

The Buckingham Navigator

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

EDITORIAL

Firstly I would like to wish you all a Happy New Year! I don't know about you, but 2006 went by in a flash, and I can't believe that it has been a year since I first met Athina, the committee and many of you members at the 2006 AGM. Talking of get-togethers, I hope to see plenty of you at the 2007 AGM (for details, read on!) and share in a glass of wine, a few nibbles and another interesting presentation, this time on the subject of French canals. This issue of the Navigator features the first of a two-part article by Richard Waddy, sharing his experience of fitting out his narrow boat DIY-style, which I am sure you will find a very interesting insight into this ambitious undertaking, complete with plenty of tips for those of you attempting a similar project! I'm off now to start reading a newly published historical story about a family living and working on the English Canals at the time of the First World War. The book was sent to the Navigator for review, so I will try to finish it in time to share my thoughts with you in the Spring issue.

Best wishes, GEORGINA SORRELL, EDITOR

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THE NAVIGATOR SPRING ISSUE

Please send in all contributions for the Spring issue by **Friday 2nd March 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).



A year of progress – Buckingham Canal Society volunteers leave a record of their hard work on the completion of repairs to this canal bridge wall

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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 this issue of the Navigator you will find details of our AGM, which takes place on Saturday 27th January 7pm at Buckingham Community Centre.

As usual we plan to make this a social event where members can meet and chat with a glass of wine and cheese. Committee member Richard Waddy will also be giving a slideshow and talk about his holiday on the French Canals.

There are also two committee vacancies at present, as one member has resigned for health reasons and another now has extra work commitments. So if anybody is interested in helping in this way please contact me or another committee member. We would particularly like to welcome more members from the Buckingham area which is under-represented at present.

I feel it has been a very good year for the Buckingham Canal Society as membership has increased and we are now 'working in partnership' with several other organisations including BBOWT (Berks, Bucks, Oxon Wildlife Trust) and South Northants and Buckingham Town Council.

After the AGM our next big planned social event is a trip down the river Nene starting from Becketts Park in Northampton 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. Booking details should appear in the next edition of the Navigator.

I would like to thank everybody who has helped with various events in 2006, these include the Cosgrove Festival, the bric-a-brac stall and the work parties and I look forward to seeing you at the AGM to thank you in person!

ATHINA BECKETT
CHAIRMAN



HBOS VOLUNTEERS WORKING HARD TO CLEAR THE CANAL BED

NEWS

Water place for a new police base!

The old Toll House at Sutton Stop, Hawkesbury Junction in Longford, Coventry, has been opened as a base for police and other agencies to help people living and travelling on canal boats.

British Waterways, the owners, agreed the police could take over the lease of the building, initially to hold public surgeries and give canal users information from British Waterways. But extra interest from local groups has led to this including the Longford neighbourhood wardens, urban rangers, youth offending services, YMCA, the local education authority, Coventry Canal Preservation Society and English Heritage.

As part of the initiative, a Canal Watch scheme is to be set up for the benefit of the 80 or so canal boats that moor there during the summer. Police funding has been arranged for the refurbishment of the Toll House and British Waterways is seeking lottery funding for a development for the site.

Source - Coventry Evening Telegraph, 31/08/06

EVENTS

AGM REMINDER!!

Buckingham Canal Society
invite you to their
Cheese & Wine Social Evening/AGM

at 7pm on
Saturday 27th January 2007
at Buckingham Community Centre

As usual the AGM will be short and the
social evening long, including a
slideshow and talk on the French Canals,
entitled 'A week on the Nivernais'

Everybody Welcome!

IWA MILTON KEYNES

Meetings are held on the 4th Monday of
each month 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

Monday 22nd January

Topic: Steaming Ahead in Adamant

Speaker: Philip Martino - Skipper, Adamant

Monday 26th February

AGM - followed by:

Topic: Developments in MK

Speaker: Canalside Project Officer, Milton
Keynes Council

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 13th February

Topic: Planning for Freight (London
Olympics)

Speaker: Patrick Moss

Tuesday 13th March

Topic: Bugbrooke to Worcester

Speaker: Steve Miles

Check their website:

<http://northampton.waterways.org.uk/diary.htm>
for updates or contact Graham Treagus on
01604 870515.

OTHER EVENTS

Thursday 18th January

Event: Friends of Canal Museum Talk
'*Discovering Local Waterways History*'

Speaker: David Blagrove

Venue: The Canal Museum, Stoke Bruerne

WORK PARTY ORGANISER'S REPORT

Our work parties have now moved to the BBOWT Nature Reserve and this is where we held our 'Make a Difference Day' this year. A reporter from the Buckingham Advertiser took photographs which appeared in the Advertiser and it proved to be a very successful day with plenty of work achieved!

The Nature Reserve site is proving to be very popular with volunteers and whilst working on site we also have the opportunity of meeting members of the public who are out walking or fishing. The response has been excellent with people expressing interest in the work being done by the society and complementing our volunteers on the good work they are doing. We have also met two new landowners whilst working on site and they have also expressed interest in our work and are in favour of the restoration on the whole of the canal.

With the increase in the rain recently the canal now looks like a 'proper' canal and most of our volunteers have taken to wearing 'wellies' on site. We are still working with BBOWT on this site and they have agreed to supply us with waders for our volunteers. I have also just been made a 'key volunteer' with BBOWT.

Starting from the Buckingham end of the BBOWT Nature Reserve we have cleared up to the lock chamber. We will be continuing with work on this site up to the middle of March when we should be returning to our other site at Little Hill Farm.

Over the weekend of the **20-21 January** BITM Waterway Recovery Group are coming to help us at our Cosgrove site as there has been quite a lot of re-growth since we last worked there. As well as the usual scrub bashing we also hope to erect two interpretation boards one at each end of the canal. The boards will give the history of the canal and will also tell of the work of the society in a series of maps and pictures.

The boards have been funded by Milton Keynes Community Foundation and we would like to thank them for their grant

which will allow us to produce the interpretation boards.

We also plan to do some exploratory work on Bridge No1 at Cosgrove as when funding becomes available we are hoping to restore the bridge and re-water this section of the canal. We have already had representatives from both Halcrow and Arrups visit the site and advise us on the restoration of the bridge.

You would be very welcome to come and meet BITM WRG over the weekend of the 20-21 January or come and inspect the work being done at the Nature Reserve. We meet on the second Sunday of each month and alternate Thursdays.

ATHINA BECKETT
WORK PARTY ORGANISER

WORK PARTY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

February - April 2007

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

February	March	April
Thursday 1 st	Thursday 1 st	Thursday 12 th
Sunday 11 th	Sunday 11 th	Thursday 26 th
Thursday 15 th	Thursday 15 th	
Thursday 29 th		

DIY FIT OUT SAYINGS

Richard told me he had originally planned to recount his entire experience as a narrow boat DIY fitter but as the project took him well over two years to complete he did not think we would have space to print it all! Instead, Richard has written a 2-part article recounting his experience and the outcome of his efforts, along with the exploration of some DIY boat fitting sayings he encountered along the way..... Ed

In the dim and distant past I have had some experience of sea going boats. When we moved to the Northampton area some 30 years ago I started my canal ventures on friends' boats and hired narrow boats. 14 years ago the opportunity came to purchase our own boat and eventually we got more or less what we thought we wanted. With some minor structural changes at the first slipping we were away. The boat proved to be pretty satisfactory and we were proud owners for about 12 years. But of course eventually we decided we wanted other 'things' not the least another 8 foot in length. Unfortunately we wanted this in three different places so lengthening was not really an option.

Technology has moved on considerably in several areas in the last decade so we decided to start from scratch i.e. a sail away. For various reasons we eventually bought a modified standard hull from ProLine. When it arrived we put it on 6 sleepers in a friendly farmer's field where it remained for 15 months. The hull came to us ballasted and with the window openings and that was about it. We had to specify the position and size of the window openings. Professional boat fitters, (Watercraft boats), carried out specialist jobs, such as the woodwork.

