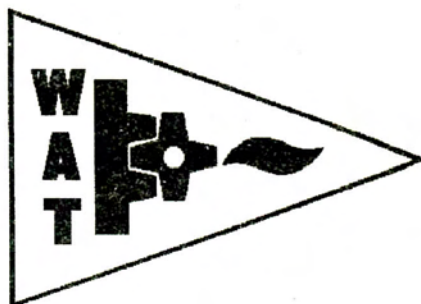


Wendover Arm News

The newsletter of the Wendover Arm Trust



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THE WENDOVER ARM TRUST

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

As I write these notes we are enjoying some beautiful Springlike (almost Summer) weather. I have my fingers crossed in the hope that this climate will stay with us until the end of next week when we will be immersed in this year's Wendover Canal Festival at Tring.

Weather permitting, I think that we shall have the best Festival to date. As usual, the small band of enthusiasts who form the Festival Committee have been beavering away throughout the winter with the result that we will have an even greater variety of exhibits, attractions and entertainment than in previous years. It is good to know that, although we will not have nearly as many caravanners as we have had in the past, the number of boats booked in is more than we have had in the past few years.

Since the last newsletter report we have had several very productive meetings with British Waterways which have been inspired by the news that BW had found elusive Tenancy Agreements and Mike Chessher's efforts to raise money from the Millennium Fund. These meetings have resulted in British Waterways becoming Corporate Members and we, for our part, have co-opted onto the board Chris

Mitchell - the local Waterways Manager. I look forward to Chris's assistance, especially with regard to convincing other parties to support us with funds.

We have recently had meetings with Officers of both Buckinghamshire County Council and Aylesbury Vale District Council and I hope that next week's Festival will give us an opportunity to impress both the elected Councillors and their Officers of our need for financial support for restoration.

Following my urgent requests for more help at our monthly 'jungle clearing' meetings on the Arm, April saw an excellent turnout and nearly all of the bushes which had been chopped down earlier in the winter were burnt up, together with a vast number of roots being pulled out. Many thanks to all of you who did turn up on April 2nd to produce an excellent end to our winter activities.

I look forward to seeing you all at the Festival and, please don't forget, we need all of your help to repeat the successes of previous years.

Roger Lewis

P.S. I am still looking for my 'Post Driver'!!!

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

With Barry away at the moment, and editorial planning not quite all it should be, there is no report from our Membership Secretary this time.

Our apologies to those who have joined recently - your names will appear in print next issue when the editor has his act together! However, you know who you are, so may we welcome you now to the Trust.

Membership now stands at 429.

We appealed to you last year to upgrade your single memberships to family where appropriate. Quite a few did so, and if you have not done so yet perhaps you would think about it again now. The difference in subscription is just £3 a year, and it helps to increase our perceived support, which in turn helps with persuading would-be sponsors to support us.

Equally, do continue to spread the word amongst your friends - the cheapest and best publicity we can get is through you, the members.

COMMITTEE MATTERS

Meetings were held on 22nd March and 19th April. Also special meeting held on 12th April. No meeting scheduled for May, due to Festival commitments, but there might be one at short notice if the Millennium Commission springs something unexpected on us. Next scheduled meeting June 21st

March

BW advise that remaining boundary position questions at Little Tring have now been agreed with former occupant.

Additional information has been filed re Banner Homes development at Castle Park, Wendover. To be followed up with Aylesbury Vale Planning Dept. To ensure not detrimental to restoration to full navigation.

A letter has been received asking for information regarding an old bridle or foot path linking Weston Turville reservoir and the canal towpath. Committee knew nothing of it - can any member shed any light?

Contact made with BBONT (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Naturalist's Trust) suggesting we jointly consider the best way to manage the wildlife interest during the restoration.

Mike Chessher reported on latest news of the Millennium Commission application. First stage successfully passed - see Mike's article elsewhere for an up to date position.

Display boards to be renovated with clear plastic facings to protect new display material - to be ready for the Festival.

12th April (Special Meeting)

As the Millennium Commission application progresses, it is apparent that we will get nowhere without a more formalised relationship with British Waterways. Whilst the Commission are perfectly happy to deal directly with the Trust as the leading party, they need reassurance that the landowners are fully committed to the project. The appointment of a BW representative to the managing body would be a clear demonstration of a joint commitment to the scheme.

