

Newsletter of the Wendover Arm Trust

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all you ever wanted to know

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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 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 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 axpressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Wendover Arm Trust

TRUST HAS NEW CHAIRMAN

After running for the past few years with the Chairman's position vacant, the good news is that, following the AGM, Bob Wheal was elected Chairman at the November Council Meeting.

This is very good for the Trust and was enabled by Roger Leishman being elected as Vice-Chairman to provide support for Bob.

Roger continues in the position of Restoration Director, which is his prime responsibility; his Vice-Chairman duties will not be allowed to detract from the vital restoration work.

NOTICE OF BOAT JUMBLE SALE

- ★ The IWA Chiltern Branch are once again to run a Boat Jumble Sale at the 2002 Tring/Wendover Canal Festival on 2nd and 3rd June.
- \star Please turn out your boat, shed, house or anywhere else for any marine related items for disposal.
- \star 75% of sale price goes to the donator and 25% to charity.
- * bring your stuff along to the Festival, BUT TELEPHONE JOHN BRICE OF CHILTERN IWA BEFOREHAND (as soon as possible) ON 01494 873298 (evenings/weekends).

WATER MANAGEMENT AT TRING RESERVOIRS AND THE WENDOVER ARM

This article is a simplified explanation of the fascinating water management of the Tring Reservoirs and surrounding canals, including of course the important role of the Wendover Arm.

A BREIF HISTORY OF THE RESERVOIR COMPLEX

When the main line of the Grand Junction Canal across Tring Summit was opened in 1800 it depended entirely on the water supply from Wendover Springs, via the Wendover Arm, which is why the Arm had to be built before the main canal. However, it was apparent almost immediately that the Wendover supply alone would be insufficient and the first part of Wilstone Reservoir (the south corner) was constructed in 1802. This was spring fed and water was pumped directly into the Wendover Arm at Whitehouses. Marsworth Reservoir followed soon after, in 1806, also pumping into the Wendover Arm (near Bulbourne Junction).

The Aylesbury Arm was completed in 1815, requiring more water, so Tringford and Startops Reservoirs were constructed between 1814 and 1818 to provide it. Tringford Pumping Station, Built in 1817 on the present site, pumped from these two reservoirs into the Wendover Arm. In 1835 Wilstone Reservoir was enlarged (the eastern corner); the old pumphouse was abandoned and replaced by a heading (tunnel) to Tringford Pumping Station so that water could be pumped from there. In 1839 Wilstone Reservoir was enlarged again (the northern part), almost doubling in size.

The Wendover Arm leakage became so bad that closure beyond Little Tring occurred in 1904 with the water from Wendover being diverted at Drayton Beauchamp into Wilstone Reservoir, via the Drayton stream. In 1908 the direct pumping from Marsworth Reservoir into the Arm ceased and from then to the present

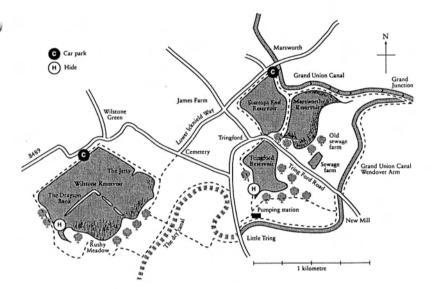
day all pumping has been controlled via Tringford Pumping Station. In 1911 the pipeline under the dry section of the Arm was installed to feed the Wendover water into Tringford Reservoir; in 1944/5 pumps were installed adjacent to Tringford Pumping Station (designated No. 4 Pump) to pump the Wendover water directly into the Arm. When restoration of the Wendover Arm between Little Tring and Drayton Beauchamp is complete the pipeline and No. 4 Pump will become redundant.

In 1995 a syphon system was installed in Wilstone Reservoir (on the northern side, near the car park) to enable water to be supplied directly to the Aylesbury Arm via the stream which also takes the Wilstone overflow when the reservoir is full.

In addition to the No. 4 Pump at Tringford mentioned earlier, there are Pumps No. 1 (only from Tringford) and No. 2 and 3 (from Tringford, Startops and Wilstone). The Tring Summit and Wendover Arm are 392 feet above sea level, but all the reservoirs are below this level and so their relationship with the Pumping Station, canals and each other should be explained. We will look at each in turn.

WILSTONE RESERVOIR

Wilstone has a maximum or weir level of 336 feet and a capacity of 1,127,000 cubic metres. In addition to the spring feed Wilstone can also be fed by gravity from the Wendover Arm at Drayton Beachamp, where there is a paddle. As mentioned previously, the weir overflow and syphon system discharge into a stream which enters the Aylesbury Arm below lock 9. There is also a recent sluice system just before the Aylesbury Arm to divert water into a steam which goes under the canal instead.



MARSWORTH RESERVOIR

Marsworth has a maximum or weir level of 360 feet and a capacity of 253,000 cubic metres. This reservoir supplies water only by gravity to the Grand Union main line, below lock 39 at Marsworth Bridge. The gauging pit or measuring chamber can be seen just by the vehicle gate from the car park to the track up to Marsworth Reservoir. Marsworth overflows at the southwest corner into Startops reservoir.

STARTOPSEND RESERVOIR

Startops has a maximum or weir level of 360 feet, although the reservoir is now kept at a lower level. At this lower level it has a capacity of 417,000 cubic metres. Water from Startops is is pumped via a heading which runs through Tringford reservoir to the Pumping Station. Water is also fed by gravity into the supply line from Marsworth Reservoir to below lock 39.

TRINGFORD RESERVOIR

Tringford has a maximum or weir level of 367 feet, although the weir is no longer used as an overflow. the capacity is 484,000 cubic metres. Water is pumped via the Pumping Station into the Wendover Arm. There is also a run-off into Startops which can be seen at the entrance to the causeway at Tringford Road. However, Tringford usually overflows into Startops by using the heading in reverse direction by gravity. This is controlled from a valve chamber actually in Tringford reservoir which also controls the pumping arrangements in Startops. In very wet weather (as in the Winter of 2000/01) it is necessary to run water by gravity from Tringford and Startops to the lower Wilstone via the headings and through the Pumping Station.

WESTON TURVILLE RESERVOIR

This reservoir was constructed in 1798 to provide a supply of water to mills otherwise deprived of flow when the Wendover Springs were diverted into the Wendover Arm. Eventually the mills were bought out by the canal company enabling water to be pumped into the Wendover Arm. Pumping was abandoned in 1975 and Weston Turville no longer supplies water to the canal system.

CONTROL & MANAGEMENT

You will appreciate that it is quite a complex task to manage the supply of water to the summit, main line and Aylesbury Arm, and from and between the reservoirs. All the controls and valves are operated manually; there are no remote controls on this system! The task is complicated by the requirement of the Environment Agency to keep the water level in Wilstone Reservoir as low as possible leading up to winter. This is in order to minimise overflow and reduce the risk of flooding in Aylesbury.

This article is based upon one by Peter Hearn, Chairman of the Friends of Tring Reservoirs, which appeared in their newsletter 'The Grebe''. We are most grateful for their permission to use the material and to Gavin Hyde of British Waterways for his considerable help in writing the original article.

PERCH BRIDGE MYSTERY



This undated photograph shows the Perch Bridge at Halton; the location is quite distinctive with the bend in the canal in the foreground and the outline of the Chiltern Hills behind. However, as you probably know, the present Perch Bridge is an iron structure not the brick arch in the photograph.

The question is when and why was the original brick bridge replaced by the present structure? A further mystery is the small bricked up arch at water level under the bridge on the offside. What could this have been for?

RESTORATION PROGRESS

Foot & Mouth Delays

When F & M restrictions were lifted, we were over four months behind schedule, but by October this had been reduced to under three months. This is still the position, and is a creditable recovery.

Winding Hole Wall Complete

The winding hole wall is now complete; this had to be given priority because it is very close to the BW property boundary and completion was necessary before the winter to prevent any potential subsidence on the adjoining landowner's property.

Wall and Base Construction

16 concrete pours were achieved in the July to September period (7 walls and 9 bases), and the target was for another 14 by the end of December. Unfortunately, due to the problem of the old wall, (see below) only 10 were achievied although both this and the pevious period exceeded that achieved in the corresponding periods in the previous two years.

Scrub & Stump Clearance

Due to the free loan of Priory Construction's machinery, excellent progress was made with scrub and stump clearance, which is now complete all the way to Whitehouses. No strimming of the Drayton Beauchamp section was possible this year because of foot & mouth restrictions, although the situation will be recovered by a special BITM work party in February.

Old Wall

An old offside wall, between Little Tring Bridge and the stop lock, was partially unearthed during the bridge building operation. This raised the question whether it could be retained for use. Unfortunately, this did not prove possible because it is too shallow for the required water level. The old wall (which is not original) has therefore had to be removed, which has proved quite a tough job and slowed progress.

Footpath and Steps

One outstanding job from the Priory Construction contract is to build a set of steps from the road, adjacent to the bridge. for the public footpath (which is currently temporarily diverted via the towpath side and across the head of the stop lock to reioin its proper line). However, the bank where the steps are due to go is unstable and has had to be shored up with sheet piling, kindly loaned by British Waterways. in order to allow the offside wall to be built. The offside wall will have to built before the piling can be removed to give Priory access, so priority has been given to this section, notwithstanding the problems of removing the old wall first (see above!) It is planned to have the offside wall between the Little Tring Bridge and the stop lock completed, and the footpath reinstated to that side, in time for the 2002 Wendover/Tring Canal Festival.

Stop Lock

Steel piling has been installed just in from the head of the stop lock to enable the footpath crossing to be moved clear of the end of the lock. This is necessary to allow the end of the lock to be excavated so that the new walls can be joined up to the existing brickwork; our restored section will at last be connected to the present end of the navigable canal!

Hedge

Hertfordshire Coutryside Services have funded the plants to reinstate the towpath side hedge from Little Tring Bridge to the tip site. It had been intended to do this in two stages but the funding was to do it all at once, so this was done in November and December. The plants are a mixture of native species (hawthorn, hazel, field maple, dog rose and guelder rose) and should be ideal for wildlife once established. We shall have to ensure the saplings survive any dry periods next summer.

Work in progress at Little Tring, preparing the new towpath ready to plant the hedge



Preparation complete, hedge planting can commence!



EARLY RESTORATION WORK

Some old correspondence has recently come my way which details some early efforts to improve the condition of the Arm.

On 24th August 1975 the Litter Group of the Chiltern Society (now the Conservation Volunteers) met at Harelane Bridge (by the scrap dealer's yard) for an underwater litter clearance. The party were advised to bring waders if possible, or swimming trunks and plimsolls. The "water is flowing crystal clear, about 2 feet deep, temperature 62°, canal has a hard base". The adjoining car breaker, Mr W G Burdett-Coutts loaned his dump truck to take the rubbish to the far end of his site.

This was followed on 6th December 1976 by another Litter Group party to remove rubbish about half a mile east of Drayton Beauchamp Bridge. A Land Rover had been arranged to remove the rubbish via Miswell Farm. The Secretary of the Group, Don Gresswell, noted that this completed their rubbish clearance, above and below the water, along the six mile route of the canal.

In association with the Chiltern Society, the Ramblers' Association 'Commando' Footpath Clearance Group were also involved and they reclaimed a section of the footpath alongside the dry section east of Drayton Bridge on 15th January 1977.

John Savage

YET ANOTHER AWARD FOR LITTLE TRING BRIDGE

Following the 'Highly Commended' won in the Chilterns Building Design Awards last year, the British Waterways engineers who designed the new bridge, John Kearsey, Ronnie Stevens, Jamie Gray and Steve Dennis (together with the late Hugh Walpole) have been recognised through British Waterways' Built Heritage Conservation Awards.

"We wanted to use a mixture of traditional and modern materials to produce a canal bridge which is both in keeping with waterway heritage and looks right in its beautiful rural setting" explained waterway engineer Mark Lampitt. "Because the skills required to rebuild the technically difficult skew arch had been lost over the years and no technical details could be found written down, we visited existing skew arches along the waterway with the bricklayers and worked out how to do it brick by brick".

The Southern Region Built Heritage Conservation Award was presented at a ceremony on 25 October 2001, held at Minworth Locks on the Birmingham & Fazely Canal.

John Savage

OBITUARY

Jim Wright, former IWA Milton Keynes Chairman and founder director of the Wendover Arm Group (precursor of the Trust), died on 21 September 2001 after a long illness.

Jim was born in 1920 and educated at St Lawrence's School, Ramsgate, where he showed an early mechanical bent by helping the teachers service their cars. His father, who was City Editor on the Morning Post, had planned a career as an actuary for him, but with the war looming, Jim joined the London Country Yeomanry (the Sharpshooters). His war service, of which he spoke very little but was very proud, was spent in North Africa, Sicily and at the D-Day landings. Jim maintained contact with his Regiment almost until his death.

After the war, Jim joined the British Tabulating Company at Letchworth becoming involved in the manufacture of the mechanical calculating machines that served commerce until the advent of electronic computers. Here he met his first wife, Joan. Their sons Andrew and Nick were born in 1952 and 1957 respectively. In 1950, Jim set up his own light engineering business at Watford, which he ran until retirement at the age of 70.

Jim joined the IWA as long ago as 1949 and took part in some of the Association's early activities. When coal was still being delivered to Croxley Mill by canal, Jim was often called out to repair the crane there. Later he worked under the WRG banner, including work parties on the Ashton Canal, at Droitwich and the Slough Arm.. His sons often accompanied him or, if he could not go himself, he paid for them to go. Jim was also a founder member of the Grand Union Canal Society. In 1974 the family bought a Teddesley narrowboat, Triton, and cruised the network extensively. They moved to Linslade in 1976 and Jim became Chairman of the Milton Keynes Branch from then until 1980.

Sadly, Joan died in 1982, but in 1985 Jim married his second wife Margaret, delighting in his newly extended family. The same year he served as Harbourmaster at the Milton Keynes National Rally. Jim was a founder director of the Wendover Arm Group (now Trust), and served as its first Treasurer.

Jim's courtesy, quiet work behind the scenes, generous praise of others' efforts and abounding interest in people, places and things will be missed by everyone who knew him.

John Hopkins Les Franklin

CLUB 100 DRAW

The 17th Club 100 Draw was made at the AGM on 24 October 2001.

The lucky winners were:

First Prize £120 Mrs J Jeffrys (no. 71)

Second Prize £50 Mr M W Wright (no. 83)

Third Prize £20 Mr R D Hardwick (no. 44)

Congratualtions to them. Have you joined the club, or would you like to take an extra number? In either case please contact Barry Martin (address at back of magazine).

WORK STARTS ON ASTON CLINTON BY-PASS

The contractors, Balfour Beatty, started work on the A41 Aston Clinton By-pass in August 2000, with completion of the project due in Summer 2003.

Crossing the Wendover Arm

The crossing and diversion of the Wendover Arm is second only to the Tring Hill Interchange in the the major construction elements of the new road. To achieve navigable headroom for the canal. without having the new road running on an embankment past the sensitive Drayton Beauchamp Church area (the higher the level of the road the more noise pollution). the canal is to be diverted as shown on the plan. British Waterways are working closely with Balfour Beatty to ensure the new section of canal is built to the correct specification, including a lining which will not leak. The bridge will have brick facing to the piers and parapet; Ember Blend bricks have been requested, the same as those used for Little Tring Bridge.

Water Flow

Because the present sump (where the water flow from Wendover goes into the underground pipeline to Tringford Pumping Station) will be by-passed by the new section of canal, a new sump will be provided just east of Drayton Bridge. The section of dry canal between this point and where the new canal rejoins the line will have to be lined by British Waterways to prevent any potential leakage. The sequence of events through construction to maintain a route for the water flow will be interesting to observe!

Towpath and Footpaths

There will be a footpath along the new section of towpath, and the existing towpath footpath will be also be maintained on the Drayton Beachamp side of the by-pass, with footpath links to the new towpath on either side of the new road.

Construction Activity

At the time of writing the course of the new road has been fenced-off and the line cleared. The new line of the canal has been partially established, although further tree clearance remains to be done. A temporary Bailey bridge has been built across the canal, just upstream of the sump, for a haul road to enable earthmoving to commence: much chalk will be excavated from the Tring Hill Interchange and moved westward to provide the base for the rest of the road. There will also be a spoil bund from the canal crossing past Drayton Beauchamp Church to deflect traffic noise. Overall, the the scheme is designed to be neutral in spoil displaced and used so that no chalk or earth will have to be taken away for disposal.

Winding Hole

It is planned to incorporate a winding hole (at the Trust's behest) at the Wendover end of the new section of canal. An ingenious design has been drawn up which utilises the junction between the new canal and the existing line to provide an area of water wide enough to turn a full length boat, without having to construct an actual 'hole'.

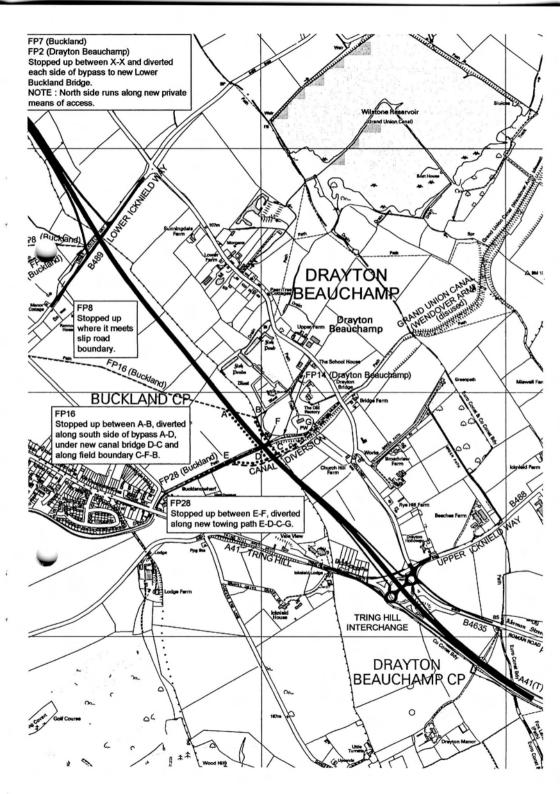
Commitment to Restoration

Whatever your views on the road (and it is sad to see such a swathe of unspoilt countryside go, not to mention the even larger area of countryside which will suffer from traffic roar) it will be fascinating to see a new section of Wendover Arm built and another section restored. Apart from anything else it is a clear and substantial investment in the infrastructure of the Wendover Arm which would only have been made if restoration was considered realistic.

Where to View

If you haven't been to have a look, you might be interested to go along and see for yourself how work is progressing. The site is only a short walk from either Drayton Bridge or Bucklandwharf.

John Savage



Council Matters

September

- ◆ British Waterways were asked to recover the 3-mile post from the site of the Aston Clinton By-pass for safekeeping.
- ◆ The Trust had been invited to the Annual Meeting of the Waterways Trust.
- ◆ £210 had been collected from outside the loos at the National Festival in appreciation of the Trust's cleaning efforts, plus £62 at the Trust's stand and a further £86 from the Berkhamsted Festival.
- ◆ The Festival Committee had decided to stick with the usual Sunday and Monday (2nd & 3rd June) despite the Holiday Weekend being extended to four days (and moved to June) in 2002 to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee.
- ◆ A vote of thanks was given to Ray Orth for organising the loo cleaning at the National Festival; the organisers had noticed the excellent job done and were very appreciative. It would not be possible to repeat next year because Huddersfield was too far away, but perhaps the year after at Henley-on-Thames?
- ◆ The Trust's presence at the Berkhamsted Canal Festival had gone well.
- ◆ It was decided to hold a special Council Meeting to discuss the way forward on external fundraising and community involvement, with British Waterways input.
- ◆ The future of the Trust's websites was discussed.
- Restoration work was recovering gradually from the 4-5 months delay caused by foot & mouth.

October

- ◆ It was agreed that Tim Eaton of British Waterways would talk to the Council at the special meeting to discuss fundraising.
- ◆ Bob Wheal was thanked for producing the newsletters and John Savage agreed to produce the next four.

- ◆ Hertfordshire Countryside Management had agreed to grant £630 toward the restoration of the towpath hedge at Little Tring.
- ◆ Restoration work was concentrating on the south east of the bridge, to enable Priory Construction to build the footpath steps at that point, as required to complete their contract.

November

- ◆ Bob Wheal agreed to stand as Chairman, and Roger Leishman as Vice-Chairman (although retaining prime responsibility for restoration).
- ◆ Other positions on the Council were filled without change, except that the Fund Raising Officer remained vacant for the time being, following the resignation of Gregg Bisgrove.
- ♦ Bob Wheal was to write to Gregg to thank him for his valuable contribution.
- ◆ £500 had been donated by the Union Canal Trust.
- ◆ The special meeting to discuss fund raising, with Tim Eaton of BW, had been set for 5th December.
- ◆ It was agreed to invite Roger Hanbury, Chief Executive of the Waterways Trust, to visit the Arm to see progress and the scope of the task ahead.
- ◆ It was agreed to update and reprint the Trust's publicity leaflet.
- ◆ Roger Leishman produced excellent drawings showing how a winding hole would be incorporated into the junction between the new and existing sections of canal at Drayton Beauchamp.

December

- Matthew Routledge reported that the 3mile post had been recovered and was in safekeeping.
- A further special meeting was arranged for 24th January to progress matters discussed at the 5th December special meeting.
- ◆ Roger Leishman and Bob Wheal had

attended the Waterways Society Conference; the section on bio-diversity was of particular interest.

- ◆ A donation of £100 had been received from Herts IWA.
- ◆ John & Shelley Savage had visited the Institute of Ecology and Hydrology at Wallingford, which had established the national historical significance of the measurement of water flow into the Arm at Wendover.
- ◆ Shelley Savage reported that work on a publication "Water from Wendover", to promote the Arm, was well underway.
- ♦ The hedge planting at Little Tring had gone well and the winding hole walls completed.

BOOKINGS FOR WENDOVER/TRING FESTIVAL 2002

As advertised on the back cover of this newsletter, the Festival is to go ahead on 2nd. and 3rd. June this year.

Booking forms are sent to previous participants, but if you need any more or know anybody who does they may be obtained from:

BOATS, CARAVANS OR CAMPING:

Barry Martin, address and telephone number inside back cover.

CRAFT STALLS:

Alan Prest British Waterways Watery Lane Marsworth TRING Herts HP23 4LZ

Tel: 01442 825938

NEW WENDOVER ARM PUBLICATION ON THE WAY.....

A new publication, "Water from Wendover" is in course of preparation by Shelley Savage, Council Member and Minutes Secretary.

It will be an attractive booklet, with colour pictures, aimed at the non-specialist public and designed to promote interest in and awareness of the Arm.

The present route of the canal will be described, with contemporary and historic illustrations. There will also be historic notes, mention of nearby places of interest and some suggested circular walks incorporating sections of the canal.

The overall theme will be the water flow from Wendover, which after all was the reason the Wendover Arm was built.

Cover price is yet to be decided, but we are aiming for about £5. In addition to direct sales to members we hope to be able to sell the publication through local bookshops. It will also be sent to local schools, libraries and organisations to raise awareness of the Arm in the community.

It is hoped that the booklet will be launched in the next (April) newsletter, in time for the Festival in June.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE



The Canal, Halton, Bucks. SEPT. 1906

This photgraph shows the view from the road bridge in Halton Village, just a few years after the canal had closed to navigation. The 'Rothschild' bridge is in the distance and the buildings are same today. Note the beautiful condition of the canal, the towpath (on the right) and footpath (on the left). This canal today features much weed growth and, whilst the towpath is in good order, the footpath on the left (which parallels the canal as far as Harelane Bridge) is in a rather rough state between this point and the 'Rothschild' Bridge.

.....from your new editor.

Having agreed, in a momentary lapse of sanity, to take on Wendover Arm News for the next year I would welcome members' comments and suggestions for future editions.

If you could spare a moment to complete the brief questionnaire below, and return it to me, I would be most grateful.

All reponses will be entered in a draw for a free copy of the forthcoming "Water from Wendover" publication.

- In this edition please list any article(s) or section(s) that you particularly enjoyed or found interesting?
 Please list any that were not of interest.
 Are there any topics you would like to see covered in future editions?
- 4. Do you have any material, or could you provide an article?
- 5. Do you have any photograph(s) that may be if interest for publication?
- 6. Any other comments?

Name and a	address

Please return to: John Savage 16 Lakeside TRING Hertfordshire HP23 5HN



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TRING/WENDOVER CANAL FESTIVAL 2002

SUNDAY 2nd JUNE & BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY 3rd JUNE

Make a date in your diary now, and persuade all your friends and relations to come along as well to make this the biggest one yet.

Grand Draw tickets are enclosed with this newsletter - sell them now (or buy them all yourself!) and send the counterfoils with cheque (payable to Wendover Arm Trust) to the address on the tickets.

WHY NOT ASK FOR SOME MORE TO SELL? REMEMBER, EVERY PENNY RAISED GOES TO FUND FURTHER RESTORATION.

Festival info. on: www.wendovercanalfestival.org.uk or www.tringcanalfestival.org.uk