



## THE WENDOVER ARM TRUST WORKING PARTY NEWS

ISSUE 70

December 2008

### December Working Party

For once, no rain during the daytime although heavy rain some nights. A very successful working party. The improvements to the cart track entrance were completed and the new reinforced concrete raft for cutting Bentomat also completed. The work on the entrance went extremely well and was virtually complete by Saturday afternoon.



Bert Matraves

This was the new concrete raft on Sunday; the rest of it was concreted on Monday and Tuesday. It will now be possible to cut three four-metre pieces at a time. To cut the twenty-metre pieces required for the bed of the canal, Ray Orth came up with the idea of cutting five four-metre pieces and leaving the rest of the forty-metre long roll as a twenty-metre piece. The raft is five metres wide, the width of a Bentomat roll.

There have been suggestions that some of the solid concrete blocks could have been laid to form a base for cutting but, as it is on a tip site, settlement as well as weeds would be a problem.



**A Merry Christmas and a  
Happy  
(and drier) New Year to You  
All**

A start was also made with initial clearance of the site of the former Whitehouses Pumping Station to see what is required for investigations to be carried out.

### January Working Party

It has been agreed not to continue work at Drayton Beauchamp that requires plant on site.



Mike Wright

This was Bert Matraves driving to Drayton Beauchamp in November – need I say more!

We will continue with various outstanding minor jobs at the January Working Party:

- Pete Bowers' weekday working party meets on the Thursday immediately before the working weekend. Ray Orth will be joining them to give his expertise on wall formwork to move the steel wall formwork from the third section (already cast) to the fourth section ready for pouring at the same time as the last base for which the formwork was completed by Pete Bowers and his weekday working party in December. Wall formwork to continue on Friday if necessary.
- Installing the memorial seats at Little Tring Bridge (for Roger Lewis) and at peg 36 (for Dick Cordell). Can we have a volunteer to look after the excavation and setting the formwork for the base at Little Tring Bridge on the Friday; Bob Fletcher (who fixed the seat at Saxonway Bridge) will use his expertise to install the seat on Saturday. Phill Cardy will be looking after the seat at peg 36 where a small solid concrete block wall needs to be built on the Friday and Saturday followed by fixing the seat on the Sunday with Bob Fletcher's guidance.
- I have just noticed that our hut requires repairs to the felt roof. Can I have a volunteer to take charge of this work? Some cutting back of overhanging branches is required as well as patch repairs to the felt roof.

These are lower priority jobs if there are enough volunteers:

- The area at Whitehouses needs further clearing and fencing for exploration by Professor Timothy Peters who is leading the investigation into this historic site of a former pumping station and what should be done to preserve it in the future.
- The ground around both footbridges needs clearing, then covering with Geotex and road stone to enable people to view plaques mounted on the stanchions as well as keep the area generally tidy. This work was commenced at Bridge 4A by Pete Bowers and his weekday workparty.
- The remaining small trees in the tip site near Bridge 4A need clearing by April so that tipping can be completed and the site levelled

over. There is also some scrub burning still required at Bridge 4A.

- The spoil deposited between the abutments of the former swing bridge at Whitehouses needs to be cleared but this will have to await a drier access road for plant.

### **Future plans for working parties.**

While the banks are being left to settle, the only work that can be carried out in Stage 1 at present is the mooring wall and this will be a priority once the track is dry enough for tracked plant as we need the space behind the wall for tipping spoil when profiling the bank opposite.

There will be a lot of excavated material to be removed from both stages 1 and 2 next year and it is becoming more of a problem finding suitable tipping sites that do not result in double handling when the pipeline has to be capped. There are two lengths of very wide bed each side of Whitehouses former pumping station that can be tipped on the offside. It is proposed to carry on with pipe capping from Whitehouses towards Bridge 4A (part of stage 3) so that the offside bank can be built up with spoil from Stages 1 & 2 so avoiding re-excavation and allowing the bank plenty of time to settle before lining.

It is hoped that by April the track will have dried out enough to allow plant through to start profiling the rest of both banks in Stage 1 and to carry on with concrete pours for the Stage 1 mooring bay. This will enable lining of banks to commence in May when we shall have the assistance of KESCRG on the Saturday and Sunday. If we prepare the base for 40 metres a day, 160 metres could be completed but it all depends on the weather and the speed of blocking and backfilling the bank with spoil. It also requires 32 four metre long pieces of Bentomat being cut on the new cutting base. We will already have enough concrete blocks in stock for this length. Bulk excavation of Stage 2 can continue when plant is available but the priority will be to complete some pipe capping in Stage 3 to give us a good tipping site.

### **Mooring Bays**

Earlier this year there were views expressed by volunteers that there was no need for four

mooring bays in Phase II. The WAT Restoration Committee at their meeting in October considered these views but it was agreed that the four mooring bays are necessary for genuine moorers as there will be no where else to moor in Phase II unless boats moor against the sloping banks, something to be discouraged. Furthermore, if mooring bays are not provided during construction works it will be impracticable to provide them at a later date. It is appreciated that one of the fears is that these moorings will be taken over by 'permanent temporary moorers' and the current experience with such moorers in Phase I does support this point of view – BW seem unable to police mooring restrictions.

I have written formally to BW on the subject of mooring in Phase I and, among other things, suggested that a charge should be levied on a per day basis for overstaying the mooring time limit. With their hand held computers, BW staff could easily record overstays and have the charges debited to the boat owners account. If not paid before the next licence renewal, any debits to be added to the standard licence fee and no licence issued until the account is settled in full. Many will no doubt say "How do you get payment from boaters who do not pay a licence fee anyway?" Jeff Whyatt, our local BW General Manager, assures me that the crackdown on unlicensed boats is being vigorously pursued. Unfortunately, for legal reasons, he tells me that evidence of licensing/mooring violations is only admissible from BW staff. This strikes me as unfortunate as BW are currently encouraging assistance from volunteers and this is an area where the many enthusiasts among potential volunteers could give great, and I am sure willing, assistance.

