

Wendover Arm News

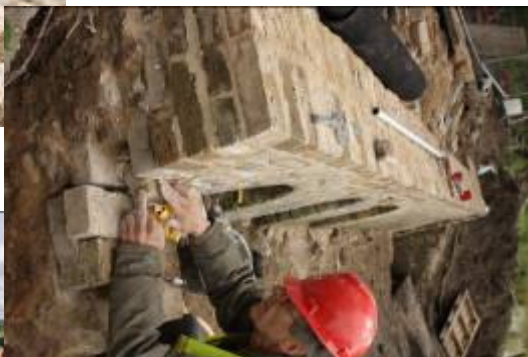
Newsletter of the Wendover Arm Trust



*Issue 2012/3
Autumn 2012*

*Price £1 where sold
Free to members*

A Huge Thank you to the Waterways Recovery Group for their hard work on Whitehouses during their annual camp in July



Still a great deal of work to be done but what a start!

A truly worthwhile project that will provide so much of interest to everyone

BARTON
PETROLEUM
www.bartonpetroleum.co.uk
For all commercial and residential fuels
01923 233171

In This Issue

The pictures opposite show members of the **Waterway Recovery Group** (WRG) hard at work on the Whitehouses site repairing the wall in readiness for the coping stones to be replaced and preparing the settling tank for use. The **AGM** looms and this edition carries the official notification to members as well as directions and a map to get you to the new venue which is not all that easy to find. **Walk an Arm's Length** is close now so last minute entries and fund raising are a must, if you can't join the walk you can still contribute—see page 6. There is an article on the **RYA Helmsman certificate** and one on the canal boat family as it was.

In recent issues I promised to report back on my progress to fitness from retirement. Well it's not been easy but I am now up to 40

Restoration News

It's been hard going on the restoration recently with all the heavy rain. There's been more pumping than working! The hardy souls who have been turning out have managed to continue lining working towards the mooring bay in Stage 2 but we would all have liked to be further on that we are

minute runs and I reckon the whole length will take about an hour—so still on track. I had my gait analysed at the local running shop "Up and Running" in Aylesbury and found that I had a serious over pronation problem. For those who are not familiar with running speak it is about the way your foot turns as you complete a stride and if left unsupported can cause many injuries to tendons, knees and hips. I am now using the correct type of shoe and enjoying my training so much more with the benefit of staying injury free.

The long awaited announcement that **British Waterways** (BW) no longer exists and the new **Canal and Rivers Trust** (CRT) has taken over is now official and the **Wendover Arm Trust** has been notified by post.

before the August camp.

Once again a big thank you to WRG for their efforts at Whitehouses, it's shaping up to be a fascinating project. Look out for an article by Prof Timothy Peters on the people who lived at Whitehouses coming soon.

Membership News

As of July 21st, the Trust has 674 members spread across 447 households. We welcome the following new members:

Mr E Blackmore Northampton
Mr I Gosling Wendover
Mr & Mrs I Petticrew Tring
Miss E Carter & family T o l l e s -
bury, Essex

Gift Aid

The total Gift Aid claimable so far is £914.20 which is for all payments / donations from April 6th to July 21st

Standing Order

To pay your membership or club 100 subs by standing order directly from your bank to ours, contact Katherine for more details, membership@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk or 01442 246523.

Email

290 membership households are

signed up for email. To register for email or if your email address has changed, please contact Katherine.

Club 100 Results

The summer draw was made on July 18th, there were 137 subscribers in the draw.

The winners were:

1st Mrs Beryl Martin, Newbury
£164.40

2nd Mr David Ager, High Wycombe
£68.50

3rd Mrs Pam Blackaller, Kings Langley
£27.40

Each lucky number is £15 per year, which covers 4 prize draws. To join club 100 contact Katherine.

Help us to Save Money on Postage

Many thanks to all of you who responded to the plea in the last edition to get your Wendover Arm News by email instead of by post despite the typo in the email address.

The address is...
newsletter@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk

If you opt for this format you will not only save the Trust money on both postage and printing you will get your copy more quickly and it will be in full colour. Remember every penny saved is a penny going towards restoration of the Arm.

