

The Buckingham Navigator

The Newsletter of The Buckingham Canal Society

Registered Charity No. 1072924



A word from the Editor...

Since the new year, with all those good intentions in the air, I made a foolish mistake. I took up jogging. The towpath seemed the ideal place for it - great views, no chance of getting lost and nobody around to see me! Perfect, I thought. In retrospect, with all the wisdom of mid-January on my side, I had to concede that the icy, muddy, slippery working towpath was not the place for self-improvement - the bruises on my leg from nearly falling into the canal near Braunston will testify to that! Oh well.

That same iciness has kept the working canals all over the country quiet and the stovepipes gently smoking since the last issue but with the AGM almost upon us, an exciting exchange of winter for spring looks set to see the BCS well into the new year.

So if, like me, you've made a resolution this year to get a bit fitter, meet more people and support a good cause, perhaps there are worse places to be than a BCS work party this year? Take it from me, it's a lot better for you than jogging!

Toby Tottle



Members of the 'Make a Difference Day' work group do battle with the wilderness to cut a flight of steps at the BBOWT site!

Getting in Touch!

To get in touch with the society, or to contribute to the Navigator, please refer to the list of contact details on pages 12 & 13.

In This Issue:

Why Bother?

Terry Cavender gets down to the real nitty-gritty of canal restoration - waste permits, planning & more drains!

The Canal at Buckingham, 1927

A collection of photographs from a personal archive, the way the Buckingham Canal was in 1927.

Mining the Archives

Ros Woodford takes a look back in time and discovers that some problems just refuse to be 'bygone'!

AGM 2011 Agenda

Your personal guide to the layout of the biggest social event in the BCS calendar!

AGM Nominations

How to go about nominating someone for a position on the BCS Committee.

AND MORE!

plus: chairman's chat, work party dates & upcoming special events!

Chairman's Chat

Another year has passed and once again it is AGM time! As well as the serious side of the AGM we hope you are able to come and socialise with other members and join us in a glass of wine on **29th January in Buckingham Community Centre.**

It has been a very successful year for the BCS starting with the funding of the feasibility study back in May when we learnt the good news from Halcrow. Since then we have updated our prospectus which now includes briefing notes and the progress made thus far, as well as outlining our future plans. This has proved a very useful document when meeting councillors and others interested in the canal.

As reported in the autumn edition of the Navigator, the Rt Hon John Bercow MP for Buckingham and Speaker of the House of Commons has agreed to become Patron of the society. On the 2nd October John, with several local councillors, visited three of the sites currently being worked by our volunteers (**pictured below**) and was impressed by the amount of work achieved by our volunteers. He has agreed to help with advice and to put us in touch with people who may be able to help our cause in the future.



Over the past year we have run a variety of events both practical and social and these have included our 'Community Tree Planting Day' in March where over 100 saplings were planted at the BBOWT Nature Reserve.

On 'Action Earth' day, again in March, a further 40 saplings were planted. With help from our volunteers who have watered them and tended them over the summer most have flourished. Then there was our very successful boat trip for members and friends in April where we again were able to use the St John Ambulance boat for a trip down the River Nene.

Forming partnerships with local authorities has become a priority this year and we are able to add Buckinghamshire County Council, Buckingham Local Area Forum and Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Consortium to our list of partners.

Some of you will have noticed in the local papers particularly in the Buckingham area in the planning application section there has appeared a 'Certificate of Lawfulness' for the Buckingham Canal. Terry Cavender who has played a leading part in putting together this application has agreed to write a more detailed report about this for the Navigator.

The other exciting project is our work with Stowe School. Since September groups of pupils from Stowe School have been joining us for an hour on Monday afternoons as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Awards scheme. These sessions have worked so well that Stowe School have now indicated that they would like these work parties to continue until at least June 2011.

Milton Keynes Volunteer Connections made four videos to showcase some of the volunteer activities taking place in the area and the BCS were chosen as one of the subject groups! A three-minute video has now been produced and this can be viewed on Youtube and our own website. For those who are unable to visit our work sites this does give an insight in to the very valuable work being carried out by our volunteers.



Continued...

