

Wendover Canal News

Restoration Biodiversity Well-being



WENDOVER
CANAL TRUST

2025 Winter
Issue 1



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 20th April 2025



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As promised, as I write Rothen are using a long reach digger and Truxor boat to clear the reeds and weeds, and this should be finished by

the time you read this. This should improve the water level past Buckland towards Tring, and reduce the need for water to have to be released from the canal system past Weston Turville reservoir.

Recently the bridge parapet of Stablebridge Road Bridge 7 was hit by an unknown vehicle, and you can read elsewhere about the rapid and careful progress made to reopen it to traffic.

CRT offered that we could do minor work around the canal under the supervision of their local volunteer co-ordinator, Alfredo Camacho. Peter Elwin obtained a grant for the materials under the Farming In Protected Landscapes programme. Our volunteers have completed repairs to two sets of steps near Drayton Beauchamp, from the canal up to Bridge 5 and up to the church. The first picture includes a glimpse of Bridge 5 on the far right, it's the original arched bridge which was covered in a layer of render many decades ago. The second is the church steps.



We also want to create steps on the sloping canal bank near Bridge 4a down towards Wilstone reservoir, but we couldn't until we found out who owned the land. The land turned out to be

owned by Herts CC and we plan to create the steps at the end of January.

But our canal re-lining still remains suspended, and this newsletter was once more delayed to report any news from a recent meeting with CRT. Unfortunately there is not much to report. Last time I wrote about a Heads of Terms agreement which we were expecting from CRT. When this eventually arrived, we found that there was much within the draft which was unacceptable or factually incorrect. We have sent many amendments which CRT are considering. I have just asked for

help from other canal restorations with a "Remediation Strategy" which we have to write.


Our Phase 1 restored canal from the stop-lock to our new winding hole remains drained. Sadly CRT have now confirmed that draining it has stopped the water appearing in the land attached to nearby properties, so we now know for sure that this was coming from the canal. We are waiting to hear from CRT how this needs to be repaired, and whether they will need our help to achieve the repair.

We have recently had to scrap the "pickup" (small open-backed lorry) owned by us and kept at the Pumping Station. This is not necessarily bad news, because it has been very expensive to keep running for the limited use we make of it – it may actually be cheaper to hire one when we need one, and certainly better for our volunteer drivers. We became aware of structural rust which could not be economically repaired, and although we could have kept it until the MoT in February, we decided it was best not to. It was the last of a series of 3 pickups which we have owned for many years; longstanding members may particularly remember the first, a VW.

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Clive Johnson, Chairman

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Damage to Stablebridge Road Bridge (Bridge 7)

Stable Bridge (also known as Wellonhead Bridge) was built at the time of the canal's opening in 1799. As with many canal bridges, the layout and gradients are such that it is not possible to see past the bridge from either direction. The bridge is only wide enough for single file traffic, controlled by lights.



10th December: damaged brickwork removed

On 4th December a vehicle hit the Tring-side parapet, moving several lower courses of bricks from their correct position, over much of the bridge's length. We have no further details of the incident.



16th December: Scaffolding in place

CRT - as owner of the bridge - had to apply for a temporary closure before any repairs could start. The resulting local diversions have increased tailbacks along the B4009 towards its junction with the old A41 on Tring Hill, particularly at peak times.

The repair work necessitated removal of much of the



19th December: Repair detail

brickwork along the parapet, down to road level, in turn requiring erection of scaffolding and boards over the canal to ensure a safe working environment. Note that in keeping with the bridge's heritage the repair has used old bricks bonded with lime mortar.

The work was completed ahead of CRT's anticipated date of Monday 23rd December, the wall work being ready on 19th but some traffic-light works meant it could only be fully reopened on Friday 20th. Pedestrians share the available width on a narrow path. The towpath is also open again.

A great job has been done by CRT in organising this repair so quickly and by their contractor in getting it done before Christmas.

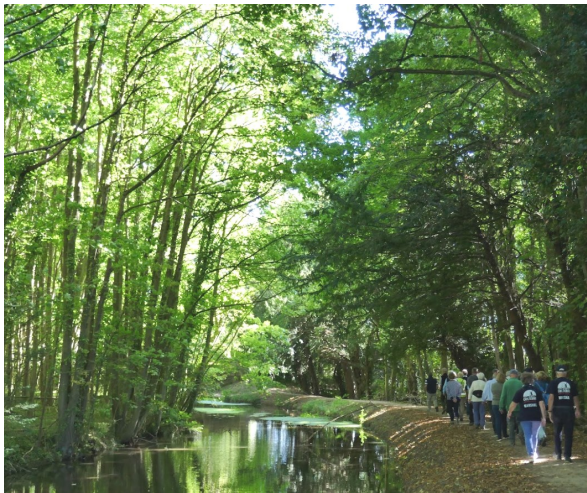


20th December: Reopened

Steve Chapman, Project Manager

A Delightful Afternoon of Heritage and Nature

As part of the Chiltern Society Heritage Festival, a guided walk along the Wendover Canal was organized, followed by a delightful cream tea at Halton Tennis Club. This event – held on 16th September - was a wonderful opportunity for members to explore the stretch of the newly upgraded Wendover to Halton towpath between Halton and The Wides, made accessible to all, including those with mobility aids. The upgrade was generously funded by the HS2 Chiltern AONB Review Group, Wendover Parish Council, Lionel Abel-Smith Trust, Wendover Community Board and Halton Parish Council.