Water Vole Sighting

When Jo and I started boating many years ago it was quite common to see Water Voles along the canal, either on the bank or swimming across the cut. However, as the years went by the sight of one of these delightful creatures going about their busy little lives become more and more a thing of the past. In fact it has been so long since we last saw one that I can't even remember where or how long ago it was. There are many reasons for this but by far the main culprit is the invasion of the Mink on our waterways which has reduced the numbers of Water Voles to a critical level, in fact you are far more likely to see a Mink than ever see a Water Vole. You can imagine our delight when, during our cruise in June of this year, we came across this little lad (or maybe lass) happily

feeding by the side of the top lock of the Watford Flight on the Leicester Branch of the Grand Union Canal. It remained, quite happily munching on the clover, whilst the lockkeeper and I took its picture so that the sighting could be reported to British Waterways, or Canal and River Trust as it is now. A very detailed survey is being carried out to determine the numbers and distribution of Water Voles remaining and we are all asked to report any such sightings. If by chance you are lucky enough to see a Water Vole on your travels, can I ask therefore that you help protect these lovely little animals by reporting it, giving details of when and where it was seen to the C&RT.

Good luck

Ray Orth



So you can't join the walk?

We are not all fortunate enough to have the mobility, time, enthusiasm or stamina to join a crowd of others and pace out nearly seven miles in support of charity (even if that charity is the Wendover Arm Trust!).

How can we still show our support for the most important event in the Trust's calendar?

Many of the people (and at least one dog!) taking part in the walk on Sept 2nd are actively looking for sponsorship for their efforts. Some have been collecting sponsorship for weeks, and have already collected hundreds of pounds. Others have just started, and will be looking for those important first donations.

Each of the fundraisers has their own 'page' on BT MYDonate, the charity sponsorship website we are using to collect and organise donations. Amongst others we have Jenny Brice who is going to walk the Arm twice in both directions! (1), Johanna who is walking in a traditional boatwoman's costume (2), and Daisy the dog who is taking her owner John for the stroll (3). We also have Jon who isn't actually walking, but intends to run the route - let's hope he starts before everyone else! (4). Not sure about promoting the running, as we state in the terms and conditions that it is a walk not running or cycling.

The funny website address shown against the walker's name below takes you direct to that person's 'page' so you can see their reason for walking, and make a contribution if you wish.

The RAF is providing a team who will be the 'last man walking' to collect any stragglers and check the route is clear, etc. They have the Team Name 'Tail End Heroes' and they also have their own sponsorship page (5).

There are those who can't do the walk because they are giving their time on the day and beforehand to help with running the event; you can still sponsor them. Graeme Lockhart is running the tripboats (6), Ray Orth will be doing restoration work together with many other volunteers at Drayton Beauchamp (7), and last but by no means least Katherine Deaney (chief organiser of the walk) (8).

Of course, if you don't have ready access to a computer (lucky you!) you can just as easily make a donation by steam-driven postal service, sending your donation to 'Walk', c/o 467 Bideford Green, Linslade, LU7 2TZ, not forgetting to state which walker you are sponsoring, and give your name and address if you want the Trust to benefit from Gift Aid on your sponsorship. Cheques should be made payable to 'Wendover Arm Trust'.

Of course, thank you if you have already sponsored one of our walkers.

Have you thought maybe you could collect your own sponsorship for the Trust? If you want me to set up a page on your behalf, do let me know (funding@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk), or go to www.BTMyDonate.co.uk to start your own page.

Finally, let's not forget the old fashioned method of getting sponsorship promises on a sheet of paper. You can download the sheet using this address (9), or I can send you one in the post.

Whatever you do, with the effort that's already gone into organising the walk, it promises to be a great day!

Personal sponsorship web pages on BT MyDonate:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| (1) Jenny Brice | http://goo.gl/OwUwD |
| (2) Johanna Wheal | http://goo.gl/D6Cf6 |
| (3) Daisy Rowe | http://goo.gl/5ENhK |
| (4) Jon Kelly | http://goo.gl/gBgCb |
| (5) RAF Tail End Heroes | http://goo.gl/QmIEj |
| (6) Graeme Lockhart | http://goo.gl/ |
| (7) Ray Orth | http://goo.gl/rzWDf |
| (8) Katherine Deaney | http://goo.gl/MxAIE |

Sponsorship collection sheet:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| (9) Sponsorship Sheet | http://goo.gl/WwkXV |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|

Copy any of these addresses in to your computer (take care of capital letters!) to go directly to that person's page.

There will be other walkers raising sponsorship - look for them on [www.BT MyDonate.com](http://www.BTMyDonate.com)



Daisy Rowe <http://goo.gl/5ENhK>

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the twenty third Annual General Meeting of the Wendover Arm Trust will be held at the Dunstable and District Boat Club, Cooks Wharf, Wellington Place, PITSTONE.

LU7 9AD on Wednesday 23rd. October 2012 commencing at 7.30 pm.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. Minutes of the 22nd Annual General Meeting held on 26th October 2011.
3. Chairman's Report.
4. Individual Trustees' Reports.
5. Honorary Treasurer's Report.
6. To receive and, if thought fit, approve the report of the Committee. (Council of Management).
7. To receive and, if thought fit, to approve the Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet of the Trust for the Year ended on 5th April 2012, and the Report of the Independent Examiner thereon.
- 8 To agree the new membership subscription rates
9. To re-appoint Mr Robin David Goodridge BA ACA as the Independent Examiner.
10. To elect Members to the Council. (See Note 1 below).

By Order of the Council

	Registered Office:
	66, Bryants Acre,
	Wendover
John. M. Rowe.	Bucks.
Secretary	HP22 6LA

1st July 2012

Note 1. Under Article 39, nominations for election to the Council may be received by the Secretary up to seven clear days before the date of the meeting. Nominations must be in writing and signed by the proposer and by the person nominated, confirming their willingness to be elected. Only members qualified to vote at the meeting may make nominations or stand for election.

A list of Council Members standing for re-election and other members standing for election will be given at the meeting.

Note 2. Any person being a member of the Trust is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and vote on his behalf at the Annual General Meeting. Such a proxy need not be a member of the Trust. A letter nominating the proxy, signed by the member, must be received by the Secretary before the start of the meeting.

Item 8

Proposed Changes to Membership Classes and Subscription

The Trust Council will be announcing changes to the membership classes and subscriptions at the 2012 AGM. These are subject to approval by Trust members who will be asked to vote to approve or reject this motion.

Membership Classes

At present there are single, family and corporate memberships available. The proposals are:

Introducing a new Lifetime membership class for a one off payment.

Block membership for 5 years at 20% discount, i.e. 5 years for the price of 4 years.

Small increases in the membership subscriptions, which were last increased 7 years ago in 2005.

If approved, changes will take effect on November 1st 2012.

	Single (annual)	Family (annual)	Life (Single)	Life (Family)	Corporate
Current Subscription	£8	£12	N/A	N/A	£20
Proposed subscription	£10	£15	£150	£250	£25

WAT AGM at DDBC (that's Dunstable and District Boat Club).

Location: Cooks Wharf, Wellington Place, Pitstone, LU7 9AD

Phone: 01296 668937

Directions: There's a map in colour on page 15

From Marsworth Canal Bridge: Go up the hill on B489. Just before the bridge over the mainline railway, turn left onto Wellington Place (signposted Cheddington and Mentmore).

The entrance to DDBC is through the metal gates almost ½ mile on the left.

From Ivinghoe: Take B489 through Ivinghoe High Street and continue on Marsworth Road.

At the roundabout, turn right onto Cheddington Road. Continue under the railway bridge (narrow!) and turn left onto Wellington Place. After 50 yards, the entrance to DDBC is through the metal gates on the right.

From Cheddington: Continue South through Cheddington and cross the GU Canal at the hump-back bridge. After 75 yards, the entrance to DDBC is through the metal gates on the right.

The RYA Helmsman Certificate

I had a bit of time off in March so decided to do the Inland Waterways Helmsman's Course. Although I thought my boat handling skills were OK I thought you can always learn something new so I gave it a go. The closest RYA training I could find was on the Oxford Canal run by an outfit called Wildcat Enterprises. I knew

nothing of them so it was a bit of a gamble but as they were RYA registered what could go wrong? On the appointed day I arrived at the marina and found the boat I was looking for Wildcat is a 70 foot cruiser stern narrowboat that has been fitted out to sleep a large number of youngsters as it is used for adventure outings for

organisations such as the girl guides. My instructor for the day was Dave who sat me down with a cup of coffee and explained what the day would be all about. We started off with a bit of theory and safety stuff before leaving the marina. Dave took us out onto the canal and then handed the boat over to me. After a short time he decided that I can steer OK and told me so. A useful tip he gave me was that this 70 footer pivots at the point where the eye bolt for the centre rope is attached to the roof, so if you keep this in the centre of the canal you can't go too far wrong.

Pretty soon we came to a lift bridge that was up. The abutments look seriously narrow from a distance; it was going to be a bit like landing a light aircraft. Just to boost my confidence Dave told me that only 1 in 10 get through it without scraping. Luckily there was no side wind to speak of and I was through without a touch.

The next job was a flight of locks. Dave ensured that I could bring the boat in to the bank for mooring in a steady controlled manner and then taught me how to "stern off" so that you can get the boat off the bank when there is a breeze and you don't have a bow thruster. Locking down was fine, we covered hovering as we went down the flight.

Not far from the locks we came to

the winding hole. With the 70 footer it was important not to get too close to the bank and yet not too far so that I could get the bows into the far bank at the right spot without the stern hitting the close bank. It wasn't perfect but we turned the boat round OK. Now the stern was facing a bridge that I had to reverse under to ensure that I could control the boat whilst going backwards.

The return trip was more practice and learning the techniques for locking up in a full size boat. The Oxford is very twisty at the point where we were and I did manage to go too wide on one turn but it was no big drama and I was able to recover pretty easily.

Back at the marina Dave managed to show me how bad I am at knots. I have since got hold of a couple of bits of coloured rope and the RYA knot book and improved somewhat.

So now I have the certificate and I must say that I did learn quite a bit from the day and do not regret doing it one little bit. Judging by the number of chunks of concrete that have been taken out of the walls of the winding hole at phase 1 of our restoration there are a number of other skippers out there who could do with a bit of training.

Jon Kelly

The Canal Boat Family

Many people nowadays are fascinated by the life of the canal families in the days when cargoes were carried by narrow boat all over the waterways system, especially in the midlands.

Since the 1950's there have been very few narrow boats operating in this way and there are no canal families of the old type left. Some boats are now worked by devotees, for instance on the Grand Union Canal.

We begin our story in the early eighteenth century.

The families of the boatmen lived ashore while the men worked on boats making daily or weekly runs. Most of these boats were owned by Carrying Companies, using double crews and relays of horses to provide a fast carrying service of which they were justifiably proud.

Various theories have been put forward as to the origins of the canal boatmen. It has been suggested that they were gypsies or navvies, or ex-sailors. These theories are open to questioning. Gypsy families would not have lived settled lives in cottages while their menfolk did day or weekly work, and the navvies' characters were often such as would have found regular boatwork dull. The sailors usually came from seaside villages or towns and would have returned there; in addition there is no

tradition of nautical terminology on the canals and the biggest insult one could offer to a boatman was to call him 'sailor'. Even their tradition-al songs mirror this disdain of the sea. However, there is no real proof either for or against these theories. The majority of the boatmen were probably village farm labourers who became unemployed due to the changes in traditional English farming in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Many of these villagers went to work in the expanding factories of the north and Midlands, but some of them took to boatwork.

Although the work was hard, the pay was good (compared with factory workers) and the boatmen were better off than both the factory and the agricultural workers. Boatmen's families often lived on the outskirts of the towns and to some extent had the benefit of the consumer goods made in the towns plus the healthier life of the country.

It was the rising competition of the railways which brought about the beginning of the end of prosperity for the narrow-boatmen and their families. The Carrying Companies cut their men's wages in order to fight back. The usual custom of these companies had been to appoint a boat captain and then leave him to engage another man and a boy as crew. Some captains had brought their boats and often a second and had set up as small carri-

ers. These were known as 'Number Ones' and they were the hardest hit. They could not compete against the faster service of the railways. To save wages in the 1840's whole families left their cottages and moved into the tiny cabins that had never been meant as permanent living quarters; boatmen's wives became the 'second man' and their own small children took the place of 'the boy'. Because these families had known some measure of prosperity the women took their treasured possessions with them to the boats. Into these little cabins they packed the plates, lustre ware, patchwork quilts, brass, fairings and the cage birds that had decorated their cottages. From about this time, too, the narrow boats, which had formerly carried the plain, although bright, colours of the various companies, were decorated with the flowers and castles which have come to be thought of as traditional.

Within thirty years the once prosperous boatmen and their families had become some of the poorest and most neglected people in the country. Because they were constantly on the move much of the legislation designed to improve conditions of work and provide education for children could not be applied. Many of the women could not cope with life in the tiny cabins especially with four, five or even more small children. Conditions be-

came insanitary and accidents more common. Many children were drowned each year, many more died of contagious diseases as typhoid, cholera and smallpox. Although Company boats were supposed to be inspected, it was impossible to enforce the regulations, and in order to get the maximum work out of the boatmen, the Companies tended to turn a blind eye to the conditions of overcrowding which led to ill-temper and frustration, only dispelled by drink with its subsequent ill-treatment of women and children. With speed a necessity, the boatmen had no chance of Sundays rest, no time for church, for education, even for cleanliness or properly cooked food. Everything had to be done 'on the move'. There was no time even for courtship and marriage in the normal way. Marriages were often arranged by mutual acquaintances and contracted for convenience, a young man taking on a boat on his own, asking a friend to find him a woman to travel with. Their 'wedding ceremonies' were arranged by the boaters themselves without the help or blessing of the church. Nobody cared.

In 1877, largely as a result of the work of George Smith, the Canal Boats Act was passed. It was a start in the betterment of the boatmen's lives, but it did not satisfy George Smith because it was too permissive and could not be enforced.

The children continued to live on the boats and remained uneducated. He went on campaigning and an amendment to the Act was passed in 1881. In 1884 a second Canal Boats Act was passed, appointing an inspector under the Local Government Board. It also required local authorities to make annual reports to this Board concerning actions they had taken over supervising canal life and to see that boat children attended schools.

Slowly, very slowly, the boat-people's lives improved; though many children remained unlettered, general conditions and hours of work were easier. 'As conditions of health improved so the boater's pride returned; the decorated boats and clothes took on a new meaning to their owners. The 'traditional' way of life, the best of the canal songs and dances, the brightest costumes date from the 1890's onward, and it is these clothes and domestic utensils which are preserved as the tradition of the cut.

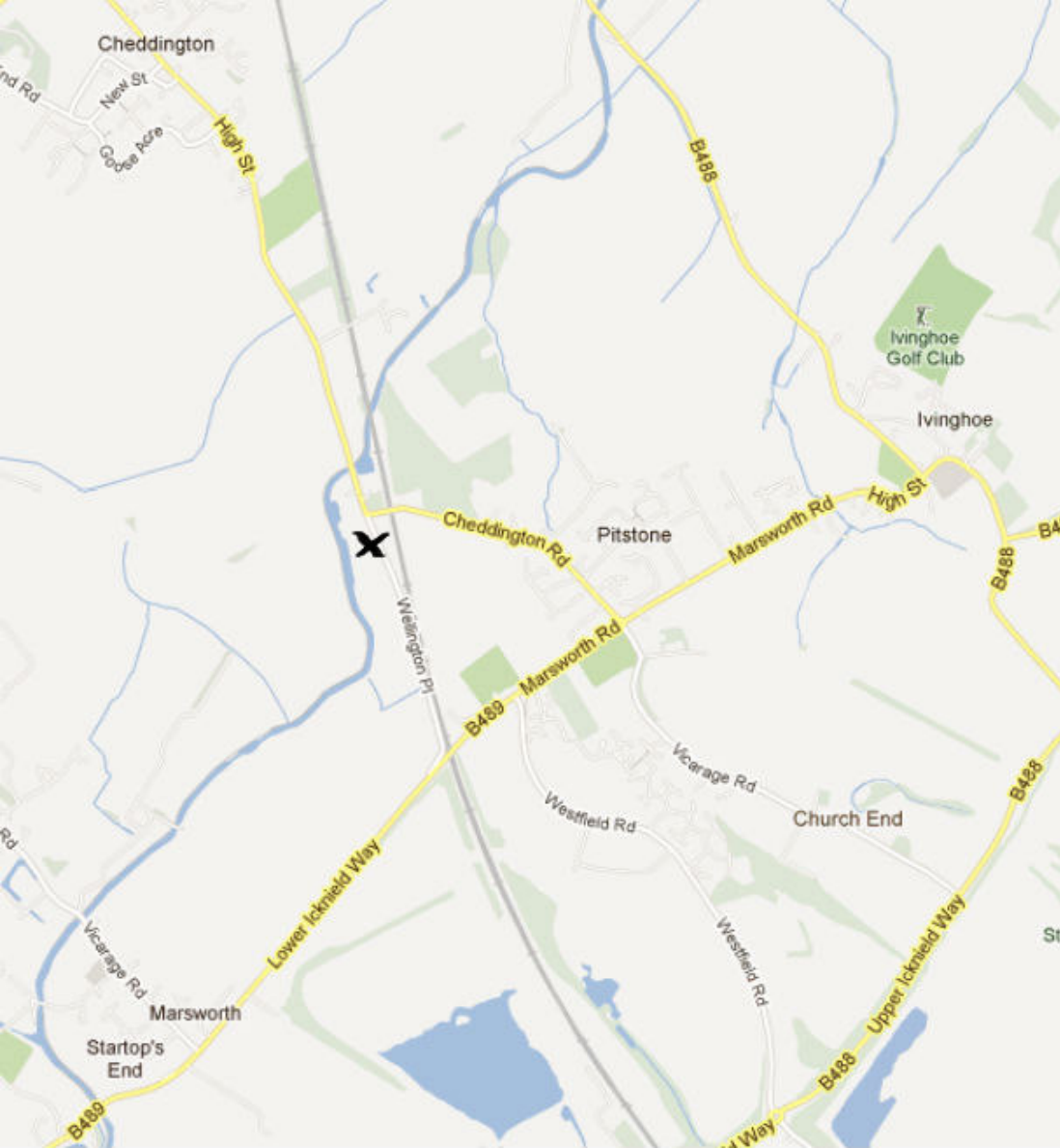
This method of running canal narrow boats while picturesque and apparently idyllic, posed, in a world where the standards of living were improving, a serious social problem, because the families became nomads and did not fit into any established community. Perhaps the worst feature, however, was the denial of educational opportunity to the children.

As the Carrying Companies came into existence they recognised their responsibilities in this field and made what arrangements they could with the Education Authorities and eventually succeeded in establishing, certain special schools for boat children. These schools were generally well conducted and, although standards of education were low, they fulfilled a much felt want. One example of a special school was a disused canal boat drawn up on land and re-fitted as a class-room.

As teaching became more enlightened the drawback of the special school became more apparent, and efforts were made to enable boat children to attend the ordinary schools. The most common way in which this was carried out was for a school vehicle to call at places where narrow craft tied up and pick the children up. While this had an air of normality about it, the problem of regular attendance remained, because no boat was tied up very long since the boatmen's income depended in part on the cargoes he carried. This led to the Birmingham Education Authority establishing a hostel at Edgbaston where boat children could lodge while the family boat was away, thus enabling them to attend regularly at the local school.

Partially taken from . The
Clothes of the Cut' by Avril
Lansdell, published by the
British Waterways Board,

How to get to the AGM at the DDBC



Go with the flow...



WALK AN ARM'S LENGTH!

Sponsored Canal Walk



Wendover to Tring

**Sunday 2nd
September 2012**

Register NOW!

Please help us raise funds to enable our volunteers to continue restoring the beautiful Wendover Arm canal. To find out more visit our website:

www.wendoverarmwalk.org.uk

or call: 07547 181857



Wendover Arm Trust

Restoring canal history in the Chilterns.

Registered charity number: 801190