

The Buckingham Navigator

Spring 2004

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

Work Party Dates for your Diary April-July 2004.

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

April	May	June	July
Thursday 15 th	Thursday 6 th	Thursday 10 th	Thursday 8 th
Thursday 29 th	Sunday 9 th	Sunday 13 th	Sunday 11 th
	Thursday 13 th	Thursday 24 th	Thursday 22 nd
	Thursday 27 th		

Instead of the Annual Rally this year we shall be holding a Lock Ransom on the weekend of 31st July and 1st 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"***

The next issue of the Navigator is due for publication in July 04. Your contributions, articles, letters, general observations will help to make it more interesting. *Please send all contributions by 1st June* emailed, 3,5 floppy disc, typewritten, handwritten faxed (in that order of preference) to Tony Collins 18 Skeats Wharf, Pennyland, Milton Keynes.MK15 8 AY phone/fax 01908 604731. 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.

Typist Wanted.

We urgently require the assistance of a Typist or Audio Typist who would be willing to take on the role of minutes secretary, either at committee meetings or if unable to attend these type from audio or hand written notes. If you can help contact Bill 01908 647317 or Tony 01908 604731

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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

Chairman's Column.

Our AGM in January was well attended again this year and I thank all who turned out on a very wintry and wet evening.

Membership is gaining ground slowly but to be able to put pressure where it counts we really do need more members. Your committee is planning a public meeting in Buckingham for October but meanwhile if every member can recruit at least one more newcomer to the Society it would make a great difference and strengthen our cause.

Please use the leaflet enclosed with this newsletter or if you take Navigator by the internet there is a form on our website at <http://www.mkheritage.co.uk/bcs/htmlpages/BCSform.html>

Under any other business thanks were expressed to our archivist Sylvia Meads, retiring treasurer Ros Munton, Membership secretary Steve Morley, Social events organiser Mandy Morley and to Jeremy Cooper for his past work with the BCS website. We also welcomed Vernon Draper as our new Treasurer and Len Barrows as maintenance organiser for our website.

We were also grateful to Neil Stafford for his outline of recent developments at BW in particular with the setting up of the new offices at Witan Gate MK.

Sadly though we learned that Bulbourne is about to close although a new maintenance yard and sanitary station is proposed at Leighton Buzzard. 20 new dog bins will be provided canal side in MK, bridges 81, 99 were being rebuilt and bridge 79 was in the programme for refurbishment. The iron trunk Wolverton would be dewatered towards the end of this year for proposed works. It would appear that BW is also discussing the possibility of developing another 50 pubs along the canal system in general.

The meeting closed at 8.30 and after a short break Steve Morley gave a slide presentation on the Old Stratford and Buckingham canal,

which for those of us who had not seen it before gave a good insight of the canals route and history, Steve has revamped his talk recently so it has bought us all up to date. All in all a very good evening. **TC.**

New Address for BW.

As from the 1st of March BW South east Region will be in new premises at:

Ground floor,

Whittan Gate House

500,600 Whittan Gate

Milton Keynes. Telephone, 01908 302500.

Foxton Update.

Grand Union Canal - Leicester Line The Heritage Lottery Fund has earmarked £1,500,000 for the Foxton Locks Partnership's bid for improvements work at Foxton in preparation for rebuilding of the Foxton Inclined Plane. The grant is subject to the acceptance by the Lottery Fund of detailed plans.

Once fully approved, the work is due to be managed by British Waterways, which has led the bid for funding. With support from IWA and the Old Union Canal Society, the Foxton Inclined Plane Trust has campaigned for a reopened Plane for twenty years, and the current partnership was formed when British Waterways announced that the project was to be included in its tranche 11 lists of priority schemes.

The work is to be undertaken mostly on the site of the inclined plane, which closed in 1910. Trees will be cleared from the plane, and the top and bottom channels to the lift will be repaired, cleared and rewatered. The interpretation of the industrial and natural heritage of the area is to be expanded and the surrounding area given a face-lift. The collection of original canal buildings and structures - the Grade II-listed lock-keeper's cottage, bridges and other associated buildings - around the locks are also due to be repaired and restored. Article reproduced from the National Journal of the IWA, "Waterways"

**CFM (Milton Keynes)
Electrician and Courier
Proprietor P A Caswell**

Tel: 01908 282589 Mobile 07702 668924

Water Resources.

