



Wendover Canal Visitor Guide

How to get there

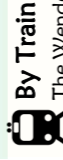


By Bus

There are several services serving the Wendover Canal. Services can change, please check your route before setting off.

- Route 500 (Aylesbury – Watford) for Buckland Wharf, Aston Clinton
- Route 50/55 (Aylesbury – Halton) for Wharf Road, Wendover and Halton
- Route 61 (Aylesbury – Dunstable) for Wendover, Buckland Wharf, Halton, Aston Clinton and New Mill, Tring
- Route 164 (Aylesbury – Tring) for Gannell Bridge, near New Mill, Tring

For more information online, select Arriva Buses www.arrivabus.co.uk, Intalink (Herts Transport Service) www.intalink.org.uk, or www.traveline.info, amongst others.



By Train

The Wendover Canal is served by two train lines:

- **The Chiltern Line** (www.thetrainline.com) from London Marylebone to Aylesbury via Wendover
- **Wendover Station** is a half-mile walk from Wharf Road. From the station walk downhill into the town centre then at the Clock Tower, bear left along Aylesbury Road. Wharf Road is the turning on the right at the first mini-roundabout. The road crosses the start of the canal, a short distance along Wharf Road on the left hand side before the school.
- **West Midland Railway** (www.thetrainline.com) from London Euston to Birmingham via Tring.
- **Tring Station** is a short distance from the main Grand Union Canal. Turn left out of the station towards the canal bridge, then follow the towpath for almost two miles northwards to Bulbourne Junction with the Wendover Canal.



By Car

- **Stablebridge Road, Aston Clinton, HP22 5ND**. There is a small free public car park/layby up the hill from Stable Bridge.
- **Wilstone Reservoir. HP23 4DA** Public car park on the Marsworth to Aston Clinton road below the reservoir
- **Startops End, Marsworth, HP23 4LJ** A large public car park next to the main Grand Union and Tring Reservoirs. Charges apply.
- **Buckland Wharf, HP22 5LQ** . Some roadside parking .



Walking - Little Tring towpath diversion:

Heading towards Bulbourne the footpath diverts left at the worksite entrance and down a lane (25 yards) onto the road. Go diagonally to the right across the road through the hedge onto the footpath, turn right and follow the path (100 yards) to Little Tring hamlet. Walk uphill through the hamlet (beware of traffic) to Little Tring Bridge (100yds); there are steps on the left down to the towpath. On the outside there are steep steps down to an unpaved canal-side footpath leading to Tring.

For more details visit our website: www.wendovercanal.org.uk

The Trust is a volunteer membership organisation. The Canal & River Trust owns the canal, but is only permitted by legal constraints to carry out essential maintenance to keep the towpath clear and to ensure the supply of water from Wendover reaches the Tring summit at Bulbourne Junction. All monies are raised through grants, donations and fund-raising activities. If you feel you can contribute, either by giving your time as a volunteer or giving a donation, we would be very grateful.

The way will then be open to making the whole canal fully navigable once more.

The Trust is also raising funds to improve the towpath to an all-weather quality, giving proper access to all, including walkers, cyclists, and disabled users. The first stage of the upgrade is an extensive rebuild of the towpath in Wendover Parish.

With restoration complete, the Canal will offer an unrivalled combination of open countryside at its best, heritage in abundance, and a huge range of biodiversity, each contributing to the well-being of the visitor.

Current restoration work is focussed on re-profiling and lining the dry section of the canal from Drayton Beauchamp to Little Tring, prior to reflooding the section. When this is complete, it will be a true milestone in the canal's history: **for the first time in over 100 years the canal will be in water and the towpath made continuous all the way from Wendover to Bulbourne.**

The Wendover Canal Trust is the working name of the Wendover Arm Trust. The working name was adopted in 2021.

The Wendover Arm Trust was formed in 1989 as a registered charity to promote and implement the restoration of the Wendover Canal. In 1997, after several years of preparation and exactly 200 years after the canal first opened, reconstruction work started . The first stage included rebuilding Little Tring Bridge, demolished less than 25-years previously and to construct a ¼ mile section of canal from the stop-lock at Little Tring to a new winding hole (for turning boats) beyond the new bridge.