BW have confirmed that they wish to join the Trust, and the meeting unanimously agreed to co-opt Chris Mitchell, the BW Waterway Manager for our area, as a director of the Trust.

19th April

Waterways World are running an article on the Arm in the June issue (out mid-May). This has been offered to the Trust to sell at the Festival, on a sale or return basis, which will help to boost funds and add interest to the Trust stand.

Waterways World have also kindly offered a year's subscription as a raffle prize, which will be the main prize in the 'boater's raffle' to be drawn on the Sunday night at the Festival.

Progress on the Millennium Commission bid continues, with Mike reporting on the standing of the second phase of the application procedure. (See his separate report.)

Other items mostly concerned sundry correspondence and regular business - all efforts now focused on the Festival and the restoration plans.



"I'm sure we can win £1.5m from the National Lottery without even buying a ticket"

THE 6th ANNUAL WENDOVER CANAL FESTIVAL

In case you've not been reading your newsletters, don't look in the local papers, don't subscribe to Waterways World or Canal and Riverboat, chuck away the informative publications of BW, haven't been through Tring and looked up at the banner across the High Street, never read posters, ignore handbills, and miss the announcements on a number of local radio stations - there's another Wendover Canal Festival taking place!

You know the formula by now. This is the bit where we **IMPLORE** you to come and give us an hour of your time. The committee consists of just 17 people. That may sound quite a lot, but when you consider that building the site takes from Wednesday to Saturday, the public swarm all over us on Sunday and Monday, it all comes down again on Tuesday, and the planning and organisation has been going on since October, you can see that 17 people are just a weeny bit tired!

We are very lucky to have the assistance of BITM WRG again this year. They do a wonderful job helping with constructing and demolishing, and ran the car parking immaculately last year as well as doing lots of odd jobs all weekend.



T.H.A.M.E.S. have also helped in past years, and will again be there for the public days this year. A number of other individuals have also contacted us to offer their help - and still we plead for more!

The Festival is our big public event - and it is the time when YOU, the members, can really make a positive contribution to the Trust. The first, and easy way, is just by being there. The second, and more important way, is by helping. Graeme Lockhart is organising teams of helpers to sell the tickets, give out programmes, run the bouncy castle and other fund-raisers, and other vital jobs. Your help for just 60 minutes will be a great help to your Trust. The more helpers we get, the easier it is on everybody concerned, and the better it looks when we go cap-in-hand to the bodies who give grant aid as we can say that 50/100/200 people have put in a positive input over the year.

So, don't wait to be asked face-to-face. This is a personal appeal to YOU to come along, make yourself known to us, and lend a hand.

Now, if you are still reading this, here is what you can enjoy at the Festival. On Saturday night (tickets in advance only - at no extra cost!) Bishopswyc will be entertaining us with a barn dance (ceilidh? - I'm not sure I know the difference and I booked them!). On Sunday night (again those tickets in advance - still at no extra cost!) Mr Kite's Benefit Band are playing. Hot from their last tour appearance in Berkhamsted High Street on V.E. night, where an estimated 500 people foot-tapped, danced and sang the evening away, this is not to be missed.

The daytime programmes are packed with goodies. On both Sunday and Monday, Professor Poppycock will be presenting genuine Punch and Judy shows, Him & Me will be holding juggling workshops, Carts & Crafts will demonstrate how a boat horse is harnessed (complete with genuine live horse), the bouncy castle will be bouncing (so long as somebody comes along to help!), people will be sticking to the 'bar-fly' wall, and you can try to bankrupt us by riding the unrideable bicycle. In the arena, there will be jugglers, Tring Silver Band, Old Dunstablians Male Voice Choir, Wheelers and Dealers showing how

to square dance, and Steve Barton the escapologist risking more than his reputation. And to keep the children quiet, Marmon Magic & Co will be mixing and mingling with magic, balloon-modelling and all the other things the kids love. And that's just on Sunday!

