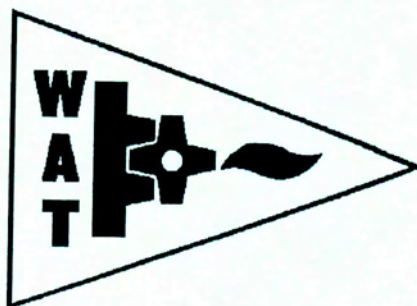


# *Wendover Arm News*

The newsletter of the Wendover Arm Trust



Issue No. 5  
Winter 1990

# THE WENDOVER ARM TRUST

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## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

### Dear Member

As winter comes upon us and 1990 draws to a close, we can look back on the first full calendar year of the Trust's existence with satisfaction. Over the past year we have made a vast number of new friends amongst the local population in the vicinity of the Wendover Arm.

We still await the result of the inquiry into the Aston Clinton Bypass but, whatever the outcome of that case, we impressed a lot of people when presenting our evidence. The Festival at Tring in May, beside being a very enjoyable event for many of us, made the Trust's name known to literally thousands of people who had not previously heard of our cause.

We can look forward in 1991 to receiving W.S. Atkins report on the feasibility and possible costs involved in restoring two sections of the Arm - the first being Little Tring Bridge and the basin beyond and the second section being mainly the "dry" section to the A41 crossing.

Early in the year we should see the repair and restoration of the "Rothschild Bridge" at Halton. We as a body are claiming the lion's share of the credit for getting this project into motion as you will see from an article produced later in this newsletter.

Your 1991 Canal Festival committee are already well on the way to preparing for next years' event which we hope will be even bigger than this years and, we anticipate, just as successful.

Finally may I wish you all a Very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year and I look forward to seeing many of you at Little Tring on January 20th for a day of scrub clearance.



Roger Lewis



Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Trust. The Editor is always pleased to consider articles, news and letters for publication.



# LITTLE TRING BRIDGE

## First Steps Toward Restoration.

We are pleased to report that British Waterways and the Wendover Arm Trust have placed a contract with W.S.Atkins for a feasibility study to re-open Little Tring Bridge, re-water 400 metres of filled-in canal and form a small mooring basin and winding hole to the west of Little Tring Farm.

In addition, as a direct result of pressure applied by the Trust, the contract has been extended to include the whole of the dry section as far as the A41 at Buckland Wharf.

The method recommended by W.S.Atkins as the best way to avoid any recurrence of the old leakage problems associated with this section of the canal will have a major impact on the construction costs involved.

The study will include negotiations with the highway authority, Hertfordshire County Council, to establish what they would allow in terms of the Little Tring Bridge replacement and also the method of reducing the impact on road travel when construction work actually gets under way.

The report should be available in the spring of next year.

Ian Packe.

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## EDITORIAL



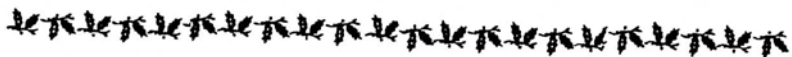
"Good Tidings" is very much the theme of this issue. I have counted at least four items of progress being made or plans being advanced. This is very encouraging and as we go forward into 1991 we hope to continue our success.

A new cruising plaque is being designed - see next issue of Wendover Arm News.

Hope to see you at various events in 1991.

Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Beryl.



## WORKING PARTY

The current state of the towpath along the Arm owes much to the labours of working parties organised by the Inland Waterways Association and the Grand Union Canal Society in the late 1970's.

It was after these voluntary efforts that BWB were able to level the walking surface and the Manpower Services Scheme cleared the remaining undergrowth from the dry canal bed and repaired fences.

Since the Trust was formed, one of the questions most often asked is, when are we going to be able to do some work on the Arm?

### Well now's your chance !

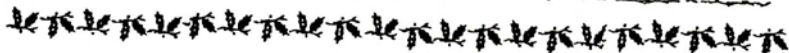
We are pleased to announce that after a meeting with local Waterway Manager, Caroline Clark, the Wendover Arm Trust plans to hold a working party to tackle the overgrown area between the Tringford Stop Lock and the filled-in bridge at Little Tring. (This is the only section not cleared by the earlier working parties.)

