

WENDOVER ARM NEWS

Quarterly newsletter of the Wendover Arm Trust

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Wendover Arm Trust

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Congratulations to our Vice-chairman, Bob Wheal, on his first effort as the new Newsletter editor on the production of the last newsletter - the Summer 1997 edition. Bob tells me that it was not his fault that that edition did not have a proper jacket on, and he assures me that when these notes are printed they will be properly "covered". Bob, as you can see, has bought himself a scanner which means that newsletters from now on will not only have reports of the Trust's progress but also visual evidence of what has, been achieved!

At this time of the year, following the intense activity of the annual Festival, things are usually very quiet but this year Roger Leishman and his small band of helpers have continued with their fencing project which was started during the Festival weekend and have now almost completed the fencing and hedge-trimming on the towpath side of the Arm around Little Tring Farm.

We are very pleased to welcome Renne Hopkins onto the Trust Council - we co-opted her at the July meeting and she will offer herself for election at the forthcoming AGM. Renee has very kindly offered her services as the Minute Secretary. We are still looking for an Hon. Secretary to continue the work that Richard House had to relinquish last year, as well as a Council member to act as a Fund-Raiser - if you feel that you can fill either of these positions I will be only too pleased to hear from you.

I'm very pleased to announce that the Council have made Group Captain Dr Ralph Winroe an Honorary Member of the Trust. Dr Winroe is a very keen amateur photographer who has given us a considerable amount of help during the whole of the lifetime of the Trust. You may remember that he gave us a very interesting presentation of canal photographs at one of our earlier A.G.M's.

I'm sorry that I was unable to attend BW's annual event at Bulbourne this year but I am told, by those members who did attend, that there is still considerable interest being shown by the general public in our plans for restoration. We had hoped to have a presence at the I.W.A. National Waterway Festival at Henley this year but, unfortunately, we did not have enough volunteers to man a stand there.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a notice of this year's A.G.M, when I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on that occasion - after the business of the meeting Roger Leishman will show slides and talk about the work that has been going on recently on the Arm.

Roger Lewis, Chairman

Jottings

First an apology and a correction (not a regular feature I hope, but who knows ...). Thanks to Roger Leishman for pointing out that domestic waste was not put into the infilled section after 1974.

In fact the domestic waste dates from between the wars. ('Restoration Matters', Summer 1997, p6). Hence interest in the bottles and other artifacts which may be recoverable.

Secondly no apology for devoting part of this issue to our Festival. Yes, it's a long time since May. Yes, it seems a long time to next May. We are almost half way between Festivals - what better time to recall the success that was the 1997 event, and to look forward to 1998?

Thanks to those who contributed to the last issue. If you haven't written or sent

your comments or even a short article, please don't wait to be asked.

In this issue you will find details of this year's AGM. An AGM can be a boring affair, but not the WAT AGM! With all the restoration plans now in the air, this is your opportunity to hear from Roger Leishman at first hand what has been done, what is being done, and what is about to be done.

Remember the date - October 29th - and put it in your diary.

I will be there so you can tell me first hand how the Newsletter can be improved.



Bob Wheal, Editor

Phone: 01525 381614

Write: 467 Bideford Green, Linslade
Beds. LU7 7TZ

Where On the Arm ?

A simple photo quiz; not too difficult, hopefully, but a little more challenging than the last one.

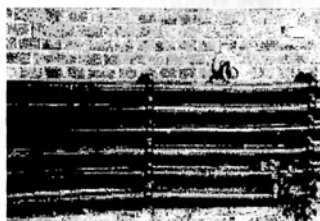
This is a prominent feature from somewhere on the Wendover Arm. Can you identify where it is ? There may be a clue in the photo.

Answers by any means you like (phone, back of envelope, etc.) to the Editor.



Last Issue's Photo:

Thick cables run along the outside wall of **Heygate's Mill at Little Tring**. The cables are clearly seen from the towpath opposite.



Membership Report

We warmly welcome all the new members listed below who have joined the Trust since the last report:

Mr & Mrs I Macdonald
Mr D M Marshall
Mrs J M Mead

Uffington
Abbots Langley
Berkhamsted

Three single memberships have been updated to family memberships - so we are also pleased to welcome:

Mrs J Dunn
Mrs J Graves

The Wendover Arm Trust has 14 Corporate members, and a total membership of 516.

