



View From the Chair

I'm writing this at the end of a sunny week in September when everything seems to be going just as well as it could be! All through the summer Trust volunteers have staffed exhibitions with some good new materials, and as a result membership stands at a record high.



Colleague Directors again hosted three VIP boat trips on the Grand Union, with the invaluable help of James Griffin of Wyvern Shipping. The trips gave us a relaxed chance to brief contacts from across the route and discuss projects of mutual interest. People clearly enjoyed being aboard and seeing first hand opportunities to use water to enhance housing, leisure and business environments.

Three walks covered the middle and MK end of the route, again giving the chance to update new contacts. It was great to be working with partners such as MK Heritage, Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity, and the Bedfordshire Ramblers – and to have the support of local parishes, shops and pubs which take publicity for our events.

A vee(Hic)ry enjoyable first Members' Barbeque was kindly hosted by John Neale at the Broughton Rectory – I hope this becomes an annual event! Richard Wood was there to give an overview of progress all along the route. In particular, the plans for the Marston Innovation Park, showing how the Waterway can provide the heart of new development, are immensely encouraging. We look forward to supporting Bedford Borough Council in this bold new development.

It's good to see new volunteers involved and I'm delighted to welcome Patrick Hall and John Best, well known faces in Bedford and Milton Keynes respectively, onto the Trust Board. I know that many members live too far away, or find it hard to get out to events – but hopefully when we revamp the Trust website over the coming year it'll be easier to keep connected.

Plans for the Trust's first Annual Partnership Conference are well in hand, and it's clearly going to be well attended. Do come if you can! It'll be a great chance to get an update from the Consortium and its Steering Groups, and to find out about new projects for the Trust.

I'm quite often asked about the impact of recession/austerity on the project. The line of the Waterway is now well protected in local plans and future developments on the route will contribute to it. So my view is that a slowdown is in fact helpful, because it gives more time to create the development partnerships that will get the Waterway designed and built – and more time for the Trust to keep building the pressure to make sure it happens!

Jane Wolfson

With A Little Help From Our Friends

Our thanks this month to :

All volunteers who brought their narrowboats to the Bedford River Festival to create such a colourful display, in particular to Don and Jill Allison, who gave trips upstream on the River Great Ouse, almost to the planned B&MK Junction.

Nathan Arnold and his team at the Environment Agency for their swift responses and action in clearing a tree at the Bedford River Festival.(see p7 for full story)

Gemma Summerfield and Paul Williams at Halcrow, and Keith Malone, Trust volunteer photographer, for their work in creating the Trust new longitudinal cross section panel for our displays.

John Neale, for donating his garden and kitchen for the Trust's Heritage Open Days route walks in Milton Keynes, followed by the Members' BBQ and progress talk in the afternoon.

Steve Ashton and his team at URS for their constant help with improving the Trust's displays, particularly all the changes from the creation of the new B&MK Consortium.

James Griffin, Wyvern Shipping, for running VIP trips to enable invited guests from many backgrounds to meet people from other organisations involved in the project's educational, artistic, sport, leisure and tourism initiatives.

Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity and their partner organisation - Community Transport provider: Talk of the Town in Bedford, who ran a shuttle bus back from the Trust's Ridgmont walk. Also, Roy Sinfield, project manager for the Ridgmont Station restoration project who gave an in depth talk and tour of the building.

Ridgmont and Broughton & Milton Keynes Village Parish Councils, and the shops and pubs in Broughton who carry our ads for events and to the Ramblers and Heritage MK who collaborate on events.

Janice Jones and volunteers at MK Women and Work, for help with mailing our newsletters.

B&MK News

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Comments or articles for inclusion in the next edition should be sent to editor@b-mkwaterway.co.uk

2 New Directors For The Trust



Patrick Hall

Patrick Hall has lived in Bedfordshire for almost 50 years. He went to school in Bedford and, amongst other things, was at one time employed as Bedford Town Centre Coordinator. From 1997 until 2010 he served full time as Member of Parliament for Bedford & Kempston. He was active on a number of All Party Parliamentary Groups relating to health, town centre development and rail transport serving Bedford. He also sought to support the Bedford - Milton Keynes Waterway Trust by working to help smooth communication with officials, Ministers and Bedford's former elected Mayor.



John Best

John is a lifelong place-maker and place shaper, now committed to Milton Keynes and the projects that will keep it special.

