

Wendover Canal News

Restoration Biodiversity Well-being



WENDOVER
CANAL TRUST

2024 Spring
Issue 2



BRADLEY & JONES

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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 19th July 2024



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Chairman's Column

Our canal re-lining still remains suspended. As I said last time, many of us have spent a great many hours trying to bring this to a conclusion, but we still haven't yet been wholly successful. Southern Testing, our independent company who looked at the Victorian coal-tar, have provided us with a report of no less than 96 pages describing their investigations, including answering some supplementary questions from CRT.



Broadly Southern Testing have supported the findings of our previous assessments, but I won't go into any further details until we have concluded our ongoing discussions with CRT. We are also following the Definition of Waste Code of Practice (DoWCoP) process recommended by CL:AIRE (Contaminated Land: Applications in Real Environment), all of which has involved Mikk Bradley in a great deal of paperwork.

A quite separate development is that the canal we restored in Phase 1 up to 2005, from the stop-lock through Little Tring Bridge to the winding hole, has had to be temporarily closed by CRT. We have willingly supported their action in doing this, because over many years water has been appearing on land belonging to canal-side properties below the level of the canal, such as Little Tring Farm. It is likely that this is coming from the canal which we re-lined, but this has never yet been proved despite numerous

attempts by CRT – there's still an outside chance that it's just ground water.

Understandably the cause of the problem must be established, and CRT's only option has been to put stop-planks in the stop-lock and start to pump out this section until the flow of water stops. As the water level falls, they will hopefully discover whether it's coming from the top of the wall, or the bed, or not from the canal at all. Until this is complete, we are back to the situation before 2005, in which boats can only turn if there is enough room for them where the "Tring Feeder" stream enters the canal.

The good news is that our most recently restored section between Bridges 4a and 4 is being refilled as I write, to test whether our repairs have been successful, as we believe them to be. You can read about the latest repairs elsewhere in this newsletter.

Thanks to the wet winter, CRT have more water than they know what to do with, so there is plenty for our re-watering. Gradual reed clearance must have been successful, because the water level at both Aston Clinton and Bridge 4a recently reached the highest we've ever seen it. In fact we estimate that it was only around three inches below the Tring summit level to which we'll be restoring.

Recently our very-long-serving Council member Bob Wheal has had to ask to

be relieved of most of his responsibilities for personal reasons, though he will remain on Council. Proposals for spreading his various responsibilities amongst Council members are under discussion, and we will update the "Council Members" page in the next newsletter.

Our Patron Robbie Cumming filmed the last few minutes of his new series of Canal Boat Diaries at Little Tring at the end of January, and several of us had the opportunity to meet him. His entire film crew consists of himself, a drone operator and his producer! We understand that the new series will start in June, on the Yesterday TV channel (Freeview 27). We may need to be patient, because there are 10 episodes

and we are right at the end.


Robbie will be cutting the ribbon at 1pm at the 'Grand Opening' of the upgraded Wendover to Halton towpath on Friday 28th June. The event is centred around John Colet School's 'Focus Week', and large numbers of pupils and parents will be there, but it will also be open to the general public. I would encourage you all to come along on the day; if you can help in any way such as being a marshal or guide, all the better. Further details are given by Peter Elwin in his article in this newsletter and on our web site.

Clive Johnson, Chairman

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SAVE THE DATE

Grand opening of the upgraded Wendover to Halton towpath

Friday 28th June
All Welcome!

Council members 2024

Leadership	Chairman, plus Twitter & Talks: Clive Johnson	chairman@wendovercanal.org.uk
	Deputy Chairman, Partnership Director: Peter Elwin	partnerships@wendovercanal.org.uk
	Deputy Chairman, Honorary Secretary: Mike Beckley	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 now a council member.)</i>	site.manager@wendovercanal.org.uk
	Restoration Project Manager: Steve Chapman	steve.chapman@wendovercanal.org.uk
	Volunteers, Webmaster and Facebook: Ken Palfrey: (Ken reports to Peter Elwin)	volunteer@wendovercanal.org.uk & webmaster@wendovercanal.org.uk

Marketing	Head of Marketing & Sales: Bob Wheel	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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Club 100 Lottery

The winning numbers were selected from 178 paid-up subscribers tickets. The Wendover Canal Trust Club 100 Lottery draw was made on January 22nd 2024, at the WCT Group Heads Meeting by Peter Bird (Membership Secretary) and witnessed by Group Heads.

The Lucky winners are...



Ken Walsh - £207.60



Dee Harrington - £86.50



Colin Parlett - £34.60

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 2024.**

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.

Easyfundraising is a free way of raising money to swell our funds simply by shopping online. For **further details available here:**



<https://wendovercanal.org.uk/support-us/easyfundraising/>

Today in 2024 we have 74 supporters and have raised more than any other cause in the same category. Total raised so far is £3,604.35.

Thank you for my support. To sign up download the app, or:

Step 1. Go to

www.easyfundraising.org.uk

2. 'Search for a Good Cause'

3. Enter 'Wendover Canal Trust'

4. Press 'Support this Cause'

5. Enter your details

6. Install 'Find and Remind' if you wish

Easter Cruise with Dunstable & District Boat Club

Every Easter the boat club organises a 4 day cruise to Berkhamsted, this involves an Easter Bunny, Easter Eggs and a treasure trail. This year we had a blown up version of Easter Bunny!

Thirteen small boats left their base at Pitstone on Friday morning, we were lucky as some members not attending with boats were waiting at Marsworth to assist with locking us up the flight. We all managed to have a cuppa and a bite to eat as we cruised the summit.

During the weekend various club members met up in different restaurants, Italian, Fish & Chips, Chinese and a total of 36 for Sunday lunch.

As this was an early date for the Easter weekend, we kept checking the weather on various sites. It looked like light rain on Monday, so most of us set off about 3.30pm on Sunday to start our return journey. Having reached Cowroast, a decision was made to moor up on the summit overnight.



**Debbie & Tracey (DDBC members).
Photo Graham Frankland**

Monday morning dawned cloudy but dry, so off we set. Unfortunately 9 boats leaving within half an hour caused a bottle neck at Bulbourne. Four of us were drifting gently while waiting for the lock to fill (no power means no steerage) when out popped Robbie Cumming's head from his boat. He was astonished, nowadays a traffic jam on the cut is a rare occurrence. After a friendly chat, we were off into the top lock, our boats are short so 3 of us fitted easily.



Robbie Cumming's arrival at Wendover winding hole early Spring. The drone is being prepared for camera action – photo Steve Bonsor.

Later as we made our way down the flight, he was chatting with various boat crews. As he is now Wendover Canal Trust's patron I joined the group and requested a photo. He was very happy to oblige. He confirmed he had already cruised up to the winding hole, luckily just before CRT installed stop planks at the pumping station.



Marsworth Flight is a magnet to walkers and families out for the day in the fresh air. The reservoirs benefit from a large car park, café and nearby pub. There are also many different walks either along the locks or around the reservoirs. So, it was great to see so many of the public out enjoying this early Easter.



Robbie chatting to Mike & Dawn Greaves and Jenny Brice – photos Jenny Brice & Mike Greaves

Jenny Brice

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Operations Report

This is a combination of our Operations Reports from January to March 2024, compiled by Clive Johnson from the monthly reports by Mikk Bradley. The full reports can be read on our website.

Start of Canal at Wharf Road, Wendover

Introduction by Clive: The Wendover Canal starts adjacent to Wharf Road, Wendover, where feed water from chalk streams runs into the canal. But this site has long been an eyesore! Until recently, all view of the canal from the road was hidden behind scrubby overgrowth, supported by an unnecessarily high-security old steel fence. As well as a fence across the end of the canal facing onto Wharf Road, there is a further section of fence next to the beginning of the towpath. The posts for these fences had an old WA logo on them, does anyone know who used this logo? I think they must pre-date the formation of the Wendover Arm Trust in 1989. There weren't even any signposts to encourage visitors.

Our volunteers cleared the vegetation a year ago, and new signage is on order. During this period, our volunteers have worked to replace the high-security fences with something more elegant and welcoming. The work has stopped and started according to the weather, many planned days having been too wet or too cold to lay the materials. Here are the details from Mikk's reports.

Void where the original timber post was removed.

In February, the wall along Wharf Road was set out and the top of the existing concrete was prepared to receive the brickwork. One of the original timber posts had to be broken out to be replaced with a new metal post set in concrete. Breaking out the timber post proved very difficult.



Volunteers in front of the new wall at Wharf Road.

The brick wall along Wharf Road was built but the mortar needs time to cure before the railings can be installed.



Gate posts in position.

The concrete foundations for the wall alongside the towpath and the return at the far end of the compound were cast and the new gate posts were installed.



Offside of Wharf Road compound with the vegetation cleared.



The vegetation was cleared from the offside of the Wharf Road compound and returned to the site area at Little Tring.

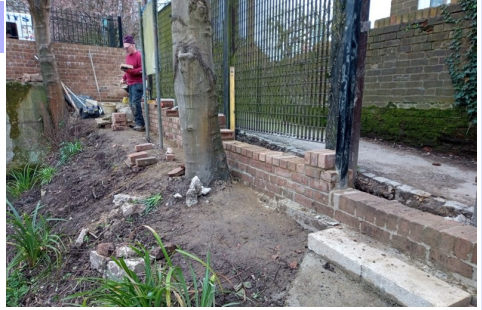
Wall with railings installed

In March, railings were added to the wall along Wharf Road. Initially there was a problem with the chemical anchors, but a two-part resin adhesive was used successfully in place of the chemical.



Low wall alongside the towpath.

The low wall alongside the towpath was started and the return at the end completed.



Joint repair at Bridge 4

Recent history: When we re-watered our re-lined canal between the 2 wooden foot-bridges, 4a and 4, there was obvious leakage. As previously detailed, the main leak was in the paddle at Whitehouses fitted by a CRT contractor, which our volunteers repaired. But there was also a small leak in joints around Bridge 4. We have recently agreed a repair with CRT, and when conditions allowed, we have been carrying out that repair.



In January, the timber in the expansion joint in the bed was removed, revealing expansion foam in the joint. The joint was too wet to seal.

To allow full inspection of the suspect joint, the ends of the brick approach walls were taken down and the mortar cleaned out.

Joint across the bed of the canal

The sealant in the existing joints in the concrete bridge hole and mooring wall were inspected and were found to have failed. However, there is a water bar in these joints. The sealant was taken out and the joints prepared ready for sealant.

Later when conditions allowed, the ends of the approach walls were rebuilt.



Towpath wall



Offside wall



Towpath wall



Offside wall

Joint in the bridge hole

Finally, at an extra day in March when the conditions were right, we completely cleaned out the joints and installed the Polysulphide sealant. All joints were sealed.



Vegetation Clearance

As you will read elsewhere, Peter Elwin has been raising funds to repair the towpath between Halton Bridge and Stablebridge Road Bridge. In case the funds can be raised in time for the work to be done this summer, we cleared any overgrown vegetation along this section. CRT contractors clear one years' growth each year, but there is a tendency for excess growth to be missed and develop until walkers are pushed close to the canal.



Wendover Canal Trust volunteers were joined by volunteers from the Chiltern Society, on a day when it poured with rain. The hedge was cut back to the fence line in areas where the towpath is in a wet and muddy condition. The arisings were collected up and placed in gaps in the hedge.

Tidy Friday

In January, mulch was transported from Little Tring and placed around trees at Bridge 4a. later in the day the ground had thawed sufficiently to allow tree planting.

In February, the remaining trees and hedging whips were planted to fill a gap in the hedge along the towpath at Bridge 4a and to create a hedge along the site fence in the compound at Little Tring. All whips were given a dressing of woodchip mulch.



Trees Planted at Bridge 4A



Hedge along the fence in the compound

Some overhanging vegetation was cut back from the side of the footpath on the offside at Bridge 4. The arisings were disposed into the gap in the hedge.



Pocket Park after grass cutting

In March, the grass was cut in the pocket park between Bridge 4 and the copse of trees. The arisings were raked up and disposed on site in the boundary hedge.


Mikk Bradley, Site Manager





We have 3 semi-traditional style narrowboats. Lavender is 35ft and Albert and Victoria are both 38ft.

They are all available for self-drive day hire for up to 10 people from Cowroast Marina Tring. Cruise The Grand Union Canal, North over the Chilterns for Bulbourne and the Grand Junction Arms, and through to Marsworth, or South down to Port of Berkhamsted.



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Wendover to Halton towpath upgrade - Grand opening Friday 28th June

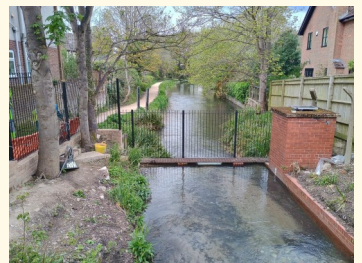
Plans for the formal opening of the towpath are well underway. John Colet School, Wendover News, EKFB, Wendover and Halton Parish Councils and Wendover Canal Trust are working together to plan the day. We are now being supported also by our PR Advisor Richard Peel who provided such valuable input into our November 2022 reception in Aston Clinton.

This will be the final day of John Colet School's 'Focus Week' of extracurricular activities, and it will play a major part in the organisation of the day's events, which will also be attended by children from local primary schools. A wide range of organisations are being invited to the event, including the project's funders, MPs, local councils, local charities, CRT and its contractors, the Inland Waterways Association, those on our e-Newsletter distribution list and the media. EKFB will also be supporting the event through its Schools & Further Education Engagement Coordinator.

The highlight of the day will be the cutting of the ribbon at 1pm by our patron Robbie Cumming on the towpath at the entrance to Walnut Tree Meadow. We are hoping to get widespread media coverage. Details of all events are on our web site.

The more WCT members that can attend the better, so please tell your family and friends about it. A flyer can be downloaded off our web site. Please also tell Peter Bird if you will be planning to attend and whether you will be able to help in any way, such as being a marshal at one of the points along the towpath and explaining the history of the canal and the recent upgrade to passers-by.

The new brick walls at Wharf Road have been built and the smart new black railings erected by our volunteers. New signs in CRT format have are now on order and will be installed by our volunteers along the towpath by mid-June.



We are now working on the funding for the 2km Halton to Aston Clinton stretch. Luckily only one third is in need of upgrade, but this nevertheless will cost about £150K, of which we so far only have £35K. More news on this in the next newsletter!

Peter Elwin, Partnerships Director



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Restoration Working Parties

We hold regular volunteer restoration working parties managed by our Site Manager, Mikk Bradley.

Next Restoration Working Parties

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

- **May:** Friday 3rd for 14 days
- **June:** Friday 7th for 14 days



Tidy Friday Working Parties

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. The provisional days are below, and come after the main work parties above.

- **May:** Friday 17th
- **June:** Friday 21st



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.



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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.

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Website: www.wendovercanal.org.uk

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

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