

# The Buckingham Navigator

Summer 2004

The newsletter of the Buckingham Canal society.  
Registered Charity no: 1072924

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## Work Party Dates for your Diary July-October

*Please note: there has been a change of days on some Wednesdays to a Thursday, for more information please call Athina Beckett on 01908 661217*

July	August	September	October
Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday 1st Lock wheeling	Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup>
Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup>
Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup>
Saturday 31 <sup>st</sup> Lock wheeling.	Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday 30 <sup>th</sup>	

Instead of the Annual Rally this year we shall be holding a Lock Ransom on the weekend of 31<sup>st</sup> July and 1<sup>st</sup> August. ***This will be followed in the evening by a general get together and "bring your own beer and eats" Bar-B-Q on the Saturday night.*** Nothing heavy, but a chance for all to socialise with a "beer and chat"

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The next issue of the Navigator is due for publication in October 04. Your contributions, articles, letters, general observations will help to make it more interesting. ***Please send all contributions by 1st September*** emailed, 3.5 floppy disc, typewritten, handwritten faxed (in that order of preference) to Tony Collins 18 Skeats Wharf, Pennyland, Milton Keynes, MK15 8AY phone/fax 01908 604731. [info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk](mailto:info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk)

### GETTING IN TOUCH

There is a list of BCS Committee members and others who are active in the Society on the back page. Please contact any member for details of the BCS activities, future events, sponsorship opportunities, membership details or any other matters.

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### Disclaimer

*The Committee of the Buckingham Canal society publishes the Buckingham Navigator and the views expressed in it are not necessarily those of the Society. Nothing printed herein may be construed as Society policy unless specifically stated. The society and its Committee accept no responsibility for any matter advertised in, or included in this newsletter*

## Tring Festival

This was the second year BCS have run a stall at the Tring Festival but having helped with the WRG BITM stall for many years and always enjoyed the Tring Festival I was looking forward to this year's festival.

From time to time I have also worked 'on site' on the Wendover Canal. So again it was good to go back and see the progress that had been made since last year.

The weather forecast for the Bank holiday was dire with a lot of rain scheduled but the gods were on our side and it only rained through the night on Saturday with Sunday and Monday the days the festival was held almost clear.

The good weather brought the crowds out with one of the largest attendance ever. Unfortunately for the BCS there were a lot more people selling bric-a-brac this year so the stall didn't take as much money as hoped for but the lucky dip game proved very successful with the children. I still have problems finding suitable gifts for the boys so if anyone can help with small items for boys I would be very grateful. The girls always seem delighted with beads and jewellery except for one small girl who told me that she was a 'tomboy' and went off delighted with a toy car. A lot of people took our Buckingham Canal leaflets so hopefully a few more members for the society!

We are planning to run the stall at the Great Linford Festival and at our own 'Lock Ransom' festival at Cosgrove on 31<sup>st</sup> July - 1<sup>st</sup> August and we also hope to do a few Saturdays at Buckingham market so any help on the stall would be appreciated

If you know of a local festival or fete and would like to take the BCS stall please let me know.

We did have an interesting incident when leaving the festival, my boat having been moored on the Wendover Arm for more than a week I found that we were well and truly aground when trying to leave. I was then approached by a Brazilian family with two small children and asked if they could have a ride on the boat. So with the family

on board and me trying to forward and reverse the boat and the 'crew' trying to pole us off I didn't notice the boat behind until there was an angry shout. With all my effort I had managed to pull his mooring pins out and his boat was now adrift in the canal whilst mine was still stuck on the mud but luckily there were plenty of people around to give him a hand. My 'crew' then gave a final heave on the pole, which then broke in half almost throwing the 'crew' into the canal. So the Brazilian family must have gone home with some very strange notions of boating in Britain.  
Athina Beckett.

## Work Party Organisers Report

The spillweir re-building at Buckingham continues to progress well and is now almost complete. It has been quite a challenge for our bricklayers who are all volunteers, as they have had to lay bricks round two large concrete pipes! There was quite a debate on how to do this but the end result is looking good.

The foliage has also been flourishing along the towpath and in the canal bed so strimming is also becoming an important task. Last year Buckingham Environmental Agency funded this work as we were keeping the footpath open for walkers. So hopefully they will do the same this year.

ATN Farms who have part funded the rebuilding of the spillweir and whose land we are working on have promised to profile the canal bed for us and then the last task will be to line the lock cottage end and then hopefully re-water this section.

I shall be on holiday for two weeks in July so if you are thinking about attending the work parties then please contact myself or Tony Collins for details. We shall also be moving to a new site probably in August near Thornton so again contact me for more details.  
Athina Beckett.

## Ancestors Enquiry

You may recall that in the last issue we had an enquiry from Stewart Mold regarding a letter he found in his family history searches relating to a John Mold, Builder and Carpenter, where he wanted to purchase 27 hundred feet of 4in planking as he thought this may make up a boat load. Stewart's request was would that amount of wood make up a boatload? Almost as soon as the Navigator was issued I had this most interesting reply from Ed Grimsdale:

### Re: Loads of Timber

Stewart Mold enquires whether the timber ordered in 1841 could be transported by canal barge? The likely answer is "Yes" and that is based on the concept that a "load" was an old measure of wood that had an exact. Any form of transport on land, sea or canal would have been designed to move one or more "loads".

So what was a load? The Ordinances of the Carpenters Co. of London set out their timber measures in 1607:

*A load was equal to 50 "solid" feet of timber.  
(We use the word "cubic" instead of "solid")*

*One load could be made from:*

*30 rafters  
50 bedsides  
100 single quarters, etc.*

Let's look at the enquiry made of Thomas Beard, Bailiff to Stowe Estates:

**2700 feet of 4" wide planking of thickness 3/4"**

The volume of that is  $2700 \times 4/12 \times 3/48 = 56.25$  cubic feet

So, Mr Mold was buying a traditional "load" of wood.

Moving a load of wood across land had always been a fraught business. Roads were rutted and wood was both long and heavy. Short lengths were moved on wagons but longer lengths required tugs –

pairs of wheels and axles that were strapped to each end of the baulks. Large teams of horses and oxen were needed and progress was slow. The risk of getting bogged down in mud was always a fear and in North Bucks an ever-present danger. Transport of timber across land was expensive. For instance, when St. Paul's Cathedral was rebuilt, it took a double team of Oxen 20 days at a cost of 20s a day to move the Duke of Newcastle's timber to London. That is why so much timber was imported from the Baltic States - water transport was cheaper by far.

When canals came to Britain, they decimated the costs of transporting heavy, bulky goods across country. There is no chance that Mr Mold would NOT have used the Buckingham Canal link in 1841 if he was moving the timber to a town east, west or north of Buckingham. Furthermore, timber had been in short supply for hundreds of years in Britain. The Buckingham Canal opened up a new source of wood (from Stowe) that formerly would have been far too expensive to use outside of its local area because of the poor communications. Mr Mold was exploiting a new opportunity -he was a true entrepreneur!

Yours sincerely,

Ed Grimsdale

And there is more:

*I'm pleased that my piece may be of use.  
Sure, you can publish it. Just one Appendix occurs to me:*

It is recorded in the Autobiography of the Great Gothic Revival Architect, Sir George Gilbert Scott, (born in Gawcott, near Buckingham), that the North Bucks' landscape of his youth (the 1820's) was bare and Spartan, denuded of large trees except in small plantations in private gardens around Manor Houses etc. Could it be that the advent of the Canal link at the start of the 19th century opened the woods of north Bucks to businessmen and their paid hands shouting, "TIMBER"!

Yours, Ed Grimsdale.

Thanks for the info Ed. TC.

## [www.waterscape.com](http://www.waterscape.com)

If you are looking for something different to do this summer have a look at the waterscape web site. Amongst other interesting articles on canal walking, hotel boating holidays, canal boating etc I came across their cycle routes. They list recommended routes from easy to tough going, I fancied trying the Rutland water route, 17 miles of moderate going around one of the prettiest spots in the area. Be aware though that to pass through some of BW's area you will need to download or obtain a free cycle permit.

## The New Westmead

We took delivery of our new boat officially at the Birmingham Boat Show in February where it then stayed until the end of the show as a Sea Otter show boat, from there she went to Upton on Severn as Walton Marine were holding an open weekend for narrow boats. We had the chance to do a little cruising on the Severn over that weekend and she was then moved to Venetian Marine Nantwich. So far "Westmead" had covered some 400 road miles and about 10 water miles.

It was at Venetian Marine we appreciated the benefits of an end of garden mooring, all those car journeys getting our gear etc on board and the motorway journey home again. When all loading was completed we took the train to Crew, a short taxi ride to the boat and we were on our own. It was then that I realised we could not just pop to the Pub at Barbridge, a couple of miles away as we were car less. So eating on board was the order for the next few days, the café at the marine did do a very good breakfast though. Taking "Westmead" out for the first journey over Easter on the Middlewich Arm was a bit of a mistake, we thought we would go out for a couple of locks and back, it took 1½ hours to get through one lock with so many boats out. Our journey back to Milton Keynes was planned so that we could travel up to Anderton to visit the "lift", go back to Hurlston junction to meet our friends who had been visiting Llangollen on a hire boat, leaving them at Great Haywood then travel back to Milton Keynes on our own. All went well to Anderton, we used the trip boat to try

the lift first and then decided that we would take Westmead down the lift next day for a short trip on the river, then back up (just to say we had done it). This plan was abandoned the next morning as it was pouring hard with rain and with a longish day ahead we didn't want to get wetter than necessary. After about an hour cruising the sun came out and it got warmer by the hour. Oh well, next time perhaps. A very pleasant few days was spent with our friends the last night being at "Tixall Wide", a beautiful stretch of water to spend the night at before we all set off to our ultimate destinations.

TC/DC.

## British Waterways advisory Notice

BW have just advised us that they may have problems maintaining sufficient water levels in the **Atherstone Flight** prior to and after the IWA National Festival and have requested that where possible boats attending the festival use alternative routes to avoid delay's.

From IWA Festivals. June 2004

## Welcome to New Members

We are please to welcome you into membership of the Society and hope to see you at our events; if the distance does not permit this we hope you enjoy reading about our activities and thank you for your support. If you would like reminders by email of forthcoming events and would take the Navigator from our website to save BCS postage please email me at

[info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk](mailto:info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk)

ED.

## Advertising in "The Buckingham Navigator"

Advertisements are welcome in the Navigator to assist funding. Rates are as below. Payment is required before copy date. Cheques made payable to "Buckingham Canal Society". 33% reduction for 3 issues.

Whole Page:	£16.00
Half Page:	£10.00
Quarter page:	£6.00
Back page:	£22.00
Inserts:	£7.50

## New Book

IN THE WAKE OF THE 'FLOWER OF GLOSTER'

By John Kemplay

ISBN 0 9518964 2 3 Hardback 41 pp. 23 b/w illustrations

This reconstruction of Temple Thurston's historic canal journey of 1911 examines some of the changes that have taken place over the past ninety years and offers a brief history of some of the waterways he travelled along. His journey started at Oxford and from the Oxford canal he moved on to the Warwick and Stratford canals. He walked the line of the river Avon from Stratford, rejoining his boatman and the *Flower of Gloster* at Tewkesbury. He ended his journey on the Thames and Severn canal being the last to navigate the entire length of the canal before the eastern section was closed.

Available from booksellers or direct from the publisher:

Ronald Crowhurst 5 West End Terrace,  
Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire, GL55 6AX  
Tel: 01386 841723

£12.50 inclusive of postage and packing.

**CFM (Milton Keynes)  
Electrician and Courier  
Proprietor P A Caswell**  
Tel: 01908 282589  
Mobile 07702 668924

## Cosgrove changeover

Synonymous with passenger boating on the Grand Union Canal at Cosgrove since Charles and Anne Crossley moved the Linda Cruises business there in 1965, the **Linda Cruising Company** is no more. The boat, and business, have been sold to Richard Hyde of the **Cosgrove Narrowboat Company** who took over the operation in early May. Since the former Fellows, Morton & Clayton motorboat Linda was retired in 2000, the 'Linda' name has been perpetuated by the company, even after commissioning of the replacement vessel "Elizabeth of Glamis". The new owners plan some improvements to the boat's facilities, which they hope will add to its popularity for both public trips and private charter.

In addition, **a day boat** is now available **for hire** from the Cosgrove base. Speaking at the handover, former owner *Steve Miles* said "*I wish Richard every success in the future, and I hope that he will enjoy the business as much as I have for the last eight years.*"

Cosgrove Narrowboat Company can be contacted at: Cosgrove Wharf, Lock Lane, Cosgrove, Northants MK19 7JR (**01525 372853**) or by e-mail: [bookings@cosgrovenarrowboats.co.uk](mailto:bookings@cosgrovenarrowboats.co.uk), or visit the company website at: [www.cosgrovenarrowboats.co.uk](http://www.cosgrovenarrowboats.co.uk)

## Other events

**7<sup>th</sup> August** Linslade & Leighton Canal Festival. BCS will have a display and bric-a-brac stand. Tiddenfoot Waterside Park Mentmore Road Linslade.

**28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> August** IWA National Festival and Boat Show. Burton On Trent.

**10<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> September** Southampton Boat Show. Southampton.

**7<sup>th</sup> September IWA Milton Keynes** "Proposed Fenland & Navigation Links"  
A talk by John Adams. 8pm Bletchley Rugby Club Manor Fields Bletchley.

