



# The Liveaboards Cut

## In This Edition

Poetry From the Cut

A Towpath Tideeee!

Strange Place Name's Explained.

Story Time.

1st Edition

May 2016



## A word from the editor

I arrived on the Kennet and Avon canal with my partner nearly two years ago and in spite of the somewhat hot political subjects that continue to circulate and affect us all, we have found much that has brought us happiness and a feeling of belonging to a community that we have barely felt elsewhere.

With that in mind I decided to set up a magazine to celebrate that which makes the live-aboard community on the Kennet and Avon so special (as well as the wider floating community).

The Liveaboards Cut as a publication will mainly concern itself with the daily workings of the Kanda such as its people and traders.

It will also contain art and literature inspired by the canal, as well as serving as a community noticeboard for important events that will benefit the live-aboard community.

Further to this, it is my hope that a publication of this type could help to dispel some of the myths about live-aboard boating and strengthen ties within this wonderful and diverse community.

If you have any suggestions about this publication or would like to contribute to future editions then contact me at:

[michelle.smith14@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:michelle.smith14@bathspa.ac.uk)

Michelle Smith is a continuous cruiser who currently resides on the Kennet and Avon Canal with her partner, son and hound. She is also studying English Literature and Creative writing at Bath Spa University.

# Whats Inside

- ~ Sam Worral on, Julien House and The Travelling Community Support Service.
- ~ Boater's take to the towpath for a spring tidy.
- ~ Ever wondered where all those strange place names on the Kennet and Avon came from? Dru lift's the inspection hatch on Digger's and Mad Cow Corner.
- ~ Meet some traders and find out what its like to work on and around the cut.
- ~ What's on? Important dates for your diary.
- ~ Canal inspired poetry from our floating poets.
- ~ Story time. An alternative view of the inland waterways.

travelling community  
support



Many boater's experience problems from time to time so organisations like The Travelling Community Support Service are a vital link to services. Sam Worrall gives us the low down on it's founding and the type of support it offer's.

The Travelling Community Support Service was started just over a year ago. It works from Julian House, the Bath charity and is fully funded by the Bath & NE Somerset NHS Clinical Commissioning Group.

The Service was created after B&NES council commissioned a report into the Gypsy, Traveller and liveaboard boater community within its local authority boundaries. They were concerned that people from these communities were not getting the access to health services that settled people were getting and they wanted to find out more about the health and wellbeing of this group of people.

A peer led survey was carried out which led to the report "Bath & NE Somerset Gypsy, Traveller, Boater, Showmen & Roma Health Survey." This was published in 2013 and was put together by Margaret Greenfields, a Gypsy Traveller specialist, based at Bucks University.

B&NES also put out a report around this time; "Boat Dwellers and River Travelers." This report looked at who boaters

were and the health issues specific to the boating community.

The NHS CCG saw a gap in the provision of support services in terms of encouraging people from travelling communities to engage with and access health services, so they secured funding to appoint a charity in Bath to put such a service together, and Julian House won that bid.

This Service is a fairly unique one. Councils usually employ a Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officer, who might be the only person to support clients with health issues, but in many cases Liaison Officers are only interested in enforcement and managing sites. There are many well established Gypsy Traveller organisations across the country who deal with the bigger issues for these communities, but not any funded by the NHS to work so closely with its travelling communities.

Since this Service started, one other such service funded by the NHS has begun in Yorkshire.



The Service has grown organically and has been very much led by the service users. There are two part time workers in post who work with clients. The Service offers;

- Access to health services, including doctor, dentist and optician.
- Access to courses such as basic first aid and fire safety.
- Helps to empower people to engage with the local community.
- Helps people to understand the range of services they are entitled to.
- Mediates and advocates with authorities and other organisations on clients' behalf.
- Addresses legal matters and other issues.
- Supports people with making complaints.

In the first year of the Service we have organised 2 first aid courses for boaters, with the Red Cross and St John's, delivering emergency first aid skills to 25 boaters. We have worked closely with Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service to help them engage with almost 200 boaters and distribute smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.