In Memoriam

We are sad to announce the recent deaths of two of our members.
Mrs Margaret Harries, WAT member since 1991,
and Mr Roger Gurney, member since 1989.

Our thoughts are with their families, who are also Trust members.

Working Party Dates

All work party dates start at 10.am Because the situation regarding the agreement of boundaries develops on a day-by-day basis, the later dates may be subject to change.

Date: Sun 5th Oct. 1997 Venue: Little Tring
Work: Complete towpath fence. Demolish old badger sett.
Clear trees from winding hole site. Excavate trial trenches and fence off.

Date: Sun 2nd Nov. 1997 Venue: Drayton Beauchamp
Work: Strimming cleared section

Date: Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th November

The Waterways Recovery Group BITM ('Bit in the Middle') are offering us a working weekend of their members on the Wendover Arm for which we are most grateful. Details of the work to be done, and where, will be published in the next 'Restoration Newsletter', but I hope that we will have a good turnout of our own volunteers to support them.

Date: Sun 7th December 1997 Venue: Priority No.1 will be to complete the boundary fence as quickly as possible, provided the line has been agreed by then.

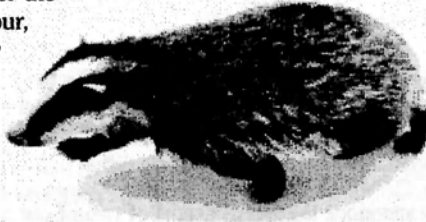
R Leishman



Badger Setts at Little Tring

Keith Higby, the local co-ordinator for the Herts & Middlesex Badger Group visited the Arm on Sunday 13th July 1997 to examine the two badger setts at Little Tring. He found an inhabited sett on the eroded bank in the triangle of land and an apparently uninhabited sett at the end of the tip adjacent to the site of the future winding hole. Ken Graves cleared the area at the end of the tip by hand at our working party on July 27th 1997.

Keith subsequently confirmed that this sett was uninhabited but that a licence must be obtained from English Nature before any work on the site can take place. WAT applied to English Nature but they decided that this sett is a MFF (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food) responsibility because it is land drainage rather than nature conservation! Keith Higby

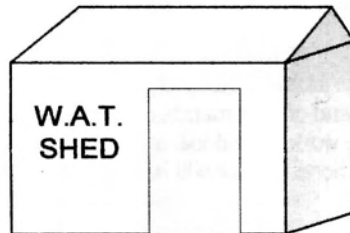


and Roger Leishman met the man from the Ministry (MAFF) on Tuesday 2nd September when it was agreed that the sett was uninhabited, and that MAFF will issue a licence. This is on the basis that the Herts & Middlesex Badger Trust would put an electric fence around the sett on Sunday 13th September 1997, with one way gates to allow any wildlife to escape. The Trust will then remove the sett at their Working Party on Sunday 5th October 1997 (Keith Higby will attend to supervise this

Badger: A mammal characterised by short strong legs, elongated feet that are more or less plantigrade (heels touch the ground), and straight, strong toes adapted to burrowing. Badgers are heavily furred, distinctly marked, and very strong. They live in dens and are mostly nocturnal. They have perineal glands which emit a foetid odour.

WANTED

WAT Workers need a storage place close to work party sites to keep tools, workgear, signs, etc. safe and dry. BW have kindly offered space for a lockable hut or shed at the Pumping Station at Little Tring. Roger Leishman is now looking out for an unwanted shed or similar 'lockup' facility. If you know of anything suitable you could donate or loan, please contact Roger on 01442 874536.



Effect of the Drought

As we all know we have experienced the driest 2 year period for over 200 years. June was the wettest for 150 years! What is going on?

I don't know, other than the British weather is like a lottery, and we can have a vast range of weather in one week.

The two very dry winters are very important, as it is winter rain that finds its way into the gravel and aquifers, and so eventually supplies springs.

Summer rain is taken up by evaporation, transpiration (i.e. use by plants and trees) and the rest runs off.

