

Press Release

Embargo: Immediate

WATERWAY VISION

Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway story continues



Almost 40 representatives of community organisations experienced a canal-side view of the potential benefits which the planned B&MK Waterway could deliver to these towns and central Bedfordshire during three narrowboat cruises along a section of the Grand Union Canal in Milton Keynes this week (Weds 15th September).

James Griffin, managing director of Wyvern Shipping, had volunteered his boat *Ocean Princess* for the afternoon so that guests from special interest and community groups could get a waterside perspective of how a canal can enhance environmental, economic and recreational possibilities for a locality. Just as last year, demand was such that an extra cruise had to be scheduled.

Among the invited guests were the Deputy Mayor of Milton Keynes, Cllr Alan Richards, and Deputy Mayoress, Mrs Richards; Milton Keynes councillors; teachers and academics from Milton Keynes, University Centre Milton Keynes and University of Bedfordshire; representatives from Milton Keynes Parks Trust; British Waterways; Bedford Group of the Internal Drainage Boards; Ramblers' Association; as well as businesses and professionals with a special interest in the planned waterway.

The two-hour return cruise from Campbell Park to Great Linford also took in Pennyland Basin, where guests saw how a 1980s canal-side community had developed and matured, and where residents hope the basin will become a conservation area.

The proposed 26km B&MK Waterway will create the missing link between the Grand Union Canal at Milton Keynes to the Great Ouse at Bedford via a series of waterparks.

Jane Wolfson, chair of the B&MK Trust said: "Nearly 40 per cent of the adult population now spend some of their leisure time enjoying water-related recreation - and water is central to Bedford and Milton Keynes. The Trust and its partners believe the creation of the link, which has the full support of local and regional authorities, can be delivered sequentially via waterparks, thus improving the environment to maximise the economic and social benefits of the region."

Walking the route

The cruises followed a weekend of events tracing sections of the route in Milton Keynes and central Bedfordshire. Some thirty Trust members, ramblers and members of the public met at Ridgmont Station and trekked over 5 miles along the



planned route from the “cattle creep” beneath the M1 via Brogborough Hill to the Forest Centre, Marston Vale. This event took place in association with the Ramblers’ Bedfordshire Walking Festival and was supported by Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) who also provided a minibus to help walkers on their return journeys. A number of walkers made this a “low-carbon” day by making use of the Bedford-Bletchley line.

The following day in Milton Keynes, as part of the local Heritage Open Days, some fourteen people enjoyed two guided walks, 4 and 6 miles along local sections of the route from the Old Rectory at Broughton. This was followed by a BBQ and a progress update on the waterway project, which was attended by thirty-three people in the rectory grounds and hosted by B&MK Trust member John Neale.

ENDS



B&MK

BEDFORD &
MILTON KEYNES
WATERWAY

Notes to editors



Left to right:

David Foster	Chief Executive, The Parks Trust
Richard Glen	Waterspace strategist working on the Environment Agency's Bedford Waterspace study
Alex Constantinides	Assistant Director of Transport, Milton Keynes Council
Nick Fenwick	Assistant Director of Planning, Milton Keynes Council & Chair of MK Waterway Park Steering Group
James Griffin	Owner, Wyvern Shipping Company



Clockwise from left:

Cllr Alan Richards	Deputy Mayor & Linford North Ward Councillor, Milton Keynes Council
Dr Keith Straughan	Dean, University Centre Milton Keynes
Cllr Mike Galloway	Wolverton Ward Councillor & Development Control & Environment Portfolio, Milton Keynes Council
Graham Mabbutt	Director, Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust
Nicole Ioannou	Project Officer for the Funion Bargee playboat, MK Play Association



Jane Wolfson, Chair, B&MK Waterway Trust, and Richard Wood, Director, B&MK Waterway Trust, giving a progress talk to Trust volunteers and members after the Heritage Open Days Walks last weekend.



For further details contact

Name: Neil Hayes, External Communications Director, B&MK Waterway Trust

Phone: 01234 826216

Mobile: 07968 097359

Email: Nhayes@aol.com or media@b-mkwaterway.co.uk

Website: www.b-mkwaterway.co.uk