

Quarterly newsletter of the Wendover Arm Trust

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Wendover Arm Trust

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President: Alderman Sir Roger Cork FCA FICM FIPA The Right Honourable, The Lord Mayor of London

Chairman

Publicity

position vacant

position vacant

Vice-Chairman Bob Wheal 467 Bideford Green, Linslade, Leighton Buzzard, Beds. LU7 7TZ Tel: 01525 381614

Secretary

c/o Hastoe Hill, Tring, Herts. HP23 6LU Tel: 01442 823378

Treasurer Bervl Martin

12 Chipperfield Close, New Bradwell, Milton Keynes, Bucks. MK13 OEP Tel: 0908 312239

Membership Secretary Barry Martin

12 Chipperfield Close, New Bradwell, Milton Keynes, Bucks. MK13 OEP Tel: 01908 312239 Sales John Brooman 66 Bryants Acre, Aylesbury Road, Wendover, Bucks. Tel: 01296 623542

Work Parties Roger Leishman 7 Hall Park Berkhamsted, Herts HP4 2NU

01442 874536

IWA Nominee Elizabeth Payne

Tel

Council Members: John Hopkins

Chris Mitchell John Rowe

Newsletter Editor: Bob Wheal 01525 381614 Printing by Clark Colour Tel: 01296 662739

Jottings

This is an exciting and yet uncertain time for the Trust.

One the one hand, concrete (pun intended!) restoration is imminent and, once the question of Little Tring Bridge design is determined, lacks only further discussion and agreement of all parties to the details. See Roger Leishman's report in this issue for more on this subject. Thanks mainly to the eight Festivals held so far, fund raising by the Trust has been successful enough to allow the first stage of restoration to be carried out.

On the other hand the Trust is undergoing what might be viewed as a lack of support in terms of membership. Trust membership (currently at 520) has grown only slowly, it seems from the early days. The relatively slow growth in member numbers, and the fact that a scheme with no major engineering or legal obstacles has 'only'

500+ members should be cause for concern for anyone with the Trust's best interest at heart.

Symptomatic of this is the lack of members willing to serve on Council. WAT currently has no officer in three key posts: Chairman, Publicity Officer, and Secretary (at least one of these posts is likely to be filled shortly - Ed).

If we are to be taken seriously in our restoration aims, we must demonstrate to those we will be working with, to those affected by the project, to those helping to fund the work,

` and to all interested parties that WAT is not only able to deal with restoration matters in a professional manner, but also able to keep its own house in order, too.

Bystander

Ed: Your letters on this issue will be welcome, for inclusion in the next issue.

WAT People

As reported elsewhere in this issue, **Roger Lewis** has retired from being the Chairman of WAT, and from his place on WAT Council.

Mike Griffin has also retired from WAT Council, due to the demands of his work. Mike was Publicity Officer for the Trust. Thanks, Mike for your efforts on behalf of WAT.

John Hopkins was co-opted as a member at the December Council meeting. John joins his wife **Renee**, who is already performing stirling service as minute secretary to Council Chris Mitchell started his new position as Manager of BW Southern Region on Jan 1. Chris was previously manager of Grand Union South Area, working out of Marsworth. His promotion leaves a gap which is being temporarily filled by BW staff members Dave Legg Liz Kelly and Debbie Childerstone, acting as a team. Chris has supported WAT and its aims during his time at Marsworth, including serving on WAT Council and holding joint meetings with WAT to present restoration proposals to interested bodies.

Congratulations Chris!

Work Party Dates

Sunday 1 February and Sunday 1 March
both at Drayton Beauchamp.Stumping and clearing 120 yards of dry
bed at the County boundary.

New volunteers for the working party, or fund raising for the restoration are always welcome to phone me for more details. Roger Leishman 01442 874536



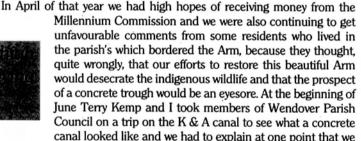


CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

As reported elsewhere in this issue, Roger Lewis did not offer himself for reelection at the October AGM. His statement is reproduced under AGM Update, being his comment on the months since April 1997 (from the end of our financial year to the date of the AGM).

The position of WAT Chairman is not yet filled. Instead of the Chairman's usual comment in this issue, his report from the AGM dealing with the year April 96 to April 97 is printed below.

This report is an account of the work of the Trust from 6 April last year (1996) until 5 April 1997.



were, in fact, on a concrete section for the whole of their canal trip.