The working party will be on **Sunday 20th January 1991**, starting 10.00 am. at Little Tring Bridge.

Please bring basic gardening tools suitable for cutting through undergrowth and gathering it for burning. Boots and gardening gloves are advisable.



This clearance will assist the feasibility study of this area and may, if done properly, persuade BW to allow some clearance of other areas which have now become overgrown again. Eg. Whitehouses site.



## SOUTHERN CANAL SOCIETY MEETING

On 14th October 1990, three of us, Roger Lewis, Ian Packe and Graeme Lockhart, travelled to the Southern Canal Society meeting near Gloucester. This organisation is made up of several Canal Societies and Restoration groups.

Our hosts were the Hereford and Gloucester Canal Society who welcomed us with tea, coffee and biscuits. There was a very impressive display of photographs / maps and a history of the canal. The Inland Waterways Association was also heavily represented.

At approximately 10.00 am we boarded a coach to be shown parts of the Canal and some clearing work that had been done. Unfortunately this involved quite a long coach journey which, added to our long car journey, proved a little too much. We were shown a small viaduct and the "skewiest" canal bridge known. The portals are positioned such that the one portal of the bridge entrance was positioned beyond the portal of the other side.

We then returned having seen a part of the Canal in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire to be presented with a lovely lunch. They catered for approximately 50 - 60 people. After lunch, a talk and slide show was given by one of the Hereford and Gloucester Canal Society team. Their canal has many more problems than ours - it has been designated a closed canal and the land has been returned to the original owners. This however has not dampened their enthusiasm and they are gradually winning over the relevant land owners. This is a long term project and is being treated as such. It appears that farmers who did not want the Canal are gradually realising the benefits of having a good waterway running through their fields especially for their livestock.

The use of the word "Trust" was discussed as this seems to have become more complicated for directors since we were originally formed. After some discussion it was agreed the word "Trust" gave a Canal Society credibility especially when raising money. Some other reports followed and we left at 6.30 pm after a hasty tea.

We concluded that it had been a very interesting and useful day and we hope to be able to host the meeting in 1991 and show them some of the Wendover Arm.

Graeme Lockhart.



## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Listed below are the members who have joined the Trust during the previous three months. - **Welcome to the Trust.**

Mr G. Hughes .....Stone  
Mr & Mrs R. Gouldstone .....Fort Salonga U.S.A.  
Mr J.B. Peatey .....Hunton Bridge  
Mr M.T. Blundell .....Halton Village

**We are also pleased to welcome the following Corporate Members.**

The Chiltern Society .....Chesham  
Messrs. Parker, Godsal, .....Wendover  
Snookes and Chorlton  
Wendover Parish Council .....Wendover  
Wyvern Shipping Co.Ltd. ....Leighton Buzzard

### GIFT FOR CHRISTMAS

What do you give at Xmas to someone who seems to have everything ?

If this is your problem then how about a subscription to join the Wendover Arm Trust ?

Just send the recipient's name, address and the appropriate fee to our Membership Secretary, Barry Martin. (For address - see inside front cover).

Single persons only £5.00 - Family membership only £8.00 .

## MONEY

At a recent committee meeting, our treasurer, Jim Wright was very pleased to be able to report that a cheque has been received from the Inland Revenue for £221.28 . This is the Income Tax which the Trust has been able to reclaim from all your covenanted subscriptions. This is a very worthwhile amount and we look forward to reclaiming an even greater amount in 1991 as more members sign Deeds of Covenant.

# THE ROTHSCHILD BRIDGE

## Report from Roger Lewis

Many of you will know that this once very beautiful bridge which spans the Wendover Arm in the grounds of RAF Halton - about one hundred and fifty yards to the East of the Halton road bridge - has fallen into a very serious state of dereliction and a few years ago the cast iron balustrade on the West side was totally smashed by the limb of a tree falling on it.

