

# The Buckingham Navigator

Autumn 2004

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

---

## Work Party Dates for your Diary October-December

*Please note: There has been a change of the Wednesday work party day to a Thursday, for more information please call Athina Beckett on 01908 661217*

| October  | November                  | December                 |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup>  | Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> | Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> |
| Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup>  | Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup>   | Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup>  |
| Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup>  | Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup> |                          |
| Saturday 30 <sup>th</sup> October<br>Make a difference day ( <b>MADD</b> ) |                           |                          |

## \*\*\*\*\*Buckingham Canal Society Open Meeting\*\*\*\*\*

**Wednesday October 20<sup>th</sup>. BCS Open meeting** Buckingham Community Centre 7:30pm  
Cornwalls Meadow Buckingham. As this is the first of this type of meeting we have held to test public opinion on restoration your committee would appreciate your support at this venue.

---

The next issue of the Navigator is due for publication in January 05. Your contributions, articles, letters, general observations will help to make it more interesting. ***Please send all contributions by 1st December*** 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.

### In This Issue.

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Extract from the log of "Enigma" .....         | Page 2 |
| Work Party Report .....                        | Page 2 |
| New Books .....                                | Page 3 |
| Canals & Deforestation<br>of North Bucks ..... | Page 4 |
| Welcome new Members .....                      | Page 4 |
| Other Events .....                             | Page 5 |
| Chairman's Column .....                        | Page 5 |

### 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*

## Work Party Organisers report

The new site at Little Hill Farm near Wicken, Northants, is proving to be a great success. The landowner is very pleased with the progress we have made so far and our volunteers are really enjoying the challenge of the work. e.g. scrub bashing and lighting bonfires.

When we first started at Little Hill we literally had to hack our way into the site. We have now cleared the growth from around a lovely old stone bridge and discovered a large winding hole which we are now clearing.

We are also continuing with our work at the Buckingham site. This is mainly strimming the canal bed and towpath and keeping the area cleared around our recently re-built spillweir. We were working here in the summer but had slight problems with wasps! Two of our volunteers got stung including one who found a wasp had crawled up under his helmet and stung him on the back of the head so we now need to add wasps to our 'risk assessment' forms! We are still hoping to have this section in water before very long.

Note for your dairies, **Saturday 30th October** is 'Make a Difference Day' again. A chance for people who haven't tried volunteering to have a go and also a chance for us to recruit more people for the work parties. If anyone would also like to come along and just see the work that has been done they would also be very welcome. Just ring or see me for details and directions to the site.

Athina Beckett  
Work party Organiser

### 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  |

## Extract from the Log of Enigma

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2004.

On the Ashby Canal. We moored at King Richards Field and set off to visit the site of the Battle of Bosworth. I will digress here for the benefit of my gentle readers, should I have any. How is the Ashby Canal linked to the Battle of Bosworth, that great event in British History when the Royal House of Tudor defeated the Royal House of Plantagenet for the throne of England? You will tell me that the Canal was not built at the time of the Battle; I however believe otherwise.

Young Henry Tudor had come up the Ashby in his second hand Springer, and was attempting to moor at these same Visitor Moorings. Along came Richard III with his top-of-the-range 72 footer, with 12,000 troops, and said, "You can't moor there. This is my Kingdom." Then down from Moira came the Stanley's in their Cruiser. Richard thought that they were his friends. But he was mistaken, and it got a bit rough. Henry and the Stanley's chucked him in the cut.

When they pulled him out, he was dead. What's more, his Crown had gone missing. Well the Stanley's tried fishing for the crown, with their Sea-Searcher Magnet, but they didn't know it wouldn't pick up gold. Henry lugged Richard down the steps from the mooring, and laid him out in the field (which they kindly named after him).

When the Constable came along next day and enquired what had been happening, they all let on that they had been asleep in their boats up on the mooring.

They said that they didn't know how he came to be dead down here in the field.

"Perhaps he tripped and fell down the steps," said one passing boater, "I bl\*\*dy nearly did!"

