

WENDOVER ARM NEWS

Newsletter of the Wendover Arm Trust

In this issue:

- ♦ Festival 2002
we need your help
- ♦ Obituary
Bernard Banfield
- ♦ Little Tring Bridge
a welcome sequel
- ♦ Moorings on the Arm
an interesting proposal
- ♦ Restoration Progress
and Future Plans
a vision for the future
- ♦ Aston Clinton By-pass
much to report
- ♦ Grants Officer
*important vacancy needs
filling*
- ♦ 'Water from Wendover'
*new Trust publication
imminent*
- ♦ The Halton Railway
a fascinating story
- ♦ Perch Bridge Mystery
an update
- ♦ Historical Perspective
another view from the past
- ♦ Trust Web Site
all you need to know
- ♦ Club 100
yet more lucky winners

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 be acknowledged, credited if used and returned.

Please send any contributions to:

John Savage
WAT Newsletter Editor
16 Lakeside
TRING
Hertfordshire
HP23 5HN

Disclaimer

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

FESTIVAL 2002 - WE NEED YOUR HELP!

★Donations of prizes are urgently needed for the Boaters' Raffle; if you can help please telephone Johanna Wheal on 01525 381614 or 07815 172113.

★Tombola prizes are also required; please bring them along to the Festival and hand them to Jo Leeson on the Harbour Master's nb *Acorn*.

★Why not lend a hand whilst at the Festival, to man the gate or whatever? Just report to Site Manager, Graeme Lockhart if you can spare some time.

OBITUARY: BERNARD BANFIELD

Bernard died shortly after his 95th birthday, and within a few weeks of his wife, Elsie. He had been actively involved with the Wendover Arm right from the start of the Wendover Arm Group, the precursor of the Trust, served on the Council well into his eighties, and maintained a keen interest in the Arm to the end. Association with the Arm goes back much further however, as Bernard lived in the cottages at Whitehouses during the Second World War period and campaigned vigorously to try to stop Little Tring Bridge being demolished

There was probably not a local Society or Group in which he had not been active! He was a founder member of the Chiltern Society and the Beacon Villages Society, and did much work for them both.

The Trust, together with the Chiltern Society and others have contributed to memorial seat for Bernard which will be installed on the village green at Ivinghoe.

LITTLE TRING BRIDGE AWARD - A SEQUEL

You may remember that it was reported in the previous *Wendover Arm News* that the British Waterways Engineers and Designers responsible for the Little Tring Bridge had won BW's *Southern Region Built Heritage Conservation Award* for the project.

The Award included a payment of £300, which the gentlemen in question have very kindly and generously donated to the Trust. We thank John Kearsey, Ronnie Stevens, Jamie Gray and Steve Dennis most sincerely.

PROPOSED MOORINGS ON THE ARM

British Waterways has submitted an application for Outline Planning Permission for moorings on the Wendover Arm at Tring.

The background to this is that they had been considering the purchase of the field in which the Festival is held each year. This would not be possible, however, without some economic benefit to offset the capital cost of purchase - hence the proposals for moorings, which would produce some income.

Should Outline Planning Permission be granted, BW will draw up detailed plans for the moorings and purchase of the field. The moorings would be non-residential and be in the corner of the field near the Tring Feeder. Vehicle access would be provided from the Icknield Way.

The Trust has considered these proposals, and is broadly supportive as BW's motive in acquiring the field is to secure it for future use for the Festival. (Although the present owner, John Brown, has most kindly and generously made it available to the Trust for the past twelve years we would most likely lose use of it should he ever decide to sell). The chance of finding another suitable site, with both road and boat access, is remote. The Trust would also welcome the increased use of the Arm that the moorings would generate.

Should the proposals go ahead, the Trust would wish to secure a long term commitment for use of the field for the Festival (until restoration is complete). The Trust would also wish to be fully consulted about the design for the moorings to ensure that they cause the minimum disturbance to the Festival arrangements.

At the time of writing (mid April), no decision on the Application had been taken by Dacorum Borough Council, although Tring Town Council has recommended approval.

RESTORATION PROGRESS AND FUTURE PLANS

Progress at Little Tring (Phase I)

British Waterways have found some wooden patterns at Bulbourne which may be suitable for casting bridge guards to finish off the new bridge.

