



WILTS & BERKS CANAL TRUST

Welcome to “On The Button”

Firstly, apologies for a “break in service” as we missed the April to July OTBs as the Trust has had no Head of Communications. A newly formed Comms Team (made up of Exec committee members) have made this edition happen but it would be great if a volunteer would like to step forward and take on the collation task in the coming months (with support from the Comms Team). If you are interested in finding out more please email tessa.lanstein@wbct.org.uk or speak to your branch chair.

Nb DragonFly & The Mary Archard

Over the early summer we have received less rainfall and so for a short period Dragonfly couldn't go on the canal, however, water levels have recovered and we are back on track. Trips have been successful and will be continuing from Waitrose at Wichelstowe, Swindon for the coming month. If you need to check timings please head to our website: <https://www.wbct.org.uk/experience/take-a-boat-trip>

The Mary Archard has been at Templars Firs, Royal Wootton Bassett recently and will be back there again in September (see Diary dates below). This boat has a drop down ramp which allows passengers in wheelchairs to enjoy a trip on the water



History was made when the two trip boats: The Mary Archard and Nb Dragonfly met for the first time earlier this month at Wichelstowe, Swindon in preparation for the trips being offered at the Wichelstowe Games. Both boats look beautiful – see the video over on our Facebook.

We've been getting great feedback and receiving lots of pictures of people enjoying their trips. Please send more to dave.maloney@wbct.org.uk

Donations

We have been extremely grateful for the donation from Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes who provided the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust with a £1,000 donation to go towards The Mary Archard boat trips. The Chippenham Folk Festival needs a specific event-built slipway each year and this donation funded the construction for this year. Thank you again to both Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes for this extremely generous donation and to volunteer Paul Tucker who initiated the request

to Barratt/David Wilson Homes. Pictured (L-R): Brian Stovold, Daniel Pavely, Jock MacKenzie.



Positions Vacant

Head of Accounting:

- The Trust plans to upgrade its financial management toolset and engage a new Head of Accounting. The selected candidate will be experienced in the use of Sage Accounts for the production of regular reports for management and would be a member of the Executive Committee, reporting to the CEO. This is a part-time post which might well suit a recently retired person looking to remain engaged with the community by working for a charitable cause. If you (or someone you know) could offer 2 days a week on a voluntary basis please contact gordon.olson@wbct.org.uk to discuss the role in more detail.

Other tasks that WBCT currently require help with are:

- reviewing local planning applications along the canal line to allow us to ensure new development doesn't prevent canal restoration along our protected line
- creation of Engineering & CAD designs to support reconstruction / restoration of canal infrastructure;
- keeping our website layout and usability

- in good shape (Joomla experience required here)
- pulling together information and form filling for fundraising bids
- physical help outdoors is always required with our work parties; please see diary dates below for opportunities to get involved in your local area.

Please contact

patricia.clements@wbct.org.uk if you could help with any of the tasks listed above.

Summer Activities

Community Engagement:

Over in Melksham, Calne & Chippenham we received lovely news that the residents at Stainsbridge House, (assisted living for those with Dementia) have been helping the Peterborough Arms grow vegetables in the Dauntsey Lock Canal Community Centre's vegetable plot



Working parties from our West Vale Branch have been joined by Nationwide Building Society and Arval staff on "volunteer days" as what was known as Pocket Park, but now renamed Canal Park, is undertaking a change to deliver an improved biodiversity plan for the former canal

stretch on the southern edge of Shrivensham near Swindon. The plan includes a woodland sanctuary, meadows, hedging and an information zone on a four-acre site off Stainswick Lane, with a longer-term ambition to re-water 600 metres of the old line



We've seen 7th Swindon Scout Group using their canoes and spending a great evening having fun and learning how to stay safe on the water near Beaven's Bridge, Wichelstowe, Swindon



Games & Festivals

The inaugural Wichelstowe Games took place this weekend in Swindon. Profits from this event will be donated to the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust for the East Wichel slipway project that will provide a facility for Dragonfly to be lifted from the water for maintenance and enable local canoe & paddle clubs to enter the water safely; making it possible for a wider range of people to become involved with water under safer conditions. There will be a full report in September's edition.

Melksham Food & River Festival:
Saturday 31st Aug – Sunday 1st Sept
1030-1700hrs. Enjoy a fun-filled day out at the Melksham Food & River Festival in King George V Park. There's lots to do for the whole family: boat trips, canoeing on the River Avon, a children's funfair, face painting, rides on Frankie the canal horse, cookery demonstrations, live music and many artisan food and produce stalls to browse, plus plenty of hot food & drink stalls and onsite bar for whenever you need some refreshment. <http://www.melkshamfoodandriverfestival.co.uk>



Wildlife on the canal

As readers will know, biodiversity is a very important part of the Trust's mission and objectives as we strive to keep the canal looking tidy and providing an environment where wildlife can flourish. Members and supporters are sharing photos via our social media sites, including this lovely photo of cygnets at Templar's Firs, Royal Wootton Bassett





Many photos were also entered in the Trust's online Photography Competition; the winner was Gary Sumner with his photos of the Kingshill section in Swindon



National Heritage Open Day Saturday 14th September.....3 different opportunities

The Sack House in Wantage will be open 10-2pm. See Diary Dates below for further details

On the Melkham, Calne & Chippenham line at Pewsham visitors will be able to see the Pewsham Locks complex where restoration is taking place on this industrial site in the heart of the Wiltshire countryside. With three locks a dry dock and the remains of a number of industrial unit visitors will also be able to chat to volunteers about our aspirations for this site and enjoy refreshments at our Pop-up

Café. Mini-buses will run from the Buttercross in Chippenham to the Pewsham Locks site. Less able members of the public most welcome as the tow path is flat and the mini-bus accommodating.

Or join us for a walk along the Chippenham branch line and the route of the main line to the Bell Inn Lacock for lunch. Departing the Buttercross in Chippenham at 10am, with estimated return into Chippenham by 2pm, the walk starts by tracking the route of the Chippenham branch line where we view the site of the Wilts & Berks Canal brickworks and the wonderful environment that has grown up around the old clay pits which are now ponds; the group can see behind the scenes at Pewsham Top Lock; hear about how the Canadian sappers practiced their demolition techniques in the late 1930's and learn about the Pewsham Locks project and how it will bring back to life this industrial area in the heart of the Wiltshire countryside.

There'll be a stop for refreshments at the branch Pop Up Café and visitors can take a trip on The Mary Archard down to Double Bridge (water levels/ weather permitting). Finally, the group will walk the rest of the line from the end of the watered canal to the Bell Inn for lunch before taking the minibus back to Chippenham.

The party numbers are limited to 10 at a cost of £20 per head to include refreshments at Pewsham Wharf, Ploughman's (or similar) lunch at the Bell Inn, transport back to Chippenham. All monies raised will be donated to the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust

Walk will be led by Dave Maloney: Chairman of the Melksham, Calne and

Chippenham Branch and Executive Officer responsible for sustainability and usage of the Wilts & Berks Canal. For more details and to discuss dietary needs please contact dave.maloney@wbct.org.uk

Diary Dates for activities along the canal

Please note that you do not need to be a member to attend these events, so come along and find out more about our activities and how you can support us.....

East Vale

- Find out more about how you can get involved with WBCT by attending your local branch meeting: Wednesday 4th September 8pm at East Hanney Royal British Legion, Mill Orchard, East Hanney, Wantage, Oxfordshire OX12 0JH. Contact brian.stovold@wbct.org.uk for more details
- Join the branch working party sessions for some exercise and fresh air whilst helping to keep the canal and towpath well maintained: Monday 2nd and Saturdays 14th & 28th September. Contact jon.miles@wbct.org.uk for more details
- Heritage Open Day 14th September 10am -2pm: The Sack House, The Wharf, Mill Street, Wantage, Oxon OX12 9GF. Contact brian.stovold@wbct.org.uk for more details.

West Vale

- Find out more about how you can get involved with WBCT by attending your local branch meeting: West Vale branch meeting 4th September 8pm at The

- Prince of Wales, 16 High Street, Shrivenham SN6 8AF. Contact graham.banks@wbct.org.uk for more details.
- Join the branch working party sessions for some exercise and fresh air whilst helping to keep the canal and towpath well maintained: Wednesdays throughout September. Contact graham.banks@wbct.org.uk for more details.

Swindon

- Find out more about how you can get involved with WBCT by attending your local branch meeting: Swindon branch meeting 4th September 1930hrs, The Lounge, United Reformed Church Hall, Upham Road, Swindon SN3 1DH. Contact john.farrow@wbct.org.uk for more details
- Second hand book sale 6th September 1000-1500hrs at the Information Centre in Regent Circus, Swindon (opposite the library).

Royal Wootton Bassett

- Find out more about how you can get involved with WBCT by attending your local branch meeting: Royal Wootton Bassett branch meeting 2nd September 1930hrs, The Angel Hotel, 47 High Street, Royal Wootton Bassett SN4 7AQ. Contact jenny.stratton@wbct.org.uk for more details
- Take a trip on The Mary Archard at Royal Wootton Bassett 7th and 8th September 1000-1800hrs <https://www.wbct.org.uk/experience/trust-events/eventdetail/144462/mary-archard-boat-trips-at-royal-wootton-bassett>
- Join the branch working party sessions for some exercise and

fresh air whilst helping to keep the canal and towpath well maintained: Wednesday sessions throughout September. Contact john.bower@wbct.org.uk for more details.

Melksham, Calne & Chippenham (MCC)

- Melksham Food and River Festival 31st August & 1st September

<http://www.melkshamfoodandriverfestival.co.uk>

- Find out more about how you can get involved with WBCT by attending your local branch meeting: Melksham, Calne & Chippenham (MCC) branch meeting 3rd September 1945hrs at the Rachel Fowler Centre, Market Place, Melksham SN12 6EX. Park in the nearby Kings Street carpark. Contact john.goring@wbct.org.uk for more details.

- Heritage Open Day 14th September: Chippenham to Lacock walk from 10am at the Buttercross Chippenham (see article above)
- Join the branch working party sessions for some exercise and fresh air whilst helping to keep the canal and towpath well maintained: mid-week sessions throughout September and Saturdays 8th & 29th September. Contact raycanter@btinternet.com for more details.

Next issue will be issued mid September – enjoy the remainder of the Summer!