

Wilts and Berks Canal

Volunteers have been praised for an "exceptional" year of campaigning for the restoration of the Wilts and Berks Canal.

Branch chairman Rob Jones told the AGM of the Melksham branch: "This has been an exceptional year with progress on so many different fronts, including membership

levels, work parties and media exposure.

"In particular, landowners who were once hostile to our scheme now offer their help and show much greater interest in our aims and objectives. Thanks to their support, work will soon start on several new pieces of land."

Highlights of 2008 included boat rides at Melksham's Party in the Park and Chippenham Folk Festival, as well as record numbers taking part in the annual sponsored walk along the former line of the canal between Chippenham and Lacock.

The trust hopes to restore the waterway from Melksham to Cricklade and Abingdon, connecting Chippenham, Calne, Wootton Bassett and Swindon. Visit www.melkshamwaterway.org.uk.