The footpath (off side) wall from the bridge to the stop lock is progressing well and, with the help of additional working parties and the Kent & East Sussex Canal Recovery Group, is planned to be completed at the June Festival. Back filling behind this wall adjacent to the bridge has been completed which will enable Priory Construction to build steps from the road to the footpath, an outstanding element of their contract. This work should start in April.

Work on laying the Bentonite lining should commence later this year and the Restoration Committee has discussed the practicalities, including whether to lay it widthways or lengthways along the canal and whether vehicles could be driven over the Bentonite once laid.

British Waterways are investigating the possibility of putting up road signs on either side of Little Tring Bridge to make road users aware of the existence of the canal.

Suggested wording would be "GRAND UNION CANAL - WENDOVER ARM"

Plans for Phase II (Little Tring to Drayton Beauchamp)

A proposed specification for re-lining the canal bed on this section has been drawn up by the Restoration Committee and can be briefly summarised:

1. There will only be short sections of concrete towpath wall at selected locations for mooring purposes.
2. Elsewhere the Bentonite granular mat lining will be brought up above water level and buried in the ground with soil held in place by coir rolls.
3. The bed of the canal will slope down at 1 in 3 from the banks/walls until navigable depth is reached. These slopes will be covered with 6 inches of concrete and the horizontal bed with one foot of excavated material, except at bridge narrows where concrete will be used to prevent scouring.

Including provision for footbridges to carry the two Public Footpaths which cross this section, the estimated cost of Phase II is £500,000 assuming voluntary labour is used. If the work was to be carried out by contractors the cost could be up to £1.5m.

Looking Ahead to Phase III (Drayton Beauchamp to Wendover)

The Restoration Committee has considered the strategy for this section and the main issues are:

1. The occupation bridge at Bucklandwharf will need to be raised. British Waterways have been asked to investigate the legal position regarding this bridge.
2. The present A41 bridge at Bucklandwharf has limited headroom and, although some pleasure craft could navigate it when the water is up to full level, British Waterways would not permit navigation without headroom being raised. The road over this bridge will become minor and unclassified when the by-pass opens in 2003.
3. The narrows at Green Park, Aston Clinton, are 7'8" wide and 4' deep (at navigable water level). They would thus be navigable by normal 7' wide canal craft although the side walls would need raising before the water level was increased. Wide beam boats would have to turn at the new winding point beyond Drayton Beauchamp.
4. Halton Bridge will require replacing with either a lift bridge or a replica of the original brick arch. There is still a contention

that, when the old bridge was demolished, there was an agreement to provide a navigable bridge if the Arm was reopened to navigation.

5. To avoid expensive pumping of water from the present 'Wendover' level up to navigational level when Phase II is complete, it would be sensible to raise the water level to Wendover at the completion of Phase II. This would require any potential bank leakages to be rectified before Phase II is completed. However, as the 'Wendover' water level exceeded full navigable depth for a time in early 2001 (after excessive rainfall) any problems should already have been noted.

Sign Boards

The Restoration Committee decided that two professionally produced sign boards should be put up at the Little Tring restoration site to make it clear to the public that all the work was being done by voluntary labour. The boards would also publicise the trust and give contact details for anybody wishing to help with restoration, join the Trust or make a donation. The Publicity Officer (that's me *Ed.*) has been asked to design and order them.

ASTON CLINTON BY-PASS

Construction Progress

The canal bridge base has been constructed and work on the abutments should be well underway by the time this newsletter is published.

The line of the canal diversion has been cleared and marked out; excavation of the cutting is expected during the next three months. See the photograph after this article which shows the new line of the canal.

Road Drainage

The run-off from the new road will go through a centrifuge to separate out the solids and will then discharge into the severed section of the old line, to the west of the road. This section, from the embankment carrying the road to the point where the new line of the canal diverges, will be a reed bed which will purify the water of pollutants (principally oil and salt) before it passes via a wier or pipe under the diverted towpath into the new winding hole. See the photograph after this article showing the section of canal which will become the reed bed.

