



Wendover Arm Trust

Operations Report 27 July 2021

Website: - <https://wendoverarmtrust.co.uk/>

Overview

Very good weather allowed for good progress on the pipe capping and brick work restoration. Covid 19 personal separation was well maintained throughout.

Strange Object sited in the hut

When I went into the new hut 3, I saw this item and wondered if it was some kind of fertility symbol, or a good luck charm? Maybe it had been picked early that morning?



Brick work restoration of the Old Swing bridge wall

During the good weather (in between the rain showers) work progressed on the badly weathered wall. With the aid of a curved wooden former, the old arch was renewed.



We do not know what the arch was originally built there for. However, we have also found other features such as stop plank channels and so on. The structure was used with a swing bridge hence the large coping stone. The restoration represents the structure and its history as best we can without knowing what all the alterations were for.

Work has now started on the other side which is in a worse overall condition due to the water and damp from the raised fields behind it. Much of the wall will be taken down to rebuild the back brick section where the deterioration is worst, before building it back up with the original bricks, if they are in good enough condition. We already have some new heritage bricks, and they will be used sympathetically to restore the appearance of the structure.



The offside wall.
The red line base
represents where
the wall will be
stripped back to.
Note the same
arch structure as
seen on the
towpath side

Concrete pipe capping and roadway

Excavation continued throughout the work party with 5 concrete delivery days each of which consisted of 3 ready mix 4 cubic m loads. (total 60 cubic m)

The concrete slab is being laid for the primary purpose of protecting the Bentomat lining system from failure should the ancient, glazed clay pipe collapse. Thus, the concrete straddles the trench originally dug to install the pipe. Where the pipe was installed towards one of the banks (it was laid in straight line lengths on a curved canal) the concrete is made wider to cover the pipe and still provide a running surface when the bank is rebuilt.

During the excavation another, unknown, lamp hole was discovered. (Lamp holes were vertical sections of pipe attached to the pipeline to allow inspection of the water flow). This was extra evidence that the excavation was where it should be. The position was recorded, and the hole blocked off before the concrete was cast over it. (<https://w3w.co/savers.shins.cascaded>)

What's that
Pete? Dunno
better look into
it!



Excavation and concrete pouring went to plan over the two-week work party and as can be seen in the picture below the amount now laid is quite impressive!



And, yes, we did get asked if this was the first stage of the HS2 construction!

The length of the roadway now stretches some approximately 363m from bridge 4, with 120m being added in this month.

Excavated spoil containing coal tar

Now that we are working towards the refuse tip and the Winding hole there is less available surface area to store anything. This situation will continue throughout the restoration. We will “lose” a large area of what was used for storage as and when the refuse tip is excavated.

Currently because we are excavating to put in the pipe capping/roadway and not doing any lining, the spoil that would be used to do bank and bed back filling is not being used for that purpose yet. The spoil has been dumped onto the refuse tip area in a storage stack as per the picture.

We have also been able to calculate that the amount of spoil containing coal tar will exceed the original plan for dealing with it.

The tar is currently thought to be too hazardous to be taken off site to landfill and the plan was to excavate the refuse tip, harvest the coal tar remaining on the banks (and bury it under the Bentomat) and excavate, and send to landfill, the soil from under the tip area and replace it with the coal tar spoil. We have done enough analysis on the soil under coal tar to prove it is not contaminated. However, the sheer volume of spoil with coal tar will exceed the practically available space in the tip bed.

This is not an immediate problem because we will be starting the bank excavation and lining at Bridge 4 in August. This will use up a lot of spoil with coal tar, but we will have to temporarily store the spoil from bank excavation locally.

Spoil with coal tar contamination disposal Team

A new team has been set up after we had some positive answers to our call for help in dealing with this material. We even had offers and encouragement from New Zealand!

The main driver is to challenge the rationale that coal tar cannot be dealt with effectively and to look at what possible options there may be, ranging from manual physical separation by people, through to specialist contractors who deal with coal tar as part of their business. For instance, there are companies that deal with coal tar in road planning materials where the underlying historical layers were originally coal tar.

The team is due to have their terms of reference approved in a couple of weeks from this date.



The excavation spoil with coal tar can be easily separated from the tip material due to being strongly contrasting colours

The Bentomatic passes initial testing

The rig known as the “Bentomatic” had a full scale try out this month and got as far as having a full roll of Bentomat installed and lifted by the 13t excavator. This was facilitated by machining out the original quick hitch attachment pins and the purchase of two 65mm diameter “pins” to connect to the excavator hitch without having to use the hydraulic quick hitch apparatus. These pins are slid into position manually.

The rig will be tried out for real on the bank lining near to bridge 4 in August.

The odd shaped item referred to at the start of this report fits into the end of the Bentomatic holding tube to help insert the tube into the centre of the Bentomat roll. Don't know where that idea came from, but it does work very well....



Bench installation and viewing platform

One of two commemorative benches can be seen to have been installed by the group of proud, socially spaced, volunteers. Due to the previous restoration work these benches had to be manually lifted up the canal side and taken along the flat area just beyond the mooring wall at Bridge 4. The same method was used to get the installation materials to the site.



A viewing platform has been built at Whitehouses to allow visitors to view a representation of the Whitehouses walls made with low level brick work. There will be explanatory boards placed here too.



Health and safety

Back problems from driving dumpers. Over the last few months, we have been driving dumpers along the rough bed of the canal and along to the refuse tip to dump the excavated spoil from the bed whilst setting up for concreting. Several drivers have either complained or commented on getting back problems whilst doing this work (I am one of them!). A lot of the driving must be done in reverse due to working in the canal bed with limited opportunities to turn round. This means driving with your head and upper body turned to see where you are going.

Dumper drivers need to be made aware that this problem occurs over a period and driving one all day can cause serious problems from fatigue.

Although it may slow down the excavation work and could lead to frustration on the part of the excavator driver, we must allow drivers to go at their own pace. The team leaders need to make sure that Drivers are swapped frequently to spread the load.

Covid 19 rules were followed very well with Volunteers keeping their distance etc. whilst working in groups.

Tony Bardwell,
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Operations Director.