We are looking forward to the future and to 2011, where we hope to develop plans in connection with the Environment Agency and their flood prevention schemes in Buckingham. We also plan to continue the restoration of the canal particularly at the Bourton Meadow end where we are in the process of applying for grants in the hope that we can have this section in water by next year.

Plans are also being discussed with BBOWT about the section of canal they own at Hyde Lane where we hope to take over the running of this site from them. Other discussions will also be taking place in the near future with British Waterways in connection with the part of the canal they own at Cosgrove and there are meetings planned with West and South Northants Councils as well.

So as you can see from the above your committee has been keeping very busy in 2010 with a lot more work planned for 2011 but all this work can only be carried out with the support of our members. So we hope as many of you as possible will continue to support us in 2011 and join us on the 29th January in Buckingham Community Centre. Come and share that glass of wine with us to toast future successes!

Athina Beckett
Chairman

The Canal at Buckingham, 1927

BCS Committee member Helene Hill recently received these wonderful photographs of the Buckingham Canal from the daughter of a lady who grew up in Buckingham. Perhaps the only question is: Can anyone identify the locations?



All members are invited to Get together for a Meeting, refreshments and Cavender's Curiosities!

Buckingham Community Centre will again be the venue for our annual get together, always a friendly event, with Helene Hill's excellent refreshments, and this year the speaker will be the larger than life committee member, Terry Cavender, who has recently been pole dancing, making a patchwork quilt and looking down drains, all designed to help the canal restoration!

The agenda of the AGM is included in this edition together with a nomination form for the committee. We will be sorry to lose Jane Caswell who has decided not to stand for re-election, but has kindly agreed to continue as Membership Secretary for a few more months pending a successor. This year the committee has also been operating one member short. There will therefore be vacancies on the committee.

Your canal needs you!

These are exciting times and if you wish to be involved do come and join the committee. There is no need to go canvassing for support as the current committee will be able to provide Proposers and Seconders for you. If you would like to find out more about committee activities in general and the particular ways in which you might help I would be very happy to talk it over with you, perhaps over a glass of wine or a cup of coffee!

tel: **01280 821232**

Helen Preston
Secretary

Buckingham Canal Society

19th Annual General Meeting

7.15 pm, Saturday 29th January 2011
Community Centre, Cornwalls Meadow, Buckingham

All interested parties are very welcome to attend, but only current members are entitled to vote. Nominations for the committee, or matters which you wish to be put before the meeting, should be submitted to the Secretary, Helen Preston, by Monday 17th January 2011. Nomination forms are available from the Secretary.

Agenda

1. Chairman's introduction
2. To receive apologies for absence
3. To confirm the minutes of the AGM held on 30th January 2010 [copies will be available at the meeting or in advance by application to the secretary]
4. Matters arising from the minutes
5. To receive a report from the Chairman
6. To receive a report from the Secretary
7. To receive a report from the Treasurer including presentation of the accounts for the year ending 30th November 2010
8. To receive a report from the Membership Secretary
9. To receive a report from the Work Party Organiser
10. Election of officers and members to serve on the Executive Committee from the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting, 30th January 2011 to the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting, 2012:
 - a) Election of Chairman
 - b) Election of Treasurer
 - c) Election of Secretary
 - d) Election of up to 7 Committee Members.
11. Subscription rates for the year to January 2012.
12. Any other business.
13. Chairman's closing remarks

Following the formal part of the meeting, drinks and refreshments will be served giving members an opportunity to meet old friends and welcome new ones. The committee looks forward to meeting as many members and guests as possible.

The evening will conclude with a presentation from committee member, Terry Cavender, "Cavender's Curiosities", an account of his surveying expeditions into the further reaches of the canal. Terry will also show us the results of the high-tech mapping tools that he is using to refine the data into a basis for future restoration planning.

Buckingham Canal Society Committee Nomination Form

Nominations are invited from members of the society, for members to serve on the Executive Committee from the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting, 29th January 2011 to the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting 2012. The Executive Committee consists of not less than 3 members nor more than 10 members, being the honorary officers, chairman, treasurer and secretary and not more than 7 members.

Nominees may indicate their willingness to accept nomination in later ballots if they are unsuccessful in earlier ballots.

Nominee.....

Proposer.....

Secunder.....

BALLOT 1 - CHAIRMAN	Willing to accept nomination	YES / NO
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BALLOT 2 – TREASURER	Willing to accept nomination	YES / NO
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BALLOT 3 – SECRETARY	Willing to accept nomination	YES / NO
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BALLOT 4 – MEMBER	Willing to accept nomination	YES / NO
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I agree, if elected, to act in the interests of the Buckingham Canal Society.

SIGNATURE OF NOMINEE:

.....

Date:

Nominations should be returned to the secretary, Helen Preston,
16, Mallard Drive, Buckingham, MK18 1GJ by Monday 24th January 2011.

Work Party Organiser's Report

Winter 2010

As the year comes to an end I would like to thank everybody who has attended the work parties during 2010. A great deal has been achieved over the past year including repair work to the bridge at Little Hill farm which is now almost finished. The work here only requires some re-pointing on a small part of the bridge on the west side for the bridgework to be finished at the farm and this we hope to complete in 2011.



There is quite a variety of tasks planned for next year at the BBOWT Nature Reserve and these include re-pointing much of the bridge near the footpath by the lock, repairing part of the footpath where it has slipped down the embankment and removing reeds from the bed of the canal where it has become very overgrown.

Most of the hedge-laying work has also been completed but there is still a small section to be finished for those of you who enjoy this type of work. We also intend to plant more saplings along part of the hedge next year.

There has been an increase in the number of companies helping us this year and these have included Londell Basell, Baxter Health Care, Santander (**pictured above**), Open University, Bury House and Allianz but there is always room for more so if you work for a company or know of a company which carries out 'team building days' and would like to work on an environmental project please pass on my details to them!



A new addition to our work parties is Stowe School. This is a new project for us and we are working with the school in providing practical work for some of their pupils who are taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. So far Stowe School have visited the site at BBOWT six times in 2010 with further work parties planned from January to June 2011. On these days 21 pupils arrive and between them thus far they have built a wildlife habitat pile, worked on the hedge laying project, dug two ponds and carried out excellent work around the lock.

Up to the end of March most of the work will be concentrated at the Nature Reserve but part of our Cosgrove site is becoming overgrown again so I am hoping to arrange some work parties there to clear the re-growth from the bed of the canal and remove some saplings which are growing again. Discussions with British Waterways are planned for next year with regard to this work.

Dates for our forthcoming work parties up to March 2011 appear in this edition of the Navigator but if you need any more information please contact me. We are a very friendly group and always welcome new volunteers, both workers or just observers! Please contact me to arrange a date:

tel: 01908 661217
email: athinabec@aol.com

Athina Beckett
Work Party Organiser

Why Bother? by Terry Cavender

...applying for planning if you don't need it?

Having just walked from Hyde Lane to Bourton Meadow checking levels between the lock to the spill weir, and with Christmas rapidly creeping up behind me, my PC popped up a reminder that it was again time to pen a few words for the newsletter. For those who are new or have just forgotten, I am Terry Cavender and have been involved with the BCS since October 2008. Meanwhile, read on for thoughts about waste permits, Planning Permission and the latest on the drains!



In 1794 the Act of Parliament (**left**) was passed enabling the canal. Then it was abandoned in the 1960s. But what does that all mean to our restoration aims? Well, the Transport Commission in the 1960s actually "closed the Buckingham Arm to navigation" (and lots of other bits). Thankfully, they did not repeal the Act and it is still with us on the statutes. So what?

When members of the Wendover canal restoration group 'put spades in the ground', a member of the public complained to planning that a bunch of amateurs were playing civil engineering and that they should be stopped.

Many months later the Dacorum Borough Council Planning team deemed, after a legal review, that as there was a valid Act of Parliament in force, it was a Permitted Development. In layman's terms the Act still exists so today we are well within our rights to restore the canal.

Alas, when it comes to filling in grant forms, folk don't seem to believe the fact that you can put 'not applicable' to the question 'Do you have planning permission?' We face further complexity in other areas too. Roughly 70% (by length) of the original line can be restored as it is - but the remaining 30% requires new canal and this will be subject to planning consent and various permissions. This is compounded further still by differences in approach between the planning authorities through which we pass. Some have a policy to give only verbal agreements which, of course, can't be used as supporting evidence for grants etc.

The result of all of this is that we have applied for a certificate of lawful development from Aylesbury Vale District Council planning team. This will be for the part of the canal which is in Buckinghamshire i.e. from the Thornton Road Bridge back to Bourton Meadow at Buckingham. Once this has been completed and (hopefully!) granted then we will engage with the planning authority for South Northamptonshire Council.

Hopefully we will be able to use the site of the quarry in Passenham as part of the new line. However, that then means we need to engage with Northamptonshire County Council in their role as planning authority for mineral abstraction (including reinstatement)! The section from the A5 to Cosgrove is still maintained by British Waterways and as such is excluded from all of the above as they are a statutory body. What will become of the planning hoops once BW is transformed into a charitable trust, only the crystal ball knows!

To update previous issues...



We now have the necessary waste permits from the Environment Agency. These allow us to use the dredged and dug material in construction of the canal and dispose of some of it on adjacent land.

Additionally, the Environment Agency has now recognised and included the Buckingham Arm restoration in its Great Ouse Catchment Flood Management Plan. This was following the BCS response to a consultation document issued by the Environment Agency which looks at medium to long term flood management of the whole of the Ouse Valley from The Wash right the way back to Turweston (which is upstream of Buckingham). BCS continue to actively participate in the Buckingham Local Area Forum Flooding Sub-Group which has been reformed with Buckinghamshire County Council and a number of local Parish/Town Councils with a view to exploring the use of balancing lakes along the Ouse Valley. Hopefully we can use these as a source of water for the canal as we progress!

The Halcrow Report...

Discussions are ongoing regarding planning requirements and are looking positive. The survival of the original Act gives us a 'local or private act' which sets a precedent in many ways for what we can do. Some of the work will still be subject to other approvals as to how it is done but in general; the Act still gives us the ability to **get it done!**

We have been progressing these issues via practical means including the collection of further 'level data' on site as well as via active discussion with Local Authorities. A number of strategy sessions have now been held/scheduled to develop all of the strands of activity into a cohesive framework which will hopefully channel our efforts into some channels full of water!

When it comes to the drains...

Chris Smith has been doing some analysis work on the drainage from North Buckingham e.g. Page Hill, Maids Moreton and Linden Village. It is looking promising that we will be able to propose some works in order to divert and harvest some of the rainwater. There remains lots more to do on this but we have support in principle from Buckingham Town Council, Transport for Buckinghamshire, and Aylesbury Vale District Council which are three of the principal parties in surface water management in the town. This will all need to tie in with storage lakes etc, to be further discussed with the Environment Agency.

If you are interested in any of the topics covered above then please get in touch with Athina or myself:

tel: 01280 860316

email: terry.cavender@buckinghamcanal.org.uk

And to finish...

I was grazing the internet and came across this:

"a man a plan a canal panama" spelled backwards is still "a man a plan a canal panama" !

Mining The Archives

Society Archivist Ros Woodford explores the realities of life on the Buckingham Arm one hundred years ago, revealing that the society is not the first to have to deal with certain perennial problems!

As another year of clearing the canal of weeds comes to an end I see from the letters of one hundred years ago the people employed to maintain the canal had similar problems to contend with. What follows are a number of extracts gleaned from the BCS Archives.

19TH MAY 1905

A letter from a Mr Charles Roberts (Collier Agent & Canal Carrier) to Mr. Millner (Engineers Office, G.J.C. Blisworth) requests permission to use knives for cutting weeds from the Locks at Cosgrove. A reasonable enough request you might think, but a memo from Mr. Millner dated 24th July 1905 from Gordon Thomas (Engineer, G.J.C. Surrey Street, London WC.) states; **"As the weeds do not interfere with the trade on the Buckingham Arm, I should not trouble about cutting them this year"**.

14TH JULY 1908

Mr. John Bliss wrote to Mr. Millner in 1908, stating; **"I enclose a letter received from the District Surveyor of Buckingham with reference to the difficulty in navigating to Leckhampstead and Maids Morton in consequence of the weeds. If you can do anything in a small way to assist the traffic, please do so, as you will see Mr. Treadwell says he has about 20 boats to come up"**.

27TH JULY 1908

A letter from Gordon Thomas to Mr. Millner in 1908; **"I have received a letter from Mr. T.W.Montgomery of the Manor House, Deanshanger, stating that there is a leakage from the Buckingham Arm into his ploughed field beyond the Buckingham Road Bridge, Deanshanger, and he cannot plough the same until the leak is stopped. Please inspect this and have the necessary repairs to the bank carried out"**.

28TH JULY 1910

A fascinating letter from J. Treadwell (Surveyor to the R.D.C. of Buckingham) states; **"I regret to have again to call your attention to the foul state of the Canal on the Buckingham Branch, also shortage of water; two boats the other day could not even get back empty from Maids Morton Wharf, and I cannot keep my carters going. I am afraid I shall have to give up altogether the use of the Canal for my stone traffic and have it by rail. I am informed that a bad leakage appears near the paddle at Maids Morton."**



3RD AUGUST 1910

Gordon Thomas (Engineer, G.J.C. Surrey Street, London WC) writes in reply to Mr. Millner "I do not know whether anything can be done to give relief to the traffic on the Buckingham Arm to Maids Morton Wharf. I believe you are now engaged in remedying the leakage to which Mr. Treadwell calls attention".

UNDATED

An undated letter from Thomas Meakins of Canal Cottages, Buckingham, (it appears Thomas is an employee of the Canal Co). He writes "I went through my length on Monday and seen the water running. It is water that comes from Strolle (?) a mile away and the culvert is not able to take it off, and the ditch is full up with rubbish. It is washed all up to the mouth of the culvert. It is too deep for to get down in it. It aint out water at all. It is not the first time I always rake the rubbish as soon as I can get to do it. The water will have to have time to draw away. Mr. Canvin is a man as wants someone to do his work for him" The letter ends; "I am at work between Old Stratford and Deanshanger hedge trimming".

Hopefully in another hundred years things will be different!

Ros Woodford
Archivist

Beneficiaries

The BCS is proud to announce the introduction of our first Beneficiary Companies! These are companies that have agreed to help the society in one way or another.

Travis Perkins Trading Co. Ltd
64 Simpson Road
Bletchley
Milton Keynes
MK1 1BD
01908 642207

G. Smith - Builder
Fieldview Farm
Bletchley Road
Thornborough
Bucks.
MK18 2DZ
01280 815651

BCS Committee

Patrons

Rt Hon John Bercow MP
Lord Boswell of Aynho

Chairman/Work Party Organiser

Athina Beckett
2 Staters Pound, Pennyland,
Milton Keynes MK15 8AX

e: chairman@buckinghamcanal.org.uk
tel: 01908 661217
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Treasurer

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12 Chipperfield Close, New Bradwell,
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mob: 07961 302039

Secretary

Helen Preston
16 Mallard Drive, Buckingham MK18 1GJ

e: secretary@buckinghamcanal.org.uk
tel: 01280 821232

Charity Commission Officer

Don Allison
30 St John Street, Newport Pagnell MK16 8HJ

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IWA Eastern Region Rep.

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Milton Keynes MK3 6DJ

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Peter Caswell

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Milton Keynes MK7 7SQ

e: peter.caswell@buckinghamcanal.org.uk
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Hélène Hill

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tel: 01280 813133

Terry Cavender

7 Buckingham Road, Akeley,
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e: terry.cavender@buckinghamcanal.org.uk
tel: 01280 860316
mob: 07976 629440

Non-Committee Positions

Website

Len Barrows - **e:** webmaster@buckinghamcanal.org.uk

Editor, 'The Buckingham Navigator'

Toby Tottle - **e:** editor@buckinghamcanal.org.uk

Archivist

Ros Woodford - **e:** archivist@buckinghamcanal.org.uk
7 Hoylake Close, Bletchley,
Milton Keynes MK3 7RH

Talks & Slideshows

Steve Morley - **tel:** 01908 520090

Committee members can also be
contacted by post c/o:

16 Mallard Drive,
Buckingham,
MK18 1GJ

or:
e: info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk

Membership Secretary

Jane Caswell - **e:** membership@buckinghamcanal.org.uk
tel: 01908 282589
96 Gaddesden Crescent, Wavendon Gate,
Milton Keynes MK7 7SQ



January

Sunday 9th
Thursday 13th
Thursday 27th

March

Thursday 10th
Sunday 13th
Thursday 24th

February

Thursday 10th
Sunday 13th
Thursday 24th

April

Thursday 7th
Sunday 10th
Thursday 21st

Meeting at 10am.

**For site details
contact Athina Beckett:**

tel: 01908 661217

e: chairman@buckinghamcanal.org.uk

submissions

Handwritten or typed, we're always keen to receive contributions to the newsletter.

Articles, photographs, reminiscences, ideas for the future; anything! Please send all submissions (**by 11th March 2011 for inclusion in the Spring 2011 Issue**) to either of the following:

by email: editor@buckinghamcanal.org.uk
on paper: The Editor, 22 Woodward Place, Loughton Lodge,
Milton Keynes, MK8 9LG.

IN NEED OF BUILDING MATERIALS?

The BCS recently discovered that Travis Perkins were sending a huge amount of their unused 'End of Line' materials to Landfill sites. Never ones to miss an opportunity, the BCS leapt in and proposed a solution to the building materials firm.

The materials available, which include large quantities of bricks, roofing tiles and timber, railway sleepers, fence posts, paving stones and much more - are now being redirected away from Landfill sites and taken to Graham Smith at Fieldview Farm, Bletchley Road, Thornborough, Bucks, MK18 2DZ.

The materials are available now to BCS members at a very much reduced rate! Please contact Terry Cavender to arrange a viewing.

tel: 01280 860316

email: terry.cavender@buckinghamcanal.org.uk

Future Events

Thursday 20th January - 8pm

Friends of Canal Museum, Stoke Bruerne
Talk: Tim Coghlan – Evelyn's War

Friday 21st January 8pm

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

Monday 24th January. 7.45

IWA MK Talk: James murders the Nile,
James Griffin
MK Village Pavilion, Worelle Ave,
Middleton, MK
Details Rodney Evans 01908 376449

Saturday 29th January 7.15

BCS AGM & Social Evening
Buckingham Community Centre

Tuesday 8th February 8pm

IWA Northampton – Talk: Foxton IPT/
Archives, Mike Beech
Walnut Tree Pub, Blisworth

Thursday 17th February 8pm

Friends of Canal Museum talk TBA

Monday 28th February 7.45pm

IWA MK AGM Talk, Update for Boaters Jeff
Whyatt
MK Village Pavillion

Tuesday 8th March 8pm

IWA Northampton AGM plus speaker TBA
Walnut Tree, Blisworth

Friday 18th March 8pm

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

Monday 28th March 7.45pm

IWA MK Talk: Not such Idle Women – Mike
Constable
MK Village Pavilion

Friday 1st – Sunday 3rd April

IWA MK Canal Clean Up
Details Peter Caswell - 01908 282589

Fancy a Natter?

We are reshaping the Thursday get together and from now on we are meeting third Fridays on the odd months and third Thursdays on the even months. The purpose is now broader than just the mapping and we hope to make it a regular social and open topic discussion about the canal restoration progress. We are happy to move venue if folk want, or happy to meet at Thornborough as we have been. Please contact Terry for venue suggestions (see page 12).

Corporate Members

Wyvern Shipping Co.

Rothschild Road
Linslade
Leighton Buzzard, LU7 2TF



Nikon Optical UK Ltd.

3 Tanners Drive
Blakelands, MK14 5BU



Taverners Boat Club

Thrupp Wharf
Cosgrove, MK19 7JP



IWA

Northampton Branch



January: Friday 21st

February: Thursday 17th

March: Friday 18th

April: Thursday 21st

May: Friday 20th

June: Thursday 16th



Advertising in The Buckingham Navigator

Advertisements are welcome in The Navigator in order to assist funding.

Rates are as below. Payment is required before copy date.

Cheques are to be made payable to "Buckingham Canal Society".

33% reduction for 3 issues.

Whole Page - £16

Half Page - £10

Inserts - £7.50

Quarter Page - £6

Back Page - £22

If your business is interested in becoming a corporate member of the Buckingham Canal Society please contact the membership secretary directly. Details can be found on page 13.