A Public Meeting was held in Wendover at which Bob Wheal, Terry Kemp, Chris Mitchell and myself put our plans to the residents – this proved to be a very lively meeting.

Council members also had a meeting with member of the Trust David Liddington the MP for Aylesbury who endorsed his support of the Trust.

During the summer of 1996 we erected the new information box at the end of the Arm. At about the same time Bob Wheal produced a series of information leaflets about various aspects of the Arm and its proposed restoration.





The 1996 Canal Festival in May proved to be the most dismal one to date as far as the weather was concerned – it rained for most of the time that it was opened to the public. Nevertheless we made a profit of over $\pounds 20,000$ and a good time was had by all.

In July we learned that, because we could not match their funding the Millennium Commission could not support our application for funds.

In August Roger Davis delivered a token load of flour which he had collected from Heygates mill at New Mill to the I.W. A. Festival at Dudley.

In November the Trust gained considerable publicity by supporting their President with a float in his Lord Mayor's Show. On of the positive results of this entry is that Andy Sharp, who had loaned us two diggers to lead our entry is prepared to let us have the use of one of diggers for restoration work, and we have already taken him up on this offer.

Also in November Bob Wheal and I attended the AGM of the Aston Clinton Residents Association and gave them a talk about the Arm and our plans for its restoration and we received support from all the members present at that meeting.

At this time we applied for funding from the Environmental Action



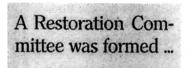
Group but, unfortunately, this application was turned down. We were one of 250 organisations which applied for this grant of whom only 14 were fortunate enough to receive support. We have, however been invited to make a further application with a greater

emphasis on environmental issues.

In December the Registered Office address of the Trust was moved from Hemel Hempstead to Hastoe Hill, Tring, Hertfordshire.

It was also in December that I received a letter from Peter Lea, who has acted an Honorary Auditor for several years informing me that, as he had recently been appointed chairman of the National Association of Boat Owners he would not now have the spare time to devote to our audit After approaching several members whom I thought had the necessary qualifications to help us and not getting anyone to accept this task I asked Peter if his firm would agree to continue with the auditing for a fee. This Peter agreed to do and so now we are paying a nominal sum for this service. Thank you Peter for all the work which you have done in the past - it has been greatly appreciated.

In January a Restoration Committee was formed under the Chairman-



ship of Roger Leishman and this committee has been meeting at regular intervals. Roger's work with regards to restoration has been invaluable. This is particularly so with regard to his work in producing from the 1996 Mike Dunn and Associates Feasibility Study of the whole of the Arm, a document

which is particular to the restoration of the Little Tring section and the section to the A41 bridge at Buckland.

Roger Leishman has again supervised all the work parties activities during the past year but I will not go into any further details as he will tell about them later on this evening.

Whilst I am on to subject of work parties I must again express my thanks, on behalf of all of you for the excellent support that we continue to have from BITIM WRG at restoration weekends and at our Festivals. We are very lucky to be able to call on them.

In March (1997) Bob Wheal and I attended a meeting arranged by the Tring Town Council when they were looking for ideas to celebrate the coming millennium year and we felt that part of those

celebrations might be the opening of the first section of restoration.

In March, John Rowe - who has been appointed by the Trust Council to be the chairman at any meetings which are held with local councils -Roger Leishman, Chris Mitchell and I presented our plans for the restoration at Little Tring to the members of Tring Town Council who, with one exception gave their approval to those plans. The one councillor who did object was one who had previously been very generous in helping to fund previous Festivals.

Roger Lewis

Membership Report

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

> Mr R.A.Dunkley Mr & Mrs H.G.Pratt

Hertford

tt Leighton Buzzard

We are also pleased to welcome Cheddington Parish Council as a Corporate Member. The Wendover Arm Trust's membership now stands at 520, with 15 Corporate Members.

CLUB 100

The first draw for the CLUB 100 was held at the AGM On October 29, 1997. The winners were announced to much ironic applause, when it was realised that they were all WAT Council members! Retiring Chairman Roger Lewis joked that maybe this would prove an additional incentive for members to join the Council. Draw results were:

First:	Mrs R Hopkins	£57.60
Second	Mr R Lewis	£24.00
Third	Mrs E Payne	£ 9.60

The next draw is scheduled for the Council meeting on January 20, 1998. Watch out for the results in the next WAT News.

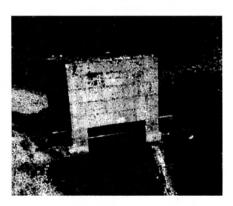
Current CLUB 100 membership stands at 50, but there is still time to complete and return your CLUB 100 membership form, so that you will be included in future draws (there are 4 per year).

