

The Buckingham Navigator

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

EDITORIAL

As Summer 2007 tries to fight its way out from behind a cloud the outdoor festivals and events continue undeterred. In Chairman's Chat, Athina tells of how the BCS got soaked through on the wettest Bank Holiday ever, bravely battling the elements in order to promote the Society and raise funds. This issue also has details of the forthcoming events being held over the summer, the most important being the Society's annual Lock Ransom Weekend at Cosgrove on 21st-22nd July. All members, volunteers, family and friends are invited, so whether you can pop along for half an hour to support the society and have a look at the stall, or whether you want to spend a few hours helping with the lock or attending the Saturday night event, you will all be most welcome.

I hope you all enjoy the summer and that the weather stays fine long enough to make it worth getting the barbeque out!

Best wishes, GEORGINA SORRELL, EDITOR

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THE NAVIGATOR AUTUMN ISSUE

Please send in all contributions for the Summer issue by **Thursday 7th September 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).



Summer is the perfect time for making memories – walks along the canal, leisurely picnics and photo opportunities to ensure we never forget. Jim & Beryl Payler sent this picture in of the bridge at Cosgrove, as it used to be. To see their other picture, go to page 6.

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

In April the Buckingham Canal Society was very lucky to be offered the chance of a boat trip down the River Nene on the Northamptonshire Crusader, owned by St John Ambulance. Forty-four people turned up for the trip, the sun shone and Jonathan Brown volunteered to make most of the food which meant getting up at 6.30am but his efforts were much appreciated by everyone! If people are interested perhaps a similar event could be held next year? A raffle was held which generated extra funds for the BCS and a donation was collected for St John Ambulance Boats group, a voluntary organisation that offers free boat trips on the River Nene for disabled people in the Northamptonshire area.

Now that summer is supposed to be here we have been taking the bric-a-brac stall and the information boards out and about. Unfortunately the weather hasn't been on our side. We tried a new venue this year at Campbell Park, Milton Keynes for 'Pups in the Park'. Strong winds didn't help but we did manage to sell a few items and talk to a few people about the canal.

Spring Bank Holiday saw us at Wendover, and it turned out to be the wettest bank holiday ever! We erected the tent in the dry on Saturday and waited for the rain to come. Sunday morning saw us chatting to a few daring souls who had turned up and braved the weather, I think they came into our tent to get out of the rain and then we did manage to sell them a few items!

On Sunday night the weather got much worse, this time with the wind getting up and we had a message to say that our tent was damaged. Jonathan Brown was the hero of the hour, using a mooring pin and rope to stop the tent blowing away! Unfortunately a lot of people did lose their possessions and parts of their tents during the night. On the Monday the festival was cancelled as the field was now unsafe.

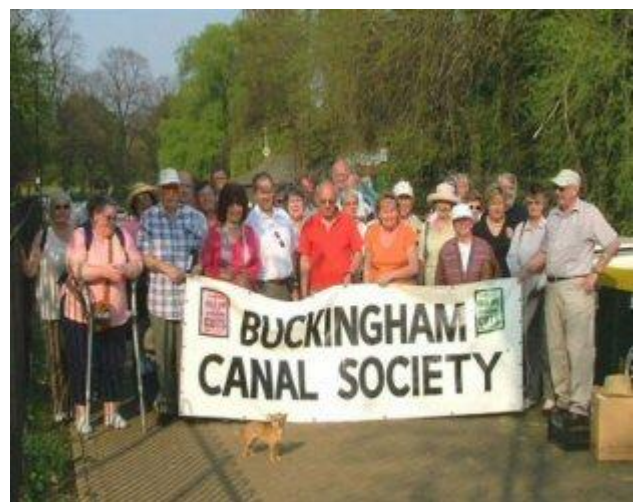
We have now managed to repair the tent which is good news as we shall be needing it for our own festival and lock ransom weekend at Cosgrove on the 21st-22nd July.

This is always a great chance to socialise with other members and to help with the fund raising. If you can spare a couple of hours either on Saturday or Sunday it would be much appreciated. We will need people to help set up from Friday lunchtime and then people to help with the lock ransom and bric-a-brac stall over the weekend.

Whether you have a few hours to spare to help out on either day, or if you pop along to have a look at the stall and support us, don't forget that you are all welcome to come to the barbeque on Saturday night to enjoy the food, company and live music so tell your friends!

The other event to mention is our heritage walk in September. It is National Heritage weekend on the second weekend in September and once again the BCS has been asked to take part. This year we will be doing a walk starting from Cosgrove Lock at 11.00 going down the Buckingham Arm and returning via the Iron Trunk towpath. We will be running a walk on both days the dates being the 8th-9th September. Again I hope members will come and join us and bring friends.

ATHINA BECKETT CHAIRMAN



MANY THANKS TO THE COLLINS' FOR THIS PICTURE OF THOSE THAT ATTENDED THE BOAT TRIP DOWN THE RIVER NENE

EVENTS

Buckingham Canal Society Lock Ransom Weekend At Cosgrove Lock Grand Union Canal

21st-22nd July 2007

This is a free festival but all donations go towards the restoration of the Buckingham Canal.

All Boaters and non-boaters welcome

Bric-a-Brac stall on site both days

Saturday evening: bring your own Barbecue plus music by local musicians

For further details contact
Athina Beckett on 01908 661217

BCS featured in MK Council Heritage Open Days Programme

Here is a copy of the entry in the Heritage Open Days featuring the Buckingham Canal. As mentioned in 'Chairman's Chat', this walk is on both 8th and 9th September, starting at 11am.

22 Buckingham Canal Heritage Walk

Cosgrove Lock, Cosgrove, Northants, MK19 7JR

Sat & Sun 11am-1.30pm



Located 6 miles NW of Milton Keynes just off the A5. At the roundabout in Old Stratford take the A508 to Northampton, then take the first turning on your right into and follow the signs to Cosgrove Lock. Please bring appropriate footwear to suit conditions. Car parking available around the village.

An interesting walk along the first mile of the Buckingham Canal and back along the Great Ouse river and Grand Union Canal. Distance approximately 5 miles. NB: not suitable for the disabled or wheeled items. Under 16s must be accompanied.

Linslade Canal Festival

The fifth annual Linslade Canal Festival takes place on Saturday, 28th July from 11am until 5pm at Tiddenfoot Waterside Park, Mentmore Road, Linslade.

The popular free event will feature more than eighty exhibitors, including our own BCS stand and people will be spoilt for choice by the array of arts and crafts on offer. Arena highlights this year include performances by folk and jazz groups, as well as a chain saw sculptor who will be carving a wooden wishing seat live in the arena.

New to the festival this year is a display by the Chesterton Horse Loggers. Up until the 1960's horses were used extensively in timber extraction but the advent of machinery saw the decline of the horse as a source of draught power in forestry. New environmental and ecological considerations have seen resurgence in the use of horses and you can watch Bruno, a pure-bred Suffolk Punch, as he uses a Scandinavian style timber arch to skid out timber with minimal effect on woodland plants or wildlife.

Another new attraction is the cheekily named 'Old Farts' (Friends and Relatives Tractor Society!) who will be attending with a display of vintage tractors, the earliest of which dates from 1936.

Visitors to Linslade Canal Festival will once again be able to cross the narrows to view the many narrow and historic working boats which include a working blacksmith, wooden tar tanker and an ex-grand union canal carrying company boat built in 1935 and Grebe Canal Cruises will be operating regular half hour boat trips throughout the event.

Car parking is available close to the festival site for a £2.00 fee. Entry to the festival itself is free. WC facilities, including disabled, are provided in the park grounds.

Event information taken from:
www.leightonlinslade-tc.gov.uk/events

IWA MILTON KEYNES

The Bletchley Rugby Club has served the branch well for several years, but has put up its charges for the next season to an unacceptable level. So next season IWA Milton Keynes will be holding their Branch Meetings in Milton Keynes Village Pavilion Community Sports Club, starting with a bang on Monday 24th September with Richard Thomas speaking on "The Royal Gunpowder Mills" (formerly by the River Lea at Waltham Abbey).

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. The first meeting of the new season will be held on 11th September at 8pm.

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

Other Events

25th-27th August

2007 sees IWA's National Festival & Boat Show move to St Ives in Cambridgeshire. The show is open to all and is a great family day out with plenty to do and see. Whether you use your local waterway to walk your dog, or you own a boat, like to canoe or enjoy fishing, the waterways festival has something to cater for everybody.

See website for further details:

www.waterways.org.uk/Events/IWANationalFestival07

A WORD FROM YORKSHIRE

Mr D J Long emailed from Yorkshire to share his memories of the Buckingham Canal, give us an insight into restoration activities in Yorkshire and a positive outlook for the future! Ed

In the 1970s - let's see, possibly 1973-4, I worked at Sandy in Bedfordshire and we also looked after a company site near Oxford, which meant driving through Stony Stratford and Buckingham.

I remember the canal bridge at Deanshanger, because my colleague said it was a railway bridge, which I never agreed with, as the bridge was narrow and had a small hump in it for road traffic. One day there was delay in our journey because the bridge was being demolished. A way around the bridge had been made on the Cosgrove side and the arch was then attacked and fell into the cutting.

Further along at Buckingham we usually stopped for coffee and the basin had been filled in with the ironwork sticking out of the fill. I remember thinking 'what are these fools doing, here they have a nice market town and they are filling in the biggest asset!' I now know that it was the obvious closure by stealth and the A5 path was required across the right of way. In the fields to the left of the road into Buckingham the line was clearly seen, sometimes quite deep, sometimes a shallow ditch.

But do not despair - the Huddersfield narrow canal is once again working and the Rochdale canal is open as well. Both had considerable road illegal occupations of the way, particularly the M62 over the Huddersfield NC, where a cattle creep was used the form a way under the motorway. The Rochdale canal was even more difficult, in Sowerby Bridge a road junction had been built on the canal course, in the town, very cramped and hemmed in. So they dug it up, dropped the canal into the ditch and put the junction back on top. You would not know now that there is tunnel underneath created by 'cut and cover'.

There were also difficulties in Lancashire where a supermarket car park was built over the canal, and at Slaithwaite (pronounced locally as 'Slawit') where the route was filled in between 1950-70 because they 'did not want a canal interfering with a village street'. The canal had to be excavated from scratch in 1984. The village has now adapted well to the new feature and takes pride in being the only village in England to have a canal running alongside its high street.

So do not dismay - the Welsh Highland Railway is rising again, including the crossing of Network Rail ON THE FLAT! (now in situ and being connected up soon) so the wind of change is blowing the correct way, and let's face it the age of the car is at an end. With 4 tunnels, 4 river bridges, 3 level crossings, a street running section - 40Km! Check out www.isengard.co.uk for more details. God bless the EEC for the money. Have a look as well at the new Liverpool Canal Link (www.britishwaterways.com/liverpoolcanallink/), where the Overhead Railway used to be.

Get lobbying via your MP, there are pots of cash to be got from somewhere, dig up the A5 and put a bridge in - simple! All you need is a good legal man and some JCBs!

Good luck from Yorkshire.

D J Long

WORK PARTY ORGANISER'S REPORT

I don't know how many of you saw a copy of July's Canal Boat magazine but if you did you might have seen the excellent four-page article on the restoration of the Buckingham Canal. The article shows various sites along the canal with coloured photos and also gives a brief history of the canal and details of the restoration work being done by us. Well worth a read!

The other good news is that one of the main grant givers for Buckingham has expressed an interest in funding the restoration of Hyde Lane lock. BBOWT who own the nature reserve support the project and are working together with us. More news on this item later in the year.

The Buckingham Advertiser have continued to support us with two articles and photos in their newspaper - one showing some of our volunteers taking part in an 'Action Earth' day at Cosgrove and the other showing the work being done at Little Hill Farm. All good publicity for us! See the latest article in full on page 6.

HBOS Bank from Aylesbury is again supporting us and has run two team-building exercises at Little Hill Farm. I think Mr Edmondson's Saddleback piglets were one of the main attractions but the group also worked hard and much was achieved.

The work is continuing at Little Hill Farm with the two main tasks being restoring the bridge where the work is coming along well and clearing the last section of the canal bed. The work will continue throughout the summer until October when we will be returning to the BBOWT Nature Reserve. Once again we welcome visits to site from interested people to see the progress being made. This is particularly important as the site at Little Hill Farm is on private land so if people want to arrange a visit the work parties are held on the second Sunday of each month and alternate Thursdays. Please contact me if you need further details.

**ATHINA BECKETT
WORK PARTY ORGANISER**

WORK PARTY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

August- October 2007

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

August	September	October
Thursday 2 nd	Sunday 9 th	Thursday 11 th
Sunday 12 th	Thursday 13 th	Sunday 14 th
Thursday 16 th	Thursday 27 th	Thursday 25 th
Thursday 30 th		

BCS IN THE LOCAL PRESS!

