



WENDOVER ARM NEWS

Newsletter of the Wendover Arm Trust



Issue No. 45
November 2004

Price £1
Free to members

From the Wendover Arm Trust Articles of Association:

To promote the restoration of the Wendover Arm of the Grand Union Canal linking the town of Wendover in Buckinghamshire to the Grand Union Canal at Bulbourne Hertfordshire (hereinafter called 'The Waterway' which shall include all waterways, buildings, works and structures associated therewith) to good and navigable order and to maintain and improve The Waterway for the use and benefit of the public.

To promote the fullest use of The Waterway by all forms of waterborne traffic and for all forms of local amenity, tourist and recreational and water-related activities for the benefit of the public

To promote, and educate the public in, the history, use and associated wildlife of canals and inland waterways generally and of The Waterway in particular.

To restore, reconstruct, preserve and maintain canals and inland waterways and works and buildings auxiliary thereto generally provided that such objects shall be carried out in a manner beneficial to the public and recognised by the law of England as charitable.

Contributions to Wendover Arm News

Contributions are welcome on any topic related to the Wendover Arm, its construction, history, wildlife and restoration.

Letters, articles, photographs, drawings and maps are acceptable; all material will be acknowledged, credited if used and returned.

Please send any contributions to:

John Savage
WAT Newsletter Editor
16 Lakeside
TRING
Hertfordshire
HP23 5HN

Disclaimer

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

EDITORIAL

On 7th November an historic milestone was reached in the restoration of our canal when construction work on Phase I was completed. The final task was the construction of the bund beyond the winding hole at Little Tring; this point will be the new head of navigation until Phase II is completed, scheduled for 2010.

The work completed is to the highest standard and is a credit to our stalwart volunteer labour force and the design and leadership of our Restoration Director, Roger Leishman.

Apart from some minor tidying up and the building of the brick plinth to take the plaque commemorating the Tim Wilkinson bequest, all that now remains for Phase I is to let the water in, and plans for this have been made. Full details are given in the Restoration Report in this issue.

Since the last edition of 'Wendover Arm News', our "Walk an Arm's Length" event took place, on 12th September. It was a great success, exceeding the expectations of the organising committee who are to be congratulated on a splendid and original day. It was particularly heartening to experience the tremendous goodwill that the event brought out. Local businesses contributed money, Trust members made available their gardens, members and many others made magnificent efforts to get sponsorship (and get the money out of people afterwards!), R.A.F. Halton came up trumps with their wonderful marshals and the ladies at Halton Village provided first class refreshments.

The Chairmen of Wendover and Halton Parish Council together with with Mayor of Tring joined in and our Patron, David Suchet, made time in his busy schedule to give us maximum support which in turn led to good media coverage, including television, a first for the Trust. What was planned as a one-off has therefore already been made into an annual event!

Finally, we have made the 2005 Festival Grand Draw tickets available earlier this year to facilitate even more sales! (The Draw has been steadily increasing its contribution in recent years). Please do all you can to maximise sales and let's have another record amount raised for further restoration.

[Front Cover Photograph: A distinctive feature on the Arm is Heygates flour mill at Gamnel, Tring. It used to generate traffic for the canal as evidenced in the article in this edition.]

WALK AN ARM'S LENGTH FOOT NOTES

- Four thousand Invitation / Registration leaflets were printed; about 150 people walked on the day
- The *fastest* (that we know about): a father and daughter who walked the return leg in two hours. Please tell us who you are.
- A *highlight* of the walk was the splendid refreshments at Halton Village Hall, provided by Patricia and friends from Halton Church. Not just tea and coffee, but scones, chocolate cake, sausage rolls, fruit buns



Greatest asset of the day: the 14 young graduates from RAF Halton, who escorted walkers safely across the roads, and, at Gamnel Bridge, stopped the traffic to enable them to do so. Having just completed their recruit training, they were about to move on to their specialist trade training. Delightful to talk to, good-humoured and extremely helpful, these youngsters are a credit to the RAF, and the walk would not have been the same without them.