The situation started to ease in November with rainfall being slightly above the average. Recent wet weather has helped fill British Waterways' network of reservoirs that feed into the canal system. The levels of reservoirs in the southern Midlands are less critical now than they used to be since the installation of BW' s backpumping system, which allows water to be transferred from a bore-hole into old mine workings at Bradley. This water can feed into the Grand Union Canal as far south as Milton Keynes, to Leicester via Braunston and Crick, and to the Oxford Canal summit. The boreholes near Tring can feed the southern Grand Union, relieving pressure on the reservoirs around Marsworth.

Most of the canals north of Birmingham rely either on river feeds, or on rainfall collected into reservoirs at the summits of such waterways as the Leeds & Liverpool, Rochdale, Huddersfield Narrow and Caldon canals. However, the Shropshire Union and

Staffs & Worcester canals are mostly fed from the outflow of a sewage works near Wolverhampton. BW has recently signed an agreement with Severn Trent Water to preserve the long-term security of this supply. Given an average winter rainfall, most of BW' s critical reservoirs north of Birmingham are likely to fill to capacity before Easter 2004. The major exception to this is Rudyard Reservoir, which feeds into the Caldon Canal summit and supplies much of the water for the Trent & Mersey Canal, as water from the Caldon Canal flows into the summit of the Trent & Mersey. The water level in Rudyard remains well below what it should be for the time of year, and an average winter rainfall would only fill the reservoir to 84% capacity. Thus, the waterway most at risk of any water supply shortages in 2004 is probably the Trent & Mersey Canal between Great Heywood and Middlewich.

Article reproduced from the National Journal of the IWA National Journal "Waterways."

TUNNEL BI-CENTENARY

Next year, Blisworth Tunnel will be celebrating its 200th Birthday and plans are afoot for a big celebration.

Ideas are already being discussed with British Waterways, Blisworth & Stoke Bruerne Parish Councils, The Waterways Trust, local canal businesses and other interested parties on how this important event can be marked, but it is likely to be a combined festival and boat gathering with two sites, one at each end of the tunnel.

Suggestions so far have included a legging competition and entertainment from the Sealed Knot history society. I will keep you up to date with info as I get it.

ED.

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

ED.

Our Budding new Author Geoffrey Lewis has produced his second book in the series entitled "Strangers". Using the same characters of D.I. Russell and D.S. Doug Rimmer it is set in Northamptonshire and uses the Grand Union Canal as the backdrop for the story. It is available from Bookshops or by mail order from Steve Miles at SGM publishing, Cosgrove Wharf, Lock Lane Cosgrove MK19 7JR or phone 07792 497116, priced £6.99 plus £2.00P&P

WORK PARTY ORGANISERS REPORT

On Sunday 14th March as well as our usual Sunday work party we also took part in an Environmental Agency Action Campaign. Ten people turned up plus a photographer from the Buckingham Advertiser, and a very good photo and article appeared in the following week's paper so we should all be famous in Buckingham! This was an exceedingly good turn out considering the weather and we managed to work until 1.30 when we had to admit defeat as the weather worsened.

The Wednesday midweek work parties have now transferred to Thursday so that they don't clash with other projects in Milton Keynes. I attended a meeting with the Parks Trust and they are planning a combined leaflet detailing all the various voluntary activities in the area. This will include Milton Keynes Countryside project, the Ouse Valley project and Milton Keynes Parks Trust projects. This will be available in all Milton Keynes libraries and various sites around the area. So this should all help spread the profile about the BCS.

Site Reports:

At **Cosgrove** we have nearly completed a strip of the whole mile of the canal from Bridge No 1 to the A5 and the work there will finish by the beginning April. There is a planning meeting to discuss future plans for this section scheduled with British Waterways for May.

Buckingham: At the Buckingham end the spillweir has been completed and the pipes have finally arrived for the culvert where it meets the river Ouse. This will be our next building project and must be completed by July to allow the farmer access to his fields. Then there is the exciting prospect of the new site near Thornton, which has a section the canal in water. At this moment in time I don't know which site we will be working on in April when we finish at Cosgrove so please ring for details

Finally anyone out there who enjoys working outside with a friendly group of people please come and support us at Buckingham and our new site at Thornton

Athina Beckett

Work party Organiser.

Other important Event Dates.

April:

13th. 8pm. IWA Northampton at the Turnpike Harpole "Archaeology of Canals" with Geoffrey Starmer.

26th 8pm IWA Milton Keynes at Bletchley Sports Club Manor Fields Bletchley. "Roses & Rabbit Stew" one-man theatre with Joe Mole.