### **Operation "FLOODWATCH"**

There is no change from the report in the October Working Party News. We await clearance of the weed growth by BW before undertaking water level measurements. I did record in November that the water level at Perch Bridge was 130mm/5" above summit level and a local farmer on the Wendover side of the bridge claimed that flooding was occurring on his fields.

### **Kingdom Tours**

Many of you will no doubt heard of Kingdom Tours of Aylesbury owned by Brian and Velma Kirton who are members of our IWA Chiltern Branch.

They are well known for running the annual waterway tours on behalf of Waterways World and our annual Chiltern Branch weekends away. They also organise annual weekends away for enthusiasts to visit restoration projects around the country and next early May Bank Holiday have arranged a visit to the Buckingham Arm, Aylesbury Basin and the Wendover Arm. The visitors will be walking from Wendover to Buckland Wharf on the Saturday and on the Sunday going from Bulbourne to Little Tring by trip boat, a visit to Tringford Pumping Station and then walk through from Little Tring to Buckland Wharf, hopefully seeing our volunteers lining the banks at Drayton Beauchamp.

### **Wildlife**



Ray Orth

I have reported from time to time on how the restored canal is benefiting wildlife. This charming picture taken by Ray Orth at the reed bed planted by our lady volunteers at the Little Tring restored winding hole demonstrates how well aquatic birds have populated the newly restored lengths of the Wendover Arm.

### **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.

**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/>

The number of e-mail recipients of this newsletter is increasing; please let me know if you wish to join them.

**General Notes.**

All volunteers receive and sign for the Trust's Restoration Handbook that includes full Health and Safety requirements for the restoration works. The Handbook is the property of the Trust; if you leave the working parties for any reason, please return your Handbook to either Ray Orth or myself. It has now been updated and being printed for re-issue to all volunteers.

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 gloves and 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 tea/coffee, packed lunch and afternoon tea/coffee. We take our own food and drink.

**DATES FOR WORKING PARTIES**

DATE (2009)	WORKING AT	WORK TO BE DONE
Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> January	Drayton Beauchamp	Move and erect formwork for next wall pour of Stage 1 mooring bay.
Friday 9 <sup>th</sup> January to Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup> January	Little Tring	Various minor works as listed in this newsletter on page 2 and completing formwork for next wall pour of Stage 1 mooring wall.
Friday 6 <sup>th</sup> February to Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup> February	Drayton Beauchamp or Little Tring	Dependent on the weather. Cutting Bentomat.
Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> February	Drayton Beauchamp	Clearing outer edge of towpath/fencing in Stage 2.
Friday 6 <sup>th</sup> March to Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup> March	Drayton Beauchamp or Little Tring	Dependent on weather, possibly pipe capping in Stage 3?
Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> March	Drayton Beauchamp	Clearing outer edge of towpath/fencing in Stage 2.
Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> April to Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> April	Drayton Beauchamp	Profiling banks of Stage 1 and pour wall and base section of mooring bay. Move wall formwork for a second wall pour? Possibly pipe capping in Stage 3?
Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> April	Drayton Beauchamp	Remove/re-fix wall formwork for Stage 1 mooring bay.
Friday 1 <sup>st</sup> May to Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup> May	Drayton Beauchamp	Bank lining of Stage 1. Pour last wall section of Stage 1 mooring bay.
Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> May	Drayton Beauchamp	Strip wall formwork of last bay of Stage 1 mooring bay.

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I HAVE MADE REPEATED REQUESTS IN PAST NEWSLETTERS FOR VOLUNTEERS TO LET US KNOW IF THEY ARE COMING TO A WORKING PARTY; AROUND HALF OUR VOLUNTEERS GIVE US AMPLE WARNING IN ADVANCE.

WHEN WE WERE ARRANGING PLANT AND MATERIALS DELIVERY TWO WEEKS IN ADVANCE OF THE DECEMBER WORKING PARTY, WE WERE EXPECTING 10 VOLUNTEERS ON THE FRIDAY. IN THE EVENT, 15 VOLUNTEERS TURNED UP! THIS DOES MAKE IT VERY DIFFICULT TO PLAN WORK AND KEEP EVERYBODY GAINFULLY EMPLOYED AND WE DO GET COMPLAINTS TO THIS EFFECT. FORTUNATELY, ON THIS OCCASION, THERE WERE ENOUGH TASKS TO KEEP EVERYONE BUSY.

MOST OF US DO KEEP DIARIES SO, IF POSSIBLE, PLEASE WILL YOU LET US KNOW AT LEAST TWO WEEKS IN ADVANCE IF YOU ARE COMING. MAKE THIS ONE OF YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS! SOME VOLUNTEERS CANNOT GIVE A FIRM COMMITMENT DUE TO THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES BUT THEY DO AT LEAST SAY SO AND WE ENTER THEM AS PROVISIONAL AND THEY ALWAYS LET US KNOW IF THEY CANNOT COME BEFORE THE DAY, ILLNESS ETC WE KNOW WILL ALWAYS HAPPEN.

I AM SORRY TO GROUSE LIKE THIS BUT WE DO HAVE A LOT TO DO AND NEED TO BE EFFICIENT IN PLANNING OUR OPERATIONS. I DO HOPE THAT THIS REQUEST WILL NOT DETER YOU FROM GIVING YOUR VALUABLE HELP AT OUR RESTORATION WORKING PARTIES.