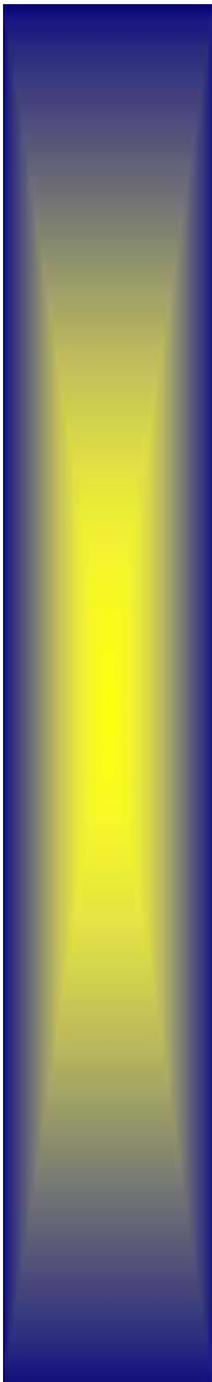




Registered Charity
No. 299595



Annual Report 2009-2010



Mission Statement

Restoring in partnership the Wilts & Berks Canal through Wiltshire, Swindon and Oxfordshire.

Charitable Aims

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, Wiltshire, the River Thames near Abingdon, Oxfordshire and the Thames and Severn Canal near Cricklade, Wiltshire.

Objectives

1. Convince local authorities, government departments and local organisations of the benefits and feasibility of the proposed restoration.
2. Convince landowners, local commerce and the general public of the merits of restoration.
3. Secure the route of the waterway and adequate water supplies.
4. Establish the Trust as a key member of a partnership with local authorities and other bodies that will facilitate restoration of the canal.
5. Implement an agreed programme for full restoration of the canal.

Legal Structure

The Trust is a Registered Charity, No. 299595, and a Non-Profit-Distributing Company Limited by Guarantee, Registered in England and Wales No. 2267719. Its Registered Office Address is: Island House, Moor Road, Chesham. HP5 1WA

Patron

HRH The Duchess of Cornwall

President

Dr David Fletcher CBE

Vice-Presidents

Neil Rumbol (Founder)
Roger Crapper

Trustees during the year

Chairman
Vice Chairman
Vice Chairman
Secretary
Treasurer
Directors

John Laverick
Alan Norris
Luke Walker
Christopher Coyle
Peter Kinsman
Raymond Aldridge
Matt Allard
Rachael Banyard
Richard Bellamy
Martin Buckland
Dave Cook
George Eycott
Colin Fletcher
John Gantlett
Clare Guy
Douglas Harris
Robert Jones
Michael Lang
Mike Lee
Kenneth Oliver
Tim Pyatt
Brian Roberts
Brian Stovold
Jennifer Stratton
Edward Thomas

President's Foreword

The opening of Double Bridge at the end of May last year, by Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall, was not just a celebration of the completion of that particular structure, as worthy as that might have been, but was a celebration of all that the Trust has achieved over many years. This fact was marked when as well as the current team who were responsible for the restoration of the bridge, being presented to Her Royal Highness at the canal side at Pewsham, so too were many of the past volunteers and founders of the Trust. Their earlier work having started a process which will not end until a new leisure resource and wildlife trail for the twenty first century has been created right across Wiltshire, Swindon and Oxfordshire.

The reception so kindly hosted at Bowood House afterwards was also a huge success, it gave Her Royal Highness a relaxing opportunity to chat to the diverse range of volunteers and partners working on the restoration of her local canal. We were all impressed by her charm and enthusiasm, and are just so pleased we have such an influential ally for the future.

The exciting prospect of boats once again reaching Melksham from the Kennet & Avon Canal has been brought considerably closer through the decision made earlier this year by the Partnership to make 'The Melksham Link' a high priority project. To start such a project in this 200th anniversary year of the opening of both the Wilts & Berks Canal and the Kennet & Avon Canal and to target completion for 2014, the 100th anniversary of the Act of Abandonment, is just the sort of inspirational thought I have come to expect from the volunteer managers of the Trust.

It is interesting to reflect as we enter an era of financial austerity following the world banking crisis that government are now moving towards a much greater involvement of volunteers and community. The Trust's well honed skills in this should stand us in good stead, and gives me considerable optimism for the future.

