

The Buckingham Navigator

The newsletter of the Buckingham Canal Society

Registered Charity No: 1072924

EDITORIAL

Once again we are still without a newsletter editor and we are very grateful to our webmaster Len Barrows for stepping into the breach once more. If you have a talent for this kind of thing please get in touch as it is now becoming pressing to appoint someone to this post. In this edition you will find details of our Lock Ransom and Canal Festival over the weekend of 23-24 July where we will be very pleased to welcome as many members as can make it.

Best wishes, Athina

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THE NAVIGATOR SUMMER ISSUE

Please send in all contributions for the Autumn 2011 issue by 22nd August, 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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Thrupp Wharf
Cosgrove MK19 7JP

Inland Waterways
Association
Northampton Branch

Braunston Marina



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.

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

Chairman's Chat

Braunston Marina has now joined our list of corporate members. Tim Coghlan from Braunston Marina is very supportive of local canal charities. They are hosting the Historic Narrowboat Rally and Canal Festival over the weekend of 24th-26th June and have invited BCS to run a stall at the festival. Our thanks go to Mr Coghlan for the support he is giving our Society.

The other really exciting news is that another landowner has agreed to let us work on their land and this makes it the fifth site we now have permission to restore. It also presents new challenges for our work party volunteers and excellent news for the Society!

Other news, once again it is nearly time for our annual festival at Cosgrove which is being held over the weekend of **22nd to 24th July at Cosgrove Lock on the Grand Union Canal**. For those members who don't attend our work parties or the social evenings on Fridays at the Two Brewers pub in Thornborough this is a chance to meet other members, help the Society raise its profile, fund raise and help recruit new members. And of course enjoy yourselves over the weekend.

If you have time to spare on the Friday before the festival extra help is needed in setting up the site, putting up tents and gazebos and if boats come along helping them through the lock. On Saturday if you can give a few hours to help run one of the stalls this would be most appreciated. We need help with the cake stall, the bric-a-brac stall and other kiddies' games stalls. We have our usual boats attending the festival such as Raymond and Nutfield with Raymond being open for viewing to let people see how the boating families used to live. The cheese and fudge boats will be attending plus a newcomer to our festival the Milton Keynes Playboat which will be moored at the Barley Mow pub and the organisers will be running events for children in the pub gardens. There will be several other stalls situated along the towpath and boat trips will be provided by Cosgrove Narrowboats so plenty of ways to spend your money!

Negotiations are continuing with BBOWT in regard to the Society taking on a lease of their Nature Reserve at Hyde Lane Lock. Hopefully there should be further news and more information on this subject in the next edition of the Navigator.

Middlemarch have completed the ecology survey for us and this will then form part of the planning application to re-water our site at Bourton Meadow. As you will see from my work party report, the work on the bridge at Little Hill Farm is progressing well, thanks to the marvellous efforts of our volunteers. Again we have had a lot of support from companies taking part in 'team building' days recently. Our thanks go to Santander who have completed three 'community days' with us and to Lloyds Bank who did a team building day with us for the first time. So if your company runs such events do mention our Society to them, as we can be very flexible in planning a day to suit their needs.

As the next Edition of the Navigator goes out at the end of September I would also like to mention our '**Heritage Walk**', which takes place on **Sunday 11th September**. This time we are walking from near Little Hill Farm which will give the public a chance to see part of the canal which is on private land and to also admire the work done by our volunteers at the BBOWT Nature Reserve.

Athina Beckett (Chairman)

Bringing the Buckingham Canal to where you live!

It has been my pleasure over the last few months to talk to community groups about the history of the Buckingham Canal, its heyday, decline and current restoration. My talk is called "Buckingham Canal, Then and Now".

Practice makes perfect so the presentation has evolved. One of my early talks was to a very select group at Brackley Library, which was having a Waterways Event. Since appropriate dress seemed to be welcomed I rushed home for my boatwoman's costume, donned my bonnet, and, somewhat self consciously, made my entrance. There was significant interest in the costume and now I always ask whether groups would like me to dress up and so far they always have. It is a trigger for discussion about the difficulties of life for the traditional boatwoman and leads on to talk of the "Idle Women" and the difficulties they faced manning the boats during the Second World War.

