



Wendover Arm Trust

Operations Report 6th March 2021 Volunteer version

Website: - <https://wendoverarmtrust.co.uk/>

Summary

A historic first step has been taken to remove the last barrier to rewatering the whole canal, by removing part of the refuse infill at Little Tring.

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Celebrations on behalf of all our Volunteers! We have been waiting for many years to start this job!

An April work party is being planned.

The first stage of excavating and removing the Historic refuse tip.

The trial excavation and transport of the tip contents to a remediation site, has now been completed.

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Before. The end of the winding hole is visible at the far end. The tip material was previously excavated and stockpiled on site and was the result of humanely moving a Badger set

STGTHUMB



After. The section from the yellow blob (Me!) back to the red fence was excavated. The end of the winding hole is just below the picture edge

Another view of the excavation with the Winding hole end just below the bottom right corner of the picture





One of the first trucks being loaded ready for the trip to Peterborough. In all, 420 tonnes were shipped out

The Trial project was completed by a Team consisting of The Canal and River Trust, Ebsford Environmental, Aegean PLC and the Wendover Arm Trust. Other contractors supplied the eight-wheeled trucks and the site machines.

Although a simple project in principle: - dig the waste up, put it in the trucks and deliver it to the Aegean plant at Peterborough, there were many constraints and imperatives that had to be resolved. The main bulk of the rubbish dump is exactly that, domestic waste deposited around 1920 by the local Town Council back then, in agreement with the Grand Junction Canal Company, who had effectively abandoned and dried out the canal section.

After many samples of the tip had been analysed it was found that the tip material itself was classed as a low-level hazard. However, the coal tar which had been put on the banks to stop leakage was found to be very hazardous which meant that it was difficult and potentially very expensive to dispose of. The solution was to remove all the low-level hazardous material and leave the coal tar behind. The low-level hazardous material would be taken to a specialist plant to be mixed with non-hazardous material and thus diluted sufficiently to be taken to landfill.

So, the main constraint was that the low hazardous materials must be taken to the remediation plant at Peterborough, and the imperative was that NO coal tar contamination could be allowed in that material. The main body of the excavation with a large excavator was relatively simple but removing the last layer of refuse from the coal tar layer and leaving the coal tar intact requires expert excavator driving using a much smaller machine in the excavated canal bed.

The coal tar lining was not part of the excavation project and you might ask about what we intend to do with that. We took soil samples from under the undisturbed coal tar layer and discovered that, even though the tar had been in contact with the soil for over 100 years, that there were no signs of contamination or leaching into the soil below. When you think about it, a material soluble in water would not have been useful to seal the banks and bed against leakage! The canal profile that is required for relining and waterproofing with modern materials is generally bigger and a different shape than the coal tar lined traditional bowl shape from 100 years ago. Thus, the coal tar must be removed from the banks before lining work can begin. Knowing that the material is effectively inert as far as soil contamination is concerned means that we can move the material around on site and bury it under the bed and banks before applying the new liner system.

That is not the end of the story because a lot of the spoil created during reprofiling and relining does contain coal tar. Some of this occurred when the pipeline trench was dug many years ago to allow the canal to be "dried" whilst still getting water to Wilstone reservoir. In other cases, the tar lining has been damaged over the years by the sun and frost/ice. None of this mixed spoil can leave the site and possible separation methods have been reviewed and found to be impractical. Since we will inevitably

have too much spoil after reprofiling, the plan is to export the uncontaminated spoil from where we carefully removed the coal tar in the rubbish tip area. This material can go to a local landfill site with a reasonably low export cost due to less transport distance.

Excavating and removing the Historic refuse tip: The bigger project.

For the removal of the bulk of the tip, the information obtained from the Trial Project will be used to draw up the Excavation and removal Project plan.

Our dedicated Tip removal project Group are evaluating the results of the Trial.

We are expecting to start work on the main part of the Tip clearance in June this year.

Health and Safety

We have had a few volunteers working on site from time to time but there have been no reported accident or mishaps.

The Canal and River Trust have told us that they must be informed of any accidents or incidents within 72 hours.

The Bentomat handling excavator attachment is now being made. It will take an uncut roll and place it directly along the canal bank at 45 degrees. This will make the task easier with less labour and heavy lifting. The required stress calculations have been done for safety and insurance of a lifting tool.

An FAW (First Aid at Work) training course has been booked for 15th, 16th, and 17th July.

The existing First Aid trained Volunteers will need a 2-day refresher course and new volunteers will need the three-day course. We already have some new people come forward to be trained but there are places for more: - without a First Aider on site we cannot work!

Volunteer plant driver enquiry

Part of the planning and costing for the whole Tip removal has shown that, using volunteer labour to excavate and transport the spoil on site for loading into trucks, would make a major cost saving compared to a subcontract company. We are estimating that the excavation process will take somewhere between four and five weeks and will be a virtually nonstop programme including weekends. WAT does have several drivers, but the project is unlikely to work unless we can get external volunteer drivers. We will need volunteers who have a 9-tonne articulated dumper (25 WRG) certificate and those who have a 10B (over 7 tonne) certificate. There will be opportunities for drivers who hold a 10A certificate, but those people will need to have some experience.

As mentioned above we are targeting June as the start date and that may overlap with other voluntary organisations working plans who also want to get going again. We are looking for a general response at this stage to decide if this plan is viable or not. Please let me know if you can help, even if it is for one day!

April Work party

With a lot of the restrictions being reduced regarding Covid 19 and most of our volunteers having been vaccinated, we are planning to start another work party on the 9th of April. The normal volunteer schedule will be sent out soon. This does all depend on the Government "roadmap" dates not being changed due to the C19 misbehaving itself.

Wanted: -Information Manager

Can you help us? – we are looking for one or two volunteers to help with online digital storage of our documents and pictures and to keep them secure but accessible when required.

The role will involve setting up and managing procedures for naming of documents/pictures and controlling permissions for access to them by members of Council, our sub committees and working groups as required.

The documents are mainly work reports, minutes of meetings and pictures that record the progress of the restoration and events etc

In both tasks, naming and dating in a consistent manner will be essential to enable us to search and find material in future.

If you think you can help us, or would like more information, please do get in touch with us.

Tony Bardwell

Operations Director