The walk was not only a chance to enjoy the beautiful weather but also an educational journey through the rich history of Halton. Participants learned about the origins of Halton and its significant role with the RAF. The sunny day saw 20 enthusiastic members of the Chiltern Society from various areas come together, all of whom appreciated the well-organized afternoon.

To further engage the community, copies of the Wendover newsletter were distributed after the walk. This initiative aimed to encourage more people to join the Wendover Canal Trust and support the preservation and enjoyment of this historic waterway.

The event was a resounding success, blending heritage, nature, and community spirit in a perfect afternoon. We look forward to more such enriching experiences in the future!

Jenny Brice

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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 October 2024, at the AGM meeting by Peter Bird (Membership Secretary).

The Lucky winners are...



204.00, John Lovelock



85.00, Maggie Page



34.00, Valerie Clark

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 2025.**

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 with over 8000 retailers on the scheme. **For further details available here:**



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

Today in 2025 we have 75 supporters and have raised more than any other cause in the same category. Total raised so far is £3,685.25.

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What happened in 1824?

After helping form the Wendover Arm Trust, Barry Martin served for many years as a Director. During that time Barry was busy researching and recording a history of events involving the Wendover Arm of the Grand Union Canal. By including Wendover Arm facts and events with unrelated UK and World events, he built up a comprehensive and fascinating picture of the development and operation of the Arm, later to be known as the Wendover Canal.

After Barry passed away the documents he left to the Trust formed a valuable historical source material. The Timeline puts the development of the Canal into a relatable and very readable context.

We could publish the Timeline as a quality full colour illustrated book for general sale. It is envisaged that the book would be a contender for canal-related collections for both WCT Members and non-members, and would form a suitable and attractive gift. With sufficient demand, production costs will be covered by sales income, with any excess going towards restoration funds. An appropriate sales price for such a high quality printed and bound book is £20.

The book itself will not age, except that it stretches from the Canal's beginnings up until Barry was forced by ill-health to stop work in 2016. At a future date, if there is a demand and a volunteer is found, the book can be brought further up to date.

An alternative way of publishing the work is for it to be featured and serialised on the Trust website, free for all to read. This will not bring an income for the Trust, nor will it be as permanent as a traditionally published book, but it will make the Timeline more readily available.

Or a combination – ie publish the book, and promote it via extracts on the website.

As a book the Timeline will be 120+ pages, with full colour illustrations, in A5 format, professionally bound, suitably introduced and annotated. Promotion would include an online extract on our website, with a direct link and QR code to a dedicated purchase/payment page.

So where do you come in?

This is not an appeal for pre-publication orders, nor is there any commitment from you. But you *can help us decide the best way forward by giving your opinion.*

Email sales@wendovercanal.org.uk, or use the comments feature in Facebook or

Instagram (or even put pen to paper!) to send your comments or suggestions how we should publish the Timeline.

What happened in 1824? You'll have to read the extract below to find out!

Monarchy

History

Invention

Canals

Wendover

Health

1815 William 'Strata' Smith, a geologist, publishes the first geological map of Britain - which identifies for the first time the differing geology to be found throughout the country – sadly many canals have already been built and even where 'problems' occur, e.g. on the Wendover Arm, the technology of the time cannot solve these problems.

1816 Jonathan Woodhouse (senior), father of Jonathan and John Woodhouse, dies.

9th Mar. - A report is received from Messrs. Boulton & Watts about the state of old engines at Braunston, Tringford and at Wilstone. It is ordered that Messrs. Boulton & Watt send a proper person to repair these engines - particularly the Wilstone engine.

Garnel Wharf Tring -

Andrew Bryant's 1820-21 map of Hertfordshire includes a windmill symbol at Garnel Wharf. Also Pigot's Directory for 1823 lists the brothers William and James Grover as 'millers' at Garnel, but the earliest record of the wharf and premises is in 1829, when they are held by William Grover, while James Grover holds the windmill and a house on the same site.



Garnel Wharf Mills, Tring

The windmill is a brick-built 6-storey tower mill with four double-shuttered patent sails, a fantail, with a gallery on the second floor. The cap is in the 'Kentish style', with an extension at the rear to support the fantail and its stage. It is considered to be a relatively large mill having power sufficient to drive at least three pairs of millstones.

The Grand Junction and Regent's Canal companies sign an agreement with the Grand Junction Water Works Company for an exchange of water. A pumping station is built by the river Thames, in Chelsea next to the Hospital and near the northern end of the present Chelsea Bridge.

The intake pipe for drawing water from the river sited, unfortunately, almost opposite the mouth of the Ranelagh Sewer (or Westbourne Brook). - see 1827 below.

1820s **Buckland Wharf** – Possibly at about this time (?) a public House – ‘The New Inn’ is situated on the downstream side of Buckland Bridge on the non-towpath side above the old wharf.

A photograph of 1824 shows the ‘New Inn’ as an established building.

1821

9th Feb - The Hon. Philip Pleydel Bouverie - 2nd Company Chairman.

William Praed - 1st Chairman retires - [\[dies in 1833.\]](#)

5th May - Napoleon Bonaparte dies, (aged 51), in exile on the island of Saint Helena.

23rd May - Work begins to build the Stockton to Darlington Railway.

19th July - George IV Coronation.

1824 4th March 1824 - R.N.L.I. is founded.

Thursday 9th Sept. - **Halton** – In the early evening a tragic accident occurs involving six people, five females and one male, when their small flat bottomed skiff, being towed by a horse, and passing near Perch Bridge, in Halton, overturns and sinks in the wide section of the canal.

All six of the boat’s occupants are thrown into the water and sadly two of the ladies, Miss Lydia Butcher from Tring and Miss Martha Allen of Leighton Buzzard drown.

At the inquest on the following day, the jury returns a verdict of accidental death.

1824/25

Boulton and Watt again inspect the steam engines at Tringford and Wilstone and give (a) favourable report.

Horse drawn buses in London.* (Ed: Wikipedia gives 1831 as the date)

1825/27 **Wilstone** (No. 1) reservoir again enlarged by raising the banks. Capacity about 1,400 locks - (78,400,000 Imp. Gallons).

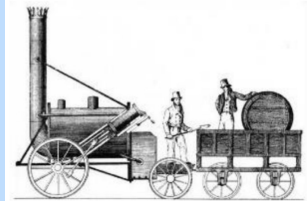
The siting of the Grand Junction Water Works Company in Chelsea, drawing heavily polluted water from the Thames, finally comes to light.

There is a considerable public outcry and a campaign led by Sir Francis Burdett, MP. for Westminster, results in the appointment of the first Royal Commission to inquire into the quality of the water to be supplied by all the metropolitan water companies.

It takes another 8 years for a new pumping station site to be authorised - see 1836 below.

1827 James Nielson first uses a blast furnace.

1829 6th Oct. - Locomotive trials at Rainhill, Liverpool, to find a locomotive for use on the Liverpool and Manchester Railway. - Stephenson's 'Rocket' is the winner.



Stephenson's Rocket

1830 26th June - George IV dies after years of overeating and drinking. He has no legitimate heirs and is succeeded by his brother William.

15th Sept. - Politician William Huskisson is knocked down and killed by Stephenson's 'Rocket'.

1830 By this time the canal system had expanded to nearly 4,000 miles. The canals changed the economy of Britain, supporting the industries that allowed the country to become the world's first industrial power and creating the wealth that led to the development of the British Empire in the Victorian era. The promotion of a canal required an Act of Parliament which stipulated the tolls to be charged. Canal engineers specified the projects, including setting the size of locks which at 7 feet wide and 72 feet long in turn dictated the maximum size for canal narrowboats". All the work was done by hand by "navvies" who worked in gangs under a foreman or contractor. The canals required a source of water at their highest point, and this was the original and still current purpose of the Wendover Arm.

Monarchy	History	Invention	Canals	Wendover	Health
1831	8th Sept. - William IV Coronation -Third son of George III comes to the throne aged 64, (Uncle to the future Queen Victoria).				
1834	18th March - Tolpuddle Martyrs sentenced to deportation to Australia. 16th Oct. - The Palace of Westminster is burnt down - firemen manage to save Westminster Hall and St Stephen's Chapel.				
1835	Jonathan Woodhouse, (aged 60), after 30 years of service at Wilstone, is employed as an engine attendant at Tringford. J. Potter is now the engine driver at Wilstone. - wages 21/- per week. Wilstone No.2 reservoir proposed, north-east of the original reservoir - Construction work begins in May. The reservoir covers 34.3 acres and has a capacity similar to No.1 - i.e. about 1,400 locks - (78,400,000 Imp. Gallons) May - New well is being constructed at Tringford Pumping Station.				





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Wendover Kingfisher sign



Unfortunately last year the Wendover canal sign with the Kingfisher on it was vandalised and dumped in the canal. It was recovered from the canal by volunteers. I volunteered to restore it.

I purchased numerous different coloured paints from a shop in High Wycombe. Following an estimated 30 hours of work, and finally spraying Enamel Varnish over the sign to protect the paintwork.

There is another identical sign located adjacent to canal where the B4009 road crosses near Buckland Wharf which is in somewhat better condition. The restored sign has now been re-erected at the Wendover end of the canal by Wharf Road. Where our volunteers have built a new section of wall and installed high security fencing.



Nigel Williams, Publicity

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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.

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