It has also been suggested that I should take some artefacts to my talks. I don't have a Buckby can or anything similar so if anyone has an interesting object which would promote discussion I would love to borrow it.

The presentation includes some fascinating photographs from the archives and some much more recent ones of work parties on site. David Seaman taking his boat through Cosgrove Lock always promotes interest as do the before and after pictures of Hyde Lane Lock.

Talking to local groups in the Buckingham area has resulted in some amusing anecdotes. One lady remembered Walter, an eccentric who lived under Thornton Bridge for some years. A retired fireman from Granborough remembered being called to a sunken boat many years ago in Rickmansworth. With great difficulty the boat was pumped out and re-floated but, when a few days later the boat sank again, the fire service declined to rescue it on the grounds that it wasn't seaworthy!

So far I have given talks to groups ranging from Stowe School Duke of Edinburgh Award participants to retired Girl Guides, Local History Groups, Women's Institutes and Senior Citizens. If there is a group that you know of that might be interested in hearing about the history of Buckingham Canal and our aspirations for the future do pass on our details. Promoting the education of the public in the history and use of the canals and, in particular, the Buckingham Canal, is one of the Society's objects and the talks are going some way towards this.

Helen Preston, Secretary

By Hook or By Crook....

All aspiring pirates will be needed to relieve passing boaters of their funds (and incidentally to work them through Cosgrove Lock in exchange) on 23rd and 24th July at the Boat Festival. Windlasses will be available but if you drop one into the cut you will have to fish it out yourself!

For more law-abiding members there are plenty of other opportunities to help. I already have some willing volunteers to help manning stalls but still need a few more.

Of course a stall is not successful unless it has something to sell so do think about the cakes that you will be making for the cake stall. Bric-a-brac contributions are always welcome and Pluck-a-Duck needs his feathers refreshing. This year he will provide adult prizes for £1 and children's prizes for 50p so if you have anything suitable we would be very grateful.

Whilst we are always looking for volunteers to help it is most important to remember that the Boat Festival is an opportunity for members to get together and have a good time so do come along and, if we don't know you already, introduce yourselves!

After stalls close on Saturday there will be a fish and chip supper and all members are welcome to join us (orders in advance please).

Contact Helen Preston [01280 821232 or secretary@buckinghamcanal.org.uk] if you can help with any of the above or wish to order fish & chips.

Cakes Wanted

For our Cosgrove Festival 23rd-24th July. Home made or shop bought. Please bring them along over the weekend.

Boaters' Bookings

If you are coming to the Cosgrove Festival by boat do let us know. We will do our best to reserve a mooring for you. Email secretary@buckinghamcanal.org.uk for a booking form or call Helen Preston on 01280 821232 who will be pleased to book you in.

New Members

We are pleased to extend a warm welcome to the following new members who have recently joined the Society:-

Mrs Pat Crawford	Buckingham
Mr Brian Knight	Bletchley
Ms Ros Ford	Newport Pagnell
Mr Maurice Harper	Stantonbury
Tony & Rebecca Teague	Upper Stowe
Andrew & Cathy Read	Tingewick
Braunston Marina Ltd	

'Go Green' Grant for the BCS

The DHL Supply Chain Head Office in Milton Keynes 'Go Green' Committee were asking for nominations for charities and one of our members Liz Turvey nominated BCS. Along with two other local groups we were lucky to have been chosen and we received a grant of £500 which has been spent on new equipment for our work parties. Here I would like to thank both Liz Turvey and the 'Go Green' committee for choosing BCS.

If any other members hears about similar awards please think about your canal society!

Athina Beckett
Chairman



Liz Turvey, on behalf of Excel Europe (DHL), presenting Go Green cheque to BCS

Work Party Organiser's Report

As you would have seen from my 'Chairman's Chat' report we will be having a new site to work on in the not too distant future. This makes five sites under restoration at present so plenty of work for our volunteers, especially with a new and exciting project and all the extra tasks this will involve and a lot more variety of work for our volunteers to try their hands at!

The work parties have now returned to Little Hill Farm where the work to restore the bridge is progressing well. So far all the easy re-pointing work has been completed and we are now working on the more challenging parts of the bridge but thanks to the splendid efforts of our volunteers this work is going well. Since our last work parties on this site the footpath has become overgrown again so volunteers who enjoy this type of work are trimming back the hedge and strimming the footpaths. We need to

get this site looking good for our planned heritage walk, which starts near Little Hill Farm in September. See poster in Navigator for more information.



Restoration work going well on the bridge at Little Hill Farm

We have been very lucky this year to have Santander join us on three separate occasions and also one 'team building' day with Lloyds Bank. Our thanks go to both companies and with a special thanks to Santander for the grants they have given us for extra tools and equipment. Our volunteers are already appreciating the new strimmers which have been purchased with this grant money.



Below Hyde Lane Lock. Reeds cleared courtesy of Santander volunteers



Santander volunteers clearing reeds from the lock at the BBOWT Nature Reserve

There are still some jobs to be done at the BBOWT Nature Reserve and some work has taken place there recently. This includes checking the footpaths and strimming around the seating areas and weeding around all the saplings which were planted on 'Community Tree Planting' days earlier this year. At present nearly all these saplings seem to be flourishing! Further work is planned in the autumn at this site.

Pupils from Stowe School taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme have just finished for the summer. This has proved to be a very successful joint project for both parties and there are plans to continue the involvement with Stowe School from September. The pupils have been helping us at our Bourton Meadow site where they have been clearing a drainage ditch, which has become mud filled. The hope is that when cleared this drainage ditch will become part of our planned flood prevention scheme for parts of Buckingham which it is anticipated will provide the water to fill this section of canal.



Your chairman working on site at Little Hill Farm

Summer and autumn should see us still being very busy on several sites and there are plans to return to Cosgrove as well, which has become rather overgrown. Discussions are taking place with BW to restore the first part of the canal from bridge No 1. Further details in the next edition of the Navigator.

Athina Beckett
Work Party Organiser

Work Party Dates For Your Diary July-Oct

Jul	Sunday	10 th
	Thursday	14 th
	Thursday	28 th
Aug	Thursday	11 th
	Sunday	14 th
	Thursday	25 th
Sep	Thursday	8 th
	Sunday	11 th
	Thursday	22 nd
Oct	Thursday	6 th
	Sunday	9 th
	Thursday	20 th

Buckingham Canal Society

Lock Ransom

**Saturday 23rd July 2011 10am until late
and Sunday 24th July 2011 10am to 4pm**

**Cosgrove Lock, Cosgrove
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

**Historic Narrowboats Raymond & Nutfield
Boat Trips & Bar – by Cosgrove Narrowboats**

Cheese Boat ♦ Fudge Boat

Craft Stalls ♦ Bric-a-Brac Stall ♦ Cake Stall

Prize Quizzes ♦ Raffle (Saturday night)

Buckingham Belles - Handbell Ringers (Sunday)

Fish & Chip Supper (needs to be pre-booked)

MK Playboat 'Funion Bargee' (at Barley Mow Pub, Cosgrove)



**For details email
info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk
or ring 01908 661217**



Why bother.... Tick Tock Tick Tock – nearly Christmas ☺

There was I putting dates in my diary following the last BCS committee meeting. A few weeks of work commitments to add in November and BANG: Christmas hit me. Or at least the week of Christmas in the Outlook calendar. Then I thought to myself, wow it's June. Nearly half way through 2011 and what have we done so far this year? A lot is the short answer and the longer answers are covered elsewhere in this edition of Navigator as well as the previous ones. But once the Cosgrove Festival / Lock Ransom has been and gone, we will have 5 months remaining to get the sprouts on for Christmas.

Progress always seems slow to me on a day to day basis, be it flying off on holiday or trying to restore a canal. But when you look back from a year end or half year perspective, quite a lot is achieved. So with a mission to drill some weep holes under the bridge at Little Hill Farm next weekend (as I write this) and with the lease for Hyde Lane with a duly appointed solicitor (well done Helen and Vernon), I look forward to meetings with BW to progress other restoration chunks along with a couple of paperwork rich months preparing planning applications for Bourton meadow. Tick Tock Tick Tock. Time marches on regardless. I really must write something for the Autumn Navigator ☺

Elsewhere, you will read of the progress that continues with partnerships that we have made. We are still progressing partnerships with organisations in the Northamptonshire part of the canal and have met with local councillors and MPs in some of those areas. Hopefully South Northants Council will approve a partnership at their meeting in July. If any of you know anyone in appropriate 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.

Last time we mentioned the shocking bit. Well hopefully the lack of shock actually. As part of the aspirations to re-water 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 had to dig a trial hole to confirm the location and depth of the cable. This had to be done by hand, down to an approximate depth of about 9ft (2.7m for those that want to be European about it ☺). So we got our digging heads on over the last few months. We found the cable (or at least the marker strips) as the couple of photos below show and all without switching off Buckingham Town!



Danger keep out



Contemplation



Exposed at last



Going down

Now that we also have the Environmental study for the area we are able to start moving forward with the necessary planning, once we have all the necessary agreements from the landowners (which are work in progress).

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 willing to listen to others' suggestions.

As many of you will already know, some BCS members have been re-visiting and surveying sections of the canal. Different aspects of this work range 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 sounds but as the Electricity Boards always say, many hands make light work.



Surveying

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 can't 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@buckinghamcanal.org.uk or get in touch via Athina or call me on 01280 860316.

And to finish....

New girlfriend shouting to her guy as she climbs the ladder in a lock:

'That's the last time you con me into believing that a mini-skirt is what every woman wears on a boat!' (Other boaters would disagree!)

A week later, same boat but with girlfriend driving, man climbs ladder in a kilt! What goes around comes around!

Fancy a Natter?

We are still meeting at the pub! It's the 3rd Friday on the odd months and 3rd Thursday on the even months at the Two Brewers, Thornborough. 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. Please let me have suggestions for other venues



Terry Cavender

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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Looking through some of the letters from 100 years ago

Water has always been a problem on the Buckingham Canal, either too much or not enough. The task of keeping the canal and the bridges in working order was on going. As seen by this hand written note from a canal employee T. Meakins, Canal Cottages, Buckingham dated 19th April 1908

"Dear Sir

Mr. Oliver Lester is complaining about the gate at bridge No 19 says he wants a new one also A E rail new fence behind the hedge he came to me on Thursday morning when I was stopping the leaks and told me he had wrote to London about it he came to me on Thursday night and seeing i had stopped the water so well he said when you come and seen it you would think it nothing to write so about it was only top water and rats holes.

Mr. Verys Bridge No 14 Mount Mill his cattle having knocked down a portion of the stone work along the top of the bridge also it wants repairing at once before further damage is done to it. Could you arrange to meet me Tues or Wed to see about things T Meakins"

An undated letter from W. J. Dolman, Hon Sec, (Buckingham Allotments Society ?) Hunter Street, Buckingham

"Dear Sir

Some years ago a 4inch drain pipe was laid from the Canal under the towing path on to the Buckingham allotments near the wharf, in the hope that surplus water on the allotments would drain away into the Canal. This now acts the other way and the water runs from the Canal on to the allotments.

The management committee would like to have the pipe removed or stopped up. Would you be good enough when you are here to inspect it & either get it stopped or give us leave to do it ourselves!

Yours truly,"

On 20th August 1907 Gordon Thomas, Engineer, G.J.C. Surry Street London W.C wrote to Mr. T. Millner, Canal Office, Blisworth.

"I enclose letters received from Mr. Thorpe of Buckingham, also Messrs Humbert & Flint's letter to Mr. White, High Street, Buckingham, respecting alleged flooding of the Stratford Road allotments by water from the Canal. Please inspect the point in question and let me have your report thereon, returning enclosures. I have acknowledged Mr. Thorpe's letter, and stated that the matter will have early attention,"

On the 15th September 1908 Gordon Thomas again writes to Mr. Millner

"In reply to your letter of the 11th inst., if you can stop the grater part of the leakage at Mount Mill temporarily, please arrange to do so, and the permanent work must stand over, as you suggest. I have ordered the posts, & c., for your Requisition No 1431"

On occasions ice has been the problem on the Canal. Unlike today's recreational boaters the families who worked the boats a century ago had to keep going in all weathers. As we see in this Post Card dated 10th Jan 1910 from C.W. Roberts to Mr. Millner

"Dear Sir

*There are five Barges including my pair that want to travel as far as Deanshanger will you kindly instruct your man to break the ice on Monday up the Buckingham Arm
Yours faithfully"*

We see from the letters that maintenance and repairs were ongoing. So plenty to keep the Work parties happy!!

Ros Woodford
Archivist

Money for Nothing Fundraising for Free

Do you do any shopping online? Maybe not your weekly supermarket shop, but a goodly percentage of us make at least some purchases online. Well now you can fundraise at the same time, and the good news is that it's the retailers who give us the money – it doesn't cost you anything at all. Just one extra mouse click is the only effort involved. Well, once you've registered anyway.

BCS is now registered with EasyFundraising. First, register yourself with them at www.easyfundraising.org.uk Then connect your account to your favourite charity by clicking on Support a Cause and entering the name of the charity into the search box.

And that's all there is to it really. Next time you want to buy something online, go to www.easyfundraising.org.uk then click on A-Z Retailers to find the one you're about to use, and then continue as you would normally with that retailer.

Potentially this could be a nice little earner for BCS. And that's not all; they have a sister site www.easysearch.org.uk which is a search engine that pays out just for using them to do your searches. Not a lot it has to be said, and its not as slick as Google, but if every member raised 20p a month (about two searches a day) this would raise getting on for £500 for BCS over the course of a year.

I'll keep you posted on how we get on, if it proves popular.

Vernon Draper

Coming Events

Saturday 2 July
Lionhearts Cruising Club Open Day
Great Linford, Milton Keynes

Friday 22 – Sunday 24 July
BCS Lock Ransom Festival
Cosgrove Lock, Grand Union Canal

Saturday 30 July
Linslade Waterside Festival
Tiddenfoot Waterside Park, Mentmore Road,
Linslade

Friday 29 – Sunday 31 July
IWA Waterways Festival
Shobnall Fields, Burton-upon-Trent DE14 2BB

Saturday 6 – Sunday 7 August
Blisworth Canal Festival

Sunday 11 September
Heritage Open Days
BCS Walk from Little Hill Farm

Friday 22 September
BCS Social Evening
Two Brewers Pub, Thornborough
Ring Terry Cavender to confirm

Saturday 1 – Sunday 2 October
Stoke Bruerne at War

Saturday 8 October
Deanshanger Village Fete

Buckingham Canal Society receives £2,000 grant from Community Leaders' fund



Buckingham Canal Society has been presented with a community leaders' fund grant from County Councillor John Cartwright. The Society is currently undertaking restoration work at a number of sites along the former canal and the £2,000 will be used in the current restoration project at the Buckingham end of the canal. The grant was made by Cllr Cartwright building on the partnership that the Society has in place with the County Council.

BCS Partnerships Manager Terry Cavender said "This additional funding will help us with the current re-watering plans for the section of the canal at Buckingham which we hope to see back in water by summer 2012. We are very grateful to John and the County Council who have helped us with a number of partnership activities leveraging existing resources at no cost to the taxpayers or the society."

Councillor Cartwright said "I am delighted to be able to help Buckingham Canal Society with their current restoration project. This is a superb scheme and I hope by donating this money it will bring the day forward when we can all enjoy seeing the canal restored to its former glory."

The Society has also recently extended its partnerships to include British Waterways and Aylesbury Vale District Council.

Patrons: Rt Hon John Bercow MP
 Lord Boswell of Aynho

Committee 2011

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Editor, "*The Buckingham Navigator*" - Vacancy

Committee members can also be contacted by post:
 c/o 16 Mallard Drive, Buckingham, MK18 1GJ or by email: info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk



Canal Heritage Walk

Sunday 11th September

Join us for a 5 mile circular heritage walk with 3 stiles along the disused Buckingham Canal. Part of the walk takes place along the BBOWT Nature Reserve.

Meet 1:30pm in the lay-by opposite Little Hill Farm off the A422 (postcode MK19 6DD) for a 2 hour walk.

Details Athina Beckett 01908 661217

Heritage Open Days is your chance to visit thousands of buildings and places across England which are usually closed to the public or charge for admission. To find out what's on in your region, go to www.heritageopendays.org.uk or call English Heritage on 0870 333 1181

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