In January 1989 Martin Wood, the Chairman of the Wendover Arm Group, wrote to the Station Commander at RAF Halton drawing his attention to the state of the bridge, and the Group's concern that, according to rumour, it may well be removed and a modern bridge put in its place. The reply was received from a Squadron Leader, writing on the Station Commander's instructions, to the effect that repairs would soon commence and allaying our fears that the bridge would be removed.

In March of this year, following an article in the Bucks Herald when it was suggested that, as the cost of the repair may well be £200,000, and the RAF were not seen to be taking any action concerning restoration, Martin wrote to the District Works Officer of the Property Services Agency (PSA - the body responsible for the maintenance of RAF Halton) again expressing the Trust's concern for the bridge. A reply was received from the Station Commander's deputy saying that the RAF were as anxious as anyone that restoration should take place but intimated that funds were not readily available.

The Trust Committee felt that the estimated cost of £200,000 was grossly exaggerated and, on Bernard Banfield's advice, I contacted a Mr Christopher Wallis (whose father, Barnes Wallis, was very well known during World War II) a member of the Chiltern Society and an engineer with a vast experience in bridge restoration. On the 25th June last, Bernard and I met the Chairman of Halton Parish Council, Michael Blundell, two of his colleagues and Mr Wallis by the canal at Halton. We discussed the feasibility of restoration and Mr Wallis agreed to make a detailed survey and report of the bridge. About ten days later I received a very comprehensive ten page report from him which he summarised as follows:-



*There are no insurmountable faults in this bridge, which is still adequate to support the British Standard Live Load on Footpaths: 100 lb/sq.ft. all over the deck. However, some minor repairs are necessary to return the bridge to a proper aesthetic and durable condition. The work could be executed by any competent restoration contractor and the cost would be between £10,000 and £20,000.*

I sent a copy of this report to Mr Blundell and he set up a meeting between himself, Group Captain Ian Blunt (the Station Commander) and me when I gave the Group Captain a copy of the report and discussed the possibility of restoration of the bridge with him. He appeared to be very interested in the report and promised to pass it on to the PSA.

Last week I received the following letter from RAF Halton:-

From :- Wing Commander C R Parkhurst RAF.

No 1 School of Technical Training.

Royal Air Force

Halton

Aylesbury

Bucks. HP22 5PG

15th November 1990

Dear Mr Lewis,

I am delighted to tell you that additional funds have now been made available to enable us to repair, in the very near future, the Halton Canal Bridge. The work proposed is outlined below:

- a. Removal of 2 trees and 2 old tree stumps.
- b. Removal of all ash and ballast topping to the roadway over the bridge and provision of working scaffold.
- c. Careful removal of all concrete cast into the steel through decking.
- d. Dismantle cast iron handrails, moulded curbs to allow complete removal of the steel through decking and the 2 curved lattice beams. All iron and steel components to be removed from site to foundry for cleaning, repair, preservative and paint treatment.
- e. Repairs to damaged stonework to be carried out by Stonemason.
- f. Repairs to brickwork where damaged at corners.

g. Replace repaired elements of the bridge (lattice beams, through deck and cast iron curbs and handrails.)

h. Lay new concrete and macadam finish to the bridge surface.

i. Clear site and reopen for pedestrian traffic (existing bollards to prevent vehicular access to remain.)

You will appreciate that it will be necessary for the access over the canal at this point to be closed for the duration of the works which I anticipate should take 6 months. However, the renovation of the bridge, to its former glory, will I am sure, be worth waiting for. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours

Chris Parkhurst.

**I hope that we shall soon be able to claim our very first restoration success for the Trust !!!**

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## WOT? NO SPECIAL OFFERS

Members of large national charities often have privilege discounts on purchases of charity goods or reduced price entry to the charity's own events etc.

The Wendover Arm Trust would love to be able to do the same for its members. However, it is not that easy. For an organisation such as ourselves to obtain charitable status, which has useful tax concessions associated with it, there must not be any financial benefit given to its members.

