

The Buckingham Navigator

The newsletter of the Buckingham Canal Society
Registered Charity No: 1072924

EDITORIAL

You'll be pleased to hear that my canal-related education is steadily progressing. Whilst proofreading this issue's content, I came across the acronym 'WRG BITM' and realised I had no idea what it stood for. After a few minutes on the internet, I found the answer, which most of you probably already know is 'Waterway Recovery Group Bit-In-The-Middle'. This group covers central and southern England and draws membership from anywhere that isn't covered by other groups! Check out www.wrgbitm.org.uk for further information. I compiled this issue whilst my husband and his friend were working hard at a BCS work party. I dispatched them with sandwiches, a flask and other treats to 'keep them going' throughout the day, with the promise that I would receive in return some 'action shot' photographs that I could share with all of you in the Navigator. I am glad to say that they all came out well and I've included a few of the best in this issue. Hopefully they will inspire some of you to come along and see what the Society does, what progress has been made, and maybe even join in yourself!

Best wishes, GEORGINA SORRELL, EDITOR

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THE NAVIGATOR SUMMER ISSUE

Please send in all contributions for the Summer issue by **Friday 8th June 2007**, emailed, on CD, typewritten or handwritten (in that order of preference) to:

Georgina Sorrell, Magnolia Cottage,
26 Forest Road, Hartwell, Northants NN7 2HE
(email address: georgina@sorrell.me.uk).



Spring is here – (despite the random snowfall!) and the work party volunteers are out in force. If you are looking for a way to meet other members and get out in the fresh air, why not consider coming along? See the update on Page 4 for details of future work parties.

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.

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.

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

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Our AGM was held at Buckingham Community Centre in January but as most of you know I was unable to attend having picked up a very nasty bug in Spain.

I hear things went very well, Peter Caswell stood in for me and his report appears in this edition of the Navigator.

Protests are still taking place over the proposed cuts to the British Waterways budget by DEFRA. I won't go into the background here as I imagine that anyone connected with the waterways will know the history behind the cuts. In November members of the BCS took part in a protest at Stoke Bruerne which attracted the local press and BBC Look East. Although it was a wet day we had a very good turnout. If you look closely at some of the photos which have appeared in waterways magazines you might have spotted my dog TinTin. With a poster on his back he attracted a lot of attention which seems to appeal to cameramen and reporters and he had his starring moment on BBC Look East news!

I've included some pictures of Tin-Tin in action on page 6 of this issue.....Ed

We also attended another protest meeting at Tesco's, Leighton Buzzard at the beginning of March. This was quite a lively demo with Morris men and local MPs and we managed to leaflet a lot of Saturday shoppers. I would encourage people to keep up the protests as a cut to BW budgets will be a disaster to canal societies like us.

George Harlock, a local businessman is planning to build narrowboats on the site next to the A5 along side the Buckingham Canal. Part of George's plan is to restore the stretch of canal from Cosgrove to the A5. We wish George every success in his venture and will keep you informed of his progress.

Our next planned social event is a trip down the river Nene starting from Becketts Park in Northampton at 11.30 on **Sunday 15th April**. The boat is a widebeam boat with a

sun lounge and disabled access for wheelchairs. A chance to again socialise with other members and have a great day out on the river. As this boat can take up to forty people there should be space to bring friends and family along as well. Food will be provided. **Bookings are via me so please ring or email me for tickets.**

Advanced notice is given that our annual festival at Cosgrove will take place over the weekend of 20-22nd July.

As I missed seeing everybody at the AGM I hope to catch up with you at the Cosgrove Festival. Please put this date in your diary as we will need help manning the lock and the bric-a-brac stall but most of all this is a friendly get-together and a chance to socialise with other members.

**ATHINA BECKETT
CHAIRMAN**

AGM REPORT

The 15th AGM of the Society took place on 21st January just 14 days after the Society's 15th birthday. It took place as usual in the Community Centre Buckingham and was attended by over 39 people. In our Chairman's absence and with the blessing of those present, I was honoured to be allowed to chair the meeting (having first beat back the baying mob of people vying to carry out the job!)

There was some confusion over the start time, as published times were different to those the committee were working to, which was a little embarrassing and will be addressed for the future and I apologise for this, however once proceedings were under way all went reasonable smoothly.

The new Committee and Non-Committee posts can be seen on the back page of this issue so please take a look. Steve Miles and Pam Forest stood down from The Committee and Steve Morley stood down as Membership Secretary. Pam Forest will continue as our archivist and Steve Morley will continue to promote our Society with his talks and slide shows. Steve Miles has said that he intends to stay involved with the

Society. Many thanks to both Steves and Pam for their past dedication and their future involvement. Jane Caswell will take up the post of Membership Secretary and Helen Preston has also offered to join the Committee. Helen will be co-opted onto the Committee at the next meeting as under the rules of the Society's Constitution it was too late for Helen to be nominated for election. I am sure you will all join me in welcoming Jane and Helen onboard.

