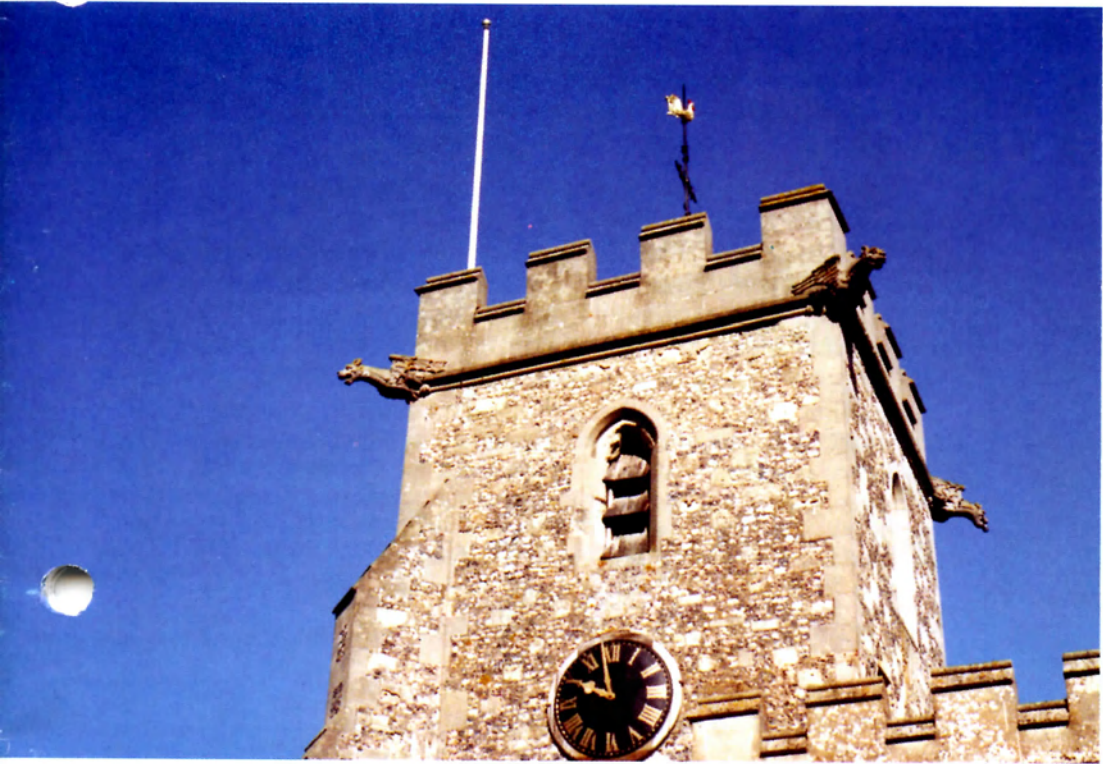


# WENDOVER ARM NEWS

Newsletter of the Wendover Arm Trust



Issue No. 51  
May 2006

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 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**

Splendid news on the financial front is that the Chilterns Conservation Board has very kindly agreed to increase the grants offered from their Sustainable Development Fund. They had offered £9400 towards one of the new footbridges but, upon finding that the actual cost of the bridge kit came to £9967, have increased their offer to that amount. Similarly, upon finding that that the £400 offered for the interpretation board at Little Tring did not cover non-recoverable VAT, the offer has been increased to £470. We are most grateful for this generous help and look forward to inviting our friends from the Board along to the official opening of the footbridges later in the year.

Talking of the footbridges, they should be up by the time this newsletter appears, so another important stage of the Phase II restoration has been achieved.

Feedback and input from readers is always especially welcome; an enquiry from new Trust member John Cook about the origin of the delightfully named Drayton Beauchamp prompted the article in this issue about place names on the Arm, which in turn prompted another piece on the parish structures. Similarly, we are pleased to publish Tim Matterson's letter from Spain (our Foreign Correspondent?), and are grateful for John & Tina Wood's research into refreshment facilities along the Arm. The article in the previous issue about the asphalt lining has generated a sequel from Barry Martin on the gasworks at Buckland Wharf.

ENCLOSED WITH THIS MAGAZINE ARE POSTERS FOR THE FORTHCOMING TRING CANAL FESTIVAL; PLEASE DISPLAY THEM TO GOOD EFFECT. FURTHER COPIES ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE EDITOR, AS ARE A5 SIZE FLYERS. THIS IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO HELP MAINTAIN THOSE RECORD ATTENDANCES AT THE FESTIVAL!

*[Cover picture; to go with the articles on parish names and structures, we illustrate some of their beautiful churches. This striking view shows the tower of Buckland church with its magnificent gargoyles]*

## REFRESHMENT FACILITIES ALONG THE ARM

There aren't any, is the simple answer! Being the rural delight that it is you will probably know that, unlike many waterways, there are no waterside refreshment establishments on the Arm.

However, within a short distance (which we have taken to mean half a mile, unless indicated otherwise) there are a surprising number and variety of eating and drinking places of which visitors to the Arm may avail themselves. This article gives brief details to 'whet the appetite', which we hope readers will find useful and may wish to keep for reference. Only 'sit-down' establishments are listed, not take-aways and shops. As well as enjoying these facilities, there is the added benefit of the Arm contributing to the local economy when visitors use the nearby businesses.

We shall start at the Bulbourne end, and work towards Wendover.

