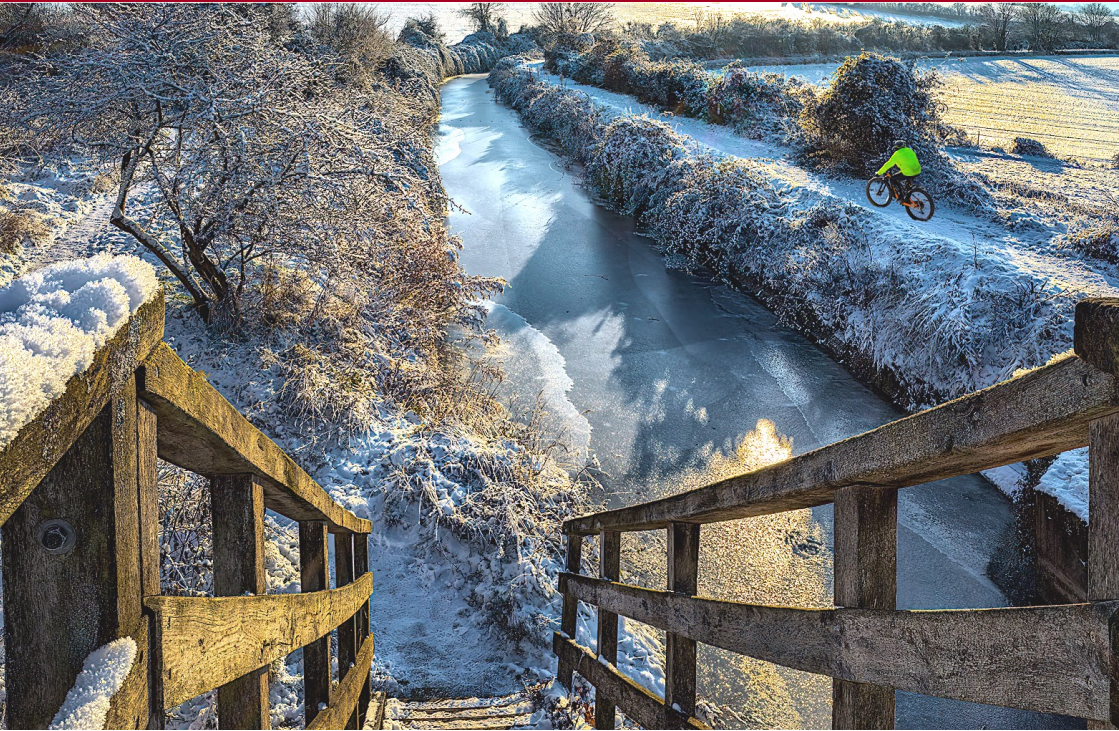


Wendover Canal News

Restoration Biodiversity Well-being



WENDOVER
CANAL TRUST

2023 Spring
Issue 1



BRADLEY & JONES

FUNERAL DIRECTORS

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Chairman's Column



The last 3 months has seen progress on a number of fronts – though admittedly not on the scale that we reported last time. Our volunteers have been busy in the wet mud in the bottom of the canal as you can read elsewhere, though we still don't have enough evidence on any further leaks between Whitehouses and Bridge 4.

We are concerned that work has not yet started on the towpath improvement between Wendover and Halton, to spend the various grants which Peter Elwin has raised. Our biggest concern is that vegetation clearance has to be done before birds start nesting, which could be as soon as mid-February. We have agreed with CRT that we will do this vegetation clearance ourselves, which is a 'first' for WCT, and this will have been done by the time you read this. This is work that would have been done by CRT's paid contractors, and so we can legitimately "charge" the project's funds for the time of our volunteers, funding which we can then spend on the Tring relining. We are working with CRT to ensure that work on the towpath itself starts as soon as possible thereafter.

We have also received some funding to spend on the towpath in Herts, and in another 'first' we ourselves are going to construct a trial 150m towpath upgrade from Little Tring towards Bridge 4. This is a win from so many points of view; the towpath is bad, it's something we can usefully do when working in the wet canal bed is unproductive, we need the money which we can make by "charging" the project's fund, and we are demonstrating how much more accessible and inclusive the towpath can be made – all at a significantly more affordable price.

Five of us have begun work on a bid to National Lottery Heritage Fund, which will have been submitted before the next newsletter.

Despite 30 years of helping this canal, I still learn new things. Personally I didn't know that it has been necessary for CRT and its predecessors to cut the reeds every year between Wendover and Drayton Beauchamp, otherwise the water from Wendover doesn't flow to Wilstone reservoir and so isn't available for boats crossing the Grand Union's Tring summit. We have gradually discovered that this reed cutting wasn't done soon enough this winter. This resulted in

water from Wendover which should have flowed down the canal, instead running over the top of the canal bank and down into Weston Turville reservoir (which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest), at which point it is lost to the canal

water deep enough for regular boat traffic, will stop the reeds blocking the canal, and avoid the need for

this annual intrusive reed cutting, which will be a further cost saving.



Clive Johnson, Chairman

system. (Photos: Steve Chapman)

We have worked with CRT to get the reed cutting done by their contractor, which finally started on January 16th, and we will have to monitor it more carefully in future years.

This annual need to cut the reeds shows how unsustainable is the shallow Wendover Canal between Wendover and Drayton Beauchamp. The annual cutting is done by a frightening-looking machine which “navigates” along the bed of the canal, chopping and lifting out the reeds. (Photo by Steve Bonser.) This cutting looks quite damaging to the environment, and yet it all grows straight back. Our long-held aim of

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Council members 2023

Leadership	Chairman & Webmaster, Twitter & Talks as part of Marketing: Clive Johnson	chairman@wendovercanal.org.uk & webmaster@wendovercanal.org.uk
	Deputy Chairman, Partnership Director: Peter Elwin Deputy Chairman, Honorary Secretary: Mike Beckley	partnerships@wendovercanal.org.uk honsec@wendovercanal.org.uk
	Treasurer: Paul Armstrong	treasurer@wendovercanal.org.uk

Finance Group	Purchasing Manager: Peter Lockett	purchasing@wendovercanal.org.uk
	IWA Nominee, Minutes Secretary: Jenny Brice	Jenny.brice@wendovercanal.org.uk
	Archivist: Chris Sargeant	archivist@wendovercanal.org.uk

Restoration	Site Manager: Mikk Bradley <i>(Mikk Bradley is an observer on Council, where he is also represented by Steve and Will listed below)</i>	site.manager@wendovercanal.org.uk
	Restoration Project Manager: Steve Chapman	steve.chapman@wendovercanal.org.uk
	Trainer and Team Leader: William Mathew,	william.mathew@wendovercanal.org.uk
	Volunteers: Ken Palfrey (Ken reports into Peter Elwin)	volunteer@wendovercanal.org.uk

Marketing	Head of Marketing & Sales: Bob Wheal	sales@wendovercanal.org.uk
	Publicity: Nigel Williams	publicity@wendovercanal.org.uk
	Membership: Peter Bird	membership@wendovercanal.org.uk

Newsletter Editor: Carol Williams/ Janine Jones newsletter@wendovercanal.org.uk



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Work Party Schedules

The Wendover Canal Trust volunteers attend regular restoration working parties managed by our Site Manager Mikk Bradley. We are restoring the Wendover Canal to full navigation, which in turn achieves so much more. Our restoration has achieved considerable Biodiversity Net Gain and continues to do so. Our work also opens access to the canal for people to improve their well-being and enjoy the heritage features.

Restoration working parties are held throughout the year, usually starting on the first Friday of the month, listed below.



2023 March	Friday 3rd for 7 days
2023 April	Due to Easter, this will exceptionally start on <u>Wednesday</u> 12th until Friday 21st.
2023 May	TBC due to the coronation



We need further help for this highly rewarding work; for further information, please contact us at volunteer@wendovercanal.org.uk

Any help will be greatly appreciated.



Photo Competition Winners Announced

In January. Robbie Cumming, tv personality, vlogger and patron of the Wendover Canal Trust (WCT) chose the three winners of the Trust's photography competition.

The competition was launched to entice people to the Wendover Canal during the autumn and winter. We invited pictures that capture the different scenes of the of the Wendover Canal whether wildlife, the landscapes or people using the canal and towpath.

Said Robbie: "It was difficult to single out winners but I liked the one I chose first because it captures the canal from a slightly unfamiliar angle which makes it stand out. It's also crisply edited to enhance the detail in the icy scene. Well done to all, though. There were some excellent submissions."

The winner of the competition with a £100 prize is Alun Morgan ; second is Charlotte Borrill, who wins £50, and third place with a £25 prize goes to Stephen Smith.

Pictures submitted for the competition may well be included in WCT publications and the Trust is most grateful to the nearly 40 photographers who entered.





Tidy Friday; 9am - 2pm

Tidy Friday work parties are light work to keep our canal, bridges and towpath looking spick and span and cared for. They are 9am to 2pm on one day each month, organised by John Reynolds. For details or to volunteer phone John on 07787 355 515. The provisional days are below.