The formalities were dealt with in the allotted 30 minutes and with these over we moved on to devouring cheese & pâté and quaffing wine & non-alcoholic beverages.

After the food was consumed and glasses emptied Richard Waddy gave a talk accompanied by slides of a holiday he had taken on the Canal du Nivernais in France. Richard's talk was very informative with some great pictures and anecdotes, underlining how quaint the canals are in the UK compared to those of Europe. Many thanks to Richard for his presentation.

Thanks go to all those who helped with organising the AGM and to those who helped with the various tasks on the night.

PETER CASWELL

EVENTS

**Society Social –
A Trip down the River Nene**

on Sunday 15th April
Starting from Becketts Park in
Northampton at 11.30am

A chance to socialise with other
members and have a great day out on
the river. Food will be provided.

**Bookings via Athina on 01908 661217
or email athinabec@aol.com**

IWA MILTON KEYNES

Meetings are held at Bletchley Sports Club, Manor Fields, Bletchley. Meetings are listed as starting at 7:45pm though they seldom get under way before 8:00pm. There is a

licensed bar at the club, and though there is no charge for admission you are welcome to take part in the raffle, which is the main funding for the meeting and provides for the speaker's expenses when needed.

2007

Wednesday 18th April

AGM: IWA Grand Junction Region AGM
And Inter-Branch Quiz

Monday 23rd April - TBC

Topic: Buckingham Canal Restoration
Speaker: Steve Morley, Buckingham Canal Society

Check their website

<http://mkiwa.users.btopenworld.com> for
updates or Rodney Evans, Social Secretary
on 01908 376449 or
Rodwen@scythia.fsnet.co.uk

IWA NORTHAMPTON

Branch Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 8pm. Members and non-members welcome. During the winter, branch meetings are held at the Walnut Tree, Blisworth, 21 Station Road, Blisworth, NN7 3DS.

Tuesday 10th April

Topic: "Daniel Adamson"
Speaker: Pat Crecraft

Tuesday 8th May

Topic: "Lowland Waterways"
Speaker: Richard Thomas

Other Events

Sunday 29th April

Westbridge Arm Clean Up
Meet at 10am at Pizza Hut, St James Retail
Park, Northampton.

4th-7th May

Northampton Boat Gathering at Becketts
Park

For more information, check their website:
<http://northampton.waterways.org.uk/diary.htm>
for updates or contact Graham Treagus on
01604 870515.

WORK PARTY ORGANISER'S REPORT

WRG BITM visited us on the weekend of 20th -21st January. Unfortunately I had to get people to cover for me as I was still recovering from a bug I picked up on holiday in Spain. One of their tasks was to install two interpretation board at Cosgrove - one at the A5 end and the other near the lock. These are now in place and look great, as you can see from the picture opposite! The other task was to investigate what remains of Bridge No1. This was very important as we are getting quotations on the work needed to repair this bridge.

A lot of the re-growth was cleared and as the canal is now partly in water it is looking good at present. BITM didn't manage to clear the area by the A5 – this is where local businessman George Harlock plans to open a narrowboat building company. I therefore plan to move our work parties to Cosgrove after we have finished at the Nature Reserve as hopefully we will be getting people visiting the proposed boat building site and therefore looking at the canal so we want to make that stretch look at presentable as possible.

At our Bourton Meadow site Nick Hawes the landowner is in talks with the organisation that funded the water meadow project on his land next to the canal. The hope is that there might be money available to help with the restoration of the canal. We shall also be erecting a third interpretation board on this stretch of canal.

We plan to return to our site at Little Hill Farm in April and continue with the work there which will include re-building the bridge and completing the clearing of the canal bed. We are hoping that HBOS volunteers will be joining us for a couple of work parties. We also hope to be able to erect a shed on site to store our tools and equipment.

Work has gone well at the BBOWT Nature Reserve site. We have now cleared the canal bed and footpath up to the lock. Jonathan Brown has been doing marvellous job clearing the area in water on the far side of the lock. BBOWT have kindly lent us two

pairs of waders to help with this task! Because of the bird nesting season we will be stopping work on this site until October when we hope to finish clearing the rest of this site. From the end of March we will be working at Cosgrove and Little Hill Farm for the summer. Members are very welcome to come and see the work being done.

