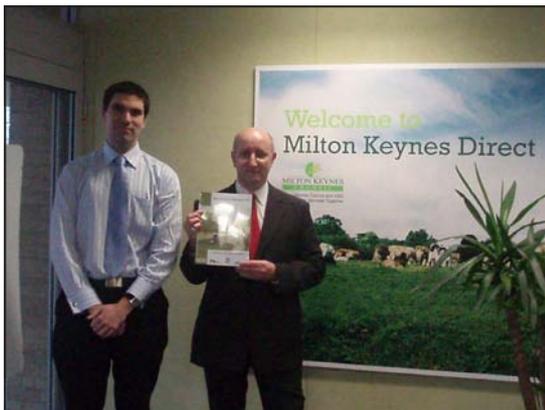




## Waterway Park Plans Await Decision

On Jan 5th, the Outline Planning application for the Waterway Park was submitted to Milton Keynes Council and MK Partnership (which is the planning authority for the expansion areas of MK). The planning application consisted of a simple form attached to a map showing the proposed location of the Waterway Park, together with a variety of supporting paperwork.



Paul Williams of Halcrow and John Bint with the planning application

This included:

A Planning Application Statement, covering the proposed development and the planning framework, design & access, community involvement, and sustainability.

An Environmental Statement for the project - some several hundred pages thick - covering:

- Water resources
- Biodiversity
- Soil and geology
- Landscape and visual impact
- Cultural heritage
- Socio-economic effects and land-use
- Traffic and accessibility,
- Noise
- Air quality and climate change
- Interactive and cumulative effects
- Services & Utilities.

A Flood Risk Assessment, demonstrating that the proposals for the canalisation of the Broughton Brook do not increase the risk of flooding in that section, nor upstream or downstream.

Drawings of the route, cross-sections, outline designs of bridges, locks, etc, all on A3.

Some 35 copies of each of these four documents were supplied, together with a stack of CDs containing the same information in digital form, plus a

box containing an entire set of the project drawings, on large (A1) paper.



The massive amount of paperwork supporting the planning application

This represents some £150k of work, mostly done by Halcrow, as well as input in kind from many Trust members, Directors and others. A lot of the money came from the Big Lottery in the form of a Development Grant, and a much-needed grant from EP to enable the work to begin before the Big Lottery money started to flow.

The Trust was also most grateful to receive an "artist's impression" of the Waterway Park, from Avebury International, a well-known firm of building consultants based in MK. This picture was used as the cover illustration for the application.



Artist impression of the Waterway Park, Courtesy of Avebury International

The authorities have 16 weeks to determine this application, and during this time we will probably have lots of detailed discussions with the authorities, Anglian Water, and various land-owners along the route.

Let's keep our fingers crossed!

**JohnBint**



## Planning For Real gets underway

In the last issue we outlined the process called 'Planning For Real' which we are using to make sure we get the maximum public consultation on the Waterway Park project. Since then we have enlisted the help of Broughton Fields Primary School which is just 200 metres from the proposed route. Over the next few weeks, children at the school will be busy constructing and painting a 7 metre long model of the waterway which will then be on display in various locations around Milton Keynes.



Broughton Fields Primary School

Headteacher Sue Payne said,

*"Broughton Fields Primary School is privileged to be part of the project for the new canal. It is giving the pupils an opportunity to participate in a real-life planning project that will hopefully become a reality within their lifetime. Being part of a project that will impact on their own neighbourhood is an excellent learning experience, enabling them to make a positive contribution to what is happening. Working with experts also reinforces to the children that learning is all around them and not just in school."*



Sue Payne and Mike Daligan explain the project to the children

The model consists of 7 polystyrene panels which represent the Waterway Park at a scale of 1000:1.

Some 30 interest groups including Parish Councils, anglers, horse riders, people with a visual handicap, artists, cyclists, runners, boaters etc. etc. will be invited to one of two events. The first will be at Broughton Hotel on Saturday 10th March and the second is on Sunday 11th March at the Lakeside pub and hotel, Willen Lake (11.00—16.00 on each day).

The model will be on display and people will be encouraged to give their views by placing sticky labels at appropriate points along the route. So for example, anglers may indicate where they would like to see fishing platforms and cyclists might want a route which is not lined with prickly shrubs !

All local residents are welcome, so spread the word and come along yourself.

We're expecting a very high turnout and as you can imagine, we need a large team of helpers. If you can spare a couple of hours please let us know.

Contact [geoffwheeler2@breathe.com](mailto:geoffwheeler2@breathe.com)

Or ring 01908 665327

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## Innovation is the Key-word in constructing the new waterway

The MK Waterway Park project is considering innovative materials and designs, appropriate for a 21st century project in a 21st century urban landscape.

One idea is to use recycled plastic bags and similar materials - perhaps old tyres - to make extruded pieces which can then be piled into the ground to make the side of the waterway. This would be wonderfully ecologically beneficial and sustainable, and may have added benefits of low maintenance, energy absorption helping to reduce erosion, and so on.

This kind of construction technique could also be used to separate the navigable channel from the more shallow, planted areas of water, perhaps with a vertical barrier just below the surface. Again, this would help reduce erosion, and soil could not wear away and fall into the navigable channel.

These ideas might also allow faster traffic on sections of the water.

Why should a 21st century waterway be restricted to the speed of an 18th century source of power, the horse? Perhaps we might want a 4 knot speed limit to give tranquility at most times of the week - but wouldn't it be nice if the construction allowed faster users like jet-skis for occasional events?

Any other suggestions for innovative materials or construction methods are most welcome, and should be emailed to:

[john.bint@britishwaterways.co.uk](mailto:john.bint@britishwaterways.co.uk).

# East Is East and West Is West



*The B&MK Trust has split the volunteers into two groups – Bedford to M1(East) and MK to M1 (West)*

*This follows some organisational changes and the success to date of the lottery bid for the MK to M1 section.*

## Eastenders Need YOU

-Not the TV programme but the new B&MK East Volunteers group.

The first meeting took place in the Wootton Memorial Hall on Tuesday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>. And was very successful with 15 members attending.



Eastenders first meeting at Wootton

The group is still looking for new members so no matter what your expertise or age, there are tasks for you – and if you're friends with government ministers, own a newspaper or have your own JCB, front row seats await you !

Publicity in all guises; manning stands at events; recruiting new members and volunteers; waymarking; raising funds and of course publicity – did I mention that already?! These are just some of the tasks for volunteers.

Our first meeting concentrated on introductions, compiling information on what everyone is prepared to have a go at and information to all on where the priorities lie for the near future. Helping to protect the proposed route is of course high on that list.

Pressganging or holding your local MP in a headlock is I'm afraid not within the rules of engagement, but anyone wishing to become a volunteer for the M1 to Bedford group, please get in touch. **Peter Davis**

For volunteers East  
Contact Peter Davis at

[paladavis@ntlworld.com](mailto:paladavis@ntlworld.com)

or ring 07775851982.

## MK-M1 Group Goes from strength to strength

The December meeting of the MK to M1 (or MK2M1 as it's become popularly known) group was, as usual, well attended.

So far we've relied on the hospitality of Vernon and Marie Draper for our meetings but if all our active members decide to attend we will need to find an alternative venue.



The MK2M1 group considering the design for interpretation boards

The success of the group has been partly due to the range of practical activities that we've undertaken.

During the past three years we have erected signs on bridges marking the proposed junction with the Grand Union Canal and manned stalls in Central Milton Keynes and various local fetes and festivals. Last year we applied for an Awards For All lottery grant and were awarded £4805 to fund our waymarking project. This is nearing completion and we have erected 37 posts bearing the B&MK Logo. We have ordered 4 interpretation boards which should be ready for installing at strategic points in March. When completed we hope to have the 4.5km route included in the 'walks' section of the Milton Keynes official Website. **Geoff Wheeler**

For volunteers West  
Contact Vernon Draper at

[vernon.draper@btinternet.com](mailto:vernon.draper@btinternet.com)

or ring 01908 312239



# Low Railway Bridges in Bedford

*Allowing sufficient headroom for boats to get under the low railway bridges in Bedford has always been one of the biggest engineering challenges for the project. Don Allison makes some suggestions.*

The two low railway bridges above Town lock in the centre of Bedford are known to be too low for most river craft although many narrowboats can pass under them.



A "floating lock" solution has been proposed but there are various alternative solutions involving the use of locks and a side channel.

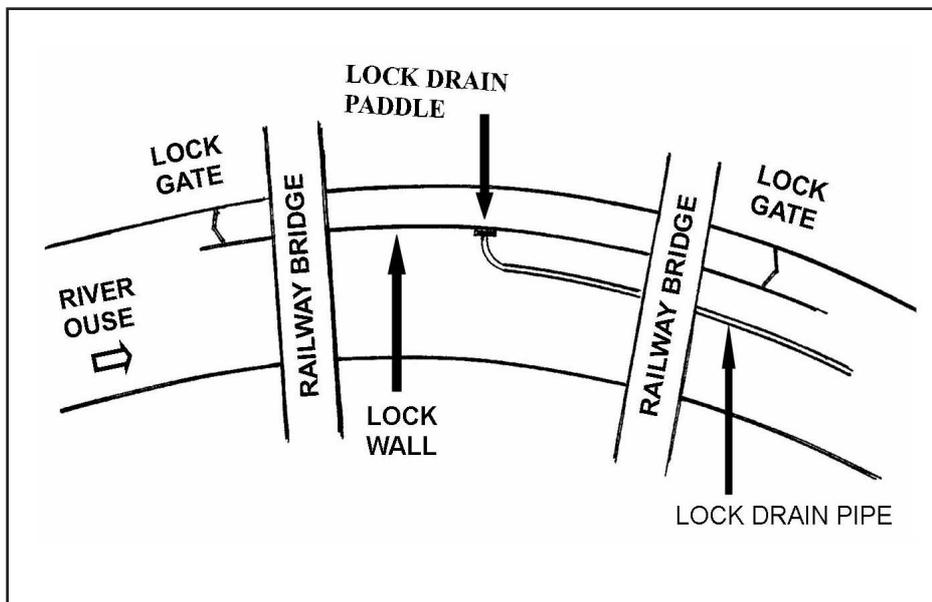
## Variation 1

Section off a channel about 500 metres long under the two bridges. At each end place a conventional lock, the upstream one to drop down about 1 metre, the second to rise back up to river level. The water level in the channel can be held 1 metre lower than the river by means of a weir connected to a drainage pipe emptying into the river below town lock. When the river floods this 500m channel will probably flood up to river level, but this will not matter since the river will not be navigable during flood conditions.

## Variation 2

Build the upstream lock and side channel as above, but extend the channel all the way down to the first main weir below the main town bridge. The channel would have to be about one mile long and would have to be on the south side of the river. Build a second lock into this weir. As before the upstream lock drops the level by 1m. The second lock then drops the level to the level below the existing town lock.

Both these solutions may well prove lower cost than the floating lock proposal and have the advantage of not requiring operating staff. Variation 2 may be preferable in view of the fact that the existing town lock will probably have to be rebuilt anyway. If the existing town lock is subsequently closed all craft will then have to use the new channel and locks.



Variation 1 uses two locks of water per boat passage and Variation 2 uses only one. This might be a consideration in drought conditions.

Design of the side channel and bottom lock in Variation 2 must take account of flood control requirements.

As always, silting up may well be a problem. Most silt will be brought down during flood conditions so it is difficult to assess which Variation would be more vulnerable to silting. With Variation 2 it is possible to envisage a design which could incorporate a flushing through system for the side channel. If flood water is allowed to flow over the side channel wall, simply opening both gates of the bottom lock during flood conditions might be the best solution..

**Don't Forget  
Subs are due.**

Annual subscriptions are now due. If you haven't renewed your subscription please do so now. We need the income at this crucial time more than ever.

**Don Allison**

# B&MK Canal In East Of England Plan

# Spread The Word



Dated December 2006, the latest draft of the Secretary of States' Regional Spatial Strategy (R.S.S.) for the East of England specifically includes the B&MK Canal as future green infrastructure to be protected. Quoting directly from the draft R.S.S.:

"Assets of particular regional significance for the retention, provision and enhancement of green infrastructure include:

.....strategically significant green infrastructure projects and proposals, such as the Great Fen Project, Wicken Fen Vision, the Milton Keynes to Bedford Waterway Park, and green infrastructure projects around the fringes of London."

We hope that this section will be ratified and be in the final R.S.S. which is due for publication later this year.

This, along with the inclusion of the canal in all the associated councils local development plans would give the project considerable standing.

Unfortunately, the R.S.S. will come too late as far as the planned changes for junction 13 of the M1 are concerned. If the latest revisions to J13 go through as they are, there is no accommodation for the waterway as it stands. This would add considerable cost to the project and may even mean a new route being sought at this point. We will be lobbying hard to have this part of the route protected and all support for this will be very welcome.

We would also ask everyone to contact or write to their MP's and councillors, encouraging the adoption of the canal into the final R.S.S. and local development plans.

**Peter Davis**

More and more people have heard of the B&MK Waterway through newspaper articles, displays at festivals, the website, and just word of mouth. A really effective way for boaters to spread the word is through display panels in the windows of their boats.

John and Sally Gunning have been displaying a B&MK panel in their narrowboat 'Superstar' for several years now. "It's surprising how many people stop and ask us about the project" said John. "We've collected dozens of signatures for the petition on the towpath and signed up several new members."



John Gunning with 2 new potential members

If you could display a panel similar to the one in Superstar's window then contact us and we will supply a set free of charge

## Lottery Ticket Sales Bring Welcome Cash To Trust



Don Allison clinches a sale



Leigh Willows with a potential winner

Volunteers were kept busy during the January sales in Central Milton Keynes selling raffle tickets on behalf of the Trust. The first prize was this rather jazzy Volkswagen convertible. The raffle is run every year by The Milton Keynes Community Foundation and organisations selling tickets are allowed to retain half of the takings. In our case, sales on the two mornings we had allocated to us plus sales by members privately amounted to £581 providing a boost to our finances. Finance Director, Don Allison said "The exercise was well worth doing but next year I hope we can do even better by getting an earlier slot. Many people had already bought their tickets"



# VOLUNTEERS COMMITTEE

## A revised system for electing members

### What is the Volunteers Committee?

Volunteers are still absolutely vital for the future of the Trust even though we are now a company and registered charity and need to establish an office with paid staff owing to the magnitude of the project. However, the Volunteers Committee (VC) does not now need the rigid formal procedure for nomination and election at the AGM. The legal responsibility for the policy and general management of the Trust now rests with the Board of Directors.

### How does it work?

The VC has the important responsibility for co-ordinating the activities of volunteers and is charged to meet bi-monthly to progress those aspects of the plans set by the Board that can reasonably be undertaken by volunteers. The VC has agreed that its role may be described as a forum for:-

1. The key volunteers who take on specific action responsibilities within the VC remit.
2. Regular review of those specific activities (and mutual updating of members) and agreement of any modifications of future action.
3. Debate and formulation of future/new activities and how they may be discharged.

It also provides a conduit for transmission of concerns/suggestions between the volunteers and the Board.

### Who are the members?

Members of the Volunteers Committee will comprise:-

1. Those volunteers who are prepared to be active organisers or individual task holders (e.g. Membership Secretary; Newsletter Editor; Webmaster; Talks Team/programme Manager; Sub-Group Chairmen)
2. Other volunteers not at present holding such portfolios, but keen to be more heavily involved, or undertaking specific jobs in a Sub-Group
3. All the Directors ex-officio who have the time or express a wish to attend.

Initially, the membership is all existing members including those volunteers who have joined/attended meetings since the last AGM. In future, the members will be circulated before each AGM of the Trust by the VC Secretary asking them to confirm their wish to continue in membership. Those declining (who hold particular responsibilities) will be asked to suggest replacements – maybe another member of the Committee who has not taken on a specific responsibility to date.

The list of members who have confirmed willingness to continue will be announced at the AGM and their membership confirmed in the AGM Minutes.

An appeal will be made at the AGM for additional/replacement members as the VC work requires. Any

volunteers immediately forthcoming will be appointed to the VC there and then or accepted subsequently on the VC Chairman's approval.

Any member may resign during the year, but should feel responsible for recommending a successor if he/she is a key task holder.

Any volunteer interested in coming on to the VC will be invited as an observer to a meeting to inform himself/herself better. Membership of the VC thereafter will be arranged through the Committee's Chairman.

It is hoped that this article will remove any mystery that may surround the Committee and encourage other volunteers to consider joining the Committee and/ or its sub-groups to help take on some aspect of the ever increasing range of activities that we wish to tackle.

**Rodney Evans**

Chairman of the Volunteers Committee

## How You Can Help

The Trust urgently needs a **Publicity Manager**.

Do you have half a day a month that you could spare to help with this vital work? No experience necessary, we will give you all the help you need to get started.

We also need volunteers to help man a stand at Central Milton Keynes Shopping Centre on **Thursday 1st March**. You will not be on your own and will be given a full briefing.

If you can spare an hour or two on either of these jobs or on any of the other many and varied tasks that the Trust is involved in please get in touch with Rodney on 01908 376449 or [rodwen@scythia.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:rodwen@scythia.fsnet.co.uk)

## Talks Report

Our excellent team of speakers made 20 presentations in 2006 and audiences numbered about 700. The Trust was also well represented at Tring, Bedford River Festival and Beale Park.

7 talks are already fixed for 2007 and even one for 2008. We shall make our first venture into a school in May and have offered two talks to at Bedford Retirement Education Centre.

If you would like to book a talk for your club, group or organisation, please contact:

**John or Sally Gunning (talks organisers)**  
01234 305925

[oldgunns@ntlworld.com](mailto:oldgunns@ntlworld.com)

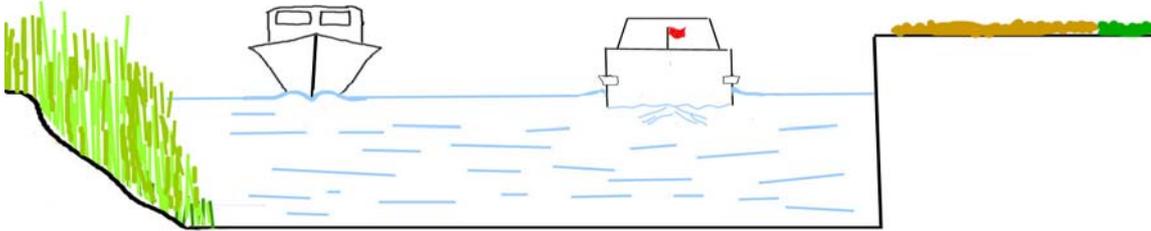
**John Gunning**

# FANTASY ISLANDS



*The Milton Keynes Waterway Park project is the subject of much public consultation (see p 2). The bid team are very keen to hear your views on what should and should not be included. In this article Geoff Wheeler provides food for thought which hopefully will get your imagination going*

The conventional way of looking at the profile of a waterway might be something like this



Environmentally friendly soft edge on one side, and boater/walker friendly towpath on the other. Apart from deciding which side the towpath should go there's not much else to be considered – or is there?

Living as we do in Britain, surrounded by water, we are all drawn to the notion of islands. So how about creating something like this?



One way traffic streams create a series of islands, each with its own identity. For example **Picnic Island** – complete with built in barbecues. **Butterfly Island** could be planted with Buddleia and other plants to attract butterflies. **Sculpture Island** might complement its neighbour, **Community Garden Island**. There's **Fishing Island** for the anglers and **Aroma Island** for the visually impaired. Each island would be linked to the next via wheelchair friendly footbridges or causeways. Some islands like Pub Garden Island would be linked directly to the 'mainland' - and in this case to a waterside hostelry.

In the end I suspect the Waterway Park will be shaped by the availability of land and cash and by technical considerations but there's no harm in fantasizing. Some ideas might get through, if not here then in other parts of the waterway.

Send us your suggestions for other islands. We'll print the list in the next edition and award a bottle of wine for the most imaginative idea. E-mail [geoffwheeler2@breathe.com](mailto:geoffwheeler2@breathe.com) or write to 1 Hopkins Close, Milton Keynes Village MK10 9AS

**Geoff Wheeler**

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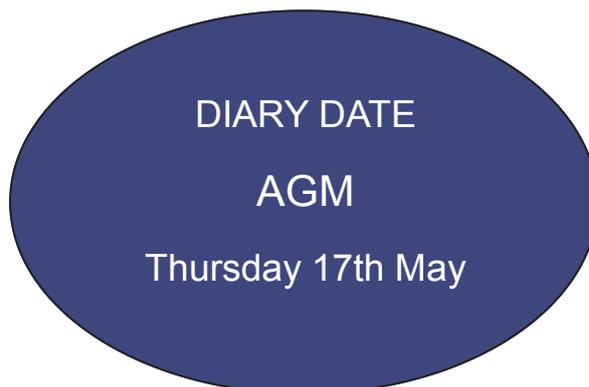
## Springtime Meeting

The Trust is changing its financial year to run from April to March, as opposed to December to November as the former unincorporated Trust did. This new arrangement puts the Trust on the same footing as all public bodies, particularly Government and its offshoots. Thus we shall be better attuned to planning and funding years of all these bodies.

The implication of this change is that the Annual General Meeting of the Trust this year will take place in May instead of February as in the past. Lighter evenings and better weather may, we hope, encourage more members to attend than just the stalwarts who have braved wind rain and dark in the past.

The venue is also changing from Woburn Sands to Newport Pagnell to a new hall with good facilities

and much better parking.  
The exact location and directions will be announced later in the year.





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## **A nICE cruise ?**

B&MK committee members have been accustomed to receiving Christmas cards from fellow member, James Griffin with amazing pictures of his narrowboat, 'Ocean Princess' cruising in all kinds of coastal waters. A few years ago he took her to the Scilly Isles to publicise the B&MK. Then in 2005 he ventured across the Irish Sea and on to Scottish waters where he took last year's Christmas photo.

This year we were all stunned to receive this picture which was captioned  
**'Ocean Princess goes winter cruising'**



Either James is braver than we thought, navigating round those icebergs, or it's just possible that along with radar and GPS his boat is now equipped with some nifty photo editing software and the only ice around was in his Scotch whisky !

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