(Mike Matherson (Skipper Enigma))

## **New Books**

### **The Flower of Gloster**

**By E Temple Thurston.**

*Read by*

**Diana Humphrey.**

A Talking Book set of 4 CDRs - complete and unabridged (In jewel case with sketch map of the journey and reprint of the original dedication)

First published in 1911, this is Ernest Temple Thurston's evocative account of a springtime journey by barge around the canals of Oxfordshire, Warwickshire and Gloucestershire. It is a fascinating historic document of a canal system that was on the brink of closure.

The personalities and characters of the people of the canal and its rural surroundings are brilliantly brought to life in this Talking Book version of the story by actress Diana Humphrey, who lives a mere stone's throw from the Stroudwater Canal in Gloucestershire. Available from:

[www.poppypoppyrecords.co.uk](http://www.poppypoppyrecords.co.uk)

Or by post: A Tuddenham Poppy Records

88 Mount Road,

Southdown

Bath BA2 1LH

### **Winters Tale**

The New David Russell Crime Novel from Geoffrey Lewis!

A young man is dead, shot down outside a nightclub. All the evidence points to his girlfriend, his murder the result of a lovers' quarrel.

But D.I. David Russell is uncomfortable with this conclusion. As he delves into the man's background, he is led into a shady world of drugs and prostitution, until the ripples of a seemingly simple crime overlap with those of a covert international operation. But the answer, when it comes, is surprisingly close to home...

*Winter's Tale* is the third in Geoffrey Lewis' continuing series of stories about David Russell, and crime and its solution in the Northamptonshire town of Grancester.

*Winter's Tale* marks something of a departure in style for Mr Lewis, in that it sees David Russell involved in an investigation of a more intellectual nature, perhaps living up to the epithet of 'Northamptonshire's own answer to Inspector Morse', attached to him by an early reviewer of *Flashback*, Mr Lewis' debut novel. In this third book, his enquiry has him

following the evidence, both forensic and eye-witness, and the gaps in it, in an attempt to understand what actually happened outside the nightclub, and to determine just who did what to whom, and why!

As always, Russell's family feature in the background of the story - tensions surrounding his now-teenage son form a running sub-plot which adds its own drama to events - and the conclusion, in now-traditional Geoffrey Lewis style, is on an upbeat note. Available from:

Any good bookshop ISBN 0-9545624-2-9.

Or Society members can order from Steve Miles direct on 07792 497116

### **The Grand Union Canal**

From Brentford to Braunston

By Ian J Wilson.

Published by Tempus @ £12.99

This is another book by Tempus scenes and one that deals with an important part of the Grand Union Canal. The author is very knowledgeable about his subject having been a leading member of the former Grand Union Canal Society for many years and serving as its last chairman.

The book takes the familiar form with pictures - nearly 200 of them - on every page and all deriving from the author's extensive collection of postcards each with a detailed caption reflecting his widespread knowledge of the canal.

The canal is divided into sections and the book traces its course through Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire into Northamptonshire with places like Stoke Bruerne being fully covered. Then on to the two long tunnels at Blisworth and Braunston to finish up at the Oxford canal in Braunston.

Further sections deal with the Paddington, Slough, Wendover, Old Stratford and Buckingham branches but sadly the Northampton arm is not covered for the simple reason that so far the author has not been able to discover any postcards of it.

The pictures are generally well chosen even if the quality of reproduction of some make it difficult to make out some of the features the author painstakingly tries to point out. Apart from this the book is good value.

Reviewed by Alan Faulkner.

Available from: IWA Sales, PO Box 114

Rickmansworth WD3 1ZY 01923 711114.

## CANALS AND THE DEFORESTATION OF NORTH BUCKS.

Stewart Molds enquiry in the last issue re “loads of timber” was well answered by Ed Grimsdale and inspired him to carry out more research into how the canal deforestrated the area of north Bucks.

**T**he relationship between canals and forests has a long and continuing history. Where canals penetrate they provide cheap routes for the export of local timber, previously protected by inaccessibility. Deforestation then occurs in a short time. But, forests bind the constituents of soil together. When the forest is removed, so the adhesion of soil to land is lost. Soil erosion follows and that erosion filters down into the canal system which silts up. That is happening today around the Panama Canal in Central America. The Panamanian authorities are busy replanting trees to protect their chief economic asset.

North Bucks was almost inaccessible, hiding behind its screen of oozing clay until the canal link arrived two hundred years ago. Suddenly, you couldn't see the Wood for the trees had gone. Our landscape and the North Bucks environment were changed radically. The whole enterprise was aided by Auctioneers who strode across the landscape setting up shop in local Inns to sell houses and other assets, such as the wood from local plantations. Our local “hero” was John Day who would advertise weekly in the Northampton Mercury that was the chief paper for Northants and Bucks at the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Sometimes, local merchants assembled cut wood from many sources for central sale. One such Auction took place at Buckingham Wharf in February 1808. The advertisement, on that occasion, was aimed mainly at “carpenters, builders and farmers, i.e. “the locals” who could shift the weighty cargo nearer to their place of work using the canal and its barges.

Other sales explicitly targeted the North Bucks “export” market. John Day would state where the forest was located and how far that was from the canal, and therefore from facile transport to all areas served by Britain's burgeoning canal network. A typical Day pitch would be one for the sale of 80

fine Oaks and 100 Ash trees to be sold on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 1809 that were fit for “Navy boats, etc”. They were growing on land owned by the Purefoy family of Shalstone Manor, which, as John Day so helpfully pointed out was “3 miles from the Grand Junction Canal” via an “excellent turnpike road”. Three miles was John Day's favourite length and encompassed all distances up to seven miles.

Our barges did not return empty for there was great demand for coal, fancy bricks and finished merchandise. Some cargoes are more fascinating. We've all heard of the phrase “*Where there's muck, there's brass*”, but do we realise that there was a market for the ash from domestic grates? Our intrepid John Day, who could have sold coals to Newcastle, sold 7000 bushels of London coal ash to the good people of Buckingham in 1808! And what did they do with it? They spread it on their fields like good muck – for there's nothing like ash to take the clag from clay!

**Was it a fair exchange – ash trees for ashes?**

Ed Grimsdale.

*Thanks for that Ed, keep em coming.* **TC**

### Welcome to New Members

We welcome the following people who have joined recently.

Roger and Judy Parker, Old Stratford.

Peter and Jane Caswell, Wavendon Gate.

Tim Boswell MP.

Lewis and Sharon Brooks Maids Moreton.

Mr R Martin Desborough, Kettering.

Tony Lenten, Hemel Hempstead.

We hope to see some you at Society events; if the distance does not permit this we hope you enjoy reading about our activities and thank you for your support..

### MK Community Foundation Raffle

*See Chairman's notes.*

We have now had confirmed two slots for ticket selling in the MK centre as:

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2:00pm to close  
(5:00pm)

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 5:00pm to close  
(8:00pm)

Please ring Diana on 01908 604731 if you can help on either of these days, part or full time.

## Chairman's Column

Last year we took part in the MK community foundation raffle and collected £136 as the society's share of the proceeds, mainly through Diana and Pam's skill in selling tickets in the MK centre and a few members selling tickets to friends.

Flushed with success we have ordered 1000 tickets (more available if required) for this year and at least 50p per ticket going towards our funds it has got to be worth going all out to sell them.

Diana and Pam have volunteered again this year to attend the MK centre and if we can get more volunteers for the centre I think I can get extra slots for other days for about 2 hours at a time.

If not, how about trying to sell a book each (10 tickets) if all members could sell a book each just think of the funds we could raise.

Please let Diana know how you would like to help as soon as possible.

I think the organisers of this years IWA Festival at Burton-on-Trent deserve a big thank you for putting together a festival under what must have been very difficult conditions. To get the beer lorry stuck in the site mud was bad enough but to lose a large number of display boats from the centre pier because they couldn't get trucks on site must have been most disheartening.

We were on duty on the Sea Otter stand over the weekend and were very surprised at the number of people coming to the show despite the weather and even on Monday when the mud was at its worst there was still a queue at the entrance to get in.

The Trent & Mersey Canal Society had members helping to man some locks which was particularly welcome at the river lock in Alrewas and the BW staff helping at Wychnor and Fradley did help to keep the wait at the locks to as little as possible, well done everyone!

