The aim of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust
To protect, conserve and improve the route of the Wilts & Berks and North Wilts Canals, and branches, for the benefit of the community and environment, with the ultimate goal of restoring a continuous navigable waterway linking the Kennet & Avon canal near Melksham, the River Thames near Abingdon, and the Thames & Severn canal near Cricklade.

The objectives of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust
Convince local authorities, government departments and local organisations of the benefits and feasibility of the proposed restoration.
Convince landowners, local commerce and the general public of the merits of the restoration.
Secure the route of the waterway and adequate water supplies.
Establish the Trust as a key member of a partnership with local authorities and other bodies that will facilitate restoration of the canal.
Implement an agreed programme for full restoration of the canal.

Membership of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust is open to all.
The annual membership rate is £10, with discounts available for families and under 18s. Company and Society membership is also available.

The views and opinions expressed in this magazine do not necessarily represent those of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust. The Editors reserve the right to shorten, change or not to publish any material received.

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DATA PROTECTION ACT
The Trust membership details are recorded in compliance with provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998

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Vice President and Founder Neil Rumbol
Vice President Dr David Fletcher CBE
Vice President Roger Crapper
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Dragonfly 140 Cover Image: Volunteering!
WRG (BitM) Forestry (Branch) with MCC & Foxham & Lyneham clearing the bed of the canal at the A4 near Chippenham (report p20).
Photo courtesy of Peter Henden
At the AGM in September 2015, Rod Bluh and I introduced the ideas behind a new Executive Organisation, and gave a timeline of when I expected to be able to implement it.

Then at the EGM, held at the beginning of March this year, I was delighted to announce that we now have a robust and fit for purpose organisation in place, and that we have five Executive Directors recruited from the membership, who are heading up a much more delivery–focused organisation for the Trust.

I would like to thank all those who put themselves forward for consideration, and let everybody know that there are still key roles open to all who want to contribute.

You will see a mixture of old and new faces on the Executive Board. I am positive that we are all, without exception, able to move the Trust forward in the way that we all have worked hard to achieve.

The next few months will be exciting as Andrew, Chris, Derek, Kath and Sheila settle into their roles, appoint their key staff and start to make the difference.

It is now time to focus on the business of the Trust: progressing all our projects including the major ones: Melksham Link, the Pewsham Locks, the Peterborough Arms, Studley Grange, Wichelstowe Link, and an extension to Jubilee Junction at Abingdon.

As for the future, the Board of Trustees has given to the Executive the task of preparing for Trustee approval a strategic plan looking forward one, three to five and 10 years, which will describe a clear and achievable route map for completing the majority of the canal in the foreseeable future, with priority given to producing long navigable stretches in water.

In addition we will re-focus on the Towpath Challenge and development of usable towpath lengths enabling the Trust to promote our canal as a destination for the region.

So our new Executive organisation will be working hard together to move the Trust forward both this year and in the years to come.

Spring is on the way, and we will reflect this with new vigour and growth in the Trust.

WBCT has moved its main office from Spittleborough Farmhouse to the Peterborough Arms with effect from 21st March 2016.

The new contact details are:
Wilts and Berks Canal Trust
Dauntsey Lock Canal Centre
Dauntsey Lock, CHIPPENHAM, SN15 4HD
Tel:0845 226 8567

There have been many people involved in planning and doing the physical work to achieve this office move, both at the Peterborough Arms end and at Spittleborough Farmhouse. The Trustees and Executive would like to record their thanks to all those who have worked so hard to make the move as straightforward a process as it has proved to be.

Particular thanks must go to Justine and Ann who have worked in their usual efficient and helpful manner throughout the move process, and who came in over the weekend to arrange the office so that little time was lost this week.

On the Sunday of the move, Justine, Ann and George managed, even in the middle of moving boxes in to the Canal Centre, to welcome two passers-by, show them around the Peterborough Arms, and then enroll them as new members. How impressive is that!

The new offices will be open for business at the Canal Centre as usual in the mornings, Monday to Friday.

You can be assured of a warm welcome. Please come and visit.
The weather gets a few mentions later so, let's go with what you, our readers, want to see in future editions. Given we are all volunteers with the ultimate aim of getting us a canal for the communities we meander through, how can we help?

The last page has lost the map everyone used to complain about and we have found an online resource which we hope people will find great use for until we can produce our own printed guides.

Photographs from the entire length with people busy restoring their bits of canal or raising money for the restoration would be greatly appreciated. Stories about projects, hobbies, outstanding people, would all make for an interesting read unless you, the readers, tell us differently!

We are heading from strength to strength in our canal building: you will find updates throughout our magazine. Our best wishes to all our members and remember, if we each recruit one new member we can be twice the size we already are. Now there's a thought!

John Millican and Margaret Lord
editor@wbct.org.uk

Volunteering? Please record your hours!

It is vital the Trust captures all your hard work so we can demonstrate to a wider audience just how much is going on. Volunteer hours urgently required to complete the end of financial year statistics for funding applications. Looking forward to hearing from you. Send your hours to juanita.poulton@wbct.org.uk who will be happy to hear from you and will send you a form for completion if you don't have one. Thank you, Juanita Poulton

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Dragonfly Available as a PDF via email. Please contact membership@wbct.org.uk
Chairman’s Report
Roderick Bluh

Hope Springs Eternal
Spring is here once again and with the light evenings returning. For me it is the best time of year full of promise and new life.

Over the winter we have been working hard to put the new Trust governance structure in place and I am pleased to report the new Executive Team is already hard at work and the new Board of Trustees will take shape over the next few months.

With re-organisation done, we can focus all our attention on the big task ahead of delivering miles of new canal and work is under way to get the community room open in the Peterborough Arms by early summer (phase one) with phases two and three being planned. Lots more planning work on other projects, in Melksham, Pewsham, Studley Grange and elsewhere, is building momentum.

We all look forward, with hope, that the summer will bring good weather to ensure that 2016 is a year of solid progress.

As I approach my first anniversary with the Trust I say, with sincerity, that it has been a great time that has inspired me with the potential of what can be achieved.

Roderick Bluh

Merchandise
Diana Hunter

As many of you will know, last year I took over the Trust’s merchandise stocks. The items stocked, which are listed below, are available to all branches to sell either at their meetings or at their special events and exhibitions. To obtain a stock of items please e-mail me at diana.hunter@wbct.org.uk or phone 01380 871354 with your requirements and I will arrange delivery as appropriate. If you have any ideas for new merchandise please let me know and I will try to arrange to obtain stocks if I can.