The ground water in the Tring/Wendover area is now at record low levels, and so the spring flows are very low. The flow into the Arm has been approx. 3 m.l/d. (million litres a day). The lowest was 2.4 m.l/d in January/February. Normally we expect 5-6 m.l/d during the Summer. We have had a lot of drought measures,

however we have spent money and jobs that give us a better return in terms of water than the Wendover Arm. However the next stage if drought conditions continue would be to carry out a flow test on the Arm to see where the main leaks or increases of water are. The extreme case would be that we would need to put all

the watered section into a pipeline, however the costs would be high, and it may not be good value for money for the 'saved' water.

The very worst case would be that the Arm would virtually dry up and another dry winter would make this a risk. Just look at all the rivers in the area!

Generally I can say that whilst we are happy to have to get through the 1997 season without too many problems, we do need rain in the winter!

Chris Mitchell
British Waterways
Grand Union South



British Waterways

That'll do Nicely !

I hate shopping.

I especially hate shopping in the Supermarket. There's nothing more likely to get the teeth grinding than to be stuck with a full trolley, ice cream steadily melting while the cretin in front of me searches for his/her purse or wallet.

It's nice then to know that when my trolley load has finally been dumped on the belt, scanned, and dumped back in the trolley, I have a simple way of proving my identity to back up my cheque.

When the moment comes to pay and the girl (it's usually a girl) asks 'do you have a driving license, please?', I don't need to juggle cheque book and credit card to find my driving licence. I simply show the back

of my WAT membership card (which I cunningly keep at the ready) which shows my name and address.

Magic! 'That's fine' is the usual response and I am free to navigate my trolley across a crowded car

park, secure in the knowledge that WAT membership has it's own

rewards !
RLW



A.G.M.

**The Place: Aston Clinton Sports &
Social Club**

The Date: 29th October 1997

The Time: 8.00 pm

Programme

WAT Annual Report
Chairman's Report
Audited Accounts

* * * * *

Light Buffet (donation requested)

Quiz

Meet Your Council
CLUB 100 Draw

* * * * *

Restoration Report

An illustrated presentation by Roger Leishman of
work completed and work planned on the Arm.

Supervised Car Park Bar open from 7.30 pm

Canal Festival Revisited

Autumn is here. Cold winds, weeping skies and low scudding clouds. Just the right time then to look back and remember the glorious weather we enjoyed earlier this year at the Canal Festival. In previous years it seemed as though Nature was practising for Autumn. In 1994 we had rain and wind, and in 1995 we had wind and rain (in between the sunshine). But this year a richly deserved cloud-free weekend meant that visitors came by the thousand. The ice-cream flowed. The bar ran dry. The weekend ran like clockwork, and for once we had a problem-free event which turned out to be a record breaker in both attendance and takings. The next few pages are devoted to the Festival - let's hope they bring a warm reminder of a great weekend.

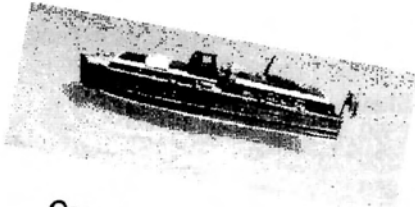
Festival Images



- and the band played on



oyez !



Canal boat at the Festival
- why is the water so clear ?



en-route to Tring
- via London !

That's the Way the Money Grows !

The Festival this year broke all records. Of course it didn't just happen, and it is interesting to compare the income and profits for the different activities and attractions with the effort and manpower needed.

What were the main money-spinners? What cost the most?

Check the results below from this year's Festival (un-audited figures, to nearest £50).

| | | Income | | Profits |
|--------------------------------|------|---------|------|----------|
| Public Attendance (gate money) | (1) | £22,800 | (1) | £20,400 |
| Licensed Bar | (2) | £9,400 | (2) | £3,450 |
| Trades/Crafts | (3) | £4,500 | (3) | £2,800 |
| Boaters/Caravaners | (4) | £4,250 | (4) | £2,350 |
| Donations/Fundraising | (5) | £2,800 | (8) | £350 |
| Teas Tent | (6) | £2,400 | (6) | £1,500 |
| Franchises | (7) | £2,300 | (5) | £2,300 |
| Grand Draw | (8) | £1,100 | (7) | £900 |
| Public Entertainment | (9) | £ — | (9) | <£1,350> |
| Overheads/Organisation | (10) | £ — | (10) | <£3,500> |

Do note the following:

- Public attendance was recorded as 9,600 over the two days.
- Newspaper advertisements £1,000 + Banner in Tring + 7,500 flyers (free).
- Advertising spend about same as previous years, but weather was superb.
- Income from Gate Entry was by far the highest single contributor.
- After costs, the contribution from fund-raising is relatively small.
- Overall profit nearly £29,000 (some minor costs still to be deducted)
- It's good to see that a significant income derives from the boaters and caravaners who support the Festival.

Main fund-raising costs:

| | | |
|-----------------|--------|---|
| Marquee Hire | £2,000 | (partially offset by a £500 donation from BW) |
| Helium Balloons | £300 | (balance of balloons from Lord Mayor's Show) |
| Gladiators | £150 | (equipment hire) |

Main overhead costs:

| | |
|----------------------------|--------|
| a Toilets/Rubbish disposal | £1,800 |
| b Power Generator /Radios | £550 |
| c Public Address System | £350 |
| d Postage/Stationery | £250 |

If you want more information, why not come to the AGM? Most of the Festival Committee will be there, wearing their other hats as Council or WAT Members.

RLW

1997 Canal Festival at Tring Grand Draw Winners

1st CANAL HOLIDAY

Donated by WYVERN SHIPPING CO. LTD.
Ticket No: 14429 Mr Moores, Manchester

9th 2 SLICE TOASTER

Donated by JOHANNA AND FRIENDS
Ticket No: -05426 Mr Lloyd, Royston

2nd BALLOON TRIP

Donated by RAF HALTON HOT AIR
BALLOON CLUB
Ticket No:- 00483 Mr Bonner, Wembley

10th DIMPLE BOTTLE OF WHISKY

Donated by JOHN ROWE
Ticket No:-00640 Mr L Woods, Hemel
Hempstead

3rd CHEQUE for £100

Donated BY WENDOVER ARM TRUST
Ticket No:- 09005 Mrs L Cooke, London

11th CHAMPAGNE

Donated by SHEILA LEWIS
Ticket No:-14367 Mr J Savage, Tring

4th A DAY'S HIRE OF "DABCHICK"

Donated by GREBE CANAL CRUISES
Ticket No:-02253 Mrs Rose, Berkhamsted

12th 6 BOTTLES OF WHITE WINE

Donated by JACK VATCHER
Ticket No:-14774 Mrs Birch, Tring

**5th £50 VOUCHER for TRING
MARKET AUCTIONS**

Donated by STEPHEN HEARN, BROWN
& MERRY
Ticket No:-07789 J.Dunne, Chesham

**13th SILVER PLATED PHOTO
FRAME**

Donated by BERYL AND BARRY MARTIN
Ticket No:- 03131 Mr J Cooke, M. Keynes

6th LIMITED EDITION PRINT

Drawn and donated by DIANE HOUSE
Ticket No:-09324 Sally Choules, Tring

14th GENTLEMAN'S WATCH

Donated by BERYL AND BARRY MARTIN
Ticket No:- 03370 Bob Whetton, Newbur

**7th 2 KILO BOX OF BELGIAN
CHOCOLATES**

Donated by Mr RWHATLEY
Ticket No:- 09458 Mr Knowles, London

15th CELTIC QUILT

Donated by Jon Taylor of Harwich
Ticket No:-08479 Mr G Jones, nb.Doris

8th KENWOOD FOOD BLENDER

Donated by JOHANNA WHEAL
Ticket No:- 03553 Mr Hicks, North Lon-
don Caravan Club

*All winners have been notified.
WAT would like to thank everyone who
donated prizes, as well as those who gave
their time to sell tickets.*

*Profits from the Grand Draw exceeded
£850 after expenses (un-audited).*

A Wyvern View

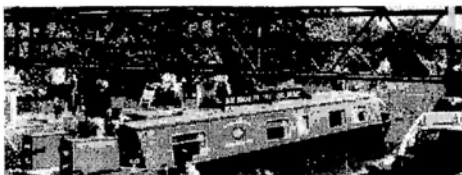
Firstly many congratulations to all the members of the Wendover Arm trust for another very successful Wendover festival. I always enjoy my weekend at the festival for two main reasons, firstly because it is always very well organised and secondly the festival captures the imagination of the public and draws the crowds by the thousands which from the point of view of selling canal boating holidays and reaching a wider market is very important.

Again we were pleased to donate the first prize of a weekend canal holiday and this year it was won by a fireman from the north who used to live in

Wendover and had always wanted to have a canal holiday but never quite managed it. Winning the draw made him very happy and it is always satisfying to have a grateful winner. We also continue to help sponsor the scaffolding bridge which gives access from the rally site to the towpath.

Having a hire boat at the Festival gives the public an opportunity of being able to actually board a boat and get the feel of being afloat. Comments range from "I never realised how big they were inside compared to a caravan" to "we could never handle a boat of this length". (Incidentally I always tie the boat so tight no one can complain the boat rocks- even with 30 people on board).

The benefits of taking a hire boat to the Festival are not solely to promote canal holidays but also an opportunity to meet other boaters and to improve relations between the hire companies and private boaters. We all know that some hirers are not the best behaved when it comes to noise or boat handling, but then this can



A Wyvern Boat at the Festival

also be said of some private boats. At least with a hire boat you have a number to phone and someone to complain to.... namely me!

As the canals become more crowded canal restoration projects such as the Wendover Arm become more important. It is unlikely any new canals will be dug in the near future so restoring old canals is the only way of increasing our cruising ground. What we must try and avoid is any long term linear moorings up the arm with only overnight mooring at Wendover or I fear the restored arm will become just another BW linear mooring which is not in the spirit of the restoration. Without

some commitment from BW about moorings the residents of Wendover will always be very wary of the canal being restored. A well landscaped marina or small basin I think could be acceptable, but please no endless towpath moorings.

I have always maintained (and it says so in our brochure) that the Southern Grand Union is one of the most beautiful and interesting of canals already having the Blisworth and Braunston tunnels, Cosgrove and Milton Keynes aqueducts, many excellent canalside pubs, Northampton and Aylesbury Arms and now soon to be joined by the Wendover Arm!

May I wish the Wendover Arm Trust continued success. The Wyvern Shipping Co will always be there in support.

James Griffin, Director
Wyvern Shipping Co.

Editor's Note: As far as is known, there are no current plans for a marina or mooring basin on the Arm.

New Festival Boss

After many years of heading the organisation and taking responsibility for the successful Canal Festival at Tring, Roger Lewis has decided it is time to let someone else take over as Festival Chairman.

The Festival started in 1989 as a 'Boat Rally' opposite the Mill, just downstream from the current Festival site. xx boats turned up for what turned out to be a very enjoyable event, notable for its informality as much as by the enthusiasm of the boaters.

From such small beginnings the idea of a Public Festival grew. With the generous free loan by Mr Brown of the field almost opposite, and the hard work of the small group of organisers, the first Public Festival was held over the late May Bank Holiday of 1990.

It's probably fair to say that Roger had little idea of the amount of work he would be undertaking that year and in the years to come. A million and one things had to be thought of, discussed, agreed, and put into action., from security, catering and events, through to dealing with the many problems 'on the day', clearing up afterwards, and storing all the paraphernalia until the next year.

Of course, Roger did not do all this by himself. A small but committed group took on many of these tasks, which were debated (it seems) endlessly on a monthly basis at the Festival meeting. In typically generous fashion, Roger and Sheila hosted these meetings in their home, often coping with as many as 15 visitors (each of whom appreciated their mid-discussion coffee).

As the various snags occurred (where can we get fencing, who's got some water pipe, can we get a licence), it seemed that Roger would often come up with a solution, or 'know a man who could'.

And it worked ! Over the years the Wendover Arm Canal Festival, now the Canal Festival at Tring became a nationally recognised event, contributing thousands to Trust restoration funds, and providing valuable publicity for the restoration project.

The work involved in organising such an event was tempered by the satisfaction of

seeing all the plans come to fruition on the day. Nevertheless, it became almost the norm to hear a chorus of 'that's the last year I do that!' from those involved.

Well, this time Roger has decided it really



Our Chairman Roger Lewis (left) meets our President Sir Roger Cork at the 1997 Festival

is time he relaxed a little and allowed others to carry on in his place. The Trust owes a debt of gratitude to him for all the work he has put into making the Festival the success it has become. Probably the best way we can thank him is make sure the Festival continues to be well organised and financially successful.