Getting canal back to best



HARD WORK: Athina Beckett, Jonathan Brown, Alan Mynard and Marie Forster working near the canal bridge at Thornton

Volunteers have cleared a quarter-mile stretch of the Buckingham Canal near Thornton.

Four members of the Buckingham Canal Society spent hours clearing canal banks of brambles and nettles, strimming towpaths, and repairing a 200-year-old bridge on private land near Little Farm, on Sunday, June 10.

One of several sites undergoing restoration by society volunteers, the eventual aim is to re-open as much of the historic canal as possible, and open the waterway to the public.

Group chairwoman Athina Beckett said: "We have spoken to the landowners – and most are in agreement that it would be a great idea to bring the canal back to life again."

Other Buckingham Canal Society projects include the restoration of the Hyde Lane lock near Buckingham – for which the society is now seeking grant funding. Buckingham Canal Society runs three working parties each month throughout the year, as well as team-building exercises for firms including HBOS bank.

Built in 1801, the Buckingham Canal was finally closed in 1964.

Source: www.buckinghamtoday.co.uk 15/06/07

SOCIETY NOTICES

Website update

For a description of the work party sites and a link to a map showing you the location of each site, you can now go to:

www.buckinghamcanal.org.uk/htmlpages/workpartylocations.html

Renewals – is your membership up-to-date?

If you have not renewed your membership for 2007 please contact Membership Secretary Jane Caswell to ensure that you continue to enjoy the benefits of membership, including your quarterly 'Buckingham Navigator'. Alternatively, you can renew your membership at the Cosgrove Lock Ransom Weekend.

Receipts for membership - update

It was agreed at a BCS committee meeting on the 29th March not to issue receipts where a subscription is paid by cheque (Cheques Act 1957) unless specifically requested and a stamped address envelope is provided. Corporate members and members paying cash will continue to receive a receipt.

How it used to be.....

Navigator readers Jim and Beryl Payler kindly sent in this old black and white photograph of the canal at Cosgrove.



Patron Tim Boswell MP

Committee 2007

Chairman/Work Party Organiser - Athina Beckett 2 Staters Pound Pennyland Milton Keynes MK15 8AX athinabec@aol.com	01908 661217 Mobile 07721 319404
Secretary - Hilary Treversh c/o 2 Staters Pound, Pennyland Milton Keynes h.treversh@open.ac.uk	c/o 01908 661217
Treasurer - Vernon Draper 12 Chipperfield Close New Bradwell Milton Keynes MK13 0EP vernon.draper@btinternet.com	01908 312239 Mobile 07961 302039
Don Allison - Charity Commission Officer 30 St John Street Newport Pagnell MK16 8HJ donallison@btinternet.com	01908 610564
Hélène Hill Cockfield House Stowe Rise Buckingham MK18 1HU	01280 813133
Bill Upton 18 Elmers Park Bletchley Milton Keynes MK3 6DJ	01908 647317
Peter Caswell 96 Gaddesden Crescent Wavendon Gate Milton Keynes MK7 7SQ peter@caswell.eclipse.co.uk	01908 282589 Mobile 07702 668924
Richard Waddy 15 Station Road Long Buckby Northants NN6 7QB Richard@rwaddy.plus.com	01327 842347
Mike Mathewson 19 Kindleton, Great Lindford Milton Keynes MK14 5EA mike@themathews.net	01908 605011 Mobile 07885 025574
Helen Preston 16 Mallard Drive Buckingham MK18 1GJ nandhpreston@yahoo.co.uk	

Other Activities (non committee)

Archivist - Pam Forrest 7 Portishead Drive Tattenhoe Milton Keynes MK4 3FN	01908 504017
Navigator Editor - Georgina Sorrell Magnolia Cottage 26 Forest Road Hartwell Northants, NN7 2HE	01604 862743
Membership Secretary – Jane Caswell 96 Gaddesden Crescent Wavendon Gate Milton Keynes MK7 7SQ jane@caswell.eclipse.co.uk	01908 282589
Promotional Activities - Mandy & Steve Morley 33 Hambleton Grove Emerson Valley Milton Keynes MK4 2JS steve@morleytowers.org.uk	01908 520090
Website - Len Barrows info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk	
Rally Facilities Officer - Richard Hyde. Cosgrove Narrowboat Company, Cosgrove Wharf, Lock Lane, Cosgrove, MK19 7JR	07973 915652

Committee members can also be contacted by email: info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk