

The Buckingham Navigator

The newsletter of the Buckingham Canal Society

Registered Charity No: 1072924

EDITORIAL

We apologise for the late arrival of the Spring edition of the Navigator but the BCS is now without a newsletter editor so this edition has been put together by the BCS Committee with special thanks to Len Barrows web site manager.

Best wishes, Athina

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THE NAVIGATOR SPRING ISSUE

Please send in all contributions for the Summer 2011 issue by 25th June, emailed, on CD, typewritten or handwritten (in that order of preference) to:

Athina Beckett, 2 Staters Pound, Pennyland,
Milton Keynes MK15 8AX
(email: chairman@buckinghamcanal.org.uk)

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.

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If your business is interested in becoming a corporate member of the Buckingham Canal Society please contact the membership secretary.

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 BCS activities, future events, work party volunteering, 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

There has been some excellent progress for the society over the last few months; one very important success story is that Aylesbury Vale District Council has agreed to form a partnership with the BCS. They recently issued a Press Release where they stated that 'they pledged their full support for the restoration of the disused canal' but rather than quote further lines from this press release we have included it in full in the Navigator.

The press release has proved to be an excellent communication document for the general public in Buckingham allowing them to discover that they had a canal and will hopefully have a restored canal in the future!



Councillor John Cartwright hands a cheque to Athina

Helen Preston who gives daytime talks on the canal has received a steady flow of requests for talks in the recent months so again extra publicity for the society. If you know of a group who would like to receive a talk please let me or Helen know.

Negotiations are taking place with BBOWT in regard to the Society taking over the lease at the BBOWT Nature Reserve at Hyde Lane Lock. We have been working in partnership with BBOWT on this site for over three years and as BBOWT are very pleased with the work carried out by the society and our volunteers they are therefore very keen for us to take over the lease for this site. We have recently received a first draft copy of the lease agreement from them and we are working together to clarify certain legal matters. Once this has been agreed it represents a significant move forward for the society.

Discussions are also in progress with Nick Hawes the landowner of the Bourton Meadow site. This is the site which we hope to re-water when funding is available. Things are already starting to happen and the first stage of the re-watering process is underway with a company called Middlemarch carrying out an ecology survey for us.

Buckingham Flood Group is also beginning to support the idea that the canal could be used as part of a flood prevention scheme for Buckingham. Different ideas are being discussed regarding how to use the canal, one idea is to take run-off water from Page Hill, Buckingham and channel it into the canal. . There is also the concept of a balancing lake as a future project with approval of the landowner.

If you haven't tried our Friday night social evenings which are held every two months at the Two Brewers pub in Thornborough do think about joining us there for a drink and a chat. It's all very friendly and a chance to meet other members. Look under the 'future events' column for details.

Our bric-a-brac stall will be starting to go out and about again, attending as many local festivals as possible to raise the profile and funds for the society. Last year we made over £2,000 so hope to do better this year. So if you have any books, bric-a-brac etc. that you think we could sell on the stall please contact me. We can sometimes arrange items to collect as well.

Plans are also underway for our annual 'Lock Ransom' festival at Cosgrove Lock over the weekend of 22nd 24th July. We do hope as many of you as possible can attend and help this year. There is quite a variety of tasks we need assistance with and these include setting up the site on Friday pm. This involves erecting tents etc. and over Saturday and Sunday helping with various activities which include the cake stall and here we need your help with supplying the cakes. We take all types of cakes shop bought or home made. Other activities include working on the bric-a-brac stall and the actual work of operating the locks! Most of all we value your support at this event.

Athina Beckett (Chairman)

Looking back to the AGM

Your committee was delighted by the support of members at the 2011 AGM and Social Evening. There was an attendance of more than 50

people, more than a quarter of the membership! In fact it was realised that next year a larger room will be needed to accommodate, not only our members, but also the increasing amount of publicity material and to make room for setting out the popular refreshments.

Copies of reports were made available to members attending in addition to the committee's presentation. We expect that the Annual Report will soon be available to view on the web-site.

Following a Cheese and Wine interval Terry Cavender gave us an informative and entertaining view of how the foundations for restoration are being laid through detailed surveying and mapping. He demonstrated the skills volunteers are developing on site and showed us the software that is being used to put the information into a usable form. We are grateful for the support of Buckinghamshire Community Foundation who have provided the Grassroots grant to underpin this work and for the support of Buckinghamshire County Council who have included us as a subcontractor in their license to use Ordnance Survey material.

The committee has received much positive feedback following the AGM both for an enjoyable evening and for the increasing rate of progress being made. There are still plenty of opportunities to get involved at all levels from recruiting your neighbour or family as passive members through to fundraising, research or more practical work. Do help us to make the progress reports at next year's AGM even more significant in the annals of the society. We look forward to seeing you at an equally successful evening next year. Make a note in your diaries on January 28th 2012 when the next AGM will be held.

Helen Preston, Secretary

Another Rummage through the Archives

Some of you were kind enough to say you enjoyed my last dip into the old letters in the Archives. So I thought I would see if there were any more letters you would be interested in. Unfortunately in many cases the correspondence is incomplete and there is no follow up letter. One such letter is from Herbert Thomas, Grand Junction Canal, London to Mr. Millner Canal Office, Blisworth. Dated 5th April 1905

"I have received the enclosed from Mr. C. W. Roberts of Deanshanger concerning our man

Lovesy catching rabbits in the towing path hedge of the Buckingham Arm. Do you know anything of this matter"

On 17th October 1905 J.W. Bliss, G.J.C. London, wrote to Mr. Millner, Blisworth. "The Enderby & Stoney Stanton Granite Company propose sending some Roadstone to Thornton's Wharf on the Buckingham Arm and ask what the wharfage charge is. Can you ascertain this? I presume boats can travel under ordinary circumstances with full loads to this point" A hand written note from M.J. Sibthorpe, The Falcon Inn, Old Stratford dated November 1905 states:-

"Dear Sir

I am very sorry to have to again trouble you concerning my paddock. But the fact is I am being troubled a great deal with the present tenant Mr. Lakun (?) apart from my not being able to obtain my rent from him he refuses to remove the mud in the paddock, only up to a certain distance of the rails, which he claims your company are responsible for, but as I received something from the late tenant Mr. Heseltine which I thought was for the removal of the mud I should esteem it a very great favour if you will kindly let me know if you think the Company are responsible for the removal of any mud being near the rails in paddock as I quite expect proceedings will have to be taken to enforce payment of rent and before doing this I should like to be quite clear as to our position with matters regard to this mud apologising for having to again trouble you I am Yours Truly"

Another hand written note, possibly from a K. Turrell, The Avenue, Cliftonville, Northampton.

"Dear Sir

In reply to your letter of the 27th re the hedge at Old Stratford. This hedge belongs to my sister. The tenant N. Slaymaker in his agreement undertakes to keep it in order. Will you therefore kindly take the matter up with him."

On 12th June 1907 Gordon Thomas, Engineer, G.J.C. London writes to Mr Millner

"I have received a letter from Mr. Lester, of Home Farm, Leckampstead, in which he states that:- "Meadow near Leckhamstead Wharf is broken in; will you have it attended to at your earliest convenience, as I shall be wanting to make use of it for the haymaking."

Please give this matter your attention"

On July 2nd 1907 Thos Seymour, Clerk to the Parish Council Cosgrove wrote to Mr. Millner.

“At the last meeting of the above I was directed to call your attention to the rails on the lock gates at Cosgrove and to ask if they can be straightened as complaints have been made that they are now so close as to be almost impassable to female passengers. If you are visiting Cosgrove during the week and can make it suit your journey should be pleased to meet you at the Lock between 12&1 (midday).”

A note from J. Lovesy on the 7th September 1905 states: - **“The Ballance Post is broken in 2 parts at Bridge 23 the one below Hide Lane Lock the post is in the Bridge ole (?) and Ballance across it whas up yesterday”**

On this occasion a memo from Gordon Thomas Engineer, G.J.C. London, to Mr. Millner dated September 14 1905 states: - **“I have received a letter from Messrs. Harrison & Son, of Buckingham, calling attention to the cartway drawbridge near Foscott Lock.**

They state that it has been in a dangerous condition for some time and it is feared that a serious accident will take place at this point. It has been suggested by their tenant, Mr. Lester, that it is past repair, and I shall be glad if you will examine and perhaps it is possible to put the same in order, if so have the necessary work done without delay. Does your Requisition No 147 for new drawbridge balance and post refer to this bridge?”

I would be interested in any information regarding the people mentioned in these letters. I am particularly keen to fathom out the name of Mr. Sibthorpe's tenant. I wish to state that I take no responsibility for spelling or grammar.

Ros Woodford.

Work Party Organiser's Report

The work has been progressing well at the BBOWT Nature Reserve but in January and February we were restricted by the weather conditions as to the type of tasks that could be started so instead of the re-pointing work on the bridge we have been concentrating on improving the footpath. The work here has gone very well and should make things a lot better for walkers and our own volunteers taking equipment to the site. Several recent work parties have been building up the canal bank using some of the material cut out from the hedge laying to reinforce the banks, which have then been backfilled. Also some of the potholes, where very large tree roots are too large to

remove, have been backfilled as well, making the whole footpath a lot more user friendly.

The hedge-laying work has also been completed in time for the bird-nesting season and we have also planted 100 saplings in the gaps along the hedge and here we were very fortunate in getting the saplings donated through a scheme run by RHS Britain in Bloom and the Woodland Trust. On Thursday 24th and Sunday 27th March we organised two Community Tree Planting days when the saplings were planted.



Community Tree Planting



The work with Stowe School continues and they are joining us on Monday afternoons; they worked at the Nature Reserve in January and February but in March we have started a new project with them. As part of the scheme to re-water the canal at Bourton Meadow and to help prevent some of the flooding problems in Buckingham we hope to divert part of the drainage system to feed the canal. One of the drainage ditches which is situated close to the canal alongside the ring road should be cleared by the Council each year but it doesn't seem to have been touched for many years. This is where Stowe School are helping us, by clearing out this ditch so as well as helping the Society, the Council is also getting help! The drainage ditch is well full of mud and also has saplings

and even trees growing out of it. So quite a lot of work for Stowe to do, but their pupils seems to love this work and it saves our own volunteers having to wallow about in the mud! We are hoping that they can complete this task by the end of June but if this proves to be a task too far we may be asking some of our regular volunteers to help out!

With the weather hopefully improving we intend to continue with the repair work on the bridge at Little Hill farm and hope to complete the repairs to the bridge by the end of summer. If anyone has bricklaying skills they would be very welcome!

Last year we removed quite a considerable amount of reeds from the canal bed to allow a free flow of water by the lock. More work will be needed to remove extra reeds which have grown up again east of the lock.

Lastly, we had a very good response last year from companies doing team building tasks and this year so far we have had a visit requests from Londell Basell and requests from Santander for possible three visits. But we can always fit in more groups, so if you know of a company looking to do a team building day on an environmental project please pass their details onto me.

Otherwise again a big thanks goes to those of you who join us on a regular basis on the work parties on alternate Thursdays and on the second Sunday of each month and we hope you will continue to join us throughout the summer.

Athina Beckett
Work Party Organiser

Work Party Dates For Your Diary May-June

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

May	June
Thursday 5 th	Thursday 2 nd
Sunday 8 th	Sunday 12 th
Thursday 19 th	Thursday 16 th
	Thursday 30 th

BCS is now on Facebook



Thanks to the efforts of Corinna, BCS now have a page on Facebook. Just search for Buckingham Canal if you are already a Facebook user.

Looking ahead to the Lock Ransom

Much planning is going on behind the scenes towards putting together another successful Lock Ransom. Note the weekend of July 23rd and 24th in your diaries NOW!

We will be looking for helpers in a number of areas and if you feel you can contribute in any way please contact Athina or myself. As always there will be a need for lock operators, a popular task as much time is spent sitting on the gates! Stall manning is an important task, there will be the well known Bric a Brac stall, Pluck a Duck for which donations of child or adult prizes would be very welcome, children's games and the very profitable tea and cake stall which will need contributions from your kitchen (or the supermarket as it all sells) and a good number of members to run it.

Anyone who can be available on Friday 22nd to set up or at the end of Sunday 23rd to help pack up and tidy the site would be particularly welcome.

If you have any bright ideas as to how we can raise even more money don't keep them to yourself. Let us in on the secret!

Helen Preston 01280 821232

Events

Tuesday 10th May 8pm
IWA Northants Talk tba
Walnut Tree
Blisworth
Northants

Friday 20th May 8pm
BCS Social Evening
Two Brewers Pub, Thornborough
Ring Terry Cavender to confirm

Saturday 28th-Monday 30th May
Boxmoor Canal Festival

Friday 3rd-Sunday 5th June
IWA Milton Keynes

Friday 10th-Sunday 12th June
Stoke Bruerne Gala Weekend

Saturday 18th-Sunday 19th June
Great Linford Waterside Festival

Saturday 25th-Sunday 26th June
Rally & Canal Festival
Braunston Marina

Saturday 2nd July
Lionhearts Festival, Milton Keynes

Friday 22nd-Sunday 24th July
BCS Lock Ransom Festival
Cosgrove Lock, Grand Union Canal

Why bother.... Working for corporations? Such a shock!

Diaries, Diaries, Diaries. My corporate life seems to revolve around diaries and emails. And worse still the diaries never seem to be completely up-to-date so I nearly missed the deadline for Navigator. Fortunately, Athina had sent a reminder so here I am writing.

So my thoughts turn to what I should subtitle this contribution. And I came up with working for corporations. Why? CSR. Do I hear cries of "*what!?*" Corporate Social Responsibility is what CSR stands for in this context. Also called by some corporate giving or corporate sponsorship. What's that got to do with Canals?.....

Well, for those of you who came to the AGM you will (hopefully) recall some of the crazy numbers in the report for the value of in kind donations. Most of these have come about due to CSR. If you had not guessed, the next question is can you get some and ideally pass it on to the BCS? Maybe you work for a corporate employer or your neighbour or family or friend does. You will probably find that they have some kind of volunteering award or giving campaign.

As an example, I work for Pitney Bowes. That's a bit of unashamed advertising.

- they allow me to do charitable giving as payroll giving which is matched by them 1 for 1 so for every £10 I give (before tax) they also give £10 and it (eventually) gets sent to Vernon

- also, they give \$500 (yes its dollars) for each year that I give more than 100 hours
- Also, we managed to get them to allow me to use some of the corporate proceeds to do mapping analysis with equivalent value of several thousands of £.

A few other members of the society have been able to help in this way and more details of these will come along as we move forward. If you work for or know someone who works for, a corporate organisation, it's well worth asking ☺

Elsewhere, you will read of the progress with partnerships that we have made now having formal partnerships with British Waterways and Aylesbury Vale District Council. We are now moving on to partnerships with organisations at the Northamptonshire part of the canal. If any of you know anyone in parish / town / district / other organisations then please email me their details including email and phone number. You never know when these contacts can be useful.

And then there is the shocking bit. Well hopefully the lack of shock actually. As part of the aspirations to rewater the Buckingham end at Bourton meadow, we were advised to do a statutory utilities search. That led us to the detailed information about the electricity cables down there in the ground. After a nice visit by the area proximity engineer from central networks we now have to dig a trial hole to confirm the location and depth of the cable. This has to be done by hand is down to an approximate depth of about 9ft (2.7m for those that want to be European about it ☺). So get your digging heads on over the next few work parties. At least its spring so we could plant some spuds in the pile of spoil from the hole. Hopefully we will find the cable with no electric shocks and without switching off Buckingham Town.

PS: The hole has been successfully completed and the cable safely located. It just needs filling in again!

Finally, the usual cry for help



***Or put another way
HELP!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
(Please, as in
come and help us!)***

Previous experience is not necessary - although please do shout if you have some relevant skills to offer. Tasks include typing up the list of notes from the walk or using MS excel or MS access. As some of you know by now, I am always willing to come up with an opinion but hopefully equally as willing to listen to others suggestions. To this end, we also plan to meet regularlyish at the Two Brewers in Thornborough where Andy (the landlord) is very receptive to us using his electricity for laptop PC as well as buying his rather good beer. This will hopefully be about once every month or so to join up all the bits of activity we have done around the elephant and work out which leg of the elephant we need to put on the bar-b-que next!



***As many of
you will
already
know, some
of the BCS
members
have been
revisiting and
surveying***

sections of the canal.

Different aspects of this work ranges from a fair bit of walking up and down the canal through to reading various documents held in the archives in order to glean all the information we can about each of the assets on the canal. We will then need to pull it all together and enter it into the mapping tool and the database. It's not as frightening as it seems but as the electricity board always say, many hands make light work.

I use the word surveying in multiple connotations! Some of the surveys have been of

the walk and check the state of the path, fences, hedgerow, rights of way, and counting rabbit holes. Others have been the full blown staff and surveyor's level as discussed above and even painting some of the bushes and manhole covers! We are still doing this work and would welcome anyone to come and help with The Elephant Project (elephants are very big and the saying goes you cant eat it all at once and have to do so bit by bit – plus I am large and turning grey!)

If you are interested in any of the topics covered above or the software or helping with the mapping and audit further then please either email me at directly terry.cavender@btinternet.com or get in touch via Athina or call me on 01280 860316.

And to finish....

Man walks into a canalside pub and orders a double whisky.

"Blimey." says the barman. "You look a bit pale."

"Well," says the guy, "There I was cruising along the cut at a leisurely 7mph, Gardner engine making satisfying clunking and wheezing noises, luxuriant black smoke billowing from the chimney. The oil slick made a pretty and iridescent pattern as it was swirled around by the 6" high waves in my wake.

I'd just chucked a few empty cans of lager overboard along with my licence - thought it was about time I got rid of it after that nasty incident with the Labrador and cauliflower cheese back in 2005.

Then I saw a hire boat approaching and as they bounced back off the pilings when I passed them, they gave me a big smile and a cheery wave.

A few moments later I saw a bloke on the towpath shaking and sweating, with a shocked, bewildered expression on his face.

I immediately screeched to a halt, moored up and then walked the half mile back to where he was still quivering.

"What's up, mate?" I asked.

"You'll never believe me. No one will."

"Come on mate, maybe talking to someone will help," I laughed sympathetically.

"OK then. But you won't believe it, really you won't."

His legs seemed to give way suddenly and he landed in a crumpled heap on the grass.

"A family of hire boaters just went past and they were shouting the most incredible, off the wall stuff at me."

"Yeah, I saw them," I says. "They seemed pretty pleased with themselves. What did they say?"

"They said... they said how wonderful it was to be on such a beautiful, tidy canal. And how p-p-proud I must be. They actually thanked me. Thanked me, I say."

Just then I noticed his BW badge.

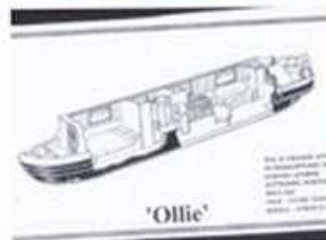
"Bloody hire boaters!" I screamed. "Give all us proper boaters a bad name, they do

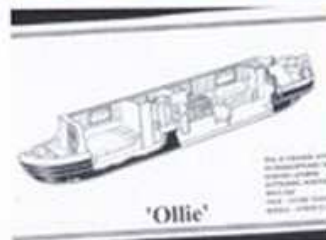
Fancy a Natter?

We are still meeting at the pub! It's the 3rd Friday on the odd months and 3rd Thursdays on the even months. The purpose is to make it a regular social and open topic discussion about the canal restoration progress. We are happy to move venue if folk want, or happy to meet at Thornborough as we have been. ***We meet at Thornborough on Friday 20th May 7:30pm for an 8:00pm start.*** Please let me have suggestions for other venues



Terry Cavender

		For Sale £30,000 ONO 45 ft Narrowboat BL 1.8 engine BSC Oct 2012 Moored Nr Cugrove More details from bilandval@btinternet.com 01536 724337 or 07808 571101
		
		


'Ollie'

Buckingham Canal Society

Lock Ransom

Saturday 23rd July 2011 10:00am until late
and Sunday 24th July 2011 10:00am to 4:00pm
At Cosgrove Lock, Cosgrove on the
Grand Union Canal

All welcome – free entry

Donations towards the restoration of The Old Stratford Arm and
Buckingham Arm of the Grand Union Canal will be gratefully
received

PLANNED ATTRACTIONS

(subject to change)

- ❖ Historic Narrowboats Raymond & Nutfield
- ❖ Boat Trips & Bar – by Cosgrove Narrowboats
- ❖ 'The Cheese Boat' selling a range of delicious cheeses
- ❖ Bric-a-Brac Stall
- ❖ Prize Quiz
- ❖ Cake Stall
- ❖ Raffle (Saturday night)
- ❖ Buckingham Belles -Handbell Ringers (Sunday)
- ❖ Fish & Chip Supper (needs to be pre-booked)
- ❖ Plus other attractions



For details email

info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk

or ring 01908 661217



Benefactors – These are companies that have agreed to help the society in one way or another

Travis Perkins Trading Co. Ltd
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Bletchley
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MOBILE NO 07949 - 671493**

Partnership news

Making Aylesbury Vale the best possible place to live and work

February 2011

For immediate release

Council pledges support for canal restoration project

Aylesbury Vale District Council has pledged its full support for the restoration of the disused Buckingham Canal, which closed down in the 1960s.

The Buckingham Canal Society (BCS) would like to see the waterway restored and reopened, using the original route wherever possible, and is seeking to develop partnerships with landowners, local authorities and other organisations to help it achieve its aims.

At a meeting of AVDC's cabinet on 8 February, members gave their backing to the restoration plans and approved a partnership agreement with the BCS.

The council will now work to:

- Keep BCS informed of any consultations on plans and strategies, or other opportunities for the canal society to contribute to the development of its plans
- Provide advice on grant funding opportunities and assist BCS in applying for funds
- Consider opportunities to provide the canal society with equipment and materials
- Introduce the canal society to other organisations that may assist its restoration plans

The project is likely to have a positive social and economic impact on the area as well as

being of environmental benefit. Restoration of the canal would provide new employment, create a range of leisure opportunities, increase the diversity of the natural environment and preserve important structures and artefacts.

Councillor David Thompson, Cabinet Member for Leisure at AVDC, said: “The restoration of the canal is a large and ambitious project, but one that AVDC is proud to support. During, and on the completion of the restoration of the canal, it will create a fantastic waterside environment that will bring real benefits to those living and working in Buckingham and the surrounding area. We look forward to working with the canal society to help take the project forward.”

From its opening in 1801, the canal was used to transport bricks, coal and manufactured goods as well as imports from the London Docks. It also provided transport for agricultural produce from the farms and villages along its route.

The waterway to Buckingham ran a total of just under 11 miles from the Grand Union Canal at Cosgrove Lock along the Stony Stratford and Buckingham Arms. The original route passed through Old Stratford, Deanshanger, Thornton, Leckhampstead Wharf, Thornborough Mill, Maids Moreton Mill and Bourton Meadow.

Much of the canal is now dry, and parts have been built over. Certain sections of the route would need to be created anew due to the development that has taken place in and around villages since the canal's closure.

Early in 2010, BCS commissioned an initial engineering feasibility study regarding the restoration of the entire length of the canal arm. The report concluded that it was a feasible project, although significant funding and commitment will be required.

Terry Cavender of the Buckingham Canal Society said: “The support for the restoration from the district council through this partnership enables us to further demonstrate the community support for the project. This support is an essential part of fundraising through grant giving bodies to enable the progression of the restoration project. Along with our existing partnerships, such as those with British Waterways, Buckinghamshire County Council and Buckingham Town council, AVDC's support is welcomed as we move forward into more and more practical restoration work”.

BCS is actively seeking new members and welcomes participation at all levels from the community. For more details visit www.buckinghamcanal.org.uk or email info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk

– Ends –

Notes to editors:

The BCS was founded in January 1992 and is a registered charity. It is affiliated to the Inland Waterways Association and has members all over the UK.

For interviews, please contact:

- Councillor David Thompson, Cabinet Member for Leisure, 01296 425656
- Jon McGinty, Deputy Chief Executive, 01296 585251
- Terry Cavender, Buckingham Canal Society, 01280 860316

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