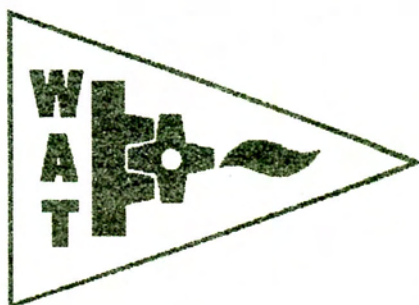


Wendover Arm News

The newsletter of the Wendover Arm Trust



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THE WENDOVER ARM TRUST

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The fifth Wendover Canal Festival at Tring is now just a memory - albeit a memory of a very successful and rewarding event. Details are on several pages in this magazine.

On the Saturday morning of the Festival I received a letter from the local Waterway Manager, Chris Mitchell, with some of the most encouraging news yet received. The letter outlined British Waterways timetable for tackling the first stage of restoration in which Chris anticipates that this stage could be started in July 1996 - when all the preliminary work such as detailed plans, engineering investigations, costs and income and planning have been completed - and finished by May 1997. This announcement gives a purpose to all our efforts during the past 10 years.

Bucks County Council have now completed their work on upgrading the towpath between Stablebridge Road at Aston Clinton and Wharf Road in Wendover. I attended the official opening ceremony in Wendover on 12th August when Mrs. Wingrove, the vice-chair of BCC's Countryside Committee opened this section of the Aylesbury circular walk. Mrs Wingrove was assisted by Sylvia Stephens who cut the ribbon from her wheelchair.

Many of you will have already seen the new official Information Sheet showing the Arm and a summary of the history with an update on the progress to date of the work being done by the Trust. We are very grateful to Mr Stephen Hearn of Brown and Merry Tring Market Auctions for so generously donating them to the Trust.

Bucks County Council have also produced a very attractive Information Sheet showing the Buckinghamshire section in detail and suggesting some circular walks which incorporate sections of the Wendover Arm.

Work will soon commence again clearing the jungle of undergrowth from the dry section and, once again, I say to as many of you members who can assist to help with this important work. Please come along on any first Sunday of the months of October to April with any implement which will cut down this small forest of bushes.

I look forward to seeing you all at the AGM on October 19th.

Roger Lewis

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Membership of the Trust is still increasing!
Currently there are 447 members registered.
Listed below are the members who have joined the since the last report.
Welcome to the Trust.

Mr & Mrs D Atlass	Kenton
Mr & Mrs J P Baughan	St. Albans
Mr & Mrs G Bristow	Berkhamsted
Mr R J Brown	Fenny Stratford
Mr J Checkley	Berkhamsted
Mr T J L Collier	Kettering
Mr D J Cooper	London
Mr & Mrs A W Delmont	Borehamwood
Mr J M Dunn	Chesham
Mr & Mrs R K Halls	Rickmansworth
Mrs V J Hatch & Mr P Dunning	Rhode Island, U S A
Mr & Mrs P Horton	Tring
Mr G C Legge	Ivinghoe
Mr L W Macdonald	Tring
Mr K Mander	Biggleswade
Mr M A G Paine	Tring
Mr H J Prescott	Amersham
Mr & Mrs D M Roche	Linslade
Mr & Mrs A G Russell	Chingford
Mr R C Steed	Harefield
Mr & Mrs S Webb	Aylesbury
Mr & Mrs D F Yule	Bletchley

Thank you to several of our "single" members who have responded to the suggestion in the last Wendover Arm News that it would be nice if their membership were changed to a family membership.

The Trust's membership total will be increasingly important as we have to seek funding for the actual restoration work.

Corporate Memberships

Corporate membership is open to any canal society, rambling club, school, local council, angling club, local history society or any other group interested in the Wendover Arm of the Grand Union Canal.

The subscription - Minimum £10.00 - covers one year from the date of joining.

Corporate Members receive four copies of the Trust Newsletter and one copy of any Notice, or other communication, from the Trust.

Corporate Members are also entitled to one vote at General Meetings.

Application forms for Corporate Membership, and other Members, are available from the Membership Secretary - address inside the front cover.