### BULBOURNE

At Bulbourne there is the **Grand Junction Arms**, recently refurbished in contemporary style. Open all day, with four real ales, canalside garden and food served until 9pm (8pm Sunday). Just along the road is the **Wildlife Café** at the Wyvale Garden Centre; café open 10.30am to 4.30pm (not Mondays).

### MARSWORTH

North of the Arm's junction at Bulbourne, there is a good choice of establishments alongside the main Grand Union Canal at Marsworth. **Bluebells Café** is open daily, and over the road is the **White Lion**, more a pub-restaurant, open all day and with an attractive canalside garden. An interesting, and useful, feature of the White Lion is that it has a separate Café/Deli, open from 12 noon to 5pm; this is to be found at the rear of the pub. Just along the road from the White Lion is the **Anglers Retreat**, a CAMRA Good Beer Guide listed pub, open all day with home cooked food and dogs welcome. Beer from the local Tring Brewery is usually available. About a half mile further north along the canal is the **Red Lion**, long popular with canal users and worth the extra walk to visit this first-rate pub. Four real ales, CAMRA Good Beer Guide listed, and a good pint is assured.



## TRING

Proceeding along the Arm, we come to Tring, accessed from Gamnel Bridge (No.2) or Little Tring Bridge (No.3). Although the northern edge of the town is within our half mile criterion, most of the facilities are in the town centre, about a mile from the Arm. We shall therefore just summarise them briefly.

### **Pubs:**

nearest to the canal is the **Pheasant** at New Mill which, along with the **Castle** (Park Road), **Anchor** (Western Road) and **Black Horse** (Frogmore Street), caters mainly for locals. The **Rose & Crown Hotel** (High Street) has a bar open to non-residents and the **Bell**, over the road, attracts the local youth. For visitors, both the **Robin Hood** in Brook Street and the **Kings Arms** in King Street are worth seeking out. Both are CAMRA Good Beer Guide listed and excellent ale can be sampled, Fullers at the Robin Hood and an ever changing selection from independent breweries at the Kings Arms. The Robin Hood specialises in high quality fish dishes, and there is a good selection of home cooked food at the Kings Arms. Both close during the afternoon, daily.

### **Italian Restaurants:**

Tring is well served, with the award winning **Forno Vivo** in the High Street; **Francesco's** is also in the High Street and **Da Vinci** in Frogmore Street.

### **Indian Restaurants:**

again, three to choose from – **Cafe Spice**, **Jubraj** and **Tamarind**, all in the High Street.

### **Thai Restaurant:**

The **Thai Valley** is next to the Cafe Spice in the High Street.

### **Cafes:**

**Buttercups** in the High Street, **Tringfellows** in Frogmore Street and the **Zebra Café** at the Zoological Museum in Akeman Street.

All open during the daytime, Monday to Saturday with Buttercups also open Sunday morning and lunchtime and the Zebra all day Sunday.

## BUCKLAND & ASTON CLINTON

From the old A41 road crossing at Bucklandwharf (site of the former New Inn, the Arm's only pub sadly closed and now Homesitters office) can be accessed:

The **Crow's Nest**, up Tring Hill from the canal. A Premier Lodge with an 'Out & In' restaurant. Two real ales, open all day with food served until 9.30pm Mon-Thursday, 10.30pm Friday & Saturday.

In the other direction, near the canal is the **Shaad Indian Restaurant**, open evenings only. Next along is another Indian Restaurant, the **Mela** (formerly the Rising Sun). Beyond our half mile zone there are four pubs in Aston Clinton; the **Partridge** (Green End Street) and **Rothschild Arms** (Weston Road) are predominantly locals, the **Duck Inn** (London Road) is a Vintage Inn catering mostly for eating and the **Oak** (Green End Street) is a wonderful 500+ year old building, with good food and Fullers' beers.

## HALTON VILLAGE

A delightful village, now a conservation area, absolutely devoid of facilities!

## WESTON TURVILLE

Nearest to the Arm, by public footpath well signed from the towpath between Halton Village and Perch Bridge, is the **Chequers** in Church Lane. A smart pub with fine restaurant (closed Sunday evening and Monday) and bar food at lunchtimes, with generally three real ales. The **Chandos** in Main Street is more a local's pub and the **Five Bells** (also in Main Street) is another Vintage Inn catering for the food trade.

## WENDOVER

The visitor is spoilt for choice, so details will have to be kept brief. The added bonus is that all are within our half mile range of the canal; what an attractive destination Wendover will be when it is possible for visitors to arrive by boat!



## **Pubs:**

The **Rose & Crown** (Old Tring Road) is a sports oriented local, the nearest pub to the nearby RAF Halton. The **Packhorse** (Tring Road) is a friendly locals pub, CAMRA Good Beer Guide listed, with Fullers' ales. Open all day, but no food at any time.

The **George and Dragon** (Aylesbury Road) is Wendover's oldest pub, with low beams as befitting. Thai restaurant attached, food served until 10pm (not Monday evenings), three real ales.

The imposing **Red Lion Hotel** (High Street), is now a Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries house, serving their beers. It has accommodation and a restaurant (advisable to book for the evening) and serves breakfasts from 7am. Open all day, until midnight Thursday to Saturday, with food until 10pm.

Over the road from the Red Lion is the **White Swan**, in the same ownership as the Packhorse. Like the Packhorse, a friendly locals pub with Fullers' ales and no food at any time. Open all day.