Where On the Arm?

A simple photo quiz; not too difficult hopefully, and certainly easier 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:

A warning sign fixed to the side of the concrete low-level bridge across the Arm at Wharf Row, near the A41 crossing.



Chairman's update (at the AGM October 1997)

Since April we have had meetings with Mr Bob Grace and members of his family concerning the fencing in of the canal site which runs through their farm and the provision which we will make to allow them to site an access bridge over the waterway.

At the end of April we held a further meeting with the Little Tring & Miswell Group to update them on our proposals, At that meeting the only objection which the majority of their members had to the restoration was the proposed mooring basin. Following this meeting the Trust Council agreed that, and I quote, "The proposal to construct a mooring basin at Little Tring shall be erased from the plans for the restoration of the Wendover Arm of the Grand Union Canal." I have since received a letter of thanks from the secretary of the Group.

i Tifr Toli I In May we held one of the most successful Festivals to date. The weather, for the first time for several years was perfect and the crowds turned out in their thousand to support us. A record profit of nearly £29,000 was raised during the weekend.

We added a bit more pageantry this year - in addition to having the Tring Town Crier, who was as colourful as ever - it was opened by our President, Roger Cork, now Sir Roger - the Lord Mayor of London, who arrived, with one of his Sheriffs at the pumping station at Little Tring and was then conveyed aboard Rod Saunder's boat "Dabchich" to the Festival site. Dabchick being the boat which we had previously toured the streets of London on in last years Lord Mayor's Show. Can I now take this opportunity to congratulate our President on receiving his knighthood in this years birthday honours list.



In June Renee Hopkins volunteer to join the Council as the Minute Secretary. This offer was very hastily accepted and I am very pleased to co-opt her onto the Board. I hope that later on this evening you will give your approval as a full Council member.

The Council have also made a very old member of the Trust, Dr Ralph Wynroe an Honorary member. Ralph is a very keen amateur photographer, you may remember that he gave us a superb illustrated talk several years ago at one of our A.G.Ms, he has also supplied me with many of the slides which I have used when I give a presentation.

You will have noticed that we now have a new newsletter editor, Bob Wheal. I would like to thank Ian Packe for producing the newsletter for

the past two years and to congratulate Bob on his first two numbers.



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We again had our stand at the BW Bulbourne weekend but, unfortunately, we were unable to raise a big enough team of helpers to man a stand at either the National Festival at Henley or the Slough Festival. Our membership secretary, Barry Martin, is also to be congratulated in starting the new "Club 100" scheme. We already have 44 eager participants

who will be taking part in the very first draw tonight and I hope that more of you will be participating in future draws.

Before I end this report I must tell you that Beryl Martin, who has been our Treasurer since 1991 will not be carrying on in that capacity after the end of the present financial year. We are therefore not only looking for someone to fill the office of Honorary Secretary, a post which has not been filled since Richard House retired from at the last AGM but also for a new Treasurer. I have made this request on many occasions in the past and I make it again now - we must have more members who are willing to serve on the Trust Council.

This almost completes my report except to tell you that I will be retiring from the Council tonight together with Mike Griffin and that we neither



of us will be seeking re-election. I would like to thank all of you for the support that you have given to me during that period and I would especially thank the many fellow councillors who have given me such invaluable support over those many years. Last but certainly not least I want to thank all of the other people who have helped to make our annual festival such a roaring success and the envy of all of

the other restoration societies throughout the country. Roger Lewis. Chairman

Ex WAT Chairman Honoured

Roger Lewis, ex WAT Chairman, and his wife Sheila were guests of WAT Council members at a dinner on January 23. In

recognition of the contribution Roger has made to the success of the Trust during his term of office, Council members clubbed together and presented him with a crystal decanter, together with a signed and framed WAT burgee. The inscription on the decanter

reads: 'Roger, with gratitude for his dedi-

cated leadership and unstinting efforts as Chairman of Wendover Arm Trust 1990 - 1997

Roger was also invited to accept the position of Vice Presidency of the Trust.

In thanking Council members for his presentation, Roger said he was honoured and gratified, and would continue to support the Trust as an ordinary member, and as a member of the Restoration Committee.

Water Control

The Wendover Arm exists to supply spring water to the summit of the Grand Union Canal. Constant surveillance and maintenance is needed 'behind the scenes'.