2023 March Friday 10th

2023 April Friday 21st

2023 May TBC due to the coronation



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Operations Report

This is a summary of our Operations Reports from November 2022 to January 2023, compiled by Clive Johnson from the monthly reports by Mikk Bradley. The full reports can be read on our website. Our volunteers worked for a total of 4 weeks in this period, but as usual at this time of year, progress has been frequently slowed by wet weather.

Canal channel on Little Tring side of Bridge 4



The majority of our work has been to try to complete the three lengths (120 metres) of each side of the canal which we lined in September. We were quickly able to lay the concrete blocks, but placing the usual spoil above the blocks proved difficult in the increasingly wet conditions. Short sections of the bank have had to be left with only temporary

covering, because the bed of the canal became too soft for the excavator to climb onto it. We often had to pump rainwater from the bottom of the canal, using our pumps which Tony Bardwell has kindly serviced for us.

The base of the canal in this section has been largely lined and covered with spoil. Surplus spoil was placed in the canal bed ready to complete the backfilling of the banks later in the year. Concrete struts, or 'sleeping policemen' as they are nicknamed, were cast at 10m intervals.



These struts provide support for the toe foundations of the concrete blocks placed on the banks.

Rough profiling of both banks was carried out along the canal channel from the last lined section towards our car park. The arising spoil was stockpiled in the area adjacent to the car park, used to backfill the Bentomat laid on the canal bed, or used to backfill sections of the former tip where the ash has been removed and the towpath bank needed widening. The picture below shows some of this spoil in the tip area, which will eventually become the towpath and canal bank.

Since that photo was taken, a weekend cold and frosty visit from Waterway Recovery Group BITM replaced the temporary green fence with a replacement sturdy stock-proof fence as shown below, which the adjacent landowner has electrified again.



Water Loss

As expected, our volunteers have carried out repairs to the leaking paddle at Whitehouses which was installed some years ago by a CRT contractor. But unfortunately, we have still not had enough water in the canal to complete our leak testing – it now seems likely that this lack of water has been caused by reeds blocking the water supply, see Chairman’s Column.

In more detail, the sluice gate at Whitehouses was removed in order to investigate the water leak. It was found that the neoprene seal between the backing plate and wall was ineffective because it was too thin and there was a build-up of surplus resin on the holding bolts. The surplus resin was removed and a new piece of Neoprene ordered. A new gasket was cut from the Neoprene, and fitted to the backing plate to the sluice gate. The gate was refitted and the operation checked.

Tidy Friday

Tidy Friday have also run 4 sessions. The first was spent strimming and cutting the grass at the Whitehouses area, getting ready for and sowing more wildflower seeds. The picture on the right shows the Tidy Friday group 'stomping' wildflower seeds into the ground.



The area at Bridge 4a was partially cleared ready for planting the trees which will form the

commemorative woodland in honour of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The offside area at Bridge 4 was prepared for the 1st Berkhamsted scout group to plant trees. Another Friday was spent planting tree and hedge whips at the winding hole (below) and along the offside fence at the narrows. Some reeds at the winding hole were cut by hand.

The last was spent strimming the triangular area near the winding hole and planting trees. When established, the trees will provide a barrier to limit public access to the badger setts in the triangle.



**Mikk Bradley, Site Manager &
Clive Johnson, Chairman**

A Handy Bus Service for the Wendover Canal



Those wishing to walk the length of the Wendover Canal might not know of the existence of a **Sundays-only bus service** which links both ends.

The No. 50 route from Redline Buses runs between Aylesbury and Ivinghoe, via Tring. The service is extremely limited, and their timetable contradictory, so check before you use it. Such as it is, with careful planning, it can enable you to walk one way and take the bus the other.

It appears there is just one service leaving College Lake at Bulbourne at 14.18, reaching Wendover clock tower at 14.44. It would accommodate a morning's walk in the northbound direction, or a sprightly walk the other way during the lighter seasons.

Going the other way, there are two services: one at 14.00 at Wendover, reaching Bulbourne at 14.18, and another at 16.45, arriving at 17.03. This can provide for a leisurely morning or afternoon walk, or a vigorous morning walk, in the southward direction.

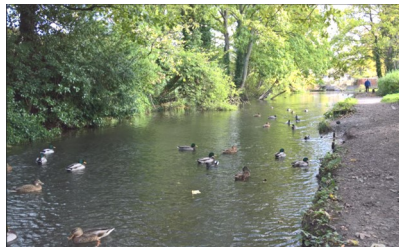
The bus is usually reliable however it's supposed to go along Stablebridge Road, which crosses the Canal at Green Park, but it doesn't always, if the driver doesn't feel like it. If you want to get off there, you should tell him, but catching it there would be to take potluck.

The weekday No. 50, however, has an altogether different route which doesn't help canal walkers.

Redline Buses:

01296 426786 /

www.redlinebuses.com



This article submitted by Tim Amsden, WCT accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of the information, which should be checked before travel.

If you have an article, or an issue you want to share, send it to newsletter@wendovercanal.org.uk for possible inclusion in a future edition.

**Deadline for the
next issue is
31st July 2023**

Can you read these words?



Do you prefer to read this size of print, **or would you prefer this size?**



Do you know anyone else who might have the same issues reading this size of print? When we wrote a new leaflet, we wanted it to be in a form anyone could read. That is why we have produced the new leaflet **Wendover Canal – an Introduction** in three forms:

A **standard print** leaflet in full colour, giving a brief introduction to the Wendover Canal, for anyone unfamiliar with it.

The same leaflet in booklet form printed in a **larger font (Maiandra 18 pt)**, more comfortable to read for anyone who struggles to read smaller print.

Again, the same text but this time in **Braille** for anyone with serious vision issues.

A video audio version is also available with a full audio description

What is so special about the leaflet? All our information leaflets, including Introduction/Visitor Guide, needed updating. It was too

much to expect one leaflet to be both an introduction and a detailed guide to the canal in one publication. Hence, the purpose-written **Introduction** was written, to complement the revised **Visitor Guide**.

At the same time, our **Wendover Canal Restoration - a Brief Guide** has been updated.

Introduction	New 2023
Introduction Large (Print A5 Booklet)	New 2023
Visitor Guide	Revised 2023
Brief Restoration Guide	Revised 2023
Cruising Guide	Due for revision

Our range of printed leaflets:

Request a copy of the Braille or Large Print version of the **Introductory Leaflet** by sending **your request to sales@wendovercanal.org.uk**

We will post you a complimentary copy, so don't forget to include your address!

The revised leaflets (including the large print one) are also available to download or view on our website go to www.wendovercanal.org.uk *Select About Us, then choose WCT Information Leaflets from the drop-down menu.*

160 Trees & Hedging Along the Wendover Canal

All planted in November 2022 by the 1st Berkhamsted Explorer Scouts. What enthusiasm, all ready for hard labour at 9am on their Saturday away from school and college.

After sorting trees, stakes and disposable guards, off we set along the tow path. After brief guidance, they split into pairs and went into action. The trees are really whips and can be quite small, but appear to flourish even through our recent hot and dry summer. An assortment of trees were supplied, Crab Apple, Elder, Rowan, Hazel, Blackthorn and this year Dog Rose. We mix them up before planting to give a more natural look.

Spade in, plant in, stake alongside and then the boot! All secure in the grassy surrounding. At Whitehouses Pocket Park, we do get visiting wild life, so the disposable guard is essential as protection for the first years.

With the inclusion of roses, we can expect a good show of colour in future years. The site now has permanent benches for visitors to while away an hour or two, watching dragonfly and some of the many species of butterflies hovering around the large purple thistles.

In previous years, dead and

decaying trees had been removed so the public can safely venture along the pathway to the wild flower meadow. The new trees have been planted to replenish this wood and will give better protection to the sheep in the field to the rear.

The wild flower meadow has recently been seeded with Yellow Rattle, this gives a good base for future wild flower seeds. This should give a yellow meadow this year, which will be seen either from the viewing platform in Whitehouses or from the towpath opposite.



**1st Berkhamstead Explorer Scouts
obtaining their Community Service**

Before: Scrub at Whitehouses

Why not visit the Wendover Canal this spring to see what has been achieved all by WCT volunteers and visiting community groups.



After: Whitehouses ready for tree planting

Club 100 Lottery

Thanks to your support the scheme has raised well over £20,000 for restoration funds since it began in 1997. Please consider joining Club 100.

We need every penny and the winner could be you!

The winning numbers were selected from 196 paid-up subscribers tickets. The Lucky winners are...



John Raven, £235.20

Beryl Martin, £98

Richard Downs, £39.20



Congratulations to our winners and thank you to all members who take part in the Club 100 lottery. **The next draw will be in April 2023.**

If you would like to be in with a chance of winning next time, joining Club 100 couldn't be easier. We encourage you to join or manage your Club 100 membership through our online system which is available on our website.

£15 per year buys a lucky number which is entered into 4 quarterly draws throughout the year. The total prize fund is slightly over half the subscriptions, so the more members, the bigger the prizes! The remaining income goes directly to canal restoration funds.

Dunstable & District Boat Club Harvest Festival September 2022



The boat club has been involved with supporting WCT since its start, either by funding or providing volunteers to help organise the successful festivals which ran for 20 years. The profits generated being used to cover the restoration costs up until recently. They have also allowed WCT the full use of their club house and facilities for our AGM and other events.

DDBC have an annual harvest festival social, members provide the produce either from their gardens or cakes, chutneys and cordials of differing strengths! It has always proved to be a great event, although Eric the auctioneer usually suffers from losing his voice by the end of the evening. The bidding is conducted in 50p increases, and some homemade brandy can reach £5 - £7 for a small bottle.

September 2022 continued this event, with the princely sum of £350 being produced for the Wendover Canal Trust.

DDBC also has a “bring and buy stall” situated in the club house. The idea is you bring in any item which is not now of use to you, but could be picked up by another member for a donation left in the Wendover Canal tin. It is amazing how much cash this produces. We have borrowed children’s life jackets for a fee, and when they get too small they are returned for another grateful Grandparent.



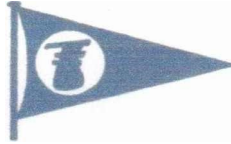
Over the years the total funding received from DDBC including gift aid equals £7055 as at October 2022.

We thank them for their continued support.

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For full details relating to the cost of the mooring and membership,
please contact David King (Hon. Secretary) either by email at
secretary@ddbc.info or by mobile phone at 07791 786617.

The club also has available a limited number of 40ft moorings in the
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Boating in Alsace & Lorraine – August 2022, Chris Sargeant & family Part 2

Lutzelboug was originally a stopping point on the Paris - Strasbourg railway, now defunct.



Saverne is a commune in the Bas-Rhin department on the Rhine-Marne canal at the foot of a pass over the Vosges Mountains, and 45km northwest of Strasbourg.



Crossing the Vosges mountains was a significant obstacle to the canal builders necessitating a 2,500m tunnel west of Lutzelbourg closely followed by a 400m one, then culminating in a staircase of 17 locks which unsurprisingly took all day to navigate! This was a major disincentive to industrial users of the canal due to the costs and time delays involved.

The problem was solved with a major infrastructure project, the building of the Azviller inclined plane boat lift – named after the nearby village of Azviller St Louis. Once completed and opened in 1969, it by passed the 17 locks and lifted boats 49m in about 4 minutes!

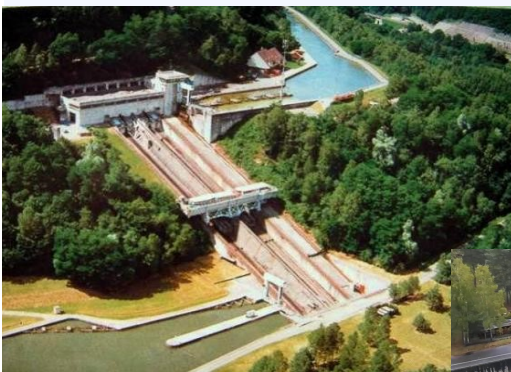
The inclined plane concept is based on Archimedes principle, i.e. that an object placed in water will displace the object's own weight of water.

The boat lift uses a box or caisson full of water and boats plus counterbalance weights to take the load and a relatively small motor to pull the entire caisson box up or down the incline.

The Arzwiller plane has a Caisson weighing 450 tons (including boats and water) plus counterbalance weights also totalling 450 tons. Fine tuning of the weight of the caisson for each load is achieved by adding or removing small amounts of water as can be seen in the picture on the left below.



In UK the Foxton inclined plane in Leicestershire had two Caissons which balanced each other. The Arziller was designed for two caissons but the second one was never built as traffic was waning by that time so has the counterbalance weights instead.



Loaded in the caisson, guillotine door on the end closed and moving up in just 4 minutes!

Views from above and (right) showing the counterbalance weights running underneath which are linked to the caisson by pulleys and over 30 cables.



It's a beautiful area of France, full of interest wonderful scenery and great cuisine – well worth a visit – we were there in August last year.

Chris Sargeant



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Wendover Canal Trust, the operating name of Wendover Arm Trust,
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Its **AIMS** are: To promote the restoration and maintenance of the Wendover Arm of the Grand Union Canal, (including all waterways, buildings, and related structures), to good and navigable order and to promote the fullest use of the waterway by water-borne traffic (subject to the regulations of The Canal and River Trust) and for local amenity, recreational and water related activities for the benefit of the public.

To restore, preserve, maintain and educate the public in the history, use and wildlife, of canals and inland waterways generally and the Wendover Arm in particular.

General telephone number: 07547 181 857

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Website: www.wendovercanal.org.uk

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Advertising Enquiries:

Contact the Publicity Director, please find the contact details on page 6.

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