

Wilts & Berks Canal Trust Foxham & Lyneham Branch

September 2015 Newsletter

Hello Everyone

Welcome to your branch newsletter which will come out about once every two months to keep you all updated with what is going on in the branch.

You will still receive agendas and minutes for the branch meetings, but we hope that the additional newsletter will make easier reading and encourage all members to join in different activities.

Our new Branch Chairman

At our recent Branch AGM earlier this month, Ian Gilbert was elected unanimously as our new Chairman. He introduces himself below to all branch members and I am sure that we can look forward to a very productive and satisfying few years ahead, with real progress made in our section.

I joined the W&BCT as a member of the Foxham & Lyneham Branch in February this year, with a view to doing something to help the working party bring the canal and the Peterborough Arms back into public use. I've worked every Sunday (with a few minor exceptions!) since then and have been most impressed with the enthusiasm and energy of every-one who comes. So much so, that when I was asked if my name could be put forward to stand for election as Chair on Andrew's retirement, I was pleased to accept.

I retired three years ago from a lifetime in Information Technology and am an active member of the Lions Club of Chippenham. I have little knowledge of Canals, except what I've learned this year, but I do live locally (I can nearly see the pub from my house of 21 years), and have been infected with the commitment of the working party.

As the new Branch Chair, I'm really looking forward to help promote the construction, restoration and maintenance of the waterway and its fullest use, in whatever way I can.

Ian Gilbert



Canal Boat Launch

Branch 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 Somerset Coalfield to the market towns in Wiltshire and Oxfordshire. 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.



George launching his boat in the canal by the Peterborough Arms by kind permission of Rachael Banyard

The Wiltshire Donkey Show

One of the two local events the branch attended this year was the Wiltshire Donkey Show in Dauntsey held at the beginning of September. The connection with the canal is

that donkeys were used on our canal both to “puddle” the clay to make it waterproof, and also to haul some of the barges.

Attendance figures were high at an estimated 450, and branch members, including some of the Working Party, were able to raise the profile of the canal and the Trust.

Nancy Collingborn had arranged for a special donkey/canal themed cake (see photo below) to be made which was raffled and made in excess of £100.



Working Party News

The working party meets most Sundays and is currently carrying out clearance work on the Foxham stretch as preparation for maintenance and repair work to the spill way.

Volunteers are always welcome and there are a number of projects, together with towpath maintenance work in the pipeline. Please contact Gordon, the Working Party Organiser, for more information.

The Peterborough Arms

We are regularly using the Peterborough Arms for Branch meetings and it is in use for other Trust meetings and events. It is great to see the building in use again.

Progress is being made with the repairs and refurbishments with volunteers painting the community room a new colour scheme as designed by member Jill Smith from Dauntsey Lock. The garden and hedge is being kept tidy, again by volunteers, especially George Schmidt, and there are some ideas being developed about improving the “kerb appeal” for next year... so watch this space!

Quiz Nights

The branch holds a monthly Quiz Night at the Cross Keyes in Bradenstoke on the second Sunday in most months. These quizzes are set by Di Smurthwaite and compered by Rachael Banyard and they are great fun, if a little taxing on the brain. The next quiz is on Sunday 11th October and starts at 7.30 pm

Trust AGM

The W&BCT AGM is being held this year on Saturday October 17th at Royal Wootton Bassett Memorial Hall starting at 2 pm.

How you can help

As a branch in 2016, we are planning to attend as many local events, including village fetes, as possible. We also are going to increase the amount of planned maintenance we are carrying out on previously restored sections of the canal. We are planning to identify and map out wildflora species along the canal. We need to hold coffee mornings, afternoon teas, sponsored walks etc to raise funds for the canal restoration.

All these activities need your support either by helping to organise, or by coming along on the day. There is plenty of choice from active days as a member of the working party to a few hours manning the Branch stand at your local fete. Please get in touch and offer your help.

Finally

The next Branch Meeting will be on Tuesday 17th November at the Peterborough Arms starting at 7.30 pm. Hope to see you then.

Branch Officers

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