The **Shoulder of Mutton** (Pound Street, by the Railway Station Approach), is a large pub with three real ales, open all day, with food until 10pm (9pm Sundays).

The **King and Queen** (South Street) has recently been refurbished in contemporary style, with an attractive pub sign depicting eponymous chess pieces. Open all day with food lunchtimes and early evening (not Mondays), two real ales.

## **Cafes**

**Crumb's** (Town Court, High Street), open 8am to 5pm mon-Sat, 10am to 3pm Sunday.

**Le Petit Café** (Pound Street/South Street corner), open Tuesday to Sunday 9.30am to 4.30pm. Popular with cyclists.

**Bonjour Café** (Railway Station), open 5.30am to lunchtime Monday to Saturday and 4.30pm to 7pm Friday.

**Rumsey's Chocalaterie** (High Street), open 9am to 5pm Monday to Saturday. Belgian chocolate made on the premises, with light snacks and coffee.

## **Indian Restaurants**

The **Spice Cottage** (Tring Road), **Prince of India** (Aylesbury Road) – booking advisable 01296 622761, and **The Raj** (Aylesbury Road) are all open lunchtime and evenings, daily.

## Chinese Restaurant

The **Wendover Peking** (High Street), open lunchtime (except Sunday), and evenings. Booking essential 01296 622713.

## Italian Restaurant

**Rossini's** (High Street), open lunchtime and evenings (closed Sunday evening and all day Monday). Booking required 01296 622257.

## English Restaurant (now there's a rarity!)

The **Bistro** (Pound Street, opp. South Street), open lunchtimes Thursday to Sunday and evenings Monday to Saturday.

*The Editor is grateful to John & Tina Wood who did most of the research legwork, without which this article would not have been possible.*

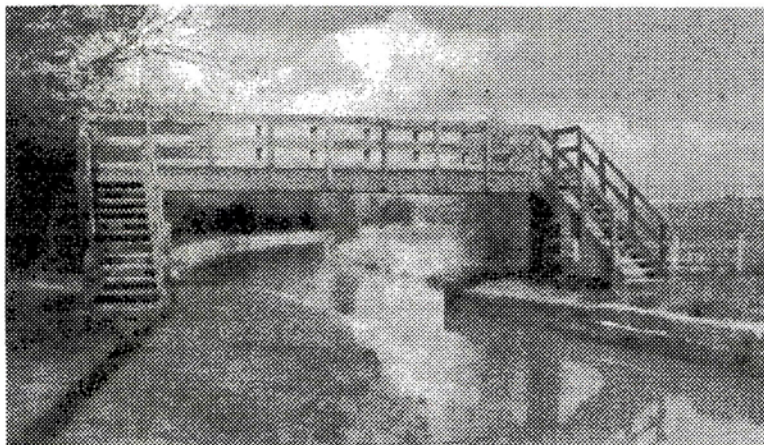
**BARTON**  
**PETROLEUM**

For prompt and personal  
attention telephone  
**WATFORD**  
**(01923) 233171**

Suppliers of Industrial, Domestic &  
Agricultural Fuel Oils, Lubricants, Greases  
and Flare petrol

LEICESTER	Other Depots	
<b>(01162) 609390</b>	BEDFORD	WELLINGBOROUGH
	<b>(01234) 822488</b>	<b>(01933) 224317</b>





## **HAVE YOUR NAME ON A BRIDGE LIKE THIS**

*This is your chance to contribute directly to the restoration of the Wendover Arm of the Grand Union Canal and have your name, or that of your company or organisation, permanently remembered by joining our*

## **BUY A PLANK SCHEME**

*Phase 1 of the restoration is now complete. As part of Phase 2, which will link the new winding hole at Little Tring to the already constructed section at Drayton Beauchamp it will be necessary to build two footbridges where footpaths cross the line of the canal.*

*In order to minimise inconvenience to footpath users during Phase 2 these footbridges will be built during 2006 thereby enabling continual safe access during construction work*

**For £50 you can have your chosen name placed on your individual plank or step of what will become Bridge No. 4**

*(see over)*

***I would like to become a sponsor of Bridge No.4 and I attach a cheque for £50 (or more\*)***

My Name \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Post Code \_\_\_\_\_ Contact No. \_\_\_\_\_

I am a UK taxpayer and would like The Trust to treat my donation as eligible for Gift Aid (delete if inapplicable)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name to appear on plate to be permanently fixed to my plank or step:  
\_\_\_\_\_

*\*Sponsors donating £100 or more will have a plate prominently mounted on the face of the Bridge.*

Please make cheques payable to *Wendover Arm Trust* and send with this form to:

Hubert Prescott  
Fundraising Director  
Wendover Arm Trust  
32 Stubbs Wood  
Amersham  
Bucks. HP6 6EY  
Telephone: 01494 725117 or 07775 927134(mobile)

WENDOVER ARM TRUST. A Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England No. 2353392. Registered Charity No. 801190  
Registered Office: 129 High Street, Berkhamsted, Herts. HP4 2DJ  
Website: [www.wendoverarmtrust.co.uk](http://www.wendoverarmtrust.co.uk)



## ORIGINS OF PLACE NAMES ALONG THE ARM *by Shelley Savage*

Marsworth, Tring, Drayton Beauchamp, Buckland, Aston Clinton, Halton, Weston Turville and Wendover, the modern parishes through which the Arm passes, are an interesting collection of words, and not all of them sound like modern-day English. Yet we take them for granted, especially when talking or writing about the Wendover Arm Canal. This article looks at the origins of these place-names.

One type of place-name relates particularly to physical features of the locality. The authority Margaret Gelling believes that many place-names “date from the 5th century, and that they record perceptions of the landscape and of situations of ancient settlements in that landscape which are those of the earliest Anglo-Saxon immigrants”. (1) Because of the regular occurrences of the same elements over the whole of England, she has suggested that the names could be seen as an early form of mapping for travellers. Some of the place-names along the Arm are very good examples of this.

Starting with TRING, the significant element is *hangar*, which means ‘sloping wood’. In settlement names, writes Gelling, the reference is usually to very gentle slopes, with perhaps a slight concavity, which gave the woods a hanging appearance. She writes further that a *hangar* may have been a highly visible feature, and so suitable for a settlement name. However, this interpretation is not certain, because in the Domesday Book (1086), Tring is called *Trunga*, and later variations are *Trawinge* (1176), *Trehangar* (1200), and *Tresange* (1208). If the first element is *treow* ‘tree’, it would be unlikely to be called a ‘tree sloping wood.’ Other local names with *hanger* are: Tyttenhanger and Panshanger.

HALTON: the first significant element in this not uncommon place name is *halh*, a West Saxon word meaning ‘nook’. It is also related to *holh*, meaning ‘hollow’. On the ground, the nook is sometimes formed by contours, or by water. In some areas the word means land between rivers, or for slightly raised ground surrounded by marsh. The second element in Halton is *tun*, an Old English word meaning ‘enclosure, farmstead, estate, village’, implying a community. So *Halton* in the Chilterns is interpreted as

a term for a wide and shallow valley, used for a populated place “where the wind-gaps pierce the escarpment producing funnel-shaped embayments along the line of the scarp-foot”(1). Halton lies to one side of the funnel-shaped gap leading through to the Missenden valley. Ringshall, Dagnall and The Hale are other examples of *halh* names.

The Chilterns are renowned for the hills, but as WAT Newsletter readers, and early travellers knew, water was of crucial importance, and so many place names in the area comment on water sources. WENDOVER must be the earliest name in the list, as it is a British name. Historians (6) write that the Chilterns formed a British reserve until the Anglo-Saxon conquest of the area in 571. The word *Wendover* means ‘clear streams’. *Wendover* is beside a clear stream flowing over white pebbles arising from the chalk.

Moving away from topographical features, the second part of MARSWORTH comes from an Old Saxon word *wuro* ‘soil’ and early German *wurt/wort* meaning ‘homestead’. *Woro* is found in Old English charters, and may refer to small places associated with hedges and fences, that is, a settlement, and in this case belonging to someone called ‘Masso’. Earliest written forms for Marsworth are 966-75 “*Maessanwyro*”, in the Domesday Book *Missevorde*, and in 1163, *Messewurda*. The ending ‘-worth’ is a fairly common place name element.

The first element of DRAYTON BEAUCHAMP is interesting. It comes from Old English *dragan*, meaning to draw, or drag, and in the place-name sense seems to mean variously ‘a portage’, i.e. a place where something can or has to be dragged, or, ‘a stiff hill; a steep slope or ascent where more than ordinary effort is required’. It is always found with another element, and *tun* is common, forming Drayton. It can also mean ‘a place where timber is dragged’. In the parish of Drayton Beauchamp is the ancient path up the scarp called ‘Drayton Holloway’, so it seems to fit.

The Domesday Book (1086) gives the place the name of *Draitone*, and the Beauchamp family are first mentioned in 1221. *Drayton Belcamp* is mentioned in 1238, and *Drayton Becham* in 1526.

BUCKLAND: The Domesday Book gives *Bochelond*, by 1265 it is *Bucland* and in 1449, *Bukland*. The word is of Old English origin, meaning ‘land held by charter’, and this is one story relating to Buckland: “In 1066 the manor was held by Godric brother of Wulfwig bishop of Dorchester. As



Godric was his brother's tenant and could not alienate the land without his licence, it is probable that Buckland was an ancient possession of the see of Dorchester. If so, the place may well owe its name to the fact that it had to be granted to some early bishop by *boc*, or royal charter" (2).

ASTON CLINTON: By now, readers will recognise the suffix *tun*, of Aston. In the Domesday Book, the place is called *Estone*, in 1244 *Eston et Clynton*, in 1342 *Astonclynton* and in 1704 *Arston Clinton*. The first element refers to an Old English word for 'eastern' or 'east', and was probably used where the thing named lies to the east of some or other place, or faces the east. Clinton comes from the family of Willelmus de Clinton which held Eston in 1208, although one source comments that there might have been a hamlet called Clinton nearby.

So, what did the 'east' of Aston Clinton refer to? It is suggested that it is east of the more western WESTON TURVILLE. The Domesday Book calls it simply *Weston*, and the first mention of the current name is in 1362, as *Westone Turvile*. One source claims that Galfrid de Tuveuill was around by 1174, but it seems clear that William de Turvile held the manor in the reign of King Stephen (or King John, depending on the source). The remains of the mott and bailey are still evident in Weston Turville, dating from those times.

So we can see that the place-names associated with this short canal hark back to the country's first settlements, earliest economy and historic land-ownership.

