



ISSUE 58

THE WENDOVER ARM TRUST WORKING PARTY NEWS

December 2006

It only seems five minutes since the last December issue of the Working Party News but I consider that the past year has been a turning point in Phase II.

We have at last put the problem of the Nuttall's bund behind us and are making real progress on Stage 31, the first 321 metres of lining back from the sump at Drayton Beauchamp. A third of the pipe capping has been completed and bulk excavation is rapidly approaching the end of this stage.

The design has now been all but finalised using hollow concrete blocks. It now turns out that the firms quoting for solid concrete blocks had been using a 10 blocks/sq.m. formula that does not apply to the solid blocks as these are being manufactured to a smaller size so as to comply with Health & Safety requirements and are, in fact, considerably more expensive than hollow concrete blocks even after allowing for filling the hollow blocks with concrete.

The target next year is to have the first half of Stage 31 (150 metres) in water (at Wendover level) with a temporary bund. This will be greatly assisted by the help we will be getting next year from visiting groups, particularly a week-long work party in August with BITM.

The downside to progress at present is the wet weather we are experiencing. This delayed the next 20 metres of pipe capping at the December work party as it would have been very unwise to transport dumpers of ready-mix



**A MERRY CHRISTMAS
TO YOU ALL**

from Little Tring in the very muddy conditions at places along the route. Fortunately bulk excavation was able to progress without delay so there was no hold up in the use of hired plant.

It was possible to transport ready-mix concrete to footbridge 4 so we were able to erect the formwork and cast the east end wing walls ready for backfilling and construction of the diverted footpath to the new bridge in due course.

Phase II, Stage 31 – Lining and mooring 4100 to 4421

As already mentioned above, bulk excavation is nearing completion and nearly a third of the pipe capping completed. One can only wonder how much further forward we would have been if we had not had to spend two nine-day work parties on Nuttall's bund!

Phase II, Stage 34 – Lining and mooring 3050 to 3400

No further work has taken place since the last newsletter.

Phase II, Stage 38 – Footbridge 4

The timber handrails of the footbridge have now settled down much better than was thought possible at first so it has been agreed to fill and sand them in the Spring (Option 1) and hope that this will suffice; if not the capping of the handrail with a 145 x 34 section redwood (Option 2) has been voted the best alternative.

The east end wing walls have now been completed ready for backfilling and construction of the diverted footpath. There has been no news of the Footpath Diversion Order being arranged by Herts County Council but the new footbridge can be used by the public once all work is completed but the existing route over the canal bed cannot be closed until the Diversion Order is effective.

It is not intended to complete the west end wing walls whilst there is priority work to be done at Drayton Beauchamp.

Phase II, Stage 39 – Footbridge 4A

The work on the handrails is as for Bridge 4 above.

It is intended to cast the west end wing walls at the January work party, weather permitting so that the footbridge can be opened for use but it is not intended to complete the east end wing walls whilst there is priority work to be done at Drayton Beauchamp.

Waterproof clothing

Mike Wright has some surplus waterproof clothing for disposal. Will anyone interested please contact Mike, Tel No. 01727 860137.

Festival 2006

John Broom, our Treasurer, has now closed the books with a final profit figure of £41,145.10.

Web Site

The address of the Trust Restoration web site managed by Oliver Revel (that is linked to the main Trust site) is:

<http://wendovercanal.org.uk/>

Drayton Beauchamp Parish Meeting

This body, which represent the interests of the residents of the hamlet of Drayton Beauchamp, jointly with Bucks County Council, funded the provision of a seat and plaque at Saxon Bridge, the bridge carrying the new A41 Aston Clinton by-pass over the Wendover Arm Canal.

They asked the Trust if they would install the seat and plaque and in July, Bob Fletcher led a small group to install the seat and in November Ray Orth and I fixed the plaque to Saxon Bridge.

The name of the bridge is derived from the finding of a Saxon burial site when the route of the by-pass was being investigated and one of the graves contained high-class artefacts that indicated the burial of a lady of high status, hence the reference on the plaque to a Saxon Princess.



At 9.30am on Saturday, November 25th 2006, Bucks County Council Deputy Leader, Bill Chapple, (seated right) held a small ceremony to mark the completion of the works.



Brian Ing, Bob Fletcher, Brian Harris and Eddy Evans, the seat construction crew on the seat.



The plaque on Saxon Bridge

Although the timing for the ceremony was unusually early, the weather was quite remarkable – at 9.15am it was pouring with rain but by 9.30am it was blue skies for the next hour and then the rain set in for the rest of the morning.

After the ceremony, all present were welcomed at the Old Rectory to a superb food and drink.

Site Security

The BW Watermate padlock on the outer gate at the cart track entrance was recently stolen. This was probably someone with a BW Watermate key so it has been necessary to replace it with a padlock with a unique key. Will all present keyholders ensure that they obtain a copy of the new key from me to add to their present set of restoration site keys. This makes my plea to leave padlocks and chains secure round a gate bar by whoever opens a gate even more essential.

E-mail

The number of e-mail recipients of this newsletter is growing. If you give me a request for e-mail transmission I will do so but please let me know if the attachment does not arrive. Transmission seems to have improved recently.

Wendover Trust Mugs

Please see Ray Orth or myself if you want Trust mugs. They are bone china, £6 each, two for £11.50 or four for £22. If you have not seen them, they commemorate the opening of Phase I with a view through Little Tring Bridge on both sides with 'Wendover Arm Trust 2005' underneath.

Insurance

It is incumbent on anyone, regardless of age, to inform the Trust in writing if they suffer from any medical condition that could in any way affect their ability to carry out their work as a Trust Work Party Volunteer.

General Notes.

All volunteers receive and sign for the Trust's Restoration Manual that includes full Health and Safety requirements for the restoration works. The Manual is the property of the Trust; if you leave the working parties for any reason, please return the Manual to either Ray Orth or myself.

David Barratt is our qualified First-Aider and, even if he is not on site, lives in Pitstone and can be contacted on 07973 411176 if he is at home.

Hard hats for use at all times and high visibility jackets to be worn on sites with mobile plant in use are kept in the store at Tringford and must be drawn/returned there. One first aid kit is kept in the store; another is kept in the VW transporter for use on site. Also available in the transporter are ear defenders and goggles that must be worn when using strimmers, angle grinders, concrete breakers and the like. Individual volunteers must provide their own footwear with reinforced toecaps.

We normally work from 9am to 5pm (or dark if earlier!) when we are hiring plant or taking delivery of ready-mix concrete early in the morning. There are breaks for morning coffee/tea, packed lunch and afternoon tea/coffee. We take our own food and drinks. However, do not feel bound by these times, as half a day is better than no help at all.

PS.

Most work party volunteers will appreciate the comment to Father Christmas on the front page but for those not in the 'know', one of our members who shall be nameless was responsible for the finished towpaths in Stage 1 and was regularly ribbed by other volunteers at the rabbit holes appearing from time to time in his finished towpath. He was even seen lacing the holes with human hair obtained from his barber that he had been informed was a rabbit deterrent!