The big national charities such as the IWA, National Trust etc. get around this by forming a separate subsidiary company which is allowed to trade in any way it wishes without affecting the charitable status of the parent company. This trading company covenants with the main charity to donate all its profits to it. The problem is that there are costs associated with operating a subsidiary company which, in our case, given our small size, would exceed any profits generated.

So, for the present at least, the Trust is unable to allow its members reduced price entry to events such as the Wendover Canal Festival. Sorry folks but we hope you understand.

# WENDOVER CANAL FESTIVAL 1991

SATURDAY 25th to MONDAY 27th MAY

Following the successful Boat Rally and Canal Festival at New Mill in May 1990, the Wendover Arm Trust will be doing it all again in 1991 !

Booking Forms will be available early in 1991 - S.a.e to Barry Martin please.

Craft and Trade bookings - contact Bob Wheal Tel. (0525) 381614.

Offers of Raffle Prizes - contact Sheila Lewis Tel. (0442 82) 3378.

Items for Tombola Stall - contact Beryl Martin.

Ideas for Arena Displays - contact Colin Rees Tel. (0442) 871920.

Arrangements are in hand for Pony Rides, Novelty Dog Event, Dog Agility, Bouncy Castle, Stationary Engines, Car Boot Sale, Refreshment Tent, P.A. System (with roving mike), Morris Dancers, and C.B. radio station.

Plans are also well advanced for the Barbecue, evening entertainment and the Bar (which will be open for more sessions than last year).

Sponsors are being approached to help pay for the temporary footbridge and sponsorship will also be needed for a marquee, fencing, the loos and the all important advertising and posters.

Ian Packe has again volunteered to produce the Festival Brochure. If you would like to place an advertisement in the 1991 Programme, please contact Ian for details.

All general enquiries about the Festival should be addressed to Roger Lewis, Trust and Festival Chairman.



## LITTLE TRING BRIDGE - DEMOLITION.

Dear Editor,

In issue No.4 of Wendover Arm News there were two historical reports on Little Tring Bridge.

The following additional information, from Grand Union Canal Society's committee meeting minutes, gives a further insight into the demise of the bridge, as follows :-

The minutes of 17th December 1971 stated that the bridge is to be demolished.

In March 1972 BWB assured GUCS that the bridge would be retained. However because of the importance of retaining the bridge hole a letter was sent to Sir Frank Price (Chairman of BWB) asking for confirmation of this.

A reply was received in May 1972 stating that negotiations with the local council had agreed that moorings would be provided at Tring so that an embankment could be built in place of the bridge. This was all subject to planning permission.

Planning permission for the embankment was granted in August 1972. Although GUCS tried to obtain a copy of what was planned BWB declined to co-operate.

The Inland Waterways Association took up the fight in October 1972 but Sir Frank Price replied saying regrettably the Wendover Arm would be cut off by the embankment.

By March 1973 the embankment was finished but various GUCS members observed that the bridge hole had only been filled in and the abutments still existed. The road had not been realigned and a two ton weight limit was still in force.

Roy Smith - GUCS.

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## CONGRATULATIONS

We are pleased to report that Michael Handford, who represented the Trust so ably at the Bypass Inquiry, has been elected to the IWA National Council. Although I am sure we all commiserate with our magazine editor, Beryl Martin, who narrowly failed to be elected, we congratulate Sheila Davenport (not a WAT member) on being the first lady elected to Council.

## LAST NAVIGATION OF THE ARM

Readers will have noticed different dates for the last navigation of the Arm around the turn of the century, sometimes supported by photographs or slides. 1897 has been quoted, others later.

I suspect that the Arm was not at first fully reduced to present water levels, and that occasionally, possibly as late as 1905, a low draft cargo, or the odd Sunday School Treat boat was allowed through. Perhaps water levels were permitted to rise for a day or so in order to pass a special cargo? How else can the differing dates be explained? Can readers throw more light?

Half way back in time, in 1945 the Arm was kept in perfect bankside condition by the canal staff, nettles and bushes were cut down or back, roots and branches dealt with, the shallow water freed from weeds. Everything clean and neat. At that time I could towpath cycle, away from the busy roads, at full speed from Drayton Beauchamp or Bulbourne to Wendover to catch my morning train to London and Baker Street. Please note the authentic local pronunciation for Bulbourne is "Boobun", as well as "Starrups End" for the nearby Startops End.

Twenty-five years ago I walked the same route with the deputy County Planning Officer, pleading for the Arm's protection, and designation as a Linear Country Park.

Bernard Banfield.

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## RESTORATION ROUND-UP

Writing in the December issue of Canal and Riverboat magazine Michael Handford has once more begun his annual review of restoration schemes throughout the country.

Part Two, which will appear in the January 1991 issue (on sale December 15th) will include updates on those restorations most likely to achieve substantial progress in the next decade. The list is based on the results of the Restoration Survey published in May 1989 and subsequent developments.

The report will include the Grand Union (Wendover) Canal and fourteen other projects.

## WYVERN SHIPPING BROCHURES

Wyvern Shipping, with hire bases at Linslade and Rugby, operate a luxury hire fleet of canal cruisers. They are part of the Blue Riband Club of high quality hire boat companies. They are also Corporate members of the Wendover Arm Trust.

Trust members and their friends who are interested in hiring one of their luxury narrowboats in 1991 can obtain a full colour brochure and booking form direct from Wyvern Shipping Tel: Leighton Buzzard (0525) 372355 . **Please mention that you are a Wendover Arm Trust member** and the Trust will receive a donation from Wyvern Shipping for each 1991 holiday booked this way.

## STOLEN FROM WRG !

At the beginning of October, "Jemma" ( A green transit van, reg. C 653 JMA, belonging to the Kent and East Sussex Canal Restoration Group ) was stolen from Wanstead. This is now the subject of an insurance claim.

However, a loss almost as important - it contained the bulk of the Waterway Recovery Group's catering kit collected over the last 10 - 12 years! Both organisations are now desperate for replacements. If you have any pots, pans or cooking utensils (the larger the better), dishes, plates, mugs, cutlery, etc., etc., etc., that are surplus to your requirements, please donate them. These are mainly used on Canal Camps where sometimes 50 or 60 people have to be fed. Does anyone know of a school, canteen, or restaurant that is closing down and disposing of equipment ?

If you can help, please contact WRG via IWA Chelmsford Branch. John Gale (0277 654683) or Molly Beard (0702 554492).

## Copy Date for the Next Issue

## Feb. 14th 1991

## Hope to hear from you - if only a card !



## THE COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF SALES ITEMS IS AS FOLLOWS:-

- \* SWEATSHIRT in a variety of colours incl. grey, blue, red, green and sizes XXL, XL, L, M, S. £10.00 each
- \* T-SHIRT in same colours & sizes as above plus children's sizes.

Adults £4.50 each

Childrens £4.00 each

(Both the above subject to availability)

- \* TEA TOWEL £2.25 each

- \* BURGEE £3.50 each

- \* BALL POINT PEN £0.60 each

- \* AYLESBURY & WENDOVER ARMS BOOKLET £1.00 each

- \* POP-UP CANAL GREETINGS CARD £1.20 each

POSTAGE WILL BE CHARGED AT COST.

The above may be ordered by telephoning Ray Powell on 0494-35152 or by writing to him at 116, Cressex Road, High Wycombe, Bucks. HP12 4TZ.

WHY NOT ASK  
FATHER CHRISTMAS  
FOR SOME OF THESE  
AS PRESENTS !

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## SOCIAL EVENING

The Trust's Autumn Social took place at Aston Clinton Sports and Social Club on Saturday 10th November 1990.

Between 50 and 60 members and visitors saw a slide presentation of this year's Wendover Canal Festival at Tring which brought back memories for those who attended.

