

THE BUCKINGHAM NAVIGATOR

The Newsletter of Buckingham Canal Society

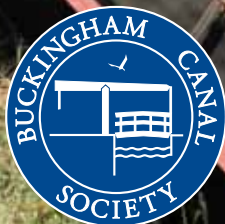
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Issue No. 113
Autumn 2022



Featuring:

- Our Festival Returns With a Bang!
- Corporates Eager to Assist More Than Ever
- A Brief History of Hayes Boatyard at Stony



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Buckingham Canal Society's work to restore the waterway to Buckingham

Please re-use this publication which incorporates a variety of information about some of our activities, to promote the work of the Buckingham Canal Society to a friend / neighbour / colleague / relative or other interested people.

Editorial

Welcome to the Autumn 2022 edition of The Buckingham Navigator.

After the storms of the winter and its devastating after effects, the summer brought the intense heat, the like of which we have not seen in this country before. Its effects have certainly taken a huge toll on wildlife and us humans alike. However, despite only downing tools for a short period, work has continued apace along the Buckingham Arm, and luckily, with the heat gradually subsiding, we were able to hold our annual festival once more! We've worked tirelessly with the community and attended many events. Corporate volunteer group numbers are probably at the highest they've ever been with bookings still rolling in! Finally, we wish Becky Hall all the best as she embarks on adventures new...so settle in and read on to find out all the latest news!



Thank you to all the contributors. Cover photo: Our festival attendees enjoying the wares the traders had to offer along the towpath (see page 15 for the full report) © Alan Mynard. **Why not drop me an email about what you enjoyed in this issue, and furthermore, why not contribute ideas or articles for future editions (see page 29). In addition to our website, we now have a wide social media presence:**

Please visit our website at: www.buckinghamcanal.org.uk

Follow/Like us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/buckinghamcanalsociety

Reach us on Twitter at: www.twitter.com/bcsocietyuk

Find us on Instagram at: www.instagram.com/buckinghamcanalsociety

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Ian Matson
Editor

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Restoration Site Update



© Steve Morley

Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles sent a team of twenty-one people on 19th May to help with a number of tasks. Here, some of the group are spreading the remaining pile of stone that was stored by Buckingham Palace along the path west of Bridge No.1.

A Big Welcome Back to the External Volunteer Groups

Every meeting brings our vision more sharply into focus and clarity. Every practical session helps us make progress to make this vision more tangible. Julie Sharman (Canal & River Trust's Chief Operating Officer) had a mini tour when visiting us at our Cosgrove Canal Festival & Craft Fair back in July (**see The Summer Statement on page 12**), and she was genuinely positive about the progress we have made at Cosgrove.



© Terry Cavender

We have had several corporate volunteer groups join us across all sites, such as Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles (amongst others) at Cosgrove (**opposite & above**). These teams have helped with towpath work, lock painting, reed & weed control and other various tasks. We have also been joined by non-corporate groups such as the Milton Keynes College students who helped expose more original brickwork at the Heritage Landing Stage (**below, left on 14th June**) that lies between Bridges No.1 and 2. Two weeks later, students from this college were joined by another from The Royal Latin School, when work was progressing with constructing the new landing stage walls (**below, right**).



© Alan Mynard



© Terry Cavender

It certainly has been a busy few months, and Becky has also done some great work organising various community engagement activities with various groups. **To read Becky's full Community Engagement Report, please turn to page 23 for all the latest news.**

We still have lots of paperwork to push on with whilst certain external events happen. We now have a plan to create and/or complete these over the winter months, and we aspire to submit our planning application for the new channel early in the spring. Approvals are also awaited from Canal & River Trust for dredging to continue. Meanwhile, we have been, and will continue progressing onwards with a range of maintenance tasks and vegetation control.

Terry Cavender

Trustee and Executive Officer

Bourton Meadow Benefits From the Extra Help Too

A group of corporate volunteers from Sava (**below, left & right**) carried out a lot of much needed work at our Bourton Meadow site on Thursday 26th May. This included helping to install a security camera by the spillweir site and preparing the site for three new bench seats (**below, right**) to be installed at the top of the canal.



© Becky Hall



© Becky Hall

These bench seats were put in place just in time for Becky Hall (our Community Engagement Lead) to run her Art by the Canal event on Friday 29th July (**see her Art by the Canal report on page 10**). They still need painting, which we hope to carry out shortly.

Our own volunteers have been completing the work started by Sava by cutting back the hedge by the lock keepers cottage. This was growing over the towpath and causing problems for walkers. We have also been removing an excess of weeds and reeds that had started to block the flow of water along the canal. Again, this vegetation control continues the good work that the team from Sava carried out (**opposite, left**).

Because of the work carried out in previous years, the wildlife along the canal has much improved at Bourton Meadow. Regular walkers Michael & Diane Hunt send us regular updates on their observations, and these are collated into the seasonal Wildlife Reports within these pages. **To discover all of the latest wildlife goings on at Bourton Meadow, turn to page 19 for Ian Matson's Summer Wildlife Report.**

A Splash of Paint and a Cut & Strim at Hyde Lane

Volunteers, including a team from HSBC UK Bank plc (**right, main**), have been hard at work painting the lock gates, and the task is almost finished. However, because of the very, very hot weather this summer, we have had problems with the paint on the lock gate beams. The plan is now to complete this task when the weather is a little cooler!

We also have five bench seats which now need re-painting (**right, inset**), so there is plenty to keep us busy in the autumn months. Construction work on the footbridge continues and again this should be completed soon.



Remedial vegetation work has been carried out next to the lock chamber, and geotextile material has been laid alongside it. Now we just need the stone to go on top. It is always a difficult problem moving heavy objects to site at Hyde Lane, as material has to be wheelbarrowed from the car park over a long distance to where it is needed within the nature reserve. Again we hope to complete this task in the autumn.

As I run the work parties at both the Bourton Meadow and Hyde Lane sites on alternate Thursdays, this means in the summers months we are spending most of our time clearing vegetation and making sure people are able to access the towpaths enabling them to enjoy walking along the Ouse Valley Way. **As usual we can always do with extra help at our Hyde Lane and Bourton Meadow sites. So if you feel you would enjoy working at either or both of these sites, then please read overleaf for more details.**

Do You Dig Canals?...We Do!



Work parties are now held every Tuesday, Thursday and the second & last Sunday of each month and are always friendly, welcoming and very rewarding. Most Tuesdays and Thursdays, as well as the second and last Sunday of each month will take place at Cosgrove. Some of the other dates will be at Bourton Meadow or Hyde Lane.

Further information can be found on page 29, and more detailed information about these and extra curricular dates can be found by visiting our work parties web page at:

www.buckinghamcanal.org.uk/events-and-news/work-parties/

If you would like to become involved, please contact either myself or Terry using our contact details on page 30.

Athina Beckett

Trustee, Volunteer Leader and Work Party Organiser

Health & Safety Refresher

Buckingham Canal Society has a duty of care to its members, volunteers and the public to comply with the Health & Safety legislations in place.

Buckingham Canal Society operates work parties under terms of Insurance provided through the Inland Waterways Association. As a part of this, we work within many of the principles and methods of Waterway Recovery Group.

You will always be given a Health & Safety briefing for any work party. All work parties involving construction machinery, often referred to as plant, will require that you confirm you have watched the Waterway Recovery Group's Health & Safety video (via the link below) within the past twelve months.

Waterway Recovery Group's Health & Safety video contains important Health & Safety information that all new volunteers need to know. All volunteers are required to watch the Waterway Recovery Group Health & Safety video before they go on site. Please watch the video to find out about Waterway Recovery Group's on site Health & Safety.

This video is only an introduction to site safety, and does not remove the need for a volunteer to have a full briefing about a specific site/project.

For full details of the Waterway Recovery Group's Health & Safety policy along with additional documentation and other important videos, please visit:

www.buckinghamcanal.org.uk/wrg-health-safety-video/

For more information about Waterway Recovery Group, please visit:

www.waterways.org.uk/wrg

Buckingham Canal Society News

Bye Bye Becky

I am sad to say that our Community Engagement Lead Becky Hall is leaving us as she moves to Yorkshire to return to her previous career as a nurse. Becky has made this role very much hers with much enthusiasm and commitment. Our loss is Yorkshire's gain and we will all be sorry to see her go. **If you know someone who would be interested in the role, please ask them to get in touch with me using my contact details on page 30.**

Heritage Listings

Two of our volunteers (Beverly and Charlie) have done some great work for Buckingham Canal Society in recording the structures that remain along the towpath of the Buckinghamshire part of the canal. This is enabling Lisa, one of the Buckinghamshire Council Heritage Officers, to work with us to potentially get several of them locally listed, which will offer some protection for their preservation.

There is lots more to do and there is lots more happening in this space as we also explore the revamping our interpretation board signs and start to create a full heritage trail along the valley. Several canal related buildings in Buckingham are also on the draft list and being evaluated. **As ever, more help is wanted if you would like to be involved!**

Terry Cavender

Trustee and Executive Officer

Get Snapping Early for Our 2024 Calender Competition

As you may know, we recently launched our 2023 Buckingham Canal Society calendar competition. Unfortunately due to the closing date being the end of August, that day will have naturally passed by the time this edition is published.

However, we are always looking for budding photographers to send in photos of the Buckingham Canal. Why not consider entering next year's competition where winning photos will be chosen to be included in our 2024 calendar?

We will notify you of the entry details nearer the time next year, but get yourselves out there and get snapping now for some autumnal shots, and through the seasons to summer next year in readiness to submit! **In the meantime, why don't you look out for our 2023 Calender (which will be published later this year) in our online shop at shop.buckinghamcanal.org.uk.**

Art by the Canal

Our Society was excited to hold an event recently as part of Buckinghamshire Open Weekend, organised by Buckinghamshire Culture. The event was Art by the Canal, held by the canal at Bourton Meadow in Buckingham. Members of the public were invited to come and join us and create some artwork inspired by the beautiful surroundings. We supplied the art materials and paint, we just needed people to bring their creativity.

We were also joined by local artist Tina Hazell, who provided some useful ideas and advice. The weather and setting was perfect. Bourton Meadow was looking beautiful with so many flowers in bloom, providing a great deal of colour. Some absolutely fantastic artwork was produced over the day (**background & opposite**). Students from Buckingham University's YouTube news channel even came along to cover the event. Everyone involved enjoyed the day, and we hope to do more events like this in the future. Huge thanks go to Tina Hazell for all her support. **For more information about her artwork, go to www.tinahazell.com or check out her Instagram page at www.instagram.com/thazell0503/.**

Heritage Open Days

As we go to print, Heritage Open Days will have taken place between the 9th and 18th September. Our own events encompassed an open weekend, self guided walks and finally a guided circular walk on the last day. **A full report will appear in the next edition.**

Becky Hall

Community Engagement Lead

© Becky Hall



The Summer Statement

Hello and welcome to this, our latest edition of The Buckingham Navigator. As some, or I hope most of you know, we had a fantastically successful festival! Not only were the moorings full with trade and historic boats, but the Craft Fair in the village hall



© Julie Sharman

was also well subscribed to. All the fantastic stalls and clever e-advertising by Edima Inwang (our new Marketing Manager) led to an outstanding turnout of visitors with a constant stream of people arriving throughout both days.

We were fortunate to have Julie Sharman (Canal & River Trust's Chief Operating Officer) **(left, with Terry Cavender, and Glen from Canal & River Trust on the far left)** attend for a few hours. Following the usual VIP tour

of Bridge No.1 and a discussion of the technical issues surrounding the next phase, Terry Cavender and I then allowed her to go off and enjoy the event. Preliminary planning has already started for next year's event. **If you have any ideas on what you would like to see at the festival next year, or if you want to volunteer, please drop me a line using my contact details on page 30 and let me know.**

For those technically minded, you will have seen some of our live streamed footage, and there will be more to come courtesy of the magic that is the internet. Please keep an eye on the Society's website.

Work has progressed on the landing stage in section one, making it recognisable as such and so totally different to what could be seen previously. Further work is planned to make this a more attractive location for people to use. An interpretation board will be placed there explaining its significance. Buckinghamshire Council have listed Thornton Bridge on the local protection register, and other structures are also being considered for inclusion. This helps protect those assets and ensure they are maintained for future generations.

Autumn is now just around the corner, and all of us here at Buckingham Canal Society hope you had a safe and enjoyable summer holiday. We hope to see you along the towpath very soon, exploring what has gone on in the last few months, or even years. Remember, the restoration is not just about creating a way for boaters to get into Buckingham, but to create a family friendly environment for all to enjoy.

Rob Morris

Trustee and Chairman

Hayes Boatyard - a Brief History

My interest in Hayes Boatyard came from having to write a dissertation whilst studying for a masters degree in Maritime History at Greenwich University. The boatyard had been local to me in Stony Stratford, and so writing about it plus comparing with three other inland boatyards seemed to be an obvious choice. Writing about Hayes was difficult as there had been a fire at Milton Keynes Museum in 1996, and much of the archival material stored there had been destroyed. But piecing together available photographs with information from cuttings and an order ledger that had been deposited at an accountants (which had come to light about twenty years ago) gave me much of the information on what I know now. This dated from 1900 and gives fine details of the boats and their sea trials on the Thames **(right)**.

The Buckingham Canal was crucial in the export of the boats (which were mostly tugs and fitted into the locks) from Stony Stratford to the Grand Junction Canal, then to be shipped to the Colonies and the Protectorates. It was the biggest employer in the town, and at the height of production in 1900, their workforce was about ninety men.



A tug for export, trialling on the Thames c1900, with Hayes family members aboard. © Unknown



Creating a splash! Launching a tug sideways into the Buckingham Arm. © Unknown

Three tugs a year were built at this time. The schools in the area were given time off to watch the unusual sight of a boat being drawn by traction engine the mile and a half north through the High Street. At Hayes Wharf, Old Stratford the boat was finished and equipped and then launched sideways into a locked off area of the Buckingham Arm **(left)**. A tricky manoeuvre!

Three generations of Edward Hayes owned the yard over a period of seventy-five years, until the premature death of the third member of the family, (Arthur) Edward Hayes in 1920.

The first Edward Hayes (1818-1877) had come from Manchester as a journeyman to work in the newly opened locomotive works at Wolverton in North Buckinghamshire, then a refuelling point for the London and Birmingham Railway Company. He remained working with them for a decade, and subsequently set up his own agricultural business at the Watling Works on London Road in Stony Stratford, a mile away. This took the form of a small foundry, and in the 1851 census he was described as a consulting engineer with one pupil.

Over the next two decades he established himself as a successful agricultural engineer with a reputation for teaching apprentices. Around this time there was an agricultural slump, as rural workers migrated to the cities for work during the Industrial Revolution. It appears that he needed to diversify, and the first reference of this in relation to boat engines is described in Kelly's Trade Directory 1864 as a 'patentee of improvements to marine engines.'

His son, also Edward Hayes (1845-1918), was indentured in the family company, and was sent away to another boatyard, as was common practice then, to be employed as a journeyman working on the River Weaver Navigation. There he saw boats built, mainly tugs too, which were then exported and shipped by sea to West Africa and the Colonies from Liverpool. It is assumed that the boatbuilding and marketing experience that Edward the son had gained in Cheshire, returning c1870, and having taken over the company, had influenced the changes that the local boatyard was having to make, and that he had been responsible for the subsequent expansion and success of the boat building business.

The second Edward Hayes established an excellent reputation for well-built boats of iron that lasted well, sending tugs as far as Portuguese West Africa [now Mozambique], to Brazil for gunboats on the Amazon, and to Argentina, the furthest known destination. Most were taken to their destinations on board ships from the ports - an Argentinian pair being sent from Cardiff, having gone through the canal system to get there: a tortuous journey indeed. The economics are hard to understand, but the boats must have been value for money for the shipping agents. There is a record of one boat being sent to Russia in 1915 to the Imperial Ministry, named *The Worker*; no further orders took place from them, the Ministry's days were numbered by the Revolution in 1917. Another, *The Curlew*, at 65ft long, went under its own steam in March 1903 as far as Portuguese West Africa, reaching Delagoa Bay in June, making this the longest delivery known by any of the Hayes' tugs.



This tug from the Buckingham Arm being pulled into Cosgrove Lock was built for service in WW1. © Unknown

Coinciding with the post World War One slump, the deaths of both the second Edward Hayes in 1917, followed by the premature demise of his son Arthur Edward Hayes in 1920 respectively, had a devastating effect on the business. Then, with the change from coal fired to diesel engines, orders decreased and thus the company deteriorated until it

went into receivership in 1925, with only a few boats having been built since the end of the War.

During this time the Buckingham Arm was silting up too, and there are accounts of boats being towed along to Cosgrove Lock. In 1922, the *Barra* was bound for Senegambia,

West Africa, and was pulled by two horses and twelve men, even though the canal was high in January. The shallow water iced up frequently too.

A unique era had ended, with boats being built in one of the furthest points from the sea and sent to many countries including Mozambique, Argentina and Palestine. The boats were well built of Low Moor iron from near Sheffield and which over the previous century had been used for cannons, paddles for lock gates and railway engine wheels, and had ensured repeat orders. During its final days in the early 1920s, when production was minimal, their spares department continued to last until the company founded.

I have written a book on this subject containing many photographs entitled:

Hayes Boatyard, Stony Stratford and was published in 2018 by Stenlake Publishing Ltd.

It is also obtainable from Odells, High Street, Stony Stratford.

Alison Leighton
Author

Cosgrove Canal Festival & Craft Fair

The 27th annual Cosgrove Canal Festival & Craft Fair made a triumphant return on the 23rd & 24th July for the first time since 2019. Initially we were a little uncertain regarding if or how we could safely proceed in the delicate post COVID-19 period. This hesitancy meant that we were a little last minute with the planning. Thankfully, a magnificent team effort combined with some very hard work and a lot of rapid organisation meant that we managed to pull together an extremely successful festival!

The excitement really began to build from Thursday onwards as numerous colourful boats and traders started to arrive to set up their stalls. We were all relieved and delighted that the weather was absolutely fantastic throughout the whole weekend and the visitors just kept coming! Initial estimates so far indicate that we attracted well over a thousand people.

It was so rewarding and well worth all the hard work to see so many people thoroughly enjoying themselves over the two days of the festival. There was plenty of wonderful entertainment and canal themed activities coupled with much delicious food and drink. What's not to like?!

The Buckingham Canal Society information tent was in prime position on the towpath. It gave us a great platform to chat to festival goers, promote the canal, raise awareness and recruit new volunteers (it's not too late to express an interest!).

It was an enormous pleasure to welcome Julie Sharman, Chief Operating Officer from Canal & River Trust. Our team were delighted to be able to take her on a tour of the Buckingham Arm to inspect our work so far, including the newly restored and rebuilt Bridge No.1. Visitors were also encouraged to take a stroll to view the brand new bridge, as well as to see how all our other projects are progressing.



We were thrilled to welcome the return of boat traders who have hosted successful stalls at past Cosgrove fairs. Word must have spread around about what a great event it is, as we also attracted several new wonderful stall holders including Alimanda Crafts, Daisy's Bakin' Butty (a special mention must go to their amazing Lemon Drizzle Cake), and of course the fabulous Beer Boat Company. Thank you all so very much, both new and returning traders, for coming and helping to make the festival such a brilliant success!

One of the visual highlights of the weekend was definitely the show stealing beautiful historic boat that is Raymond, fresh from a starring role at the recent Fellows, Morton & Clayton Ltd Rally & Canal Festival at Braunston Marina. I'm sure it featured in very many visitors' photographs.

Festival revellers were really spoilt for choice with the wonderful selection of goodies for sale on the boats, ranging from amazing artworks and crafts through to delicious food and drinks. In addition, Cosgrove Village Hall welcomed large numbers of visitors to their absolutely fantastic stalls with gorgeous craft creations as well as delicious food served by Lynda. Sharron Comerford, our Craft Fair organiser, told me that there were very high spirits throughout and lots of laughter with stallholders bursting into song at one point!

Music & poetry fans were entertained in fine style throughout the festival. Poet, musician and former Bard of Buckingham Dean Jones regaled the festival crowd with entertaining poetry readings as well as performing a brilliant acoustic set with his band Lost Lagondas. Local folk band, Drywood also played some seriously foot tapping folk tunes for customers at the Beer Boat.

The musical fun continued on the Sunday where crowds had the pleasure of Michael Squire's performance which kept the crowds thoroughly entertained with a variety of popular tunes. All stall holders reported having had a brilliant weekend and are certainly very keen to return next year.

Thanks must also go the extremely valuable assistance from a team of volunteer lock keepers from Stoke Bruerne. Their expertise was much appreciated by all.

Saturday evening, after the festival had closed for the day, the Society hosted their traditional fish & chip supper for the boat traders on Lock Island. Delicious food and some beers were enjoyed by all after a busy day.

Buckingham Canal Society would like to thank everyone who came to the festival: traders, performers, volunteers and visitors. Following on from the huge success, we are already planning next year's festival, and it will be even bigger and even better! It will take place on 22nd & 23rd July 2023 - save the date! **Anyone who is interested in getting involved next year, then please email volunteer@buckinghamcanal.org.uk and anyone who would like to have a stall, please email events@buckinghamcanal.org.uk.**

Becky Hall
Community Engagement Lead

The Summer Wildlife Report

In the Heat of Summer, Our Wildlife Has Shown Resilience!

This summer has certainly pushed wildlife to the extreme, certainly in the southern areas of the UK, but as Michael & Diane Hunt's reports testify, and judging by the biggest quantity of reports I have seen so far for any three month period, local wildlife seems to have found a way to adapt. Birds, Reptiles, Insects and Flora are represented this time around. I have organised the report a little differently this time, so that it hopefully flows better. I hope you like it.

We seem to be going from one extreme to another. In the last report I said there hadn't been any signs of "a decent warm and sunny spell thus far". I spoke to soon! Winter brought us some of the worst storms on record, then July saw our hottest temperatures on record with such a prolonged period without any decent rainfall in the south. Wildlife and habitats have certainly suffered, especially with so many wildfires in my area (Surrey & Hampshire) at least. We have had some rainfall finally, but obviously not enough. Anyway, Bourton Meadow's green corridor has certainly thrived in these times when the odds have certainly been stacked against habitats nationally.

Last year at this point we had confirmed two breeding pairs of Reed Warblers (with young seen) and one pair of breeding Whitethroats. The good news is that this year has been a little better, with two pairs of successful Reed Warblers and young seen skulking through the reedbeds, and two, possibly three Whitethroat nests confirmed. Reed Buntings are showing positive signs, but again, and rather worryingly, no Sedge Warblers have been seen.

The Dragonflies (order Odonata, which contains the sub-orders Zygoptera (meaning 'paired-wings' - Damselflies) and Anisoptera (meaning 'unequal-winged' - Dragonflies)) are exceptionally well represented here this time, with ten species, some in very high numbers. Butterflies are also well documented too, across an impressive eleven species!

BIRDS: Two **Swifts** were observed drinking along the canal on 19th May, with no further reports for this period. These are often given away by their characteristic screaming as they perform their acrobatic dances overhead. The same lunchtime produced two **Stock Doves (right)**, resplendent in their uniformly slate grey plumage and metallic green neck patch. Easy to tell apart from Feral Pigeons, they are not as common and usually seen in small numbers, although I have certainly seen them in groups numbering three figures!



