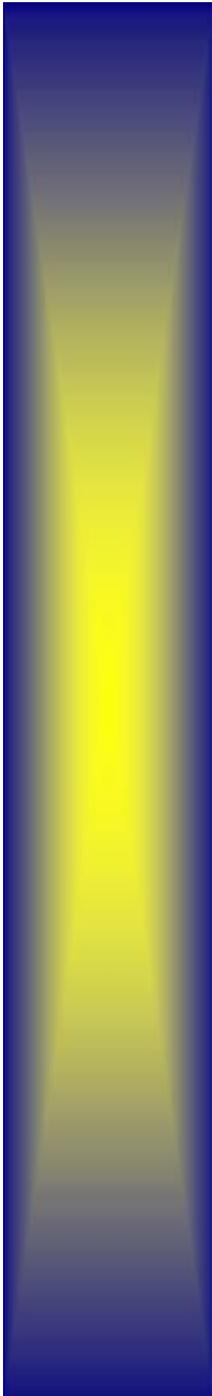




Registered Charity
No. 299595



Annual Report 2008-2009



www.wbct.org.uk

Mission Statement

Restoring in partnership the Wessex waterways through Wiltshire and Oxfordshire to reconnect them with the main network by 2014.

Charitable Aims

To protect, conserve and improve the route of the Wilts & Berks and North Wilts Canals, and branches, for the benefit of the community and environment, with the ultimate goal of restoring a continuous navigable waterway linking the Kennet & Avon Canal near Melksham, Wiltshire, the River Thames near Abingdon, Oxfordshire and the Thames and Severn Canal near Cricklade, Wiltshire.

Objectives

1. Convince local authorities, government departments and local organisations of the benefits and feasibility of the proposed restoration.
2. Convince landowners, local commerce and the general public of the merits of restoration.
3. Secure the route of the waterway and adequate water supplies.
4. Establish the Trust as a key member of a partnership with local authorities and other bodies that will facilitate restoration of the canal.
5. Implement an agreed programme for full restoration of the canal.

Legal Structure

The Trust is a Registered Charity, No. 299595, and a Non-Profit-Distributing Company Limited by Guarantee, Registered in England and Wales No. 2267719. Its Registered Office Address is: 117 High Street, Wootton Bassett, Swindon, Wilts. SN4 7AU.

Patron

HRH The Duchess of Cornwall

President

Dr David Fletcher CBE

Vice-Presidents

Neil Rumbol (Founder)
Roger Crapper

Trustees during the year

Chairman

Vice Chairman

Vice Chairman

Secretary

Treasurer

Directors

John Laverick

Alan Norris

Luke Walker

Christopher Coyle

Peter Kinsman

Raymond Aldridge

Rachael Banyard

Richard Bellamy

Martin Buckland

George Eycott

Colin Fletcher

Clare Guy

Douglas Harris

Robert Jones

Michael Lang

Kenneth Oliver

Brian Roberts

Brian Stovold

Jennifer Stratton

Edward Thomas

Christopher Toms

President's Foreword

The end of March 2009 marks the end of an era of Partnership working as North Wilts District Council and Wiltshire County Council, both stalwart supporters of the restoration project, disappear from the political map. As these two Councils together with West Wilts, Kennet and Salisbury District Councils are combined to form the new unitary 'Wiltshire Council' I am confident that a stronger team player within the Partnership will emerge.



I continue to be amazed at just what can be achieved in waterway restoration by unpaid volunteers giving freely of their time. Wilts & Berks Canal Trust is fortunate that it not only has such a group of people with the necessary skills to manage the operation both centrally and within the Branches, to design and specify engineering works, but also to ensure that chosen solutions meet with current regulations and contribute positively to the green environment.

On the restoration sites, the work undertaken by the construction volunteers is of the highest quality. This is clearly achieved because of a passion brought to every task together with a desire to build something that will last for generations to come.