ATHINA BECKETT
WORK PARTY ORGANISER

WORK PARTY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

April- July 2007

*Please note: For more information contact
Athina Beckett on 01908 661217*

April	May	June	July
Thursday 12 th	Thursday 10 th	Thursday 7 th	Thursday 5 th
Thursday 26 th	Sunday 13 th	Sunday 10 th	Sunday 8 th
	Thursday 24 th	Thursday 21 st	Thursday 19 th



**WRG BITM VOLUNTEERS INSTALL
INTERPRETATION BOARDS**

DIY FIT OUT SAYINGS

Following Richard's engaging and informative presentation at the AGM, here is the second part of the article recounting his DIY experiences!..... Ed

'I agonised over every decision on my first boat'

This is a more recent saying, quoted to me by a professional fitter. In my case a lot of thought went into every nut and bolt and there is no doubt that on a repeat, a lot of the agonising would go. There are many steel boxes, brackets tanks etc. I had to design and agonise over on the way. For example a single bracket in the engine compartment needs thought on how to make it so it will work and not cost too much. It then has to be drawn, taken to the local Blacksmith to be made and then collected. I did some of the modifications myself such as drilling holes, as I did not know in advance where they needed to be and also I needed to keep the costs down. There was then 3 coats of paint to be applied before fitting - all very time consuming. This is, therefore, a very true statement and another one where the third boat helps.

'Of course you will have teething problems'

We knew the boat would need trimming once on the water but the stern was 6 inches lower than expected so about a ton of ballast was hastily shifted from the back to the front and it is not far off correct now. When we received the hull we shifted about half a ton of ballast to the back thinking it would be stern light, perhaps ProBuild knew more than us! The first night out we were without gas so it was "Come back corgi man!" Fortunately the microwave worked or there could have been a hiccup in the marital bliss! The second morning the boiler decided not to light but this was a problem that I could soon put right. The other problems so far have been pretty minor but I am sure there will be more as we have only been out for a couple of weeks. So yes, the DIY fitter can expect teething problems, after all, each boat is basically a prototype.

Some of these problems have manifested themselves where I least expected them, for

example, when we got the boat trim about right I found the gas locker was getting water in it when we went through tunnels. I am still working on that one!

In conclusion

I had carried out a lot of work on my previous boat and am an enthusiastic DIY person so boat fitting was by no means new to me. In my work I have managed several large engineering projects, a number in unfamiliar territory so this side was not new to me either. However, it does put a bit of a different slant on things when you are doing all the detailed design, sourcing materials and half the work and of course picking up the cost of mistakes and specification changes.

I still cannot believe how wrong I got the timing and we effectively missed our spring holiday which is about half a years cruising for us. The cost was significantly higher than my estimate when I placed the order for the hull. Some of this was due to improved specification but a lot was just plain optimism, like taking the lowest catalogue price instead of being a bit more realistic. This was however softened by a higher finished valuation than I had expected which was considerably above the actual costs. Definitely the best part of the project was ending up with the boat we wanted and could not have afforded to have had built. It also has many subtle details which only a DIY fitter can achieve. A great project but I would not want to do another for a while!

RICHARD WADDY

NEW ONLINE FORUM LAUNCHED

If you are inspired by Richard's story and want the chance to share your experiences with other canal lovers, you might want to have a look at

<http://canalsandboats.informe.com>

This independent forum has a section for everyone, from chat to photos, from information on towpath walks to letting groups advertise their events and share their restoration project progress. It is free and easy to join, so why not give it a try?

19TH CENTURY SHIPPING

This advertisement, originally placed in The Times Newspaper in 1850, evidences that one of the chief products that was shipped from Buckingham on the canal was timber.

BUCKINGHAM. – Important Sale – About 150 loads of fine maiden ASH, sweet Chestnut, and capital Beech TIMBER, (of large dimensions and very superior quality), together with a variety of choice woods, and 400 bundles of the fire stuff, suited for stick, whip, and fancy chair making, now lying on the bank of the Grand Junction Canal, at the Old-wharf, Buckingham, which will be SOLD by AUCTION, by Messrs. HARRISON and SON, on Wednesday, 20th March, at 2 o'clock. Catalogues may be had on application to the auctioneers, Buckingham; and Mr Acocks, estate agent, 36 Upper Albany-street, Regent's-park, near Gloucester-gate.

**TRANSCRIBED AND SUBMITTED
BY ED GRIMSDALE**

SOCIETY NOTICES

New recruits find their niche!

February's Sunday work party proved that all you need to get started is enthusiasm and some 'get up and go'. No previous experience is necessary, as other members are more than happy to provide instruction and training where needed. Despite it being Alex's (pictured) first work party, he stepped in and used his survival skills by lighting the bonfire and, more importantly, keeping it alight – which is not an easy task!



Dogged Determination at the DEFRA Protests

BCS's only four-legged member, Tin-Tin, shows his disapproval at the proposed DEFRA funding cuts.



Calling all volunteers!

Help needed on Bric-a-Brac Stall

As most of you know the Society runs a bric-a-brac stall to raise funds. So far this year Athina has booked the stall into three festivals. If anyone can help on the stall, there are some advantages for being a helper as at some festivals you get into them free of charge. The events are:

- 19-20th May - Pups in the Park, a Guide dog event in Campbell Park, Milton Keynes
- 27-28th May - Wendover Canal Festival
- 28th July - Linslade Canal Festival

Patron Tim Boswell MP**Committee 2007**

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