In 1990 the Trust was involved in the public enquiry into the proposed A41 Aston Clinton bypass that resulted in the construction of Saxomway bridge over the canal and restoration of a short section of canal from there to Drayton Beauchamp bridge.

The Wendover Canal Trust is the working name of the Wendover Arm Trust. The working name was adopted in 2021.



WENDOVER CANAL TRUST

Navigation



Powered boats

The first 1½ miles of the Wendover Canal from Bulbourne Junction are open to navigation. There are no locks and there is a winding hole for full-length boats at the current limit of navigation beyond Little Tring Bridge with good moorings nearby.

See our leaflet *Cruising Guide* for more information.



Canoes

Passage is straightforward by canoe, kayak, paddle-board or other unpowered craft from Bulbourne Junction to Little Tring. Other sections of the Canal can be explored subject to water conditions and weed growth. Portage is required. Local canoe clubs use the Canal for training.



Fishing

Fishing rights on all the navigable section of the Canal from Bulbourne to Little Tring are licensed by Canal & River Trust to The Tring Anglers (www.tringanglers.org.uk) An Environment Agency licence is needed to fish, available online and from most Post Offices.

The section from Little Tring to Bulbourne Junction has a good range of fish and is used by Tring Anglers, the local club, for fishing competition and tuition. Guest tickets are available. The Club organizes regular matches for members and non-members.



Walking

The entire length of the Canal is walkable along the towpath with a short diversion at Little Tring, while restoration continues. There are also many local footpaths that can be used to make a circular route including around the Tring reservoirs.

There are many such circular routes in and around Wendover, Halton, Aston Clinton, Drayton Beauchamp, Buckland and Tring that include sections of the Canal, find details of walks on sites such as www.walkinginbucks.co.uk and www.nationaltrust.org.uk.

Information on walks can also be found in the 'Walks from Wendover' section on the Trust website at <https://wendovercanal.org.uk/about-us/walks-from-wendover/>

The book *Water from Wendover* by Shelley Savages, available from the Tring Town Council Information Centre, Tring Local History Museum and the Trust (email sales@wendovercanal.org.uk), contains a number of walks as well as information about points of interest.



- **Marsworth:** Waters Edge Marsworth (4)
The Anglers Retreat public house (5)
The Red Lion public house (6)
- **Wilstone:** (a short walk from footbridge 4)
Mead's Farmhouse Kitchen, Farm Shop and Café (7)
The Half Moon public house (8)
- **Halton Village:** Limited availability Halton Tennis Centre.
- **Aston Clinton:** (a short walk from Wellonhead bridge)
Crows Nest, hotel pub and restaurant (11)
Café in the Park (12)
The Bell, Gastro pub and hotel (13)
- **Tring:** The Bell, Gastro pub and hotel (13)
Plenty of shops, pubs and cafes in the town centre.
- **Bulbourne:** The Grand Junction Arms, Gastro Pub (2)
Café at Tring Garden Centre (3)

There are no shops, pubs or cafes along the canal itself but you will find a variety of establishments a short walk from the towpath.

Wendover: Plenty of shops, pubs and cafes in the town centre, a short walk from Wharf Road.

Halton Village: Limited availability Halton Tennis Centre.

Aston Clinton: (a short walk from Wellonhead bridge)
Crows Nest, hotel pub and restaurant (11)
Café in the Park (12)
The Bell, Gastro pub and hotel (13)

Refreshments: There are numerous sponsored benches situated along the canal so sit down, rest your legs and enjoy the scenery!

Benches: There are numerous sponsored benches situated along the canal so sit down, rest your legs and enjoy the scenery!

Road Crossings: The towpath meets a road in three places along the canal and continues on the opposite side of the canal.

- Halton Village (D)
- Buckland Wharf (F)
- Gannell Bridge, New Mill, Tring (J)

Take care with traffic hazards at each road crossing.

Disabled access: There is step-free access at Wharf Road, Wendover (A), Halton Village (D), Buckland Wharf (F), Drayton Beauchamp (G) and Bulbourne Junction (K) and some lengths of the towpath can be accessed by those with a disability. There is also disabled access from Little Tring Road via a short lane with entry at the end of the work site.

Facilities - *The letters/figures in this section relate to points on the map.*

Toilets: None on the canal itself. There are public toilets in Wendover and Tring and most public houses and cafes have toilets for customers.

Access: Except at Little Tring there is a **towpath** all the way along the canal but it is narrow and uneven in places and can become muddy in wet weather. Walking boots are advisable. (see the *Walking* section in this leaflet for details of the Little Tring footpath diversion.)

Disabled access: There is step-free access at Wharf Road, Wendover (A), Halton Village (D), Buckland Wharf (F), Drayton Beauchamp (G) and Bulbourne Junction (K) and some lengths of the towpath can be accessed by those with a disability. There is also disabled access from Little Tring Road via a short lane with entry at the end of the work site.

Facilities - *The letters/figures in this section relate to points on the map.*



Cycling

It is possible to cycle the towpath along the length of the Wendover Canal but please take care and respect other users including walkers and anglers. The route is flat and mostly in good condition, but parts can become wet and muddy following heavy rain, making cycling difficult. A mountain bike and helmet are recommended.

Buckinghamshire Council's website www.bucksouncil.maps.arcgis.com includes a map of the cycle route from Wendover to Drayton, along the Canal. The walking and cycling route of the whole canal from Wendover to Bulbourne is covered in www.gps-routes.co.uk

Restoration

Current work is focussed on re-profiling, lining and rewatering the canal from Drayton Beauchamp to Little Tring. There is very limited parking at Drayton Beauchamp Bridge; from there head east along the towpath past already restored sections of canal that are already in water. Continue towards Little Tring. As you approach the work site you may see completed sections of canal, in water or still dry.

Restoration volunteers use heavy plant to create a channel with sloping sides and a flat base ready for lining with the clay based liner Bentomat®. This makes the canal water-tight and is protected by concrete blocks, hidden below the water level. Coir rolls line the top and spoil is backfilled to create the finished banks.

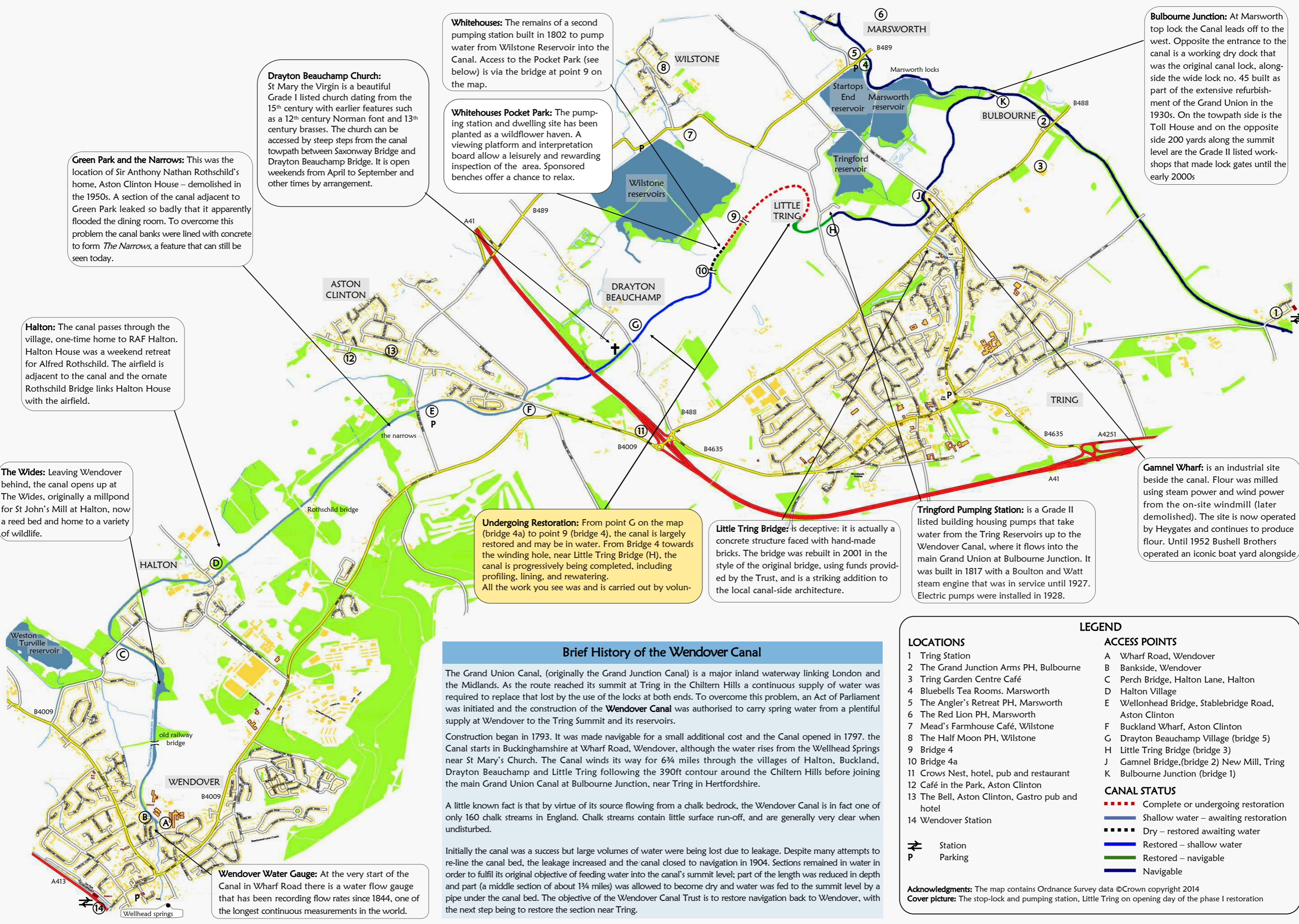


Visitors are welcome at the regular work parties to see the volunteers at work, who are always happy to answer any questions you may have. For work party dates and information see: www.wendovercanal.org.uk/key-benefits/restoration/

Either side of Whitehouses two wooden footbridges were installed by the Trust so public footpaths can cross the completed canal. Supporters have made donations in return for personalised plaques on the bridges. Full details of the scheme are described on our website.

Visit: www.wendovercanal.org.uk/support-us/bridge-plaques/

Footbridge 4 leads to the newly created wild-flower 'pocket park' at Whitehouses. There are several sponsored benches giving the chance to simply sit, relax, and enjoy the views over the Canal and the countryside.



Green Park and the Narrows: This was the location of Sir Anthony Nathan Rothschild's home, Aston Clinton House – demolished in the 1950s. A section of the canal adjacent to Green Park leaked so badly that it apparently flooded the dining room. To overcome this problem the canal banks were lined with concrete to form *The Narrows*, a feature that can still be seen today.

Drayton Beauchamp Church: St Mary the Virgin is a beautiful Grade I listed church dating from the 15th century with earlier features such as a 12th century Norman font and 13th century brasses. The church can be accessed by steep steps from the canal towpath between Saxonway Bridge and Drayton Beauchamp Bridge. It is open weekends from April to September and other times by arrangement.

Whitehouses: The remains of a second pumping station built in 1802 to pump water from Wilstone Reservoir into the Canal. Access to the Pocket Park (see below) is via the bridge at point 9 on the map.

Whitehouses Pocket Park: The pumping station and dwelling site has been planted as a wildflower haven. A viewing platform and interpretation board allow a leisurely and rewarding inspection of the area. Sponsored benches offer a chance to relax.

Bulbourne Junction: At Marsworth top lock the Canal leads off to the west. Opposite the entrance to the canal is a working dry dock that was the original canal lock, alongside the wide lock no. 45 built as part of the extensive refurbishment of the Grand Union in the 1930s. On the towpath side is the Toll House and on the opposite side 200 yards along the summit level are the Grade II listed workshops that made lock gates until the early 2000s

Halton: The canal passes through the village, one-time home to RAF Halton. Halton House was a weekend retreat for Alfred Rothschild. The airfield is adjacent to the canal and the ornate Rothschild Bridge links Halton House with the airfield.

The Wides: Leaving Wendover behind, the canal opens up at The Wides, originally a millpond for St John's Mill at Halton, now a reed bed and home to a variety of wildlife.

