



WENDOVER ARM NEWS

Newsletter of the Wendover Arm Trust



Issue No. 53
December 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

Many members will be aware of the cuts to the British Waterways budget, imposed by DEFRA as a consequence of additional costs incurred by the new agricultural single payment subsidy. We hope that BW's reduced financial resources will not affect the Trust or the Wendover Arm. They do provide some sponsorship for the Tring Canal Festival, although indications are that these arrangements should not be affected.....

There has, however, been one very direct effect on the Trust which is that our BW Representative on the Council, Matthew Routledge, has become one of the many hundreds of BW employees to lose his job. Matthew has been a good friend to the Trust during his period of tenure and we could not have wished for a more helpful or supportive individual. We wish him well in his future career. Matthew has volunteered to remain on the Trust's Council in a personal capacity, which is good news indeed and warmly welcomed by the Council.

You will see from the vacancies in the list at the back of this magazine that we have lost two other members of Council; Hubert Prescott has resigned owing to ill health following a fall whilst on holiday and Ray Joyner (our IWA nominee) has had to resign as he is moving away from the area. We thank them both for their contributions.

A postscript to the 2006 Festival is that the final profit was £41,500 - a remarkable achievement in view of the challenging conditions. Looking forward to 2007, encouraging news is that the Festival Committee is at full strength, with all tasks covered, no mean feat when so many voluntary organisations struggle to maintain an adequate number active people. The Festival gets underway with the launch of the Grand Draw with this issue; we look forward to your support - get those cheques rolling in and let's beat the record amount raised yet again!

[Cover picture: before and after; the 'Kingfisher' sign at Wendover in April 2006, and after restoration by Sue Hetherington (funded by the Wendover Community Trust). What a splendid job!]

RESTORATION REPORT

Firstly, a correction to the report in the previous issue in which it was said that the sump at Drayton Beauchamp has become permanent at the request of British Waterways. Whilst remedial work to the Nuttall's bund was in progress it became clear that future removal of the sump at the present end of the pipeline (that is on the offside in the bund) would be a difficult operation at the end of Phase II. Furthermore, its retention would give an additional weiring point in case of future flooding. Roger Leishman, our Restoration Director, therefore suggested to our BW Project Engineer that the sump should be left in place after re-watering all of Phase II. No objections to this proposal were made by BW and the concrete block required to seal the gabions on the towpath side has now resulted in a 14' 6" narrows.

On Saturday 21st October footbridge 4a was officially named "The Chiltern Bridge" at an unveiling ceremony led by Sir John Johnson, Chairman of the Chilterns Conservation Board. The Board was the major sponsor for this bridge, contributing almost £10,000 from their Sustainable Development Fund. Sponsors of individual plaques were also invited to see

their plaques in place, and very smart they look too. Sir John thoroughly enjoyed himself, and was most complimentary about the efforts of our volunteers. He vowed to walk the length of the Arm to see the other progress made.

Work parties have continued with bulk excavation and pipe capping, with this work now approaching the next manhole into the pipeline, at chainage 4290. It is planned to build the next temporary bund at this manhole with a view to re-watering this section during 2007.

Work has also progressed with the wing walls for the two footbridges; they cannot be opened for public use until these are complete (and even then the original routes of the public footpaths across the canal channel will have to remain available for use until such time as Hertfordshire County Council has completed the footpath Diversion Orders.)

Of interest, is the total of volunteer labour hours expended from 1996, when restoration proper started, to the end of 2005; this stands at 36,215 hours, with a cash value equivalent (which can be used for any 'matched funding') of £358,137.



WAT Chairman Bob Wheel, Chilterns Conservation Board Chairman Sir John Johnson and WAT Restoration Director Roger Leishman at the dedication ceremony for footbridge 4a on 21 October 2006.

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WENDOVER TO KATMANDU

Trust member Clive Hicks made an epic journey to the Everest Base Camp with sponsorship to raise money for two charities, including the Wendover Arm Trust. He raised a magnificent £2675 for Trust funds, worth well over £3000 to us after Gift Aid. We thank him most gratefully; here follows his account of the trip, it certainly sounds as if he earned the money!

I used to walk. In the days before I owned a narrowboat I would walk for miles with my wife, child and dog. But now I stand holding the tiller of Athos and watching the glorious countryside drift by. Oh, I play a little bit of hockey and pride myself that I am a fit man for my age (pushing 60) so I didn't think twice when.....

A friend's daughter asked me, during much imbibing of Christmas spirit, if I would "make the numbers up" on a charity trek to Everest Base Camp. I agreed enthusiastically. On the way home my wife smiled her patient smile. "You do realise", she said, "that you'll need more than your walking boots and your old Barbour, don't you? You do realise what a commitment this is? You do realise that Hannah and her friends are nearly 40 years younger than you?"

I had not considered any of these, of course and she was right, as she nearly always is!

When I got the list from the charity company, I could not believe the kit one needs - light warm jacket (for day), down jacket (for night), hat for sun, hat for snow, waterproofs, thermal undies that wicker (don't ask), special tog sleeping bag and liner, insulated mattress, water purifiers, ecological toiletries, the list went on, and all this in a rucksack weighing 12 kilos!

I set about getting sponsorship. I decided that I would raise money for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust and the Wendover Arm. People signed up easily enough and it was a good opportunity to explain about canals and their funding. Every meeting, casual or otherwise, was an opportunity not to be wasted. I turned into Scrooge, counting my pledges nightly. Of course, signing up was not the end of the matter!

I left getting fit a little late. The youngsters went on several training walks. I went on a couple but found I could not keep up with the alcohol

consumption, let alone the speed, so I retired to the gym and endless miles on the treadmill and cross trainer.

In the end seven of us took the plunge, and none of us were very suitable Everest conquerors. We were an unlikely crew to trek for twelve days to an altitude of 5,300m and sleep in tents at -5C. And we were all a bit nervous. On arrival in Nepal we were whisked in darkness to an hotel in Kathmandu for one last shower and a night's rest before setting off into the wilderness. We all piled plates high with the dinner buffet and fortified ourselves for the journey ahead. By seven the next morning we joined another small group and were on our way to the Khumbu in the high Himalayas. We flew in a light aircraft with a pilot who navigated by sight - impressive in the clear light of the Kathmandu Valley, but disconcerting when we plunged into cloud. We landed safely however at Lukia, a tiny town on the edge of a cliff with an airstrip a few hundred metres long. We met our trek leader, Raj, a British doctor. He introduced Dipendra, our trek doctor, Saran, our head guide and a team of five Sherpa guides and 22 assorted porters, cooks, kitchen boys and pack animals who would be our "staff". We were all a little taken aback; 27 staff for only fourteen trekkers? It seemed ludicrous but soon all became clear.

There is one industry in the Khumbu - adventure sport. Every lodge and shop in every town is devoted to climbing equipment, fleece-lined jackets, energy bars and maps. Every local person you meet is a guide, or a porter, or a lodge owner. Sagarmatha National Park, the protected area around Mount Everest, is the Mecca of climbers and walkers from all over the world. It's a simple way to live; the peak you're aiming for is always the focus. There are no roads and no motorised vehicles; every journey is on foot and all the cargo is carried, either by yaks or porters. Porters are phenomenal, carrying loads of 50 or 60 kilos in baskets supported by straps over their heads. They walk all day, often in rubber flip-flops, along narrow mountain paths - stopping only when a train of yaks goes lumbering through. Our porters would set off before us, carrying our gear. When we stopped for lunch, they would be ready to hand out drinks and plates of hot food. When we stopped to camp in the evening they would be there before us yet again, with tents all erected and our mess tent glowing with lamplight and *tattoo* this (hot tea).

We quickly fell into the rhythm; up at six for breakfast, trekking for 6 - 8 hours then rest and supper and bed by nine. The food got worse as the trek progressed. One gourmet supper consisted of pasta, rice and potatoes - nothing else! Over supper Raj, our leader, would tell us about

the next day's journey. "Tomorrow will be a nice easy walk in the morning", he told us on our second night, "with just a cheeky little hill to climb after lunch". Raj's 'cheeky little hill' turned out to be a toil of several hours, up steep stone steps and slippery forest paths that left even the fittest among us gasping at the top.

From then on, every day was a series of 'cheeky little hills'. We learned to walk slowly, sip water at every pause and save our energy for the higher altitudes. As the air thinned, my lungs struggled to take in enough oxygen. I felt nauseous and light-headed. Altitude also disturbs your sleep and breathing patterns. You may even stop breathing during sleep. Some woke in the night gasping for air, or subconsciously anxious because the sound of the tent buddy's snoring had ceased. (Tricky situation this - many people found, oddly, that sick tent buddies preferred not to breathe than to be woken and reminded to do so!) Luckily our camp doctor, Dipendra, has pills for every malady - 'anti-dizzy pills', 'anti-squit pills', anti-sick pills' etc.. You get the idea. By the time we made our ascent to Base Camp on the ninth day nearly everyone had altitude sickness at some level. Curiously, the smokers survived the best, their bodies being used to oxygen deprivation (seriously!)

But sleepless nights were made up for by spectacular days of walking. At first we walked through villages full of vegetable patches and blossoming trees, and through forests of pine and rhododendron. We saw birds we couldn't identify, and even one or two golden eagles. But as we trekked higher the trees gave way to short, prickly shrubs and grasses, the rivers got wider and faster, and the paths narrower, rocky and bare. All along the trail we passed Mani Stones, rocks piled high and carved with Tibetan mantras for good karma. There were many small shrines and stupas bedecked with colourful prayer flags. The Tibetan Buddhists are superstitious and take every opportunity to increase their good karma. When a prayer flag flutters or a prayer wheel spins, it carries good thoughts to all the people around it. So, the more your flag flutters, the better karma you have. We saw great loops of prayer flags like bunting all over the mountainsides, fluttering madly and clocking up the karma by the second. We took care to pass on the left of every sacred object; to pass anticlockwise is bad luck. And we soon found out why luck is so important in this area; one afternoon we found a hillside dotted with monuments to disappeared climbers. Hopeful adventurers of every nationality are remembered only with pile of stones and a small inscription in this memorial garden. It is an

memorial garden. It is an eerie place, covered with prayer flags and full of tiny piles of stones placed for luck and remembrance.

Our final 'cheeky little hill', the trek to Everest Base Camp itself, began with a wake-up call in darkness at 4.30am. Tents were frozen on the inside and we needed head torches to pack bags and fumble our way to the toilet tent. But when the sunlight broke over the highest peaks, colouring just the top ones with gold and leaving our camp in shadow, the effect was spectacular. The trek wound through a weird lunar landscape of frozen, glacial water and rocky paths frosted with layers of snow. By 9am when we stopped at Gorak Shep, the highest station before Base Camp, the sun was very strong so we carried on to make good time. We could see the peaks of Pumori, Nuptse, Island Peak and Changtse all around us. Changtse is in Tibet, just the other side of the mountain.

As we got higher those not previously affected by the altitude started to feel a bit weird. We could see Base Camp in the far distance - a collection of tiny colourful tents spread in a gully at the bottom of the Khumbu ice-fall, a massive wall of ice. The tents didn't seem to get any nearer for a long time. And then, suddenly, mid afternoon, we were there. Exhausted, we flaked out among a motley collection of tents belonging to one of the summit expeditions. We were almost too tired to realise that we'd completed our challenge. Our guides told us that everyone had exceeded expectations. It is apparently quite unusual for everybody in a group that size to make it all the way to Base Camp.

Coming back down felt to me exactly that. Supposedly, after building itself up to combat the effect of altitude, the body experiences a surge of energy that can last for up to two weeks. I felt none of this euphoria and remained lethargic for about another month. I don't think any of us have ever appreciated the opportunity to shower as much as we did when we reached our hotel in Kathmandu. There had been one or two opportunities to shower on the trek in little corrugated sheds where a bucket of hot water with a shower fitting attached could be hired for about £2. One team member proudly showed a photo of his bathwater that morning, which contained two week's dirt and was an impressive shade of brown.

The next day we explored the sights of Kathmandu; Durbar Square with the ancient palaces and temples; the Swayambunath temple where the monkeys come to charm people's lunch out of their pockets. And all the

monkeys come to charm people's lunch out of their pockets. And all the crazy markets where the Nepalis throw their wares on temple walls and statues to display them. Unaware, while trekking, of the political turmoil in Kathmandu, we spent our last night venturing out of the safe confines of our hotel and ended up being rescued from a bar by very youthful 'police' wielding AK47s. Very sobering!

I came home having lost a stone in weight and gained a beard! It took nearly three months to collect the sponsorship pledges - as those involved with charity events will know, 90% comes without asking, the rest is a long, embarrassing nag. Sadly the weight went back on a little quicker.

All in all, now the dust has settled, did I enjoy it? Yes! Would I do it again? No! So.....

Anyone out there want to borrow a light warm jacket (for day), down jacket (for night), waterproofs, thermal undies (that wicker), special tog sleeping bag and liner, insulated mattress, water purifiers, ecological toiletries etc. etc.

BACK ISSUES OF 'WATERWAYS WORLD'

Trust member John Francis (landlord of the Kings Arms in Tring - a highly recommended hostelry) has kindly donated a splendid collection of 'Waterways World' magazines to the Trust, for us to use to raise funds. There is a complete run from 1982 to date and offers are invited either for the whole set or for individual years (with preference given to anybody wanting them all). Free delivery is possible within a reasonable radius of Tring. This is a good opportunity to acquire a useful archive, and benefit the Trust in the process.

Offers to the editor in writing or by telephone, please.

STORAGE FOR TRUST MATERIAL

The Trust needs additional storage for material, particularly publicity displays and merchandise. We do not wish to divert money from restoration for this purpose unless absolutely unavoidable and wondered whether any member(s) may be able to help.

Do you perhaps have a disused garage, shed or barn that could be used? It would have to be secure (or capable of being made so), dry and with reasonable vehicle access.

If you think you may be able to help the Trust in this way please contact the Editor.

ONE FOR THE BOYS

Reminiscences of Trust member Peter J R Trout

As a young schoolmaster at John Colet School in Wendover in 1961 one was encouraged by the Head, Jim Crick, to organise a club for the pupils. Being interested in transport I was quite keen to do something along those lines.

A Transport Society was formed; a committee elected; a bespoke badge commissioned; ideas for activities garnered and the society was launched.

After 45 years I can remember little of the activities, which included films, visits (eg the Motor Show) and talks etc.. However, two special projects stand out.

Firstly was the film project. A group of us set out to make our own film. The basic plot was a cycle ride to take in photogenic transport features that took our fancy; obviously the cyclists themselves and events on the road. Moving outwards towards Tring we came across the treasure trove known as Crows Nest - a scrap yard of lorries, cars and goodness knows what else. (I suppose it is long gone). From there we moved on to Tring for both the railway and Grand Union Canal. Here we caught the tail-end of the commercial boats. That year there was a dreadful water shortage and the

painted boats were moored up and unable to move. They were there a long time. We got some good shots of the boats, which would now be archive material.

The second and ambitious scheme was to research the Wendover Canal which ended, appropriately enough, at the John Colet site. The project was reported in The Bucks Herald of 5th May 1961, and I still have a copy. We did not achieve all that much, partly because of time. Walking the canal (what could be seen of it), some basic research and the very few responses to the newspaper article gave some information.

The really outstanding memory is a visit to British Transport Archives near Paddington. Here a small group had the privilege of looking at appropriate minute books and other material of the Grand Union (Junction) where it applied to the Wendover Arm. I cannot imagine that the same facility would be made available now to a small group of schoolboys who must be amongst a small elite of youngsters to turn the pages of 18th and 19th century documents.

Alas for high hopes! Firstly I moved from the school after only two years. The film was not

finished and I should imagine it was thrown away some time after. If it were still around it would have at least historical value; likewise the canal project. The real research was impractical. It would have taken time and money (neither of which I had and certainly not the boys) to keep going up to London. A little pamphlet could have been forthcoming but I had moved on leaving most of what we had acquired at the school and which probably suffered the same fate as the unedited film. "Other men's flowers" are inclined to wilt.

On the other hand I have often wondered about the boys (girls were invited but transport was not seen as a girlie thing) of the society. Was it just a fleeting interest? Did any activity make an impact? Have one or two become members of the Wendover Arm Trust and seen the transformations wrought over the decades.

ED: wouldn't it be good if such a project could be undertaken by John Colet School today, led by a present day incarnation of Peter?

FUNDRAISING

Following on neatly from the above article, Bob Wheal and David Andrew from the Trust recently attended a conference on fundraising organised by the IWA. The Lottery people were there, and we learned about the current way that grants are allocated. What came through very clearly was that, whilst we are unlikely to attract funds from the Lottery for straight engineering purposes, projects linked to learning and improved access for the public have a good chance of success. Clearly we need somebody to work with the local schools and community to develop such project(s).

NEWS IN BRIEF

DEDICATION CEREMONY

Members of the Restoration Team recently attended a ceremony at Drayton Beauchamp to dedicate the seat pictured on the front cover of September's 'Wendover Arm News'. Also unveiled was an attractive plaque, affixed to the new A41 overbridge, commemorating the Saxon burial discovered during the excavations for the new road and canal diversion. Look out for it if you pass that way.

WILSTONE RESERVOIR

Major works are underway on the northern side of Wilstone Reservoir, necessitating the closure of the car park on the Lower Icknield Way. A new higher capacity overflow weir is being constructed, discharging into a new culvert leading to the Gudgeon Brook. These works are necessary to provide protection for the headbank in extreme high water level situations, as the existing weir (at the northwest corner of the reservoir) has insufficient capacity to discharge water quickly enough in such circumstances). It is hoped to have the work completed, and the car park reopened, early in the New Year.

MOORING AT LITTLE TRING

There have been problems recently with boats substantially overstaying at Little Tring, both on the 48 hour moorings and in the narrows between the bridge and the stop lock. A number of such boats have been unlicensed, and some have been responsible for other antisocial behaviour such as abandoning items on the towpath. Trust Council members have been regularly reporting such infringements to British Waterways who are taking action, including the removal of one of the unlicensed vessels. At the time of writing the situation is much improved, although we shall continue to be vigilant and report any further infringements. Trust members may report any such problems to British Waterways at Milton Keynes on the number in the back cover of this magazine.

TRUST AGM

The Trust's AGM in October was well attended and, after the formal business, members were entertained by a splendid presentation by Jem Bates on his wooden boat restoration and construction activities. A summary of the key financial statements from the Annual Report are included in this magazine; any member who would like a copy of the full Report and Accounts for 2005/6 should contact the Editor who will be pleased to send one.

WALK AN ARM'S LENGTH 2007

Good news is that Sue Hetherington has had some offers of help, but more will always be welcome. Please give her a call on 01296 622955 if you think you might like to be involved with this most worthwhile event.

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As members, we make a contribution to The Wendover Arm Trust for each booking made.

Quote 'Wendover Arm News' when enquiring and booking.



NAVIGATION HAZARD ON THE ARM

Rodney Evans writes:

Intrepid navigators of the Arm will almost certainly at some time have made the acquaintance of the hidden ledge running round the inside off-side of the Heygates Mill bend of the canal. Disengagement from its clutches can be difficult and even damaging - I heard that somebody bent a prop during their attendance at the last Festival.

After the glorious opening of Phase I of the restoration, it was hoped that many new boaters would be tempted into exploration of the Arm. (This hope has been fulfilled). So, back in Spring 2005, I made a request to British Waterways, in line with their regular appeal at User Meetings, to be advised of "little things that mean a lot". The request was for navigation hazard notices to be posted clearly before the bend, both for going up the Arm and return. I had hoped that these signs would be erected before the 2006 Festival. It was not to be so. Further urgings and deliberations were required on wording and location, but at last in October 2006 notices have been erected on the towpath side as illustrated in the photograph.



WENDOVER ARM TRUST

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (including Income and Expenditure Account)

YEAR ENDED 5TH APRIL 2006

	Unrestricted Funds 2006 £	Restricted Funds 2006 £	Total Funds 2006 £	Total Funds 2005 £
<u>Incoming Resources</u>				
Incoming resources from generating funds				
Voluntary income:				
Donations and Grants	79,597	-	79,597	46,393
Subscriptions	4,350	-	4,350	3,155
Activities for generating funds				
Sale of goods and books	2,517	-	2,517	1,672
Wendover Canal Festival	97,013	-	97,013	82,788
Fund raising activities	8,087	-	8,087	7,505
Investment income	9,799	-	9,799	7,110
Incoming resources from charitable activities	-	-	-	
Total incoming resources	<u>201,363</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>201,363</u>	<u>148,623</u>
<u>Resources expended</u>				
Costs of generating funds				
Costs of generating voluntary income	3,559	-	3,559	3,017
Fundraising trading: cost of goods sold and other costs	48,076	-	48,076	42,233
Charitable activities	58,592	-	58,592	84,970
Governance costs	953	-	953	819
Total resources expended	<u>111,180</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>111,180</u>	<u>131,039</u>
Net movement in funds	90,183	-	90,183	17,584
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	181,699	-	181,699	164,115
Total funds carried forward	<u>271,882</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>271,882</u>	<u>181,699</u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses in the year. All incoming resources have been derived from continuing activities.

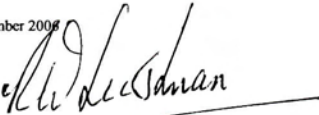
WENDOVER ARM TRUST

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 5TH APRIL 2006

<u>Fixed Assets</u>	2005 / 2006		2004 / 2005	
	£	£	£	£
Tangible Fixed Assets		<u>1,296</u>		<u>1,830</u>
 <u>Current Assets</u>				
Stock: Goods for resale	1,980		1,088	
Cash on Deposit	269,951		181,270	
Cash at Bank	7,905		8,684	
Stock: Books	741		1,054	
Stock: Walk T Shirts	<u>52</u>		<u>152</u>	
		280,629		192,248
 <u>Current Liabilities</u>				
Receipts less payments relating to the June 2006 Wendover Canal Festival including the Festival grand draw	8,026		10,259	
Sponsored walk			150	
Creditors	<u>517</u>		<u>470</u>	
		<u>(8,543)</u>		<u>(10,879)</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		272,086		181,369
NET ASSETS		<u>273,382</u>		<u>183,199</u>
 <u>REPRESENTED BY</u>				
General Funds	271,882		181,699	
Designated Fund : Wendover Canal Festival Expenditure	<u>1,500</u>		<u>1,500</u>	
Total Unrestricted Funds		<u>273,382</u>		<u>183,199</u>

Approved by the Directors on the 27th September 2006

R. Leishman (VICE CHAIRMAN)




J. Hopkins (SECRETARY)

Wendover Arm Trust

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GRAND DRAW FESTIVAL 2007

**Enclosed with this magazine are tickets
for the Grand Draw 2007.**

**This is your opportunity to support the
restoration, and our dedicated volunteers, by
selling all the tickets.**

**The 2006 Grand Draw raised a record £2215,
so let's set out to beat that this year!**

**Please send ticket stubs with cheque to
Beryl Martin at the address on the stubs.**

**PLEASE DO NOT SEND TO THE PROMOTER,
JOHN HOPKINS.**

**For more tickets call
John Savage on 01442 827702.**

**THANK YOU IN ANTICIPATION
OF YOUR SUPPORT**