Iain Ferguson, Tring Town Council's Information Officer, gets his passport stamped by the RAF Marshals at Stablelane Bridge, Aston Clinton.

- The *youngest* to walk the whole length was Luke Pearce, aged 3.
- *Luckiest* incident: David and Sheila Suchet being able to lead the walk. All along, David, the Trust's Patron, said that he wanted to do it, work commitments permitting. As the time drew nearer, he was in the middle of rehearsals for a play, and it looked promising. Two weeks beforehand, it was close to definite. Then on the Thursday, he almost had to cancel.
- *Best media coverage* for the Arm – this is the first time that TV has attended one of our events. Mind you, this was because it suited their agenda, and the clip they used was of David Suchet recommending walking as excellent exercise.
- The poor *weather* forecast was contradicted by the bright morning sunshine (it did rain a little later in the day).
- *Historic event* – recorded here for posterity. Chairman of Wendover Parish Council Richard Gridley, Chairman of Halton Parish Council Michael Blundell, and Mayor of Tring, canal boat owner Denise Rance, all met at the start of the walk to celebrate their mutual interest in the canal which runs through all their local areas.



L -R, David Suchet, Denise Rance, Richard Gridley and Michael Blundell, before setting out from Wharf Road, Wendover.

- Biggest *surprise* of the day was Richard Gridley walking the whole length of the Arm. He had planned to go only as far as the Wendover boundary – a mere few hundred yards.
- Caroline Watsham's *fun map* shows the Wendover Arm Canal as you've never seen it before! Busy with details, and helpful indicators, Caroline is our local Richard Scarry (if you don't know Richard Scarry, please ask a young child). The T-shirt with the walk logo (the boot) proved popular (see photographs) too, in all sizes.
- Lots of walkers entered the *quizzes* to test their powers of observation, and found it great fun. The overall winner was Nick Wolfe, who won the meal for two at the Mela Restaurant in Aston Clinton. Runners-up in the adult quiz were: Hazell Powell, Caroline Rourke and the Barker family, with John and Tina Wood second in the photo competition. Emily Barker won first prize in the Children's quiz, and the Children's collection winners were: Under 5: Grace Rourke, 5-6 years: Thomas Findley, 7-8 years Ellen Phillips; 9-10 years Katie Findlay and Over 11s: Edward Corble. All these, and the other runners-up, have been sent their prizes.
- The *most unreasonable* were the motorists at Gamnel Bridge. Just because the RAF were stopping cars to let walkers across (the only safe way to do this on the steeply humped bridge), they then expected them to act as traffic wardens and manage the flow of traffic all the time. Some were actually rude and offensive.
- And how much money was raised? Just over £3,500, including gift aid.
- *Greatest* fundraiser was Johanna Wheal, who contributed £270. She was followed by Michael Joseph with £229 and John Brice with £127.
- The organising committee, Judith Watsham, Shelley Savage, Eileen McKechnie and Angus McKechnie are tremendously grateful to everyone who helped, walked, sponsored and supported this great team effort. As well as everyone mentioned

above, we won't forget the Restoration crew, who put on a dramatic show of Big Machines at Little Tring, David and Cheryl Beazley who hosted the registration desk at the Wendover end, and Adrian and Helen Murcott who did the same at Bulbourne; Jo Orth and Beryl Martin for invaluable help in manning the desks; John Colet School for the loan of the minibus; Caroline Waddams for writing the historic page on Halton; all our initial Sponsors, whose seed corn money meant that no Trust funds were used, and even the local press who did us proud with lots of coverage.



David Suchet chatting to the 'workforce' at Little Tring

- A *fantastic* effort by walkers – whose day it really was. Come again next year, and bring your friends.

Shelley Savage

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Long standing members of the Trust will know that we must hold some sort of record for not increasing our membership fees; indeed the fees have never been changed since the Trust was founded in 1989! The fees are so modest that only a minority of our members actually pay the minimum, most top up their subscriptions with a donation.