We have also mediated with CRT to support vulnerable boaters with enforcement issues, resulting in reduced cruising distances and reissue of licences.

We deliver cultural awareness training to health professionals and other agencies to enable them to better under-

stand the specific needs and issues affecting GRT and boater communities and to help them build trusting relationships with travelling communities through positive engagement.

As the Service continues to become well known our client and work load is increasing and we are being asked to become involved in a myriad of joint working projects. If you would like more information about how the Service could help YOU please contact the number below. Client information is confidential within the work involved at all times.

Contact Travelling Communities Support on 01225 354650/07960097719

Email: [samw@julianhouse.org.uk](mailto:samw@julianhouse.org.uk)

# Live aboard boater's take to the towpath for a spring tidy.

Boat dwellers on the Kennet and Avon Canal met together on the 23rd of April for the initial Towpath Tidy.



Getting to grips with the hidden rubbish.



A boating mum hauls away rubbish in a bicycle trailer.

Organised by Matt Hilsdon through social media, the day was deemed to have been a great success with many boating families turning out to show their support of the initiative.

The route ran from Smelly Bridge outside Bradford Upon Avon to The Easter Spot beyond Avoncliff Aqueduct, with some boaters even tackling the hidden rubbish problem on the embankments.

This is the first of what is hoped to be many such events aimed at keeping the towpath



The younger member's of the community have a preliminary planning pow wow.

tidy and forging stronger links within the boating and wider communities the Canal passes through and for some of the boater's present it is also hoped that in being actively visible on the towpath boaters can interact more positively with the many and diverse set



Heeeeeeave!

of user's on the KandA. Laura Darling pictured above said, "It was so much fun, day's like today really remind me of how lucky I am to live on the canal and to be part of a community."



With the digging done, planting commences.

Another boater said, "It was great to roll up my sleeve's and get stuck into something worthwhile."

The day culminated in the restoration of an abandoned community garden formerly set up by boater's 20 years ago.

To get involved with future Towpath Tidies please check the Kennet and Avon Boaters Society on facebook for updates.



Ready for rain, extra plant's and a bug hotel.



“Someone else did a canal map twenty years back” said John; “It was different names then”.

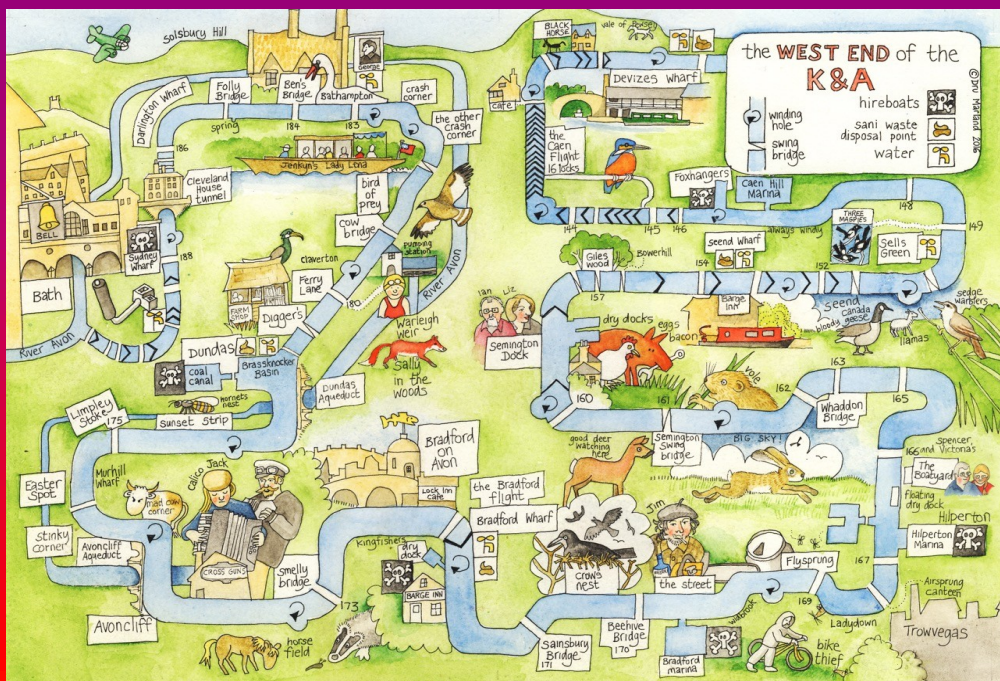
John was one of the pioneers on the reborn K&A, working towards its restoration in the 70s and 80s, and still living on the cut. To the many boaters who now cruise past his home, it's a boat like any other. John isn't on the map. History can be capricious.