Present Sump and Paddle to Wilstone Reservoir

The sump is to the east of the new road, so will be cut off from the Wendover water. Similarly the paddle which allows water

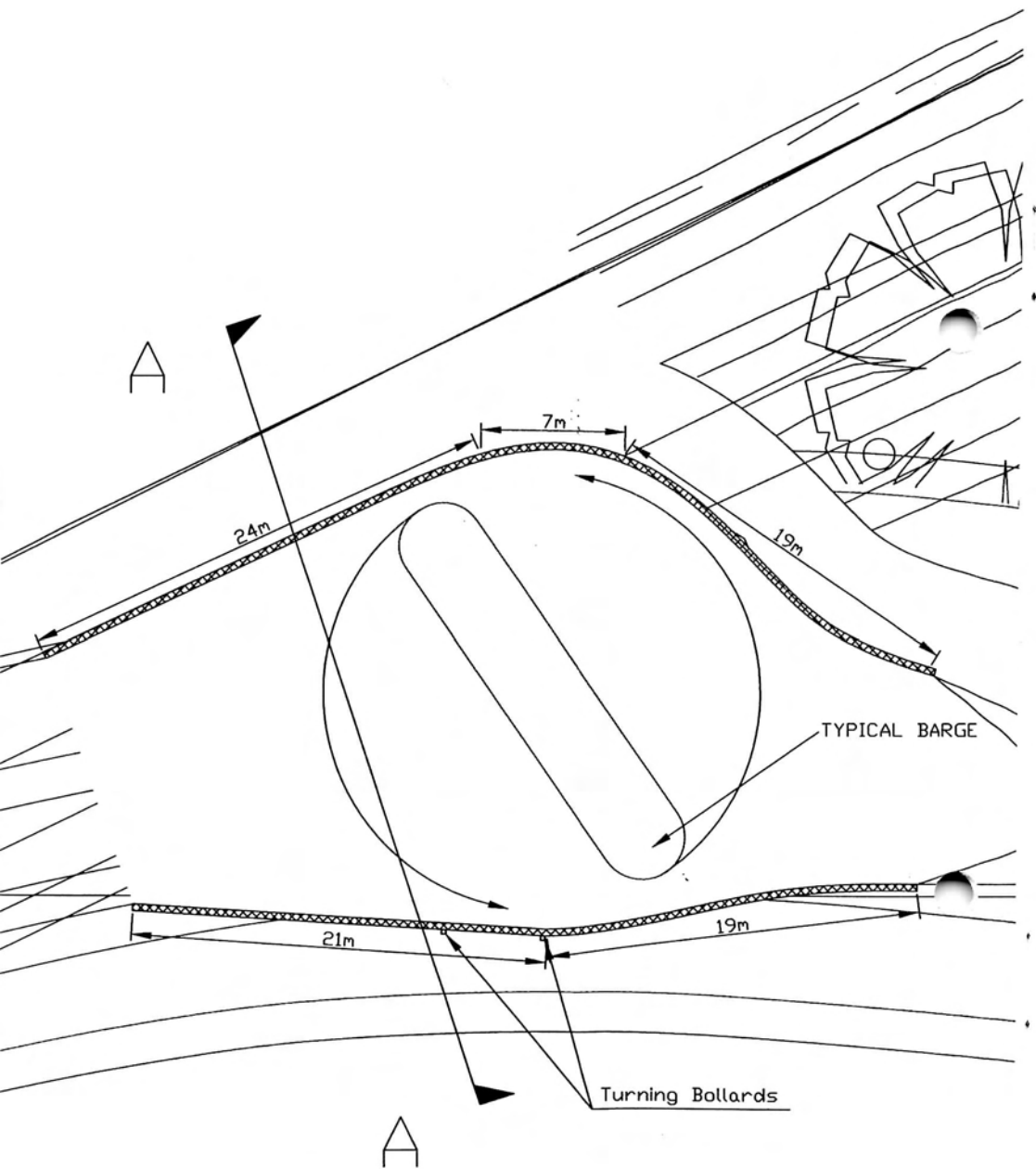
to be run direct to Wilstone Reservoir will no longer be usable. Therefore all the Wendover water and the run-off from the new road will flow along the new section of canal to a weir and thence into the pipe at a manhole to the east of Drayton Beauchamp Bridge.

