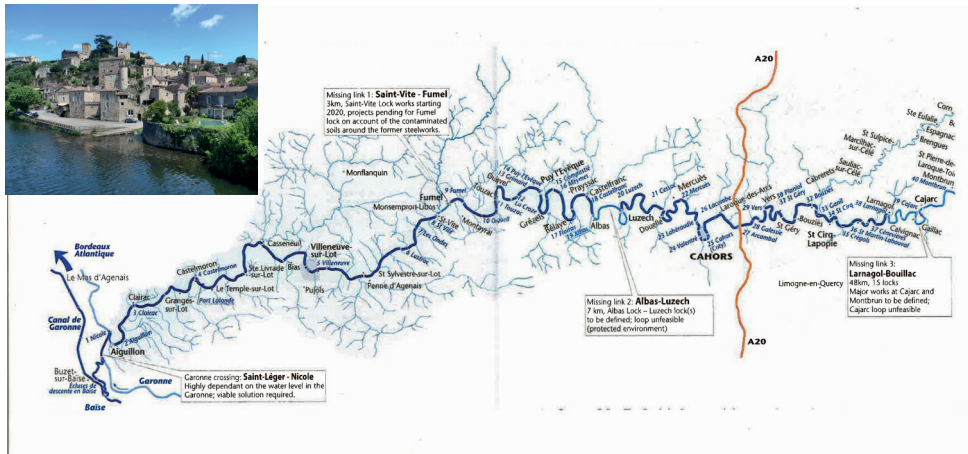
Regards from your Editor  
Carol Williams (left)  
Assisted by Janine Jones (right).

Deadline for the  
next newsletter is  
**30th June 2020**

# Study Tour of the Lot Valley 2019 part 1

by Nigel Williams

Many readers will no doubt have heard of the IWA (Inland Waterways Association) but some may not know of the IWI (Inland Waterways International). The President, David Edwards-May lives in France and puts together various continental tours primarily aimed at boaters and/or those with a love of rivers and canals.



The River Lot is regarded as one of the top five waterway destinations in France. Thanks to phenomenal feats of engineering navigation potentially extends over a distance of 266 kms from the River Garonne at Nicole, near Aiguillon, to the village of Port D'Agres, a few kilometres from the former industrial centre of Decazeville. Open cast mines here produced coal for steelworks and other industries throughout south-west France. The intense traffic was the reason for improving the navigation and a series of new locks and weirs were built from 1830 onwards.

Like the other river navigations in south west France the Lot was abandoned following the decline in commercial traffic owing to railway competition. (*Have we heard this before?*). It was formally closed in 1926.

The revival of the River Lot as a cruising waterway has been one of the most spectacular developments on French waterways, starting in 1985. The initial restoration project of 37 kms was extended to 46 kms and finally to 64 kms having been approved by the French Government at an estimated cost of €120 million.

To be continued .....



## WENDOVER ARM TRUST

**President** Dr David Fletcher CBE  
**Vice Presidents** Barry Martin & Roger Leishman  
**Patron** David Suchet CBE

Wendover Arm Trust, A Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered Charity No.801190. Its **AIMS** are:

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 educate the public in the history, use and wildlife, of canals and inland waterways generally and the Wendover Arm in particular.

**General telephone number:** 07547 181 857 **Website:** [www.wendoverarmtrust.co.uk](http://www.wendoverarmtrust.co.uk)  
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Contact the Publicity Director, (Email addresses on p3)

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