Barry Martin
Membership Secretary

+++++

A G M

Notice of the Annual General Meeting is enclosed with this issue. Do please make an effort to attend - we can promise an interesting evening. For those of you who may not have been to a Trust AGM before, the formal proceedings are dispensed with fairly quickly (usually about half an hour is enough) and there then follows some 'entertainment'.

This year, Arthur Dungate from the Surrey & Hampshire Canal Society is coming with a selection of his excellent audio-visual presentations. Having seen some before, I know that we are in for an enjoyable evening. Incidentally, if any member is coming in from Hounslow area that night, Arthur could use a lift. Please let Ian Packe know if you might be able to help out on this one.

COMMITTEE MATTERS

The meeting scheduled for June 15th had to be cancelled due to circumstances beyond our control (nobody was around!). As there was no pressing business needing full Committee attention, it was decided to keep routine business for the next scheduled meeting in July.

Consequently there are just two meetings to report this time, on July 20th and August 17th.

July

Update on leased land situation - now mostly resolved, albeit at unwelcome expense.

Letter from BW on preliminary planning for Stage 1 restoration warmly welcomed.

Report sent regarding restoration progress to Scania Award Scheme - hoping for some funding from this source,

Letter from member regarding poor state of canal at Wendover. Passed to BW and Council. Agreed to make this workparty project if matters do not improve.

Good coverage of Festival in press noted.

Need for more members of committee discussed - again appeal to members to put themselves forward.

August

Due to limited number of members available to man stand at IWA National Waterways Festival, reluctantly agreed we could not attend.

BW advise that action has been taken to clear up towpath and banks following WAT members letter. Trust member who wrote to us reports situation better now.

Chairman attended official opening of towpath walk on 12th August.

Approach been made by local Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme asking if young people can help with 'jungle bashing'. Agreed to invite them to workparties subject to satisfactory insurance cover and supervision.

Rod Saunders offered use of Grebe Canal Cruises day boat. See page 13 for further details of this kind offer.

Leased land - matters proceeding.

Highways Agency (Dept. of Transport) advise there have been some objections to land taken for canal diversion (for Aston Clinton bypass). Likely a small public inquiry will be held later in year. WAT asked to give a clear statement of restoration plans to counter any suggestion that refurbishment provision is unnecessary. Response letter agreed.

Environmental Action grant details received from Dept. of Environment - agreed to 'express interest' as first stage toward obtaining project grant towards stage 1.

Asked by WRG to host one week canal camp in 1995 - declined as amount of physical restoration work available in 1995 uncertain.

AGM planned. Accounts agreed. Arthur Dungate of Surrey & Hants Canal Society has agreed to present a selection of his audio-visual programmes after main business of AGM.

Programme for Southern Canals meeting which WAT are hosting on October 23rd agreed.

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the
Wendover Arm Trust

JUST ANOTHER WEEK!

Wednesday May 25th. Try to do three days work in one - fail abysmally. Forget the attempt and move boat to Bulbourne.

Thursday May 26th. - Work - till noon when decide I'll never get ahead, so give up trying. Down to boat for a leisurely cruise down the Wendover Arm. Past the mill and there can't be that many boats here already. Site Manager comes over to warmly welcome me - wrong - he wants a job doing. Throw ropes at him, he dodges, tie up loosely on somebody elses' pegs and start work. Midway through job, Vice Chairman comes up with another. Start that. Chairman arrives.

"Could you just do ..."

"No" I think. I want lunch.

"Yes Roger" I say.

"Wimp" I think.

2 hours and 10 jobs later, put army camouflage training to good use. Run from cover to boat, turn it round, drive in mooring pegs and neatly moor up. Hammering pegs in was a mistake - noise attracts attention.

"Richard, can you help with..." comes a voice.

"No" I think. I want lunch.

"No" I say. Impressed - assertiveness training leaping to the fore. Also, I want lunch.

"Just give me 5 minutes and I'll be with you" says I. Lunch reduced at a stroke from gastronomic delight to can of coke and 2 slices of bread with lump of cheese.