Canal from By-Pass Diversion to new Weir/Sump

British Waterways are finalising the design for this section, which is to be done at their expense as it is additional to the by-pass requirement. Provision is to be made for mooring one boat on either side of Drayton Bridge. Bentonite is to be used for the sloping sides of the channel and clay on the bottom (although this is to be reviewed when the final excavations are inspected).

Winding Hole

See the drawing on the next page of how the winding hole will be incorporated into the junction of the canal diversion and the existing line, at the western end of the diversion. Diverging to the right of the winding hole on the drawing are the existing line (to be the reed bed) and the new line (lower).





This is the point at Drayton Beauchamp where the new line diverges from the existing (looking south west). The cleared bank opposite will be excavated to create a cutting. There will be a public footpath along the new towpath from this point, and the existing public footpath along the old towpath will be retained as far as the present sump.



This view shows the present sump, looking east. The bridge is a temporary Bailey structure to provide a crossing for the contractors; the new road will cross the old canal line on an embankment at this point. The section of canal in the foreground will become the reed bed for processing the road run-off.

VACANCY FOR GRANTS OFFICER

The Trust is currently without a Grants Officer and we need somebody for this vital role as soon as possible.

What does the job entail?

There are innumerable opportunities to pursue for funding. The Grants Officer just needs to use his or her initiative to seek out likely sources and use their skills of persuasion to convince the body in question that they wish to support the Trust. Other Council members will often suggest leads and will also help in preparing cases.

This can be a very rewarding job; just think of the satisfaction in securing some extra money towards restoration, promoting the Wendover Arm or conserving its wildlife.

**INTERESTED? THEN
GIVE BOB WHEAL A
RING.**

"WATER FROM WENDOVER": NEW TRUST PUBLICATION

Our new booklet, written by Council Member Shelley Savage, is on course to be launched at the Festival.

It will be an attractive full colour publication aimed at the general reader rather than canal enthusiast. It is designed to raise interest in the Arm, encourage people to visit it and walk alongside.

The booklet follows the water flow from the springs at Wendover and describes the canal today, points of historical interest and future restoration. The wildlife is featured together with places of interest adjacent to the canal.

We hope all Trust members will wish to buy a copy for themselves, and perhaps one as an attractive gift for somebody else.

'Water from Wendover' will be available from the Trust Sales Stand at the Festival, thereafter by mail order from the Sales Officer (address inside back cover) and local bookshops.

THE HALTON RAILWAY

Many Trust members will know that there was a railway bridge across the Arm between Wendover and Halton. This article gives a brief account of the interesting story of the line.

Origins of the Line

During the First World War Alfred de Rothschild allowed his estate at Halton to be used for a military camp and by 1915 some 20,000 men were stationed there. Intensive training took place in the simulated battleground created in Halton Woods. The No. 3 Squadron of the Royal Flying Corps (predecessor of the R.A.F) also set up camp early in the war.

The military requisitioned road vehicles from local traders and the Metropolitan Railway to transport all the supplies for Halton from Wendover Station.

An Enterprising Station Master

Mr Thomas William Read, who was Station Master at Wendover in 1915, prepared a plan for a simple railway line to the Military Camp to carry the considerable traffic. He submitted his plan (including the proposed route, which he had walked one Sunday morning) to the Metropolitan Railway Board at Baker Street who accepted the idea and gave Mr Read £350 for his initiative. This was a substantial reward in those

days and it enabled Mr Read to buy a house in Chiltern Road, Wendover.

The Line is Built

With the Military's approval, the railway was built by German Prisoners of War being held at Halton supervised by Military personnel. The line opened for traffic in 1917 and ran from a specially constructed platform at Wendover Station to terminate at Chestnut Avenue Halton. The Wendover Arm was initially crossed by a bridge built of railway sleepers whilst an order was placed with the Cleveland Bridge Co. for the permanent structure. As the canal had already closed for navigation the railway bridges did not have to provide headroom for boats.

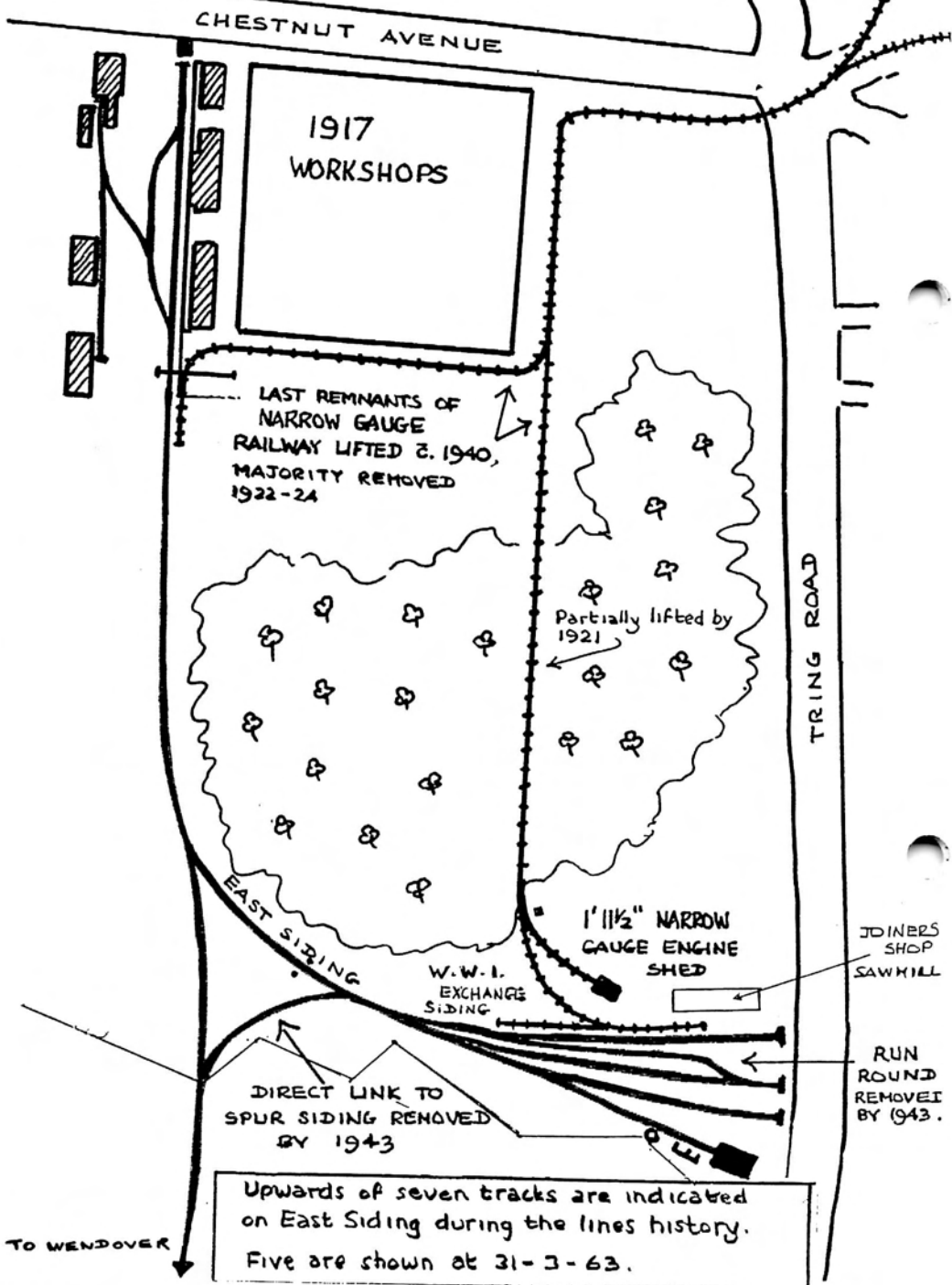
During 1917 many trees in Halton Woods were felled to be used as trench props on the Western Front in France and the railway was immediately used to facilitate the removal of this timber.

A Narrow Gauge Connection

Connecting with the new railway at Halton Camp was a narrow gauge (1"11½") line, built to help with the construction of the Camp Workshops and then extended into Halton Woods to extract the timber mentioned in the previous paragraph.

HALTON LIGHT RAILWAY

1917 NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY ++++++
SKETCH. TONY COLDWELL 1992 ©



Traffic on the Line

For most of its history the railway's main use was for the delivery of coal for the boilers at Halton Camp, but when the R.A.F changed over to oil-fired boilers in the late 1950s fuel supplies were delivered by road and the line declined in use.

The line never had a passenger service, although there are accounts of airmen riding on wagons from the Camp to Wendover when going home on leave. There is also an unsubstantiated report of a charter passenger train leaving Halton with hundreds of airmen going home on block leave in the 1950s.

Closure

By the early 1960s the track was in need of renewal and this contributed to the decision to close the line. The last train left Halton, amid much ceremony, on 29 March 1963. The bridge over the Wendover Arm was demolished by Royal Engineer sappers in 1965 and in recent years a wooden footbridge has been built at the site of the railway crossing to take the permissive footpath which follows the line of the railway at this point.

Tracing the Line Today

A Public Footpath follows the route of the line from Wendover Station to Aylesbury Road, where the level crossing gateposts can still be seen. A

permissive footpath follows the course of the line from Aylesbury Road, crossing the Wendover Arm, until it reaches the Wendover - Halton Public Footpath. There is no trace of the line beyond this point to the Camp, although the terminus platform can still be seen from Chestnut Avenue, Halton.

JOHN SAVAGE

Thanks are due to Trust member Peter Nicholls for permission to use extracts from the late Tony Coldwell's publication on the Halton Railway

PERCH BRIDGE MYSTERY - UPDATE

Many thanks to the readers of this newsletter, and to those of 'Halton Village News', (which reproduced the article) who contacted the Editor with information.

We have established that the original brick arch bridge was replaced with the present iron structure by Alfred de Rothschild, presumably for aesthetic reasons. However, we have still not been able to date the change nor explain the small arch in the brickwork at water level.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE



This photograph shows the New Inn at Bucklandwharf with the original bridge, later replaced by the present culvert carrying the busy A41. In 2003, upon completion of the Aston Clinton by-pass, this road will be declassified and will carry much reduced traffic. The New Inn is now the offices of Homesitters.

TRUST WEB SITES

There is no excuse for well-connected Trust members not to keep abreast of what is happening on the Arm. By well-connected I mean of course anyone with web access.

The Trust now has an attractive and professionally presented web site which give a wealth of information about restoration, events, maps, history and much more. The web site is hosted and produced by Torkel Larson, a member of the restoration work team. Torkel takes his digital camera on site on work party days and his excellent photographs are a colourful feature of the web site.

You can get to the site by one of three addresses; having multiple names helps increase the chance of someone finding the site from a search. The addresses for the Trust web site are:

www.wat.org.uk
www.wendoverarmtrust.org.uk
www.wendovercanal.org.uk

It doesn't matter which one you use, they all end up at the same site.

The Trust web site will grow with time and will serve as a good reference for information about the Arm and the Trust. One section, however, has a different emphasis. The 'page' dealing with the Festival is written separately by Trust member Peter Andrews and, because of the significance of the Event, has its own addresses:

www.wendovercanalfestival.org.uk
www.tringcanalfestival.org.uk

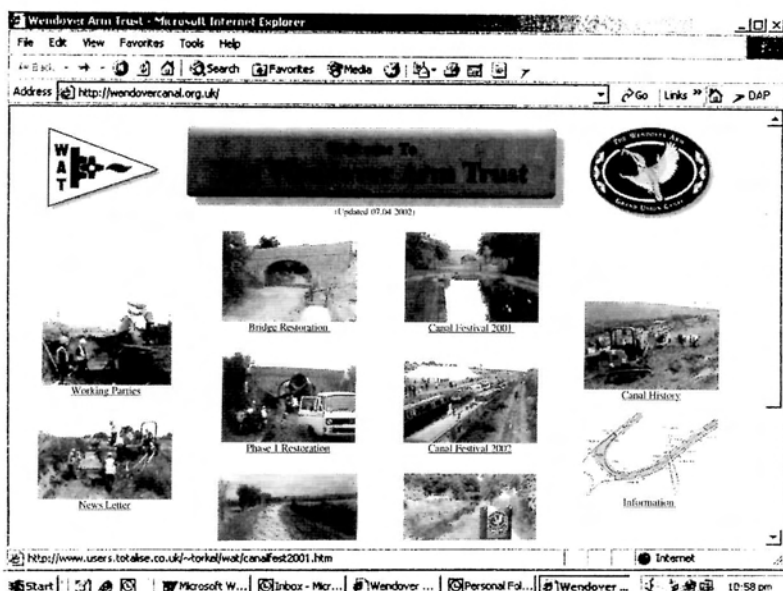
or it may be accessed by clicking on the button 'Canal Festival 2002' from the Trust site.

The Festival section gives details of the planned attractions as well as details of how to attend the Festival as an exhibitor. You can print application forms for boats, trade and craft bookings. Peter hopes to include photographs of this years event, once it takes place.

The Trust is fortunate in having these two people who have the expertise and enthusiasm to put together the web presence and thanks are due to both Torkel and Peter. Don't let their efforts go to waste, visit the site and let us know what you think.

Bob Wheal

Reproduced below is an example of a 'page' from the Trust's web site



NEWSLETTER SURVEY RESULTS

Very many thanks indeed to those members who returned the survey form in the previous edition. Those responding were predominantly satisfied with the content, which they found of almost universal interest. Photographs, maps and diagrams were appreciated.

Constructive points for the future were:

Type size. (Increased with this issue)
 Include members' letters. (I'd be delighted to, if I receive any!)
 Re-design/update the cover. (good idea; thinking about it)
 More photographs . (agreed, subject to availability)

Thanks again to those who took the trouble to return the form; I found your views and comments extremely useful.

John Savage

FORTHCOMING WORKING PARTIES

ALL AT LITTLE TRING

4 May (Saturday)
5 May (Sunday)
15 May (Wednesday)
16 May (Thursday)
17 May (Friday)
18 May (Saturday)
19 May (Sunday)
30 May (Thursday)
31 May (Friday)
1 June (Saturday)
2 June (Sunday)
3 June (Monday)
4 June (Tuesday)
13 June (Thursday)
14 June (Friday)
6 July (Saturday)
7 July (Sunday)
11 July (Thursday)
12 July (Friday)
27 July to 3 August (Saturday
to Saturday)

Volunteers are always welcome; please contact Roger Leishman, Ray Orth or Ron Pittaway (details inside back cover).

THE QUEEN MOTHER

The Trust offers its condolences to the Royal and Bowes-Lyon families on the death of Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother. The Bowes-Lyon Trust of St Pauls Walden is a Corporate Member of our Trust.

CLUB 100 DRAW

The 19th draw was made at April's Council Meeting, and the lucky winners are:

First Prize (£123.60)
Mr E J Geary (093)

Second Prize (£ 51.50)
Mr A R Holloway (073)

Third Prize (£ 20.60)
Mr P Bowers (030)

If YOU do not have a number in the draw why not take one NOW, or if you do have one why not increase your chances and take another? 50% of the subscription goes directly to restoration and 50% goes back to members as prizes.

To subscribe, or extend your subscription, please contact Barry Martin (details inside back cover).

COUNCIL MATTERS

Due to lack of space 'Council Matters' have had to be held over until the next issue.

All major issues are covered in this edition in other features.

NEWS IN BRIEF

● **1790 Map of the Arm.** A visit to the Waterways Trust Archive at Gloucester produced a beautiful 1790 map of the Arm (i.e before it was built), in scroll format on vellum. It only came to light somewhere in BW last year. Most interesting is that the route of the Arm varies significantly from that built in two locations (at New Mill and Halton Village). With the help of British Waterways, we have just acquired a superb photographic copy of the map and will consider having it framed. We shall also see whether it is possible to reproduce extracts from it in future editions of Wendover Arm News.

● **IWA Northampton Rally (3 - 6 May).** IWA Northampton Branch have most kindly decided that any profit from their rally will be donated to the Trust. We thank them most sincerely, and will let you know how much was raised in the next edition.

● **Tring Town Council.** Have donated £100 to the Trust from their budget to help local voluntary organisations. Thanks to them for their support.

● **Chief Executive of The Waterways Trust to visit the Arm.** Roger Hanbury, Chief Executive of the Waterways Trust is to visit the Arm on 3rd May, hosted by Roger

Leishman and John Savage. The visit has resulted from the question of external funding for restoration schemes in affluent areas, posed by John Savage after attending the Waterways Trust Annual Meeting. It is intended to show him our present achievements and the investment going on at Drayton Beauchamp together with the major challenges ahead with Halton and Bucklandwharf Bridges.

● **New Trust Leaflet.** The Trust's information and membership recruitment leaflet has been updated and reprinted; a copy is enclosed. WHY NOT USE IT TO RECRUIT A FRIEND, RELATION OR NEIGHBOUR TO THE TRUST? Further copies are available from John Savage if you can put them to good use.

● **Unlocked and Unlimited.** John Savage and Roger Leishman attended British Waterways' presentation at the Glaziers Hall on 19 March, together with about 500 others. It was celebration of recent achievements and a statement of the next priorities, which were delivered with an optimistic confidence that they would happen. In answer to a question about smaller schemes (like the Wendover Arm) it was said that these should progress in parallel with the big strategic ones.

Wendover Arm Trust

Registered Office: 129 High Street BERKHAMSTED Herts HP4 2DJ
A non-profit making company limited by guarantee. Registered in England no. 2353392
Incorporated 1989. Registered Charity no. 801190

President

Sir Roger Cork FCA FICM FIPA

Vice President

Mr Roger Lewis

The Council

Chairman

Bob Wheal
467 Bideford Green
LEIGHTON BUZZARD
Beds
LU7 2TZ

Tel: 07860 286155

Restoration Director & Vice Chairman

Roger Leishman
7 Hall Park
BERKHAMSTED Herts
HP4 2NU

Tel: 01442 874536

Secretary

John Hopkins
80 Ashfield
Stantonbury
MILTON KEYNES
MK14 6AT

Tel: 01908 311521

Treasurer

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

Publicity Officer & Newsletter Editor

John Savage
16 Lakeside
TRING Herts
HP23 5HN

Tel: 01442 827702

Membership Secretary

Barry Martin
69 Wenwell Close
Aston Clinton
AYLESBURY Bucks
HP22 5LG

Tel: 01296 630599

Trust Sales

Beryl Martin
69 Wenwell Close
Aston Clinton
AYLESBURY Bucks
HP22 5LG

Tel: 01296 630599

Grants Officer

VACANT

Minutes Secretary

Shelley Savage
16 Lakeside
TRING Herts
HP23 5HN

Tel: 01442 827702

Council Member

Ray Orth
42 Lowndes Avenue
CHESHAM Bucks
HP5 2HN

Tel: 01494 786868

Council Member

Ron Pittaway
65 Wenwell Close
Aston Clinton
AYLESBURY Bucks
HP22 5LG

Tel: 01296 630698

BW Nominee

Matthew Routledge
BW Grand Union South
Watery Lane
Marsworth
TRING Herts
HP23 4LZ
Tel: 01442 825938

IWA Nominee

Elizabeth Payne
33 Priors Walk
St John's Priory
LECHLADE Glos
GL7 3HR

Tel: 01367 253121

Chiltern Society Nominee

John Rowe
Fox Meadow
Water End Lane
Potten End
BERKHAMSTED Herts
HP4 2SH

Tel: 01442 862619



TRING/WENDOVER CANAL FESTIVAL 2002

*SUNDAY 2nd JUNE
&
BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY 3rd JUNE*

Support the Trust and have a great day out at the Festival. Bring along your friends, relations and neighbours and let's break all the records to have the biggest one yet!

Late news: Bob the Builder AND his Personal Assistant Wendy are confirmed as being there on both days. Tell all your young friends who will surely want to come and meet them.

**DON'T FORGET THOSE GRAND DRAW TICKETS -
SEND OFF YOUR CHEQUE AND COUNTERFOILS NOW
IF YOU HAVEN'T YET GOT ROUND TO IT . THIS IS
YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPORT FURTHER
RESTORATION AND WIN A PRIZE.**