

THE BUCKINGHAM NAVIGATOR

THE CEREMONIAL FORMAL RE-OPENING EDITION

The Newsletter of Buckingham Canal Society

Registered Charity No. 1156662

Issue No. 118
Winter 2023



Featuring:

- Our Latest Dredger is Now Fully Restored
- Sir David Suchet CBE Formally Names Her Diana
- He Officially Re-opens Cosgrove's Section One



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Contact us for short, medium and long term moorings.



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 Winter 2023 edition of The Buckingham Navigator. We have a newly named dredger, and a newly re-opened stretch of the Buckingham Arm that will now take us beyond Bridge No.1, again, albeit for a few hundred metres. We now need to restore that little tiny gap in between Cosgrove and Buckingham! Well...not before the new year me thinks! Seriously, this is yet another tremendous achievement, in a long line of milestones that we have accomplished. Almost ten years to the day since re-opening the Bourton Meadow stretch on 26th October 2013, Section

One at Cosgrove ceremoniously met the Grand Union Canal once more on 2nd September 2023! Wow! And while we were at it, we named our new dredger too. In the cover photo (© Victoria Jane Photography) you will see Sir David Suchet CBE pouring the ceremonial champagne across the nameplate of this latest dredger, to proclaim her new name as Diana, in honour of our Society friend and supporter Tim Coghlan's late wife. Sir David was joined by our very own Athina Beckett and Terry Cavender, and of course Tim Coghlan (Managing Director of Braunston Marina) and his granddaughter Camilla. **See page 10 for the full report.** Thank you to all the contributors. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all!

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 X at: www.twitter.com/bcsocietyuk

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

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

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Ian Matson
Editor

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Restoration Site Update



Up.

© Athina Beckett

Bourton Meadow is the Place to Be!

The canal at Bourton Meadow has been suffering from a very large problem with weed this year, but it turns out it has been a nationwide problem due to certain weather conditions, as has been reported in several canal magazines. This has meant it has been a much longer task than usual to remove said weed, which was blocking the whole of the canal bed at Bourton Meadow.

As well as our own hard working volunteers, we have had a lot of extra help from external companies joining us throughout the year.



Amongst many others, in the last few months we have had two visits from Network Rail, firstly on Thursday 31st August (**above**) and then on Thursday 28th September. On Thursday 12th October we had a group from NHBC (**opposite**) and we also had a visit from Audi UK who joined us on Thursday 26th October (**page 6**). By the time this is published, Audi UK will have visited once more on Thursday 9th November, followed by T.En E&C Ltd on Sunday 12th November for the first time.

As well as the weed clearance, the hedgerows have all been strimmed, the towpath bank cleared and masses of Brambles have been removed from the offside of the canal. There is still a large task left which is to clear and strim a section of the area as you enter the site which has become very overgrown. We will tackle this shortly, so that by the end of the year Bourton Meadow will look great again and worth a visit!

We are always happy to welcome new volunteers to visit us and help out where they can. See page 6 for more details.



Do You Dig Canals?...We Do!



Work parties are now held every Tuesday, Thursday and the second Sunday of each month and are always friendly, welcoming and very rewarding. Most Tuesdays and Thursdays, as well as the second 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

Records Are There to Be Broken...So Guess What?

By the time this edition is published, up until the end of November this year will have been the most successful year we have had in terms of the number bookings from external groups and organisations sending teams of volunteers to join us on our work party days. So far this year we have had over thirty bookings, and several of these were from organisations wanting to join us for the first time. These included Cranfield University, BayWa r.e. UK Ltd, Galliford Try Holdings plc, The Coca-Cola Company, The British Standards Institution, StudioB2, Senceive Ltd and Audi UK. That's a pretty respectable and lengthy list indeed.

We already have more wanting to book up for next year, with Biffa making a booking for 12th March, whilst Santander are also interested again. With all the extra help this year

we have been able to make significant progress with canal restoration and management at both the Cosgrove and Bourton Meadow sites!

Stalwart Volunteer Tony Purbrick Makes a Comeback

I would like to make a special mention of Tony Purbrick here in these pages. Tony has been one of our very regular long term volunteers, joining us at work parties at all three sites - Cosgrove, Buckingham Canal Nature Reserve at Hyde Lane and Bourton Meadow.

Unfortunately, after a long illness, he hasn't been able to join in with the practical tasks. Recently though he has been able to visit us at Bourton Meadow on his mobility scooter and join us for lunch. Then a few weeks ago we had a surprise as he turned up with his strimmer! Never one to be deterred and against all odds, after practising in his garden he was then able to strim the towpath comfortably and safely from his mobility scooter.

So a very special thanks to Tony. We hope he will continue to join us on work parties in the future.

Athina Beckett

Trustee, Volunteer Leader and Work Party Organiser

What Does the Future Hold?

Way back in 2016, we added the restored section of the canal at Bourton Meadow to Google Maps. Fast forward seven years to October this year and Google confirmed that there have been 350,000 visits to the Buckingham Canal at Bourton Meadow information page on Google Maps since 2016! No, it's not a typo, and yes some will be search bots and weird stuff, but it means we have had an absolute shed load of visits every year!

Alongside this, we have taken on an intern from Buckingham University who is helping us to look at how best to use the data on Google Maps and the visits to our own website in order to grow volunteering involvement in the three age tranches we are focussing on. Don't think we are excluding the over fifties! We have a number of over fifties folk joining us over the course of a typical year, but we do need to consider the longevity of the project and the Society by attracting folk that are perhaps not as 'experienced in life' shall we say.

The three age brackets we are considering are:

1. *16 to 25 - focusing on the positive environmental and climate change contributions of restoration.*
2. *26 to 40 - focusing on the wellbeing, blue green space and family friendly aspects.*
3. *41 to 50 - helping people to look at putting back, volunteering and heritage protection etc.*

If you would like to know more or would like to get involved, please contact Edima Inwang using his contact details on page 30.

Over the coming months, the key focus will be on some spot dredging at Cosgrove in order to get workboat Louise onto the newly re-opened section. This is so she can do some bank profiling and also some piling where we have some leaks thought to be caused by tree roots. This is all as per guidance from Canal & River Trust and the plan which anticipates that we will open for moored boats around Easter 2024, which in turn will help the Society as a source of income other than the usual fundraising.

At the Buckingham end of the arm, we are exploring with Buckinghamshire Council the following projects:

1. *The Ouse Valley Way as a cycle route to the villages.*
2. *Pedestrian refuge (traffic Island) for crossing the A413.*
3. *Potential design and funding for replacing the current road bridge (not the stone bridge) at the road to Thornton College.*

If you are interested in helping with these particular projects, please contact me using my contact details on page 30.

Changes Are Afoot Within the Team

Owing to some recent health and workload challenges, Rob Morris has now stood down as Trustee and Chairman. Rob has been a great asset during his tenure to help us head towards correctly splitting governance and operations as well as assisting with a lot of background compliance policies etc. We thank him for all of his time and input. Rob remains as a member.

We also say thanks to Colin Levett who has stepped down as Trustee and Grants Officer, but remains as a member and volunteer. Also, Amanda Robinson has stepped down as Trustee, Heritage and Archaeology Lead due to her own health and family challenges.

Do you fancy joining the Buckingham Canal Society management team? Please give any of the trustees a ring for a chat, using their contact details on page 30.

Help Us Host the 2024 Waterways Restoration Conference

Please save the date. We have been given the prestigious honour of being designated the 'lead hosting society' of the 2024 Waterways Restoration Conference which is organised by Inland Waterways Association with Canal & River Trust. This time it will be held at Northampton University on Saturday 13th April 2024.

We will need plenty of help with hosting this key event. If you feel you can assist and contribute your talents, then please get in touch with me using my contact details on page 30.

Terry Cavender
Trustee and Executive Officer

Diana's Big Day Out



© Alan Mynard

of the crew cabin (**left**) and some of the pilot cabin left a bit to be desired as all the plywood panelling had delaminated due to water damage. With assistance from other team members, Gerry Millard stripped out all the existing wood in the crew cabin and I extracted the wooden shroud around the hydraulic controls in the pilot cabin.

As acquired, both cabins contained an oil-fired (diesel) heater for use by the crew during colder months. If we were to keep these, they would need regular safety inspections (at a cost). Given that it was very unlikely that we would need these we decided to remove them. We didn't throw them away though...they were sold on eBay and brought in a welcome income.

The crew cabin also contained two wooden benches. These were in reasonable condition but were surplus to our requirements: the space they took was more of a hindrance than the benefit they offered. So, we removed them, and after giving them a clean and fresh coat of paint, they were donated to one of the live-aboard boaters at the Cosgrove marina for use in her garden.

We also took the opportunity to review all the electrical wiring. Some of the lighting in the crew cabin was removed entirely (being an unnecessary luxury and another maintenance headache). The

In my previous article (Issue 117 - Diana's Motivation), we left off where Diana's rebuilt engine had been installed and all was working as desired. Now the story of her renovation continues, culminating in a very important event...

With the engine work complete, we could turn our attention to the overall condition of the boat. When we acquired her, the existing paintwork was in a pretty bad state. Following her attempt at being a submarine during the trip up the Grand Union, the state



© Alan Mynard

essential equipment: bilge pumps, exterior lights and horn, were all checked. Only the horn failed inspection and was replaced by a motorcycle one from Halfords.

It rained a bit over the time we were working on her. It became obvious that the door and hatch on the pilot cabin (**opposite, bottom**) was a source of a considerable water leakage that caused a pool to accumulate in the pilot's seat! Some of the wooden frame around the hatch and door had rotted away. So off came the doors (**right**) and fresh woodwork installed.

The time-consuming job however was the paintwork. It was very flaky in places and the Glass-Reinforced Plastic cabins had some bad knocks and holes. We spent many hours filling the holes and cracks with filler and then rubbing down. A good clean surface is required in order to get fresh paint to adhere correctly and give a lasting finish. The yellow decking (**below**) at the front and rear of Diana also underwent cleaning and de-flaking.



The Canal & River Trust had previously donated us several tins of two-part paint which had been used to repaint Shoveller (the Canal & River Trust tug) and Percy (our wide-beam dredger). Lucking we still had quite a bit left and this could be used to paint Diana. One of the requirements stipulated by Canal & River Trust when we purchased her was that we had to change the colour away from the Trust's standard blue colourway. There followed a bit of experimentation with the black and blue paint we had and we came up with a slightly darker and greyer variant to the Canal & River Trust blue. In fact it was something nearer to the dark blue tint that our Society uses for its logo.



Over the course of a couple of months, when weather permitted, the yellow decks, blue cabins, and black sidewalls were all cleaned, sanded and painted (with two coats). We now have a much smarter looking boat than we started with. At this time we have not looked at painting the mechanical parts of the boat: the excavator arms and the hydraulic feet. This may get investigated next year when warmer and dryer weather returns.



©Victoria Jane Photography





© Edima Inwang

Now for the all important date. Saturday 2nd September had been in the calendar for some time as the day when Diana would be officially named and the first section of the re-watered canal past Bridge No.1 would be re-opened.

The funding to purchase and maintain Diana has come from Tim Coghlan, Managing Director of Braunston Marina. He has made charitable donations to several canal societies who are involved in restoration (including ourselves) and has supported the Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rally over the years. When making his donation to us he asked if it could in some way commemorate his late wife, Diana, who died of cancer in 2014. When we told him of our intended purchase of a dredger from Canal & River Trust and our suggestion that we rename the boat after his wife, Tim agreed that this would be a great way to remember her and her involvement with the waterways.

The formal naming took place on Saturday 2nd September and incorporated the official re-opening of the section of canal from Bridge No.1: construction of a new narrows and stop-planks by the farm crossing 500 metres along the section, meant that we could remove the stop-planks at Bridge No.1, which would then fully link this restored section of the Old Stratford Cut (or Arm) of the Buckingham Canal, through the marina and to the Grand Union Canal itself.

We were honoured to have Sir David Suchet CBE join us to perform the actual naming and opening ceremony. Sir David had known Tim and Diana (Tim's wife, not the boat!) for many years, keeping their own narrowboat moored at Braunston Marina. Proceedings began from the back deck of the dredger, with Tim explaining to all why he had made the gift. Sir David then spoke of his memories of Diana and read a canal sonnet by the Irish poet Patrick Kavanagh (**pages 12 & 13**). There then followed the formal naming of the dredger as 'Diana' by Sir David, with the accompanying ceremonial pouring of a glass of champagne over the name plate (**front cover**).



©Victoria Jane Photography

Proceedings then moved to the canal towpath under Bridge No.1. Here, Sir David cut a blue ribbon (**above**) to formally re-open the first 500 meters of the Old Stratford Arm of the Buckingham Canal.

An attempt to sail up the channel (**below**) had to be abandoned as the depth was insufficient to allow Diana to proceed: she had not been put to work yet at this stage, which ironically will be to do her job of dredging the final remnants of the dam under the bridge!



©Victoria Jane Photography



©Victoria Jane Photography

Events concluded with the cutting and sharing of a very special cake (**above**), cut by Mike Freeman, one of the founding members of Buckingham Canal Society. This was washed down with a glass or two of some rather delicious sparkling wine which was very much appreciated by all!



© Alan Mynard

Alan Mynard
Website Administrator and Archivist

Exploring Nature's Pantry

A Hedgerow Walk to Remember



In a world filled with bustling cities and fast-paced lives, sometimes we all need a gentle reminder to slow down, connect with nature, and appreciate the treasures it offers. Recently, a group of nature enthusiasts embarked on an unforgettable journey through Buckingham's lush landscape on a Hedgerow Walk on 17th September 2023, on a morning that left them with a deeper appreciation for the natural world. This was organised by Buckingham Canal Society as a part of MK Heritage Open Days to showcase the abundance that nature has to offer and take the people through the Bourton Meadow site of the Buckingham Canal which has been restored owing to the efforts of the volunteers.

Led by the dynamic duo of Aimee Tidman and Claire Conway-Crapp, this exploration into the world of foraging and hedgerow treasures was nothing short of magical. A two mile round trip starting from the picturesque Bourton Park led participants through the enchanting Buckingham Edible Woodland (**above & right**), a haven nurtured and maintained by the dedicated efforts of John Mortimer and his team of volunteers, through to the restored section of the Buckingham Canal at Bourton Meadow.





© Kat Harper



© Kat Harper

What awaited them along this tranquil path were nature's gifts in full abundance. From the tantalizing aroma of Mint to the vibrant hues of Raspberries (**above, left & opposite, top**) and Lemon Balm, from the sturdy Hazel to the fiery Horseradish, and the delicate fragrance of Elderflower, the hedgerow revealed its secrets, introducing participants to the diverse flora that graces the UK's countryside. However, one star stood out among the constellation of plants...the enigmatic Medlar (**below**), a true gem in the world of hedgerow treasures which belongs to the Rose family.



© Kat Harper

As the group of over twenty-five people meandered beside the serene waters of the River Great Ouse, they explored the historic Buckingham Canal site, taking in the sights and sounds of a restored section (**opposite, bottom**) of this once-thriving waterway. The gentle rhythm of their steps mirrored the flow of the river, creating an atmosphere of tranquillity and wonder.

Notably, the walk wasn't exclusive to human participants. Playful dogs accompanied their owners, adding an extra layer of joy to the experience. Furry companions and their human counterparts revelled in the beauty of nature, forging a deeper bond with the environment around them.

The hedgerow walk was more than just a stroll through nature; it was a communal experience filled with shared knowledge, recipes, and creative uses for the discovered treasures. Participants tasted the bountiful offerings of the hedgerow, fostering a deeper connection to the land and its resources.

The event, captured through the lens of volunteer photographer Kat Harper, will undoubtedly serve as a lasting memory for all involved. It serves as a testament to the beauty of community exploration and the magic of the natural world.

The hedgerow walk was not just an event; it was a living testament to the enduring connection between humanity and the natural world. As the seasons ebb and flow, and the landscape transforms, this adventure will remain etched in the hearts of those who took part, serving as a timeless reminder of the magic that awaits when we slow down, look around, and embrace the world outside our screens. So, let's continue to cherish the gifts of nature, explore its wonders, and together we can create more moments that celebrate the beauty of our world, one step at a time.



Shivanshi Marwah
Community Engagement Lead



The Spring to Autumn Wildlife Report

The Flamboyant Little Egret Makes its Wildlife Report Debut



Finally, I can bring you not one, not two, but three season's worth of wildlife reports all rolled into one! It's what you've been waiting for all year. That's right... eight fascinating and insightful site reports that our two roving wildlife recorders Michael & Diane Hunt have sent in

covering spring, summer and autumn at Bourton Meadow. Birds, Reptiles, Amphibians, Insects and flora are all well represented this time.

The last time I put together the seasonal wildlife report, we were heading into spring. But now as I write this, winter is on our doorsteps. Where did the summer go? Well, through the medium of words and pictures, I will do my best to bring a sense of the distant joys of spring, the barmy heat of the summer (was there any?) and the colours of autumn through the wonderful wildlife we have helped provide for at Bourton Meadow.

With the exceptional habitat maintenance program that Athina helms with her team, the Warblers appear to be thriving again this year, with Reed Warblers and Whitethroats holding territory, although there were no sign of any juveniles. That said, a late juvenile Sedge Warbler filled in the gap there! A new species in these pages, a Little Egret made its debut, but have no doubt been visiting this site regularly already. Grass Snakes seem to be breaking cover and getting more coverage than previously.

The stars of the show this for this edition were the Dragonflies (order Odonata, which contains the sub-orders Anisoptera (meaning 'unequal-winged' - Dragonflies and Zygoptera (meaning 'paired-wings' - Damselflies)) and were represented by a respectable ten species here this time, with some of those species making themselves known in seriously respectable numbers too! For reasons unknown, Butterflies are noticeably conspicuous by their absence from these reports...well almost.

The Spring Wildlife Report

BIRDS: Spring had already sprung, and on 20th March there was a first (at least for these pages) in the shape of a **Little Egret (above)** traversing elegantly, all dressed and

resplendent in pure white, across the adjacent field while two **Grey Herons** watched on nearby. They in turn were overlooked from a mighty Oak by a highly vociferous flock of gorgeous chuckling **Fieldfares**. These will be feeding up on the last of the winter berries before their imminent and lengthy journey back to northern Europe for the summer.

The 25th April saw the first site record of the year, with a secretive **Whitethroat** making an occasional appearance, probably marking out its territory. Such a beautiful little Warbler, with a white throat and chestnut uppers, it is often only heard skulking through bramble patches or hedges, but is so worth the wait when it breaks cover, leaping up for a quick vocal display! Michael mentioned that "this species likes the patch scrub on the south side of the site (the same side as the overspill) to nest in" and advised that we "please retain these patchy hedges and leave rough". A single (perhaps the same?) **Whitethroat** was also seen on 28th April. Lastly, a singing **Reed Bunting** was chanced upon along the restored canal on 29th April.

REPTILES: Not to be outdone, **Grass Snakes** have made themselves known too. Athina noted one at the Hyde Lane site on 19th March, as well as another several weeks earlier. The first two of the year for Michael and Diane were seen on the morning of 20th March.

AMPHIBIANS: A mesmerising cluster of **Tadpoles** were seen performing their own synchronised water ballet by the spillweir halfway along the canal on 28th April. A perfect example of new life, evolving through metamorphosis into adulthood, becoming a seemingly different creature entirely. Nature at its finest...and speaking of metamorphosis, and perhaps on an even more spectacular scale...

INSECTS: The season's first Damselflies were finally on the wing by the end of April at Bourton Meadow. One rather beautiful and exquisite **Azure Damselfly** and one equally striking **Red-eyed Damselfly** were seen over the water on 29th April.

FLORA: Michael noted that the "first **Marsh Marigolds** are flowering now" along the canal bank by 20th March, gloriously resplendent in a blaze of early spring Buttercup yellow. That's not surprising really, since they belong to the same family. I wonder how many of the original plants are left that I helped to plant back in 2013/2014? In another dazzling display of yellow flowers, there was a "Great display of **Yellow Flag Iris** coming now" according to Michael & Diane when they visited the site again on 18th May.

The Summer Wildlife Report

BIRDS: On 3rd May the Michael noted that the "first **Reed Warbler** for 2023 was singing this afternoon in the reed stands you [Athina] very kindly have left for this important species". He went on to state that "in fact it's the only known breeding site in Buckingham." Mid May arrived, and Michael stated that on the 18th "a visit this afternoon was very productive". He was referring on the whole to the wealth of Dragonflies and their allies on the wing, which I will come to later. Bird wise however, a **Great-spotted Woodpecker** was reported, as well as a **Green Woodpecker** no doubt prospecting the area for Ants, which are a favourite food. Also, a single **Whitethroat** was seen displaying, breaking cover above the bramble and announcing itself to the world and no doubt its hopeful intended, before dropping back down to seemingly mutter to itself in the thicket.

Michael & Diane “just had a quick look” on 14th June, but when coupled with the other sightings for that day, and as you will read under Insects below, it’s quite an extensive list again for a “quick look”! Another **Great-spotted Woodpecker** and **Green Woodpecker** were observed. Two singing male **Reed Warblers** were now holding territory in two distinct locations along the reedbed. Michael advised that without disturbance they will successfully raise their broods. Athina had also heard the **Reed Warblers** singing on a work party visit to Bourton Meadow on 11th June, taking ‘whistle while you work’ to a whole other level! Finally, there was still just one **Whitethroat** displaying today.

REPTILES: Another **Grass Snake** was seen on the afternoon of 18th May.



Beautiful Demoiselle-male © Barry Walter is licensed under CC BY 4.0

INSECTS: As I alluded to earlier, a more productive day was to be had on 18th May. The season for Dragonflies and Damselflies was certainly in full swing, with a full-on carnival of colour to boot. Damselflies were far more numerous than the Dragonflies, as is often the case, with two aptly named **Beautiful Demoiselles** (left), an impressive fifty **Azure Damselflies**, seven **Red-eyed Damselflies**, one **Blue-tailed**

Damselfly and three **Large Red Damselflies**. Among the Dragonflies recorded were a solitary **Southern Hawker** male resplendent in its intricate blue and green finery, followed by two of the UK’s smallest and hairiest yet still beautifully coloured Hawkers that are otherwise known as **Hairy Dragonflies**, and finally two golden coloured **Four-spotted Chasers**.

The aforementioned “quick look” that took place on the 14th June revealed a wealth of insects on the wing too. The sub-order of damselflies observed today covered four **Banded Demoiselles** and three of the similar looking **Beautiful Demoiselles**. **Azure Damselflies** were simply too numerous to count, but by contrast there were a rather humble three **Red-eyed Damselflies** and seven **Blue-tailed Damselflies**. The sub-order of Dragonflies seen over and along the still waters along the meadow included a single **Southern Hawker**, five eye-catching and huge **Emperor Dragonflies** and a whopping thirty-eight **Four-spotted Chasers**! A pretty good haul over the two visits in my book!

Butterflies got a look in too on 14th June, but only just though. Three examples of the small and diminutive **Meadow Brown** were seen alongside one unmistakable **Red Admiral**. I have certainly seen a lot of Red Admirals myself this year, with Butterfly Conservation reporting a 400% increase in sightings against the same period last year, in a report dated 3rd August. A migrant species from North Africa and continental Europe, this year’s running total of an incredible 170,000 sightings in that time frame is believed to be driven by climate change. Unfortunately no further Butterfly reports were received for Bourton Meadow at the time of writing. I wonder how many more Red Admirals we had?

FLORA: Bourton Meadow was in full bloom for Michael and Diane on 14th June. In flower and of note were the colourful spikes of **Common Spotted Orchids** with their purple splashed lobed flowers and distinctive purple spotted green leaves. With even taller purple spikes of flowers, the **Purple Loosestrife** certainly made for an unforgettable display too. Along the still waters of the canal were plenty of **Water Lilies (right)** which “looked fabulous” according to Michael.



The Autumn Wildlife Report

BIRDS: Sadly, I only received the one report for this period, dated 2nd September. The first report of this season for this particular species, and Michael commented that “a nice surprise was a juvenile **Sedge Warbler**”. Being an entirely migratory species, many would have left by now for their sub-Saharan wintering grounds, so this individual would have been feeding up in readiness to leave our shores for it’s bold and exhausting journey south within the next few days. Proof yet again of how important Bourton Meadow is as a habitat for such an important species, which has seen a gradual 42% decrease in the UK breeding population since 1967. It is worth noting that as a breeding habitat, reedbeds such as ours at Bourton Meadow are THE single most important for the Sedge Warbler. Another summer visitor that for many are a symbol of the high summer months were a group of five **Swallows**. Seen feasting up on insects, they too would be readying for their own journey back to sub-Saharan Africa.

INSECTS: And finally, only Dragonflies were of note on 2nd September, with just three species represented yet again, although seasonally differing in offerings. One **Southern Hawker**, two **Migrant Hawkers** and seven **Common Darters** were found that day.

You Too Can Contribute to The Seasonal Wildlife Report!

As always, the Society wishes to thank Michael & Diane Hunt for their contributions, which were forwarded to Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust.

Please keep your eyes peeled and 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.bbowl.org.uk.

Ian Matson
Editor

The Grants & Funding Report

We have had two small successful grant applications during the last period. We have been granted £1,163.73 by the Co-op Local Community Fund and £5,000.00 from Heart of Bucks on behalf of Veolia.



Supported by
Co-op Members

As always, we are extremely grateful to all of our grant funders, without whom, the restoration would remain a dream instead of a reality. **A complete list of our most recent funders can be found on page 26.**



Colin Levett

Trustee and Grants Officer

Win Big with Buckinghamshire Lottery

The Buckinghamshire Lottery is an exciting weekly lottery that raises money for good causes. Buckingham Canal Society has registered with the Buckinghamshire Lottery as a beneficiary.

Tickets are just £1 per week, and 50% of that will come directly to the Society, provided you nominate us as your preferred charity.

Each ticket has a 1 in 50 chance of winning a prize, with a top prize of £20,000. Every ticket consists of 6 numbers and each of those is between 1 and 9. There is a draw every Saturday night when a 6 digit winning combination is picked. Match all 6 and you can win the jackpot!

However, before you buy, please do not forget to select Buckingham Canal Society as your preferred charity, otherwise your money will be directed into a general charitable fund, which we do not benefit from. Good Luck!

To play and support BCS you will need to visit the Vale Lottery website to register and buy tickets at: www.buckinghamshirelottery.co.uk.

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.



To try to tempt you, some of the events attended in previous years include:

- *Buckingham Spring Fair in April*
- *May Day Fayre at Leighton Buzzard*
- *IWA Milton Keynes Lock Help Weekend at the Three Locks, Stoke Hammond in May*
- *Family Festival Weekend at Stoke Bruerne in June*
- *Braunston & Historic Narrowboat Rally & Canal Festival in June*
- *Our own Cosgrove Canal Festival & Craft Fair in July*
- *Linslade Canal Festival in July*
- *The Festival of Water at St Neots in August*
- *Village at War Weekend at Stoke Bruerne in September*
- *Buckingham Christmas Fair in December*

We will certainly attend many of these events and more in the future. The Village at War event, for example, 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:

- Co-op - Local Community Fund
- Heart of Bucks Community Foundation - Veolia Water Technologies 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

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:

- Audi UK
- Santander
- NHBC
- Senceive Ltd
- Network Rail
- Studio B2
- The British Standards Institution
- Mitie Group plc
- The Coca-Cola Company
- Galliford Try Holdings plc
- BayWa r.e. UK Ltd
- Cranfield University
- Ingram Micro
- Cummins
- Arriva UK Bus - Procurement
- HSBC UK Bank plc
- British Telecommunications plc
- The Royal Latin School
- Milton Keynes College
- Sava
- Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles
- 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

Future Events

Tuesday 9th January 2.30pm

IWA Northampton

**Presentation: Waterways Videos
(Bring Your Own Too)**

- Bernard Morton

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

Details:

www.waterways.org.uk/northampton

Thursday 18th January 7.45pm

IWA Milton Keynes

**Talk: Challenging the Myths and
Misconceptions of the History of
Canal Folk Art**

- Kay Andrews

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

Details:

www.waterways.org.uk/miltonkeynes

Tuesday 13th February 2.30pm

IWA Northampton

Talk: Curious Cuts!

- Phil Clayton

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

Details:

www.waterways.org.uk/northampton

Thursday 15th February 7.45pm

IWA Milton Keynes

Branch AGM & Talk: The Bata Canal

- Hana Wilson

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

Details:

www.waterways.org.uk/miltonkeynes

Saturday 2nd March 7pm

BCS AGM & Social Evening

Buckingham Community Centre,
Cornwalls Meadow, Buckingham, Bucks,
MK18 8AX. Details:

www.buckinghamcanal.org.uk

Tuesday 12th March 7.30pm

IWA Northampton

Branch AGM & Quiz

- John Pomfret

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

Details:

www.waterways.org.uk/miltonkeynes

Thursday 21st March 7.45pm

IWA Milton Keynes

Talk: Buckingham Canal Update

- Athina Beckett

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

Details:

www.waterways.org.uk/miltonkeynes

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 this listing.**

Athina Beckett

**Trustee, Volunteer Leader and Work
Party Organiser**

Work Party Dates 2024

January

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 14th

February

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 11th

March

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 10th

April

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 14th

May

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 12th

June

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 9th

July

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 14th

August

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 11th

September

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 8th

October

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 13th

November

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 10th

December

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 8th

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 119 (Spring 2024) by the 1st February 2024 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

Buckingham Canal Society Craft Group



© Edima Inwang

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 the coming year. 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 below. They can still be used to make even more rag rugs.

Athina Beckett

Trustee, Volunteer Leader and Work Party Organiser

Contact the Committee

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Trustee

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



Trustee

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



Other Key Contacts

Registered Address/General Enquiries

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Illustrated Talks & Presentations

talks@buckinghamcanal.org.uk

Cosgrove Festival Team

events@buckinghamcanal.org.uk

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Waterside Cottage

The WYVERN SHIPPING Co Ltd

Rothschild Road, Linslade, Leighton Buzzard, Beds LU7 2TF
Tel: 01525 372355 Fax: 01525852308

Website: www.canalholidays.co.uk Email: wavern@canalholidays.co.uk

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



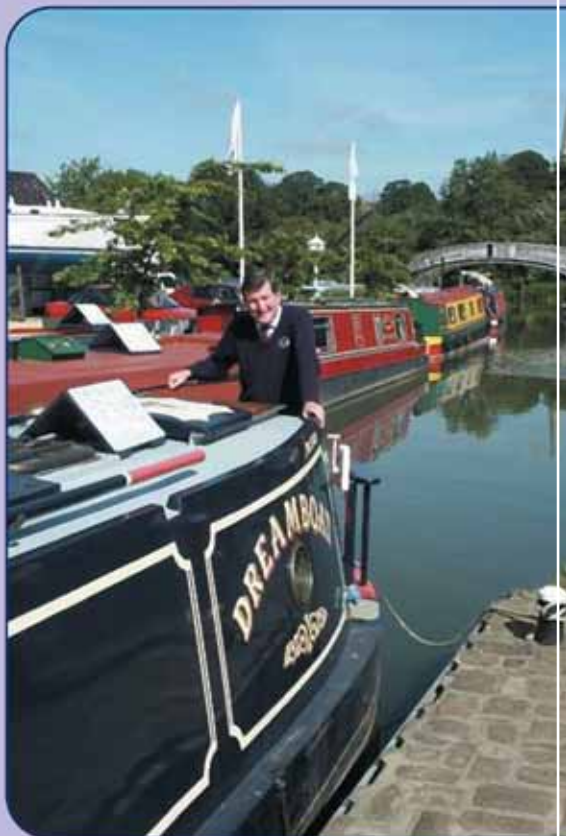
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Email: sales@braunstonmarina.co.uk