

THE BUCKINGHAM NAVIGATOR

The Newsletter of Buckingham Canal Society

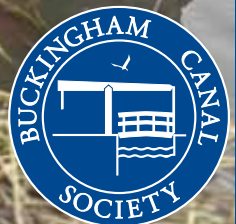
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Issue No. 121
Summer 2025



Featuring:

- Corporate Group Attendances at All New High
- Workboat Perseverance Finds a New Home
- WRG Makes Light Work at Christmas Camp



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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 Summer 2025 edition of The Buckingham Navigator.

So, where have we been? Due to ongoing demanding personal pressures, difficulties with preparing the Winter and Spring editions meant I had to make the tough decision to scrap those and create a 'bumper' Summer edition, which itself wasn't easy. I can only apologise, and I hope you enjoy the newsletter and all the wonderful contributions within!

While I have been putting this together, I find it rather uplifting to see so many reports of extra volunteers taking up the call to arms in an effort to restore our canal to its former glory. The corporate group numbers have excelled especially, breaking any previous record in previous years. But we can do better! Volunteering and outdoor activities are especially beneficial to our mental health. With our mental wellbeing taking a negative hit from so many directions in life, why not help yourself and help others in whatever capacity you can, whether it be here with us, or another group or society nearer to you. Surprise yourself, volunteering may be just the tonic you need! Not only that, someone else will benefit from skills you may be able to offer!

Cover photo of volunteers from JNP Group Consulting Engineers thinning out reeds from the canal at Bourton Meadow in December © Cameren Birch-Ghose. **See page 7 for the full report.** Thank you to all the contributors. **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 33).** 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

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Ian Matson
Editor

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Restoration Site Update



© Terry Cavender



© Steve Morley

Muddy Waters Ain't Channeling the Blues at Cosgrove!

In the last issue I reported on the start of work on the water capture chamber, including digging out a base for the foundations and piling (**above, at the back**) to support the towpath and protect the construction works. Despite having to remove water at each session, the brickwork (**above & below**) for the chamber is now complete, including replacing the original degraded fifty year old pipe from the land drain (**opposite**). The project is now well on the way to completion, which will allow us to reinstate the clay lining which was cut through when the land drain was installed. It's not just Buckingham Canal Society folk that have been involved; materials have been loaded and unloaded on site by corporate groups. For example, a team from Santander loaded, unloaded and stacked bricks, and even carried out much-needed vegetation clearance - those weeds do keep growing!



© Steve Morley



© Steve Morley



Also reported last time was the acquisition of a mobile site office, which has been installed at our compound near Bridge No.2. Given the distance from 'civilisation' at the Cosgrove junction, this will be used for volunteer welfare facilities. Repairs have been completed and the floor has been laid with carpet tiles. A covered area has been constructed by erecting a 'roof' between the site office and the storage container to provide a shelter for volunteers in unfavourable

weather (**above**). The hoarding boards of this shelter were painted before erection, with much of this task being carried out by a corporate group from Vinci Technology Centre UK. Fortunately the transparent roof was already in place so the painting could be done under cover, despite the showery weather. The same team also laid brick paving in front of the site office entrance.

Work has continued in attempting to seal a small leak in the bank of the re-watered section just past Bridge No.1 (**right**). Dye tests identified the location of the leak, and our dredger Diana was used to move clay against the bank. However, this proved to provide only a temporary seal. Investigations are ongoing to remediate the leak, which has reduced to a trickle now that the depth of the canal water has reduced to near-normal levels.



Our Society is always willing to work in partnership with other charitable organisations where this is to our mutual benefit. Each year Inland Waterways Association - Milton Keynes Branch carries out a canal clean-up in its area, pulling out items which have been thrown into the cut. Having satisfied ourselves with the health and safety arrangements, Buckingham Canal Society supplied crew for Shoveler - our Canal & River Trust tug, and a hopper to assist in the rubbish collection. After the event, the hopper was moored just south of the Iron Trunk Aqueduct. Shortly after (**opposite, top, crossing the Iron Trunk Aqueduct**), we brought it up to Cosgrove Wharf to be unloaded into a grab lorry for removal and disposal.



As well as new restoration related work, there is always an long list of maintenance tasks to be carried out. Having sorted out both the Hitachi and JCB excavators, our maintenance team turned its attention to the dumper, which was having issues with its ignition switch and hand brake. Meanwhile Diana's steering box has received attention to cure a hydraulic leak. Work has also continued with the planters along the towpath at Cosgrove, repairing raised bed woodwork and planting bulbs ready for the spring.

As always, there have been many and varied tasks for our volunteers to get to grips with. We have gained some new recruits recently and everybody is always welcome to join in. It's not just the heavy digging we need help with, we can offer gardening, painting, vegetation clearance and other lighter tasks too. **So why not come along to Cosgrove on Tuesdays or Thursdays? See page 11 for further details on how to sign up.**

Steve Morley
Trustee

Corporate Group Attendances Break All Records in 2024

Last year we received a lot of extra help through visits from corporate groups. In fact, it was the largest number of these groups we've had in a calender year since we started working with them! Overall, we had thirty-three join us at both our Cosgrove and Bourton Meadow sites. Nineteen teams attended Cosgrove and the other fourteen joined us at our Bourton Meadow site near Buckingham. Of these, there were an impressive seven visits from Santander (**right, at Bourton Meadow on 10th October**), and Network Rail joined us on no less than three separate occasions too.





© Cameren Birch-Ghose

There were several groups joining us for the first time, and these included GTC who made two visits to Bourton Meadow in June and July, and WD-40 Company Ltd who joined us at Cosgrove in July too. Furthermore, another team from WD-40 paid a visit to Bourton

Meadow on 19th December **(above)** where, rather ironically, a can of WD-40 provided by them helped us out with our wheelbarrows. The Open University also made their first appearance last year too, joining us at Bourton Meadow on 15th August **(page 10, top)**.



© Cameren Birch-Ghose

In the past, Corporate groups usually started visiting our restoration sites from about May onwards, and usually stop by the beginning of November, but last year bookings started in March and continued until the 19th December, taking us almost up until Christmas! At the time of writing in January, we already had bookings for February, March, April and July this year! A special thanks must go to JNP Group Consulting Engineers who, as well as providing us with some brilliant photos of their visit **(left)**, also made a generous donation of £250 to our Society!

Bourton Meadow Looks Fab!

With very little access to our Hyde Lane site throughout 2024, our conservation volunteers spent most of their time working at Bourton Meadow and were helped by the attendance of fourteen corporate groups who worked there from May to December, including Lyreco who joined us on 12th September (**left, with myself wielding a wheelbarrow, and long-time regular Bryan Knight in the spillway**). We have continued the work throughout the year of maintaining excellent access to this site, making it look attractive and therefore inviting to more visitors to walk the canal who may possibly want to support us by becoming a member, a volunteer, or even both. As well as making the site look attractive we have been maintaining the environmental and wildlife aspects of this site which is important as well (**below**). We have been



© Rachel Reed

helped in this task by Michael Hunt, who after each visit to site sends us a very detailed list of the wildlife seen there.

Hedges were trimmed through the winter and the towpath was strimmed several times over the summer months. Four of the bench seats were repainted and a new interpretation board and leaflet box were installed. The main problem over the summer months was the amount of weed taking over the canal bed which also had to be removed. From past experiences the best way to carry out this task has been for volunteers donning waders to work in the canal bed itself. This always proved a very popular task for both our own volunteers and the visiting groups in the summer months, and because of the very mild winter weather we were able to continue working in this way right up until December.



© Cameren Birch-Ghose



© Athina Beckett

As I said at the top of this article, most of the practical tasks lead by me were at Bourton Meadow (**such as below, on 12th January**), but for the first few months of 2024 I lead several tasks at Cosgrove where I worked with children and their parents taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. This is something I have done in the past and would love to continue doing. Hopefully this year will be just as successful as the last, if not more so, as we continue the good work at Bourton Meadow. I look forward to seeing all the spring flowers grow there once again, which is one of the many reasons I'm so happy to be part of it again this year.

Athina Beckett

Trustee, Volunteer Leader and Work Party Organiser



© Cameren Birch-Ghose

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 33, 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 34.

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



COSGROVE CANAL FESTIVAL & CRAFT FAIR

Historic Boats
Trade Boats
Cake Stalls
Craft Stalls
Games
Entertainment

19th - 20th
JULY
2025

Fun for all
the family

This event is organised by the Buckingham Canal Society to raise awareness and funding for the restoration of the Buckingham Arm of the Grand Union Canal. Latest information and plans will be on display at the festival

 buckinghamcanal.org.uk
 events@buckinghamcanal.org.uk

Fund raising for Charitable Incorporated Organisation Registered Charity Number 1156662

For more
information



Buckingham Canal Society News

Booking for the 2025 Cosgrove Canal Festival & Craft Fair is Now Open

We are pleased to open the booking process for this year's Cosgrove Canal Festival & Craft Fair, which this year is being held over the weekend of the 19 & 20th July. As usual we anticipate having a wide selection of trading and charity/historic boats along the length of the canal from Cosgrove Lock to the Iron Trunk Aqueduct. There will also be limited spaces available for anyone who wishes to have a stall on the towpath. The Craft Fair will once again be held in Cosgrove Village Hall.

For full details of how to book a place to participate in this event, please email us at: events@buckinghamcanal.org.uk. Please state what part of the festival you would like to participate in (Boat Trader or Craft Fair).

More information about this year's festival can be found on our website by visiting: www.buckinghamcanal.org.uk/events-and-news/annual-festival-events/.

Alan Mynard

Website Administrator and Archivist

This Year's Craft Fair Will Not Disappoint!

Join us for a celebration of creativity and craftsmanship taking place alongside the Canal Festival! This part of the festival in Cosgrove's Village Hall will be packed with talented artisans with unique handmade home crafts that always prove popular with our visitors. With well presented items for sale, it's a feast for the eyes! Our stall holders enjoy lots of fun at this event with great camaraderie between us all. There's lots of chatter and laughter making the event in the hall a fun place to be...and this, as ever goes a long way to making the fair a great success.

This year our regular stallholders will be joined by several newbies...making the event bigger than ever before! Browse pottery and ceramics, textiles and fabric art, woodwork, candles, scents, clothes, knitted and crochet items with handmade cards, free motion stitched art, photography, woodwork, jewellery, henna art (get a tattoo), felted items, dolls, honey, chutneys and preserves, junk journal's, cushions, bags and lots, lots more!

All this should be a feast for the senses, and whilst you are there, a feast for the tummy especially! Our professional kitchen team will be providing refreshments, delicious cakes, sandwiches, pulled pork rolls, quiches and salads to satisfy all your snacking and lunch requirements! By shopping at our craft fair, you'll be supporting local artisans and helping to preserve traditional crafts. We look forward to seeing you there!

Sharron Comerford

Craft Fair Organiser



© Athina Beckett

2024 IWA Fenny Stratford Canal Festival

Over the weekend of the 3rd & 4th August I attended the IWA Fenny Stratford Canal Festival with my canal boat Brown Trout. As well as helping Inland Waterways Association - Milton Keynes branch, I decided to use Brown Trout to promote Buckingham Canal Society as well.

Brown Trout proudly displayed one of our Buckingham Canal Society banners (**left**). Several Society posters were also displayed, including one advertising our new project the Green Gym. This seems to have worked well,

as I had about half a dozen inquiries about volunteering with our Society. Hopefully this will result in some new volunteers joining our campaign.

2024 Climate Cafe MK Green Fair

Last year on Saturday 16th November I attended the popular Climate Cafe MK Green Fair at The Old Bathhouse in Wolverton. The event is organised to promote all things eco-friendly, be it products, gifts, environmental concerns and organisations, while indulging in a lovely beverage or snack. Although we were not able to have a stall of our own, we were able to share a stall with another group. All in all, we did have a very good afternoon, with plenty of positive responses to our Green Gym and walk leaflets (**right**). It certainly generated interest in our cause, and hopefully in turn it will see us gaining more volunteers and new members for us here at Buckingham Canal Society.



© Athina Beckett



© Alan Mynard

2024 Buckingham Christmas Parade and Community Fair

Finally, I had a very successful day at the Buckingham Christmas Parade and Community Fair (**left**) on Saturday 14th December. A big thanks must go to Beverly Mags and Ros Woodford for

helping me out on the stall. Between us, we raised plenty of funds for the Society, and we spoke to a lot of people about our restoration work, aims and ambitions. As a result, we may have about five new recruits which could mean we have about five more volunteers for the work parties. So yes...I would count that as a successful day indeed!

Athina Beckett

Trustee, Volunteer Leader and Work Party Organiser

Proud of Bucks Awards 2024

On the evening of Thursday 5th December, myself, Terry Cavender and Derin Adegun (**right**) attended the Proud of Bucks Awards event held at The University of Buckingham. We were assigned a stall with which we were able to generate further awareness of our restoration successes to date and our aims of restoring the entire length of the Buckingham Arm, none of which would be possible without the help of volunteers of the past, present and future. While we had the opportunity of sharing with a few people the immense and huge undertakings of our work so far, we also managed to enjoy the awards ceremony too, and perhaps do a little networking.



Edima Inwang

Trustee and Marketing Manager

Membership Renewal Reminder

For those of you who have forgotten to renew your membership or mislaid your renewal notice, we hope you will consider doing so soon. If you need a reminder of payment methods, you can make payments in several ways:

- **By BACS transfer, using Sort Code 09-01-50 and Account No. 03030504, with your membership number as a reference.**
- **By cheque, payable to: 'Buckingham Canal Society'. Please write your membership number on the reverse of the cheque.**
- **By paying online via our shop at: www.shop.buckinghamcanal.org.uk/.**

If you are having difficulties with the process, then please make contact with us at membership@buckinghamcanal.org.uk.

Richard Dwight

Trustee and Treasurer

WRMP What?

At the time of writing, Buckingham Canal Society trustees have just agreed with Anglian Water that a proposed scheme to restore the canal will be considered under a programme called the Water Resources Management Plan 2029 (WRMP 29). We had discussions with the Anglian Water team last year, including a meeting in their Huntingdon offices. This scheme forms a potential component of delivering the water supply for Milton Keynes and surrounding villages in the west of the Anglian Water area for the next fifty years.

Whilst we are in the early stages with several hoops to jump through, the trustees and I are understandably excited by the potential that this opportunity brings.

We again ask for additional help and support as we build this scheme alongside Anglian Water from the Expression of Interest (EOI) through to the formal bid and beyond. Please contact any of the trustees if you or someone you know may be able to assist us by using our contact details on page 34.

Details of the government's WRMP process can be found by visiting here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-resources-planning-guideline/water-resources-planning-guideline.

Terry Cavender

Trustee and Executive Officer

Tackling Urban Flooding...

...by Restoring Our Canals

In November last year, an estimated 350,000 homes in England lost power as Storm Bert hit the nation (Source: Met Office). The UK suffered strong winds, snow and heavy rainfall which caused flooding throughout the country, damaging homes, businesses and roads and disrupting daily life. With more storms on the way, flooding will continue to affect many communities across the country. What can be done to tackle flooding in our urban areas? The answer may lie in embracing nature-based solutions such as canal restoration.

What Causes Flooding?

Rising global temperatures are key causes of flooding. As our oceans get warmer due to climate change, more water evaporates into the air. When this moisture-laden air joins a storm system and travels over land, we receive more intense rainfall which our urban areas struggle to handle.

For example, heavier rainfall in short time periods can overwhelm drainage systems, which can also become blocked by sediment and debris, leading to flooding. The disappearance of green spaces in urban areas due to building development also

contributes to worsening flooding as water cannot drain into fields to be absorbed by soil and plants. Instead, it sits on the surface of concrete roads and pavements, closer to our homes.

Tackling Urban Flooding Through Canal Restoration

Digging a big hole in the ground is an excellent way to collect rainwater. Similarly, by restoring canal systems, particularly in low-lying areas, we can create more spaces to capture flood water that would otherwise damage homes, businesses and schools. Unlike ponds or lakes, canals have lock systems which let us control the flow of water, diverting it away from urban areas. By also channelling this canal water to other areas, in some cases, the water can be reintroduced into adjoining rivers to replace evaporated water during summer or in dry areas.

Despite being man-made waterways, canals provide thriving habitats for wildlife. Plant life in canals can absorb water through their root systems, helping to reduce the impacts of flooding and supporting a diverse, healthy ecosystem.



Great Ouse in flood at Cosgrove below the Iron Trunk Aquaduct last October © Alan Mynard

Other Benefits of Canals in Urban Areas

Canal restoration in towns and cities is particularly useful in tackling flooding, as canals can be connected to existing stormwater management systems or sewers to further reduce the risk of flooding. An additional benefit is that by using heat transfer technology, water from canals can be used to heat or cool nearby homes, at no risk to the environment. The Inland Waterways Association estimates that up to 350,000 homes could benefit on Canal & River Trust waterways alone, saving more than 1 million tonnes of CO₂ each year.

Like flooding, heatwaves are also becoming more frequent in the UK and are made worse by the urban heat island effect which occurs in towns and cities. Concrete buildings and roads absorb heat and densely packed high-rise buildings reduce ventilation, trapping warm air between narrow streets. Introducing more waterways in urban areas can help reduce this effect because water naturally cools the air around it as it evaporates. According to Canal & River Trust, waterways can cool temperatures in urban areas by up to 1.6 degrees, helping to reduce the harmful impacts of heat waves in urban areas.

Drawbacks

Since canals are man-made waterways, they require maintenance to operate efficiently. Sediment can build up over time, especially if dirty flood water drains into canals, meaning that they must be dredged and maintained to stop them overflowing. Also, flooding can occur if a canal falls into disrepair, for example its walls are broken or it fills up with rubbish. However, organisations like Buckingham Canal Society are dedicated to maintaining the quality, safety and beauty of our canals, making them pleasant spaces to live and visit.

Protecting Nature and Our Communities

Flooding is a real threat to our communities. People have been injured or lost their lives in the recent storms, and many have been evacuated as their homes have been destroyed by flooding. While we cannot stop flooding through canal restoration alone, it goes to show that embracing nature-based solutions can significantly reduce the impacts of extreme weather. The effort to restore and protect natural habitats not only benefits nature, but has direct, tangible benefits for people too.

To be a part of the canal restoration work carried out by Buckingham Canal Society, you can visit our website to get involved at: www.buckinghamcanal.org.uk.

Cameren Birch-Ghose

Volunteer

Raising Money by Recycling

One of the ways we generate funds is by recycling unwanted or used items for cash. We are currently collecting: Aluminium drinks cans (preferably crushed, to take up less room) and used printer ink cartridges (unfortunately not laser or toner cartridges). These can be dropped off at the white cabin at Cosgrove marina

Don't forget we are still collecting quality bric-a-brac and books for our Publicity & Recycling Stall at the various canal festivals we attend. We also require old T-shirts for making into rag rugs to sell at these same events.

Steve Morley

Trustee

Persevering with Perseverance



Although our workboat Perseverance had received much attention, including much work on the paintwork, for various reasons she had not fulfilled her original purpose. With the arrival of Diana as a more practical proposition, it was decided to offer Perseverance to another group. The winning bidder was Essex Waterways Ltd (EWL), operators of The Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation. Part of the deal was that Buckingham Canal Society would navigate Perseverance to Willowbridge Marina, south of Milton Keynes, where she would be craned out to be transported to her new home.

This was achieved over the summer, but on arrival it was discovered that the boat was somewhat heavier than had been thought and was beyond the capabilities of the facilities there. Accordingly, arrangements were made to move the vessel to P&S Marine Services Ltd near Watford and Buckingham Canal Society were called again on to help with the move.

One of the matters which had not been satisfactorily resolved was Perseverance's hydraulic drive, necessitating push-towing with tug Shoveler (**below**) which we had on loan from Canal & River Trust. Navigating with this combination calls for a substantial crew (**above**)



as the steerer, in Shoveler's low cabin, has very limited forward vision past Perseverance's superstructure. It requires a crew member standing on the back of the tug to give directions and at least two people on the workboat (**page 20, top**) armed with large fenders to avoid impact with bridge holes, moored craft and the like. There was also a 'ground crew' travelling by van to set locks in advance, with the van



returning the crew to the starting point at the end of the day. Most of the travelling has been at weekends and we have been joined by crew from Essex Waterways Ltd coming across from Essex.

Progress with a deep-draughted, wide beam boat has been much slower than with a modern narrowboat with the summit level of Tring Cutting in particular causing difficulties with the boats scraping the bottom of the cut. By this time it was autumn, with short hours of daylight, meaning early starts, either from Cosgrove to travel by our Society van to the last mooring point or making our own way, depending on location. Boating then continued until light faded and we could find a suitable mooring place with road access for the return journey.

All was going reasonably to plan until we reached Berkhamstead (**left**). We had been warned of a 'restriction' to navigation owing to a lock gate having been seriously damaged by a boat, allowing passage for narrow beam craft only.

Canal & River Trust staff were offering assisted passage and thought they might be able to help us through but in the event found the gate was too unstable to be opened. This meant a short day for us, with possibly two days' further travel ahead. Meanwhile, Canal & River Trust were asking for Shoveler back for their Christmas work.

Progress continued after lock repairs had been completed but was halted two locks short of our destination by a further stoppage; this time by what is euphemistically known as a 'Police incident'. The Essex Waterways Ltd manager was able to arrange with the boatyard for them to tow *Perseverance* the rest of the way in due course and so we uncoupled and set off solo for the return journey.

One mile and two locks back the engine suddenly died, and despite attempts to re-start, we ended up abandoning the trip for the day. Canal & River Trust were called to send out a fitter when one was available. At the time of writing the recently-refurbished starter motor has been taken away for more refurbishment. Meanwhile, we have purchased a workboat which is moored in the area, so we plan to bring this back with Shoveler once repairs have been carried out.

Steve Morley
Trustee

The 2025 Annual General Meeting

On Saturday 15th March we held our 33rd Annual General Meeting in Buckingham Community Centre. A small number of displays were set up showcasing some of the works being carried out. The meeting was called to order at 7.35pm and we made a start.

This year we had our new chairman, Paul Rodgers, leading the proceedings. Some of you may know him for his long association with the Inland Waterways Association. There were around thirty in the audience and as there were a number of relatively new faces amongst the trustees, each one was invited to say a few words about their role in the Society by way of introduction. Terry Cavender gave his usual brief overview of the key events from the previous year, along with some indications of what might be happening in the coming months.

Paul then started on the formal part of the meeting, working through the agenda, including voting on accepting the minutes of the previous AGM and adopting the accounts following their presentation by the treasurer. With no resolutions, members questions or any outstanding business, the formal part of the meeting was closed at 7.55pm.

Next followed the social part of the evening when all were invited to partake in the buffet at the rear of the hall, followed by the presentation. Unfortunately, our planned speaker had to cancel at the last moment, so it was very brave of Trustee Steve Morley to take on the challenge of providing a suitable talk. At such short notice and having been involved with waterways for a number of years he was able to come up with the interesting topic of working with Waterway Recovery Group. The Society has worked with this group on a number of projects on our arm, but Steve told the story of two very different projects he had been involved in elsewhere. Clearly these work parties, which can last several days and nights away from home in sometimes fairly basic accommodation, can provide a much wider experience of work type and a chance to try new things with different and well trained individuals.

The evening closed with the usual raffle of quite a number of generously donated prizes, after which, all that was left to do was thank everyone for attending. **For those not attending the AGM, you can find the annual report and account on our website at: www.buckinghamcanal.org.uk.**

Richard Dwight
Trustee and Treasurer

Why I Love the Green Gym

What is the Green Gym?

Green Gyms are an opportunity to keep fit by taking part in outdoor conservation and gardening activities in your local community. I joined Buckingham Canal Society's Green Gym back in July of last year, and I really enjoy the chance to get out in the fresh air while doing something meaningful that supports nature. I always look forward to the Green Gym sessions because they are a fun and invigorating way to stay active.

Why are Green Gyms Important?



In 2013, Buckingham Canal Society restored a section of the original Buckingham Canal at Bourton Meadow (**above, on the Grand Re-opening Day of 26th October 2013**). This canal is a vibrant wildlife habitat, home to a multitude of plant, animal and insect species. At the Green Gym, we carry out vital conservation tasks to ensure Bourton Meadow remains a healthy ecosystem as well as a safe, clean and beautiful space for people to enjoy nature. Now more than ever, it is vital to protect our blue and green spaces.

What Do I Do at Buckingham Canal Society's Green Gym?

Buckingham Canal Society's Green Gym is a relaxed and friendly environment where you can do as little or as much as you like. The sessions at Bourton Meadow involve doing a variety of jobs such as donning waders and getting into the canal to chop back reeds (**opposite, bottom**), or staying on dry land and maintaining hedges (**opposite, top**) or cutting back brambles and other weeds. These activities require light to moderate effort and involve tasks like pushing wheelbarrows, lifting and carrying, using equipment like loppers, shears, rakes and mattocks. I find these activities help improve mobility, flexibility and support general fitness levels.

Protecting Nature and Wildlife

Like many young people, I'm concerned about the climate crisis and the damaging impact it's having on wildlife and the natural world. Joining the Green Gym has helped me feel less hopeless as I've been able to do something practical that benefits nature. It's so rewarding to see how our efforts have helped wildlife flourish!

With help from other members, I've been learning how to identify different plant, bird and insect species. I've enjoyed spotting Robins, Red Kites and Damselflies, and there were also some Grass Snake eggs found on site! The canal has helped increase biodiversity in the area by providing a habitat that supports a wide variety of species.

Health Benefits of the Green Gym

Green Gyms can help you improve your physical health by staying active and mobile, but they also have many benefits for your mental health. I've found that I really enjoy the social aspect of the Green Gym as it's a great way to meet new people. Additionally, research has shown that being connected to nature can help reduce depression and anxiety, and promote feelings of joy, calmness and creativity [Source: Mental Health Foundation].

How Do I Join a Green Gym?

Green Gyms are a fantastic opportunity to keep fit, enjoy the outdoors and give back to your local community, and unlike regular gyms, there are no expensive joining fees! These volunteering initiatives are free and training and equipment is provided.



© Cameren Birch-Ghose



© Cameren Birch-Ghose

Buckingham Canal Society runs Green Gym sessions at Bourton Meadow in Buckingham, every second Sunday of the month and every alternate Thursday. Contact Athina Beckett using her contact details on page 34 for more information, and try it out for yourself!

Cameren Birch-Ghose
Volunteer

When Will It Be Completed?



© Alan Mynard



© Alan Mynard



© Colin Levett

Over the Christmas period last year we were again able to have the amazing Waterway Recovery Group Forestry team join us on the Buckingham Canal at Cosgrove for our annual Christmas Camp. The team of eighteen or so other volunteers on some of the days made huge progress on three key project sites. This included the Forestry team removing some eight diseased trees for us. **(The photo opposite shows the western side of Bridge No.1 in mid November last year before any work had started. Compare the same scene to the image on the left as well as the other photos, and you can get an idea of how much work was needed).**

Buckingham Canal Society would like to thank the whole team. Those on the ground doing the physical bits, those organising, and those supporting everything Waterway Recovery Group does, including all the backroom 'stuff'.

I look back on the mere seventeen years I have been involved with restoration and what has been achieved across the country by those of us 'keeping the restoration faith'. These are often intergenerational projects.



© Alan Mynard

Every week one door closes and another opens. Some are hugely game changing opportunities that enable progress. But it all needs bodies to help with the physical work as well as all the other elements from strategy to planning work parties, and everything in between.



© Alan Mynard



© Terry Cavender

So, get involved if you are not already. It is not a New Year Resolution; it is a tangible way to resolve to protect and restore our waterways. We all know that Waterway Recovery Group and local societies need new blood, regardless of how vintage or nouveau it is! If it is a few hours a month or several weekends, go for it.

You could become a self-appointed ambassador and talk to three or four random people each week about canals. If you spark interest in a handful, you will have done so much for the legacy we are all trying to achieve.

My favourite reply to the often-asked question on the towpath of “When will it be completed?” is usually “even sooner if you support us, or even come and help!” **Please contact me, or any of the trustees using our details on page 34 if you can spare us some time.**

I’m really looking forward to seeing this year’s progress across all the restoration sites!

Terry Cavender

Trustee and Executive Officer



Our Publicity & Recycling Stall Needs You

Help! We Need MORE Help!

For over ten years my partner Jonathan Brown and I have run what was once called the Buckingham Canal Society Bric-a-Brac Stall. Now known as our Publicity & Recycling Stall for some time, we trade at various canal festivals and other local events. Prior to COVID-19, we had managed to raise something in the region of £2,000 a year by the end of 2019 for the Society!

Unfortunately, through illness my partner is no longer able to erect the gazebo needed at most events or lift heavy objects. I am now asking for extra help to set up the stall and gazebo at local festivals where we can promote the work of our Society.

You wouldn't need to be available all of the day, but perhaps to just help me out at the beginning and the end of the event. The other advantage is that by becoming a helper, you would be able to get into the festivals and events free of charge!

If anyone is thinking they could help out, or if you have any good quality bric-a-brac that you would like to donate, please contact me to discuss this further using my contact details on page 34.



Athina Beckett

Trustee, Volunteer Leader and Work Party Organiser

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 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 on page 34. They can still be used to make even more rag rugs.

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

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
- The Conservation Volunteers
- 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:

- WD-40 Company Ltd
- JNP Group Consulting Engineers
- Triad Group Plc
- Gatehouse Bank Plc
- DHL Group
- Technip Energies N.V.
- Santander
- Vinci Technology Centre UK
- Volkswagen Financial Services UK
- Lyreco
- Lucid Group
- The Open University
- Premium Credit Ltd
- NHBC
- Network Rail
- GTC
- Bibby Financial Services Ltd
- BRI (UK) Ltd
- KAM Project Consultants Ltd
- Biffa
- Audi UK
- Senceive Ltd
- 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

Future Events

Saturday 19th July - Sunday 20th July

The Buckingham Canal Society's 29th annual Cosgrove Canal Festival & Craft Fair

Cosgrove Lock, Lock Lane, Cosgrove, Milton Keynes, Northants, MK19 7JR

Firstly, we would like to thank everybody who helped at last year's festival, which was as ever a huge success. However, we need you once again. As always, and in addition to the main event, extra help will be needed to begin setting up the festival on Thursday 17th and Friday 18th July, and also to dismantle everything at the end of it on Sunday 20th July. There will be a great variety of tasks to suit everybody, and we will need assistance with activities including, but not restricted to the following: Baking cakes for the Cake Stall; Serving cakes in the Village Hall; Working on the Games Stall; The Lock Ransom, whereby training will be given to operate the lock gates.

Whether you can spare a couple of hours or a whole day, all and any help would be much appreciated as this event is our one big opportunity where we can reach out to the public to explain our current and future projects and promote the Society. If you haven't been involved for a while, it's a chance to meet up with the other volunteers. Why not also invite your family and friends along to the event for what is promising to be a very enjoyable weekend! You would also be very welcome to join the boaters on Saturday evening for a fish & chip supper, although this must be booked in advance.

So that we can get an idea of the volunteer numbers and the days you will be available to help out at the festival, please contact the Cosgrove Festival Team using the contact details on page 35. You can also use this to book a stall, boat mooring or fish & chip supper. Additional details can also be found by visiting: www.buckinghamcanal.org.uk/events-and-news/annual-festival/.

Saturday 28th - Sunday 29th June

Fellows, Morton & Clayton Ltd

Rally & Canal Festival

Braunston Marina, Braunston,
Nr Daventry, Northants, NN11 7JH

Details: 01788-891373

www.braunstonmarina.co.uk

Saturday 26th July 11am - 5pm

Linslade Canal Festival

Tiddenfoot Waterside Park, Linslade,
Leighton Buzzard, Beds, LU7 2AE.

Details: www.leightonlinslade-tc.gov.uk

Saturday 2nd - Sunday 3rd August

IWA Milton Keynes

Fenny Stratford Canal Festival

Towpath south of Watling Street Bridge,
Fenny Stratford,

Milton Keynes, Bucks, MK2

Details: diane.witts@waterways.org.uk



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Work Party Dates 2025/2026

July

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 13th

August

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 10th

September

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 14th

October

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 12th

November

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 9th

December

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 14th

January

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 11th

February

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 8th

March

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 8th

April

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 12th

May

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 10th

June

Every Tuesday
Every Thursday
Sunday 14th

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 122 (Autumn 2025) by the 1st August 2025 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

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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

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Buckingham Canal Society, Aylesbury Canal Society.



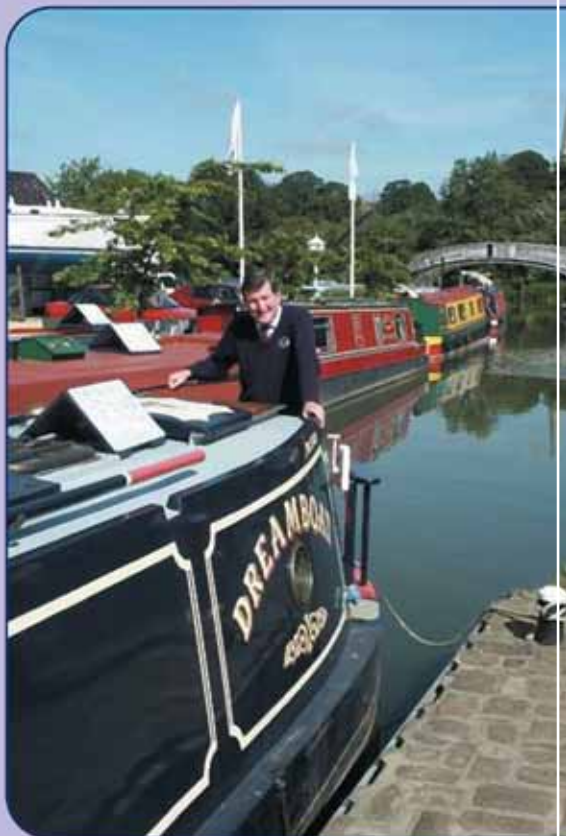
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