Stock Dove © Langham Birder
is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.



A solitary **Grey Heron** spent much of its time on 7th June perched motionless along the canal bank, awaiting its next meal opportunity to present itself. That day, another predator also cast its shadow on the water. However, this was in the shape of a **Red Kite** and was circling high up. This apex species has been known to take the occasional fish too. Three **Buzzard (left)** were also displaying and calling in the vicinity too, and when doing so are such a sight to behold!

A dash of turquoise blue shot along at speed skimming the adjacent River Great Ouse on a visit on 7th July, which can only mean one thing...a **Kingfisher**! A rare sight, its always a delight to see, even if it is a blur! A single **Great-spotted Woodpecker** was observed on 19th May. Hirundines made themselves known in the shape of two **Swallows** on 7th July, whilst a single **House Martin** was seen overhead on 14th May,

with a further two tempted in for a drink on 7th June. Like the Swifts, although unrelated, these Hirundines are very similar in many ways, in the way they often vocalise whilst performing their exhaustive yet seemingly effortless aerial manoeuvres as they feast on flying insects.

Now, for some news on some of our regular breeders. Michael recorded his "first of the year" **Reed Warbler** singing in the reedbeds on his first visit on 14th May, after which he reminded us that "no work to reeds 'till autumn/winter" should take place to ensure another breeding success. This evidence of a potential population growth was further backed up with one seen singing on 19th May & 7th June, and two...yes two seen singing in the reedbeds on 21st June. The results were in on 7th July, as Michael reported that "in two areas of the reedbeds, two Reed Warbler pairs have young moving about in there with them". He went on to re-iterate that "as per usual I express caution and not to carry out works until autumn". A rule, that as always, we heed.

In other Warbler news, strikingly marked single **Blackcaps** were seen singing on 19th May and also 7th & 21st June. The ever illusive **Whitethroats** were certainly being productive though, with singles seen singing on 14th May and 7th June, and two in between on 19th May. However, the 21st June produced three, "of which one has a definite nest with a further probable nest in the large nettle area between the entrance gate and the new benches" Michael stated. As with the Reed Warblers, obvious caution was advised. A further nest was discovered in the scrub on 7th July. Truly amazing news, I'm sure you will agree, and follows up nicely on the hopes drawn upon in the last report.

A single **Song Thrush** was singing away on 7th July, mostly hidden away as they often are. An unusual sighting along the canal, ten **House Sparrows** certainly made their entrance,

chirping gregariously in the hedges on 19th May. A solitary **Greenfinch** was noted on 7th June. Finally, following on from the last edition, gorgeously marked **Reed Buntings** were certainly active along the reedbeds, with one singing well and a further pair noted on 19th May. Furthermore, a female was seen on 7th June, while a pair providing promise was seen on 21st June, so fingers crossed they've added to the success at Bourton Meadow too.

REPTILES: Another sighting of a **Grass Snake** was made on 19th May, making this the second known sighting this year.

INSECTS: This has to be one of the best seasons for Dragonflies reported within these pages! With this, I thought I'd impart a little random detail or two on each species. Starting with the sub-order of the Damselflies, two



Banded Demoiselle - female © Ben Sentence

striking **Banded Demoiselles (right)** were observed on 7th June. The not so widespread **Beautiful Demoiselle** was seen on 7th June, with six noted on 21st June. Beautifully metallic just like the Banded (in both species, males are blue and females are green), this is also the only other Damselfly beside the aforementioned with coloured wings, with the male of each bearing far more intensely marked wings than their female counterparts.

The 14th May, Michael exclaimed "at last some good Dragonfly and Damselfly weather", and saw an impressive forty-four **Azure Damselflies** on the wing. These were the first of the year. Fifty-three individuals and thirteen pairs in tandem was an impressive haul on the 19th May. "Numerous" was Michael's quote for the 7th June, and at least thirty were skimming the water on 21st June, dropping to just a few on 7th July. Two **Red-eyed Damselfly** were present on 7th June with a further four on 21st June. Less colourful than the black and bright blue banded Azure, this species certainly favours still waters like canals.

Blue-tailed Damselfly males with their eye-catching bright blue-tipped abdomens are similar in many ways to the Red-eyeds, aside from the eye colour itself. Strangely, but not exclusively, the females exist in at least five colour forms! The first five of the year appeared on 19th May, with a further singleton on 7th June and four more on 21st June. One of the larger Damselflies at 33-36mm, the male **Large Red Damselfly**, as the name suggests, is bright red. However, the female too is red, but a more variable muddled or bronze colour. The first one of the year to be noted was on the wing on 14th May, with another singleton five days later.

Moving on to the generally larger species within the sub-order of Dragonflies, a single blue & yellow marked golden **Brown Hawker** was the first of the year to be seen on 21st June, and the only one noted so far. Distinctive brown tinged wings are its unique feature. Probably our most well known or signature Dragonfly, the brightly coloured blue & green (in the case of the male) **Emperor Dragonflies** were seen on 7th June (four), 21st June (three) with just a single example on 7th July. At 78mm, this is our largest and bulkiest Dragonfly species!

A single **Hairy Dragonfly** was observed on 7th June. At 55mm, these are smaller than Emperors and the males have more of a black base colour with blue markings, and the female green. The thorax, as the name suggests, is distinctly hairy. Finally, at the smaller end of the scale at around 48mm, and with a preference for marginal emergent vegetation, the golden-brown **Four-spotted Chaser** is told from other Chasers diagnostically by the dark spots on the anterior edge of all four wings. These began appearing early in the season, as this species always does. We had the first two reported this year on 14th May, four on the 19th May, six on 7th June, a whopping fifteen on 21st June, followed by just a single sighting on 7th July.

Butterflies seen along the canal include two **Orange-tips** on 19th May. One **Large White** was also seen that lunchtime, with possibly two on 07th July. One **Green-veined White** was seen on a quick visit to site on 21st June, as was a **Ringlet** and two **Meadow Browns**.



Silver-washed Fritillary © naturalengland
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Michael made an exciting discovery on 9th July, stating that "sightings were pretty much as the last report (7th July) except for an exciting Butterfly this afternoon. An *Argynnis paphia* or **Silver-washed Fritillary (left)**! A very striking species and interestingly I had seen a few earlier today at other locations".

The 7th June saw beautiful single examples of a predominantly black dashed with orange

Red Admiral, a beautifully decorated **Painted Lady** and a similarly marked and most familiar **Small Tortoiseshell**. The latter provided four examples on 21st June and 'several' on 7th July. A single **Comma**, so called due to a comma shaped extension on each scalloped hind wing, was found on 21st June. Finally, a **Holly Blue** danced lazily along on 14th May.

FLORA: Plants noted in flower on 14th May included the pink flowering **Ragged Robin**, the **Yellow Iris**, the yellow cup flowering **Marsh Marigold** and the white petaled **Common Water Crowfoot**. The later two are both members of the Buttercup family.

You Can Contribute to The Seasonal Wildlife Report Too!

Hopefully we will continue to see more and more wildlife records for Bourton Meadow and our other sites in the coming months, and who knows, something rare or unexpected too! Do keep your eyes peeled, and not just at the sites in this report. As always, the Society wishes to thank Michael & Diane Hunt for their contributions, which were forwarded to Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust.

Please let us know of any wildlife sightings along any stretch of the entirety of the Buckingham Canal, be it restored or not. You can send your records to myself or any of the trustees using our contact details on pages 30 and 31. For further details about the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust, please visit: www.bbowt.org.uk.

Ian Matson
Editor

The Community Engagement Report

Well, what a busy few months it has been! As the weather has improved, I have had more and more things to do, and more and more events to attend or organise! It's been wonderful welcoming so many people to our lovely canal. We have had lots of corporate volunteer groups coming to spend time with us working at both our Cosgrove (**Ingram Micro visited on 13th May, below left**) and Bourton Meadow (**Sava visited on 26th May, below right**) sites over the last few months. The work they have done has been so invaluable and we have progressed with a great many tasks thanks to them. We still have more groups due to attend our work parties well into October.



© Becky Hall



© Becky Hall



© Becky Hall

I attended a very interesting networking event in Northampton at the end of May. I met many other groups, made some useful contacts and generated some new ideas for things to do. There will be more of these events being held in the autumn.

Festival season got into full swing this summer, starting with Celebrate

Buckingham Day on Thursday 2nd June. We ran a very successful stall selling bric-a-brac and hosted Athina's ever popular lucky dip. It was a lovely sunny day with a great turnout from the people of Buckingham. Next up was the Riverside Fair at Stony Stratford on Saturday 11th June (**above**). Again, we had a very popular stall, with many people enjoying our plant sale and lollipop game. The following day we were at the Castlethorpe Duck Race. My duck didn't win the race sadly, but there was a lot of interest in the canal and we even recruited a new volunteer for our fortnightly volunteer work party group!

I also popped up at Stony Stratford Farmers Market with a little information stall. Despite the wind trying its hardest to blow my display away, it was a lovely morning talking to



© Andrew Denny - Waterways World

locals about the canal and sharing memories. I had a few weeks break, then it was on to the Fellows, Morton & Clayton Ltd Rally & Canal Festival at Braunston Marina with our stall. Here I had the pleasure of meeting canal heroes Prunella Scales and Timothy West (**left, with Tim Coghlan of Braunston Marina presenting Athina and myself with a cheque for £200**)! I saw some fabulous boats including some who were booked for our own festival, as

well as meeting many other canal societies and groups who are all on the same crazy mission as us here at Buckingham Canal Society!

Then it was our turn to hold a festival, and after a couple of years break, the Cosgrove Canal Festival & Craft Fair came back with a bang! **See page 15 for my full report.** We rounded off the festival season with a trip to the Linslade Canal Festival. Again, another busy stall and a great day!

At the end of June, we were really pleased to host a school trip for ninety Year 2 students from Bourton Meadow Academy in Buckingham. After a brief talk about the history of the canal, the students were challenged to try and work in teams to build a bridge - perhaps a good training exercise for future volunteers as the canal restoration progresses?! They also took part in a scavenger hunt and a litter pick which resulted in several bags of rubbish being collected. It was a wonderful day enjoyed by all and the students were enthusiastic, polite and engaged. We look forward to doing more events with them. **Please get in touch to arrange a visit if you have a group or school who would be interested, by getting in touch with me using my contact details on page 31.**

At the end of July, we were excited to take part in the Buckinghamshire Open Weekend organised by Buckinghamshire Culture. We held a successful art event at Bourton Meadow where people were invited to come and spend some time by the canal and create some artwork. **Read the full story on page 10.**

And finally...I am sad to say I am leaving Buckingham Canal Society and in fact, Buckinghamshire! I've got a new job and am returning to my roots in West Yorkshire. **I will be carrying on my role for a little while from afar and may pop up at a few events in the autumn, but in the meantime if you, or someone you know, might be interested in taking on the most fun, crazy job I have certainly ever had, please do get in touch with Terry Cavender using his contact details on page 30!** I am very grateful to everyone who has helped me, attended events and offered support. It has been brilliant, thank you. I am currently looking at canal boats to buy up north, so clearly my time here has made a lasting impression! Maybe see you out on the canals up there!

Becky Hall
Community Engagement Lead

Meet the Trustee and Marketing Manager



© Edima Inwang

Edima Inwang Appointed as Our New Trustee and Marketing Manager

I am a tech enthusiast, and I have spent most of my life helping people to use technology to handle day-to-day tasks, and business ones too. I am also a User Interface Designer who likes creating intuitive designs. When I am not discussing technology and designs, I am often talking about ways to preserve the environment for future generations, which is how I became involved with Buckingham Canal Society. I hope to make others aware of the Society, and in turn become passionate about supporting it too.

Edima Inwang
Trustee and Marketing Manager

Our Publicity & Recycling Stall Needs You

Our Publicity & Recycling stall is out and about throughout the year attending canal festivals and village events, while raising funds for the Society. If anyone fancies a change of scene, we readily welcome new people to come along and give a helping hand in running the stall. It's really good fun and you'll also get the chance to attend a wide variety of canal festivals and local events whilst helping to raise funds for our Society to restore the Buckingham Canal.

So why not come along and help us make a difference. You won't regret it. The Village at War event in Stoke Bruerne is always great fun, as you get the chance to dress up in 1940s costume! It's worth noting that over £1,800 was raised for our canal restoration work by this stall alone in 2019! I'm sure we can beat that this year now we are back and out & about!

If you have any good quality bric-a-brac that you would like to donate, or would like to give us a hand on the stall this year, please get in touch using my contact details on page 30.

Athina Beckett
Trustee, Volunteer Leader and Work Party Organiser

Funders

We are very grateful for the financial support from all of our funders. Listed below in chronological order, beginning with the latest, are our most recent funders:

- Heart of Bucks Community Foundation - B P Collins Fund
- The Skinners' Company - The Lady Neville Charity
- Waitrose & Partners
- Moto in the Community Trust
- Buckingham & Villages Community Board
- Arnold Clark Community Fund
- The National Lottery Awards for All England
- Co-op - Local Community Fund
- Heart of Bucks Community Foundation for Buckinghamshire - Bucks Coronavirus Stabilisation Fund
- HDH Wills Charitable Trust - Martin Wills Wildlife Maintenance Fund
- Buckinghamshire Council - Local Authority Discretionary Grant
- Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust - Thriving Communities Fund
- The National Lottery Community Fund
- The Rank Foundation
- The Radcliffe Trust
- The Foyle Foundation

Patrons, Partners & Supporters

We are very grateful for the continued support of our patrons:

- Lord Boswell of Aynho
- Lord & Lady Scott of Foscote

We have formal partnerships with the following:

- Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust
- Buckinghamshire Council
- Buckingham Town Council
- Canal & River Trust
- Deanshanger Parish Council
- Environment Agency
- Inland Waterways Association - Corporate Member
- West Northamptonshire Council

We are very grateful for the ongoing support of:

- Inland Waterways Association - Milton Keynes Branch
- Inland Waterways Association - Northampton Branch
- Waterway Recovery Group and their regional volunteers

We have been recognised by the following:

- Cosgrove Parish Council
- Foscote Parish Meeting
- Maids Moreton Parish Council
- Old Stratford Parish Council
- Thornborough Parish Council
- Thornton Parish Meeting

Corporate Members

Braunston Marina



Lionhearts Cruising Club



Taverners Boat Club



The Wyvern Shipping Co Ltd



Inland Waterways Association Northampton Branch

We Support:



Corporate & External Volunteer Groups

We are very grateful to all of the organisations that have ever assisted us with their volunteer groups. Listed below in chronological order, beginning with the latest, are our most recent attendees:

- Arriva UK Bus - Procurement
- Audi UK
- HSBC UK Bank plc
- British Telecommunications plc
- The Royal Latin School
- Network Rail
- Milton Keynes College
- NHBC
- Santander
- Sava
- Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles
- Ingram Micro
- Waterway Recovery Group - Bit in the Middle
- Kent & East Sussex Canal Restoration Group
- Waterway Recovery Group -London
- RS Components
- Marsh LLC
- Hallam Land Management Ltd
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints - Northampton Stake
- The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
- McAfee
- Eddyfi Technologies - TSC
- Vinci Technology Centre UK
- Computacentre
- Stowe House
- Stowe School
- Trees for Cities
- Argos
- Network Rail - Bletchley Maintenance
- Virgin Money UK
- Mayflex UK
- Community Payback - Buckingham

Buckingham Canal Society Craft Group

Our craft group isn't meeting at present because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, but I still continue to make the rag rugs which are sold on our Society stall for £25 each, raising much needed funds for us. In fact, six were sold at this year's Fellows, Morton & Clayton Ltd Rally & Canal Festival at Braunston Marina back in June!

If any members have any unused or old T-shirts which are not wanted, then please get in touch with me using my contact details on page 30. They can still be used to make even more rag rugs.

Athina Beckett

Trustee, Volunteer Leader and Work Party Organiser

Future Events

Tuesday 11th October 2.30pm

IWA Northampton

**Talk: The Canal Boatwomen Trainees -
Mike Constable**

The Boat Inn, Bridge Road, Stoke Bruerne,
Nr Towcester, Northants, NN12 7SB
Details:

www.waterways.org.uk/northampton

Thursday 20th October 7.45pm

IWA Milton Keynes

**Talk: The Panama Canal Canal -
Richard Thomas**

Bletchley Conservative Club,
105-111 Queensway, Bletchley,
Milton Keynes, Bucks, MK2 2DN. Details:
www.waterways.org.uk/miltonkeynes

Tuesday 8th November 7.30pm

IWA Northampton

Entertainment:

**Songs of the Waterways Trainees -
Phil & Denise Underwood**

The Boat Inn, Bridge Road, Stoke Bruerne,
Nr Towcester, Northants, NN12 7SB
Details:

www.waterways.org.uk/northampton

Thursday 17th November 7.45pm

IWA Milton Keynes

**Talk: IWA MK Waterways -
John Pomfret**

Bletchley Conservative Club,
105-111 Queensway, Bletchley,
Milton Keynes, Bucks, MK2 2DN.
Details:

www.waterways.org.uk/miltonkeynes

Tuesday 13th December 7.30pm

IWA Northampton

Christmas Quiz with

John Pomfret as Quizmaster

The Boat Inn, Bridge Road, Stoke Bruerne,
Nr Towcester, Northants, NN12 7SB.
Details:

www.waterways.org.uk/northampton



© Alan Mynard

Work Party Dates 2022/2023

October

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 9th
Sunday 30th

November

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 13th
Sunday 27th

December

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 11th

January

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 8th
Sunday 29th

February

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 12th
Sunday 26th

March

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 12th
Sunday 26th

April

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 9th
Sunday 30th

May

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 14th
Sunday 28th

June

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 11th
Sunday 25th

July

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 9th
Sunday 30th

August

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 13th
Sunday 27th

September

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 10th
Sunday 24th

Next Navigator

So we are nearing the end of another issue of the Navigator and I am sure many of you are eager for more. You can be part of what appears in the next issue. There are regular items from the committee but there is space assigned to YOU, our valued members, for your submissions. I am also always very interested to hear what you think of the newsletter and comments are most welcome!