Dr David Fletcher CBE



Duchess of Cornwall opening Double Bridge (Mike Matthews)

Chairman's Report

Through the continuing and unstinting efforts of our active volunteers giving freely of their time to drive forward the Wilts & Berks Canal Project, this has been another very successful year for the Trust.

The beginning of the year saw major political changes within Wiltshire, with the disappearance of the County Council and the District Councils and the formation of a new unitary authority – Wiltshire Council. Particular thanks are due to the former North Wilts District Council which had done so much to promote the project by hosting the Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership.

The Trust was delighted to learn that the new Wiltshire Council proposed to take on this hosting role and to engage the services of a Canal Officer to manage the Partnership and coordinate the issue of all canals across Wiltshire. It is entirely appropriate that in these stringent financial times the cost of this provision is not borne by the Council Tax payer but by voluntary contributions from all of the Partnership members.

One of the first decisions made by the reorganised Partnership was that the 'Melksham Link Project' should be afforded the highest priority, with the aim of opening a footpath, cycleway and navigation into the centre of Melksham by 2014 to mark the one hundredth anniversary of the Act of Abandonment of the Wilts & Berks Canal.

Following his appointment as the first Canals Officer at Wiltshire Council, former Trust Chief Executive Ken Oliver continued as a trustee until his line managers identified a possible conflict of interest arising from his role as a council employee dealing with third parties who interface with the project. Trust Council of Management reluctantly accepted the need for Ken to resign as a director and trustee whilst at the same time unanimously agreeing that his appointment at Wiltshire Council was in the best interest of the project. Ken was thanked for his huge input over a number of years, first as Trust Chairman and then as Chief Executive Officer.

Between storms the day before and the day after, the sun shone on the 26th May when our Patron, Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall, spent a day with the Trust. In the morning, Double Bridge at Pewsham was declared fully restored and open by the cutting of a ribbon to release the first vessels to navigate this part of the canal in 100 years – several canoes paddled by the Wiltshire Youth Canoe Club from Melksham. In the early afternoon Her Royal Highness attended a reception at Bowood where the Trust was able to entertain a whole range of guests who had, or who could, support the project in one way or another. The thanks of the Trust were forwarded to The President of the Partnership, Lord Lansdowne, who made facilities available for the event at Bowood Golf & Country Club at generously discounted rates.

Four new volunteers have this year been welcomed to Council as co-opted members. Matt Allard (Communications Director), Dave Cook (Projects Director East), John Gantlett (Land Negotiations Director) and Tim Pyatt (Trip Boats Director). Despite these successes, the one vacancy that has proven difficult to fill is that of 'Fundraising Coordination Director'.

At one time a duty of the Trust CEO, responsibility for Health & Safety legislation temporarily became a collective responsibility shared by all directors. Trust Council of Management appointed consultant 'Listed Building Consultancy' (LBS) to rewrite H&S documentation to fit the revised management structure of the Trust. David Stirling, the principal partner of LBS, has stated that on completion of his commission he planned to offer his services to Council as a volunteer 'Health & Safety Advisor'.

Because of the pressures of their day jobs, Richard Bellamy stood down from the very busy role of Communications Director and Clare Guy stood down as Environment Director. So that his expertise should not be completely lost to the Trust, Richard was persuaded to continue to serve on Council as 'Director Without Portfolio'. The Trust is grateful for all of the volunteer hours put in by both Richard and Clare in their former roles.

Half way through the year the Trust launched its splendid new Web Site which had been remodelled by the volunteer efforts of Matt Allard ably assisted by Sue Paine.

Towards the end of the year the Trust was given notice by Wootton Bassett Town Council to vacate the office premises rented from them as the space was needed for an office reorganisation. After some months of searching, suitable accommodation was found at the Spittleborough Farmhouse office suite, near to Junction 16 of the M4 and over one weekend the whole of the Trust office was moved to this new location.

This year being the 200th anniversary of the opening of the Wilts & Berks Canal, Council decided to celebrate the event at Wichelstowe (the new southern suburb of Swindon) and at Semington Junction. With an extension to the navigable length available at Wichelstowe a boat centred event was thought appropriate. At the west end of the waterway a ceremonial cutting of the first turf of the Melksham Link Project is hopefully within our sights to achieve. Both events are being planned for early September.