Back to work, until dark. Tired - sleep like a log.

Friday May 27th. Fencing, watering, signposting, carrying, loading, unloading. Site beginning to look almost useable now - time for the bar and first entertainers - *panic* - will they turn up? They do, nobody else does. Resign as entertainments officer at end of Festival.

Saturday May 28th. Rather like Friday - work around site all day. Barn dance in the evening - band turn up and so do the people - better than yesterday, but I'm still resigning.

Sunday May 29th. Where's the PA? Panic. Give him an hour, after all it is only 5.30 am! He arrives of course. By 10, site looks good, people coming in - perhaps it will be OK after all. Now, what entertainments have I booked? Will they turn up? Panic (again). They arrive (some 3 hours early). Calm down. Crowds all day, steady stream of jobs to do but overall remarkably easy. Radios a godsend - all very formal today - "Mike to Graeme, Over, Roger Wilco, Ten four Rubber Duck etc.". Hours of fun - don't want to give radio up at end of day, but told I can't have one tomorrow if I don't. Give it up.
5 pm - public go - time to clear up a bit before the evening barbeque and entertainment. Band turn up complete with light show, and have excellent night according to all.

Monday May 30th. A few hours sleep, and time to get ready for the hordes again. PA announcer turns up - 3 seconds late - would have shouted but she's got a sore head from wedding reception last night, and besides I'll never hear the end of it if I do - I'm married to her! Crowds turn up in their thousands - how will we cope? All runs smoothly all day - and they've let me play with a radio again. Slight security slip when I announce where my cheque book is over the air - crowd stampedes - forget army camouflage technique and run to get there first. Just succeed. Can't afford to lose it - it has all my notes for this article on it - another case of 'cheque book journalism'?
Before I know it's 5 o'clock again, the last of the public are going and people everywhere are knocking the site down. After all the effort of putting it up too - but much appreciated as it lessens the amount to do tomorrow. Time for committee to sit down at last.

Tuesday May 31st. Knock it all down, load it all up, store it all away. Congratulate ourselves on a good event. Start thinking about next year, then remember I resigned on Friday. Well, maybe I'll give it one more chance. After all, I do enjoy it.
Finally get home (must remember to go back for boat tomorrow). A few muscles don't even ache - although quite a lot do. Just hope we can get a few more bodies to help next year - but then we always say that.

Richard House

LETTERS

Dear Mr Editor,

Since you have to write most of the Newsletter it seems a fair assumption that once again you will be writing a review of the Festival. Last year's article gave the impression that all you did was catch a cold and no doubt this year's will be similar. I must therefore inform your readers that you were everywhere - and not with a notebook and pencil!

Not only did you arrange an excellent programme of entertainment, spending only half of your laughably small budget, but I spotted you putting up fencing, treading down rubbish skips, serving in the bar and generally sorting out problems. Not ALL at the same time, mind.

To come to the point, as a newcomer to the Festival team, I am staggered by how much work is done by so few people. To be blunt, Mr Editor, it's too much for their own good and your readers must do something about it. I know and appreciate how much they helped on the day and how much they have been nagged in the past, but we need just a few more to agree to take on specific tasks well in advance of the Festival.

The committee may seem a bit "cliquey", but I can assure you they aren't, although they must be bonded together by going through an experience like the Festival not once but five times. It's easy to break in, so please help. Incidentally, I suspect that breaking out is much more difficult, so ... See you next year!

Mike Chessher, Site Manager 1994 Festival

Many thanks for your glowing accolade Mike - I shall be on to you for job references from now on. Whilst we are back-patting, I know everybody will agree with me that you did an amazing job this year, despite being a "new boy", and you're right - you will be back next year! You've committed yourself in print now, so there's no turning back, although I think you did enjoy the experience anyway. It does get (marginally) easier the second time.

I have avoided writing a straight review of the Festival this time - I think so many of our members were there that they will each have their own memories and their own stories to tell, so have tried to relate mine. And yes, I am stupid enough to say in print that I will be back next year as well - All we need is a few more volunteers please.