The Trust's members continue to earn my highest admiration for their efforts and achievements. I encourage all of you, with the help and support of our many Partners, to continue the good work until we reach the ultimate goal of complete restoration.

Dr David Fletcher CBE

Chairman's Report

The past year has seen some solid progress on restoration and on planning for future restoration but has also been a year of significant change both for the Trust and for many of the other organisations of which the Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership is composed.

During the year Chris Toms retired from Council after nearly twenty years as Membership Director. It was a tribute to Chris, in the way that he had structured the membership operation, that Council was overwhelmed with the number of volunteers who came forward to take on the role. Mike Lang was selected to succeed Chris.

Following the period during which Peter Kinsman, in addition to his Treasurer duties, again covered the Company Secretary role due to the unexpected departure of Tracey Quinn; Chris Coyle was appointed to the post of Company Secretary. Council's special thanks go to Peter for once again covering the post until a suitable replacement was found.

Due to heavy commitment of work as a Wootton Bassett Town Councillor, as WBCT Wootton Bassett Branch Chairman and as Environment Spokesperson for the Trust, Jenny Stratton felt that she had to reduce her workload and reluctantly decided to give up the latter duties. Council were delighted later in the year to welcome a new volunteer, Clare Guy, into the key role of Environment Director. Clare who currently works for a leading Engineering and Environmental Consultant, possesses appropriate professional qualifications and has wide experience of working in canal and waterway environments including restoration projects, having in the past worked for both British Waterways and for the Environment Agency. Clare is clearly the right person to guide our projects through green legislation and to build the Trust's reputation within the environmental community. Her contribution will ensure that our waterway does as much for the countryside and habitat as it does for extending the navigable waterway network of the United Kingdom.

Updated images and crisp eye catching posters are changes clearly evident in the Wilts & Berks pagoda at events and exhibitions up and down the country. John Minns has taken on the role of the production of these works of art that so well depict the works and achievements of the Trust and make their contribution to attracting new members. As well as producing these posters John organises and attends events having taken on these duties from Verity Mackie who had to relinquish these activities due to pressures of her day job. In this latter role John is ably supported by Doug Small.

The Trust is grateful for all of the volunteer hours put in by Chris Toms, Jenny Stratton, Verity Mackie and Tracey Quinn in the roles that they have given up during the current year.

Christine Hardasty has taken on the role of reporter for Trust events and is now writing a regular 'Wilts & Berks' piece for 'the Butty', the magazine of partner organisation, the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust. Changes in that organisation saw a remodelling of the management structure following the departure of Brian Poulton as its last Chairman.

Another partner organisation, the Cotswold Canals Trust, has appointed Ken Burgin as Chief Executive following the Wilts & Berks model. CCT together with its new lead partner, Stroud District Council, have worked hard and with great success to recover the situation following the surprise withdrawal of British Waterways from their project partnership.

At the Environment Agency the Partnership's representative Eileen McKeever has moved on from her former position as Thames Manager. Thames management duties are now shared between three colleagues. The new partnership representative at the EA is Russell Robson.

Ian Jarvis General Manager at British Waterways has also moved on within that partnership organisation. BW's Partnership representative is now John Ward who is acting General Manager for their South West Business Unit.

By far the largest grouping within the Partnership is that of the local authorities and the major change on the last day of this reporting year is the dissolution of the District Councils within Wiltshire together with the Wiltshire County Council and the formation of a new unitary 'Wiltshire Council'.

The Trust looks forward to working with Wiltshire Council and with all other members of the Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership throughout 2009 - 2010 on the development of future policies and projects that in the end will secure the full restoration of the waterway for the benefit of communities and wildlife along the route.

John Laverick

Accounts

Statement of Financial Activities for Year ending 31 March 2009

	<u>Unrestricted</u> <u>funds</u> <u>£</u>	<u>Designated</u> <u>funds</u> <u>£</u>	<u>Restricted</u> <u>funds</u> <u>£</u>	<u>Total this</u> <u>year</u> <u>£</u>	<u>Total last</u> <u>year</u> <u>£</u>
<u>Incoming resources</u>					
Donations	6,625		87,602	94,227	106,907
Investment income	3,685	364	4,252	8,301	7,504
Income from charitable trading	7,205	25		7,230	7,335
Members Subscriptions	19,510			19,510	19,020
Grants	200		29,351	29,551	37,554
Landfill Tax Credits				0	2,103
Tax refunds	4,332		1,063	5,395	6,624
Total incoming resources	41,557	389	122,268	164,214	187,047
<u>Expenditure</u>					
Restoration	9,640	9,651	46,250	65,541	128,052
Fund raising and publicity	13,973	911	98	14,982	14,203
Management & Administration	3,675	470	56,608	60,753	62,796
Total expenditure	27,288	11,032	102,956	141,276	205,051
<u>Transfer between funds</u>	(3,618)	45	3,573	0	0
Net movement in funds	10,651	(10,598)	22,885	22,938	(18,004)
<u>Fund balances brought forward</u>	30,375	46,949	116,204	193,528	211,532
<u>Fund balances carried forward</u>	41,026	36,351	139,089	216,466	193,528

Accounts (continued)

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2009

	<u>Total this</u> <u>year</u> <u>£</u>	<u>Total last</u> <u>year</u> <u>£</u>
Total fixed assets	18,829	22,677
<u>Current assets</u>		
Stocks and work in progress	3,938	5,425
Debtors	4,908	8,876
Short term investments and deposits	171,676	138,386
Cash at bank and in hand	35,902	39,161
Total current assets	216,424	191,848
Short term creditors	18,787	20,997
Net current assets/(liabilities)	197,637	170,851
Net assets	216,466	193,528
Restricted income funds	139,089	116,204
Designated Funds	36,351	46,949
Unrestricted income funds	41,026	30,375
<u>Total funds</u>	216,466	193,528

Notes to Accounts

1. These financial statements have been extracted from the set of accrual based accounts prepared for submission to the Charity Commission. An examination of those accounts has been carried out by our accountants, Morris Owen, in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. A full set of those accounts is available on request and for a small administration fee.

2. The definitions of the categories of funds are as follows:-

Unrestricted - Those funds that the trustees should spend on any of the charity's purposes

Restricted - Those funds that the trustees are obliged to spend on only particular purposes

Designated - Those funds which the trustees have earmarked for particular purposes

3. No Landfill Tax credits have been received this financial year but have resumed in Financial Year ending 31 March 2010.

4. Restoration expenditure has dropped from £128,052 last year to £65,541 this year. As with last year our CEO has been driving through projects that had the necessary funding in place. The CEO continues to spend much more time on strategic planning, fund raising and supporting the Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership.

5. The Fixed Assets of £18,829 are made up of Land at cost of £8,062, Plant and Machinery at a depreciated value of £8,929, Boats at a depreciated value of £1,511 and office furniture and equipment at a depreciated value of £326.

6. Debtors at the end of this year consist of Gift Aid Tax refund of £2,719 from the Inland Revenue and £2,189 VAT refund due.

7. The charity had two part time paid employees at the end of this year.

8. There has been no remuneration or other benefits paid to the charity's trustees, or people connected with them, from the charity other than £28,016 to Waterways Consultancy for twelve months' services of our Chief Executive Officer who is also a trustee.

9. Other than Note 8 above, there have been no transactions undertaken by (or on behalf of) the charity in which a trustee or connected person has a material interest.

Grants & Donations

Once again, the Trust would like to register its thanks to all those who have contributed to funding projects; some of the major funding sources are listed below. This list in no way ignores all of the smaller organisations, individuals and trusts who have contributed to the restoration of the Canal.

AC Brent
Awards for All
Big Lottery Fund
E&M Bird
M. Buckland
D'Oyly Carte
M. Henderson
J. Holloway
IWA
Kingdom Tours
J. Laverick
M. Matthews
J. Middleton
Morrison Construction
North Wilts District Council
E. Rose
Shrivenham Village Institute
D. Smurthwaite
Swindon Borough Council
The Conservation Foundation
The Underwood Trust
Vale of White Horse District Council
L. Walker
Wiltshire County Council
WL West

Restoration Progress

The Trust has organised its work into four areas broadly in line with the relevant Local Authority districts. Each area has a Director responsible for managing the projects.

West (Colin Fletcher)

Melksham. Work has continued on the proposals for a navigable waterway between the Kennet & Avon canal at Semington and the original line of the Wilts & Berks canal north of Melksham.

Forest Farm and Queenfield Farm. About half a mile of canal on these two farms continues to be managed on a care & maintenance basis with volunteers keeping the towpath clear.

Naish Hill to Pewsham Locks. A short section of canal adjoining the established watered section has been cleared and improvements to the public footpath on this section have produced favourable comments. The final stages of the rebuilding of Double Bridge commenced at the end of February 2009 when the period of frosty weather came to an end. Two culverts near the bridge were repaired during the year and were sealed with puddle clay allowing us to re-water the area beneath the bridge. At Pewsham Locks the lease has been signed and preparations for the planning application have commenced, including a refresher for the slightly dated protected species study. Ken Oliver has developed the first stage of an HLF bid for recovery and restoration of the significant remains of our industrial heritage in the area of the locks.

Dauntsey. Trust volunteers have continued working with the landowner on this stretch. A significant length of the towpath hedge has been laid this year. The regular maintenance of the towpath both north and south of the B4069 has continued.



Hedgelaying in progress at Dauntsey (Luke Walker)

Foxham. Work has continued on the care and maintenance of this restored section.

Calne Lock and rewatered section. This widely used length of canal is maintained by our volunteers and kept in a good state of repair.

North (Luke Walker)

Lower Waite Farm. During the winter, the landowner offered us the opportunity to start work on this section – clearing the towpath for use as a footpath and bridleway, and clearing the vegetation from the canal channel. This invitation was received with enthusiasm, and the towpath is now under regular maintenance.

Seven Locks – Lock 2. Some initial repair work has been done around the head of Lock 2. Further survey work has been done, and discussions have continued with Wiltshire Highways regarding the re-alignment of Bowds Lane to the west of the lock chamber, including construction of a new bridge. A volunteer Consulting Engineer from the Inland Waterways Association has agreed to design the road re-alignment and the bridge structure.

Seven Locks – Lock 4. The major focus for work by the Trust's local volunteers, supported by teams from Waterway Recovery Group and the Kent and East Sussex Canal Restoration Group, has been the reconstruction of Lock 4. The offside wall has been rebuilt from the very bottom to modern standards, using mass concrete with a brick facing. Conditions set by funding organizations placed significant constraints on the programme, but the reconstruction was completed by the due date in August 2008. Good progress was also made to landscape the area around the re-built lock walls.

Dunnington. We have continued to maintain the area around the Dunnington Aqueduct. The Inland Waterways Association Consulting Engineer who helped with the technical solution for repairs to the south face and culvert of the aqueduct some years ago has inspected the structure and provided advice on the repairs necessary to the north face.

Templars Firs. The local team has continued the regular maintenance of the towpath. This section is a popular local amenity.

Chaddington. The major spillway construction project was completed during the year. Work has started on landscaping the area and clearing the canal channel in preparation for re-watering.

Central (Ken Oliver)

Hayes Knoll Lock. It was not possible to make much progress on the reconstruction of this structure during the year while discussions continued with the relevant authorities regarding methods of work given the Great

Crested Newts which are presumed to be present on this site. Work has continued to raise the necessary funds for this project.

Latton Basin Project. Regular work parties have continued to conserve the structures on this site which have significant heritage value.