Please submit all contributions for Issue 114 (Winter 2022) by the 1st November 2022 via email, CD, or typed/handwritten letter (in that order of preference) to:

editor@buckinghamcanal.org.uk or

Ian Matson, 63 Alnners Road, Lyne, Chertsey, Surrey, KT16 0BH

Advertising with us

We welcome advertisements 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

Quarter Page: £6

Back Page: £22

Half Page: £10

Inserts: £7.50

Contact the Committee

Athina Beckett

Trustee, Volunteer Leader and Work Party Organiser
2 Staters Pound, Pennyland,
Milton Keynes, Bucks, MK15 8AX
01908 661217 / 07721 319404

athina.beckett@buckinghamcanal.org.uk



Terry Cavender

Trustee and Executive Officer
7 Buckingham Road, Akeley,
Bucks, MK18 5HL
01280 860316
07976 629440

terry.cavender@buckinghamcanal.org.uk



Richard Dwight

Trustee and Treasurer
34 Hazell Park,
Amersham,
Bucks, HP7 9AB
01494 728611

treasurer@buckinghamcanal.org.uk



Edima Inwang

Trustee and Marketing Manager
129 North Ninth Street,
Milton Keynes,
Bucks, MK9 3AW
07596 033295

edima.inwang@buckinghamcanal.org.uk



Colin Levett

Trustee and Grants Officer
47 Bradwell Common Boulevard,
Bradwell Common,
Milton Keynes, Bucks, MK10 9DN
07950 997177

colin.levett@buckinghamcanal.org.uk



Gerry Millard

Trustee and Construction Manager
32 Campbell Close,
Linden Village, Buckingham,
Bucks, MK18 7HP

gerry.millard@buckinghamcanal.org.uk



Rob Morris

Trustee and Chairman
218 Bushbury Road,
Fallings Park, Wolverhampton,
Staffs, WV10 0NT
07818 035299

rob.morris@buckinghamcanal.org.uk



Amanda Robinson

Trustee, Heritage and Archaeology Lead
218 Bushbury Road, Fallings Park,
Wolverhampton, Staffs, WV10 0NT
07485 109966

amanda.robinson@buckinghamcanal.org.uk



Paul Sayer

Trustee and Construction Engineer
Sunnyside, 25 Moreton Drive,
Buckingham,
Bucks, MK18 1JG
07825 190867

paul.sayer@buckinghamcanal.org.uk



Trustee

We are interested to hear from people who would like to join us as trustees.



Other Key Contacts

Registered Address/General Enquiries

Buckingham Canal Society
c/o 2 Staters Pound,
Pennyland, Milton Keynes,
Bucks, MK15 8AX
0300 323 1350
info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk

Jean Beddard

Membership Secretary
5 Staters Pound, Pennyland,
Milton Keynes, Bucks, MK15 8AX
01908 674447
membership@buckinghamcanal.org.uk

Becky Hall

Community Engagement Lead
07885 467024
becky.hall@buckinghamcanal.org.uk

Ian Matson

Editor
63 Almnors Road, Lyne, Chertsey,
Surrey, KT16 0BH
07793 451958
ian.matson@buckinghamcanal.org.uk

Alan Mynard

Website Administrator and Archivist
Milton Keynes, Bucks
alan.mynard@buckinghamcanal.org.uk

Keith Rawlings

Structural Engineer
Dryden, Rock Lane,
Leighton Buzzard, Beds, LU7 2QQ
07415 461917
keith.rawlings@buckinghamcanal.org.uk

Illustrated Talks & Presentations

talks@buckinghamcanal.org.uk

Cosgrove Festival Team

events@buckinghamcanal.org.uk



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Buckingham Canal Society, Aylesbury Canal Society.



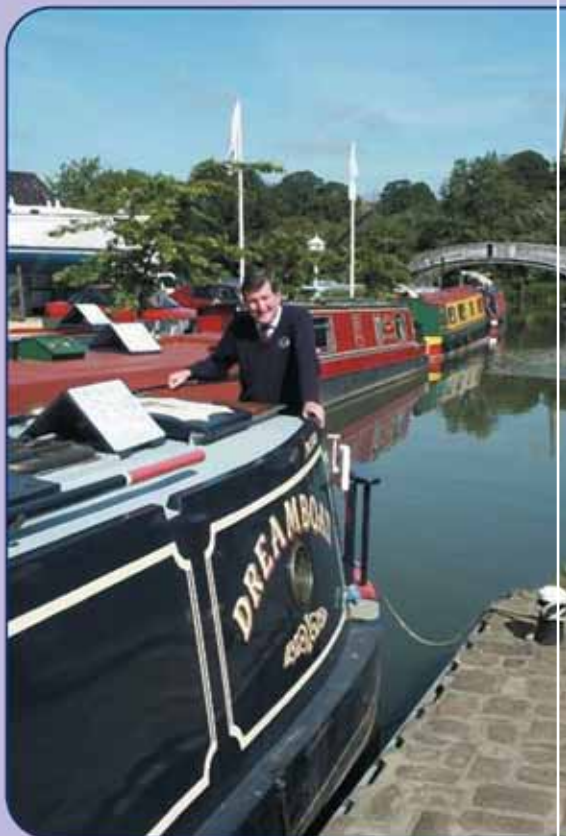
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