GRAND DRAW PRIZEWINNERS

1st	Canal Boat Holiday donated by Grebe Canal Cruises	Mrs Lockton, Tring
2nd	Balloon Flight donated by Chris Dunkley	Catherine Hislam, Berkhamsted
3rd	£100 Cash	T. Hible, Berkhamsted
4th	Framed Limited Edition Print donated by Diane House	Mr I. Williams, Hemel Hempstead
5th	Dinner for Two donated by the Grand Junction Arms	R & L Jermyn Heathfield, E Sussex
6th	House Contents Valuation donated by Brown & Merry Auctions	R. Nunn, Hemel Hempstead
7th	Food Hamper	Nick Hardwick Garston
8th	Large Teddy	Mr C. Evans Wooburn Green
9th	Champagne	Mr & Mrs Stoyles Pitstone
10th	Ribbon Plate donated by John Branch	Mrs J. Martin Milton Keynes
11th	£15 Meal Voucher	Martin Webb Aylesbury
12th	Camera donated by Mrs B. Martin!	Mrs B. Martin Milton Keynes
13th	Teddy Ring Hanging	Don Smart Stewkley
14th	Large Tin of Roses Chocolates	Sue Kent Hemel Hempstead
15th	Normandy Lace	Mrs Jennings Broghbrough

THEY ARE BACK

The ever popular Sunday work parties start again in October.

Remember, the first Sunday in every month throughout the winter is when YOU can do some restoration work. All you need is a pair of gloves, and any hacking-type tools (bowsaw, secateurs, bill hook, JCB etc) you can bring.

We aim to capitalise on the clearance work done last year and try to pull out a lot of roots this winter. The sooner we pull them out the easier they are; and each one out means a bit less needing cutting in the future.

Please try to come along to at least one Sunday if you possibly can. We start about 10 am, and work usually until about 5 pm. If you can't come for the whole day, don't worry - just an hour or two is still a huge help/

Having worked from Little Tring towards Drayton Beauchamp so far, we are nearing the middle of the section now. For the time being we are still nearer Little Tring, so park there and follow the towpath to find us. When we get nearer Drayton Beauchamp we'll let you know in the Newsletter - until we see how many will turn out this year we don't know how far we'll get.

In case you don't know where we are, the map opposite might help. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on:

October 2nd
November 6th
December 4th
January 8th (note 2nd Sunday in Jan)
February 5th
March 5th
April 2nd

Restoration Committee
(which is coincidentally the same as all the other committees!)

Where to find the work party



FREE!

It is very rare to find us giving something away, so read on.

We still have our original display boards, which have now been superseded by the new, lightweight ones.

They are really no further use to the Trust now, so does anybody know a worthy cause who could make use of them. Preferably we would like them to go to another waterways connected body, but if anybody would like to put in a case for having them, we would be pleased to hear from you. They are big and heavy, but they got us started, and could do the same for you now.

ANOTHER VIEW OF THAT FESTIVAL

This Article first appeared in 'Navvies', the Waterway Recovery Group newsletter, under the banner "BITM at Wendover".

Wendover Canal Festival 28-30 May 1994

Friday evening and the rendezvous - the beer tent on the Festival site. Accomodation at New Mill Playschool, with the Chairman and handlers enjoying all the comforts of home on the boat. (It makes a great tea stop though.)

Saturday dawned with 20 volunteers present. Despite the forecast it rained and was unseasonably cool. The work consisted of erecting the Wendover Arm Trust's tent on the gate, the WRG Market stall, plus plenty of fencing, miles of barrier tape and signing. In the evening everyone took a turn at guarding the beer tent entrance from uninvited guests. The Chairman staying on duty all evening without getting his free drink!

On Sunday the sun made an appearance heralding a day that brought early sunburn followed by showers and widespread goose-pimples! With the public descending on the site from early morning, our great car park plan swung into action; and despite an early hiccup when people parked in the exit road, it went very well. Meanwhile the BITM stall was offering everything from a single table tennis racquet to a waterproof clock for the shower. (This item did not sell! Any offers to Sue Burchett.) The children were queuing to 'pluck a duck' from our paddling pool. By all accounts it was the best first-day attendance the Festival had ever seen.

Monday, and this time no respite for the sunburn. The car park kept filling until we were reduced to running up and down the lines looking for spaces. Judging from the comments received from some Trust members and the Police it was a job well done. 'Pluck a duck' reached its peak when Sue allowed a client to fall face first across the pool. The sobbing, dripping little girl was finally consoled with a handful of 'wiggly worm' sweeties! The weekend was rounded off by dismantling all our hard work.

All in all a successful weekend. This is the first experience the Trust has had of a WRG group on site, and we hope to be invited back next year.

Kevin Angus

Dave Wedd adds: The Trust have thanked us all for our help in making the event run the smoothest ever, especially those who arrived early on Friday, and stayed late to clear up. Steve Paice, in particular, worked through from Friday morning to Tuesday evening. Trust Chairman Roger Lewis said that the two biggest improvements over last year were our presence, and their two-way radios. They would like us back again, so that's another date to pencil in the diary.

WAT really are very grateful to BITM WRG for all their hard work at the Festival. For those who might be wondering, their Chairman is a dog! No I'm not being derogatory, he is actually a beautiful German Shepherd, and he looks set to stay in the Chair for as long as he wants to, because nobody seems to want to oppose him. I wonder why!

BOAT TRIPS

Rod Saunders, who does so much for the Trust (including donating the big holiday prize for the Grand Draw each year), has again come up trumps.

He has very kindly offered to let us loose on one of his day boats on **Sunday 9th October**. This will be an opportunity for members who do not normally get the chance to see the canal from the water. We will be setting out from Bulbourne (by the Grand Junction Arms), and cruising down to the start of the Arm.

Please note that space is limited, so don't be upset if you can't get on board the moment you arrive - and if you bring a coach party you can't all come on at once. However, we hope to be able to take lots of people on throughout the day, and look forward to seeing you there as well. If there is a bit of a wait we feel sure the Grand Junction will not mind if you pop in for a bit!

A 10 MONTH FESTIVAL?

What is different about July and August? Of course, it's holiday time, there is a chance of good boating weather, and England may not lose by a whole innings at Lords. But these delights pale to an anaemic insignificance compared to the fact that this year's Wendover Canal Festival is over, and work for the next will not start until September! Not that the long hours spent corresponding, phoning, meeting, and generally planning each festival is a chore, but it is nice to have a summer break.

The two month rest is necessary for Trust members and the Festival Committee to forget the 'never again' comments, made when at a low ebb on a wet afternoon, struggling to complete the festival site in a near gale.

Some time in September, when immediate memories of the festival and all the excitement have faded, the inevitable phone call comes to summon a Committee Meeting for the next event.

Focal point of this meeting is when committee members 'volunteer' for next year's tasks. The routine is invariable: *'We all thought you did a great job last time as Site Manager/Entertainment Officer/Bookings Manager/Treasurer.'* Roughly translated this means: *'Please take it on again, as we don't want to get lumbered!'* This is also the point when we agree that we are too few in number, and there is too much work for such a small number of people. More committed volunteers needed - surely there must be others willing to take part? Collective thought is given to who we can inveigle or coerce onto the committee.

As Autumn slips into Winter, the first bookings arrive for space in the Craft Marquee. About half of the craft exhibitors come back the following year and will have already reserved their favourite positions in the big marquee. During the winter months, new exhibitors who have learnt of the Festival by word of mouth or by personal invitation ask for booking forms and information. They want to know all the details before parting with their hard earned cash several months in advance of the event.

Much of the discussion in committee concerns the entertainment for the public as part of the Festival, or for boaters as part of the Rally. Entertainment cost has to be weighed against attraction value, usually without first hand experience of the entertainment in question. *'Was the Children's Puppet Show at £x better value than the clown at £y, 'Is it worth accepting that offer of a money-making side-show for us to run ourselves, when we know we have too few helpers anyway?'* Boardroom battles and strategic thinking in Big Business are as nothing compared to a typical Wendover Festival Committee Meeting!