John Laverick



Reception at Bowood attended by the Duchess of Cornwall following the opening of Double Bridge (Doug Small)

Accounts

Statement of Financial Activities for Year ending 31 March 2010

	<u>Unrestricted</u> <u>funds</u> <u>£</u>	<u>Designated</u> <u>funds</u> <u>£</u>	<u>Restricted</u> <u>funds</u> <u>£</u>	<u>Total this</u> <u>year</u> <u>£</u>	<u>Total last</u> <u>year</u> <u>£</u>
<u>Incoming resources</u>					
Donations	14,334		63,227	77,561	94,227
Investment income	284	78	931	1,293	8,301
Income from charitable trading	4,378		204	4,582	7,230
Members Subscriptions	17,898			17,898	19,510
Grants	1,815		5,019	6,834	29,551
Landfill Tax Credits			3,122	3,122	0
Tax refunds	4,627		1,000	5,627	5,395
Total incoming resources	43,336	78	73,503	116,917	164,214
<u>Expenditure</u>					
Restoration	14,551	8,640	35,411	58,602	65,541
Fund raising and publicity	14,054	783	982	15,819	14,982
Management & Administration	5,047	122	33,097	38,266	60,753
Total expenditure	33,652	9,545	69,490	112,687	141,276
<u>Transfer between funds</u>	(11,700)	25,176	(13,476)	0	0
Net movement in funds	(2,016)	15,709	(9,463)	4,230	22,938
<u>Fund balances brought forward</u>	41,026	36,351	139,089	216,466	193,528
<u>Fund balances carried forward</u>	39,010	52,060	129,626	220,696	216,466

Accounts (continued)

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2010

	<u>Total this</u> <u>year</u> <u>£</u>	<u>Total last</u> <u>year</u> <u>£</u>
Total fixed assets	25,373	18,829
<u>Current assets</u>		
Stocks and work in progress	3,482	3,938
Debtors	8,261	4,908
Short term investments and deposits	152,967	171,676
Cash at bank and in hand	45,591	35,902
Total current assets	<hr/> 210,301	<hr/> 216,424
Short term creditors	14,978	18,787
Net current assets/(liabilities)	<hr/> 195,323	<hr/> 197,637
Net assets	<hr/> 220,696	<hr/> 216,466
Restricted income funds	129,626	139,089
Designated Funds	52,060	36,351
Unrestricted income funds	39,010	41,026
<u>Total funds</u>	<hr/> 220,696	<hr/> 216,466

Notes to Accounts

1. These financial statements have been extracted from the set of accrual based accounts prepared for submission to the Charity Commission. An examination of those accounts has been carried out by our accountants, Morris Owen, in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. A full set of those accounts is available on request and for a small administration fee.

2. The definitions of the categories of funds are as follows:-

Unrestricted - Those funds that the trustees should spend on any of the charity's purposes.

Restricted - Those funds that the trustees are obliged to spend on only particular purposes.

Designated - Those funds which the trustees have earmarked for particular purposes.

3. Landfill Tax credits have resumed this year and £3,195 has been received from Crapper & Sons.

4. The total of Designated Funds has risen from £36,351 to £52,060 due mainly to the purchase of Fixed Assets of £14,176 less depreciation charges of £8,031 and the transfer of £10,000 from the unrestricted general fund to the Designated Land Purchase Fund.

5. The Fixed Assets of £25,373 are made up of Land at cost of £8,062, Plant and Machinery at a depreciated value of £15,930, Boats at a depreciated value of £756 and office furniture and equipment at a depreciated value of £625.

6. Debtors at the end of this year consist of Gift Aid Tax refund of £2,943, VAT refund of £2,823 VAT (both from HMRC) and sundry prepayments of £2,944.

7. The charity had two part time paid employees at the end of this year.

8. There has been no remuneration or other benefits paid by the charity to the charity's trustees, or people connected with them, other than £3,498 to Waterways Consultancy for two months' services of our Chief Executive Officer who was also a trustee. His contract terminated at the end of May 2009 on his appointment as Canal Officer with Wiltshire Council. The charity has not replaced him.

9. Other than Note 8 above, there have been no transactions undertaken by (or on behalf of) the charity in which a trustee or connected person has a material interest.

Grants & Donations

Once again, the Trust would like to register its thanks to all those who have contributed to funding projects; some of the major funding sources are listed below. This list in no way ignores all of the smaller organisations, individuals and trusts who have contributed to the restoration of the Canal.

E H Bird
Braunston Marina Ltd
D E Brownlow
M Buckland
Crapper & Sons Landfill Ltd
Bill Hunt in memory
B M Malsberger
Peterborough Arms
Swindon Borough Council
Dr E Tull - Estate
The Underwood Trust
C Wardley
Wiltshire Council
J Yearon

Restoration Progress

The Trust has organised its work into four areas broadly in line with the relevant Local Authority districts. Each area has a Director responsible for managing the projects.

West (Colin Fletcher)

Forest Farm and Queenfield Farm. About half a mile of canal on these two farms continues to be managed on a care & maintenance basis with volunteers keeping the towpath clear. The completion of the rebuilding of Double Bridge took place in April & May 2009. The fully restored bridge was opened on May 26th by our patron, HRH the Duchess of Cornwall.

Naish Hill to Pewsham Locks. A fundraising programme for a £90,000 project to rewater the length between Double Bridge and Pewsham Locks was started in September 2009. Sufficient funds have now been raised to allow physical work to start in April 2010. Buried locks that had been damaged during explosives training in the second world war at Pewsham have been cleaned out and their condition investigated.



A new sign on the A4 showing the canal crossing (Doug Small)

Calne Lock and rewatered section. This widely used length of canal is maintained by our volunteers and kept in a good state of repair. During November and December 2009 clearance started on a thickly wooded area at the end of the navigable section. This work was boosted by the presence of the WRG forestry group.

Foxham. Using the Waterway Recovery Group's three-tonne excavator, most of the wingwalls at the lower end of Foxham Upper Lock were exposed to enable repair of the brickwork. By the end of March the offside wall was close to completion, and a start was made on the towpath side wall. Also with the use of the excavator, a significant leak in the canal channel within Elm Farm – which had defeated several previous attempts at repair over recent years – was successfully sealed. The canal channel was re-watered to approximately 200mm below the historic level – and drew positive comment from local people about the improved appearance.



The pound above Foxham upper lock holding water (Luke Walker)

Dauntsey. Working with the landowner, the Trust's volunteers have continued to maintain the canal towpath on both sides of the B4069. Approximately 300m of the towpath hedge west of the B4069 has been laid this year.

North (Luke Walker)

Lower Waite Farm. Work has continued on the canal section, clearing the channel of vegetation and removing tree stumps. A good start has been made on clearing the chamber of Lock 1. The towpath is being maintained and has become popular with walkers. The design solution for Lock 2 has been developed, and proposes realignment of 160m of the road to meet the requirements of Wiltshire Council's Highways Department. The drawings of that alignment formed part of an application for Planning Consent, which was nearly ready for submission by the end of the year. A Trust volunteer used the engineering drawings, and their knowledge of the site from having worked there, to build a scale model of the proposal. The model will be very valuable in helping Council officers, potential funders, and others, to understand the scheme. We are indebted to an honorary Consulting Engineer from the Inland Waterways Association for the design solution, and grateful to the relevant officers of Wiltshire Council for their constructive advice.



Work in progress at Seven Locks (Luke Walker)



Culvert above lock 1 at Seven Locks (Luke Walker)

Seven Locks – Locks 3 and 4. Progress has been made on the landscaping either side of these two lock chambers, the towpath alongside has been maintained by our volunteers this year.



Lock 4 with completed brickwork (Doug Small)

Templars Firs. Our local volunteers have continued to maintain this section – it remains a popular amenity.

Chaddington. Landscaping around the new spillway has continued. Work to reopen the towpath and to clear the canal channel for re-watering has made good progress.



Chaddington Spillweir now structurally complete (Doug Small)

Central (Ray Aldridge)

Hayes Knoll Lock. Progress has been made with clearance of the lock chamber and in taking delivery of some of the materials necessary to reconstruct the lock chamber walls. Work methods and timing have taken into account the presence of Great Crested Newts on this site.

Latton Basin Project. Regular work parties have continued to conserve the structures on this significant heritage project.

Moredon. A project was started in 2008 to clear the towpath on a section of the canal in the Ray Valley – funded by Big Lottery Fund/BBC Breathing Places. The work was completed during the year.



Work in progress at Moredon (Doug Small)

East (Dave Cook)

Steppingstone Lane. Work has continued at Steppingstone Lane bridge throughout the year, starting in Easter 2009 with a wrg (Waterway Recovery Group) two week camp which installed and filled gabions with stone recycled from a local MOD base as well as completing the brickwork on the parapet walls. During the coming year the approaches to the bridge will be completed and it is hoped to re-open the bridge to 'bridleway traffic' during 2010, the coping stones will be installed as soon as they have been procured.



Work at Steppingstone Lane Bridge (Doug Small)



Steppingstone Lane bridge nearing completion (Matt Allard)

Savernake Brake. Fencing work has been completed as required by the lease conditions and initial discussions have taken place to try to acquire the southerly half of this section of the canal line.

Childrey. Planning permission has been obtained for the construction of a new spillweir at the eastern end to control the water levels and work has commenced with completion expected in the autumn of 2010.



Preparation for the spillweir work at Childrey (David Cook)

Childrey/West Challow border. Work continued on the improvement of the towpath to a permissive path. A seat was installed behind the graveyard which is very popular with the village residents. Preparatory work commenced for the construction of foundations for a temporary bridge to be installed in order to allow the bridge itself to be restored. The temporary bridge is already owned by the Trust and is in storage awaiting the go ahead. Planning permission was applied for in late 2009 but delayed pending a fresh water vole survey. This was undertaken in the spring as part of the regular BBOWT surveys and final permission is currently pending but expected soon. We have a drawing of the bridge in 1914 with which to design the replacement and this is intended to be a project for 2011.

Communications

It has been an exceptionally busy year for the communications team starting with the challenges of covering the visit by HRH Duchess of Cornwall to Double Bridge at Pewsham and Bowood as well as a complete restructuring of the Trust's web site, while continuing to present the project at a large number of events both locally and nationally. Matt Allard has set up the new web site while Christine Hardisty has been working on press and public relations. The events team of John Minns, Doug Small and Keith Walker not only represent the Trust at events but also look after the equipment and produce presentation displays used by other members. During the year the Trust has been to the IWA Campaign Rally at Chesterfield, the Braunston Historic Boat Rally, the IWA National Festival at Ratcliffe-on-Soar, as well as many other events along the line of the Wilts & Berks Canal.



Display marquee at Chesterfield campaign rally (Doug Small)

Dragonfly continues to be published quarterly for all members and has had a number of guest editors pending a permanent appointment. The technical facility for the electronic newsletter has been restored and it is hoped that the monthly updates to subscribers will be started again during 2010.

Land Ownership

The Trust is conscious that its restoration activities are usually carried out by kind permission of the landowners concerned. The Trust wishes to take this opportunity to thank those landowners who have assisted the Trust in its aims by giving such permission. The Trust also wishes to remind all members and workers of the need to respect the landowner's rights when allowed on to such land.

The Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership

I am very pleased that the Partnership continues to grow, and we have been delighted to welcome four new members this year.

The implementation of One Council for Wiltshire has allowed the Partnership to have again an officer working on behalf of Partners and I am pleased to welcome Ken Oliver as Canal Officer, working as part of Wiltshire Council's Countryside team.

In June 2009 the Partnership agreed to promote the Melksham Link as a priority project to connect the Kennet & Avon Canal to the River Avon in Melksham. Much work has been carried out on the design proposals and plans are in place for local consultations. Project partners Swindon Borough Council have enabled significant restoration of the canal as an integral part of the Wichelstowe development and, after years of planning, it is exciting to see the new canal being constructed. Further extension of the canal eastwards will see the waterway constructed very close to Nationwide's headquarters.



New bridge and towpath on the Wichelstowe development (Doug Small)

The restored canal corridor will allow safe cycling on the towpath and Sustrans are helping to identify strategic parts of the route. Canoe England are also working to bring some activity to those sections already in water.

It is very encouraging that, against a difficult economic climate, so much is continuing to be achieved and I should like to thank all partners for their continuing support.

Members of the Partnership at March 2010:

British Waterways
Canoe England
Cooper Tires
Cotswold Canals Trust
Cricklade Town Council
Environment Agency
Inland Waterways Association
Kennet & Avon Canal Trust
Melksham Town Council
Melksham Trust
Melksham Without Parish Council

Nationwide Building Society
Oxfordshire County Council
Swindon Borough Council
Sustrans
Thames Water Utilities Ltd
Vale of White Horse District Council
Waterways Trust
Wilts & Berks Canal Trust
Wiltshire Council
Wootton Bassett Town Council

*Fleur de Rhé-Philippe
Partnership Chairman*