**14<sup>th</sup> September IWA Northampton, New Venue.** Blisworth Coaching Inn, Blisworth 8pm.  
Speaker & subject not confirmed yet but bound to be a good evenings talk.

**26<sup>th</sup> September** Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust. Start at 10am Campbell Park. Walk the route day, Boat gathering, Sign unveiling. Various walks from 3 to 8 miles from Campbell Park to the top of Brogborough Hill with transport available back to Campbell Park, for more details, Don Allison PO box 3611, Newport Pagnell MK16 0XN or email [donanjill@dallison.fslife.co.uk](mailto:donanjill@dallison.fslife.co.uk)

**12<sup>th</sup> October IWA Northampton. New venue.** Blisworth Coaching Inn, Blisworth 8pm.  
Speaker & subject not confirmed yet but another good evening promised.

## Great Things from Little Packages at Crick

The late May Bank holiday sees the Crick Boat Show, which just gets bigger year on year, but not so for the BCS. This year our pitch measured just 6ft 6ins x 4ft although centrally situated in the Barlow's marquee.

After a delayed set-up due to a lack of tables, (a wee glitch on the communications front) we set up a compact but eye-catching stand. My thanks to Tony and Diana Collins daughter & son-in-law Tina and David Calvert who made a mercy dash with tables from Milton Keynes. We had something for every one; the ever-popular Lollipop game for the children (of all ages, yes, we had some adult players), second-hand books, videos, computer games, CD's and cassettes plus BCS merchandise and our display boards which generated considerable interest.

Steve Miles, wearing his nom de plume hat as Geoffrey Lewis had a display of and was selling his two books to date, "Flashback" and "Strangers". These were both well received and buyers were keen for signed copies.

Sunday was by far the busiest day at the show but Monday was disappointingly slow. People preferred to be outside in the unexpectedly lovely weather, which was good for Crick but not so good for our takings, which totalled just over £70 for the three days. These included a donation from Steve Miles from the sale of his Novels.

Early Saturday afternoon something rather unexpected occurred. A woman approached the stand which my little Chihuahua, Vashti was guarding from her box in front of our display boards and introduced herself as an animal agent who was in need of a brown Chihuahua to act in a BBC-one sit-com. It was "Eyes Down" set in a Bingo Hall and starring "Paul O'Grady". I remember watching the first series screened at the end of last year and as a fan of Paul O'Grady I agreed to let Vashti play the part of Penny, the much talked about but little seen Chihuahua owned by Christine the Bingo Hall catering manager. Ten days later Vashti and I found ourselves on location in a

disused art-deco cinema come bingo hall in Rayners lane for two very long 12hr days in 28-degree temperature filming an episode involving Christine's wedding at which Penny is a bridesmaid... Oh yes, along with a Smurf! Vashti was dressed in a made to measure outfit, which matched the dress of the human Bridesmaids and even had a stunt double (a stuffed model on wheels) for some daring rooftop antics, although Vashti too did some roof top scenes. She was a real little star, a natural and highly praised by Pal O'Grady who adored her.

For the Bucks Canal Society Crick was a great public relations exercise, thanks also to Helen Calvert who help on the stand Sunday & Monday. For Vashti and me it resulted in an exciting little adventure into the world of television.

**Pam Forrest.**

PS. We have the script for the two days Vashti starred in "Eyes Down" signed by Paul O'Grady which will be auctioned on "E-bay" once the series has been aired). **PF.**

### Honorary Positions.

As the Society grows and life gets more complicated we have been advised that it could be useful for the Society to have a Solicitor and Surveyor to help with the more difficult stages of our restoration project, if there is, or you know of a Solicitor or Surveyor that would be willing to help the BCS in a Honorary capacity please contact myself on 01908 604731 or Bill Upton 01908 647317

**TC.**

### Fund Raising Activities

Bill, Athina and myself took the bric-a-brac stall to Aylesbury market last month and much to my surprise raised over £70, had the interest stayed as high during the lunch period the total would have been even higher, The BCS was well represented at Great Linford again, thanks to Athina, Bill, Pam & Jonathon over £140 was raised there despite the heavy showers at times.

**TC.**

**Patron. Tim Boswell MP.**

**Committee.**

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31 Essenden Court Stony Stratford Milton Keynes MK11 1NW 01908 562941

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16 Bradvue Crescent Bradville Milton Keynes MK13 7AJ

**Membership Secretary.** Steve Morley.  
33 Hambleton Grove Emerson Valley Milton Keynes MK4 2JS 01908 520090

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