

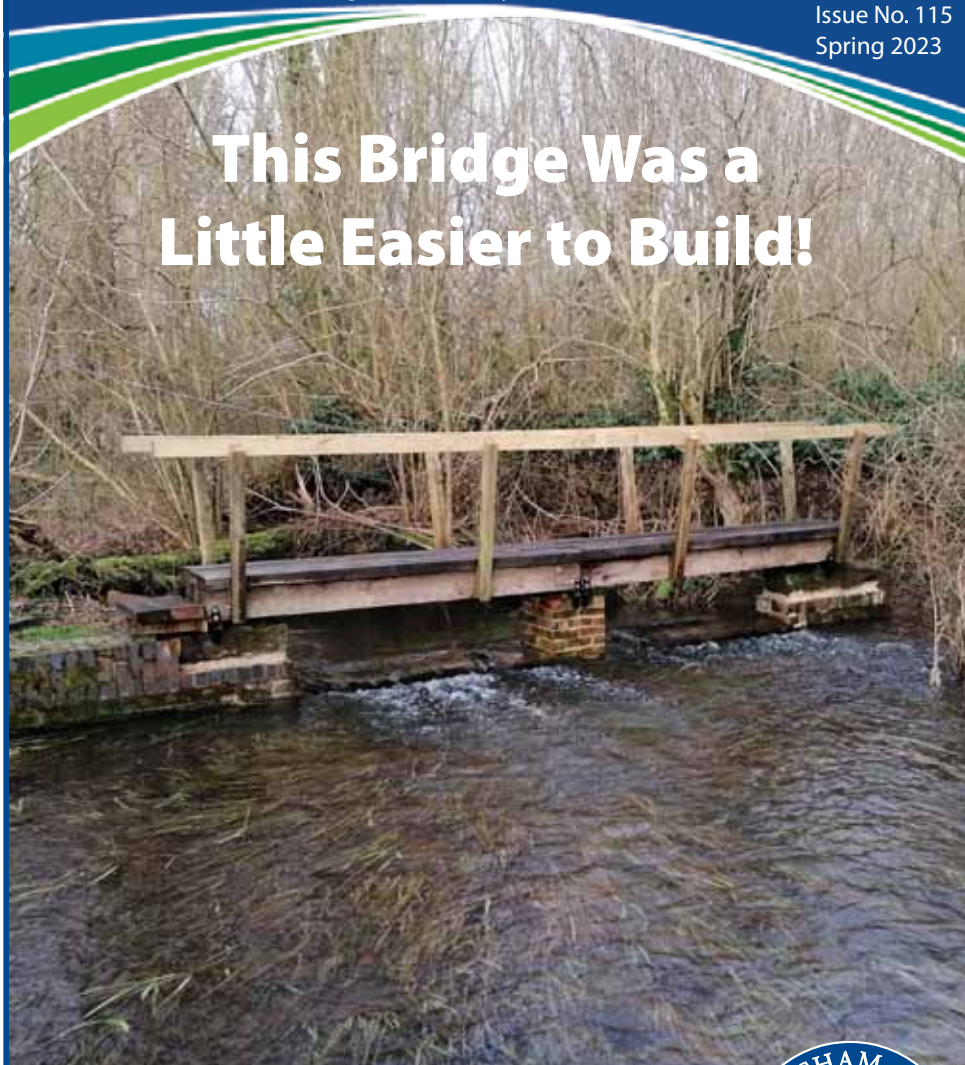
THE BUCKINGHAM NAVIGATOR

The Newsletter of Buckingham Canal Society

Registered Charity No. 1156662

Issue No. 115
Spring 2023

This Bridge Was a Little Easier to Build!



Featuring:

- Dredger Diana Makes it Home to Cosgrove
- Major Works Commence West of Bridge No.1
- Mega Bird Sighting at Bourton Meadow



Cosgrove Marina

Lock Lane, Cosgrove, MK19 7JR

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Mick and Shirley are pleased to support the restoration of the Buckingham Canal.

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Keith Rawlings MISE is proud to support
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 Spring 2023 edition of The Buckingham Navigator.

Happy New Year! This year certainly promises to be bigger and better than ever for the Society, with new appointments, positive progression on paper and in the field, our biggest festival yet, and our up & coming Annual General Meeting & Social Evening to tell you all about it! If you've not been before, please make the time to support us by coming along to meet us and other like minded members, and who knows, you may make some new friends to! BUT...more importantly than anything else (well almost haha)...check out our first recorded Hawfinch sighting at Bourton Meadow on page 22! Absolutely stunning! Now, that sighting really is the big news haha! But seriously...we are certainly in for a progressive, productive, inspirational and, quite frankly...a simply awesome year ahead! Well done all!



Thank you to all the contributors. Cover photo: The almost completed restored and rebuilt footbridge in the Buckingham Canal Nature Reserve at Hyde Lane © Athina Beckett. **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

Watch us on YouTube at: www.youtube.com/buckinghamcanalsociety

Ian Matson
Editor

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Restoration Site Update



©Terry Cavender

En route to Cosgrove, Dredger Diana and Tugboat Shoveller are seen moored up at Bridge No.135 on the Grand Union at Tring on 13th November, with the next stop being Lock No.46 at Bulbourne. **Find out more in 'Diana's Dreams' on page 19 - Steve Morley's fascinating story about her rather troubled journey home.**

Work Continues to Access the Waterway Beyond Bridge No.1

Most of our effort has been focused on our fleet of boats in the run up to Christmas. Work on the engine for Diana the dredger (**opposite**) is ongoing and we hope to have gotten her engine back in by around late February.

Meanwhile, plans are now being enacted to form a 'narrows' at the farm crossing at Cosgrove, west of Bridge No.1. This will enable us to get this section of nearly 500m to full navigable depth, and in use by boats too. Preparations have included the erecting of Heras fencing and



the laying of bog mats which form a temporary floor for safe working (**above**). Narrows are where stop planks can be fitted for maintenance and emergencies, and once in place, we anticipate approval from Canal & River Trust to remove the ones in place under Bridge No.1.

Steel piles will be used, some of which came from the piling we took out at Bridge No.1, and these will be installed using a second-hand piling hammer (**similar to that pictured left**) we have purchased from Canal & River Trust.

Many hands make light work, and we welcome folks to join us most Tuesdays and Thursdays at Cosgrove. Please get in touch with me for more information using my contact details on page 30.

Terry Cavender
Trustee and Executive Officer

Huge Thanks to All Our Volunteers, Not Only at Cosgrove...

Firstly, I want to thank all of our Society volunteers who have helped me over the last twelve months with the various work parties I've run. Also, I'd like to thank those that helped me out on my Publicity & Recycling Stall and with the Cosgrove Canal Festival & Craft Fair.

We have also had an amazing amount of work carried out by external organisations taking part in their 'team building' and 'volunteer' days. These have included Waterway Recovery Group - Bit in the Middle, Kent & East Sussex Canal Restoration Group, HSBC UK Bank Plc, Audi UK, Arriva UK Bus - Procurement, Mitie Group Plc, Cummins, Sava, Santander, NHBC, Network Rail, Ingram Micro and Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles. Some of these companies have already booked a return visit for this year. We have already taken three bookings for February and several more for March!

...but Also to Those That Help Us Out at Bourton Meadow...

I'm running work parties between Bourton Meadow and the Buckingham Canal Nature Reserve at Hyde Lane at present. At Bourton Meadow, the hedges have all been cut and strimmed back using our newly purchased battery operated hedge cutter. The banks have been cleared and strimmed, and large amounts of weed removed from the canal. Because the weather was so warm in November, we continued clearing weeds and working from the canal bed even then!



© Athina Beckett

We have recently purchased a garden incinerator to allow us to clear all the hedge trimmings and reeds pulled from the canal. This will allow us to have bonfires on site in a safe environment and perhaps keep volunteers warm in the cold weather too!

The area at the top of the site which was left last year because of nesting birds can now be cleared. We will also be clearing Brambles from the non-towpath side where they have started to spread into the reeds on the canal bank.

Unfortunately, in spite of having the security camera on site, our interpretation board that is situated at the start of the canal has been vandalised and will have to be replaced.

...and at Our Buckingham Canal Nature Reserve Too!

The lock gates at our Hyde Lane site have been re-painted and look great (**opposite**). The new footbridge over the stream on the far side of the canal has been completed and just needs painting in the coming summer months (**see cover picture**).

A lot of Bramble and foliage was beginning to destroy the brickwork inside the lock chamber, so this has now been removed (**below**). Now that has been completed, the re-pointing of some of the brickwork in the chamber has now been planned for the summer months.



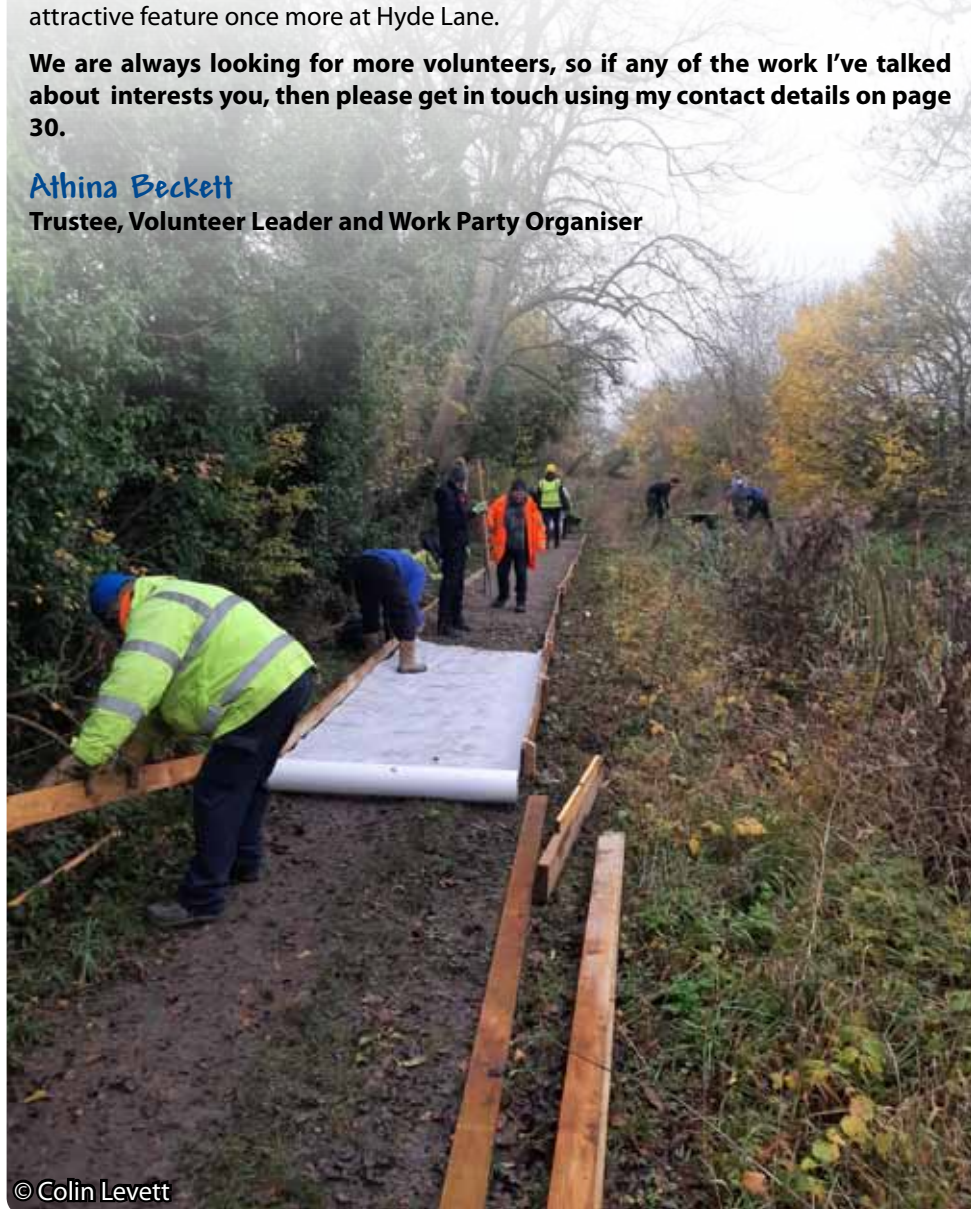
© Paul Whitewick

The visitor seating area will also need re-painting over these summer months too. The canal bank has been trimmed back (**below, with Network Rail assisting on 29th November**) to allow the spring flowers to flourish, and about seventy sapling trees were planted in gaps in the hedgerow last year. Once the weather warms up we hope to see the wild flower seeds we planted last year to bloom and make an attractive feature once more at Hyde Lane.

We are always looking for more volunteers, so if any of the work I've talked about interests you, then please get in touch using my contact details on page 30.

Athina Beckett

Trustee, Volunteer Leader and Work Party Organiser



© Colin Levett

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



Cheese, Wine and Light Refreshments will be available during the mid-session break.

2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

BUCKINGHAM CANAL SOCIETY

Everyone welcome - only members can vote on AGM resolutions.

MAR. 18TH 2023 | 07:00PM
Buckingham Community Centre
Cornwalls Meadow, Buckingham
MK18 1RP

Listen to an intriguing talk
by Ed Grimsdale on
*"The Impact of the Canal
on Buckingham"*

A raffle will be held at the end of the evening.

For more information

- info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk
- 0300-323-1350
- www.buckinghamcanal.org.uk

Buckingham Canal Society News

Join us at Our Annual General Meeting & Social Gathering

The Buckingham Canal Society will hold its 31st Annual General Meeting and Social Evening on Saturday 18th March at 7pm until 9.45pm.

As usual, this will be in the in the Buckingham Community Centre, Cornwalls Meadow, Buckingham, Bucks, MK18 8AX. This is next to the Waitrose supermarket in the town centre, and all are welcome to attend.

As is our usual practice, we will start with the short formal business of the meeting where we will update you all on progress over the past year and outline our plans for the future. We will be asking members to approve last year's minutes, the annual financial report and some changes that occurred within the committee.

Following the formal section, we then break for the cheese and wine social. Here you will have a chance to enter our raffle and mingle with the committee and everyone else present.

The final part of the evening should be really interesting and directly relevant to the history of The Buckingham Canal. We will be joined by Ed Grimsdale who will be giving a fascinating talk entitled: 'The Impact of the Canal on Buckingham'. Not to be missed!

Why not come along for what promises to be an enjoyable and informative evening, where you can catch up with friends and support us, your local friendly canal restoration group.

For further details please visit: www.buckinghamcanal.org.uk, or email: info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk or tel: 0300-323-1350

Ian Matson
Editor

Join Athina on an Informative Local Circular Walk

On Tuesday 18th July I will be leading a walk for my local walking group. Any Buckingham Canal Society members and friends are welcome to join me.

The walk will start at the Ostlers Lane Car Park in Stony Stratford, where will meet at 6.30pm. We then walk through Stony Stratford Nature Reserve towards the Iron Trunk Aqueduct, and then along the towpath back up the Grand Union Canal towards Cosgrove. Finally, we will then follow the Buckingham Canal along to the A5 and back to the car park in Stony Stratford. The walk is approximately five miles in length.

For more information, please email me using my contact details on page 30.



Getting the Word Out There to Get Those Willing Feet on the Ground!

On the morning of 14th December last year, I attended the SNVB Volunteer Fair at Towcester Town Hall. Some excellent & constructive conversations were had with many people. Several showed an interest in volunteering, and I made contact with some more volunteer organisations who could be interested in working in partnership with us! I also had the chance to liaise with the Mayor of Towcester Martin Jones at our Society stall (left).

The following day I also attended a session with MK Community Action in Milton Keynes to promote our Society. So all in all, it was a busy week indeed with the usual work parties thrown in too!

Getting the Word Out There About Events in Your Area

If any members know of events or festivals they think might be of interest to other Buckingham Canal Society members, please get in touch. **Could you please forward the details on to me using my contact details on page 30, and I will include them in the newsletter's Future Events column.**

Athina Beckett

Trustee, Volunteer Leader and Work Party Organiser

Cosgrove Canal Festival & Craft Fair - A Call for Vendors

The carnival boat is sailing towards Cosgrove yet again. This time, it is due to berth on the 22nd of July 2023. I am talking about the Cosgrove Canal Festival & Craft Fair.

After a halt due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the festival made a triumphant return in 2022 with an influx of colourful boats and the setting up of well-packed stalls. This year we hope to surpass the turnout for last year as we are expecting to see new faces and new boats. As in the previous years, most of the activities for the canal festival will be held along the canal towpath from Cosgrove Lock all the way to the Iron Trunk Aqueduct. The craft fair will be held Cosgrove Village Hall.

A call for vendors was sent out at the beginning of the year inviting interested narrowboat and towpath traders to register. At the moment, we have received a good number of applications, and at the time of writing, traders who have had the opportunity of displaying their wares in previous festivals have been sending emails for slot reservations. At this rate, we may have to open a waiting list, although the Committee had earlier agreed to extend the mooring sites beyond Cosgrove Lock to accommodate more traders. Beyond the buying and selling, some of the events we also look forward to are the live performances by the bands and the traditional fish & chip supper.

For more enquiries on how to be a part of this year's festival, you can send an email to Cosgrove Festival Team using the contact details on page 31.

Edima Inwang
Trustee and Marketing Manager



© Alan Mynard



For more
information



COSGROVE CANAL FESTIVAL & CRAFT FAIR

22 - 23 JUL 2023

CALL FOR VENDORS

🌐 buckinghamcanal.org.uk
✉ events@buckinghamcanal.org.uk

Fund raising for
Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Registered Charity Number 1156662

The Winter Statement

Happy New Year! I hope you all had a Merry Christmas and avoided all the lurgies currently going around. Well, it has been a great year for Buckingham Canal Society! We have a new co-opted Trustee & Marketing Manager, Edima, who you will meet at the upcoming Annual General Meeting. He has come onboard and is working hard bringing our marketing strategy up to date, and is proving to be a fantastic asset. He has already recruited a small team to support him in this. As well as Edima, we have employed a new Community Engagement Lead, Shivanshi (**see page 25**), who we welcome to the team and hope you get the opportunity to meet at the AGM.

Admiral Cavender has expanded the fleet and we hope you will take the opportunity to review it at our annual Cosgrove Canal Festival & Craft Fair in July (**see page 12**). We are planning to make it bigger and better than ever before with more trading boats and more canalside traders alongside the craft stalls in the village hall.

The Society continues to embrace social media (though being a luddite I do tend to need all things computer breaking down in to byte sized chunks on repeat), so keep your eye out for updates, photos and news. I would ask that if you see a post you like then please click the 'Like' button and 'Share' with your friends. By sharing our posts not only do you show your support, it helps us to know what people want to see. Liking and sharing posts about our Society is one way you can help us raise awareness about the organisation and its goals.

Please see Amanda's article (**page 21**) regarding the need for help with our archaeology surveys. We also continue to run regular work parties. **See page 9, our website or our social media channels for details.** Please come along and join in, or just have a look at what's going on.

A final reminder that our Annual General Meeting & Social Evening is fast approaching (**see page 11**), so now is the time to block your diary. **If you have a burning question for the trustees then it would be a great help in ensuring you get the best answer if you could submit it to me in advance using my contact details on page 30.** This allows time for us to research the answer.

Rob Morris
Trustee and Chairman

Yuck, Muck & Luck



© Terry Cavender

Hello all and welcome to 2023. Winter is generally best described as a bit yuck, with lots of muck and hopefully some luck.

The adventures of Buckingham Canal Society have been chronicled in taking far too many attempts to get Diana, our 'new' dredger, from Apsley up to Cosgrove. Anticipated to still be a challenge as some of the team members work hard to restore her to working, dredging glory, I can honestly say "I hate engines" almost as much as the weather, which itself beats us into occasional submission and changes our plans!

Our fleet has grown and now takes a chunk of maintenance time which has kept us all amused as we await the finalisation of the fifth iteration of that long-awaited lease for the Cosgrove section of the Buckingham Canal from Canal & River Trust. It's now with our solicitors, but I have learnt to not hold my breath!

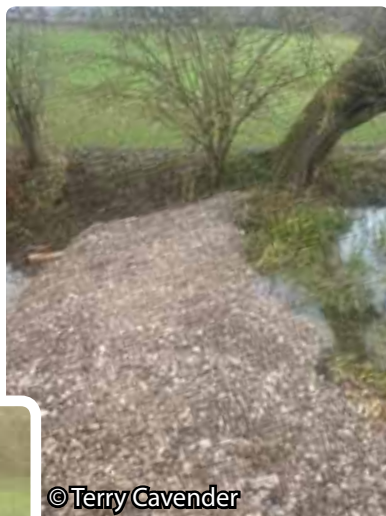
Our plans for the descent channel are firming up as we await news from National Highways to confirm the outcome for their deliberations. We are also awaiting the planning outcome of the proposed developments in the area and the proposed Country Park which will offer us the preferred route 'down under' to link up to the A5 crossing, aka an open top box culvert.

Tapping away writing this and starting to prepare for the Annual General Meeting, 2022 has seen progress, albeit with slight wrinkles here and there. By example this week sees:

- Two separate meetings with Buckingham Town Council
- Two evening working sessions, with the first looking to plan the piling work at Cosgrove, and the other bringing together our Marketeers to grow our presence and hopefully volunteers.
- Meeting with another society to explore common ground and help each other out.
- Two work parties (one cancelled due to weather).

So what? Well, the classic annual shout of “help” comes about. We are growing resources in several areas but we still need more folk to help with tasks on an ongoing basis. So the question you might ask is: “What can I do?” I might just answer with: “just about anything!” Still not sure? Drop any of the trustees an email or call us using our contact details on page 30, and I promise we can find a way for you to help Buckingham Canal Society achieve the vision of restoration. Make this the year when you make that commitment to help us, PLEASE.

So, what about that luck? Well, we are lucky to have a group of people who are collectively about to come up with all the designs and specifications for piling the narrows at Cosgrove next to the farm crossing to enable the installation of stop planks. Lots of drawing, talking and thinking. Then lots of discussion and approvals from various folk including Canal & River Trust. Then a bunch of great volunteers will be wallowing in mud to do the work. Another bunch of volunteers will then be organizing our annual festival when we hope that people, like yourselves, will walk that little



©Terry Cavender

bit further to see our labours, and hopefully see Diana and the other boats under the bridge we restored, and see what all our sweat and tears have gone into in extending our work westwards towards Buckingham. Is it impossible? Wait and see!



©Terry Cavender

So, we are now firmly entrenched into 2023, and we will resolve to face head on, and overcome all the trials and tribulations that may attempt to block our progress westwards to Buckingham. **Join us, out there along the canal and on the restoration sites and help us to make our ultimate goal a reality to benefit us all!** With that in mind, I propose a new year's resolution, "NEVER SAY NEVER", and finish with a favorite quote of mine...

Doing the impossible???



"Impossible is just a big word thrown around by people who find it easier to live in the world they've been given than to explore the power they have to change it. Impossible is not a fact. It's an opinion. Impossible is not a declaration. It's a dare. Impossible is potential. Impossible is temporary. Impossible is nothing." - Muhammad Ali

*Restoration is **not** impossible. Its a reality!*

Do you dig canals? We do !!!

Email notimpossible@buckinghamcanal.org.uk

Terry Cavender

Trustee and Executive Officer

The Archaeology Report

Hi everyone, not much is happening on the archaeology front at the minute due to various reasons including gaining permission from some of the landowners. We would love to be back out there doing the geophysical surveys but currently don't have the equipment required to do so.

If any of you have the necessary equipment and time to come and help us with this part of the task it would be greatly appreciated. Please contact me using my details on page 30.

Amanda Robinson

Trustee, Heritage and Archaeology Lead

Diana's Dramas

Having taken part in bringing Louise up the Grand Union from Brentford, fetching Diana from Aspley should have been easy. After all, Diana is a narrow beam, so there would be more chance of seeing ahead when steering. However, things did not go according to plan. This is the story from one of those involved.

Our first visit to Aspley, on 22nd September, found Diana moored on the offside bank, meaning we had to carry all our equipment across the lock gates and down a bramble-strewn path. The boat had not been used for a couple of years, and the first task was to pump water out of



the cabin and engine compartment (**above**). The engine oil was emulsified, but after an oil change it started up and we tested the hydraulics; most functions seemed to be OK. Upon moving gear back to the van, the trolley tipped over, depositing various equipment into the muddy water. Little did we know that this was a foretaste of things to come!

We had been bringing Shoveler the tug (on loan from Canal & River Trust) from Cosgrove in order to bring Diana back, but since things looked promising we decided to try Diana under her own power to meet up with Shoveler. On 26th September all started well with the engine lighting up, but Diana was well aground. We tried to shift her by using the grab, but a hydraulic union broke. Unfortunately, the spare fitting that a helpful Canal & River Trust man had did not fit, but we were able to change round the hoses to enable the slew to operate. By this time we were afloat, but the engine suddenly smoked heavily and stopped. Upon investigation we found that the oil had again emulsified, and we suspected there was water in the fuel line. It was necessary to bring Shoveler all the way to Aspley after all.

My next involvement was on 2nd October, as work was going on at Cosgrove at the same time. Before setting off, Shoveler's leaking stern gland had been attended to by a Canal & River Trust fitter, but by the time it arrived at Aspley it was again leaking seriously. A Sunday afternoon was spent fitting a solar panel on Diana's cabin roof to power a battery operated bilge pump to keep Shoveler afloat.

The 6th October came with the intention of starting Diana's engine, but despite Alan and Matt's best efforts bleeding through, cleaning out filters and dismantling and rebuilding the fuel pump, the engine refused to start. It was decided that the best course of action would be to use an external power pack to operate the legs and boom to allow us to remove Diana's engine for attention when we got back to Cosgrove.

On 29th October this had been installed. After much pulling and pushing from Shoveler, the dredger was eventually released from the mud, and all that remained was to re-arrange the Canal & River Trust workboats which had been moored alongside Diana before we set off.

It had been calculated that in push-tow mode the two boats would be too long to fit in the locks, so we first attempted to move breasted up. This did not work; steering proved all but impossible. We stopped above Aspley Top Lock to change to push-tow format, and at Boxmoor Bottom we discovered that the assemblage did in fact fit if the boom was raised. We moored above Winkwell Top Lock after a frustrating half-hour trying to find a way over a shoal just before the swing bridge; much reversing and pulling on ropes was involved.

Sadly, having left Diana with legs down, the water level had fluctuated and had sunk the boat. On 5th November we took a van full of tools, pumps and hoses to the stricken craft but did not manage to raise her. It was time to call in the professionals and on the 10th a team from River & Canal Rescue, armed with pumps much larger than ours, re-floated Diana. An afternoon's boating took us to Berkhamstead Bottom, which would at least be more accessible if anything else happened.

My next involvement was on the 13th, when I met the boats at Cowroast, having travelled that far in the morning. We managed a fairly uneventful journey to Tring Station Bridge, mooring on the summit pound. The comment was made "It's all downhill from here". If only we knew!

On 17th November we took the boats from Tring to Slapton without incident, but on the 22nd we managed about half a mile before Shoveler stopped. We moored up and discovered an engine full of emulsified oil. The rest of the day was spent changing the oil and replacing the filters but without success. We pulled the boats back to a section of piled bank to make them more accessible.

This was a job for Canal & River Trust, and on the 24th we met two fitters at the nearest point on the road, loaded equipment into wheelbarrows and carted it across two fields to the boats. One fitter looked at the stern gland (and was uncomplimentary about his colleague's previous efforts) while the other attended to the engine, flushing through



© Terry Cavender

the oil, refilling it with fresh and changing the filter. Having returned the fitters and their equipment to their van, we set off for Church Lock (**opposite**). Passing through the lock, the ominous clouds unleashed a downpour, and by the time we had moored and packed up the boats we were absolutely drenched.

On 28th November we set off with high hopes of reaching at least the outskirts of Milton Keynes. Apart from striking a large underwater obstruction just past the Globe at Linslade, all was going well until just short of Old Linslade Bridge, when frantic signals from Matt caused me to stop. He had spotted fuel spraying out of Shoveler's engine. Matt and Alan discovered a fracture in the copper fuel return pipe. Thoughts of how to repair this suddenly turned to the fact that there was an identical part on Diana's non-working engine. Just over an hour later we were on our way again. We reached and descended Soulbury Three Locks before the light failed.

This was my last involvement with the boat move (apart from a 'checking-up' visit) as I was due for surgery, but I can report that Diana did in fact reach Cosgrove without further incident (**below**). The next stage was to return Shoveler to Canal River Trust at Gayton for its five-year out-of-the-water inspection. What else could possibly go wrong - apart from three inches of ice on the cut!



Many thanks to my fellow boat steerers, handlers, lock wheelers and mechanics, (and those travelling to check up on the boats between movements) at various stages of the journey – Terry Cavender, Colin Levett, Matt Lane, Paul Sayer, Paul Mason, Alan Mynard, Bill Sturgess, John Hawkins, John O'Connor, Rob Morris and Amanda Robinson.

Steve Morley
Volunteer

The Winter Wildlife Report



Hawfinch - male
© Martha de Jong-Lantink
is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Wow! Our First Hawfinch Record!

As we make our way through a period of milder weather than is normal for this time of year, and with some colder spells surely yet to come and round out the winter season, we look forward to what wildlife spectacles the spring will bring. The days are getting longer, and there is finally a little daylight as I leave work in the evenings. I've not had any opportunities to get out and about this year, so have seen little of the natural world lately. This report is but a rather short one, as I have only received two batches of

sightings from Michael & Diane Hunt, which are from the beginning of November. However, one of the sightings was a first for these pages - two Hawfinches!

BIRDS: The first report of the season was on 1st November, and Michael states that "with autumn in full swing, the bird life fits the season. The birds that passed over are all typical for this time of year". So, first up on his early morning watch were a couple of Skylarks ascending and descending in height and song across the meadows. Always a reminder of spring into summer time, it's easy to forget that their song can be heard even through the shortest days of the year, as I have experienced this winter where I work. It has to be my favourite birdsong of all! Two Meadow Pipits, similar in size to the Skylarks and almost as vociferous, made themselves known while lifting from the grasses and calling out their thin monosyllabic note repeatedly. Just wait until they start singing in the spring, it really is a beautiful thing to hear!

Redwings too made an appearance, with a pair making their distinctive "tzzzz" call whilst forging a direct and concerted route over to some tree tops south of the canal, whereby they paused a while before continuing on. Always a joy to see, with their rather striking facial markings and reddish-orange flanks and underwings, these Thrushes will soon be returning northwards into Scandinavia toward the middle of March onwards. Our largest Thrush, the Mistle Thrush gave a single appearance this morning. Always distinctive with its football rattle like call in flight, they are easy to pick out in the air, and are separable in the field from the smaller Song Thrush due to their larger size, more greyish brown upperparts and round spotted (not arrow shaped) chest, flank and throat markings.

Now, most excitingly, and a first for these seasonal reports...two Hawfinches "dropped into the Oak tree near the solar panel pump station" according to Michael. These are stunning birds, noted for the larger than life size and colouration, and especially diagnostic are their heavy, thick-set bills. They are not a common bird, and are very localised. I'm lucky enough to have a reliable and undisclosed location near me for Hawfinches, and they often seen and heard coming in to roost. What a sight they are! The picture says it all!

You Too Can Contribute to The Seasonal Wildlife Report!

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 Marketing Report - A Fresh Perspective

Every once in a while, something new comes along and changes the course of our journey. In my case, it was a fleet of houseboats moored along the waterways that surround the University of Northampton - Waterside campus. I used to spend a lot of time in the University library while studying for my Masters degree. Sometimes, while taking breaks, I would wander towards the canal and watch the Geese. I would also stare at the boats and wonder what an exciting life it would be to just spend an entire summer living on a houseboat bobbing up and down the liquid surface.

On one of my campus walks, I noticed a group of men in reflective vests working on the canal. They diverted the water into the River Nene while they set up camp and got into maintenance mode. I was intrigued at the whole setup and that inspired me to read about the history of the British canal system.

Interestingly, I learnt a lot about the history of canals. I read about the need for better transportation around the 1700s, the Grand Junction Canal, locks and aqueducts. I read about the people who built them; I admired their passion and ingenuity and reflected on how they were able to build such a magnificent network for waterborne transport with the primitive tools of the time. I wanted to find out more; and I did - I joined Buckingham Canal Society as a volunteer.

I was so excited when I was asked to take up the responsibility of digital marketing, I could not wait to share with others the benefits of volunteering and digging canals. I immediately informed my family and others who cared to listen about my new passion for canals. I always looked forward to visiting Cosgrove, which is where most of our work parties happen. Unfortunately, due to my busy day job, I could not attend as many work parties as I would love to.

As the head of the Digital Marketing Team, my focus at the moment is to build a solid team of young vibrant people who will help spread the gospel of our Society within Buckinghamshire, because the job of restoration requires all of us. We hope to get as many people involved in various capacities which will include getting people to share their stories through articles or pictures.

It is usually a very exciting time helping out during work parties. The boaters are always so nice to talk to, as most of them would stop to have a chat while trying to navigate their vessels through the locks at Cosgrove. It shows how connected we are because of water.

I joined Buckingham Canal Society for a chance to help restore the Buckingham Arm of the canal, but in the course of this journey, I have realised this key truth: the restoration is not just about heritage. For me, it is also about community, because the canal seems to represent different things for different individuals. For certain people, it is a place to relax, take long walks and reflect. For others, it might be an opportunity for building relationships with family or pets. A few people still come for a glimpse of wildlife which seem to only reside on the screens of our television sets these days.



The canal certainly has its own beautiful ethereal wintry charm on misty frosty mornings at this time of year! If you have been to Cosgrove during the summer, you will be amazed at the beauty and richness the canal has added for the people who live there. From the ones who sit in the sun with their fishing lines, to those on their various water vessels. Everything seems to come alive along the canal. Sometimes I just think about the difference the network would make if we could restore it all the way to Bourton Meadow.

The restoration work being carried out by Buckingham Canal Society needs everyone of us, because each time we donate or support in one form or another, we are supporting the growth of community.

Edima Inwang
Trustee and Marketing Manager

Meet the Community Engagement Lead

Shivanshi Marwah Appointed as Our New Community Engagement Lead



© Shivanshi Marwah

Hi, my name is Shivanshi, and I am currently an MBA student at Cranfield University, having recently moved to the UK to pursue Higher Education. I have previously worked across multiple industries and geographical locations with employers including InterContinental Hotels Group, GMR Group, Sodexo, CB Richard Ellis and Microsoft.

I have traversed through Hotel Operations to venture into the corporate as an Integrated Facility Manager in India. As a Hospitality Professional, I am more of a pragmatic achiever and enjoy working on the shop floor. Thus, whilst now being based out of Cranfield, the role and the cause of Buckingham Canal Society were alluring for me, and I look forward to contributing to and expanding my horizons with this organisation.

I am a passionately curious person, constantly wanting to learn new things and stress-testing current inherent beliefs and ideas. I pride myself on being a simplifier - following a basic approach and making things easier for most (if not all) people. I am enthusiastic about developing new experiences and enabling value for clients and colleagues.

Every day, I look for someone who can change my mind, and I enjoy making exciting conversations and forming deep connections. I enjoy wildlife and spending time in the natural environment.

Furthermore, I am also an avid reader and a passionate traveller too. What books are you currently reading, and where are you planning to take your next break? Feel free to connect and let's talk over these exciting subjects at the next work party!

Shivanshi Marwah
Community Engagement Lead

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:

- Co-op - Local Community Fund
- Buckingham & Villages Community Board
- The Woodroffe Benton Foundation
- Heart of Bucks Community Foundation - B P Collins Fund
- The Skinners' Company - The Lady Neville Charity
- Waitrose & Partners
- Moto in the Community Trust
- Arnold Clark Community Fund
- The National Lottery Awards for All England
- 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:

- Mitie Group plc
- Network Rail
- Cummins
- Arriva UK Bus - Procurement
- Audi UK
- HSBC UK Bank plc
- British Telecommunications plc
- The Royal Latin School
- 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

Buckingham Canal Society Craft Group

Our craft group still isn't meeting, but I still continue to make the rag rugs which I am hoping to sell at the many planned visits to canal festivals and events throughout 2023. These are sold on our Society stall for £25 each, raising much needed funds for us.

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 April 2.30pm

IWA Northampton

One Woman Theatre Show:

A Century of Boatwomen - Kate Saffin

The Boat Inn, Bridge Road, Stoke Bruerne,

Nr Towcester, Northants, NN12 7SB

Details:

www.waterways.org.uk/northampton

Thursday 20th April 7.45pm

IWA Milton Keynes

Talk: The Bat'a Canal in the Czech

Republic - Both its History and the

Ongoing Restoration - Hana Wilson

Bletchley Conservative Club,

105-111 Queensway, Bletchley,

Milton Keynes, Bucks, MK2 2DN.

Details:

www.waterways.org.uk/miltonkeynes

Friday 21st - Saturday 22nd April

IWA Milton Keynes

Canal Clean Up

Meet Friday 09.30 at Fenny Stratford Lock

& Saturday 09.30 at The Giffard Park

Details:

Contact Athina Beckett - See Page 30

Tuesday 9th May 7.30pm

IWA Northampton

Quiz: Peter's Spot the Lock

Talk: A Night in the Sheffield Floods -

Peter Scott

The Boat Inn, Bridge Road, Stoke Bruerne,

Nr Towcester, Northants, NN12 7SB

Details:

www.waterways.org.uk/northampton

Saturday 27th - Monday 29th May

Crick Boat Show

Crick Marina, West Haddon Road, Crick,

Northants, NN6 7SQ.

Details: 01283-742950

www.crickboatshow.com

Sunday 28th - Monday 29th May

IWA Milton Keynes

Paint the Wolverton Canalside Train

Mural

Details:

Contact Athina Beckett - See Page 30

Saturday 24th - Sunday 25th June

Fellows, Morton & Clayton Ltd

Rally & Canal Festival

Braunston Marina, Braunston,

Nr Daventry, Northants, NN11 7JH

Details: 01788-891373

www.braunstonmarina.co.uk

Work Party Dates 2023/2024

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

October

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 8th
Sunday 29th

November

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 12th
Sunday 26th

December

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 10th
Sunday 31st

January

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 14th
Sunday 28th

February

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 11th
Sunday 25th

March

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 10th
Sunday 31st

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 116 (Summer 2023) by the 1st May 2023 via email, CD, or typed/handwritten letter (in that order of preference) to:

editor@buckinghamcanal.org.uk or

Ian Matson, 63 Almers 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

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Trustee

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



Other Key Contacts

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Illustrated Talks & Presentations

talks@buckinghamcanal.org.uk

Cosgrove Festival Team

events@buckinghamcanal.org.uk

The cost to call 0300 numbers is the same as calling a normal local or national land line. If your tariff or call package offers free or inclusive calls to landlines, numbers starting with 03 will be included in the exact same way.

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Members of: IWA, APCO, BMF, B&MK Waterway Trust, Wendover Arm Trust,
Buckingham Canal Society, Aylesbury Canal Society.



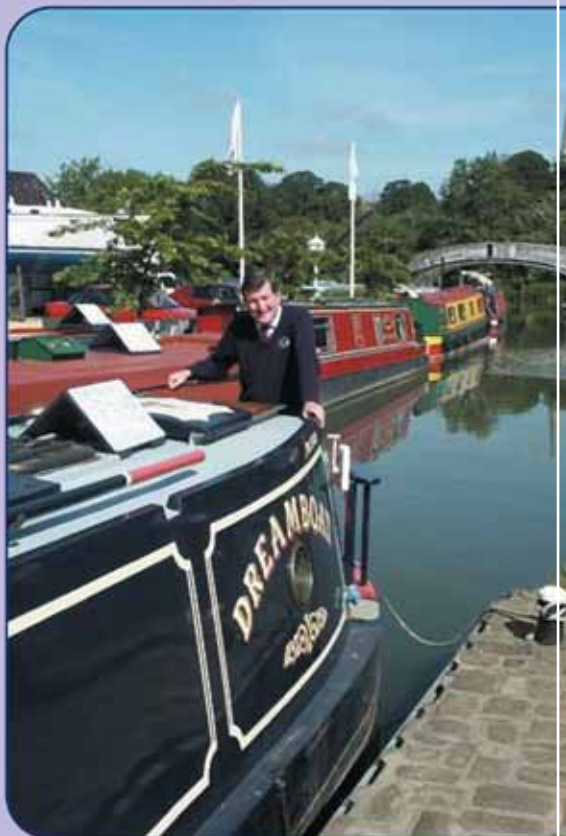
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