Undergoing Restoration: From point G on the map (bridge 4a) to point 9 (bridge 4), the canal is largely restored and may be in water. From Bridge 4 towards the winding hole, near Little Tring Bridge (H), the canal is progressively being completed, including profiling, lining, and rewatering. All the work you see was and is carried out by volun-

Little Tring Bridge: is deceptive: it is actually a concrete structure faced with hand-made bricks. The bridge was rebuilt in 2001 in the style of the original bridge, using funds provided by the Trust, and is a striking addition to the local canal-side architecture.

Tringford Pumping Station: is a Grade II listed building housing pumps that take water from the Tring Reservoirs up to the Wendover Canal, where it flows into the main Grand Union at Bulbourne Junction. It was built in 1817 with a Boulton and Watt steam engine that was in service until 1927. Electric pumps were installed in 1928.

Gammel Wharf: is an industrial site beside the canal. Flour was milled using steam power and wind power from the on-site windmill (later demolished). The site is now operated by Heygates and continues to produce flour. Until 1952 Bushell Brothers operated an iconic boat yard alongside

Brief History of the Wendover Canal

The Grand Union Canal, (originally the Grand Junction Canal) is a major inland waterway linking London and the Midlands. As the route reached its summit at Tring in the Chiltern Hills a continuous supply of water was required to replace that lost by the use of the locks at both ends. To overcome this problem, an Act of Parliament was initiated and the construction of the **Wendover Canal** was authorised to carry spring water from a plentiful supply at Wendover to the Tring Summit and its reservoirs.

Construction began in 1793. It was made navigable for a small additional cost and the Canal opened in 1797. The Canal starts in Buckinghamshire at Wharf Road, Wendover, although the water rises from the Wellhead Springs near St Mary's Church. The Canal winds its way for 6¾ miles through the villages of Halton, Buckland, Drayton Beauchamp and Little Tring following the 390ft contour around the Chiltern Hills before joining the main Grand Union Canal at Bulbourne Junction, near Tring in Hertfordshire.

A little known fact is that by virtue of its source flowing from a chalk bedrock, the Wendover Canal is in fact one of only 160 chalk streams in England. Chalk streams contain little surface run-off, and are generally very clear when undisturbed.

Initially the canal was a success but large volumes of water were being lost due to leakage. Despite many attempts to re-line the canal bed, the leakage increased and the canal closed to navigation in 1904. Sections remained in water in order to fulfil its original objective of feeding water into the canal's summit level; part of the length was reduced in depth and part (a middle section of about 1¾ miles) was allowed to become dry and water was fed to the summit level by a pipe under the canal bed. The objective of the Wendover Canal Trust is to restore navigation back to Wendover, with the next step being to restore the section near Tring.

Wendover Water Gauge: At the very start of the Canal in Wharf Road there is a water flow gauge that has been recording flow rates since 1844, one of the longest continuous measurements in the world.

LEGEND

LOCATIONS

- 1 Tring Station
- 2 The Grand Junction Arms PH, Bulbourne
- 3 Tring Garden Centre Café
- 4 Bluebells Tea Rooms, Marsworth
- 5 The Angler's Retreat PH, Marsworth
- 6 The Red Lion PH, Marsworth
- 7 Mead's Farmhouse Café, Wilstone
- 8 The Half Moon PH, Wilstone
- 9 Bridge 4
- 10 Bridge 4a
- 11 Crows Nest, hotel, pub and restaurant
- 12 Café in the Park, Aston Clinton
- 13 The Bell, Aston Clinton, Gastro pub and hotel
- 14 Wendover Station

Station
P Parking

ACCESS POINTS

- A Wharf Road, Wendover
- B Bankside, Wendover
- C Perch Bridge, Halton Lane, Halton
- D Halton Village
- E Wellonhead Bridge, Stablebridge Road, Aston Clinton
- F Buckland Wharf, Aston Clinton
- G Drayton Beauchamp Village (bridge 5)
- H Little Tring Bridge (bridge 3)
- J Gammel Bridge, (bridge 2) New Mill, Tring
- K Bulbourne Junction (bridge 1)

CANAL STATUS

- Complete or undergoing restoration
- Shallow water – awaiting restoration
- Dry – restored awaiting water
- Restored – shallow water
- Restored – navigable
- Navigable

Acknowledgments: The map contains Ordnance Survey data ©Crown copyright 2014
Cover picture: The stop-lock and pumping station, Little Tring on opening day of the phase I restoration