During the second half of the evening Jim Wright, WAT & Festival Treasurer, gave an interesting review of the monies raised at the Festival. In the discussion that followed several useful ideas were suggested that will help with next year's Festival.

As usual Janet laid on an ample buffet supper, an enterprising member sold Christmas cards and gift tags raising over £30.00 for the Trust, and the Sales Stand and the raffle were well supported.

## A HISTORY OF WHITEHOUSES PUMPING STATION - 1802 TO 1842

The steam engine and pump was supplied and erected at Whitehouses by Jonathan Woodhouse, a civil engineer, from Ashby-de-la-Zouch. The pump was capable of lifting 1,659,960 gallons of water per 24 hours, (about 30 locks per day), to a height of 75 feet from the recently constructed Wilstone Reservoir. Woodhouse also contracted to erect the engine house, keeper's house and smith's shop. The work was completed in August 1802, but the heading connecting the pumping shaft and the reservoir was not finished until the following June, when the engine commenced working.

By 1805 Jonathan Woodhouse had become a full-time employee of the Grand Junction Canal Company and was employed to drive the Wilstone (Whitehouses) engine. In 1835 he was working as an engine attendant at Tringford Pumping Station which had been completed in 1818. He eventually retired, aged 74, in 1849 after 46 year's service.

In 1825 it is recorded that Boulton & Watt inspected the Wilstone engine and found it in good repair. J. Potter took over at Whitehouses in 1835 and was paid 21 shillings per week. The engine was nearly worn out and it was proposed to construct a new heading, one mile long, to connect Wilstone reservoir directly with a new well at Tringford. The work was completed with some difficulty and pumping from Wilstone by the Tringford Pump commenced on 21 November 1837.

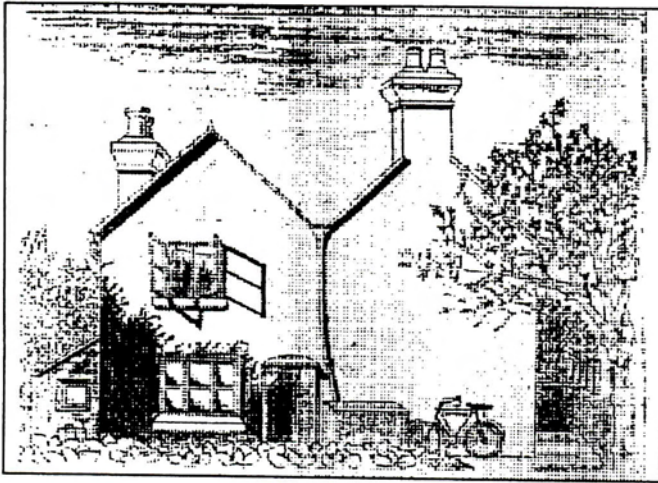
Whitehouses Pumping Station closed in 1836 and the engine was sold in April 1841. It was then decided to convert the old buildings into a dwelling house and William Woodhouse, Jonathan's son, took up occupation in April 1842.

Reference material from D.G.McGarey's - The History of Tringford Pumping Station 1817-1945.

*Dates for comparison:- 1805 Battle of Trafalgar, 1815 Battle of Waterloo, 1837 Queen Victoria came to the throne.*

## THE WHITE HOUSES

A view of the east side in the 1940's from an artist's sketch kindly lent by Bernard Banfield.



## TRING RESERVOIRS

The Nature Conservancy Council have announced their intention to relinquish their lease on the Tring Reservoir area, which was declared a National Nature Reserve in 1955. Management control will revert to British Waterways.

Plans under consideration by local Waterway Manager, Caroline Clark, include the re-instatement of a nature trail, the opening of a visitors centre, provision of toilets, picnic areas and better car parking. The intention is to make the area into a more accessible and attractive local amenity whilst still protecting those sites used by breeding and over-wintering birds.

The SSSI ( Site of Special Scientific Interest ) classification will remain in force but the change in responsibility recognises that the reservoirs are no longer of the outstanding quality required for them to remain a National Nature Reserve. Shooting and fishing rights on the reservoirs remain with the Rothschild Estate who owned the land before the reservoirs were built.