In the mid-70s while living and working in North-east London he was for several years secretary of the Lee Valley Association, a community-led ginger group driving a sustainable vision for the linear park running the 23-mile length of the River Lee Navigation. He spent 36 years as a town planner and organisational manager, first in London and then, from 1996, in Milton Keynes where he spent five years as Chief Executive of Milton Keynes Council.

During his twelve years at MK Council he was, and remains an active champion of the Bedford-Milton Keynes Waterway project, seeing it as a major contribution to the sustainable green character of the city, and also a significant catalyst to forge more collaboration across the sub-region.

Links with University of Bedfordshire

The Bedford campus of the University of Bedfordshire, specialises in a number of programmes relevant to the goals of the B&MK. For example in Sport, Tourism, Education, and the Environment. University staff were introduced to the delights of the River Great Ouse at the Bedford River Festival with a number of staff taking advantage of Don and Jill's hospitality aboard their boat.

An outcome of the trip was a desire for all parties to have a boat which could be used for field trips by people of all ages; for company events; various elements of University students' courses, and for tourism.

A business proposal is being prepared for a Bedford boat to be used for such events with revenue options currently being examined. A number of other canal societies have their own boats so others have gone down this route before us. If you would like to be involved in planning this project, contact Marilyn.leask@beds.ac.uk

Marilyn Leask

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Marston Vale Innovation Park



“Preparation of an indicative masterplan and detailed landscape infrastructure plan for what will become Marston Vale Innovation Park is well on the way. The 15-hectare site is mostly owned by Bedford Borough Council and located just south of Bedford between the new dualled A421 and Wootton village. This location is a key gateway to the Bedford A421 Innovation Corridor, and to Bedford as a whole, and will complement the successful Priory Business Park, which is regarded as Bedford’s premier commercial location. A high-quality, innovation-focused, environmentally sound, exemplar Business Park is intended. It is envisaged that the Bedford Milton Keynes waterway will wind through the business park, starting life as a linear water feature. The emerging master plan illustrates this”

Paul Vann, Economic Development Manager (Growth)
Bedford Borough Council



1811 Descendants Search - Hopes and Frustrations

In the last edition of B&MK News we reported on the search for ancestors of the original signatories of the 1811 petition to build a canal from Bedford to the Grand Junction Canal. Alan Mayo has been on the case.

Significant progress has been made with the 1811 Descendants Search, but it has not been without its setbacks, with raised hopes followed by frustrations.

The immediate difficulty is to bridge the years from 1811 to 1838, when the Registration Act took effect. During these years, information is neither complete nor reliable. The Bedford Record Office is to be thanked for providing some valuable information for this period. The families listed were at least reasonably well off, so they were not tied to one place and young children (boys at least) could have been sent away to school. Thus the census records of family units are often fragmented at best, or even absent through being away travelling in Europe.

Most progress has been made with the family of John Foster of Brickhill House, who had sugar estates in Jamaica and was Lord of the Manor of Marston. The names Farrill, Fuller, Dawson, Suther and Thomas are in his direct descendant line, and also the names Pinhorn, Tucker and Darby are those of people who could be alive today. Actually contacting them is another matter, and whether they would accept our invitation is yet another.

If someone had married into a title, Burke's Peerage and Baronetcy would have done the lineage tracing work for us. A grand daughter of John Foster did marry into a baronetcy, but on closer investigation, they did not have any children -- so no title. Did anyone spot the name Fuller? That should be familiar to the people of Bedford.

Most descendants have been found away from Bedford. However, a lady living near Bedford has contacted us saying that she is a descendant of Charles Bailey. This information is being verified. Samuel Gifford did not have any descendants as he was a bachelor. The Robinsons were a family of medical practitioners, but the younger grandson "lived off his own means", and no children have been traced so far.

There is one known descendant, who is the thrice great grandson of William White, a corn merchant and the miller at Kempston Mill. Other names in the White line are Chisolm, Lovell and Arthur. White itself is a common name, but add in the possibility of a double barrelled name, Hale White, or a hyphenated name, Hale-White, and the difficulties of tracing multiply.

Little or no work has been done on the names John Rawlins, John Emery, Richard Leach and Charles Short, the mayor, so if there are any willing volunteers, please do not hesitate to step forward. Also, we would still like to hear from anyone who is a direct descendant, or if they know someone who is.

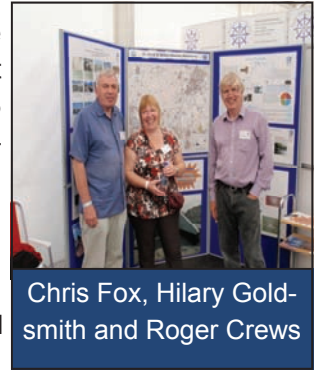
Alan J B Mayo

If you would like to volunteer to help or have any information, please contact : Alan Mayo tel : 01234 409737 or alanjbmayo@ntlworld.com

Spreading The Word at The Festivals

IWA Rally, Beale Park

The IWA rally on the River Thames brought in £141.70. and 15 new members including Mr K. Booyson who lives in Durban, South Africa and comes to England Every Year for a canal boat holiday.



Chris Fox, Hilary Goldsmith and Roger Crews

Woodworks

Woodworks is not a waterway festival, but a celebration of working with wood and trees. It is run by The Marston Vale Trust and held over two days in September at the Forest Centre, Marston Moretaine. MVT is one of our partners in the consortium and the route of the waterway goes across the vale. Although it was only local we still managed to gather six new members and a photo opportunity with the Mayor of Bedford.



Jenny Eardley and Mayor, Dave Hodgson

Jenny Eardley

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Bedford River Festival 2010



One of the highlights of the summer was the chance to show the flag to the residents of Bedford and beyond.



Our waterfront stand

Our team of volunteers recruited 22 new members and collected £166.40



Ken and Sue Deveson's boat 'Cleddau'

Ken And Sue Deveson kindly offered to display our banner.



B&MK Trustee, David Fowler being interviewed for Three Counties Radio

The Bedford River Festival is a great place for us to publicise the project.

The Tree That Disappeared

- Brilliant work by the Environment Agency

It was enormous, and it was just "not there" the next day.

We took our boat 'Starodavny' to Bedford for the River Festival. We had planned to do several trips up to the head of navigation in Kempston, taking various influential people to impress them with what a fantastic project the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway is.

Four weeks before the event we discovered a fairly substantial tree had fallen, blocking the river about half way up. We emailed our contact Amanda Spivack at the Environment Agency, who had given us a talk at our AGM about the Bedford Waterspace Strategy. She contacted their engineers and, when we did our trial run on Wednesday, we were delighted to see that the tree had duly been removed.

However, three quarters of a mile further on we discovered a monster of a willow tree completely blocking the whole width of the river. There was absolutely no way through. When we got back to Bedford we were lucky to find EA engineer, Tom Hamlin, in his van and talking on his phone to his boss. We explained the problem, told him about our intended VIP trips up to Kempston and pleaded with him to see if they could cut off the higher branches so that we could get round the main trunk of the tree.

Next day we asked our Project Officer Claire to phone EA and impress on them how important it was for us. She spoke to Nathan Arnold and discovered that they were already at work on the job. So that afternoon we did our second trial run. When we got to where the tree had been all we could find was this very large stump and a very large hole in the hedge. The entire enormous tree had just gone. They had not bothered trimming the top bits off. They had cut it off at the break point, hauled the whole thing out and dragged it away.

So a thousand 'thank yous' to EA. They really pulled the stops out to make sure we got through.



The offending stump

Don and Jill
NB Starodavny





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Ahoy There!

We know that many of our readers and supporters are not boaters. Some of the nautical terms boaters use may seem confusing, so here's a useful guide.

Ahoy

The first in a series of four letter words commonly exchanged by skippers as their boats approach one another.

Sill

Underwater concrete step in a lock on which boats are often left high and dry. Useful for testing the strength of a rudder.

Wash

Water disturbance produced by a speeding boat. Relieves the boredom for fishermen and helps to widen the canal.

Propeller

Underwater winch designed to wind up at high speeds any lines left hanging over the stern.

Going Aground

Mooring somewhat earlier than intended.

Galley

- Ancient: Aspect of seafaring associated with slavery.

- Modern: Aspect of seafaring associated with slavery.

Hatch

An opening in a deck leading to the cabin below with a cover designed to let water in while keeping fresh air out.

Leeward

The direction in which objects, liquids and other matter may be thrown without risk of re encountering them in the immediate future.

Life jacket

Any personal floatation device that will keep an individual who has fallen off a vessel, above water long enough to be run over by it or another rescue craft.

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