As time passes, a comfortable sense of confidence grows. *'After all, we've done it all before, haven't we?'* When the days lengthen again this gives way to a mild attack of Spring Panic. No-one remembered to order the loos, the main entertainment band has cancelled, advance bookings seem terribly slow, and we have still sold no advertising space in the Programme.

Come April, and panic subsides under the surface, covered by a veneer of confidence. *'It'll be OK on the day, it always has been so far.'* The realisation soon dawns however that the Festival is ONLY THREE WEEKS AWAY! A flurry of phone calls, letters and visits are superimposed on the daily routine. Now all those jobs discussed so long ago in the calm atmosphere of pre-planning and forethought might just get done at the last minute, if we hurry ...

By now, thousands of pounds have been spent or committed. However, the difference between a healthy injection into Trust funds from a successful Festival, and a slightly better than break even rests mostly with the weather. *'We did remember to send off the cheque for our advertising, didn't we?'* So far (the 1994 Festival was the 5th one) the weather has been kind to us. It has kindly ensured we get the chance to experience all its varieties: wind, rain, hail, as well as (mostly) sunshine. Anyway, we are committed now, so off we go in our shorts and T shirts (with wellies and sou'westers at the ready) to turn an empty field into a Festival site.

Seemingly endless miles of fencing need erecting, the man from the Water Co. wants to know where the tap is, we can't find the power cables from last year, all those chairs need bringing out of storage, and did anyone remember to bring the signs we kept from last year's event? The marquee and the specially built bridge over the canal seem to appear as if by magic. Boats arrive, caravans take residence in the field, the PA system coughs into life, and we are ready.

In June, when it's all over and the foot blisters have begun to heal, we all get together as a committee to agree what was good and what we could do better next time. Next time? Please don't ask me, I need a couple of months off first ...

Seriously, we are always keen to have new faces on our Festival Committee; you don't have to be a boat owner, or even a member of WAT. If you have a particular skill or ability and want to get involved, we would be happy to hear from you.

Bob Wheal

TOWPATH TALK

- ◆ It can hardly have escaped your notice that this issue lacks the normal high standard of presentation. I do apologise for this - circumstances have conspired against me and I am reduced to producing this on borrowed machinery, without the Vice-Chairman's usual expert desk-top publishing help. Would anybody else like to take over as Editor next year, or has anybody got a fancy 386 or 486 computer they don't want which I can 'store for them? Answers on a postcard please.
- ◆ A moving moment at the Festival when the Grand Draw was taking place. As the 6th prize was being announced, a lady came into the arena saying she thought she heard her name called. Investigation proved her right - she'd won the first prize of the canal holiday - and she promptly burst into tears! It turned out she has not had a holiday in years - nice that it was so appropriate, and doubly so in that she runs Tring Pet Supplies and had kindly donated loads of prizes that very afternoon.
- ◆ On Sunday 18th September, a rather special journey starts at Gas Street Basin in Birmingham. A group of enthusiastic volunteers from The Pepper Foundation are setting out for London - horsedrawn. Captain Cargo has lent 'Australia' and arranged a cargo, and with a little luck they should arrive in London 11 days later. The Pepper Foundation raises money for charity, and is hoping to sponsor their own paediatric hospice nurse this year. Unfortunately they cannot get a sponsor for the horse, so if anybody there has some cash to spare...! I am lucky enough to be joining the boat on the 24th/25th when we should pass the Arm, so look out for us if you're around.
- ◆ Congratulations once again to WAT member Antony Askew, who has won the Tom Rolt Award at the IWA National for the second year running as Editor of Dunstable & District Boat Club's monthly journal. I understand he is standing down from that post now, so why not help me pressure him into taking over this newsletter and making this an award winner too.
- ◆ No article on a parish this time. I had intended to write about Tring, but somehow the pages got filled up and since Festival articles would hardly be relevant kept over to another issue, I rather think that Tring will still be there, and the history should not change much. So, next time you might get Tring, provided you don't all write articles for me to publish instead!





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