## REFERENCES:

- (1) M. Gelling & A. Cole: "The Landscape of Place-Names" (2000, 2003)
- (2) Victoria History of the Counties of England – Buckinghamshire (1899)
- (3) E. Ekwall: "The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names" (Revised 1959)
- (4) A. Mawer & F.M. Stenton: "The Place-names of Buckinghamshire" (1925)
- (5) A.H. Smith: "English Place-Name Elements" (1956, 1987)
- (6) L.W. Heppel & A.M. Doggett "The Chilterns" (1992)



## PARISH CHURCHES OF THE ARM



*Above: Buckland (see front cover) in all its glory.*



*Above: Halton, where many of the graves are for RAF personnel, associated with the local base.*



*Above: Weston Turville. Worth a visit to see its charming revolving lychgate, operated by a suspended ball and chain.*



*Left: The tower of Marsworth which, perched upon its hill, dominates the local canal scene.*



## **PLACE NAMES ALONG THE ARM: THE PARISH STRUCTURE** *by John Savage*

If you were to look at a map of the parishes along the Arm you would be struck by the strange shape of many of them, tending to be long strips aligned north – south. This parish structure is very old, generally having been established in Anglo-Saxon times and little changed since.

These strip parishes are a particular feature of the Chilterns scarp and they continue as such right down into Oxfordshire. They were thus formed so that each had a share the flat 'good' land at the foot of the hills (not wooded), steep wooded escarpment and the poorer soils of the hilltop, often with extensive woodlands. The parish churches are invariably on the good ground in the vale and, because of the thin parishes, are often remarkably close together. For example, the churches of Drayton Beauchamp, Buckland and Aston Clinton lie within a line of only 1.75 miles.

Classic examples of strip parishes are neighbouring Drayton Beauchamp and Buckland, which are each about five miles in length, but generally only 0.5 miles across. Indeed, at its narrowest point in the middle, Drayton Beauchamp is only just over 300 yards wide and at its top (southern) extremity is only one field in width (about 400 yards). Both these parishes were originally even longer, stretching a further mile south; the top ends (together with that of Aston Clinton) were amalgamated with Cholesbury to form the present parish of Cholesbury-cum-St.Leonards. However, place names still relate to the original parishes with, for example, Drayton Wood, Buckland Wood and Buckland Common now lying in Cholesbury-cum-St.Leonards.

Of our parishes, Tring, Aston Clinton, Halton and Wendover also have substantial upland parts with most of the extensive 'Wendover Woods' actually lying in the parishes of Halton and Aston Clinton.

Some parishes even had detached sections on the hilltop, although these have all subsequently been 'tidied-up'. For example, Weston Turville had The Lee and Marsworth had Hawridge. Even more remarkable was Tring, which had Coleshill - some ten miles away south of Amersham. As a result, Coleshill was a detached island of Hertfordshire deep in Buckinghamshire, a situation which remained until 1844. Again, place



names give away the original structure and Hertfordshire House and Herts Wood can be found at Coleshill today.

Civil parish names and boundaries are shown on the 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey Explorer Maps. Another useful source of information is the excellent series of Chiltern Society Footpath Maps as these show the path numbers, and all rights of way are numbered by parish; you will therefore always know which parish you are walking in!

*Some of the beautiful parish churches are illustrated in this issue, to accompany this, and the parish place names, articles. As well as Buckland on the front cover, Marsworth, Weston Turville, Halton and Buckland appear on the centre pages.*

## **INTERPRETATION BOARDS**

The boards for Little Tring (funded by The Chilterns Conservation Board) and Wendover, Wharf Road (funded by the Wendover Community Trust) have now been delivered and should be erected by the time you read this. In addition to general information about the canal the Little Tring board gives details of the completed Phase One restoration, and that at Wendover gives the history of water measurement there.

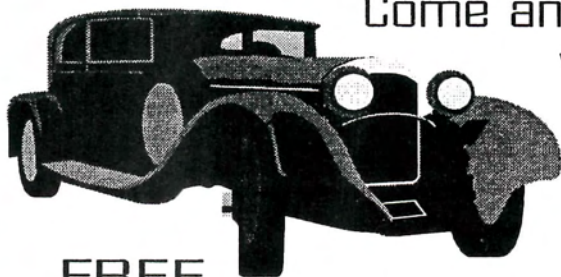
**CHILTERN HILLS**



**VINTAGE**



**VEHICLE  
RALLY**



Come and see the finest  
vintage vehicles  
on  
display

Proceeds  
to Local  
Good Causes

**FREE  
PARKING**

Auto Jumble - Trade Stands - Craft Marquee - Licensed Bar  
Helicopter Rides - Fun Dog Show + Other Attractions

**ADMISSION : £4.00**

**OAP's £3.00, UNDER 14'S FREE**

**SUNDAY 21ST MAY** 10.00AM - 5.00PM

**WESTON ROAD - ASTON CLINTON**

**NEXT TO**

**AYLESBURY RUGBY CLUB**

Entries  
Welcome  
on the Day

## **RESTORATION REPORT**

At the time of writing, the bases for the two new footbridges (4 and 4a) between Little Tring and Drayton Beauchamp are complete and the footbridge kits have been delivered. By the time you read this, the bridges should have been erected. Our team of volunteers doing this tricky job wished to keep the date of the work quiet as, understandably, they did not want an audience of gongoozlers!

As mentioned in the Editorial, the official opening of the completed bridges will take place later at a date convenient for our principal sponsors, The Chilterns Conservation Board. Other sponsorship is also coming along nicely, and the form is reproduced again in this magazine in case you have yet to sponsor a plank - the total cost of the two bridges, including bases/narrows has not been covered to date and further donations are still very welcome.

Incidentally, stop-plank grooves are provided at the eastern end of the narrows for bridge 4, and the concrete retaining wall on the off-side is extended for 50 metres, inset by one boat width, to provide short term visitor moorings by Whitehouses.

Near bridge 4a, on the off-side, is an old Hertfordshire County Council waste tip. This needs stabilising alongside the canal, and it has been agreed that we shall use surplus spoil tipped here for the purpose. This work will have to be delayed until badgers, who have excavated a sett in the tip, have completed their breeding, June at the earliest.

With the footbridges completed, attention can resume on the main re-lining aspect of Phase II, working backwards from Drayton Beauchamp. You may recall that the method of protecting the Bentomat on the sloping sides of the channel needs to be finalised, hollow concrete blocks being the preferred option with soft covering above the water line. Once the method has been finally established, the costings for this phase will need to be revisited, as they may need to be recalculated due to the different method originally envisaged (stone filled gabions).



# LETTER

Re: Issue No/50 – February 2006

Many thanks for your last Issue, received February.

As you can see by our address, we are in Spain, but we also own land next to the Wendover Arm at Buckland Wharf. May I just add my observations and views, which you could bring to other reader's attention.

1) Reference the asphalt repairs to the Arm. I have several areas of old black asphalt showing through the overgrown banking on my side of the canal (The opposite side to the towpath). This was discovered when clearing back the overgrown weeds/reeds etc. to help keep the canal banks tidy. A significant find regarding the waterproofing of the canal. If anyone is interested, I will happily provide a site visit when next in the UK later this year. I also have photographs of the waterproofing with black asphalt when the new by-pass was built and the canal re-routed, showing the original inverted half shape of the base walls of the old canal.

2) With regards to David Beazley's letter/correspondence, I have owned Trailers End, Buckland Wharf for some 30 years or so, and have seen the rise and fall of the water level. Regarding the cleaning of weeds etc. which affect the water flow, an old Polish waterways man used to keep the canal on this stretch in very good condition and the weeds and reeds cut back to allow the landing of ducks and swans etc. on the water. He was retired by British Waterways and unfortunately was not replaced, so therefore the canal became overgrown. I understand that British Waterways do not have the men or finance to carry out this type of work, therefore the flow of water is impeded by the weed growth while the opening of the canal will obviously keep the centre area clear of weeds and free flowing.

As far as wildlife goes, I and my wife when residing at our accommodation adjacent to the canal in the summer have seen most types of wildlife on the land, including Herons, wild ducks, Canadian Geese, with foxes and rabbits living happily together. There is also a pair of Roe Deer who have successfully raised young each year in a small overgrown copse provided to protect them, especially since the by-pass was built. When working on the canal bank I see Moorhens, ducks and swans with up to five cygnets, as well as frogs, toads and small fish. We also see many different birds in

the paddock area and it is not unknown for the water fowl and their young to use this area for themselves when out of the water. We still do not see Water Voles.

On the point of the tow path adjacent to Buckland Road, I must ask anyone walking along it to beware of dog excrement which some people seem to think will just 'go away', while others put their poop scoopers into plastic bags and throw them into the hedges - a double environmental problem. PLEASE, if people walk their dogs down the canal, leave the tow path as you would like to find it and for the benefit of others.

Yours sincerely

*Tim and Judith Mattersom  
Fuengirola, Malaga, Spain*

*[ED: some valid points are raised here. The problem of weed growth, so bad at times on the upper Arm that water is not visible, will of course be solved by the restoration of the canal. This will maintain a clear channel, together with aquatic vegetation along the banks; the best of both worlds for wildlife. The fluctuating water level, extremely low at present following another winter of low rainfall, will again be solved by restoration. It should be remembered that this will maintain a constant water level all the way up to, and including, the Wendover Basin. I heartily endorse the plea to dog owners! Putting the excrement into a plastic bag and throwing it in the hedge only makes the problem worse; instead of an unpleasant but quickly biodegradable mess a revolting item of permanent litter is created. Unless, of course, somebody carries out the unenviable task of fishing it out for proper disposal].*

# HELP RESTORE INLAND WATERWAYS AND EARN CASH



*Sort out all those items you have been saving because "one day I'll need them". We will sell them for you at our Famous Boat Jumble to be held at the Wendover (Tring) Canal Festival.*

*25% of the cash goes to waterways restoration and the balance to you*

*Bring your items to the Chiltern Branch Tent during the Festival or contact John Brice (01494 873298) or Ray Joyner (01494 524166) for information on how to get items to us prior to the festival.*



## **BOAT JUMBLE**

*at*

**Wendover Canal Festival  
28/29 May 2006**

**All Proceeds to  
IWA CHILTERN BRANCH**



# **BUCKLAND WHARF GAS WORKS**

*By Barry Martin*

Research into the use of asphalt in an attempt to cure the leakage problems of the Wendover Arm gave voice to the question - where did the basic coal tar used as one of the ingredients of the asphalt come from and could the source be local to the Wendover Arm?

Subsequent research into the Grand Junction Canal Company archives, by Professor Timothy Peters, has shown that the quantity of coal tar ordered, some 1600 tons, was greatly in excess of the amount produced by any small local gas works and was obtained from the Greenwich and Deptford Gas Works in London. ( See: Wendover Arm Asphalt - Wendover Arm News – Issue No. 50, February 2006 )

## **Outline history of Gas Lighting and the need for Gas Works**

Up until about 1820 most buildings were lit at night by candles or oil lamps. It was William Murdoch, an innovative engineer who invented the first gas lighting. William Murdoch was born in August 1754, at Old Cumnock in Ayrshire and his father was a talented engineer in addition to being a master gunner in the army. In 1777, at the age of 23, hearing of developments at Matthew Boulton's Soho Factory in Birmingham, where fellow Scot James Watt was building his improved steam engines, he walked south in search of a job. (His name later became anglicised to Murdock and he proved to be an engineer of great ingenuity.)

He was sent to Cornwall in 1779 to oversee the building of Boulton & Watt atmospheric steam engines to drain water from tin mines.

While in Cornwall, unknown to his employers, he invented and drove the first steam carriage but never patented or developed the idea. Murdoch then turned his talents in a completely different direction and in 1792 he came up with an invention that was, at the time, equally valuable – gas lighting. He invented a method of extracting gas from coal and his house in Redruth was the first in the world to be lit by this method.

In March 1802, to celebrate the Peace Treaty of Amiens, the Boulton and Watt Soho Works in Birmingham were illuminated by Murdock's gas

lighting. The Peace Treaty however did not last for long and soon Britain and France were at war – again ! Thankfully gas lighting was soon to be used to provide better lighting for cotton mills and factories, and to make dark city streets safer. For his achievement Murdoch was awarded the Rumford Gold Medal by the Royal Society in 1808.

The early gas producing plants were set up to manufacture gas for specific industrial needs and it was some years before gas became available for street lighting. Some time later Frederick Windsor was the entrepreneur who promoted the idea for central gas works rather than individual installations. His first demonstration of public lighting was in 1807 when, for the birthday celebration of George III, he lit the garden wall of the Prince Regent's London home, Carlton House. Later, in the same year, he erected street lights in Pall Mall.

Within a few years private gas companies were set up in London and other towns and cities where there were large populations. The early gas burners were rudimentary and the lighting dim. It was not until Carl Auer, Baron von Weisbach, invented the incandescent gas mantle in 1887 that "bright lighting" became available. This particular invention was to keep the use of gas for lighting going for many years against increasing competition from electric lighting.

Away from towns and cities owners of large country houses, having enjoyed the benefit of gas lighting in their town houses, set up small privately owned local gas works to allow gas lighting to be installed in their country residences. These gas works were sited close enough to be able to supply the gas via buried pipes, close to roads for coal deliveries, and generally downwind !

One such private gas works was built beside the Aylesbury to Tring Road on a piece of land beside the Wendover Arm. It was built to supply gas to Aston Clinton House, the country home of Sir Anthony de Rothschild. ( See: The Romantic History of Aston Clinton House - Wendover Arm News – Issue No. 48, August 2005 )

We are not certain when these gas works were built but we know some details from the Sale Catalogue printed in The Estates Gazette by direction of the Hon. N.Charles Rothschild.

---

The sale, at the London Auction Mart, on Tuesday, 17th July, 1923 included eight "lots".

The "lot" of particular interest being - The Private Gas Works for which the supply of gas is generated for the Estate, situated a short distance to the East of the Residential portion of the Estate, on the Aylesbury to Tring Road. The Premises comprise a Cottage faced with compo, having slate roof and containing : - Sitting Room, Kitchen with range, Scullery, Larder, and two Bed Rooms over, each with fireplace. Company's Water is laid on. The Works include : - Gas Holder, Retort House, built of brick and slate, containing Six Retorts, and having Storage Rooms on either side; detached Purifying House with boxes, with Meter House adjoining: Coal Shed with Store Shed adjoining; Tar Well and Melonia Well, Two Piggeries and Mixing Houses. There are small Shady Pleasure Gardens and a Good Vegetable Garden.

-----

Due to the small size of the Gas Works at Buckland Wharf, and the other Gas Works built beside the Arm in Halton to supply gas for Halton House, it is obvious that little, if any, locally produced coal tar was used in the manufacture of the asphalt used on the Arm. Certainly if any of the coal delivered to these Gas Works was transported by canal the frequent closure of the Arm due of leakages must have been a considerably source of annoyance to the Rothschild families.



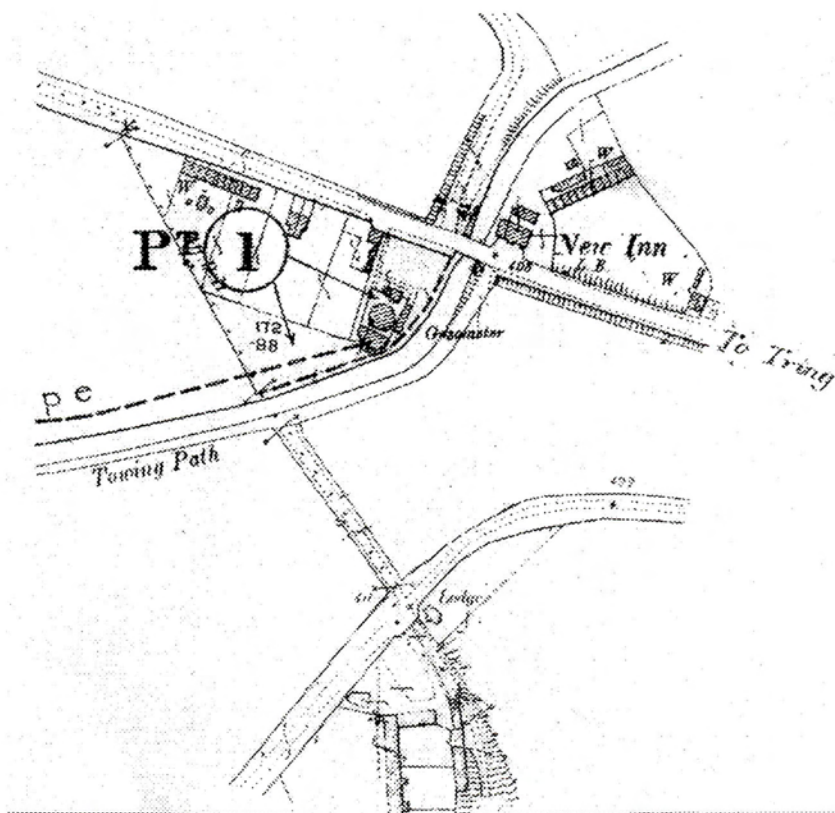
## Other Information on Historic Gas Works

Fakenham Gas Works, opened in 1846 and closed in 1965, is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument. It is the last surviving complete Gas Works in England and is a typical small town works which served 500 customers and employed 11 men. The Fakenham Museum of Gas and Local History, in Fakenham, Norfolk, comprises the Gas Works and displays of lighting, heating, laundry and cooking equipment. For further details and opening times - phone 01328 851133

---

**Acknowledgement.** I am grateful to archivist Diana Gulland of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society for the Buckland Wharf Gas Works Sales Catalogue details.

## MAP OF BUCKLAND WHARF SHOWING GAS WORKS



# Wendover Arm Trust

Registered Office: 129 High Street, Berkhamsted, Herts HP4 2DJ  
A non-profit making company limited by guarantee. Registered in England No. 2353392  
Incorporated 1989. Registered Charity No. 801190  
[www.wendoverarmtrust.co.uk](http://www.wendoverarmtrust.co.uk)

President: Dr. David Fletcher, CBE

Vice President: Mr. Roger Lewis

Patron: Mr. David Suchet OBE

## The Council

### Chairman

Bob Wheal  
467 Bideford Green  
LEIGHTON BUZZARD,  
Beds LU7 2TZ  
Tel: 01525 381614  
07860 286155

### Restoration Director & Vice Chairman

Roger Leishman  
7 Hall Park  
BERKHAMSTED, Herts  
HP4 2NU  
Tel: 01442 874536

### Secretary

John Hopkins  
80 Ashfield  
Stantonbury  
MILTON KEYNES  
MK14 6AT  
Tel: 01908 311521

### Treasurer

John Brooman  
66 Bryants Acre  
Wendover  
AYLESBURY, Bucks  
HP22 6LA  
Tel: 01296 623542

### Publicity Officer & Newsletter Editor

John Savage  
16 Lakeside  
TRING, Herts  
HP23 5HN  
Tel: 01442 827702

### Membership Secretary

Barry Martin  
69 Wenwell Close  
Aston Clinton  
AYLESBURY, Bucks  
HP22 5LG  
Tel: 01296 630599

### Trust Sales

Beryl Martin  
69 Wenwell Close  
Aston Clinton  
AYLESBURY, Bucks  
HP22 5LG  
Tel: 01296 630599

### Fundraising Director

Hubert Prescott  
32 Stubbs Wood  
AMERSHAM, Bucks  
HP6 6EY  
Tel: 01494 725117

### Minutes Secretary

Shelley Savage  
16 Lakeside  
TRING, Herts  
HP23 5HN  
Tel: 01442 827702

### Council Member

Ray Orth  
42 Lowndes Avenue  
CHESHAM, Bucks  
HP5 2HH  
Tel: 01494 786868

### Council Member

Ron Pittaway  
65 Wenwell Close  
Aston Clinton  
AYLESBURY, Bucks  
HP22 5LG  
Tel: 01296 630968

### BW Nominee

Matthew Routledge  
Operations Manager  
BW South East Waterways  
Witan Gate House  
500-600 Witan Gate  
MILTON KEYNES  
MK9 1BW  
Tel: 01908 302500

### IWA Nominee

Ray Joyner  
2 Keats Close  
HIGH WYCOMBE  
Bucks  
HP11 2UJ  
Tel: 01494 524166

### Chiltern Society Nominee

John Rowe  
Fox Meadow  
Water End Lane  
Potten End  
BERKHAMSTED, Herts  
HP4 2SH  
Tel: 01442 862619

### Festival Chairman

Graeme Lockhart  
15 St Leonards Close  
LEIGHTON BUZZARD  
Beds LU7 3DF  
Tel: 01525 374761

# **TRING CANAL FESTIVAL 2006**

**Sunday 28 and Bank Holiday  
Monday 29 May**

**Booking forms for boats, classic vehicles, craft stands, trade stands, caravans and tents are available from the Trust website, or by telephoning John Savage on 01442 827702**

**Posters are enclosed with this  
'Wendover Arm News'**

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO BUY OR SELL YOUR  
GRAND FESTIVAL DRAW TICKETS AND SEND THE  
COUNTERFOILS AND CHEQUE TO JO LEESON AT  
HER ADDRESS ON THE TICKETS**