Items currently held:
T shirts at sale price of £3,
Polo shirts with embroidered logo £14,
Sweat shirts with embroidered logo £17.50,
Fleece Jackets with full length zip and embroidered logo £22,
Hoodies with full length zip (a few with no zip) and embroidered logo £25,
All in sizes XS, S, M, L & XL. Other sizes on request.
Books by Doug Small:
The Wilts & Berks Canal, £12.99,
The Wilts & Berks Canal Re-visited, £12.99
The Wilts & Berks Canal Through Time, £14.99,
A Waterway to Wantage, £11.99
Other:
Sets of Pencils,
Colouring books,
Selection of Muddy Waters books,
Notelets in packs of 5 (3 designs), £2.50
The prices quoted are recommended selling prices
Fundraising for the Wilts & Berks
Kath Hatton

A great start to 2016! Chippenham Area Board has awarded us a grant of £19,873 towards the restoration of Top Lock at Pewsham. We already have been successful with other matched funding for this project – details next time. This will be a volunteer-led restoration that will start in the Spring. It will be the first of the structures on this site to be rebuilt and I hope will be a catalyst for the others. Planning permissions are all in place and a small team is preparing a bid to Heritage Lottery Fund for the other two locks, the dry dock, saw pit and carpenter’s workshop that will be an outdoor classroom. The first stage application should be submitted in June. We will be fundraising separately for the cottage which will be a visitor centre and café – a great place to come and visit only a short walk from Chippenham.

Work is progressing at the Peterborough Arms on improving the electrics and fire protection and we are hoping to open the community space this summer so that local groups can meet there. A generous donation of £1,000 has been received from Lyneham/Bradenstoke Parish Council to help with refurbishments and Malmesbury Area Board has granted £990 towards repairs to the flooring and materials for a disabled access ramp. £20,000 has been raised to complete other ongoing works. We plan to hold some events at the Peterborough this summer and hope as many people as possible will be able to come along and see what is happening.

At Studley Grange work on site is still stopped for the winter but should re-commence April/May. Donations are still coming in slowly and the appeal total is approaching £20,000 now with a target of £25,000. Kate Jones has been working with students from Swindon College who have done lovely illustrations for the interpretation boards that depict all the wildlife you might see there. These Boards will go up when the towpath is surfaced – hopefully by June. That will also be the trigger for all the new planting at the site.

Congratulations to Lynda and Jeff Daws who organise the 200 Club for the Trust. This year there has been a good increase in membership and it is now, technically, the 300+ Club. That means extra money for prizes and extra money for tools/materials for the branches.

Finally, we will soon be launching an appeal for funds to go towards the purchase of part of the canal track between Melksham and Lacock. The current path between Melksham and the Bell Inn is poor and cyclists have to go via Forest Lane which is not ideal as it is twisty and narrow. We want to start to secure this section of canal track so that we can put in a multi-use path for all. We have an opportunity coming up soon to purchase 850 metres which is nearly a quarter of the whole. If you can help it would be great. Every pound counts!

Many thanks for all your support and generosity.

---

Swindon Branch - Notice of AGM

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 7th June 2016 at the StoweAway Community Centre in East Wichel starting at 7.45pm

Agenda
1 To receive apologies for absence
2 To approve Minutes of the last AGM on 16th May 2015
3 To approve the Chairman’s Annual Report for 2015-2016
4 To approve the Treasurer’s Report
5 To elect Principal Officers and Branch Executive Members
6 Any Other Business

Further information about the programme will be published on the web site and directly to branch members on our email list.
The Wonder of Nature: an epic tale of survival
Larry Finnegan

Life is tough and one never knows what will truly happen until it does. As is often said, "the best laid plans of mice and men" etc., etc. will come into play just when one least expects it.

What has that to do with survival? Well, this little tale was related to me by the person who actually saw it with his own eyes: truly a tale of survival against the odds.

It all began when a group of like-minded people got together to help raise funds for the Wilts & Berks Canal restoration kitty by chopping up the logs harvested from a local farmer's hedgerow who had generously donated them for that very purpose. One of the group, George Schmidt, was beavering away on a circular saw cutting cordwood into manageable lengths whilst another, Chris Poore (the originator of this tale) was hewing the lengths into stove-sized logs with a heavy log-splitting axe. I was off to the side, sawing smaller stuff into bite-sized pieces suitable for those with twee wood stoves.

What happened next was astonishing. Having put the cordwood through the circular saw, George tossed the log into the waiting wheelbarrow where it was duly picked up and placed upon the tree stump ready for chopping. With a mighty swing, Chris split the log in two and out popped a mouse!

Calling over to me, Chris asked if I'd seen what had just happened and at that very instant the mouse gathered its wits and scurried off across the mud, puddles and sawdust to an adjacent wood pile and to relative safety, apparently unharmed.

Now, at any time the mouse could have picked an opportune moment to make itself scarce but it was determined to hang onto its home until it became untenable and by the slimmest of odds managed to survive to tell the tale – isn't nature wonderful!

Membership Matters
Membership Secretary’s Report

We welcome the following new members

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<th>No</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>Ms C Morgan</td>
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<td>Mr and Mrs S Winter</td>
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<td>Mr D R Goodfellow</td>
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<td>Mr N Hughes</td>
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<td>Mr C Pook</td>
<td>South Cerney</td>
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<td>4260</td>
<td>Mr and Mrs S Harcourt</td>
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Dear Editors

Keeping our ducks healthy. Reports in many national papers recently after Canal & River Trust released some statistics. My experience, I see it constantly when I walk by the canal, people giving out bread and seeing it floating about. Of course, you try to tell them but like most things around here, one looks like an alien speaking a different language... to them.

Here it goes. Bread? You must be quakers.

Ducks are so sophisticated these days. Once, they'd be happy with a few crappy slices of sunblest
Dear Editors,

I have much enjoyed reading your issue 138.

1) Your photographs on the inside back page suggest a use of a raft like my Tandem Yuloh for such work (details by Googling the words in italics).

2) Some years ago I did get myself afloat on a similar raft on the short navigable length of the Calne arm. Alas I visit Wiltshire only rarely these days. Nonetheless, I am planning to come down to Calne again for a short visit this summer.

Best meanwhile to anyone who may recognize my name

Mike Bedwell

Dear Editors, January 2016

I was interested to read Judy Gosnell’s report of a grey heron at Wootton Bassett. We have had a resident grey heron at Dauntsey for some 15 years, and from time to time he is joined by a partner, but we don’t know where he is nesting. This month we have had no less than four herons, just in the half mile of canal west of the B4069. Our two resident swans, although young, raised five cygnets to adulthood last year, and the mallards and moorhens also have several families every year. We have also occasionally seen a cormorant.

I am a mastercraftsman hedgelayer, and laying the hedge on a regular basis (I retired last year at the age of 80) has made such a difference to the flora and fauna. In the spring, the towpath is smothered with primroses, cowslips, oxlips, violets, coltsfoot, bugles and ground ivy. This section is very busy from a wildlife point of view. I have laid about three miles of hedge in the Foxham/Lyneham section over the last 20 years, and the hedge contains at least 10 species. There are 12 different styles of hedgelaying in England and Wales; for this area the Midlands style using stakes and hethering is the appropriate one. A few years ago, Wiltshire Council paid grants for hedgelaying, provided it is done to a high standard – what a pity the money no longer seems to be available!

Di Smurthwaite

Dear Editor,

Whilst a more detailed map is sourced for inclusion in ‘Dragonfly’, Members might like to know (if they don’t already) that the proprietor of Waterway Routes has kindly made available for download maps (in a number of formats) for the use of restoration projects, including one covering ours. Well worth exploring his web pages. I have one open on my device whenever I read any restoration society magazine.

Free Restoration Project Maps:
www.waterwayroutes.co.uk/wb and www.waterwayroutes.co.uk/free which links to free maps of all current restoration projects

Brian Farrant, NB Ansty Rose

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Di Smurthwaite

Email:- editor@wbct.org.uk
Write to:- Dragonfly Editor, Wilts & Berks Canal Trust, Dauntsey Lock Canal Centre, Dauntsey Lock, Chippenham, SN15 4HD.

The Trust encourages debate and contributions from members on any matter relating to the Trust, and believes the letters page provides a forum for this. However the Editors reserve the right to shorten, change or not to publish any letters received.
What view and what cab I hear you cry! Well, the view is not only what is visually apparent but also my opinion (which, like belly buttons is something we all have) and what about the cab? This cab is not perhaps what you are thinking; that of a lorry, bus or taxi but is actually an excavator cab which, I opine is at least different!

An excavator or digger if you prefer, might not be everyone’s choice but who hasn’t passed a worksite and gazed in awe at the skill and dexterity with which the machines are manoeuvred often sat atop a huge heap of topsoil or lumbering to and fro with gubbins hanging from their booms. Well, I for one have and that is one of the reasons why I chose to learn to operate one. I should, I suppose, for those of you who do not already know me, say that I am a volunteer worker with the Foxham and Lyneham Branch of the Wilts and Berks Canal Trust and have been one of the persons who go out in all weathers on a Sunday and wield a shovel or slasher for hours on end, dragging the derelict canal back to life before arriving home tired and hungry and ready to fall asleep before the Countryfile weather forecast can finish.

Back to the excavator bit then. Rachael Banyard has one and has been our mainstay for years and has trained and had trained many volunteers both men and women in the skills of either dumper or digger operation and it was to her that I turned when the opportunity arose. That was some two years ago and having qualified and receiving my operator’s ticket I was eager to ‘get out there’ and prove my worth and not have to be the one out in the drizzle with a clay-logged shovel. The trouble is, excavators no matter what size they may be cannot just appear on-site at a moment’s notice – no, no – they have to be transported at eye-watering cost which let’s face it is prohibitive to a Voluntary Group working on a shoestring. But I digress, dear reader. We needed a digger and Rachael’s was not available so Gordon Williams decided to buy a small one and trust me to use it and not bend it too much as he was the one paying the insurance premiums!

The first time a novice, nay fledgling, operator sits in the cab, particularly if it’s been a while twixt passing one’s test and the first job, can be quite daunting but one struggles on manfully until someone says ‘we need to change the bucket’ (to a larger or smaller one) and at that point your credibility comes sharply into focus. Why so you may well ask? Well, diggers have two joysticks which are multi-functional and to couple and uncouple the bucket requires deft movements and all while a couple of macho blokes (who are of course self proclaimed experts) are watching you make a complete banana of yourself twitching the boom and stick all over the place trying to align all the various bits to make it connect properly. Now, if that ain’t bad enough, just wait to the fateful moment the decision is made to send the digger from the nice flat towing path down onto the canal bed to do a task. Having lined-up the excavator at right angles to the slope which from the cab looks like the North face of the Eiger, you have to extend the boom and stick to its full extent down into the slope to act as a buffer to stop the machine tipping over. That, dear reader, is what is lovingly called ‘a brown trouser moment’ and it occurs when the machine is tracked forward and passes the tipping point proving or disproving in a trice whether or not you have positioned the boom and stick properly – believe me, every time the manoeuvre is carried-out it is a stomach-churning moment and you still have to get the blessed thing out of the canal and if anything, that’s even worse!

Is it all worth it I hear you say, well I have to say that it most certainly is. Just like learning to drive a car for the first time with all those pedals, gear stick and wheel movements to learn you wonder when it is all going to become second nature and be carried out without conscious thought, but of course it does and it's at that moment when you see the cold, wet spade-wielding volunteers working around you covered in mud and up to their shins in cold canal water and decide it's time to turn the heater up another notch!
Our new Executive Team are introduced to the EGM (see pages 14/15 for more details) photo courtesy of Jenny Stratton

Dredging continues apace at the wet section near Pewsham to join the bits that are actually in water between Bottom Lock and Double Bridge (report p20)
The Trust’s Retail Outlet in Swindon

Our shop is currently open from 10am to 3pm on Mondays, Fridays and Saturdays. It could be open more often if only we could find sufficient volunteers to man it.

Please contact Darrell Donaldson on 07704 938 272 if you can help out.

Just contact the office on 0845 2268567 or by email info@wbct.org.uk or speak to Kath on 01380 831231 or kath.hatton@wbct.org.uk and we will help you to set up a Standing Order.

Land Fund

The activity in acquiring the track of the Wilts & Berks Canal is continuing to grow and so the need for funds is increasing. It is vital that we secure the track, as we cannot make serious progress at any point until we have control of the land.

The Land Fund is still open for donations and if you would like to contribute, please send a cheque to Wilts & Berks Canal Trust, Dauntsey Lock Canal Centre, Dauntsey Lock, Chippenham, SN15 4HD. If you were able to donate a few pounds on a regular basis, that would be even better.
We were pleased to host The Inland Waterways Association (IWA) Restoration Committee March meeting where a number of the Wilts & Berks projects were discussed.

In April we will be attending the annual Canal & River Trust/IWA Restoration Workshop in Birmingham with a chance to share experiences with other restoration groups and exchange ideas and offer support.

Melksham Link
Finally, to note my personal thanks to Paul Lenaerts and the project team who have completed the work on the Environment Statement and other revised drawings for the Melksham Link. These have been submitted to Wiltshire Council which means the planning application process can restart with hopefully a decision by the summer.

Wilts & Berks Blog - You can keep in touch with many of the fast moving events and projects in our weekly blog which you will find at: http://wiltsberkscanal.blogspot.co.uk

Tel:01249 706494
Email: ken.oliver@wiltshire.gov.uk
Partnership Website: http://www.wiltsandberkscanal.org.uk

We are delighted to be working with the new WBCT Executive – the enthusiasm, experience, and skills of the team will without doubt accelerate the pace of the project.

Working more with Partners
Having the new Executive in place now allows me more time to interact with other members of the Partnership with the aim of encouraging more support for the Wilts & Berks. One of the areas where work has already started is a dialogue with the Environment Agency and Local Authorities to show how the restored canal could contribute to land drainage and flood prevention. Richard Sewerniak from the WBCT engineering team has now submitted two reports suggesting use of the canal for flood relief at Abingdon and Swindon New Eastern Villages. A number of other possibilities are being considered including construction of dual purpose water bodies intercepting the many streams that flow from the Marlborough Downs. The purpose of these new structures would be to attenuate water flows in exceptional conditions and to provide miniature ‘reservoirs’ to supply the canal in dry conditions: this kind of forward thinking approach is very much in line with current national policy on flood protection.
Sheila J. Wade MA Oxon
PR & Communications, IT Director

After graduating in the late 70’s from St Hugh’s College Oxford, I went into industry initially in the manufacturing sector and then in the information sector, where I held a variety of roles in multinational corporations in HR and Communication.

I started my own service company in the 90’s which is still working today in the environment management sector. I have been MD and FD for Greenscape Services Ltd, and am now on the last stage of my exit strategy, as a nonexecutive director.

I have also lectured, trained and facilitated in Management and Communication, mainly working with young people.

I have, for the last 20 years, been committed to voluntary work, both in my community and nationally, and I continue to work at Trustee and Director level for a number of Charities and voluntary organisations.

In 2013 Andrew Chapman, the then Chair of Foxham & Lyneham Branch, recruited Greenscape as a corporate member of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust in order to have our professional, environment management skills available to the Branch and the Trust on a pro bono basis. In 2015, I became the Foxham & Lyneham Branch Secretary and will continue to work with Ian Gilbert Foxham & Lyneham Branch Chair, and other Branch Officers, to ensure the branch remains an effective part of the Trust.

I am delighted to join the Executive at this exciting time in the Trust’s development, and I look forward to working with the other Directors in order to support and achieve the aims of the Trust.

Andrew Matters
Projects Director

After an apprenticeship with Rolls Royce I spent 28 years in the Royal Navy, serving in the Cold War and the Falklands, the Persian Gulf and the Adriatic conflicts. Highlights included the role as Squadron Marine Engineer Officer for six Destroyers; leader of a team to introduce the novel concept of Reliability Centred Maintenance (RCM) and finally in a role charged with ensuring that new maritime procurement projects are supportable.

I joined BAE Systems in 2002 on the Type 45 Destroyer Support team to define the services and processes needed for the waterfront maintenance and servicing of these six ships. I moved to the Queen Elizabeth class Aircraft Carrier Support team in 2009 and now hold the authority to ensure that all the maintenance instructions, technical manuals, training packages, spare parts and stores for this £6 billion project are fit for purpose and safe to use.

I am a Chartered Engineer and Fellow of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers where I am chair of their Ethics Working Group, in which role I have just rewritten the Code of Conduct.

For the last 18 months I have served on the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust Engineering Committee and as a member of MCC branch. I have led groups of up to 350 people while knowing exactly what their jobs involve. My project management experience comes from the RCM team experience and my employment within BAE Systems, during which I undertook formal training.

In my role on the Executive I look forward to directing major restoration projects in liaison with Branch Chair and Individual Project Managers, while making best use of support from the Engineering and Land Teams.

Wilts & Berks Canal Trust Executive

Derek Flexer C.Eng. MIET
Volunteers, Property, Commercial Operations Director

I have had a varied career starting as an Engineering Cadet in the Merchant Navy, I then moved on and had jobs ranging from Software Engineering, through Project and Programme Management, and Product Management through to Compliance Management.

I am currently a Programme Manager with TFMForum, a telecom industry body.

I have lived in Chippenham since 1994, with my family and have been on many family canal boat holidays round most of the popular cruising rings of the Midlands and further North.

I have been an active volunteer in the Chippenham area since 2000 and have been with the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust since March 2011.

I was elected Chair of the MCC Branch in June 2012 where I remained for three years. Since then I have been Maintenance Director and Health & Safety Officer.

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I am delighted to join the Executive at this exciting time in the Trust’s development, and I look forward to working with the other Directors in order to support and achieve the aims of the Trust.

Andrew Chapman, the then Chair of Foxham & Lyneham Branch, recruited Greenscape as a corporate member of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust in order to have our professional, environment management skills available to the Branch and the Trust on a pro bono basis. In 2015, I became the Foxham & Lyneham Branch Secretary and will continue to work with Ian Gilbert Foxham & Lyneham Branch Chair, and other Branch Officers, to ensure the branch remains an effective part of the Trust.
Kath Hatton
Fundraising, Sponsorship Director

When I first became aware of the Wilts & Berks Canal restoration in 1993, it was instantly appealing as I wanted to join something that was at an early stage where I could make a difference. As a new member I went to the AGM that year, but nobody spoke to me. So I was a little disheartened and just became an armchair member for a few years. In 2000 I retired from the Civil Service and moved to France for 8 years and was even more out of reach, but keeping up with progress by reading Dragonfly.

I have been a boater for many years, first hiring, then having a share in a narrowboat for 14 years.

We moved the boat regularly and so I have seen many different canals. When I finally moved into Wiltshire in 2008, I was at last close enough to attend local MCC meetings where Colin Fletcher encouraged me to try fundraising.

I really enjoyed it and we managed to raise enough to dredge a good length of canal at Pewsham and restore the horsesey spill weir.

I became Fundraising Director for the Trust in 2010.

The last few years of running without a Chairman meant that as Vice-Chairman I had many extra duties and responsibilities, and fundraising activity suffered as a consequence. The Trust is moving into a new exciting phase now and I am really looking forward to my new post on the Executive. I have many ideas and hope at last I will be able to “make that difference”!

Jonathan Till MA Cantab
Chief Executive Officer

After graduating in the early 80’s from Corpus Christi College Cambridge, I joined the banking industry learning the ropes at Barclays Bank International PLC.

My career later took me to Ernst & Young as a consultant in Financial Services doing organisational and financial modelling work mainly for the banking industry. But it was not long before I was once again employed by the industry, firstly at National Westminster Bank PLC and then – thanks to Ernst & Young – at Budapest Bank Zrt in Hungary with the job of supporting the organisation prepare for privatisation – as it turned out by GE Capital.

After 10 years here I moved on to the Austrian Erste Bank’s Hungarian subsidiary where I spent a further 10 years at a bank – eventually being appointed to the Board of Directors.

For the last 5 years I have worked outside the banking industry in both the UK and in Hungary, and I have at last had the chance to pick and choose what challenges I take on. One such challenge has been to modernise the organisation of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust. If we get it right (which we will), then the target of making substantial progress on getting the canal restored over the next 10 to 15 years will be a reality.

I’m very proud to be working with my fellow Directors on the Executive – with Andrew, Chris, Derek, Kath and Sheila – and excited about moving on to deal with the challenges ahead of us.

Chris Coyle
Finance, Legal, Administration Director

Although I lived in Hertfordshire at the time, a business visit in 1987 to Wantage led me to spot by chance the profile of a dry canal in the car park of the factory I was visiting. This led me to join the Wilts & Berks Canal Amenity Group (as it was then). Over the next few years I worked on the canal, on the WRG Big Dig, and at other sites, mainly at Foxham and Royal Wootton Bassett.

A Chartered Accountant by training, I have been Finance Director of a number of companies. My work gave me little time for the canal, but it did give me a lot of experience in company administration, and in helping businesses of all sizes and types with a large range of problems to solve.

In 2001 I moved to Bath. In 2008 I decided to retire (mostly) and to take a more active role in the canal restoration. I was very pleased to be asked to take on the role of Company Secretary following the AGM in 2008.

Since that time I have been looking after the legal aspects of the Trust, such as arranging insurance cover and making the legally required returns of the company, and also have made a wider contribution, at one time editing Dragonfly and taking a part in developing the wider strategy and its implementation. Recently I have been helping with the proposals for the reorganisation of the Trust.

Joining the Executive as Director of Finance and Administration I look forward to strengthening the Trust’s financial position and building the strength of the administration, in addition to retaining the separate role of Company Secretary.

With the continuing support of our members and with the new organisation coming into place I have no doubt that the pace of our progress will quicken!
Stroll along the Wilts & Berks canal towpath at Royal Wootton Bassett between Templars Firs and Chaddington Lane and you will see trees. Some are large and old, others smaller and easier to look at and some are young. The three kilometres of the towpath host quite a variety of trees mainly those whose preference is for a heavy clay soil and close to a wet location. We are fortunate to have these trees and a hedge by the towpath to offer weather protection for canal users and to enhance the area.

Trees add texture to the landscape whether it is urban or rural, give shelter to wildlife and add to our wellbeing. They host birds, insects, beetles, plants, mosses and lichens and butterflies. In fact older established trees have communities living in them and some have ivy growing on the trunks and branches. Many trees in the countryside will have been planted over generations but some will have naturally propagated. Alongside the canal here at Wootton Bassett we seem to have a mixture of both.

Throughout the year the trees will be home to several species of birds; many will make their nests around the branches. Insects and beetles like the bark; unfortunately some beetles will do damage such as Dutch elm disease. Back in the 1970s this area was home to many hedgerow elm trees. Birds will feed on berries and fruits that the trees produce, such as hawthorn and blackthorn berries (known as sloes for making sloe gin) and blackberries. It is always a delight to meet up with photographers along the towpath waiting patiently to capture a picture. Often it is the kingfisher that will be the subject but the heron may be on duty along with wrens, tits, fieldfares, willow warblers, chiffchaffs and sedge warblers. The summer migrants will live in the smaller trees such as hawthorn which line the canal and bob in and around the reeds and bulrushes. Some years ago the heron nested at the top of one of the large oaks and produced a family.

Near Templars Firs the land between the canal and the railway has some mighty oaks and ashes. Listen out for greater spotted woodpeckers as they like the old trees. Every autumn the ashes which are one of our most common trees, are covered in bunches of single brown keys and they will stay throughout the winter. A large healthy ash tree must produce millions of keys and they germinate quite well. The leaf buds are matt black with the flowers out before the budburst. The oaks are a delight to look at in winter with their gnarled and twisted branches and in autumn one of the trees to keep their leaves until the last autumn gale of the year. The small bunches of flowers that come out in spring are like catkins. In a good year an oak will produce many fruit, which is the familiar acorn. There is an oak close to the Templars Firs bridge
which usually drops many acorns. We have collected some for growing in plant pots; great fun.

Another large tree which is widespread and frequently found near water, both rivers and canals, is the crack willow. An untidy tree, it morphs into all sorts of shapes with branches all over the place and liable to crack; the sound of branches and twigs is a cracking sound. On the north path are some old willows that have been pollarded. Near Lower Woodshaw are four willows close together by the towpath. They seem elderly but willows are not usually a long-lived species. They often host other things such as grasses and many beetles and insects in the soft highly fissured bark.

Trees that probably have been planted and found in the hedgerows by the towpath are the field maple, hawthorn and wild apple. The hedge is mainly hawthorn with a little blackthorn. The hawthorn is familiar in autumn for producing bunches of red berries which blackbirds, thrushes and fieldfare just enjoy in winter. There is a very old hawthorn tree close to the bridge (near site of Buxton Bridge, SU 081817) over the stream that empties into the canal. The field maples turn a lovely shade of yellow in autumn with winged pairs of seeds that parachute down on a calm day. The seeds are straight not curved as is the sycamore. There are several wild apple trees which every year produce masses of small hard and yellow apples. When winter is cold the birds and insects are glad to eat these fruit.

At the west end of the Chaddington rewatered section (at SU 090817), 150 metres from the restored lock, are three oak trees standing by the ditch which flows from the north. They add shelter to this windy area and look old, with large girths.

I must mention a tree (at SU 076816) which is a favourite, several are growing on the north side. This is the alder with its purple catkins in winter and small cones. Watch the catkins blowing in a breeze and you have a purple haze. Alders like to live in or close to water and are very good in reducing bank side erosion. The roots bind together to prevent erosion and they like living in water.

Underneath trees you will often find nettles and brambles and plants such as cow parsley and herb Robert: this is where you may see butterflies. Species seen regularly are usually the yellow brimstone, small tortoiseshell, skippers, whites, and speckled woods. Meadow browns and gatekeepers are in the neighbouring fields with the gatekeepers hanging around the hedges.

Where we have trees close by the canal they will add value to our lives.
Map for Trees by the Canal

Waiting for the crowds at Chippenham Museum during February half-term activity days for local children.
Report reference page 20

Good News For Members

15% Discount from Cotswold Outdoors. Just take this magazine into any of their stores or online quoting AF-WBCT-M8 and your membership number. Note this only applies to full priced items.
Keith Price
Race Night

Have you ever attended a Race Meeting?
No? Then now’s your chance for a great evening out.
No prior experience necessary – in fact, it’s a positive advantage!
On Saturday 21st May MCC will be hosting a Race Night

This free entry event will be on Saturday 21 May 2016 at The Conservative Club, 17 Bank Street, Melksham SN12 6LE. The event starts at 7.00pm with the first race at 7:30pm.

There will be eight races each with eight runners: these are all actual racecourse races recorded on DVD. Tote tickets can be bought in advance at 50p, there is no limit on the number of tickets you can buy, and when all bets are taken, the film is shown. Payouts will be made immediately after the race, and will depend on the total stakes.

During the evening you will also be given the chance to become an owner of a horse, this will all be explained on the night by the team from Chippenham Lions Club who have huge experience in running such events.

It can be a good idea to organise yourselves into syndicates to share the fun, joy and/or pain! Either way, these events are a great way of enjoying the racecourse experience in a comfortable and sociable environment.

In addition, there will be an opportunity to buy horses in advance: this means that you can take part even if you can’t be there on the night. Horses are listed on a pre-event programme, all “for sale” at £2. The winning “owner” of each race will win a bottle of wine (or equivalent) Please either see a member of WBCT, or ring Malcolm on 01373 859207.

Hope to see you at the Melksham Races!
For more details, posters or pre-event programmes, contact Malcolm Hitchinson on malcolm@hitchinson.eu

Around The Branches

A look at what’s happening along the line.

MELKSHAM, CALNE AND CHIPPENHAM

Chairman:
Dave Maloney. 18 Bolts Croft, Chippenham, SN15 3GQ. Tel 07809 374 754

Secretary:
Sandy Wright Tel 01249 658 812

As always we have been very busy at the western end of the line, we wouldn’t want it any other way!
One of our active volunteers is not well at the moment; we wish Robin well and hope his continued treatment is successful and he is back to being our webmaster soon.
We received some encouraging, but not exact, information on funding for Pewsham Top Lock in so much that we have heard we will be receiving some funds from the Canal and River Trust (CRT) towards this project. Full details are not yet available but hopefully by next Dragonfly we will know more.
Work is just finishing on the line north of the A4 for the bird nesting season. We have had a good
couple of months where we are continuing with our three-year clearance in accordance with our environmental plan. This work was enhanced during February when the Waterway Recovery Group team *Bit in The Middle* arrived to help out for a weekend. We also welcomed members from Foxham and Lyneham branch: as our immediate neighbours they were most welcome. Over 20 volunteers on a site is great to see and although the weather was wet and a bit miserable no one seemed down hearted and a great deal of work was done, so Thank You to both teams and to the MCC volunteers who have turned out two weekends in a row.

Volunteers enjoyed a number of days over the recent half term at Chippenham Museum entertaining youngsters and their mums with canal related activities, painting, dragonfly making etc. Over 130 people turned up and by the feedback they had a great time: so well done to Val and her team.

We have been carrying on with dredging and tow path raising in a small but important section of the line north of Double Bridge. We are hoping to clear as many bunds as possible to allow Boswell, our work boat, to reach a section we call the ravine.

Work on Boswell has been held up for the winter as most of this work is preparing and painting. Richard M our boat officer has done some work on locating rain water leaks and Rob Jones has done sterling work on the electrics to ensure Boswell starts. She has had a mini cruise and all seems well.

We had the opportunity during February to work in a warm dry environment so took it!

A number of the mid-week work party team, including Alan and Mary O’Durny who travel up from the Salisbury area, were refurbishing a couple of donated trailers. We had a tool trailer donated by WRG – Thank You. Slightly more interesting was the auxiliary fire pump and trailer which Mike Brotherwood donated to us. It’s got a Godiva engine and Mike even fitted an electric start for us. This particular unit is nearly finished and is resplendent in Fire Engine red, the pump is powerful too.

As always we are keen to have volunteers join us and we do need new members on our Events team in particular. Nothing too strenuous and your involvement will make a difference to joining our stretch of canal to the Kennet and Avon. Go on, give me a call – you know you want to.

Dave Maloney

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**FOXHAM & LYNEHAM**

**Chairman:**
Ian Gilbert, 15 The Banks, Lyneham, SN15 4NS

**Secretary:**
Sheila Wade, Scots Smith Farmyard, Dauntsey, Chippenham, SN15 4JA

Tel. 01249 891159

Tel. 07976 281586

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At the Elephant (ST980787), logging is complete with 10 tons of split logs put up for sale to help with restoration costs, and the two diggers have been declared fit for work.

However, it’s mainly been raining for the past few months, so the work to re-profile the canal and repair the spill-weir has been slowed until some of the collected water can be dispersed! The electricity poles along the line of the canal there have been checked by the supplier’s contractor to replace damaged poles and re-route them to the legal minimum distance from the canal. One pole was found to be leaning at a fairly precarious angle which may provide an incentive for work to go ahead soon!

The working party has started to remove rogue trees from the canal bed and pounds at Seven Locks in preparation for developments there (SU020807). And plans are being put in place to tidy up Dauntsey Lock (ST996802).

The F&L working party has also helped MCC at Pewsham when BITM folk came to help with tree removal and tidying. I’ve never seen so many canal restorers in the same place before. I’m sure that in due course, we’ll ask for the favour to be returned on our patch!

There’s been a great deal of hard work and fund raising over the past 12 months at the Peterborough Arms. It’s meant that the Trust is now in a position to achieve its first objective of restoring the community space (lost with the closure of the pub) to the community of Dauntsey and beyond. A big “Well done” to our three branch members on the steering group (Ray, George and Rose) for their hard work to get to this point. Well done too, to all the volunteers who have helped achieve the massive changes made so far. To fully restore the
We grumbled in July when there were temperatures around 32°C on our work party and we grumbled one morning in January when it was -7°C at the start of the day. There’s just no satisfying some people! Still, we soldier on. It’s good to see the days getting longer and just that hint of spring in the air and hopefully the worst of the bad weather behind us – so much rain, so much mud. Nevertheless, a productive few months with quite a lot done and a lot to show for it. We eventually received permission to work at Dunnington Aqueduct though the delays were with insurance issues on our side not the land agents. We have spent a number of work parties clearing the top and sides of the aqueduct of summer growth which seemed to have kept growing all winter. It already looks like there was a canal there and is looking more so each year. A few more visits will see it done for another year. The aqueduct needs some serious restoration work as its condition deteriorates further as time goes on. One of the biggest problems with working at the aqueduct is getting there. We have to walk across the fields from Dunnington Road and carry/wheel our tools etc. with us. This is all on private property which is why we have to obtain a licence from the land agents for access and to work. However, part of the route is popular with walkers (unofficially) and the path has been extremely muddy this year as it has been made much narrower because of the construction of a temporary road to facilitate nearby bridge work for Network Rail. We now have a two-man wheelbarrow, one pulling and one pushing.

We have also continued work to clear the offside of the canal at Templars Firs of scrub which has grown up over many years. We have left a lot of small trees and cleared the scrub. It looks a bit bald at the moment but will soon settle down, giving the remaining trees room to grow. We are gearing up to get ready for the growing season again and hope to get the work boat in the water soon. With the excessive water in the canal some of the leaks we had fixed have started up again so we have had a session fixing them. When we start the Templars Firs extension we will have a lot of clay available to rebuild part of the bank but until then we will have to fix the leaks as they crop up.

We had a maintenance day at Chaddington early in January and cleared out the overflow pipes at the end of the section below the lock. This is working well with the stream running into this section and then running out again through the overflow pipes, so preventing the water below the lock becoming stagnant. With all the water coming from Studley Grange the big spill weir in the section above the lock is earning its keep and is working well. We also have a small spill weir at the entrance to the lock which is at the same level as the main...
spill weir (almost). We don’t want the water to go over the lock spill weir as the canal doesn’t go anywhere far from there so we have made a temporary modification to this and raised the cill by several inches which means all the water is going over the big spill weir at the moment.

We are still getting used to the Studley Grange section looking like a canal and being full of water, sometimes too full. We had so much rain in early February the water was coming into the Studley Grange section faster that it could get out and the water level rose over the new towpath, backing up the main input stream causing potential problems for a local farmer. We managed this for a while by turning on and off the drawdown valve to reduce the water level more rapidly. This was OK for a while but not a long term practical solution to the problem. Eddie Thomas has been very involved with Studley Grange and the water management for a long time and was able to advise us of the best way to deal with it, which involved widening and lowering the exit channel to a predefined profile. After gaining permission from the contractor to do the job (it is still their site) we hired an eight-ton digger for a few days to do the job. We are lucky enough to have Richard Hawkins, a professional digger driver, as part of our work party to do the job. It was quite a challenge to operate the digger is such atrocious ground conditions and took half a day to build a ramp to get it on site. We also had to contend with water flowing down the ditch we wanted to widen even though we had been operating the valve to lower the level for a number of days. This was solved by damming the outflow for a while during the work. It was necessary to lay a special matting in the ditch to reduce the effect of the water scouring away the bottom of the ditch. So difficult for everyone to work in such mud, we all gradually turned from bright yellow to soggy brown but it was completed in three days and we did a couple of other jobs before returning the digger. We now have three times the capacity in the ditch and early indications are that it will go a long way to solving the problems.

We are lucky enough to have had enough volunteers to split the work party into two groups on a number of occasions which has meant we have been able to get more jobs done. We have had some additions to our numbers in recent months but there is always room for more. We are going to have a busy year ahead so why not come along and see what we are up to. By the way, did I mention the mud? Never mind, spring is on the way.

John Bower

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SWINDON

Chairman:
Rod Hacker, 11 Whittington Road, Swindon, SN5 7DF Tel: 07840 072817

Secretary:
John Farrow Tel: 01793 490672

As usual, in the last quarter there has not been much evidence of progress on the ground towards restoring more of a canal route through and around the Borough. Behind the scenes huge efforts are being made to establish the commitment to build the canal and create some real projects.

In the New Eastern Villages area where 8,000 homes are proposed we continue to explain the crucial benefits to drainage and flood protection which the canal can bring. A tour of the affected parish councils to explain the scheme will continue through the next quarter. There is also the hope that we may be able to restart the Wichelstowe Link project (from Waitrose to East Wichel) this year, at least in the design stage.

We are starting to plan which events in the Borough we will attend this year with the Trust’s small display tent. 2016 is being celebrated in the town as Swindon 175: that number of years since the railway works came to Swindon. We are hoping to tag on to some of these events and have put entries for the canal on the Timeline page of the www.swindon175.com site. Suggestions for events that we could attend are welcome as of course are volunteers on the day.

The work parties have been continuing with the usual winter tasks of tidying hedges and trees. Mouldon Hill has now been cleared of unwanted young trees in the waterway and on the structures.
and so is looking much tidier. Plus of course the usual and never-ending minor maintenance tasks in Westleaze and Wichelstowe. It is good to see two new volunteers join our small work party team. We need all the help we can get as our commitments continue to expand.

We still have to finish off the Waitrose landing stage by mounting the plaque recording the official opening on a stone cairn. If any member has experience of building small cairns please give me a call.

Our branch AGM will be held this year on our regular first Tuesday in the month date, specifically 7th June. We have chosen the same venue as two years ago in East Wichel. The formal notice is given at the bottom of page six. We expect to include some presentations on progress and a light-hearted quiz. We are offering Dragonfly trips before the meeting, particularly for members who have not yet taken one.

It is too early to see if our move to bimonthly meetings is successful. I still hope that we can find something of interest to a wider membership for a more social or informative event in the alternate months. Any suggestions?

Rod Hacker

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**WEST VALE**

**Chairman:**
Graham Banks, 12 Craven Common, Uffington, Faringdon, SN7 7RN

**Secretary:**
Brenda Forward, 'Llamedos', Longcot Rd, Shrivenham SN6 8HF Tel: 01793 782776

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Well, everything is quiet here except the weather. We've had rain, severe frost and wind – well, gales.

The rain and floods have kept us away from planned work at Steppingstone Bridge and the gales have kept the mid-week work parties busy clearing fallen trees and branches. Some of the fallen trees and branches fell into the ditches that run along the boundaries of the Canalside Park so that prompted us into our usual winter ditch clearance programme, a messy, cold but necessary annual job. When better weather returns we intend to put a weir into one of the ditches to regulate the water level. There are several ecological reasons to do this, one to hold up the level in the pond for a little longer in the summer and two to maintain a higher and hopefully muddier boundary, both will go some way to delay flooding downstream and one will hopefully deter unwanted access from a friendly neighbour's land.

Most winters we see the electricity board cutting all the hedges back under their overhead lines: this takes place all along the Shrivnham section and is a great help as it means that we do not have to manage the tops of the towpath hedges ourselves.

However, extra to this a while ago we had a contractor on behalf of the electric board come into the Park to clear dense scrub and small trees from directly beneath the high voltage lines that diagonally cross the wild eastern end of the Park.

To reduce their annual maintenance work a swathe about five by 40 metres was completely cleared to ground level and it looks a right old mess, basically bare earth! The work upset a few of the locals who use the park on a regular basis but we look at it more as ‘a bit of an opportunity’ to make ecological/environmental enhancements. We could, of course, have just ignored it and let ‘natural regeneration’ take place but experience tells us this rarely works!

Some years ago we had an ecological/environmental survey done on the Park and one clear suggestion was that although it encouraged some tree planting in the wilder eastern end, (which we have since done), it also recommended that small ‘glades’ with open grass tracks joining them together were installed and maintained. This would leave small areas of open land between the trees and shrubs and that would provide a warmer, sheltered habitat for wild grasses, flowers, butterflies and insects, etc. to flourish and also provide narrow protected corridors joining them all together. Our newly installed footpath at this end will provide easy access for our visitors whilst this new network of interconnecting tracks should encourage the wildlife in. So, over the next year or so we will be giving nature a hand, grass and native wild flower seeding between whatever ‘mother nature regenerates’ herself. But we know she will need careful and continuous management! Any helpers out
Thank heavens Spring is arriving at last. Winter has felt particularly dreary these last few months. I have been working on dates for this year’s Summer Festival walks. As they are still liable to change please keep a look out on the Trust web site or look for Wantage Summer Festival. As usual the festival goes from mid June to mid July. This is also the start of our fete season and by the look of it it’s going to a busy time with East Challow, Childrey, Grove Extravaganza, the Old Berks Countryside show, Newbury Waterways Festival and the White Horse Show already in the calendar and a hot off the press request to attend an event in Wantage in June. This should ensure the marquee doesn't gather any dust! The Sackhouse re-opens in April with some changes in displays. Mike is swopping the tramway pictures we've had up on the big wall with a themed display of before and afters concentrating on a particular stretch of the canal, changing every month or so. John has also been working on a change of the backlit information posters. My thanks as ever to Mike and the team for the spring cleaning of the Trust. The meeting, organised by the Branch, was very well received by those attending. I’m sure that we convinced them all that we ‘mean business’! We now look forward to a rapid increase in the pace of restoration all along the line but especially east of Swindon!

Alan Norris

Branch Meeting & Contact Details

The Melksham Calne and Chippenham branch meet at Melksham Skills Centre, Melksham, at 20:00hrs on the first Tuesday of each month.

MELKSHAM CALNE & CHIPPENHAM WORK PARTY INFORMATION:
Organiser: Ray Canter: raycanter@btinternet.com, Tel 01249 659111, Mob 07717 536883

Work Parties: Second & last Sunday each month
Details of the work parties are circulated by e-mail. Any member wishing to be included in this circulation please contact Ray
The Swindon Branch meets on the 1st Tuesday of every second month at 19:30hrs. Check website for details.

FOXHAM/LYNEHAM WORK PARTY INFORMATION
Organiser: Gordon Williams Tel. 07949 257897
Work Parties: Every Sunday at about 09:30-10:00hrs.
Ring Gordon to find out where we are working.

The Wootton Bassett Branch meets at 20:00hrs on the first Monday of each month. Please contact the secretary for details of meeting venue.

WOOTTON BASSETT WORK PARTY INFORMATION:
Organisers: John Bower, 20 Glebe Road, Wootton Bassett, Wiltshire SN4 7DU
Tel 01793 636297
Richard Hawkins
Tel 01793 814959

Work Parties: There are midweek and some weekend work parties. Please phone for details.
Work involves some maintenance of the existing canal area.

The Swindon Branch meets on the 1st Tuesday of every second month at 19:30hrs. Check website for details.

SWINDON WORK PARTY INFORMATION:
Organisers: Ray Aldridge Tel: 07502 046708
Oliver Gardiner Tel: 07785 775993

Work Parties: Regular work parties are on a Sunday. Check web site for details

Branch web-site: www.wbct.org.uk/branches/swindon

The West Vale branch meet at The Prince of Wales, High Street, Shrivenham at 20:00hrs on the second Wednesday of each month.

WEST VALE WORK PARTY INFORMATION:
Organisers: Chris Forward, 'Llamedos', Longcot Road, Shrivenham, SN6 8HF
Tel 01793 782776
Branch web-site: www.wbct.org.uk/branches/west-vale

EAST VALE WORK PARTY INFORMATION:
Organiser: Bob Airey Tel 01235 769469

Work Parties: Second and fourth Saturday of the month with changes at public holiday times.
The East Vale work sites are: Childrey New Road; West Challow; Elm Farm section; and Grove Locks. Contact WPO for details.
Board of Trustees:

Chairman             Roderick Bluh, Contact via Trust Office 07831 340 387
Vice Chair            Colin Fletcher, Lower Foxhangers Farm, Rowde SN10 1SS 01380 828 254

Interim Board of Trustees
Peter Kinsman, Nant-y-Broch, Purton Stoke, Swindon SN5 4JG 01793 771 548
Eddie Thomas, 14 Sandringham Road, Swindon SN3 1HP 01793 534 404
Dr David Cook, 11 Highfields Road, Earley, Reading RG6 5RZ 01189 863 284
Jenny Stratton, 35 Sheridan Drive, Wootton Bassett, SN4 8JJ 01793 850 310
Dave Maloney, 18 Bolts Croft, Chippenham SN15 3GQ 07809 374 754
Brian Stovold, 1 Roman Way, Wantage, Oxon. OX12 9YF Branch Chairs Rep 01235 763 072
Dave Stirling, Contact via Trust Office 08452 268 567

Executive Committee
CEO Jonathan Till            Contact via Trust Office 07444 432 441
Co. Secretary, Finance, Legal & Administration: Chris Coyle, 27 Seymour Road, Bath BA1 6DZ 07710 737 166
H&S, Volunteers, Property, Commercial & Operations Director: Derek Flexer 07753 980 297
Fundraising & Sponsorship Director: Kath Hatton, 4 Charlton Hill, Edington, Westbury, BA13 4PL 01380 831 231
Projects Director: Andrew Matters Contact via Trust Office 08452 268 567
PR & Communication and IT Director: Sheila Wade Contact via Trust Office 07976 281 568

Officers
IWA Rep:                          Vacant
Branch Chair East Vale:   Brian Stovold, 1 Roman Way, Wantage, Oxon. OX12 9YF 01235 763 072
Branch Chair West Vale:  Graham Banks, 12 Craven Common, Uffington, Faringdon, SN7 7RN
Branch Chair Swindon: Rod Hacker, 11 Whittington Road, Swindon, SN5 7DF 07840 072 817
Branch Chair WB: Jenny Stratton, 35 Sheridan Drive, Wootton Bassett, SN4 8JJ 01793 850 310
Branch Chair F&L: Ian Gilbert, 15 The Banks, Lyneham, SN15 4NS 01249 891159
Branch Chair MCC: Dave Maloney, 18 Bolts Croft, Chippenham SN15 3GQ 07809 374 754
Contact Officer Abingdon: Martin Buckland, 4 West Avenue, Abingdon OX14 1QP 01235 204 115
Archivist:                      Doug Small, 8 Raymond Rd, Maidenhead SL6 6DF 01628 544 666
Events Co-ordinator:          John Minns 19 Compton Drive Abingdon OX14 2DF 01235 525 116
Trip Boats, New Boats: Mike Lang, Contact via Trust Office 07444 432 441
Trip Boats, Operations: Robert Yeowell, Contact via Trust Office
Corporate Membership Executive: Contact via Trust Office 08452 268 567
ENTRUST Liaison Officer: Ian Skerry, 16 Chapel Hill, Watchfield, Swindon SN6 8TA 01793 784 197
Gift Aid Officer : David Chalmers, 40 Greenleaze, Knowle Park, Bristol, BS4 2TL 01179 720 423
WRG rep:                        George Eycott, Knowle House, 1 Ham Road, Wanborough, SN4 0DF 07771 775 745

Partnership - Wiltshire Council Countryside Officer:
Ken Oliver, Wiltshire Council, Monkton Park, Chippenham, Wilts, SN15 1ER
Email Ken.oliver@wiltshire.gov.uk 01249 706 494

Emails
Anyone on this page or in the branch details may be contacted using an e-mail address in the form: firstname.lastname@wbct.org.uk (firstname and lastname as printed in the listings).

Trust Office
Dauntsey Lock Canal Centre, Dauntsey Lock, Chippenham, SN15 4HD 08452 226 8567
Administrator: Justine Hanley 08452 268 567
Finance Assistant: Ann O'Donoghue 08452 268 567
IT/TechOps: Martin Stubbs 08452 268 567
The 200 Club has now grown into a 300 Club; thanks to all of you who have continued to support and to those who have bought a ticket for the first time.

This year 308 tickets have been sold and they were in the first draw which took place at the EGM on Saturday 5th March.

Prize winners are:

1st Ticket No. 252 William Cosgrave
2nd Ticket No. 306 Mike Smallwood
3rd Ticket No. 12 Paul Tucker

With the increase in member numbers £3,080 will be available to branches to bid to buy or contribute to individual branch needs i.e. plant, equipment, tools, materials etc. to assist them in restoration works.

Prize money will similarly increase to the following amounts

March – November 1st £150. 2nd £80. 3rd £40.

December will again be a bumper draw with prizes of £340/£170/£90/£50 respectively.

Further winners will be published in Dragonfly throughout the year and money awarded to branches will hopefully be allocated by end of April.

Once again thanks for your support and good luck to all (including those, like ourselves who have not won to date (they say its the taking part that counts!).

Jeff and Lynda

BITM Forestry with MCC & Foxham & Lynham hedge laying north of the A4 near Chippenham (report p19/20). Photo courtesy of Peter Henden
Waterway Routes has a collection of canal maps including our own Wilts & Berks Canal at: www.waterwayroutes.co.uk/wb

Other free maps for restoration projects at: www.waterwayroutes.co.uk/free

Paul Balmer of Waterway Routes has kindly given us permission to share these links with our readers so please feel free to peruse his website. You may even find his saleable “open” canal maps of interest.

We are trialing this new map because of readers complaints and requests. A map workshop will be taking place early summer 2016, hosted by Communications, to come up with answers to the multiple demands of mapping in the Trust. The date will be published on the website.

Sheila Wade, PR & Communication and IT Director, W&BCT