On Monday, Jenny Wren will be there to entertain the children with a puppet show, and Big Foot and Furry Foot will be all over the place with their unique way of entertaining the youngsters. The Blue Angel Majorettes will be strutting their stuff around the site and the arena. Don't forget to bring Fido, Rover, Spot or whatever more original name your dog has - we've even got entertainment for him/her in our ever popular Novelty Dog Event (the event is the novelty, not the dogs!). And, something you don't see every day - a custard pie fight that you can join in!

There will be the usual very high quality craft show with a wide variety of different crafts on display and to buy. A number of trade stands (some on the water) will be there - ranging from real 1950's Juke boxes to rope fenders, canal ware, plants, and goodness knows what else. Several charities, a children's fairground, a range of different food vendors, stationary engines and classic cars add to the colour and appeal.

In case you love acquiring a bargain, or want to clear your attic/garage/shed of some of that 'to good to throw out' junk, don't miss the Car Boot Sales on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning - no charge to buyers, just £5 a pitch to sellers. In previous years some superb items have been found at our car boots, and vendors seem to have been pleased with the profits they've made.

Now, how can you not come with all that going on? You're right, there is no way you can miss it, so we'll see you there - at New Mill, just follow the signposts - sometime between now and Tuesday May 30th. It will not break the bank - adult tickets are £3 and children £1.

Don't forget, let us know you are there and please give us a helping hand.

FROM THE PAST

While manning the Trust stand at the Wendover VE celebrations earlier this month, a kind gentleman approached us and offered some old copies of the Grand Union Canal Society Newsletter. I'm afraid I didn't get his name, but if you are reading this sir - thank you very much.

Looking through it is amazing how the same concerns and issues seem to be relevant then and now. I thought it might be interesting to reproduce some snippets (GUCS - please don't claim copyright).

The following are taken from issue number 64, dated October 1980. The cover of this issue has a photograph of two smartly uniformed naval types, with the caption 'BWB patrol men check a few licences while surveying the Wendover Arm Event'.

From 'Round the Table': Once again the committee can report a busy time what with taking part at the Boxmoor Rally and organising our own Wendover Arm Event. While the idea of setting up a special fund to raise money to pay for the Wendover Arm to be reopened has not been discussed further, this is likely to be raised again in the New Year.

From 'From the Chair':Also we hope to see all members, both new and old, spending a few Sunday mornings with us on the Wendover Arm clearance project. It won't cost, won't hurt, but it will do you and the Wendover Arm a lot of good.

From 'Third Annual Event a Great Success for GUCS': Sunday September 21 saw the GUCS' third annual Wendover Arm Event - the

yearly happening designed to publicise the existence of the Arm to the public and to show the British Waterways Board and others that we care about and are concerned for the future of this 6 1/2 mile, lock-free waterway. Nearly 20 boats attended our event The day didn't start off to well, however, as dark clouds rolled towards us, gathering speed and finally showering us all morning. The weather cleared for the afternoon and turned a dark day into a bright sunny one. The boat trips .. along the Tring summit .. provided the passengers with an idyllic trip tea and ploughman's lunches laid on. If the afternoon trip was interesting for the passengers then the evening trip was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. The passengers boarded and waited

patiently as Gemini turned round and mated with her new butty. We were then off the dangerous and seemingly crocodile-infested waters of the notorious Wendover Arm. The passengers were both enthralled and saddened to see the remains of the old narrowboats as we crawled by, occasionally bumping into a submerged gunwale. The reason for our slow progress was that the summit water level was down by about nine inches due to a paddle having been left open a week before!

The end of this article lists the boats which took part in the event - noticeable were quite a few of our regular visitors and helpers at WAT Festivals, including Aramis (our Chairman's boat).

ADVANCE NOTICE

1995 Annual General Meeting

You are cordially invited to the Annual General Meeting of the Wendover Arm Trust, to be held on Wednesday 18th October, at Aston Clinton Sports and Social Club.

All members welcome.

Further details in the next newsletter, but put the date in your filofax now!



Aston Clinton

House '95

PARISHES OF THE ARM

Having started this series around halfway along the Arm (Buckland), then gone to each end (Wendover and Tring), we come back to the middle to look at Aston Clinton. The research for this was interesting - plenty has been written about the church, and plenty about the Rothschilds (yet again), but to find anything concrete about the village itself has proved difficult. So, I apologise now if the information is a bit sketchy - and if you know anything else of interest do please write and let me know.

The picture shows the church of course! Like the others in the series, a limited edition print is available through the Trust. The complete series will be on show at the Festival, and we will be taking orders there, for sets of notelets and/or cards featuring the pictures, at the WAT stand.

No. 4 - ASTON CLINTON

Sprawling along the A41, this former coaching stop on the important London to Coventry route has grown considerably in recent years with a number of new housing estates being built. The bulk of the village lies to the north of the A41, although the church and the large park are both on the south side. The

reason for the one-sided development becomes apparent when one stands in the park itself. Just a field away is the RAF airfield at Halton, and also the Green Park estate - much easier to persuade farmers to give up fields on the other side of the main road!

The old coach stop was the Bell Inn - now more likely to be a stopping place for a Rolls-Royce or Jaguar than a coach. The Bell itself is north of the road, but it boasts a conference centre on the other side which is also much used for weddings - often with a helicopter to whisk the happy couple away afterwards from the inn's own helipad. The Bell is widely recognised for its fine wine cellars - reputedly well over 500 different wines on the list at any one time. I am told that, when the business was being built up by Gerard Harris, the father of the present owner, the curious practice of bringing in wine from the new pressings in France as early as possible began; of course today everybody cashes in on 'Beaujolais Nouveau' day.

Green Park, which borders the Wendover Arm between Stable Bridge and Hare Lane Bridge, was originally known as Enston Manor. Shown as belonging to the Salisbury family in the Domesday Book, it had passed by 1139 to William de Clinton. The present day name of Aston Clinton must therefore date

from around this time - the 'Aston' being a corruption of 'Eastern'.

The last owner of the Manor was General Lake, a former Commander-in-Chief of India, who died in 1848. The estate was bought a few years later by Anthony de Rothschild, who promptly demolished the old house and built a square pile mansion (not really in keeping with the rest of the Rothschild grand houses in the area, which are noted for their architectural splendour. In 1964 Buckinghamshire County Council acquired the estate, knocked down the house once again, and built a residential Youth Service Training Centre, and today this is still what it is used for.

The church is first mentioned in the Pipe Rolls of 1197-9, although one can assume there was at least one church on the site previous to that. Richard, Archdeacon of Ely was paid 'certain sums out of the forfeited estates of William de Clinton'. This forfeiture seems to have been a regular occurrence in those far off times; on this occasion due to de Clinton's adherence to Richard II. One wonders how long some of today's press barons would have lasted in those days! The last Vicar appointed by the de Clintons was in 1243. Henry V re-established the Lordship of the Manor, which was granted to the Montacute (Montague) family - their first appointee as Vicar arrived in 1318.

In the 13th century, the people were obliged to attend Mass every Sunday, and on Holy Days. They would have stood on the rush strewn floor of the Nave, facing the altar, with the men on the right and the women on the left. Around 1270 the South Aisle was added, with the North Aisle being built, along with the Clerestory, in 1340. The Clerestory supported a flat roof over the Nave, which was destroyed in the Restoration. Fortunately the shaped lights high up in the Clerestory survived, and the pink panes there today are the original 14th century lights - the glass is invaluable.

The South Aisle was widened in the first half of the 15th century, and the South Porch added. The original font stood at the east end of the South Aisle (the font today is by the North door). This old font, which was vase shaped, of veined marble on a pedestal, fell into disuse, and was removed to the churchyard. From there it found its way to the Vicarage garden, where it was used as a geranium pot; presumably another incumbent was no gardener, for it was later found in a ditch by the churchyard, whence it was removed by a layman to adorn his rockery! Eventually it was restored to the church, but is not the same font as is used today.

The inside of the church has some particularly good carving. The stone masons, who accurately portrayed

the Lord of the Manor, and who knows who else, were paid the princely sum of 6d per day for their skills. The chancel, with adornments, was built by Sir William de Montacute, 2nd Earl of Salisbury, as thanks for his preservation at the Battle of Crecy in 1346.

Murals, calculated to inspire fear in the parishioners, covered the walls of the church at one time, but were plastered over in Cromwell's day. One remnant can be seen today, which was found during renovation work in 1932, on the South wall by the organ.

The bells were given up in the Reformation - the parish notes showing that £21 was still owing on one of them. The current peal of 5 bells was made by Mears and Son

of London in 1806. Whilst not the original set, they have been recast at least once so one can imagine that some of the original metal might still be in them somewhere.

One claim to fame for Aston Clinton which I am reliably informed is true, but which I have been unable to verify, is that the first Aston Martin was built there. It seems a chap called Martin, who was a keen hill climber, built a special car to use on the well known Aston Hill climb in the 1930's, and to make the name sound a bit more professional, added the Aston to his own name. Fortunately he wasn't called Villa I suppose!

Richard House

FUNDING THE FUTURE

It seems an age since I wrote breathlessly, telling you of our proposal to the Millennium Commission for restoration funding. Come to think of it, it was back on the 8th of February when I delivered the 3 page proposal form to the Commission, accompanied by a two page letter - all that was permitted under the rules. Here I am, sitting in the May sunshine, wondering where March and April went.

Well, as you may have heard, the Millennium Commission had over 1400 proposals and just under 700 of the applicants, including the Trust, were invited to submit full applications. Of that 700, less than 450 managed to get their applications in by the deadline of 30th April. I would hardly dare be writing in the Newsletter if our own 3½ lb. worth had not been delivered on Friday 28th April.

So we are still in there with a chance. Soon after the Festival we will know whether we have reached the next round. If so, we will be involved in a detailed appraisal of the project (DAR) and site visits by the Commission.

We have applied to the Commission for £1.45 million. This is half the estimated cost of restoring the canal as far as Green Park, Aston Clinton. (Between Stablebridge Road and "the narrows") The project includes bridgeworks at Little Tring and the A41 crossing and a manually operated swing bridge at Buckland Wharf. There are also two foot bridges over the dry section. A lot of the money will go into lining the canal channel, as one thing is certain, "the leaky canal" must leak no more!

One of the major problems could be timing the work to fit in with the construction of the Aston Clinton bypass, especially as the road, like the canal is "awaiting funding". Unlike the road, however, the canal must seek 50% of its funding from "partnership" sources and the battle is now on to find willing "partners".

I said right back at the beginning that we could not restore the canal without the whole hearted support of British Waterways. I am delighted to report that we have that support and also the promise of money which would otherwise have to be spent on

repairing or replacing the pipeline.

Whilst it's nail biting time with the Millennium Commission, a similar situation exists with English Partnerships, who fund Derelict Land Grants. They are considering a preliminary application and we should know soon whether we can put in a full application for the £600,000 we have requested.

We will also be re-applying to the Environmental Action Fund and it is essential to have the "partnership" of the four local authorities through whose area the arm passes. Progress here is slow, one of the problems being that the councils can only commit funds one year at a time and not in advance over the four year period necessary. We also need to make progress on funding future maintenance.

So if you know any councillors, please use your powers of persuasion on them. Make sure they appreciate that the restored canal will be a very visible, durable and uncontroversial way of celebrating the start of a new millennium. - And what great value for money too! To attract this major funding to the area, we are asking each of the four local authorities to contribute only 1.75% of the total capital cost.

Mike Chessher

RESTORATION REPORT

Thank you to all who turned out for the last official workparty of the year on April 2nd.

More than 25 members came to Drayton Beauchamp to haul away the 250 yards of cut wood in the bed, and feed the bonfires. It was very heartening to see such a good turnout, and at the end of the day the area looked really good. As the piles moved, the root-pulling gangs were able to get in, and whilst we didn't count the number removed, there will be a lot less trees growing there next year.

Unfortunately, a half-planned session on May 6th did not materialise. I must confess that I was otherwise engaged, and with a number of the other regulars also unable to make it, the couple who could have decided that perhaps their own gardens deserved a bit of attention for once!

We mentioned last time that we were hoping to get a session in on the basin at Wendover over the summer. So far plans have not got

any further - when I was walking down there recently it seemed that actually the basin looked pretty tidy, apart from an isolated traffic cone right over on the far side. We will keep an eye on it (the basin, not the traffic cone in particular), and if a tidy up becomes necessary will arrange one. Of course, if you notice a deterioration there, or anywhere else along the Arm, just let us know and something will be done about it.

Is it too early to put a date in your diaries? Hopefully not, so go and get them right now, and write in October 1st for the next workparty, and while you're about it put down November 5th as well. If we can get a really good turnout in October, we can leave the burning to November, and have the biggest bonfire in the area. See you then, and in the meantime enjoy the summer, and get your tools sharpened ready!

Richard House

Disclaimer

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

Which Way to Wendover ?

V	K	F	R	J	B	L	H	W	G	L	D	U	M	P
T	O	W	P	A	T	H	F	I	S	H	H	D	H	J
G	G	L	S	J	F	L	O	W	Y	R	C	Y	X	P
S	N	I	U	U	E	E	T	R	U	S	T	R	U	X
U	N	I	O	N	S	G	J	H	W	R	I	M	E	O
M	K	K	R	C	T	D	R	O	A	I	P	G	R	P
P	R	N	O	T	I	E	R	P	T	L	D	B	K	A
D	O	G	W	I	V	R	E	L	L	I	T	E	Z	T
Z	W	R	R	O	A	D	L	R	R	O	M	O	S	E
Z	V	A	D	N	L	I	S	B	O	Z	C	M	N	G
F	B	N	T	A	M	L	S	T	N	T	S	K	U	U
R	E	D	E	E	F	R	A	H	W	K	S	A	D	S
W	X	S	R	Q	R	O	P	H	N	L	T	E	I	P
X	K	R	B	Y	B	H	Y	A	S	A	Z	L	R	C
V	P	Q	H	V	H	V	B	O	F	W	J	G	T	U

Arm
Bridge
Feeder
Grand
Lock
Perch
Restore
Tiller
Union
Wendover

Banks
Bypass
Festival
Halton
Mill
Pitch
Shallow
Towpath
Volunteer
Wharf

Basin
Dredge
Fish
Junction
Narrows
Pump
Summit
Tring
Walk
Wides

Boat
Dry
Flow
Leak
Party
RAF
Sump
Trust
Water
Work

OK, what other subject would you expect in a Wordsearch in a Wendover Arm Newsletter? Anyway, it'll keep you busy for a few minutes perhaps, and there's a prize of a bottle of wine for the first correct entry out of the hat! (prize to be collected at the Festival!). Solution next issue.

TOWPATH TALK

- ❑ What's in a name? Well, judging by a query to the Secretary recently, quite a lot. Ian had a call from a group asking for details of the Trust, as they were compiling a contact list of 'missing limb' persons. It seems that while we associate the arms with canals, others, less waterway-minded associate them with shoulders! It takes all sorts, doesn't it?

- ❑ You might have noticed that the envelope bringing your Wendover Arm News this time is hand-written. The reason for this is that your editor failed to think ahead. (My excuse is that I've been doing so much Festival stuff that the mind has closed down more than usual.) With our Membership Secretary working in Denmark, I have to book a label run from him well in advance to catch him on one of his weekends home. I forgot! So, if the postman was late with your News, he probably couldn't read my writing after I had addressed the first couple of hundred. Next time I shall think ahead!

- ❑ It was with great regret that we heard that one of our most supportive members would be leaving the area. Roger Davis, who has contributed in so many ways, currently does the printing of the Wendover Arm News for us at very good rates. This will be the last issue which he will be able to do however, so yet again we are on the lookout for somebody who can help out. Does your company have a reprographics facility (that's posh for a big photocopier!) we could use? Please, if you can help get in touch with the editor and save the rest of my hair turning grey.

- ❑ Last issue I bravely said that I would do this one on my own having mastered the new WAT computer. Well, I haven't! Yet again I must thank Ian Packe for helping out - the more so as he is in the middle of sorting out all the boater's packs and other essentials for the Festival. We really do need more help with this Festival - please think seriously about it and volunteer yourselves for next year to take some of the massive burden off the few.

11

11

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