But a good map, like a

dictionary, is descriptive, not prescriptive. Places have been named by people ever since there've been people. When the canal came through this part of the world, it passed places like Sally in the Woods, a name that dates from a Civil War skirmish, and marked its passing with the simple numbers it gave to the bridges and locks. But the West End of the Kennet and Avon has now a very definite community of boaters, with their own names for the places along the cut. When I moved onto my boat, I was mystified by references to places that didn't feature on the OS map or the Nicholson

Guide. I needed a People's Map. And so, as no-one else was doing it, I did.

Some names go back a way. Folly Bridge is next to the Folly public house, that was bombed in 1942, and is now a ruin in the woods. It's also Spring Bridge, because you can get sweet water from the spring there. Nearby Candy's Bridge is also Ben's Bridge- you'll find RIP BEN carved on the stonework. Further down past Claverton, Digger owned the land alongside the canal which is now a little community known as Digger's. Check out the little farm shop next to



Dru's immensely popular alternative map of the western end of the Kennet and Avon Canal.



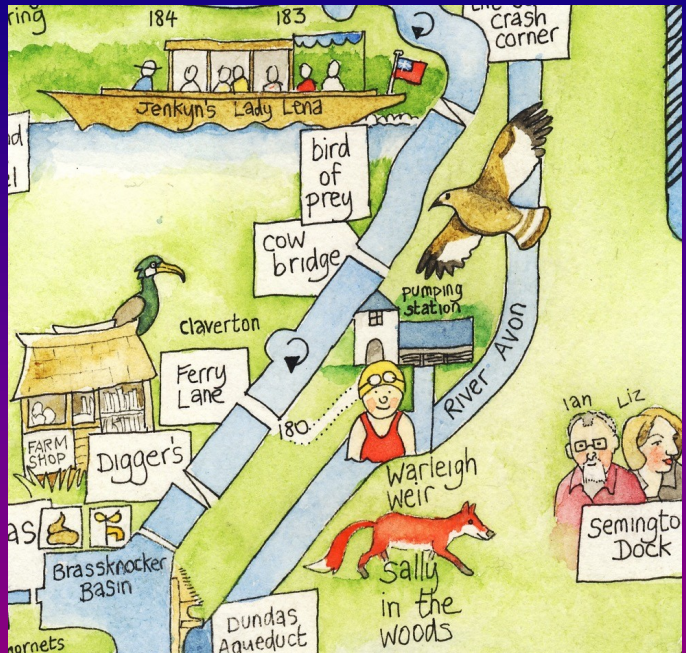
## “Why Smelly bridge?”

the swingbridge for books, eggs and veg. Out at Semington twenty or so years ago, Freddie Giles planted lots of trees by the canal, and they are now Giles Wood.

Cow Bridge connects two pastures; at Bird of Prey and at Horse Field, you might hope to see buzzards and horses respectively. You won't see any mad cows at Mad Cow Corner by the Avoncliff Aqueduct, because the herd was removed. The cows in question weren't mad; but they were bad and dangerous to know. I thought Murder Cow Corner sounded a bit excessive, and changed the name for the map. Big mistake. It's not up to me to change things...

Why Smelly Bridge? - perhaps the sewage works opposite will give you a clue. Sunset Strip is a good place to watch sunsets from. Easter Spot? Don't know why. But watch hireboats charge around Crash Corner and that name will seem obvious.

Sainsburys Bridge at Bradford on Avon used to be



Closer inspection reveals a wealth of local knowledge not seen in other maps.

Budgens Bridge. Beehive Bridge is still Beehive Bridge even though the pub is closed. The crows at Crows Nest are actually rooks, but there you go. Airsprung Bridge is next to the mattress factory; nea

by Flysprung was a suggestion from Kris Malar-chist, and seems so very apposite that it has been adopted. I left out Dogs\$ %!

Alley because Trowvegas (sic) was already looking a bit uninviting on the map... there, in the riverside woodlands where I hoped to hear nightingales but only heard raving youths, you may find 'Trowbridge fairy rings', as a friend

describes circles of litter on the grass. Bless.

Party Spot... If such a place exists, I'm certainly not putting it on the map. Some things don't get broadcast too widely. And we all have our own secret map. Don't we?

## *Dru Marland*

To purchase a print of Dru's unique map or to peruse other artworks visit:

[www.etsy.com/uk/shop/DruMarland](http://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/DruMarland)

## Does your leather come from roadkill?

My partner, Chris Palmer set up Skyravenwolf leatherwork in 2007 and I have been working with her since 2010.

Four years ago we moved onto our narrowboat and our workspace became a second hand table measuring 3 feet by 18 inches.



Skyravenwolf's workstation with a view of the canal.

We couldn't run our business without the internet – we have customers all over the world, they can see pictures of their finished commissions instantly and we get their usually delighted reactions just

as instantly. However,



Space Battle's.

with the inter

net, comes the email.

Usually quite a few, each morning. Generally with questions about prices

and shipping and waiting lists. Sometimes the questions are a bit more ...unusual and require a bit of tact, and diplomacy. Which is why Chris prefers to deal with them!

We were asked recently if we made our leather from roadkill. The short answer is no. I had a longer answer. There seems to be a lack of roadkill cows in Wiltshire, for a start. There is no

shortage of dead badger along the highways though. I got to imaging a line

of badger pelts, stretched out on frames along the towpath, gently curing in the wholesome air of Bradford on Avon. Then I wondered how many you would need for one of our boho bags...then I got to thinking about the smell. So probably not really practical. You see why I don't get to answer emails?

Sometimes we get asked if we will make something as part of an exchange. Again the answer is generally no. Unless the exchange seems like a fair one and it definitely would need to be legal.

Our post goes to my par-



A leather book mark hand painted from life.

And talking of dodgy, if I have to google the item you are requesting with the aid of David Cameron's list of banned search terms, you are asking the wrong people.

We generally prefer to receive payment in actual money. Exposure on your blogsite in exchange for a bag of your choice does not work for us. Especially if you have a readership of 17, and all from the same religious sect.

"Could you just...?" is a question that kills the mojo of artists and crafters. As in "I have found the perfect bag on your website. I love it, it is totally me. But could you just make it purple instead of brown. And could you just change the hares into a triskele of unicorns? And could you make the rounded bits squarer? And it needs to be much, much bigger? And you don't

mind popping a quick sketch over to me, do you? You could just scan it in..."

Our work has changed since moving onto the boat. We cannot work long into the night at the flick of a switch. We are more in tune with seasons and changing levels of light. Our work has



Skyravenwolf's uncannily realistic leather leaf pendants.

become more detailed and smaller. A recent new thing has been leather jewellery, hand-made leather leaves and feathers, painted from life from things we have collected from the towpath. They have been popular, but I had a few things to learn about displaying our creations.

We found a lovely piece of twisty hazel which we put in a crock pot and packed around with moss and stones. I tied pendants and earrings among the twigs. Sadly the effect was not as artisan as I hoped. More Glastonbury hippy. The weekend walkers were unimpressed, and one was heard to comment "these boaters, they'll try anything to make money. picking up leaves from the towpath and charging a fiver!"

Really, I suppose we



Jinny and Chris aboard NB Netty.

should be flattered.

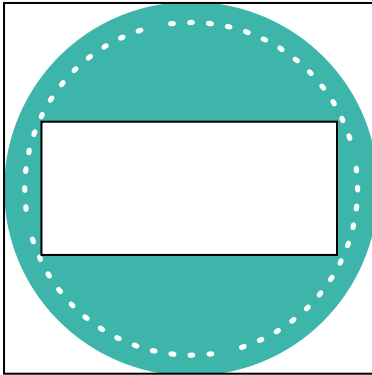
*Jinny Peberday*

*May 2016.*

For a closer look at Jinny and Chris's creation's search Skyravenwolf on facebook or visit their etsy page.



# Summer Fun!



Hello there! Hannah here, from Fantasy Faces Bath. I am a liveaboard professional face and body painter running my business from our sixty-two foot Narrow boat on



the Kennet and Avon.

I offer face and body painting for all events, as well as specialist services such as personalised make-overs and pregnancy “bump” painting.

As the sun is shining beautifully as I write this, I thought you might like to know what public events we’re excited about attending this summer.

Bath Boules Festival – 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> June – Queens Square, Bath

Come and watch the Boules Festival teams while you enjoy the Bath Boules Market! Get painted and enjoy amazing food and drink while lapping up the sun as you watch the games.

Bath Carnival – 16<sup>th</sup> July – Sydney Gardens, Bath



Carnival time is our favourite kind of time! Join the Carnival parade with Jamba de Samba, or come down to the gardens to enjoy food and drink, stalls, fun and games with Super Pirates, paint by us, animals to meet and stroke- just a great day out!

## Neston Park Farm Shop Food Festival- 17<sup>th</sup> July – Atworth, Melksham

Enjoy the sights and smells of the food festival, see the egg BBQ in action, get painted, make some crafty things and simply have fun!

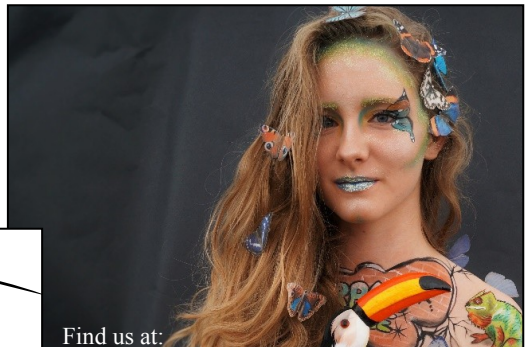
## Kennet and Avon Floating Market- 30<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> July- Bradford-on-Avon

Face paint, crafts, crochet, leather work, art work, poetry... you name it, they have it! Come and support our fellow boat-traders! There is also a Civil-War re-enactment in BoA the same day, so lots to see!

## Shambala Festival – 25<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> August 2016-

We can't wait to have our stall at Shamabla this year! This charitable, eco-conscious, recycling crazy, sustainably sourced festival is a summer highlight! Fancy dress and families are encouraged. With twelve stages, over two-hundred acts, circus areas, children's exploration areas, chill out tents, medical and alternative medicine tent, kids over-night bush craft courses, hundreds of stalls and a theme this year of Myths and Monsters; what's not to like?!

Owner and Founder – Fantasy Faces  
Bath



Find us at:

[www.fantasyfacesbath.com](http://www.fantasyfacesbath.com)

Facebook- @FantasyFacesBath

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*Looking for a special gift for a treasured person? Look no further.*

Anna Berthon grew up in Somerset, her Mum was a Silversmith and her Dad made tapestries and then moved onto silver and enamel jewellery.

She started out as a milliner making hats for British Hatter in Walcot Street and then went on to do a foundation course in Brighton followed by a Degree in Metalwork at Camberwell College in London.



Owl Figurine



Inspiring views out on the canal

She then spent ten years working as a jewellery designer for high street brands in London.

Anna returned to Somerset five years ago and became a self employed Silversmith.

Anna has been on her boat for a year and a half now and says of her work, "There's nothing more enjoyable than watching the Heron while making a pair of Heron earrings."

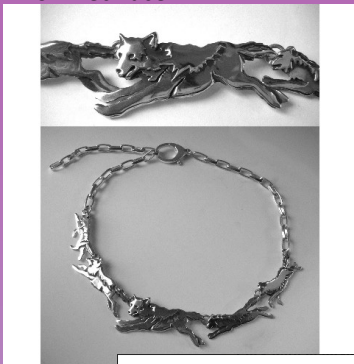
All pictures shown are Anna's commissioned pieces, but to view more of Anna's silver creations visit:

[www.facebook.com/anna.jewellery](http://www.facebook.com/anna.jewellery)

[anna@silverworkshop.co.uk](mailto:anna@silverworkshop.co.uk)



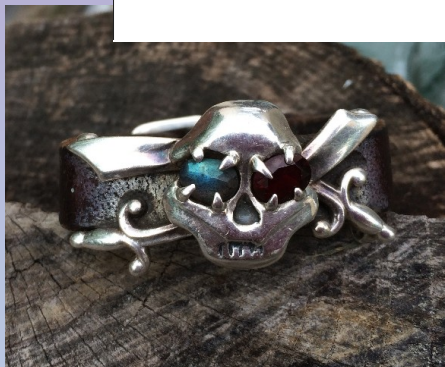
Wolf Necklace



Trumpet Pendant



[www.annaberthon.co.uk](http://www.annaberthon.co.uk)  
[anna@annaberthon.co.uk](mailto:anna@annaberthon.co.uk)  
Tel: 07984573654



Skull Cuff



Silver box with Blackbird design

# What's on? A rough guide to meet's and event's on and around the cut.

Playgroups (recommended by boaty mums).

## Monday

Playgroup, United Church, Trowbridge Rd, Trowbridge, 10-11:30am, term time only.

Drop in Session-Devizes Children's Centre, The Green, Devizes, 1:30-3pm

## Tuesday

Bearcubs Singing Group, Bearfield Church, Huntingdon St, BOA, 10-11:30 am, term time only.

St Georges Baby and Toddler Group, Pound Lane, Semington, 10-11:30am, term time only.

## Wednesday

Seend Bouncy Club in The Pavilion, Rusty Lane, Seend, 09:30-11:15am, term time only, £2.

## Thursday

Baby and Toddler Group, Quaker Meeting House, Whitehead Lane, BOA, 2-4am, small donations welcome towards room hire.

Parent, Baby and Toddler Group, Widcombe Methodist Church, Widcombe, Bath, 10-11:45am, term time only, £1

## Friday

Little Fishes Parent and Toddler Group, Bradford Youth and Community Centre, BOA. 10-11.30am, £1.50

## Night's Out.

Live Music at The Cross Guns, Avoncliffe Aqueduct every Tuesday night.

(More events to be included in future editions)

## Day Event's.

Open Garden Bradford on Avon, southeast of Bath, Wiltshire, BA15 1DE, Sunday 29th May 2016 (first of two dates), 2.00pm to 6.00pm, £6 per day, children under 14 free.

K&A Canal Floating Market Bradford-On-Avon Wiltshire Bradford-on-Avon, United Kingdom from 30 to 31 July 2016

## Boat Fire Safety Talks

The Wiltshire Fire Service will be out treading the towpath armed with guidance packs and potentially life saving advice. Here's where to keep an eye out for them:

Honey Street area, 27th May

Bradford on Avon area, 31st May

Devizes area, 31st May

Froxfield to Wootton Rivers area, 1st and 2nd June

Bradford on Avon area, 3rd June

Honey Street area, 6th June

For more information here is a link to the Boat Safety Scheme website:

<http://www.boatsafetyscheme.org/stay.../fire-safety-for-boats>





KENNET AND AVON

CANAL

FLOATING

MARKET

BRADFORD ON AVON

30-31

JULY

\*\*\*

Boaters from the liveaboard community have rallied together to organise the first ever floating market on the Kennet & Avon canal. Floating markets are very popular across the canal network nationally, drawing hundreds of visitors and traders selling goods from their boats.

Floating traders work out their calendar of markets each year and cruise to the various locations to do business. The range of items people make on their boats and sell is astonishing. Stunning leatherwork, artwork, pottery, woodwork, items made from wool and cloth, doggie paraphernalia and pens. Then there is the food.....oatcakes, cheese, fruit wines and ciders, ice creams. All arrayed to peruse on the bank outside the boats, which are of course a draw themselves.

Why has there never been a floating market on the K&A? We think this is due to the location of the K&A. Being at the far south of the national network it is often too far for boaters to travel to, and the fact you can only access the K&A from either the Thames or the Avon rivers means it is a seasonal visit and not accessible to winter cruising. By placing the market in the middle of summer we are hopeful that it will encourage traders to venture onto this

beautiful waterway.

For this, the first year of trading we have chosen Bradford on Avon as the venue. The event will take place along the visitor moorings below the lock, stretching from the Lock Inn to the medieval tythe barn. The event coincides with Bradford's civil war re-enactment weekend in Barton Park so there should be a lively atmosphere (and lots of men wearing strange clothes!).

The market is already booked up with traders and we also hope to have some stalls along the towpath for other trading to take place. The event is supported by the Canal & River Trust and Bradford on Avon town council, and by local businesses.

If this year is successful, which we anticipate it will be, we aim to hold future markets in other locations along the canal. Entry to the market is free so please come along and visit and chat to the boaters about their life on the cut and their work. Boaters are a very friendly bunch!

Trading will be from 10am to about 4pm on the Saturday and Sunday, 30/31<sup>st</sup> July.

# *A splash of poetry*

## *from some of the cuts*

### *versifiers.*

There was an old man called Andy  
Who, at limericks, thought he was handy  
He wasted his time  
Penning many a rhyme  
And also some that didn't.

Here lies the bones of our dear Clive  
Who kept all his Bees in a Hive  
They thought it not funny  
When he sold all their Honey  
So they Stung him and that's how he died.

There was a Towpath ranger from Thatcham  
Who liked to chase boaters and catch em  
After 14 days stay  
I'll make them all pay  
Or I'll just seize their boats and dispatch em.

### *Grandad Spanner*

### *Poolside Pride*

Silent sentinel  
at the side of the pool  
kicking your heels  
trying to look cool.  
You look like you've been  
there since way before dawn  
as you try (unsuccessfully)  
to stifle a yawn.

Watching the swimmers  
as they crawl up and down  
making sure  
they don't do anything silly  
like drown.

Watching the instructors,  
As they try to teach  
Little uns that flounder  
And occasionally screech.

I can tell from your wistful gaze  
That in the surf and on the sand  
Is where you'd rather spend your  
days.

But alas this is no Malibu Beach  
Where you can impress the crowds  
With feats of derring do,  
This is just a little swimming pool,  
Just outside the village of Hoo.



## 53 K and A Street

Up my watery street the 6am alarm duck quacks. It's demanding a bready breakfast from 220 Gideon, and across the way in 327 Green Field, the multiple kids gambol about on the front lawn yelling their happiness at the new blue sky. Next door in 210 Hawthorn the Sparrows are quarrelling again. That bush just isn't big enough for all of them. They're at it every morning, and now the Squirrels have had enough, and are hurling acorns of abuse at them from the gnarly veranda of The Oaks. I scrunch back down under the covers in 53 wishing for my Bonny Bay dream and the quiet hum of city life. The delivery float motors past too fast and sets the pots and pans rattling. **Mitch**

## Moorhen

Moorhen, Moorhen. Why do you covet the soapy fragments from my sink?  
Snippets of spaghetti or slithery-thithery cabbage and bean  
Which I could not fit on my fork or in my stomach,  
Which the dog avoided as she tongued the gravy in eager washing up duty.  
SAS-like, darting from the reeds when you hear my pull the plug and  
Carrying away my spoiled-your spoils-with total satisfaction and delight.  
Self sufficient Moorhen,  
Moorhen, why, when I have a tin of water fowl food on the stern?

## Gorgina Beazeley

Though you're my dog, and a good dog too,  
Please let me walk in front of you  
So, should you sh.., I shall not see  
-and I have brought no bags with me.

Oh uncouth boater, do not stare-  
You're coarse and crude, but I am fair.

## Dru Marland



## The Incoherent Ramblings of Grandad Spanner

Out for a cruise the other day, we crept round a bend and there was a fisherman on the bank. He looked as surprised to see us as we were to see him. As he lunged for his rod it became snagged somehow on our boat. He ended up in the water and the rod on the roof of the boat. So far so good we thought. "I can't swim" he shouted. Quick as a flash my training kicked in. First reassure the casualty. "You'll be alright" I replied "Bob" "Oh funny" came his retort "throw me a line". My mind went blank for a moment, ah, "Knock knock" said I. But he must have heard that one before as he just growled, then he did manage to bob to the bank. Holding on to the reeds he yelled "cant you see I'm in the competition" I put his apparent confusion down to the mishap and was happy to correct him pointing out that in fact he was in the canal. My comment must have inspired him as he pulled himself out of the water with one movement, not an easy thing to do with 10 gals of water in your waders. As we puttered on this gallant fellow kept pace with us along the towpath, it was quite thrilling to watch because his fellow anglers were by now one by one withdrawing their rods as we passed thus creating a bit of a steeple chase for the poor chap who was obliged to leap the obstructions. Not an easy thing to do with 10 gals of water in your waders. The next lock was empty and the gates open so we slid quietly into the empty chamber. Looking up we noticed our stout fellow looking somewhat flushed and out of breath standing on the edge "I'll have you locked up" he yelled "No thanks we can manage just fine". Unfortunately I think that must have hurt the poor chap's feelings as his features distorted and he threw his arms up in a gesture of surrender, he turned and stomped away with what dignity he could muster, not an easy thing to do with 10 gals of water in your waders. I never did get the chance to apologise for the refusal of his offer or to thank him for the rod, which we have put to good use. We now get 17 digital channels not 5!

## A Rare Sight Indeed

Chris had a Passion for the underwater world of the River Dart and very much like a Train spotter or Birdwatcher he catalogued his sightings of different underwater species with meticulous care. Fish, invertebrates, plants and mammals were all neatly categorized in a small, well worn and jealously guarded notebook. Once a month Chris attended an informal meeting of, The Friends of the River Dart Association. This small group of five (sometimes six if Theo bothered to turn up) were known as Underwater Watchers and they met to discuss the upkeep of the river. Well, this is what they would like everyone to think. Really they only met up to show off about recently spotted rarities and complain bitterly about the Grockels (tourists to normal people). Chris wasn't the only one with a jealously guarded notebook or a passion for the River. Chris, however had the most entries in his notebook purely because he was fanatical about Underwater Watching and spent most of his waking hours at the river.

He could hardly wait for the meetings to come around as he just loved to watch his fellow Underwater Watchers faces as he announced a new and rare sightings. Tonight Chris would be going to one of these meeting and he was all a quiver with excitement as that very day he had spotted the long absent and rare rainbow spotted stickle brick which meant that maybe the numbers of otters would go up as the greater spotted stickle brick was their favourite food but more importantly (to him) he knew that all the other members would literally go green with envy as he announced his entry.

That night he arrived at a somewhat ill used Scout hut they used for their meetings, to find his fellow U.Ws already there and settled in. This nettled him a little as he was usually the first to arrive and he fancied this lent him a superior air. He made himself a weak tea (strong Tea irritated his bowels) and found an uncomfortable, graffiti and chewing gum ridden, plastic seat to sit on.

As he sat down he noticed that there was a strange buzzing tension in the air almost like a suppressed shout that might at any minute burst out and make everyone jump. Although Chris was outwardly calm his inner self was champing at the bit and the reading of last months minutes seemed interminably slow and excruciatingly painful. Finally after what seemed like an age it was time to announce their sightings. This was the moment Chris had been anticipating all day long. He opened his mouth to speak but Mary beat him to it.

"I saw a rainbow spotted stickle brick today!" She sat back and folded her arms as a smug smile spread across her face.

To be continued...

By Michelle Smith

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## on and around the

# Kennet and Avon Canal

Email:

[michelle.smith14@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:michelle.smith14@bathspa.ac.uk)

for more details.