With some gentle persuasion, Richard House has agreed to become Chairman for 1998 (yes - it seems we are going to have another Festival !). Richard has served on the Festival committee very successfully as entertainments manager, so he knows what's needed. He

feels he cannot properly carry out the many duties of Festival Chairman, and still continue with his role as entertainments manager,

so there is a vacancy or two on the committee (see the back cover of this issue).

Richard's task next year of drawing together all the volunteers and tasks for the 1998 Festival is made somewhat easier by the knowledge that much of what takes place has been thought out and put into practice in previous year's events. For that we can say 'Thank you Roger - you made it possible'.

'thank you Roger - you made it possible'

CLUB 100

CLUB 100 membership currently stands at 40 and is still growing. The first draw will be made at the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 29th October 1997.

So there is still time to complete your and return your CLUB 100 membership form and be included in the first draw. In case you missed the launch of CLUB 100, here's how it works:

You subscribe £15 for four quarterly prize draws.

Each draw is for approximately 50% of the monies subscribed, with prize values dependant on the number of CLUB 100 members.

The more members there are, the larger the prizes.

All proceeds from CLUB 100 go to restoration funds.

Join now, and enrol a neighbour !

CLUB 100

For Sale

Large Aquarium Tank

6ft wide x 2ft 6in high x 2ft deep

Suitable for Marine or Tropical Fish, or as Vivarium

Large enough for a stunning display

Cover and lights included.

£125 ono. Call 01908 364500 daytime.



Rebirth of Roger

The wooden narrowboat Roger was built in 1936 for A Harvey-Taylor of Tring, Coal Merchants and General Carriers, by Bushell Bros. at Little Tring. John Bushell started building and repair-



Roger at Rickmansworth

ing boats for Mead (Flour Millers) at Little Tring on the Wendover Arm of the Grand Junction Canal in the 1850's. The boat building yard developed adjacent to the flour mill next to Bridge No. 2 (Gammel bridge). His son Joseph developed the boat yard into a separate business around 1875. In 1912 John's grandsons Charlie and Joseph took over the business and formed Bushell Brothers. The boat yard continued until their retirement in 1952. After the closure of the boat building business the land was again used by the Mill as a storage and vehicle loading area.

In the early 1930's, when Roger was launched, most new boats had moved on to being steel hulled.

Roger was one of the last, if not the last, wooden boats trading on the canal system, and much photographed during it's latter days.

In 1993 nb Roger was lying unused at Maple Cross, and in a bad state of repair,

likely to sink at any time due to it's failing hull. The Rickmansworth Waterways Trust arranged for the boat to be lifted out of the canal, and for it to be kept on dry land at Batchworth. The Rickmansworth Waterways Trust is committed to repair and relaunch Roger, in a project estimated to take three to four years to complete. They hope to relaunch Roger in the year 2,000 - a fitting commemoration of a bygone age.

The display at Batchworth will involve creating a workshop area comparable to that which would have been used by Bushells originally. It is hoped that many of the original tools can be borrowed which were used in the original building work.

Roger can be seen at Batchworth Lock Centre, Rickmansworth.

Restoration work will take place several days per week in summer months, along with a number of weekends. Rickmansworth Waterways Trust are appealing for



Inside Roger - a lot of work to do !

sponsors and supporters for the project. Contact the Canal Centre, 99 Church Street, Rickmansworth, Herts. WD3 1JD for further details or for best times to visit. Tel 01923 778382.

Article based on information supplied by Rickmansworth Waterways Trust.

Memoirs of a Canal Boatbuilder - Part 4

Concluding Miss Moira Hegarty's interview with Mr Harry Fennimore. Autumn 1979

The boss of the Bulbourne Works lived in a house by the yard with a lovely garden. One of their blacksmiths (his name was Buckingham), made a lily out of iron; it was a real work of art as it is difficult to beat iron out as thin as a lily leaf. There was no welding then, so joining the tiny stems together just by heating the metal and then beating them together when they were white hot without breaking them off, really took some doing. This lily still stands outside the house at Bulbourne now, and it was made about forty years ago. There were two or three blacksmiths at Bulbourne as there is a lot of iron-work in a lock.