This short collection of cartoons, drawn by Terry Kemp, describes the work carried out by BW to

maintain water flow and levels to/from Tringford pumping station. First published in BW Monthly.

With acknowledgements to BW.



Water on the Tring summit was in short supply in 1997. It is Gavin Hyde's job to control the supply. He depends on the Chiltern springs supplying the Wendover Arm feeder and the four Tring reservoirs. All the water has to be pumped up to the summit level using a combination of the six pumps at the 180-year old Tringford Pumping Station. Culverts linking the reservoirs to the pumphouse also allow water to be transferred between them providing the right sluices are opened.

Reservoir Fact Wilstone Reservoir is the largest at Marsworth and holds 243 million gallons

Reservoir Fact Under half the size of Wilstone is Startopsend (how do you pronounce it?) at 106 million gallons Part of the job is checking levels in the summit to make sure enough water is pumped for boating use. Gavin checks several times a day, beginning with a look out of his lock cottage window at Cowroast. During the day he does a visual check on the piled bank of the Wendover Arm outside the pumphouse. Gavin has to predict how many lockages there may be and pump water in advance of it being needed.

1

Winter 1998

At 52 million gallons, Marsworth Reservoir is half as big as Startopsend Under the Reservoir Acts, Gavin has to check each of the reservoirs on foot every day. He also checks their sluice gates and their levels.

At times Gavin has to operate sluices on the reservoirs. The two highest can feed the Aylesbury Arm by gravity via Marsworth pound just below the summit.

Reservoir Fact Western Turville Reservoir, completed in 1799 holds 40 million gallons

Reservoir Fact

Tringford is the baby of the Reservoirs, took two years to build, and holds (only!) 38 million gallons Spring water from Wendover is pumped continuously, but Gavin has to draw water from one or more reservoirs according to his judgement of demand. Using his knowledge of reservoir levels, pump capacities and likely demand, Gavin operates the switchgear which controls the electric pumps.

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A Restoration Milepost?

Leave the Wendover Arm and turn left down the flight of locks on the main line of the Grand Union Canal. The first

lock features the dry-dock (once a second lock in parallel to the current one), but alongside the second lock down, number 44, is one of the many mileposts originally erected by the Grand Junction Canal Company., and bearing their name. This one shows that the lock is 55 miles from Braunston, near Rugby.

Over the years mileposts fell into disrepair and even disappeared in many places. But, thanks to the stirling efforts of local enthusiasts ('spend a penny'

campaign) between 1993 and 1995 all the mileposts were

replaced or refurbished along the line of

before ...

the canal, in a style which followed the original.

Each milepost was sponsored in

some way by a local individual or organisation, and the restoration of milepost 55 was sponsored by the Wendover Arm Trust, as it is the nearest to the Arm.

By 1997, the milepost was beginning to show the effects of weather and neglect. During the Bulbourne Open day in 1997, with

BW's permission the opportunity was taken to give the milepost a facelift, courtesy of a scrubbing brush

and appropriate application of Hammerite. The operation did not go without incident, as the single shower of rain that day fell precisely as the paint can was being opened! But the final effect was worth it

and the Trust can again be proud of 'its' milepost.

... after





TLC WAT-style

G.J.C.C.º

BRAUNSTO

55

MILES

NEO

Restoration Update No 1 Jan 1998 Background and Objectives

The Trust applied to the Millennium Commission for a grant towards restoration, initially to restore as far as the A41 at Aston Clinton, but at the Commission's suggestion this was revised at short notice to include the whole of the Arm. Both applications failed as there was no possi-



bility of the Trust raising a matching \pounds 4m. a prerequisite of the Commission to their giving a grant of 50% of the estimated cost of \pounds 8m. However, thanks to a series of successful annual Festivals, the Trust is now able to finance 300 m of the Arm, as far as a former winding hole, including the reconstruction of Little Tring Bridge.

In October 1996, after a discussion of various options including working at the Wendover Basin, partially replacing lengths by a narrow concrete trough, and taking the restoration on from Little Tring the AGM of the Trust voted to proceed with restoration by commencing what became known as Phase 1. This is to fully restore the first 520 m from the end of present navigation at Tringford Pumping Station towards Drayton Beauchamp.

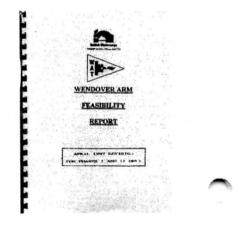
The first step in starting Phase 1 was to prepare an initial report, "The Way to Re-water to Wendover", that set out the current objectives of the Trust, and how to achieve them:

Short term: Phase 1 Restoring 300 metres from the Pumphouse, through a rebuilt Little Tring Bridge, to 200 metres past the Winding Hole

Medium term: Phase 2 Extending the restoration to the A41 crossing

Long term: Phase 3 Restoration from the A41 through to Wendover Basin.

