The Quarterly Magazine of the
Wilts & Berks Canal Trust
Autumn 2015
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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The Trust membership details are recorded in compliance with provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998

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Dragonfly 138 Cover Image:
Our Patron with some of our front line forces after the official opening of the landing stage at Waitrose in Swindon. Report pages 4 & 5
Photo courtesy of Chloe Leadbetter
Editorial

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Exciting times appear to be on the horizon with much talk about the future.

We look forward to the AGM with a new Chaiman in place and briefings having taken place the length of the canal on the planned reorganisations that need to take place.

The weather has not been as warm or as dry as the Meteorological Office predicted but seems to have allowed many activities to still take place as reported later in the magazine.

There are stories in here that we know are not complete so will get further coverage in future issues. Keep sending them in and keep working on our restoration in whatever way it needs. We look forward to reporting about many positive developments over the next few months.

If you would like to see any particular features going forward, please let us know or, even better, type them up and let us have them.

The Editors.

Announcement from Trust Chairman Roderick Blu

Chief Executive (Interim)
In the context of the proposed re-organisation I am very pleased to announce the appointment of Jonathan Till as interim Chief Executive.

You will be aware of the proposals for the reorganisation of the Trust. A key element of this is the appointment of a Chief Executive, who will lead a new Executive group. While these proposals are still subject to approval by members, I do believe that it is essential that we move forward along the lines proposed if we are to deliver our common objective, a restored canal.

Dragonfly Available as a PDF via email. Please contact membership@wbct.org.uk

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It is three months since I took up my role as Chairman of the Trust. It has proved to be a very busy time, so much so that I feel I have been around a lot longer.

The learning curve of needing to understand everything that goes on in the Trust has been quite steep but after two months I felt ready to take up the Leadership role properly and starting working with colleagues to plan the future and how we move forward to achieve our objectives.

I have already made a number of recommendations to the Council of Management on changes that I think would help the Trust move forward and I have been working with others to finalise the draft proposals for re-structuring the management of the Trust. These proposals are now out for consultation with the Branches and the membership at large. Details can be found on our website. We encourage as many of you as possible to view these and respond if you have thoughts/comments on what is being suggested. All feedback will be considered and changes made if appropriate before bringing the final proposals to the Annual General Meeting on 17th October.

In addition, there is real sense of optimism about how we can increase the pace of delivery of the restored canal over the coming years. We need to turn that optimism into reality and to do that will require a fundamental shift in how we organise ourselves internally and a much more professional approach to our communications externally to drive confidence in the project.

My view is that we need to attract and work with the best people available, empower them to get on with their tasks, working to an agreed strategy and backed up by excellent project management. The restoration project the Trust is endeavouring to deliver represents a massive logistical and financial undertaking that would challenge many commercial organisations. The commitment from all is already amazing and everyone deserves to experience the feeling of a job well done in a reasonable timescale.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible very shortly and hopefully at the Annual General Meeting.

A New Landing Stage at Middle Wichel

What a great day for the Trust! On Monday 13th July our Patron HRH the Duchess of Cornwall came to Wichelstowe in Swindon to inaugurate the new landing stage in front of the Waitrose store. The event was a great success in every way; it showcased the work that the Trust did in designing and helping with its construction; it demonstrated the skill and organisation of the boat team; it showed the level of cooperation with Swindon Borough Council and Waitrose, as well as the local community. It demonstrated to the world that the Trust can deliver projects of high quality, in keeping with the surroundings. It was also great fun!

Even before the Waitrose store opened in April 2014 we were talking to Ian Smith, the Manager, about the possibility of building a landing stage right outside. He was very enthusiastic, and has supported the project ever since. SBC were also keen to help, seeing it as a positive feature and a focus for the District Centre that will be built on the opposite bank as part of the next phase of the Wichelstowe development.

So then we had to go through the process of designing it, obtaining planning permission, finding the money, finding a contractor to do the bulk of the work, and actually constructing it. In the meantime we were keen to arrange a further visit from our Patron, and these have to be fixed many, many months in advance, so we took the plunge and fixed the date, even before all the necessary arrangements as described above were finalised; it was an excellent motivation for keeping the project moving!
A very large number of people contributed to the event. Juanita Poulton did a sterling job in the background with the organisation and the invitations. Our volunteers made a big contribution to the actual construction, particularly Richard Hawkins from RWB, and he was one among many. Rod Hacker project managed it to completion – ahead of time! And the boat team worked extraordinarily hard to make sure that nb Dragonfly was ready for a return visit from our Patron, who performed the naming ceremony in 2010. The crew on the day, Annie Ireland and Wendy Cole, managed the boat beautifully despite strong winds and water levels reduced by the very low rainfall in the preceding weeks.

We were also very pleased that it was a great opportunity for our new Chairman, Roderick Bluh, and our new President, Sir William McAlpine, to take part in a Trust event and lend their support.

Of course, the longed-for rain arrived on the day itself rather than in time to fill the canal, but despite that everyone enjoyed themselves. We invited as many people as we could fit in to the space available, and our Patron made a particular point of meeting the volunteers from the construction group and the boat team. The children from East Wichel Community Primary School were very excited to be there as well.

So, all in all a very successful day. It has really helped to publicise the canal in the area, and bring it to the attention of the people of Swindon. We are building on the contacts made and relationships developed to help the canal to the next stage of development in Swindon.

Fundraising for the Wilts & Berks

Kath Hatton

Studley Grange project is at last under way and the big machines are working. It is a hugely impressive work site, the canal is in quite a deep cutting here and there is a lot of infill to remove. By the time you read this I hope that really good progress has been made and that we will be able to take members to have a look at it on the morning of 17th October, before the AGM, which is being held at Royal Wootton Bassett this year.

I am still trying to raise more money for the site –everything is overrunning! Our appeal for £25,000 has now reached £13,430 so is creeping up. Our engineering team have started work on the design for the new bridge for Bincknoll Lane so that we can join up the new section to the one already restored to Chaddington Lock. This will require some serious money but will make a big difference and we will be able to start thinking about running a trip boat here.

The Trust has recently received a legacy of £9,400 from a member Mary Archard who lived in Chippenham and we are very grateful to her for thinking of the Wilts & Berks in her will. Apparently she used to walk by the canal at Pewsham and we will put something up there in her memory, probably a bench with a brass plaque. Her god-daughter who handled the estate thought that would be a lovely idea. The money from the legacy will be used in the area.

This bequest set me thinking –receiving legacies is really helpful for the Trust – they are especially important for providing match funding and for landfill tax grants they can provide the third party funding. This makes the bequest even more valuable. For the person making the gift it is also valuable because it means leaving something worthwhile for the future and your name can live on. Definitely a win-win situation.

The Trust Grand Draw this year is in aid of restoration and so far we have received about £2,400 from the tickets. Now that the prizes and cost of tickets are covered, every ticket sold is all profit so please keep selling! The winning tickets will be drawn at the AGM and the profits can be used on all parts of the canal.

Many projects on the go at the moment so back to work! Hope to see lots of you at the AGM.
200 Club

We are getting ready for the end of the year with December’s bumper draw getting nearer. If you’re not in it, you can’t win it so get ready for 2016 and please help us make it a really good year for prizes and monies to our branches. Details will be on the website and new forms will be in the next Dragonfly in January.

Here are our latest winners and our thanks to them for buying in to the club

July
1st prize ticket 102 Michael Greenslade Reading £140
2nd prize ticket 52 Chris Coyle Bath £70
3rd prize ticket 87 Caroline Gilman Chippenham £35

August
1st prize ticket 18 Ian Carter Bradford on Avon £140
2nd prize ticket 274 Robert Humphrys Addlestone, Surrey £70
3rd prize ticket 243 Jonathon Seagrove Bristol £35

September
1st prize ticket 229 Ann O’Shea Reading £140
2nd prize ticket 47 Charles Keevil Didcot £70
3rd prize ticket 102 Michael Greenslade Reading £35

To all those who have not won to date, all the best in the forthcoming draws!

Jeff and Lynda

Leave a Lasting Legacy

You may have been watching the ads on TV for the “Remember a Charity” week – have you ever thought about leaving a gift in your will for the Wilts & Berks Canal restoration? It is a common fallacy that you have to be rich to do this. Any gift, large or small, can have a big impact on our projects and it will mean that your name will live on for the future. The canal that we are rebuilding is an important part of our history and landscape: your gift will help it to last another 200 years for future generations to enjoy.

Your name can be on a brass plaque on a bench or for larger amounts we could arrange to rename a structure like a lock or a bridge in your memory. Talk to us about it – we would be happy to help with advice or suggestions what your donation might achieve. Please contact:

Kath Hatton - kath.hatton@wbct.org.uk
or Chris Coyle - chris.coyle@wbct.org.uk
or ring 0845 226 8567.
Access to the section will be from Chaddington (Bincknoll) Lane and via a public footpath from Hay Lane.

Currently no site access is permitted.

WBCT is arranging a few publicity opportunities with the contractor (Land & Water Services Ltd).

The project is to restore a 1.2 kilometre section of the Wilts & Berks Canal running east from Bincknoll Lane at Royal Wootton Bassett. The original canal track is being excavated and the towpath rebuilt.

Progress
It probably should be noted that to get to works on the ground the WBCT team have spent at least 10 years in negotiations with the landowners to produce an acceptable technical solution as the restored canal is in a cutting alongside a (now closed) landfill site.

May 2015:

The existing watercourse (Bincknoll Brook) will supply water for this section of the canal. Shown here prior to works starting, it has been scraped on both banks (following extensive work with environmental consultants) to create an approximate angle of 45 degrees from the original base. This action was undertaken on the advice of water vole expert Derek Gow after the re-homing (through a process of live trapping) of the local water vole population. The angle of the slope and management of the vegetation close to water level have temporarily discouraged any repopulation but we will be pleased to see them return when the canal is restored, as part of our wildlife trail.

Contractors Land & Water Services Ltd were appointed and the first part of the works has been to reinstate the towpath on the southern side of the canal

September 2015:

Towpath works adjacent to Bincknoll Lane

This is the final work on the towpath reinstatement at the western end (Bincknoll Lane) on the right of the photograph. Clay from elsewhere on the site has been brought in to do this.

When the canal towpath has been re-formed we will plant the kilometre of canal banks with a variety of hedging, shrubs and wild flowers to encourage wildlife, in particular water voles that are an endangered species, and bees and other insects. Bird and bat boxes will also be installed and seats and leaning posts provided for the public to use. WBCT was successful in obtaining funding from the Big Lottery Fund People’s Millions for the planting and are working with Friends of the Earth and Wiltshire Wildlife Trust.

If you would like to help with this work in the autumn please contact the wildlife trail project manager Kate Jones, email: Studley@wbct.org.uk

From Bincknoll Lane before start of works
Central Section
This is a section in the most technically challenging part of the site. The towpath is at finished level so you can see the amount of material still to be removed from the other channel. Ahead and to the left you can see the start of the length where the offside bank needs to be supported by gabions (wire baskets filled with stones).

Eastern extent of works
In the distance lies the end of the works, and ahead the walk is over the infill material which is now being removed. The massive diggers and dumpers will first work from this point going westwards to the centre of the site where a haul road links to the landfill site and then repeat the process from Bincknoll Lane. Weather permitting this work should be completed by the middle of October.

Membership Matters
Membership Secretary’s Report

We welcome the following new members

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Dear Editor

It has been such a busy year for me and my team of Elves getting all the presents made ready for this Christmas. I am pleased to say that visiting all the children on nb Dragonfly in Swindon this year is my top priority because I had such a lovely time with them all last year.

I have been told that there will be more of those delicious Waitrose mince pies on board so I am planning to be with you all for more trips this year.

Santa

Dear Editors

How encouraging are the pictures of ongoing work at Studley Grange? Hugely welcome. When seeing big diggers helping to restore our canal, we should remember that all this 'spadework' has - for many years - been preceded by much 'paperwork'.

Owners of the site were a commercial company - Biffa landfill - with whom months of discussions preceded a search for grant-making bodies who could be persuaded of our cause. Trust members know of the wider benefits of restoring canals where none existed before - wildlife corridors, secure countryside walking routes, homes for fishermen and paddlers (canoeists), short-cut journeys-to-work/school for cyclists - even before keep-fit running, feeding the ducks, walking the dog and enjoying our trip-boat.

Our cause is helped by recent TV programmes and renewed CRT efforts to promote public understanding of what we have and could have. But all this heightened awareness can only be a welcome background to the daily graft of working through the legal and admin processes of obtaining permission to work particular sites.

Let us salute those who do this 'back office' work for WBCT - it is vital. No paperwork, no pictures of diggers.

Brian Roberts

Email: editor@wbct.org.uk
Write to: Dragonfly Editor, Wilts & Berks Canal Trust, PO Box 3630, Swindon, SN4 4AN

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.

Update on the Peterborough Arms

Kath Hatton

It is just over a year since the Trust purchased the Peterborough Arms, a canal-side pub at Dauntsey Lock, near Lyneham. This was a momentous decision by the Trust to branch out into pub ownership but the threat, from the brewery who owned the pub, to turn it into a residential property, spurred us on. Through the generosity of members and supporters who came forward with loans and donations, the Trust was able to buy it for £250,000. This was a good result for the Trust and equally for the local community who almost lost their pub.

So it is a year on and it is time for a review of progress. A small steering group has been developing strategy and detailed plans for the pub and we have sought advice as to the best way forward. As the pub was not running profitably before we took it on, it is obvious that we have to work towards providing a different experience for clientele. We do not want to re-open it, or part of it, and then close again because that would just lose us the goodwill of customers.

There is quite a lot of work inside and outside that needs to be done to bring everything up to a good standard and so some serious fundraising
has to be done. Some initial works have been done in order that we are legally compliant with safety and fire laws and an excellent team of volunteers have been doing some decorating and have built a temporary office at the end of the skittle alley. We had the pub kitchen steam cleaned and it is in reasonable condition. We have received planning permission for various parts of the work needed – like a new unisex toilet for the less able, new entrance, enlarged car park and other essentials. The change in the right of way past the premises has been agreed so that we will be able to develop a garden seating area overlooking the lock. We also have permission to use the skittle alley as a meeting room for the Trust and in fact most meetings are held there now. It saves on renting other locations.

We have held two Open Days at the Peterborough so that members and sponsors could see our progress and these were well attended. We displayed plans for the finished version of the pub for all to study. Overall we want to provide a pub, with good beer and even better food and with letting rooms for bed and breakfast. There is a shortage of similar accommodation in Wiltshire so that should be popular. We want to eventually run it as a canal centre as well and open up the canal here for everyone to enjoy.

There is more listed building consent to be applied for and quite a lot of restoration work required. This will require funds that I shall be applying for in the near future. The important message is that the Peterborough Arms is an amazing asset for the Trust and we are very grateful to have been able to buy it. We will be welcoming our first customers just as soon as we can.

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. If you are a volunteer could you please spend a few minutes each month to 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

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, PO Box 3630, SWINDON, SN4 4AN. If you were able to donate a few pounds on a regular basis, that would be even better.

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.
Commemorate the Award to the Trust

What better way to remember the award to the Trust than by buying the splendid souvenir items that are now available.

The Trust was awarded a glass crystal, and you can obtain your own replica, engraved with the name of the Trust. Pinbadges, ties, scarves and a replica of the crystal award are available.

Please order your items from:
Administrator, Wilts & Berks Canal Trust,
PO Box 3630, Swindon, SN4 4AN.

Annual General Meeting 17 October 2015
10.00am Visits and Displays, 2.00pm AGM

Wootton Bassett Branch is hosting this year's AGM for the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust, at Wootton Bassett Memorial Hall, Station Road, Royal Wootton Bassett, SN4 8EN. Everyone is welcome to hear about all the exciting developments concerning the restoration of the Wilts & Berks Cana

Car parking is available at the Wootton Bassett Memorial Hall.

Programme
10:00am Arrivals and refreshments. Slideshow displays will be presented during the morning.
10:30am Minibus available to the local canal sites; Templars Firs to Chaddington. Studley Grange to be confirmed.
12:30pm Lunch. Promptly between 12:30 and 1:30.
2:00pm AGM commences at the Main Hall, followed by the Open Forum.
4:00pm Close.

Meal Selections: Pay on the day on a first-come-first-served basis arrangement is in place.
Shepherd's Pie (£7.00)
Chicken Curry & Rice (£7.00)
Vegetable Chilli con Carne & Rice (£7.00)

Maps Courtesy of Google Maps 2015
THE RESTORATION of the southern end of the canal will be driven by a fresh focus on attracting a new generation of volunteers.

Dave Maloney has been elected as the new chairman of the Melksham, Chippenham & Calne branch of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust. He was the deputy chairman for the last three years and closely involved in some of the charity’s most important local projects.

Now he hopes to lead a new effort to recruit younger volunteers who can play an active part in work parties and fundraising.

Dave brings a wealth of experience to the role. He is the Trust’s technical operations director but also leads the branch fundraising team and is on the steering group preparing for the reopening of The Peterborough Arms, the former canal-side pub at Dauntsey Lock.

He has also been leading the restoration of hundreds of metres of canal alongside the A4 between Chippenham and Calne in conjunction with a habitat management plan to repair hedgerows and encourage native flora and fauna.

Dave, an IT manager at a local school, said: “I am very proud to be leading such a dedicated group of volunteers and plan to swell their number by attracting a new generation of supporters so that we can bring more of the canal back to life.

It’s vitally important that we recruit a greater number of younger volunteers, aged 18 and above, who can get involved in any aspect of the restoration – from work parties and fundraising to event management and a host of other activities. Teenagers in particular will find it’s a useful and unusual addition to their CV, while others will find it’s an excellent way to keep fit and healthy.

“Every member, whatever their background and interests, will receive a warm welcome. Even the ‘armchair’ supporters will still be helping us to raise awareness and funds.”

The Wilts & Berks Canal Trust has proposed the creation of a ‘Melksham Link’ which would bring the canal across the fields from the Kennet & Avon near Semington and through the centre of the town via the River Avon. The local branch is supporting this plan by restoring the historic line from Pewsham towards Melksham so that the two sections will ultimately be connected.

Dave added: “Thanks to the hard work of our volunteers, and the generous co-operation of landowners, the local community now realises that the reopening of the Wilts & Berks Canal is no longer just the pipe dream of a small group of enthusiasts.

“The evidence is plain to see along the stretches which have already been restored where we’ve rebuilt towpaths, bridges, culverts, spillweirs and other structures and provided a popular amenity for walkers, runners and cyclists.

“Now we need to make even more people aware of its existence and benefits.”
Wilts & Berks Canal Trust  
Charity No 299595

Canal Trips to find Santa 2015

From Waitrose Landing Stage SN1 7BX

November 21st, 22nd, 28th & 29th
December 5th, 6th, 12th, 13th, 19th, 20th, 21th, 22nd & 23rd
10.00, 11.30, 1.00 & 2.30 each day
Certain Days we will be running 5 trips - see Booking Form for details
Midweek Santa Charter trips available on request

Presents for the children
Mince pies and drinks for all
Kindly Donated by Waitrose

As Dragonfly carries only 12 passengers availability is limited
& we will ask for payment at time of booking

Adults £6  Children £9

Booking is essential
Please complete a booking form
Visit www.wbct.org.uk/santa-trips
Email santa@wbct.org.uk,
Trust Shop Theatre Sq Swindon
or phone 07401 220076
A heroic effort by local volunteers sees 220 year old culvert rebuilt. This June, after nearly a year of working in all weathers, from frost and wild winds, to torrential downpours and heatwaves, volunteers with the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust finally completed a mammoth rebuilding project at Pewsham Locks near Chippenham.

A 30-metre-long, 220-year-old brick culvert, which collapsed during the record-breaking wet winter of 2013-14, has been rebuilt after a herculean effort by a team of workers, who worked weekends and mid-week, clocking up an amazing total of over 2,000 voluntary hours during the project.

Basil Raddy, a volunteer with the Trust, who has been involved from the start, said: “I have been keeping a record of the hours worked, and by my calculations, the actual rebuild has taken 1,656 hours. But when you add in the time clearing out the silt and bricks, diverting the towpath, pumping out the water, and cleaning the original bricks, I would estimate over 2,000 hours is near the mark. We keep a record of volunteer hours as it is important to show funders what the Trust has contributed to a project.”

The historic structure was originally constructed between 1795 and 1799, to cross underneath the canal, and was effectively an underground tunnel to carry the small stream Cocklemore Brook. In January 2014, that stream became a torrent, and the destructive power of the water collapsed the arched culvert, creating a huge hole in the towpath and canal bank, allowing all the water from that section of the restored canal to drain out.

Ray Canter, project leader, said: “It has been a massive challenge. We couldn’t even start on the rebuilding for eight months, as it took that long for the water in Cocklemore Brook to lower sufficiently. Even then, volunteers had to don waders and work up to their chests in water and mud. Luckily, this last winter was not so wet, and by using three 4” pumps, we were able to clear all the debris and begin the rebuilding. We had to construct bunds (dams) on either side of the culvert, divert the towpath, and excavate the whole canal bed; it certainly gave us an enormous respect for the original builders who did not have the benefit of excavators and dumpers.

“Many of our volunteers are not professional bricklayers: they have enjoyed learning new skills and the culvert is now quite a stunning structure complete with over 8,000 bricks. Unfortunately, once finished, it will be completely hidden under the canal, so we want to show it off while we can!

“The fantastic donation of £10,000 from the Yorkshire Building Society, which we received last December, inspired members to redouble their efforts, and they worked heroically until the structure was finally completed this June. We are now looking forward to using our newly acquired skills on rebuilding the locks.”

On 3 July, Bristol manager of the Yorkshire Building Society Lee Hathaway, was invited to
ceremonially lay the final inscribed brick, as an acknowledgment of the importance of the YBS funding in securing materials and hiring machinery. Roderick Bluh (newly appointed Wilts & Berks Canal Trust Chairman), Councillor David Powell (Mayor of Chippenham), and Michelle Donelan (MP for Chippenham) also attended the ceremony, applauding the volunteers for their fantastic efforts, and admiring the new structure before it is finally reburied.

Dave Maloney, chair of the Melksham, Chippenham and Calne Branch of the Trust, said: “We were delighted that the Yorkshire Building Society contributed to this fantastic project. The funding was awarded as a Lasting Legacy grant to commemorate their 150-year anniversary, and this culvert will certainly last for another 200, or even 300 years. We understand that YBS would like to be involved in volunteering to help with the restoration project of the Wilts & Berks Canal, and we will be very pleased to welcome them along.”

The culvert itself will soon be lost again to view when the temporary bunds (or dams) are removed and the canal bed restored. The canal below Pewsham waiting wharf will then be returned to its former glory.

The aim of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust is to restore the former waterway from the Kennet & Avon Canal near Melksham to the Thames & Severn Canal near Cricklade and the River Thames near Abingdon, connecting Chippenham, Calne, Royal Wootton Bassett and Swindon.

New members and volunteers are always welcome; see more information on the websites: www.melkshamwaterway.org.uk and www.wbct.org.uk
WBCT SALES

2016 CALENDARS AND CHRISTMAS CARDS
now available

2016 Calendar
£5.00 p&p £1
One month to view with space for notes.
Each month illustrated with a picture from the route of the canal

CHRISTMAS CARDS
Available in packs of 6 cards of one design
£3.00 p&p £1 up to 2 packs - £2.50
3 packs or more (card size A6)

Available in packs of 6 cards of one design
£3.50 p&p £1 up to 2 packs - £2.50
3 packs or more (card size A5)

A selection of other items available:
Walks Around the Wilts & Berks’ - £5 inc p&p
A collection of 10 walks on the Southern section of the canal.
Books by Doug Small: all plus p&p £2
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

Hoodies - £25 p&p £5
Fleeces - £22 p&p £5
Polo Shirts - £14 p&p £3
Sweat Shirts - £17.50 p&p £5
Sizes available XS, S, M, L, XL, XXL

To order:
Please send cheque payable to WBCT together with details of your order to:
Diana Hunter, 20 The Strand, Steeple Ashton, Trowbridge BA14 6EP
Email: diana.hunter@wbct.org.uk Tel: 01380 871354
Merchandise will be on sale at the AGM and in the Swindon Shop
Partnership News

Predicting the future always leaves you as a hostage to fortune – to put it another way, sci-fi author Douglas Adams was always quoted as saying that he loved deadlines particularly the sound of them rushing by. Having just re-read my article for the last Dragonfly I could almost repeat the words I wrote then and change the date. The Partnership intends to hold its September meeting in Royal Wootton Bassett in order to look at the Studley Grange project which should be near to completion (written with fingers crossed and remembering Robert Burns ‘The best-laid schemes o’ mice an’ men/ Gang aft agley!’)

Poised for Action

All the above simply said means that despite the amazing achievement by Kath to obtain the funding and the extensive work to get the final permissions in place, and the selection of contractors, a few unexpected delays put the start of the Studley Grange project back by about four weeks.

I thought for posterity it would be a good idea to record a video of the site before restoration. You can watch it at https://youtu.be/hEPpfhyghDo but I do not think it will get the cult following of the BBC two hour Kennet & Avon film. I am looking forward to the follow up walk when the job is completed.

Go shopping by boat

Very shortly you will be able to do this at Waitrose in Swindon! Work on the new landing is stage is well under way as I write this – a combination of the work of the WBCT volunteer team and contractors will have the work completed for the official opening in July.

Restoring the nation’s waterways

You may have seen the Wilts & Berks billed as the longest waterway restoration in the country. It is of course one of many schemes to revive derelict waterways and it is encouraging to see that the Canal & River Trust and Inland Waterways Association have joined forces to give help to all waterway restoration projects. Kath Hatton and I attended the second National Waterways workshop held in Birmingham in May. The workshop was on the theme of ‘putting it on the Map’ and much of the useful advice discussed during the day is now available on line at https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/restoration/news

Welcome to the new Chairman

I am delighted that Roderick Bluh has accepted the chairmanship of the Trust and look forward to his bringing his great experience and drive from his time in local government to help advance the restoration of the Wilts & Berks. Our paths first crossed some ten or more years ago when as a new elected councillor he rang me as the then Chairman of Swindon Branch to find out more about our plans for the town. We look forward to revisiting some of the town centre issues again shortly!

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

@wiltsberkscanal (Twitter)
www.facebook.com/wiltsberkscanal (Facebook)
Dragonflies At Chaddington Lock
Judy Gosnell

The restored lock and watered part of the Wilts & Berks canal at Chaddington Lock, Royal Wootton Bassett, has become a good place to watch dragonflies and damselflies. The muddy and still water of the canal together with a good variety of plants and vegetation alongside the canal and in the water is a haven for these spectacular insects. Dragonflies are brightly coloured with large wings, large heads and big eyes and with their four large wings buzz around like aeroplanes doing aerobatics.

Nature has ensured the plants that like this type of landscape have appeared. The canal hosts lilies, of dubious background, water plantain, grass reed and sedges. Along the banks, many of the plants are ones that grow in the adjacent meadows. Amongst the great willowherb and meadowsweet some knapweed, birdsfoot trefoils, devil's bit scabious, great burnet and betony are to be found with the thistles and teasels. The dragonflies have found a home here with water and vegetation for ovipositing, (egg-laying) and food including butterflies and an assortment of insects, beetles and bugs that make use of the flowers. On a warm summer’s day the scene is magical with so much to see and look for. During winter when the plants have died back and the hedgerows and the large oak have shed their leaves, listen for fieldfares.

Richard and I have enjoyed watching the antics of dragonflies and in particular the Emperor. The male emperor is large, impressive and has a bright blue abdomen which glints in sunlight; females are not quite so colourful. The canal in water to the west of the lock is long enough to support three emperors at the moment so we watch them patrolling their territory. Males patrol backwards and forwards several feet above the water level seeing off any interlopers. Every now and again they come into contact with their neighbours and we listen to the clash of wings and bodies and watch the dog fight. When this is settled patrolling begins again. We watched several females laying their eggs amongst the water vegetation, mainly under the lily leaves. Each finds a suitable place, arches her back, lays her eggs and often moves to another leaf whilst the male watches her overhead. We had watched all these antics for over an hour before seeing an emperor land to rest on a leaf. Emperors are carnivorous, and have been seen catching and eating butterflies on the wing. The soft juicy abdomen is eaten and the thorax, head and wings later flutter to the ground.

The emperor is aptly named, it rules over its territory but other dragonflies live here so watch out for migrant and southern hawkers, common darters and damselflies. The dragonfly rests with his wings stretched out whilst damselflies fold their wings when at rest. The smaller “cousin” is the damselfly and has a thinner body. The lovely common blue damselfly is usually near the water and we have seen the delightful banded demoiselle damselfly flying around. It has a metallic blue-green body and a dark blue blob on the wings looking like a band, an exquisite creature.

And to end . . . dragonflies are celebrated in the well-named trip boat, the Trust’s logo – also a good choice – and of course the name of this magazine!
Common Darter

Blue damselfly on back of female Emperor ovipositing (laying eggs on lilies)

Common darters in tandem
Wilts & Berks Canal Trust member, George Schmidt, successfully launched his model canal boat at Dauntsey Lock on Friday 14th August. He was very pleased at the number of people that came to watch. He said “I’ve enjoyed building the boat and with help of some friends turned it into a fundraising event for the canal.”

George has spent many hours building the 1/12th scale model of a working canal boat: it is based on the style of boats that would have transported coal along the Wilts & Berks back in the 1800’s on their way from the Somersetshire Coalfield to the market towns of Melksham, Calne, Chippenham, Wootton Bassett, Swindon, Faringdon, Wantage, Abingdon and Oxford. Although in those days the canal boats would have been horse-drawn.

George also ran a competition to name the boat; this was won by Marj Barnicoat with the name of Dauntsey Belle receiving the greatest support.
In late March this year MCC Branch held its very successful annual auction raising a total of more than £3k towards restoration funds. I was pleased to support this fund raising effort by offering a steam experience aboard SL SCATHTAN. Details of this auction lot were mentioned on BBC Radio Wiltshire and very fortunately the piece was heard by Gillian who had for some time been trying to decide what she could get for a special birthday that her husband Geoff would be celebrating this year.

A steam experience on a launch would certainly fit the bill she thought as Geoff is a keen steam transport man being a supporter of a preserved steam railway in Hampshire.

Gillian bid for the lot, securing the birthday present for her husband and at the same time making a worthwhile donation to the Trust. The mutually acceptable date for the ‘voyage with a difference’ was set for Friday 28 August which turned out to be a fine day with one shower amidst days in a week of heavy rainfall. The chosen route was the Long Pound on the Kennet & Avon Canal journeying from Devizes Wharf eastwards to the moorings at the Barge Inn at Honeystreet, a return journey of 16 miles. During the voyage Geoff had a constant smile on his face as he did a time served spell of duty in the engine room and spent a large part of the voyage at the helm.

I learned that the K&A was a very special place for the couple who met during a Devizes – Westminster Canoe Race.

As a special unscripted additional treat on the return of SCATHTAN to Devizes Wharf we were met by the Mayor of the Town in his full regalia. He had just finished another engagement at the Wharf when he was attracted by the vessel’s steam whistle and came to investigate. He explained his love of steam from his time in the Royal Navy.

SCATHTAN was designed as a replica Edwardian Gentleman’s Day Launch. Designed and built by Walter Simmons of Fowey, Cornwall for estuary use and built light enough for trailing. First steamed May 1990, she has been owned and operated by John & Valerie Laverick of Keevil since 1992. SCATHTAN is coal fired, the boiler supplying steam at 150 pounds per square inch to a Stuart 6a compound engine of early 1900’s design. She has cruised on many waterways in the South of England and Wales and John looks forward to her being one of the first vessels to reach Melksham by water directly from the Kennet & Avon Canal via the MELKSHAM LINK WATERWAY.
My first report in Dragonfly must start with a number of thank-yous. First to Derek Flexer who has been at the helm for the past three years and has brought some great ideas to be used by the events team. He takes on the role of Health and Safety Director and is also currently working on a maintenance policy for the line of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust. Thanks also to Diana Hunter who has stepped down as branch treasurer after many years of keeping our books straight and trying to keep the Work Party Organisers in check and welcome to Steve Roberts who has picked up the treasurer’s baton ….Finally a special Thank-You to Doug Harris who steps down as Work Party Organiser. Doug has been a member of MCC for over 14 years and a WPO for 13 of them. He has seen the branch grow from a small number to the 600+ members we currently have, and work party numbers growing to the 20/25 volunteers we see out regularly on work parties. He has kept our machinery serviced and in good running order for many years. Ray Canter steps into his shoes as Chief WPO.

After a very busy time working during the week and standard work party days Ray Canter, Basil Raddy and their team have finished the rebuild of Cocklemore culvert, which is estimated to have
taken over 2,000 volunteer hours. Our thanks to the Yorkshire Building Society for the funds to help repair the culvert and we must not forget the many many people who voted for us (inc a large number from other canal trusts) which enabled us to receive the funds from YBS.

Clearance work on the north side of the A4 at Pewsham was stopped prior to the bird nesting season but the three-year phased environmental clearance of this section will recommence in September. A recent inspection of trees donated by the Woodlands Trust and planted by 10th Chippenham Scouts has shown the trees to be doing well.

We are working towards satisfying the final planning conditions before we start the major work on Pewsham Top Lock and lockkeeper’s cottage project. Top Lock itself has been completely cleared out and John Sreeves, one of the Trust support engineers, has been to inspect the brickwork to advise us on what we can leave and repair and what needs to be removed. Of course one section needs to be completely rebuilt after the South Midland Royal Engineers used the lock for demolition practice in 1931. This project will be the focus of our publicity for 2016.

We have had cause to work on yet another culvert, fortunately this one much smaller than Cocklemore brook. We had reports of a “hole” in the canal bed south of double bridge. This turned out to be a land drain running under the canal. With the help of volunteers from YBS (who really did get their hands dirty and seemed to be enjoying it) we were able to install a large twin walled plastic pipe which was kindly donated by Wavin. Once we get an excavator on site it should take no more than two days to back-fill. That will be great as we can then let water into that section again.

If you are a member of the MCC branch reading this article could I ask that you send me your email address so that we may keep you informed of events in between copies of Dragonfly. Your email will be used only for Trust business and not passed on to third parties. For more information on our branch activities please visit our branch website melkshamwaterway.org.uk.

People have been asking how to get to Pewsham locks to see the work we are carrying out. The easiest way is to park in the Pewsham carpark off Lodge Road. (If you have satnav the Tesco store is at SN15 3SY). Once parked walk to the left hand side of the Old Lane pub, Turn left down Blackthorn Mews for 50 yards and then branch off right down Forest Lane. This turns into a footpath. Take care crossing the busy Pewsham Way and follow the gravel path you find on your left. This will take you to Pewsham Locks and the re-watered canal further down the towpath. The distance to the locks from Pewsham carpark is some 1.7 miles, is generally flat and even, and will take about 35 minutes to walk, so Google tells me.

Dave Maloney

FOXHAM & LYNEHAM

Chairman:
Ian Gilbert, 15 The Banks, Lyneham, SN15 4NS Tel. 01249 891159

Secretary:
Sheila Wade, Scots Smith Farmyard, Dauntsey, Chippenham, SN15 4JA Tel. 07976 281586

We have had a fairly quiet summer with some maintenance work being carried out on the Foxham stretch and on the towpaths up to Seven Locks on the Dauntsey stretch.

One of our members has been busy building a “scale model” of a canal narrowboat and has used the launch of this boat to raise £200 for the Trust (See article and photo page 21). We had a great evening at The Peterborough Arms where a local neighbourhood group organised a get together to name the boat the “Dauntsey Belle” and watch George launch her in the canal by the pub, with kind permission from Rachael Banyard. We even got George off the plank without him falling in!

Our next event is the Wiltshire Donkey Show which will take place on Sunday 6th September at Scots Smith Farmyard, Dauntsey, where in addition to lots of donkeys doing their stuff, some of the branch will be there celebrating the donkeys connection as a working animal to the W&B canal. Photos to come in the next issue of Dragonfly.

Sheila Wade
Was that the summer then? It didn’t seem to last long and already the days are drawing in. We seem to have spent most of the time fighting a losing battle with nature, the first part very hot to get everything growing and the second part quite wet to keep it growing.

We have divided our time between Templars Firs and the Chaddington Lock site. By the time we were able to start clearing the weed in the canal at Templars Firs it was already well established. We trundled the work boat up and down with the weed cutter attached. Masses of weed had to be gathered up and pushed to the side to be dragged from the canal, unbelievable how much of it there was. We started using a weed gatherer made from a metal fence panel on the front of the boat which we have used for a number of years but it is quite heavy and unwieldy to use. Stuart volunteered to craft a smaller device made from wood with a row of six inch nails at the bottom. When we saw it for the first time someone commented that it looked a bit vicious so it immediately became known as Sid (think about it). Smaller than the first one, it was much more manoeuvrable, much easier to use and has been very successful. But it hasn’t stopped the weeds growing, they return after a few weeks so it’s a never-ending job. Whilst some of us have been clearing weed from the canal others have been mowing and strimming the paths and banks so it’s all looking a lot better now though it was a difficult task as the paths had become so overgrown.

We have been troubled again by a leak on this section of canal and spent some time tracing its origin and plugging the hole with clay – until the next time. When the Templars Firs extension is constructed we should have a lot of surplus clay and hope to improve the canal bank along this section.

When not at Templars Firs we have been at Chaddington Lock completing the fencing around the canal area. Installing seven hundred metres of stock fencing without mechanical aid is no mean feat but it has now been completed. When we started the ground was so wet and solid it was difficult to drive the posts in and impossible to remove one if needed. Towards the end, after working in temperatures in the low thirties, the posts were quite loose in their holes where the ground around them had dried and shrunk. This made it difficult to tension the wire without pulling the posts out of the ground. Whilst this was going on there was a lot of strimming, mowing and hedge trimming taking place to make things look decent again.

When we excavated the section below the lock last summer we spread the dredgings on the adjacent field. This summer all the weed and thistle seeds in the silt have burst into life and we had a field of thistles over two metres high. One of our brave volunteers has spent several weeks gradually getting it under control. The opposite bank of the canal on this section where we dumped more silt is quite impressive with a mass of colour of different grasses and wild flowers. Unfortunately, the dry summer has meant there is no water flowing into the canal at Chaddington. Even the recent rain has not reached the cut as the ground is just soaking it up.

However, we do not want too much rain yet as restoration work at Studley Grange is well under way with all sorts of huge machinery moving enormous quantities of muck and clay around. The contractors seem to be re-building the towpath first. They have flattened the canal area which gives them access to the towpath all along its length. Presumably they will install a new surface on the towpath whilst they have good access rather that have to trundle materials up and down from one access point. We are looking forward to this section being completed in the next couple of months, and then it can rain all it wants.

Jenny Stratton invited James Gray, our local MP, to visit the Royal Wootton Bassett section of canal on a recent work-party day. Mr Gray has been a supporter of the Wilts & Berks canal restoration for many years but had only seen part of our section.
Top event of the last quarter has to be the opening of the landing stage by HRH the Duchess of Cornwall. I am sure there will be plenty about this event elsewhere so I will just say how honoured the branch was to be able to host this event and how pleased I was that she made a point of talking to the work party members and the general public.

So, the dust has almost settled, except for some planting and seeding and also finding a base on which to fix the ceremonial plaque.

What do we do next? It has been some years since Swindon had a restoration project for our work party to get stuck into. It was noticeable that the challenge of the landing stage raised the level of enthusiasm in the branch and easily attracted volunteers, including some from RWB branch. Most of our identified projects are large scale and will require contractors to be appointed. I would really like to bring forward some more small-scale projects which can be tackled soon by volunteers. Bright ideas on an email to me please.

The work party is well on with clearing 15 years' worth of accumulated “it must be useful one day” stuff from the compound at Westleaze and reorganising the remainder to allow the landowner better access to his field. Meanwhile the weeds and bushes keep on growing all around the town so there is plenty more tidying up to be done to keep the towpaths and canal lines clear. We expect soon to take on wider responsibilities for the maintenance of the canal on borough land and need to get ourselves ready for the challenge.

A small band of volunteers has helped to attend several events around town with our display tent over the summer. It’s a pleasant time when the rain holds off, chatting to visitors, explaining what we are about and answering the inevitable question “Will you get the canal back through the town centre?” The answer of course is a very positive “Yes – but we need your support.” We usually sign up a couple of new members, encourage others to join later and sell a few raffle tickets. At the least, after each event hundreds more residents will be aware that we mean business.

There is no news yet on the next stages at Wichelstow but I hope for some before our next newsletter. Our scheme for the Eastern Villages area is making progress. We now have an outline design for about 7km of new canal which we are taking to consultation with the council and other interested parties.

The branch membership has grown steadily over recent months and we have even managed to add a couple more active volunteers. I still need to repeat the request I make in almost every newsletter, which is that; we need more help in every possible task. The challenges ahead of us in Swindon are far greater than those of the past but it is an exciting and rewarding time to be a part of it.

Rod Hacker
It’s been very quiet here with the summer holidays so not a lot to report. However our work parties have been busy with the usual stuff: rabbits seem to have been extra busy this year, holes in the paths everywhere. Herbage even more luxuriant than usual falling over the paths. Hedges seem to have grown out over the paths with amazing bramble growth and tree branches falling. Must be global warming!

We have also tidied and upgraded our ‘extensive facilities’ at the Canalside Park, installing shelves, tool racks and a PPE gear store etc. All in readiness for several planned Autumn volunteer visits from local companies, (four days booked already). These corporate ‘team-building days out’ are a great help for us; the volunteers are always keen to put in a good day’s work and thoroughly enjoy themselves.

We plan to get them to help us with laying the rest of the stone on the new path in the park, we have had another twenty tonnes of stone delivered to site and we have amassed lots of wheelbarrows, rakes and shovels in readiness. Unfortunately, as I reported in my last article our compactor failed whilst working on the path. It was subsequently looked at by our ‘machinery tinklers’ and it’s ‘terminal’. It has suffered a total bearing collapse and being ancient, spares are not available. Anyone got one we can have/borrow?

We have had several new active members join the branch recently so we plan to do some more work on Steppingstone Bridge soon, before the winter weather sets in, and more materials, including dozens of donated coping stones, are now on site. The coping stones do not match those installed on the eastern parapet but we are going to use them anyway. Steppingstone Lane Railway Bridge, not far from the canal, has odd coping stones as well, stone one side and large blue bull-nosed bricks on the other, so we thought ‘what’s good for Brunel’s Great Western Railway is good enough for us’. A bit of a feature we thought. We like ‘quirky’ on canals anyway! Our less physically active members have also been busy, there is always much to do in the background as well as down on the cut itself. Our branch web page has been updated and someone has to order all the materials, tools etc so there you are, all sorts of people can become volunteers – just join in!

Most of our projects over the years have been funded by local donations, fundraising and various awards from local councils, companies and the lottery of course, and we were pleased yet again to receive an award from the Trust’s own 200 club, so thank you all and keep buying the tickets, it’s much appreciated!

Alan Norris

Chairman:
Graham Banks, 12 Craven Common, Uffington, Faringdon, SN7 7RN
Secretary:
Brenda Forward, ‘Llamedos’, Longcot Rd, Shrivenham SN6 8HF
Tel: 01793 782776

Chairman:
Brian Stovold, 10 The Kestrels, Grove, Wantage OX12 0QA
Secretary:
Chris Naish, 5 Tirrold Way, Wantage, Oxon OX12 7DL
Tel: 01235 763072
Tel: 01235 769615
arranging to get invited to a wedding in Belfast, and noted that strangely the weather was better there than in Vale. My thanks to the team for attending these very pleasurable and useful events. I should also have mentioned the Newbury Waterways Festival.

Another highlight of the summer was a visit to the Vale by intrepid walker Doug Hamilton-Cox. Doug has raised many thousands of pounds for Help for Heroes. He has been walking all the canal network, including derelict stretches. It was therefore on a very hot and sunny August day that Doug, my wife Fiona, and I met at the historic canal junction in Abingdon and walked back to East Challow using the public footpaths and diversions off the towpath where necessary. I have two walking speeds, plod and stationary, and I think both Fiona and Doug were rather patient! A very interesting walk out through the wide open spaces of the eastern Vale.

On a work-party note, I would like to mention the clean-up of a short stretch of footpath on the Wantage–Grove border: a strange section now avoidable by following tarmac paths around the roundabout (with aircraft on pole). It follows the former towpath between Denchworth Road (site of Barwell Bridge and Grove Top Lock, now bisected by Mably Way. It was becoming rather overgrown and of course once in that condition people are not tempted to walk it. The team diverted from a work-party on the Elm Farm stretch to strim this back to an orderly condition, much to the delight of one of the adjoining landowners in Canal Court (which lies on the old junction). We had been advised that this is no longer on the OCC maintenance schedule so with our usual good will to the community we have stepped into the breach. We will keep an occasional eye on it.

Hopefully in the next Dragonfly I'll have some positive news on the lease negotiations currently under way. See you at the AGM.

Brian Stovold

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**Situations Vacant**

**Events Sales Manager**

The Trust attends a number of events such as Festivals and boat shows during the year. To ensure that it gains maximum financial and membership advantage at each event the Trust is looking to appoint a Sales Manager.

**Communications Director**

We need someone to oversee all our communications, both internal and external. We have such a good story to tell and we need someone to tell it!

To apply for any of our vacancies (there are more on our website), please contact Chris Coyle or Kath Hatton whose contact details are given on page 30

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**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 doug.harris@wbct.org.uk
The Swindon Branch meets on the 1st Tuesday of the 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 the month at 19:30hrs.
Check website for details.

SWINDON WORK PARTY INFORMATION:
Organisers:
Ray Aldridge    Tel or Txt: 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, 'Llamados', 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.
Trust Officials and Council of Management

Council of Management:
- Chairman: Roderick Bluh, 07831 340 387
- Vice Chair: Kath Hatton, 4 Charlton Hill, Edington, Westbury, BA13 4PL 01380 831 231
- Co. Secretary/Vice Chair: Chris Coyle, 27 Seymour Road, Bath BA1 6DZ 07710 737 166
- Treasurer: Peter Kinsman, Nant-y-Broch, Purton Stoke, Swindon SN5 4JG 01793 771 548
- IWA Rep: Roger Holmes, 72 Primrose Hill, Lyndey, GL15 5SP 01594 840 316
- Project Director - North: Vacant
- Project Director - West: Colin Fletcher, Lower Foxhangers Farm, Rowde SN10 1SS 01380 828 254
- Project Director - Central/WPO Swindon: Ray Aldridge, contact via Trust Office 07502 046 708
- Project Director - East: Vacant
- Fundraising Director: Kath Hatton, 4 Charlton Hill, Edington, Westbury, BA13 4PL 01380 831 231
- Environment Director: Dr David Cook, 11 Highfields Road, Early, Reading RG6 5RZ 01189 863 284
- Engineering Directors: Eddie Thomas, 14 Sandringham Road, Swindon SN3 1HP 01793 534 404
- Mte. Policy Director: Derek Flexer 07753 980 297
- Health & Safety Director: Derek Flexer 07753 980 297
- Branch Chair East Vale: Brian Stovold 10 Kestrels Grove Wantage OX12 0QA 01235 763 072
- Branch Chair WB: Jenny Stratton, 35 Sheridan Drive, Wootton Bassett, SN4 8JJ 01793 850 310
- Branch Chair MCC: Dave Maloney, 18 Bolts Croft, Chippenham SN15 3GQ 07809 374 754
- IT/Tech Ops: Dave Maloney, 18 Bolts Croft, Chippenham SN15 3GQ 01249 658 699
- Communications Director: Vacant
- Membership Director: Vacant, contact via Trust office
- Towpath Project Director: Vacant
- Events Director: Vacant

Officers:
- Archivist: Doug Small, 8 Raymond Rd, Maidenhead SL6 6DF 01628 544 666
- Contact Officer Abingdon: Martin Buckland, 4 West Avenue, Abingdon OX14 1QP 01235 204 115
- Branch Chair F&L: Ian Gilbert, 15 The Banks, Lyneham, SN15 4NS 01249 891159
- Branch Chair Swindon: Rod Hacker, 11 Whittington Road, Swindon, SN5 7DF 07840 072 817
- Branch Chair West Vale: Graham Banks, 12 Craven Common, Uffington, Faringdon, SN7 7RN
- Administrator: Justine Hanley, PO Box 3630, Swindon, SN4 4AN 08452 268 567
- Finance Assistant: Ann O’Donoghue, PO Box 3630, Swindon, SN4 4AN 08452 268 567
- Events Co-ordinator: John Minns 19 Compton Drive Abingdon OX14 2DF 01235 525 116
- Trip Boats, New Boats: Mike Lang, Contact via Trust Office 08452 268 567
- Trip Boats, Operations: Sue Paine and Robert Yeowell 01793 827 678
- 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
- PR/Press Officer: Vacant
- Webmaster: Dave Maloney, as above
- WRG rep/Technical Ops: 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 706494

Trust Office
PO Box 3630, Swindon, SN4 4AN 0845 226 8567

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).
HRH The Duchess of Cornwall unveiling the plaque for the inauguration of the Wichelstowe Landing Stage - Report pages 4 & 5

Royal Wootton Bassett volunteers collecting weed for something. Pages 25 & 26

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