28th 8pm IWA Grand Junction Region AGM followed by the "**Inter branch Quiz**" come and support your local branch.

May.

1st to 3rd IWA Northampton, Annual Boat Gathering at Becketts Park, contact branch for details.

3.rd May Bank holiday Monday. Bradwell Road Recreation ground in Bradwell Road All the usual attractions, stalls, sideshows, displays and fairground rides. The sports club is also open in the afternoon to serve drinks.

11th 8pm. IWA Northampton, at the Turnpike Harpole. "Gunpowder Plot" with Richard Thomas.

29th to 31st Crick Boat Show. At Crick Northamptonshire.

30th to 31st May. Tring/Wendover Canal Festival, Wendover Arm Tring.

June 18th 19th & 20th Gt Linford Waterside Festival

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

Ancestor enquiry.

We recently received this rather interesting email from Stewart Mold.

“During my family history research I came across some letters written by my 3rd Gt Uncle John Mold to the bailiff for the Stowe Estates Thomas Beard. John Mold was a Builder/Carpenter and appeared to buy a lot of wood from the estate, in one of his letters dated Dec 6th 1841 he is enquiring to purchase 27 hundred ft to begin with of 4" planking as that would make up a boat load.

This has been puzzling me for some time as I did not realise that there was a canal at Buckingham, until I came across your very interesting website. Is there any way in which you could verify for me, that when he says a boatload he probably meant to go off via the canal, would that amount of wood fit on a barge? What sort of paper work would be involved to send cargoes off by barges for instance. Should you be interested in a copy of the letter I could type it out and send it to you”. *I emailed back for a copy because I thought it would be worth keeping in the archives, and this is the letter.*

Buckingham Dec 6th 1841.

Sir,

Today I taken the person into the park to look at the Beech and the only thing I could prevail upon him to say was that he would willingly purchase a quantity of 4 inch and 3 3/4 inch plank if cut out of the prime part of the butts up to the first branch only - the whole of the next part of the trees I shown him being too course and rough for his use.

Should his Grace feel willing to allow a quantity of four inch planks to be cut out of the best part of the butts and would otherwise dispose of the remainder of the trees I would engage to take any quantity say 27 hundred ft to begin with as that would make up a boat load and if you have it sawn into planks and let us take what would do for our purpose only we could afford 5 1/4 ?? foot supplied for 4 inch plank and fetch it away ourselves. I am Sir,
Yours Respectfully John Mold.

We are now left with the question, where was he sending all this wood. Stewart would

welcome any ideas , send them to me and I will pass them on. **ED**

Anytime Stew.

Ingredients

Some meat (doesn' t matter much what it is as long as there' s plenty of it)

Some vegetables (whatever is in the cupboard, potatoes, carrots, onions, leeks, etc.)

Herbs and the odd bay leaf if you' ve got any or know where there' s a handy Bay Tree Stock (vegetable is a safe bet ' cos it goes with anything)

Method

1. Cut the meat up into chunks, removing any obvious fat and gristle.
2. You can, if you wish, brown the meat off in a frying pan with a little oil or fat (I prefer not to do this in the casserole dish or stew pot as I find it tends to make the meat stick to the bottom during the subsequent cooking).
3. Place the meat in a suitable casserole, stew pot or large saucepan. Make up sufficient stock to adequately cover the meat and pour it into the pan.
4. Add salt, pepper, herbs, spices, Worcester Sauce, the odd bay leaf or three and/or whatever else you can lay your hands on that makes your taste buds tingle.
5. You can also add the dregs of the wine bottle, about ' /4 of a can of beer (ideal excuse for drinking the other 3/4 whilst cooking the evening meal), etc.
6. Bring to the boil, stirring occasionally, and simmer for at least an hour or longer if you have time (the longer the better).
7. Add the vegetables and bring back to the boil, stirring once more. Simmer for a further 30 to 40 minutes until the vegetables are cooked but still slightly crunchy.
8. Chuck in some frozen peas about 15 minutes before the end if you like.

Serve hot with bread or even dumplings!

Quick to prepare and easy to cook using whatever ingredients are to hand. The staple diet of the Broughton branch of the Peckett family. Can be left on the stove for self-service offspring and leftovers can be frozen as instant ready meals.

Bruce Peckett. Reproduced from Immanuel's Imaginative recipes, published by, Immanuel at St Giles Milton Keynes,

Patron. Tim Boswell MP.

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