It is hoped that the careful development of the area can be extended to include the nearby Wendover Arm. Several circular walks are possible which could include both the Nature Trail and the restored canal.



## **CIVIC TRUST VISIT THE ARM**

On Wednesday 3rd October 1990, Roger Lewis and Ian Packe, met Sarah Jackson and a colleague, both from the Civic Trust and took them for a conducted tour of the Arm.

The Wendover Arm Trust has been invited to register with the Civic Trust with a view to obtaining financial assistance from the Department of the Environment "UK 2000" scheme.

### **What Is The Civic Trust ?**

The Civic Trust encourages the protection and improvement of the environment; it advises local societies and building preservation trusts which are working to save their heritage, and improve their surroundings and seeks to increase recognition of their work.

The Civic Trust provides conservation areas, initiates various projects concerning conservation and revitalisation; draws national attention to specific environmental problems and opportunities by means of films, reports and conferences. It is also involved in shaping legislation, working in schools and providing information.

The Civic Trust gives grants towards feasibility studies into such projects as building restoration and improvement of waste sites. The grants can contribute towards the cost of professional advice e.g. from architects and surveyors.

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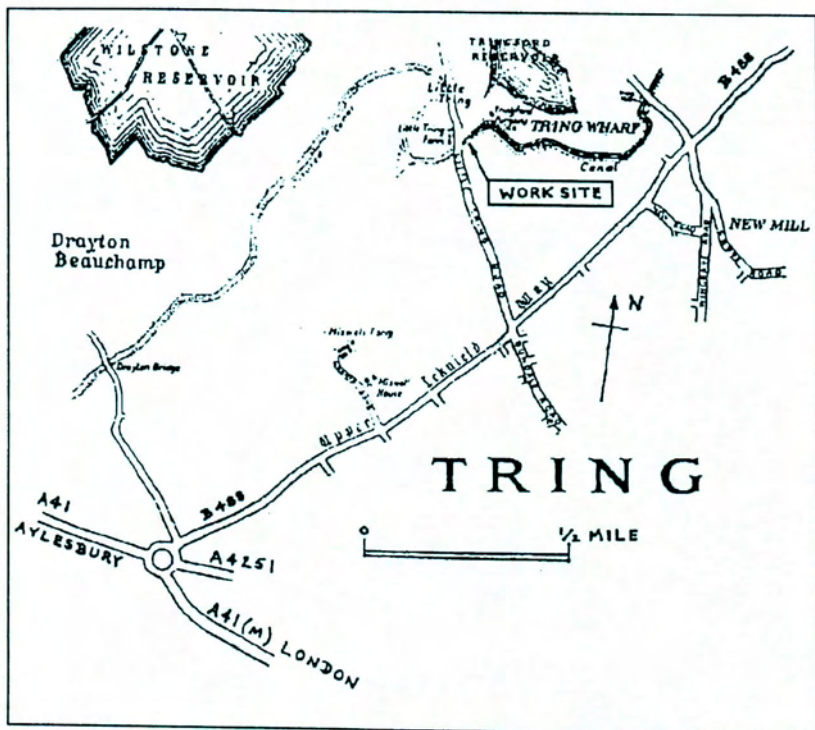
## **BRITISH WATERWAYS GENERAL POWERS BILL**

British Waterways will be seeking leave from the Secretary of State for the Environment to introduce a Private Bill into the next session of Parliament.

The principal purpose would be to enable existing legislation on safety standards to be extended to all waterways operated by British Waterways. The Bill would give powers to BW to gain access across private property for plant and equipment in dire emergencies where life and property might be endangered, e.g. an imminent threat of a breach.

The remainder of the Bill covers a wide range of issues where anomalies or outdated clauses in existing legislation need to be brought up to date.

# LOCATION MAP FOR WORKING PARTY SITE



**SEASON'S  
GREETINGS**

**LITTLE TRING  
BRIDGE CLOSED -  
OPEN 1992 ?**