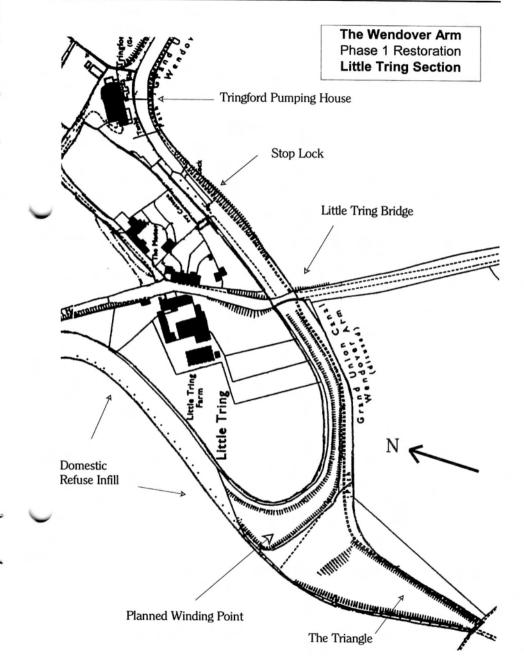
A Restoration Committee was appointed



by the Trust to consider this initial report which was then submitted to and agreed by the Council of the Trust. It was agreed that the Feasibility Report dated June 1996 commissioned by the Trust and BW to support the application to the Millennium Fund should be revised:

a] to omit Phase III from the report, as this has been deferred as an objective in

Winter 1998



the present financial situation.

b] to include both Phases I and 11 as the latter is affected by the diversion required by the Highway Authority for the proposed Aston Clinton by-pass and

cl to incorporate the proposals from "The Way to Re-water to Wendover".

including the use of voluntarv labour wherever possible.

These revisions have been made and the resulting report dated April 1997 defines the short to medium term objectives of the Trust and is supported by BW. Copies



Gates have been installed

of this report are available from the Trust at £75 each.

Progress to Date: Phase 1

Whilst major works such as the reconstruction of Little Tring Bridge will involve

letting work out to contract. it is intended that voluntary labour will play a major role in the restoration. During 1997 a recruiting drive for working party volunteers was commenced and, so far, has doubled the number of volunteers assisting in the work. We are also very grateful to the Waterways Recovery Group, Bit In The Middle, from the Inland Waterways Association who hold working weekends on our restoration.

and styles built ...

In October 1997, while the

Current tasks completed or in hand are: -

The Phase 1 area owned by BW west of Little Tring Bridge had been the subject of protracted negotiations before BW were able to repossess the land. These negotiations were completed and the whole area is now enclosed with a post and four strand barbed wire fence erected by our

> working parties over the May Festival. and later Gates have been installed. styles and built where necessary.

This same area of land has a badger population and meetings have been held with the vari-

ous authorities and the Herts. & Mddx. Badger Group. A 'badger' licence was obtained for the bed of the canal including the winding hole where there was a disused badger sett. The sett had to be fenced off by the badger group with one way gates for three weeks to ensure the

> sett was uninhabited then. on October 5, the working party and the badger group, with the aid of an excavator lent free of charge and operated by one of our volunteers. carefully demolished the sett tunnel by tunnel. A further badger licence will be required for an area of land owned by BW but clear of the canal bed where there is an inhabited sett, if we are to work within 10 m of the sett.

excavator was on site; a trial trench was dug across the bed of the canal to deter-

mine the ground conditions and, hence, the type of construction required for the restored canal. The excavation threw up an interesting discovery. The old asphalt lining was found but was only a couple of inches thick, and only extended up the canal banks about two feet above canal bed level! There was no sign of

any puddling clay, which would have been the sealing material used on the original canal.

There was thus no way the asphalt by itself could have been enough to contain

the water without leakage. An example of shoddy workmanship? The ground over and below the asphalt layer was of a very chalky composition but the good news was that it is suitable for laying the proposed waterproof lining with concrete cover. It is hoped to carry out this work with volunteer labour, including construction of the towpath walls.

The towpath hedge between Little Tring Bridge and the winding hole is in a very bad state and the Trust have consulted the Dacorum Council arborist who has given her views on what should be done to restore a normal towpath hedge in due course. This work has commenced.

Progress on the reconstruction of Little Tring Bridge has been slow, partly due to the PW engineers being to due

due to the BW engineers having to give priority to the back pumping on the Grand Union Canal main line. We have been fortunate in that BW have found that a full site investigation was made prior to the demolition of the bridge when rebuilding was under consideration. Once the basic design has been agreed with the highway and local authorities, detailed design and letting of a construction contract can commence.

> The 200 m of canal bed in Phase 1 past the winding hole was used as a refuse tip during the 1920s. It contains many bottles and other relies that are now the subject of illegal bottle digging. The Trust and BW are currently letting the rights to excavate

these objects to a recognised bottle club who will be paying the Trust a lump sum for the rights and will clear the tip of all items including broken glass, etc. In the meantime we are still suffering from illegal bottle digging, especially annoving where

these diggers are throwing their spoil and broken glass across our road access.

A future update will deal with Phase 11 in more detail but, apart from the length affected by the Aston Clinton by-pass, our working parties had cleared all trees etc. by early 1986 from Drayton Beauchamp Bridge back towards Little Tring, as far as the Herts/ Bucks County border. Last winter (1996/7) we strimmed this length to keep it from re-growth and have already strimmed at least

half of it this winter. This policy of complete removal of all stumps, etc., has been very successful and will apply to future clearance of the canal bed. Roger Leishman 01442 874536

Relining the Canal Bed

Roger Leishman is preparing an outline design for the towpath walls which will be constructed on both sides of the canal. between the lock and the winding hole. One side carries the towing path, the

other carries a footpath. The details will have to be agreed with BW. but are based on the design in the feasibility study, but with a hollow concrete block facing to make construction easier for volunteer labour. The proposal is that using access via our new gate, we construct all the walls needed from the wind-

ing hole up to the bridge. When the bridge is completed we will then have access through the bridge to construct the walls to join up with the lock. The lock will have to be de-watered and Stop Planks put across each end of the empty gate recesses at the West end of the lock chamber. This will also provide diversions for the footpath and towingpath during construction. On completion of the walls we can then lay the canal bed liner with concrete cover working our way out from the lock to the

winding hole. An additional bonus, if the tip is cleared. is that we will be able to include this section which only has a wall on the towpath side. the other side having a gently sloped bank which will be laid with the central lining. On completion, a bund or dam will be built inside the end of the completed lining, the stop planks removed from the lock and the

water let in - hopefully in time to celebrate the year 2000! Roger Leishman

Access Road Blocked

Keith Slade the farmer at Miswell Farm has had trouble from what he thinks are

four wheel drive vehicles used by rabbit poachers. They used bolt cutters to cut the chain on his gate at the end of the track by our new gate to enter his farm, cut through several fences and gates finally leaving his farm to cross into an adjoining farm. Keith's worry is that this left gates open and gaps in fences for his stock to stray, including into Little Tring Road. He has put a



which also cut-off entry to our gate. BW and the Trust have agreed to this as a

> short term measure. BW will discuss security arrangements with Herts County Council. who own the land on both sides of the Canal at this point. The blockade will be removed for our working party in January. and when the Bottle Club commence their work. This is just the latest in a number of incursions and trespass onto BW and neigh-

blockade across the entrance to the track

bouring land, recently,

Council Matters

August

 There was no Council meeting in August

September

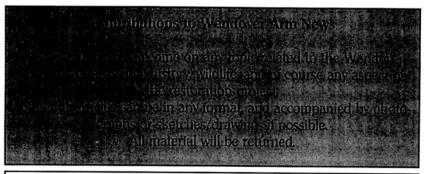
- Roger Leishman will give a talk at the October AGM, reporting on the status of Restoration work.
- There is one live (occupied) and one disused Badger Sett in the phase 1 restoration area. The necessary licences will be obtained.
- A trial trench is due to be dug across the infilled area on October 5.
- Negotiations are continuing with Bottle Clubs concerning clearance of the infilled section.
- CLUB 100 currently has 38 members. The first draw will take place at the October AGM.

October

- A stock of new navigation plaques has been received.
 Plaques are available on application.
- Waterways Recovery Group BITM (Bit in the Middle) section is planning a work party on the Arm over the 15/16th November weekend.

November

- Mrs Beryl Martin wishes to be replaced as Trust Treasurer after the current financial year.
- Roger Lewis was thanked for his contribution as Chairman to the Trust.
- John Hopkins is to be approached regarding becoming a Council member.



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 successfull 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 !