At the yard we kept an old punt which we used to go round the boats in when we were working on them. Well, there was this old hunchback chap at the yard, (he taught me an awful lot about boats, he was a lovely workman), and he had to write the name on the end of a boat, so he had to go out on this punt to do it, and he didn't like going in the punt. He untied the punt to go round to the other side of the boat he was painting and it started to drift away. He was hanging onto the boat with his hands and his feet were in the punt, getting further

and further away. He was shouting "Help, Help", and although he was very old and a bit crippled, we still waited a little to see a bit of fun, and then we caught him just before he fell in - we jumped into the boat and caught hold of his hands! He never went in the punt again!!

The cabin top we used to grain and down the centre we would paint a strip about 12" wide with diamonds - always the same colours - blue, yellow, green, white and red, repeated all the way along.

Inside the cabin, the whole idea was to 'grain' it. Everything had a coat of ochre (yellow), then you add raw sienna very thin, and then after a moment or two you would mark graining on with a comb. The panels which were not grained had pictures on - castles etc. In fact, I have even painted traditional patterns on cabin floors!

Then there were gang-planks; along the length of the boat were about four beams which went across the boat (thwartwise we called it), and dropped into slots on the inside side of the boat. That had stands dropped through these slots in the beam and they had diamonds and fancy pat-

terns painted on as well. Over the top of those from the deckboard at the fore end (the boat peopled called it a 'cratch'), this gangplank, about 11" wide and about 11/2" thick, came from a slot in the cratch,



Traditional Castle Scene

cut so that it fitted round the mast, (which was also decorated with diamonds), and then along from stand to stand until it curved down to the cabin top and ended up on the cabin block, (a block about 10" deep and about 12" wide and 3" thick which stood on the end of the cabin). This block had castles and landscapes painted on it, facing the position of the cabin.

Along the side of the boat were waterproof cloths, held down with a strip all the way round the side of the boat. This strip of wood is called the gunwale. These sidecloths were about 2 feet wide and we used to oil them to keep them supple. They had cords on one side and rings on the other. The cord went over the top of the gangplank

and down through the cloth on the other side so the sidecloths were pulled up, over the side of the boat for two feet, tight over the top of the gangplanks. Over the top of these were the topcloths. They went on the gangplanks and dropped down over the sidecloths to make the whole thing perfectly watertight. This was particularly necessary with coal and wheat as they were liable to spontaneous combustion if they got wet.

The Ovaltine Company had six pairs of boats - six motor boats and six butty boats. They travelled in pairs, and it would take a week for one pair to reach the collieries in the North as their average speed was not more than four miles an hour. As there were six pairs of boats, the coal was delivered more or less continuously to the Ovaltine as the boats plied back and forth.

The Ovaltine were very proud of their boats and put no limit on money spent on the decoration of the boats so long as they looked nicer than other people's.

They also chose their boat people for cleanliness and nice manners, as the boats acted as an advertisement for the company. I used to put 16 bunches of flowers and 14 castles on a pair of Ovaltine boats, and diamonds galore, plus practically anything that the boat people asked for. I also used to write 'Ovaltine' in letters about 10" high along the cabin side, exactly as it is written on the Ovaltine tin. It was written in orange on dark blue. Underneath it had 'A. Wander & Co. Ltd., Manufacturing Chemists, Kings Langley'.

At Blisworth Tunnel, which is a mile and a quarter long they used to 'leg' the boats through, but then we built the tugs. There used to be perhaps half a dozen boats or pairs of boats at one end of the tunnel. The horses and crew would go over the top and just one man would stay on the boat. The

tugs, Pilot and Hasty were the names of two of them, were built so that they were only two or three inches narrower than the tunnel itself so that they could not possibly go off course. They would hook about half-a-dozen of the boats behind and the tug driver would get his engine rewing with no-one at all on board. At the other end his mate would be ready waiting to step on to the tug and bring it to a halt when it appeared.

Some of the boat people kept cats and dogs. Between the fore cabin and the



living cabin at the rear of the boat, there was the 'stowage' where the cargo was put. In one corner would be the dog's kennel, boarded round so that the cargo could not fall on it, and when the boat was empty the dog would have the run of the stowage, all the way along the boat, backwards and forwards. In the wet weather, cloths would be put over planks, hanging down over the side of the boat, to keep the cargo dry, and it was really cosy in there. When the boat was travelling, sometimes the dog would get off the boat and run along to the next lock and wait for the boat to come along again. Sometimes the dog would sit on the cabin top, but if it did, they would put a cord or a leather strap round its collar to stop it if it fell down the side - instead of going into the canal it hung down the side on it's strap until they could pull it back again. They kept the dogs as pets mainly, although a dog might catch an occasional rat!

Inside the boats there was no sanitation, except maybe a chamber pot which would be emptied straight over the side anyway! For washing they had a bowl (metal and traditionally painted), which would hold about 11/2 gallons and this would be used for everything else as well, such as peeling the potatoes! When this was not in use it would be hung up in the cabin, so the bottom of it was decorated as well, and the inside of it was plain white. They were also very proud of their china which they would use to decorate the cabin. These plates were made of real

bone china and they looked just like lace, with holes right through them. The 'old' boat people - the women - wore lace hats, and the lace trailed down their backs - well, it was crochet. they did it themselves. During the War I saw hundreds of 'dumb' boats - these had no accommodation at all, not even a cabin. They were used in the war effort for carrying vital supplies, and we used to caulk them and coat them with tar.



Traditional Roses Design

The biggest boat we built, (apart from the tug), was called the 'Tiny', and the first load it had was a load of 12' naval shells, all stacked up like milk churns! Also during the war we converted the float from a seaplane into a boat and put an engine in it! We did all sorts of jobs like that during the war.

As the boats became used less we started building lorries, first as a side-line, but it grew in importance. We also painted them and put the advertisements on them.

Finally, Bushell's Boatyard closed down simply because the two bosses had reached retiring age, in about 1948.

This concludes these memoirs.

We gratefully acknowledge the help given by Mr Fennimore who sadly has never seen this in published form as he died in June 1980.

Council Matters

May

- ◆ Due to pressure of other commitments (Festival !) there was no general Council meeting in May.

A special council meeting convened on May 6th agreed to drop the proposal for a mooring basin at Little Tring from it's plans.

June

- ◆ The application for a grant from the Environmental Action Fund was not shortlisted. The EAF suggested the Trust submit a further application with more environmental information.
- ◆ BW Regional Manager wrote expressing continued support for the Trust and it's plans. See this issue.
- ◆ The Trust president has received a Knighthood, and is now Sir Roger Cork
- ◆ BW commented that the laying of a fibre-optic cable along the GU tow path will not affect the Arm, except over the bridge at Bulbourne.
- ◆ The fence surrounding phase one of the restoration is almost complete.
- ◆ The Landfill Tax scheme may

prove a potential source of funds. BW is registered as a recipient for the purpose of environmental improvement.

July

- ◆ The Trust will approach Mr P Lea to carry out it's Audit, for a reasonable fee. Alternatives are still being put forward and a final decision remains open.
- ◆ It was agreed that attendance at local functions such as the recent Bulbourne Open Day are necessary for PR reasons, despite disappointing takings and attendance.
- ◆ Dr R Wynroe has been offered Honorary Life membership, in recognition of his long-standing support and interest in the Trust.
- ◆ Mrs R Hopkins was formally co-opted as Council Member, acting as Minutes Secretary..
- ◆ Membership Secretary Barry Martin stated that the original membership covenants were expiring. Existing and new memberst may need to complete a new form to meet In-land Revenue requirements.
- ◆ It is planned that the first draw for 'Club 100' will take place in Autumn 1997.

Disclaimer

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



Situations Vacant

**Young/Old Men/Women wanted to take on
challenging roles as Members of
WAT Festival Committee.**

**Flexible working hours - no paid overtime
(actually, there's no pay at all)**

**Duties include one monthly meeting plus three to
four days at the end of May**

Choice of job descriptions include:

Public Entertainment (ie to select and book
the entertainment, not provide it yourself)

Minutes Secretary (it only takes a minute)

Barbecue 'Chief' to organise food for the
Sunday pm barbecue (not cook it !)

*To fit these positions a sense of humour is essential,
and a thick skin is advised. If you work best in a calm,
stress-free environment with no responsibility, please
don't apply. Otherwise, help make the 1998 Festival as
successful as previous years by joining the organisers.
You will be helping the Trust achieve it's funding target
and restore the Arm. You might even enjoy it.
Call Richard on 01296 748036 - If you dare !*