Those of you who have seen Pam Forrest's little dog "Vashti" with her on the Society's stand may like to know that "Vashti" is starring in Paul O'Grady's TV show "Eyes Down" on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> October 9:30pm BBC1. Pam unfortunately had a mild heart attack in August and has been advised by the specialist to lose weight. Because of her disability she cannot take exercise as much

as the specialist wants so she is hoping that if she can find some sponsors it will help her concentrate more. She aims to lose 3 stone by February 14<sup>th</sup> so if you would like to help by sponsoring her, any amount would be appreciated, ring Pam on 01908 504017, any weight loses will be verified by the practice nurse and Pam has promised to donate all proceeds to the BCS funds. So there you are, get phoning, you can help two good causes for the price of one.

TC.

## Other important events dates.

### IWA MK.

All meetings are held at Bletchley Rugby Club, Manor Fields Bletchley. **7:45pm.**

### **Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> Oct IWA MK branch clean up.**

Fri, 11:00am start Br 94, finish Barge, Woolstone.

Sat, 9:30am start Barge, finish Proud Perch, Linford.

Sun 9:30am start, Proud Perch, finish Galleon.

Contact Roy Cleverly for last minute details 01908 367928

### **Monday 27<sup>th</sup> September.**

Proposed Fenland Navigation Links, talk by Roger Valentine. Recreation & Business Development Manager, EA.

### **Monday 25<sup>th</sup> October.**

Narrow boating to the Medway, with Roger Squires, Deputy National Chairman, IWA.

### **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November.**

#### **An extra meeting and not to be missed.**

Five Kingdoms Cruise with James Griffin.

### **Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> November.**

"Running Hind & Hart," hotel narrow boats, with Nigel Hamilton. H&H Narrowboat Hotels.

### IWA Northampton,

All meetings held at the Blisworth Coaching Inn, Station Rd, Blisworth, **8:00pm.**

### **Tuesday October 12<sup>th</sup>.**

North East Waterways. By John Pomfret.

### **Tuesday November 9<sup>th</sup>,**

Wendover Restoration update by Roger Leishman.

### **Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> December.**

Northamptonshire Ironstone & Canals by Geoffrey Starmer.

**Patron. Tim Boswell MP.**

**Committee.**

**Chairman / Navigator Editor.** Tony Collins  
18 Skeats Wharf Pennyland Milton Keynes MK15 8AY 01908 604731  
info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk

**Secretary.** Bill Upton  
18 Elmers Park Bletchley Milton Keynes MK3 6DJ 01908 647317

**Work Party Organiser.** Athina Beckett  
2 Staters Pound Pennyland Milton Keynes MK15 8AX 01908 661217

**Treasurer.** Vernon Draper.  
12 Chipperfield Close New Bradwell Milton Keynes MK13 0EP 01908 312239

Steve Miles.  
Cosgrove Wharf, Lock Lane Cosgrove Milton Keynes MK19 7JR 07792 497116

Helene Hill.  
Cockfield House Stowe Rise Buckingham MK18 1HU 01280 813133

Diana Collins.  
18 Skeats Wharf Pennyland Milton Keynes MK15 8AY 01908 604731

Pam Forrest  
72 Portishead Drive Tattenhoe Milton Keynes MK4 3FN 01908 504017

Peter Robertson  
3 Abbey Way Ravenstone Olney MK46 5AP 01908 551317

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

**Other Activities (non committee)**

**Archivist.** Sylvia Mead.  
16 Bradvue Crescent Bradville Milton Keynes MK13 7AJ

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

**Promotional Activities.** Mandy & Steve Morley.  
33 Hambleton Grove Emerson Valley Milton Keynes MK4 2JS 01908 520090

**Website Design.** Jeremy Cooper. [www.olio.demon.co.uk](http://www.olio.demon.co.uk)

**Website Maintenance.** Len Barrows. [info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk](mailto:info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk)

**Rally Facility Officer.**  
Richard Hyde.  
Cosgrove Narrowboat Company, Cosgrove Wharf, Lock Lane, Cosgrove, MK19 7JR 07973 915652

Committee members can be contacted by email: [info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk](mailto:info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk)