



# The Buckingham Navigator

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

## EDITORIAL

Firstly, I'd like to thank all the members who have sent in contributions over the last 12 months. Your efforts have made the Navigator an interesting read and I hope that they will inspire others to send in their stories and thoughts for inclusion in 2008's issues of the Navigator.

My New Year's Resolution for the Navigator is to print more of *your* content, ideas, pictures and memories. Whilst putting this issue together, I tried to find pictures of Festive canal boats. I know many people live on their boats, or at least spend a lot of their leisure time on them and I'm sure many have their Christmas decorations up already. I would love to see your pictures of the festive season as viewed from a canal boat, and I will print the best ones in the Spring issue of the Navigator.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year for 2008.

Best wishes, GEORGINA SORRELL, EDITOR

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### THE NAVIGATOR SPRING ISSUE

Please send in all contributions for the Spring 2008 issue by **7 March 2008**, 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](mailto:georgina@sorrell.me.uk)).



I really wanted to include a seasonal picture in this issue and finally found this image on photo stock website. If you have any images that you feel would be suitable for the Navigator please send them through, so I can build up an image library for use in future issues.

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

With the problems of more budget cuts hanging over British Waterways we have to travel hopefully on the restoration front - but I believe that the public are behind us as canals are more popular than ever at present and have a special place in their minds!

On a positive note, we have recently found a surveyor who has offered his services free of charge to us at Cosgrove. However, this does present a lot of hard work for our volunteers as we have to completely clear the re-growth from a mile of canal and install benchmarks along the towpath, so any extra help would be appreciated as this work has to be completed by the middle of March.

We also have the prospect of help from WRG with the repairs to the bridge at Little Hill Farm and at the BBOWRT Nature Reserve plans are in place for the restoration of the lock. At our Buckingham site we hope to erect our third interpretation board and complete the restoration of the site shortly.

It's almost AGM time again and as most of you know we try to turn it into a social event with an excellent cheese and wine party plus a slideshow and talk by one of our members. It's a chance to meet old friends and to get to know other members. We would like to have a few more social events next year where we can all get better acquainted. The boat trip last April was a great success and we hope to have another next year.

With the year drawing to a close I want to thank all those who have helped the BCS over the past year. Thanks go first of all to my committee without whose help the society would not exist. A committee is essential to every society but it is not always easy to get people to offer their services and give up their spare time therefore we try to make our committee meeting fun as well as business like and I feel we have been served well this year by the present committee.

## Thanks also go to:

- volunteers who helped at the Cosgrove Lock Ransom weekend
- volunteers who organised and ran our heritage walks in September
- volunteers who ran the society stall
- our new membership secretary Jane
- Len who looks after our web site
- Pam who maintains our archive
- Georgina our Navigator Editor without whose work you wouldn't be reading this!
- the work party volunteers who have made such a difference to our four sites this year
- our raffle ticket sellers, who have already outsold last year by 300 tickets with a month left to go!

I wish you all a very happy Christmas and hope to see you all at the AGM.

**ATHINA BECKETT**  
**CHAIRMAN**

## EVENTS

### **AGM REMINDER!!**

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

at 7:15pm on  
Saturday 26th January 2008  
at Buckingham Community Centre,  
Cornwall's Meadow

Featuring a slideshow and talk entitled

***'A Medway Adventure'***

For details call Athina on 01908 661217

## **IWA MILTON KEYNES**

Monthly social meetings are held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month at Milton Keynes Village Pavilion Community Sports Club. The current schedule of meetings is:

### **Monday 28 January**

*'History of the Wyvern Shipping Company'*  
- James Griffin - Managing Director, Wyvern Shipping

## **Monday 25 February - AGM**

*'Wendover Arm Restoration Update'*

- Roger Leishman - Restoration Director,  
WAT

## **Monday 26 March**

*'Hayes Boatbuilders of Stony Stratford'*

- Neil Loudon - MK Heritage Association

Check their website

<http://mkiwa.users.btopenworld.com> for  
updates or Rodney Evans, Social Secretary  
on 01908 376449 or

[Rodwen@scythia.fsnet.co.uk](mailto: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.

For more information, check their website:

<http://northampton.waterways.org.uk/diary.htm>

for updates or contact Graham Treagus on  
01604 870515.

## **Tuesday 08 January**

*'Three Men in a Skiff'*

- John Russell

## **Tuesday 12 February**

*'The Union Canal'*

- Richard Thomas

## **Tuesday 11 March - AGM**

*followed by 'The Rivers of Oz'*

- Steve Miles

## **FREE TIME WITH CANALTIME**

This is an account of the time my husband  
Jeremy and I spent working for a boat  
company.

It started one Saturday afternoon in the  
summer of 2002 when we visited the marina  
at Peartree Bridge. We had seen Canaltime  
boats on the Grand Union and discovered  
they had a base in Milton Keynes. As  
Jeremy and I had spent many enjoyable  
holidays on the canal we were interested in  
hiring a boat. It was fortunate the person we  
spoke to at the marina was Ian Greenfield,

Operations Manager for Canaltime. Ian  
explained that Canaltime was a time-share  
company and did not hire out boats for short  
holidays. As we chatted it became obvious  
to Ian that we were fairly experienced  
boaters. He explained that from time to time  
they need crews to move boats, and asked  
if would we be interested in doing this. He  
said the company could not pay us, but we  
could have a free trip. That was the start of  
our association with Canaltime.

Our first trip was in November that year  
when we took a boat from Market  
Harborough for three days to run in a new  
engine. We enjoyed having the canal to our  
selves but decided to buy some thermal  
long Johns for any further winter journeys!

In 2003 we did five trips. The first was in  
July when we did a four-day trip from  
Sawley marina along the Trent and Mersey  
canal, again to run in a new engine. Our  
daughter Elizabeth, her husband Michael  
and our four-month-old grandson Connor  
joined us for one of the days. They had a  
great time helping work the boat and  
manning the locks. As a thank you we took  
them to a nice restaurant in the little village  
of Alrewas, where Connor entertained  
everyone by being very cute and well  
behaved.

Our next job was from Market Harborough to  
Sawley to deliver a new boat. Our son  
Edmond came with us, and as the weather  
was good it was a pleasant trip.

The rest of the trips were to take boats from  
Milton Keynes to Stoke Bruerne on three  
consecutive days. The company was  
reducing the size of its fleet at Milton  
Keynes and the boats were to be  
transported by road to other bases, with  
Stoke Bruerne being the nearest place  
where boats can be lifted out of the water for  
transfer on to lorries. Ian was concerned  
that we might find the same trip three days  
running boring. In fact we enjoyed the  
leisurely journeys through the Northampton  
countryside, with Edmond accompanying us  
on one of the days.

By March 2004 Canaltime was closing their  
base at Milton Keynes and all the boats

were being transferred to other bases. We were asked to take a boat up to Ellesmere on the Llangollen canal. A number of boats were to make the trip in convoy. As it was likely to take about two weeks Edmond agreed to come with us and he and I took time off work. Two days before the trip Jeremy drove his car to Ellesmere and returned to Milton Keynes by train.

There was a snowstorm the day before we were due to leave and it was very cold. We discovered that we had the boat that had no heating and the door of the cooker was missing. Despite these minor setbacks we started off. The long johns came into their own, and with several layers of clothing and plenty of hot drinks we made good progress. There was a gale on the Saturday and we were stranded overnight as trees had fallen into the canal. We were on our way the next morning when the engine stopped. It was just our luck this was Mothering Sunday and the engineer who should have been on duty had taken his mother out to lunch. We were stranded for a second night! There was nothing we could do but walk a mile to the nearest pub for a meal. The journey took twelve days in all, we had gone through snow, hail, rain and wind, but eventually we arrived at Ellesmere.

In February 2005 Jeremy and I were asked to take a boat from Market Harborough to Sawley. The long Johns got another airing, and fortunately the heating was working on this boat. We woke one morning to find the canal covered in a layer of ice, a new experience for us.

I had just taken the boat through a lock and was slowing down to let Jeremy back on board when I heard a splash. I turned round to see him walking along the towpath dripping wet. He had slipped on black ice and fallen in the water, just below the lock. We moored up for an hour to let him change his clothes and have a hot drink.

Unfortunately we were unable to finish the journey. British Waterways were doing emergency repairs to the lock just outside Loughborough. As the work would take several days it meant we would not get to Sawley before I was due back at work.

A few months later the company was closing its base at Bradford on Avon. Again boats were being relocated to Ellesmere. We were asked to take a boat from Banbury on the Oxford canal to Atherstone, as the journey was being done in stages. We were taken to Banbury to meet up with the other crews. We stayed in convoy as two of the boats only had one person each. It was interesting working as a team, making sure all three boats got through the locks as quickly as possible. On arrival at Atherstone the manager of the base was there to meet us. He explained that there was no one to take the boat on to Ellesmere and asked if we be interested in doing the rest of the journey. Unfortunately we had to say no as I had to be back at work in two days.

It was two years before we heard from Ian again. After heavy rain in the Midlands the rivers Trent and Soar were flooded, and some boats had been abandoned. Ian asked if we were available to take a boat along the Trent and Mersey canal from Barton under Needwood to Shardlow. As the rivers were still high we would not be able to get the boat back to their base at Sawley. We were happy to help out, and the following day drove to Barton under Needwood to collect the boat. It took about eight hours to do the trip but we had to wait for over an hour at Shardlow for a member of staff to drive us back to Barton to collect our car. It was eleven o'clock by the time we arrived home. It had been a long but exhilarating day.

Two weeks later we received another call from Ian. More boats needed to be brought down to Shardlow. Edmond was home and agreed to crew a second boat. By the middle of the afternoon it had started to rain and by the time we arrived at Shardlow we were soaked to the skin.

We have enjoyed all our trips despite the cold, rain, snow, high winds and lack of heating that we have sometimes experienced. It has been interesting seeing another side of canal life, and we hope there will be other opportunities to work for the company.

**ROZ WOODFORD**

## WORK PARTY ORGANISER'S REPORT

The work has gone well at the BBOWT Nature Reserve. Most of the foliage has been removed from the sides of the lock and this has led to the discovery of two flights of steps at the far end of the lock, which had been completely filled in. We had hoped to clear more from the inside of the lock chamber but when one of our volunteers ventured into the lock he found that the water was coming over the tops of his waders and he was sinking fast into the mud! He then had to be rescued by other volunteers.

Whilst working there this Autumn we have also come across some extra wildlife which has included an adder which luckily quickly disappeared; also some frogs one of which had got trapped by its hind legs in a clump of weeds. He was then freed by us and hopped away quite happily. We also discovered several crayfish but unfortunately they were the American type which have now taken over our ponds and rivers.

Over the weekend of the 8-9<sup>th</sup> December BITM Waterway Recovery Group joined us for the weekend. They held their Christmas party with us at Cosgrove Village hall and we had over thirty people in attendance. Over Saturday and Sunday most of their folks worked on our Cosgrove site clearing the re-growth from the bed of the canal. This is really important work as we now have the services of a surveyor who has offered his time free of charge if we can clear the Cosgrove site by the middle of March.

Unfortunately the weather wasn't on our side and most of the time over the weekend we had to work in the rain but a lot of work was achieved and two sections of canal were cleared at Cosgrove.

We also had a second group who were learning hedge laying at the BBOWT Nature Reserve. This work again was hampered by the weather but now some of our volunteers know how to hedge-lay this work can continue next year.

In January the work parties move to Cosgrove and as well as clearing the canal bed we also have to put in benchmarks along the whole of the canal for the survey to be carried out. This will involve a lot of extra work for our volunteers so help would be much appreciated. The work at Cosgrove will be much lighter than some of the past work as we will only be removing saplings rather than large trees. So if some of you found the previous work rather heavy this work might appeal more.

Hope everyone has a really good Christmas and hope to see you all in the New Year at our AGM on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> January or at our Cosgrove site where the work parties start from the 3<sup>rd</sup> January.

**ATHINA BECKETT**  
**WORK PARTY ORGANISER**

## WORK PARTY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### January - March 2008

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

<b>January</b>	<b>February</b>	<b>March</b>
Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup>
Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup>
Thursday 17 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday 27 <sup>th</sup>
Thursday 31 <sup>st</sup>		



MEMBERS AND VISITORS ENJOYED THE HERITAGE WALK IN SEPTEMBER – MANY THANKS TO THE VOLUNTEERS WHO GAVE THEIR TIME TO ORGANISE THE WALK

## **SOCIETY NOTICES**

**\*\*\*\* STOP PRESS! \*\*\*\***

The BCS has just learnt that we have received a large grant to restore Hyde Lane Lock. So thanks goes to all those who have helped with this project over the years.

### **Peter Robinson**

Last year I had the sad duty to report the death of Peter Robertson. Peter was a keen supporter of the BCS as a committee member and he also attended our work parties on a regular basis. In fact Peter was responsible for rebuilding part of the overflow spillweir at our Buckingham site.

Peter had attended a brick-laying course and used the skills learnt there to help rebuild the part of the spillweir that contains the original bricks.

The BCS has now received a donation from Peter's estate for which we are extremely grateful.

### **ATHINA BECKETT**



PETER AND OTHER BCS MEMBERS WORKING ON THE SPILLWEIR AT BUCKINGHAM

### **Remembering Maurice**

In October the Society heard the startling and sad news that Maurice Batts, the ex-chairman of the Buckingham Canal Society, was murdered on his canal boat in Banbury. There will be a tribute to Maurice in the Spring issue of the Navigator. Members have already sent through their memories of Maurice and several pictures of him during his time as chairman. If you have any

memories or thoughts that you want to share with other members, please send them through to the Editor.

### **Raffle tickets appeal**

Some BCS members have been selling raffle tickets for the Community Foundation in Central Milton Keynes. Half of the proceeds from the ticket sales go to the BCS and the other half to local charities.



THE MEMBERS DRESSED IN BOATMEN AND WOMEN'S COSTUMES FOR THE OCCASION!

### **Buckingham Canal Remembered**

Hedley Cadd, Buckingham County Councillor remembers a story told to him by his father. In 1923 the canal was frozen over all the way from Cosgrove to Buckingham and a skating race was held which is father won.

If anyone remembers the race or has other stories about the canal and its history please send details through to the Editor.

## Patron Tim Boswell MP

### Committee 2007

Chairman/Work Party Organiser - Athina Beckett 2 Staters Pound, Pennyland, Milton Keynes MK15 8AX <a href="mailto:athinabec@aol.com">athinabec@aol.com</a>	01908 661217 Mobile 07721 319404
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Treasurer - Vernon Draper 12 Chipperfield Close, New Bradwell, Milton Keynes MK13 0EP <a href="mailto:vernon.draper@btinternet.com">vernon.draper@btinternet.com</a>	01908 312239 Mobile 07961 302039
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Membership Secretary – Jane Caswell 96 Gaddesden Crescent, Wavendon Gate, Milton Keynes MK7 7SQ <a href="mailto:jane@caswell.eclipse.co.uk">jane@caswell.eclipse.co.uk</a>	01908 282589
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Website - Len Barrows <a href="mailto:info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk">info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk</a>	
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](mailto:info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk)