

Oakham Canal Summer Newsletter



As summer draws to a close and we start to look forward to Autumn colours, we thought it was time to catch up on a few of the happenings along the canal this summer. It's been a busy one!



New Benches

Rest your weary bones.

Two of our regular visitors made the very sensible suggestion that we should install a bench on the northern section, for weary walkers. This suggestion was followed by a very kind donation to fund the project, so we had to work out how to make a bench!

After a bit of research and checking out our wood store, we managed to build three benches, which were installed by our friends from [Edmentum](#), back in May. This was followed by a fourth bench in July, so we are confident you should now find a place to perch while you contemplate your surroundings.

Homes for bats!

Night life...

Our friends at [Men In Sheds](#) kindly donated two purpose built Bat Boxes, which we will install in the woods along the canal, ready for next year's breeding season.

Talking History

Tales of old..

Talks and Walks

Talks

We had the pleasure of giving a talk on the history of the canal and tales of our toils to the Oakham, Ladies Cooperative club, who made a very generous donation. We always love the chance to spread the word and hear canal anecdotes and history facts from the groups that we meet, so send us an invite to your group and we'll make a date.

Walks

As well as Talks, our founder, Paul Dadford, also gave a series of canal

Work has started on the creation of a "Talking history" montage. We hope to create an online and downloadable montage of the canal's history, as seen through the eyes of some of its historic characters.

We are working on this with Rutland Arts and a local writer, so watch this space!

New Dam bridge

What - no trolls?

The old dam crossing, at the southern end of the Fishermen's section, was getting a little unsafe, so we were very pleased to install a brand new bridge in its place, in June.

All work was completed by volunteers and "road tested" by a passing group of walkers, who seemed very happy with the result!

history guided Walks throughout the summer, where he shared tales of the canal's history to various groups - all events were sold out!

We are happy to do presentations for similar local groups - if this is something that is of interest, please do [email](#) us.





Bio Blitz

Wildlife snapshot.

Towards the end of July, our friends from the [Rutland Natural History Society](#) conducted a Bio Blitz.

The team spent the day hunting out and recording as many species as they could find. While the water voles remained elusive (we know they are there!), the results were quite impressive, with more than 70 species recorded, including the first ever sighting of a Water Lily Beetle in Rutland!

Seeking budding nature sleuths

Year round effort to gather information on canal biodiversity.

Knowing what is present will allow us to protect and enhance habitats for as many plants and animals as possible. Which is where you come in! We're inviting you to join [iNaturalist](#), a citizen science survey that allows you to take snaps of what you see and upload them for identification by other naturalists. iNaturalist will then form an overall map from all users who upload data. Your pictures can be of anything: flowers, insects, fungi, birds, trees - if it's alive, we'd like to see it recorded.

We already know we have the rare water vole present, as well as owls, bats and many other species. On 12 March, we had nine students from Oakham School on a work party, who made a great start on the iNaturalist survey, identifying 37 different species in one day - all data will feed into our planned ecological site surveys over the coming months. It's not just important to help us measure biodiversity, it's a great way to liven up a walk with the kids - or just one by yourself, so please do give it a try!



Slippery slope-less

Easing access.

Back in April, a keen team of volunteers laid the surface on a new, gentler slope to the top of the Northern section, West Bank. You can now avoid the slippery, rooty section leading to the footpath on the West Bank.

Factoid - the West Bank is the diggings from the canal construction, which was dug out by hand! We have also started collecting wood clippings, which will be spread along the West Bank path in autumn, to improve the surface.

And finally...

As ever, the team is actively seeking funding for the next phases of renovation. Our next key target is to restore the path along the Fishermen's section. We are approaching a number of local and national organisations, including the National Heritage Lottery. If any of you work for, or are involved with, organisations who might be sympathetic with our aims and help fund our activities, please do get in touch.

One way or another, we are determined to continue the restoration work, so do keep an eye out for chances to volunteer when we announce the next work projects and as always, please keep spreading the word and sharing the love for our local waterway as we bring it back to life.

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