Moredon. A new project was started during the autumn of 2008 to clear the towpath on the derelict section of the canal in the River Ray Valley near Akers Way. The project was funded by Big Lottery Fund/BBC Breathing Places. A new walk will be available during the summer of 2009 along the former towpath, and this will herald the next phase of canal bed clearance.



Work on the River Ray valley section of the canal (Gary Mason)

Wichelstowe. Significant work on the first phase of infrastructure has now been completed which includes a very impressive new road bridge adjacent to Mill Lane.



The new canal bridge at Wichelstowe (Gary Mason)

Swindon Town Centre Proposal. During the summer of 2009 the Central Area Action Plan produced by Swindon Borough Council was approved by the Planning Inspectorate. This plan defines the new route for the canal in the town centre.

East (Ken Oliver)

Steppingstones Lane Bridge. With continuing help from Waterway Recovery Group, Steppingstones Lane Bridge is very close to being completed.



Steppingstones Bridge nearing completion (Doug Small)

Savernake Brake section. A lease has now been signed to allow work to start on the section of canal to the east of the Pocket Park.

Childrey. Work on the drainage of the adjacent field has been completed and design work is under way for a new spill weir, meanwhile some work continues on dredging.



Adam "Digger" Morris dredging at Childrey (John Minns)

Communications

This has been a difficult year to sustain the activities surrounding communications as work and health issues have taken their toll on Richard Bellamy who reluctantly informed Council during the year that he needed to suspend his Trust activities for a while. Some interim solutions have been put in place including a temporary revision to the web site, and the appointment of a PR and Press Officer (Christine Hardisty).

The Swindon Advertiser produced a splendid guide to the Wilts & Berks Canal at no cost to the Trust and we thank them for their continuing support.

Local media and specialist waterway publications continue to carry a significant number of articles about the Wilts & Berks and we have been visited by a number of television crews during the year.

The newly formed Events Team have produced some wonderful posters for use at public events.

Dragonfly continues to be our main means of distributing news to members and there have been a few improvements to the technical quality of the publication.

The Information Centre at Swindon has had a makeover with new signage and continues to be an essential facility to publicise the project.

Land Ownership

The Trust is conscious that its restoration activities are usually carried out by kind permission of the landowners concerned. The Trust wishes to take this opportunity to thank those landowners who have assisted the Trust in its aims by giving such permission. The Trust also wishes to remind all members and workers of the need to respect the landowner's rights when allowed on to such land.

The Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership

Partnership working has always been a strength of this project and the Partners have been pleased that during the transition from District and County Councils to the new Unitary Authority in Wiltshire, the Trust has been able to allocate some of the time of its Chief Executive to continuing the work of the Partnership Project Officer. The newly formed Wiltshire Council intends to host a Canal Officer for the project; so during the forthcoming year this situation will be resolved but on behalf of the Partners I thank the Trust for this interim solution.

The Partnership meets every 3 months to discuss strategy and I am pleased to report continuing enthusiasm at the meetings from Partners along the line of the waterway and the national organisations which are members. We are keen to widen the membership of this Partnership and are actively encouraging other relevant organisations to join.

Our President, Lord Lansdowne, reminded Partners recently that, although there were certainly difficult financial times ahead, there may be other opportunities to progress the project and we thank him for his time taken to show a practical example by facilitating discussions on a new project at Pewsham.

Members of the Partnership at March 2009:

British Waterways
Cooper Tires
Cotswold Canals Trust
Cricklade Town Council
Environment Agency
Inland Waterways Association
Kennet & Avon Canal Trust
Melksham Town Council
Melksham Trust
Melksham Without Parish Council
North Wiltshire District Council
Oxfordshire County Council
Swindon Borough Council
Thames Water Utilities Ltd
Vale of White Horse District Council
West Wiltshire District Council
Wilts & Berks Canal Trust
Wiltshire County Council

*Fleur de Rhé-Philippe
Partnership Chairman*