'It takes 3 boats to get it right'

I was very conscious of this from the start particularly as it is unlikely that in my case there will be a third boat. I had a good start from the first boat and most of the fixed internal layout is very similar. Some things changed like a shower instead of a bath, moving the holding tank and calorifier. Care had to be taken to avoid introducing undesirable features as a result of these

changes - there are one or two niggly ones like a couple of light switches behind curtains and a sofa bed protruding into a passage way – but I may even be able to sort these out on this boat. The potential third boat would mainly benefit from better and less costly ways of achieving the same results. A good example is hull openings which in my case were all drilled and generally brass fittings used. It would have been much better to get the hull builder to weld in steel fittings for these openings. So yes it is true - I think it is almost impossible to hire one or two boats then get a sheet of paper and say *'that is what I want'*. Previous ownership for a year or two of something near one's desires (as in our case) is an essential. First time buyers beware!

'Of course you realise it will take forever'

Well, a sail away can take a professional fitter from 2-12 man months, and one assumes in the 2 month figure there is considerable assistance from MFI or at least pre-constructed units. With this in mind, I reckoned that 12 months for two of us was pretty fair. *How wrong I was.* The original intention was to have it on the water for the Northampton Becketts park rally. When this event passed, the next target was set for our late June. When June came and went I was given a lecture by my son, quite simple really, 'Dad the target date is when it is finished!' Eventually we got out on the cut a good 15 months after we took delivery of the hull - certainly not finished. It was at this point I realised that the DIY fitter does not complete a boat, it is a gradual transition from fitting out to use. As an example we met a friend on the way back from our first trip who was fitting out a boat. He was out for the weekend and about where we were after 8 months. I guess our problem was being in the middle of a field with the engine connected to nothing and too cold at that time to work outside! On reflection the last boat, which we had for 12 years, I still had improvements on my list of jobs when we sold it! So, in conclusion, it *does* take forever so **do not** set yourself a target date!

RICHARD WADDY

SOCIETY NOTICES

Peter Robinson

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of *Peter Robertson*. Peter had been a committee member with the Buckingham Canal Society and also played an active part in our work parties. Having attended a heritage bricklaying course he found plenty of use for his newfound skills in the re-building of the overflow spillweir at Buckingham. Those of us who knew him and worked with him will also remember him as a good friend.

**ATHINA BECKETT
CHAIRMAN**

DEFRA FUNDING CUTS

I am sure most of you already know the funding cuts DEFRA plan on making to British Waterways budgets and I hope most of you have already written to your MPs about the said cuts.

Several members of the Buckingham Canal Society attended a protest meeting at Stoke Bruerne on Saturday 25th November. I took my dog TinTin along as well and we pinned a banner onto his back which caused a lot of merriment. Anglia News were also present and TinTin managed to get himself on Anglia News that night! He and I also managed to get ourselves in a photo in Waterway World along side various protests photos.

So now I have a famous canal dog! Seriously folks - keep up the good work, continue writing to your MPs about the funding cuts and support any local or national protest meeting that takes place.

**ATHINA BECKETT
CHAIRMAN**

Calling all volunteers!

The society is looking for people to join existing volunteers in the following roles:

- Manning the publicity stand
- Providing administrative assistance
- Helping out at the work parties

Additionally, due to an increasing workload, and pressure of other personal and business interests, the Society's Committee is looking for a volunteer to act as Publicity Co-ordinator.

The society is also short of storage space, ideally in the Milton Keynes area.

If you think you may be able to help with any of the above (or have other talents you could offer) please see one of the committee members or contact the secretary.



**TEAM WORK IS
A KEY PART OF
VOLUNTEERING
AT ONE OF OUR
WORK PARTIES**

**WHY NOT GIVE
IT A TRY, MEET
OTHER
LIKE-MINDED
PEOPLE AND
LEARN NEW
SKILLS, WHILST
HELPING THE
WORK OF THE
BCS.**

Patron Tim Boswell MP

Committee 2006

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