We have always taken the view that as long as the fees cover the cost of servicing the membership we are satisfied, as we have never sought to use subscription income to finance restoration.

The point is fast approaching, however, when the fees will no longer cover the basic cost of membership (which includes the newsletter, A.G.M., and administration) so the Council has decided that they will be increased from January 2005.

The new fees will then be:

Single £8

Joint/family: £12

Corporate: £20

We shall in future review the rates more frequently, and certainly more often than every 15 years!

ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS

The full Annual Report & Accounts of the Trust was presented to the A.G.M. on 27th October.

In previous years we have sent a copy to all members with the subsequent newsletter, but this is quite expensive for printing and additional postage. We think that this money would be better spent on restoration so the full report has not been included with this newsletter, although the financial statement is reproduced on the next page.

Any member who wishes to have a copy of the full report may call the Editor (01442 827702) who will be pleased to send a copy.

WENDOVER ARM TRUST
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
YEAR ENDING 5TH APRIL 2004

Income

	Notes	2003 / 2004	2002 / 2003
		£	£
Donations, Grants and Subscriptions :-			
Donations		7,640	9,772
Donations for Restoration		710	1,119
IWA Grant		22,061	13,319
Subscriptions		2,594	2,227
Tax Refunds		1,418	1,848
Book Sponsorship		750	
National Festival Donation		750	
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		35,923	28,285
Operating Activities :-			
Wendover Canal Festival - Gross receipts		68,248	50,315
Less direct costs		(33,430)	(31,914)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		34,818	18,401
Festival Draw (Gross £1747 ; Costs £72)		1,675	1,470
Sale of Goods (Gross £661 ; Costs £448)		213	89
Sale of Books (Gross £1472 ; Cost £508)		964	1512
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		37,670	21,472
Club 100		1,410	1,395
Other Fund Raising Activities		247	172
Investment Income		4,532	3,679
Total Income		<hr/>	<hr/>
		79,782	55,003

Expenditure

Fund raising and Publicity		2,364		1,862	
Wendover Arm Restoration	4	29,002		27,464	
Administration	5	2,849		2,433	
Depreciation	2	534		534	
Total Expenditure			(34,749)		(32,293)
Net Income / Expenditure			45,033		22,710
Unrestricted funds at start of year			119,082		96,372
Unrestricted funds at end of year			164,115		119,082

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

*[Photograph kindly
loaned by Michael
Blundell of Halton]*



A delightful scene at Halton Village in the period after the canal closed to navigation, but with the original bridge still place. How sad that this attractive historic structure survived for about seventy years after the closure of the canal only to succumb to destruction at that unfortunate time when anything old was fair game to be swept away. All the buildings are still there, and now protected as part of the new Halton Conservation Area. No doubt the bridge would also be so valued and protected had it survived !

The replacement of the modern flat deck concrete structure is probably the biggest challenge of the third phase of restoration.

RESTORATION REPORT

On Sunday 7th November the bund beyond the winding hole at Little Tring was built, thus completing the construction works for Phase I, a significant moment indeed!

Following good progress at the August working week, the major final push came in October when another full week's working saw all the Bentomat lining and concrete cover completed. Ready-mix pours for Phase I had commenced on 22nd April 1999, when the first wall base sections were formed and continued through the intervening 5½ years. Our volunteers must be relieved indeed to reach the end of this huge task. Their resolve is to be applauded for at times the objective now achieved must have seemed never coming.

There are some minor works still to be completed on Phase I:

- the towpath between the stop-lock and the bridge needs levelling, with surplus material placing behind the toe wall at the bridge.
- the towpath steps at the bridge are to be cleared, and the footpath on the offside requires some improvement at the foot of the brick steps.
- pavements are to be laid on the towpath under the bridge.
- 150 plants have been ordered for the towpath hedge to fill gaps and replace failures.
- a brick plinth is to be built by the winding hole to accommodate the plaque commemorating the Tim Wilkinson bequest.

So, when will we let the water in? This is provisionally scheduled to happen on Sunday 6th March 2005, and further details will be given in the next edition of 'Wendover Arm News'. The plan is that on the Thursday before, stop planks will be installed at the Pumping Station end of the stop-lock. On the Friday and Saturday the lock will be pumped out and the temporary bund at the end of the lock removed. During these two days aquatic plants, previously sourced from the Wendover end of the canal, will be planted on the shelf at the offside of the winding hole. This should leave the way clear to let in the water, by removing the top plank, on the Sunday. The new section should fill within the day and British Waterways requires that the plank then be replaced and the newly filled section monitored for a month before it can be opened to navigation.

The new stretch will be opened for navigation when BW give their clearance and it has been

arranged that the first boats through will be those of Roger Leishman, Restoration Director and Roger Lewis, our Vice President. These will be followed by a working boat and butty, which will convey all the work party volunteers (including WRG BITM WRG Essex, KESCRG and Newbury Work Party), WAT Council Members, Festival and all other WAT Helpers who are attending without their own boats. This will not be the Official Opening, which will happen later.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THESE DATES AND ARRANGEMENTS ARE PROVISIONAL; FURTHER DETAILS WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE NEXT EDITION.

Meanwhile, away from all this excitement, planning continues for Phase II restoration. The level survey was completed in September with a level pegs concreted in every 100 metres from Little Tring to Drayton Beauchamp. After careful checking and rechecking the closing error between the Ordnance Survey benchmarks at Little Tring Cottages and St Mary's Church, Drayton Beauchamp was 18mm ($\frac{3}{4}$ ").

It is hoped to soon agree a specification with British Waterways for the first 50 metres of lining at Drayton Beauchamp (the Trust Council has already authorised this work). This will be a trial length to establish the specification. The likely method will be to

profile and line the channel with Bentomat, which will be protected with spoil filled gabions rather than concrete, as used in Phase I. This should be cheaper and will overcome the problem of having to get ready-mix to the site.

An early job is to install timber footbridges for the two public footpaths which cross the canal on the Phase II section. It planned to do this in 2005 as soon as agreement has been reached with British Waterways and the Local Authority, who are responsible for Rights of Way. A supplier of suitable bridges has been identified.

British Waterways has agreed to flail the vegetation along the length of the dry bed during the winter. This will save our volunteers a long and arduous strimming exercise.

To date, the Trust has spent just under £400,000 on restoration and Phase I is set to come in very close indeed to budget.

See over for photographs of the completion of Phase 1 restoration works.

RESTORATION REPORT

On Sunday 7th November the bund beyond the winding hole at Little Tring was built, thus completing the construction works for Phase I, a significant moment indeed!

Following good progress at the August working week, the major final push came in October when another full week's working saw all the Bentomat lining and concrete cover completed. Ready-mix pours for Phase I had commenced on 22nd April 1999, when the first wall base sections were formed and continued through the intervening 5½ years. Our volunteers must be relieved indeed to reach the end of this huge task. Their resolve is to be applauded for at times the objective now achieved must have seemed never coming.

There are some minor works still to be completed on Phase I:

- the towpath between the stop-lock and the bridge needs levelling, with surplus material placing behind the toe wall at the bridge.
- the towpath steps at the bridge are to be cleared, and the footpath on the offside requires some improvement at the foot of the brick steps.
- pavements are to be laid on the towpath under the bridge.

- 150 plants have been ordered for the towpath hedge to fill gaps and replace failures.

- a brick plinth is to be built by the winding hole to accommodate the plaque commemorating the Tim Wilkinson bequest.

So, when will we let the water in? This is provisionally scheduled to happen on Sunday 6th March 2005, and further details will be given in the next edition of 'Wendover Arm News'. The plan is that on the Thursday before, stop planks will be installed at the Pumping Station end of the stop-lock. On the Friday and Saturday the lock will be pumped out and the temporary bund at the end of the lock removed. During these two days aquatic plants, previously sourced from the Wendover end of the canal, will be planted on the shelf at the offside of the winding hole. This should leave the way clear to let in the water, by removing the top plank, on the Sunday. The new section should fill within the day and British Waterways requires that the plank then be replaced and the newly filled section monitored for a month before it can be opened to navigation.

The new stretch will be opened for navigation when BW give their clearance and it has been

arranged that the first boats through will be those of Roger Leishman, Restoration Director and Roger Lewis, our Vice President. These will be followed by a working boat and butty, which will convey all the work party volunteers (including WRG BITM WRG Essex, KESCRG and Newbury Work Party), WAT Council Members, Festival and all other WAT Helpers who are attending without their own boats. This will not be the Official Opening, which will happen later.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THESE DATES AND ARRANGEMENTS ARE PROVISIONAL; FURTHER DETAILS WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE NEXT EDITION.

Meanwhile, away from all this excitement, planning continues for Phase II restoration. The level survey was completed in September with a level pegs concreted in every 100 metres from Little Tring to Drayton Beauchamp. After careful checking and rechecking the closing error between the Ordnance Survey benchmarks at Little Tring Cottages and St Mary's Church, Drayton Beauchamp was 18mm ($\frac{3}{4}$ ").

It is hoped to soon agree a specification with British Waterways for the first 50 metres of lining at Drayton Beauchamp (the Trust Council has already authorised this work). This will be a trial length to establish the specification. The likely method will be to

profile and line the channel with Bentomat, which will be protected with spoil filled gabions rather than concrete, as used in Phase I. This should be cheaper and will overcome the problem of having to get ready-mix to the site.

An early job is to install timber footbridges for the two public footpaths which cross the canal on the Phase II section. It planned to do this in 2005 as soon as agreement has been reached with British Waterways and the Local Authority, who are responsible for Rights of Way. A supplier of suitable bridges has been identified.

British Waterways has agreed to flail the vegetation along the length of the dry bed during the winter. This will save our volunteers a long and arduous strimming exercise.

To date, the Trust has spent just under £400,000 on restoration and Phase I is set to come in very close indeed to budget.

See over for photographs of the completion of Phase 1 restoration works.

RESTORATION: COMPLETION OF PHASE I



This view clearly shows the final stage of lining the winding hole. Bentomat is laid over the prepared bed and then covered with a protective layer of ready-mix concrete.



The End! This view was taken on 8th November, the day after the bund at the end of Phase I was constructed. A layer of earth has been spread over the concrete in the centre of the channel. This point will be the new head of navigation until Phase II, through to Drayton Beauchamp, is completed in 2010.

MR MEAD'S LETTER BOOK

Heygates Mill at Gamnel, Tring, has long been associated with the Wendover Arm Canal. We have been privileged to peruse Mr William Mead's large bound volume of copies of his business letters from 1904 to 1908. A random sample of these illustrates the importance of the waterway to his business. They also give a glimpse of the personality of the owner/miller, and similarities with business problems today.

Note how he addresses his clients, and signs his name, depending on the person to whom he is writing. The handwriting is mostly easy to read, but the technique of wet copying, and fading ink, means that not every detail is legible. In the extracts below, '?' means 'undeciphered'

March 16th 05
Messrs Shirley & Co
Bletchley

Dear Sir

Please note I have this day sent per boat to Norchams? Wharf 35
qrs W O sacks received with wheat to oblige
W.N. Mead

.....

March 21st 05
Mr A. Maywood (?)
Fawley

Dear Sir,

Please let bearer have a boat load Hoggins for my Account
Yours faithfully
William N. Mead

.....

April 14 05
John J. Carter
Seething Lane
London

Dr Sir

I beg to inclose Chq £82.9.6 also reduced a/ct 18/- for cartage of Wheat from Tring station, it being put on rail in error, instead of Canal as ordered at the time of purchase. I might say the usual price is 2/-per ton from Station to here.

Yours faithfully W.N. Mead
April 26th 05

Mr C.E. Nash
Fenny Stratford

Dear Sir

I am in receipt of yours enclosing Cheque £4.0s.0d for which please find receipt. I am sorry to say I shall not be able to get flour down to Wharf before end of the week.

Yours faithfully
William N. Mead

.....
June 2nd 05
Messrs Drantom & Co
Leighton Buzzard

Gentlemen,

Will you kindly forward bags for the Bran. I am now waiting for them, if you send to Bulbourne Wharf I can get them from there.

Yours faithfully
W.N. Mead

.....
July 10th 05
Mr E Smith
Brentford

Fosters boatman informs me that he has left at Bulbourne today 49 Bags flour which should have been 50. I have not got them away yet but he asked me to let you know there was one bag short so you could make enquiries about it which please note

Yours faithfully
W. N. Mead

.....
July 10th or 15th 05
Messrs N.P. Wood & Co
Seething Lane
London

Gentlemen,

I beg to enclose Cheque £190- 0- 0 on a/c of Wheat. I have received of this lot ex "Ontarion" 80 qrs Manitoba & 97 Plate how do you account for this. Please let me know what quantity my lighterman Smith signed for at ship.

Yours faithfully
William N. Mead

July 10 or 15th 05
Mr E Smith
Canal Carrier
Brentford

Dear Sir

I telephoned you today re wheat & Wood & "Ontarion". There should have been 120 qrs Manitoba wheat & 97 Plate per your boatman 'Neal' June 14th. Is this all there is to come of this lot & how do you account for the wheat being mixed as my man had to sort this all over. Starkey's [?] note for sacks says 240 have you these with you if so please return to stop here and one sack [?] this lot is an Odd Marked one & I have received one in the 7 qrs received so shall have to charge these to your acct as Messrs Starkey Room & Co do not take Odd Marked sacks in place of theirs. Your attention to this will oblige

Yours faithfully
William N. Mead

And one more letter, but this time not referring to the canal:

10 Jan 04
To the Committee
of the Tring Cooperative Society

Gentlemen

Your letter to hand thanking me for loan of Horse and regretting not returning same according to my instructions. I did not mind having to send to you for the Horse: but what I did not like was the Horse coming back in worse condition that when I lent him you.

He has a large sore place on his back & will not be any use to work for at least a week: However I will have him seen to and hope soon to get him round.

Yours faithfully
W.N. Mead

These documents are historical treasures, and we are most grateful to Mr Paul Messenger of Heygates Mill, for allowing access.

Shelley Savage

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Club 100 winners, drawn at the A.G.M. in October were:

First Prize (£123.60) Mr S J Bell

Second Prize (£51.50) Mr R D Hardwicke

Third Prize (£20.60) Mr M D Caldicott

As ever, numbers are available from Barry Martin (details inside rear cover), and are an excellent way to support the Trust with good odds on winning a prize.

- BBC Radio 4 visited Little Tring on the weekend of 6/7 November to record for a programme "Tales of the Towpath". This is to be broadcast at 11.02 am on 13th. December and members may wish to listen

- The line of the old Halton Camp railway where it crosses the Wendover Arm has been made a Public Footpath (No.63a, Wendover) by Buckinghamshire County Council. British Waterways withdrew their objection after B.C.C. agreed to bear the cost of raising the present footbridge when necessary for navigation.

BARTON **PETROLEUM**

WISH EVERY SUCCESS TO THE
RESTORATION OF THE WENDOVER
ARM - WE ARE PROUD TO HELP
WITH THIS ONGOING PROJECT

FOR ALL YOUR DOMESTIC,
AGRICULTURAL AND LUBRICANT
NEEDS

Tel: 01923 233171
www.bartonpetroleum.co.uk

GRAND FESTIVAL DRAW

- ✉ Enclosed with this Magazine are tickets for the Grand Festival Draw 2005.
- ✉ Please help support the Trust by buying and selling as many tickets as you can.
- ✉ Counterfoils, with cheques, should be sent to:

Jo Leeson
120 Bedford Road
Cranfield
BEDFORD MK43 0HA

(NOT to John Hopkins, the Promoter)

- ✉ Further tickets are available by telephoning John Savage on 01442 827702

WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR SUPPORT!