



BASINGSTOKE CANAL BULLETIN

No. 12 February / March / April 2012

Towpath work started at Frimley Lodge Park



Stump-grinder in action

This vicious piece of equipment could be seen recently grinding away the tree stumps that obstructed the towpath near the Guildford Road bridge, in preparation for a new 40m landing stage that is to be built by Society volunteers, which will service the northern end of Frimley Lodge Park.

Learn about the Canal by clicking these links

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- [The Canal "then, later and now" pictures](#)
- [Basingstoke Canal Wiki Page](#)
- [New Basingstoke Canal Authority \(BCA\) Website](#)
- [Map of the Basingstoke Canal](#)
- [John Pinkerton on Facebook](#)
- [BCA Visitor Centre on Facebook](#)



Canalside Jubilee 2012

**Sat 2nd June ,Sun 3rd June ,Mon 4th June 2012 12.00pm – 5.00pm
at Frimley Lodge Park**

This 3-day family event is being organised by Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society to celebrate the *21 years since the Royal re-opening of the Basingstoke Canal* and Her Majesty the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, with as many boats as are able to get

Live Entertainment

there, one way or the other, by water or by road. In addition to the entertainment on stage in the main arena, there will be a variety of stands and stalls, a craft marquee, fun activities for children, boat trips and a beer tent. Click [here](#) for a [full programme of events](#), and for general, boaters and stallholders information, please visit the [Canalside Jubilee website](#). The show will run from 12.00 pm to 5.00 pm each day. Entry is free.



The site, which is adjacent to the Canal, provides ample parking, toilets and a permanent café in the pavilion, plus further refreshments in the outside area. There is accommodation for camping and caravans and a permanent miniature railway.

Boat Trips

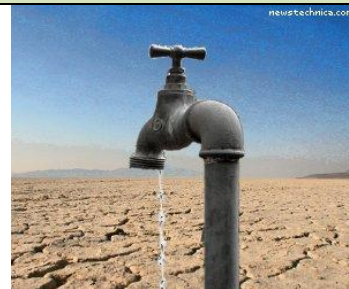
Do come along and support this event and help rebuild the reputation of the Canal as a waterway which everyone with an interest in our rich canal heritage will want to visit.

Help is urgently needed at the event – if you can lend a hand in any way please contact Verna Smith at events@basingsstoke-canal.org.uk or on 01252 517622.

Click here to join the Surrey and Hants Canal Society

Water Situation

Many will be aware that because of a succession of dry weather, followed by a very dry autumn and winter, water supplies across much of the country are at their lowest for many years. The Southern, South East and Thames Water companies have all recently imposed [hose pipe bans](#). There has already been news of the impact upon the waterways network, and the Basingstoke is for a change not alone in being affected. For example, voluntary or mandatory reductions in opening hours are being imposed on [several canals](#), including the Kennet and Avon and Oxford. The Grand Union is to be closed completely in Leicestershire after April 13th until normal water levels resume.



It was hoped earlier in the year that when the first phase of work by the term contractor had been completed on the Deepcut flight it would be again filled and reopened, not least so that boats could cruise to the Canalside Jubilee celebrations at Frimley Lodge Park in June (see above). However the BCA's standard operating procedures during periods of water shortage have required that the Deepcut flight not be filled or used: it is believed that to do so would compromise the Hampshire and Mytchett pounds and put at risk the Galleon Marine and the Society's trip boat operations. The flight will therefore remain closed for the foreseeable future, and it is hoped that the opportunity can be taken to continue with more remedial works, provided that further funding from Surrey County Council becomes available. Ash Lock will remain open for the time being between 9am and 5pm, subject to the Hampshire pound level not dropping more than 200mm (8"), and boats are asked to lock in pairs wherever possible. The Brookwood flight will also remain closed, to keep the Brookwood pound in water. Boaters coming up the Canal for the Jubilee event will need to moor at Brookwood Country Park and will be provided with transport to Frimley Lodge Park.

Society Regular Volunteer Work Party



The team has been busy, as usual. In January, picking up from where [Waterway Recovery Group \(WRG\)](#) teams left it, the landing stage at Lock 1 was finally completed (*see left*), if somewhat hurriedly, to beat the fading light on the second day. We then moved to Frimley Lodge Park, where for three weekends, we have been engaged

with repairs to the towpath. This section of canal is one of the most popular with the general public, but at the same time one of the most badly eroded, to the point that closure would have been soon necessary on safety grounds. The worst washouts, or "dog holes" which have resulted in the most severe narrowing of the path (*see right*), have been temporarily repaired using



wooden posts (*see above*) which will retain a clay-based backfill. Inlets allowing access to the water at various points will be constructed, and growth of vegetation will over time help to bind the repair. It is also hoped to start work concurrently on a new landing stage near the bridge at a forthcoming work party. The old wooden affair has been removed in preparation, along with 4 tree stumps which were blocking the way (see page 1).

sandbags and hoggin backfill. This has made passage for pedestrians, cyclists, and not least our plant that bit safer. Now the work party has started a more permanent repair, working south from Guildford Road Bridge. This entails installing along the original line of the bank a strong membrane supported by treated

The next work parties take place at **Frimley Lodge Park** on **April 14th/15th** and **April 28th/29th**. If you would like to know more about what we do and maybe come along and join us, then please contact Janet Buckley at workparty@basinstoke-canal.org.uk or on 01252 620787.

Other activity on the Canal

Members of the [John Pinkerton trip boat crew](#) (right) were out again on the Society's workboat in January doing bank clearance and overhanging branch removal along the course of the JP trips around Odiham. Now that the nesting season has started, this work has had to be curtailed, and will be resumed in October.



Praise should go to Andy Beale for an excellent photo (left) of reflections in the Canal in Hampshire taken while out on one of these trips.



The term contractor (Dyer and Butler) has nearly completed the first phase of structural repairs on the Deepcut flight and in Hampshire (for a



list, see the [latest BCN](#)). In Hampshire, the work on embankment leaks at West Hart (continuing work done last year – see right) and near Poulter's Bridge unfortunately resulted in the unexpected and unannounced closure of the Canal for several weeks. Following a plea from the Galleon Marine boat operation at Odiham, the Society and the IWA, the term contractor was requested to ensure that the Hampshire section would be re-opened before the Easter break, and this occurred on 2nd April.



It is pleasing to see that structural repairs have been completed at Deepcut locks 19, 20 and 25, and repairs to wing walls, by-pass runs and outlets, and gate replacement have been done or are underway at several other locks in the flight (*new lower gates have been installed at Lock 26, with help from the BCA rangers, left*). However, the intrusive nature of gabion (stone-filled, wire mesh) baskets which have been selected for use at rebuilt lock by-pass outlets has caused some

concern amongst boaters (see story in the [Spring Basingstoke Canal News](#)). We are told that they (for example at lock 25, right) are going to be removed or suitably re-profiled so as not to be a boat hazard. However perhaps we should be more worried about the protruding concrete and brickwork that now exists at various locations along the Deepcut flight as a result of these works, which could be even more of a problem for boats.

Lock gate replacement is also going on at the eastern end of the Canal, at Locks 1, 4, 5, 6 and 9. The term contractor had again been requested to ensure that these works would not interfere with navigation during the Easter period, especially the Open Access trial (see below). There will be temporary closures of a few days each at various times during the next few weeks while these gates are replaced, and boaters are advised to check with the Canal Centre (on 01252-370073) before planning trips.



Canal "Open Access"

Boats currently have to be escorted through the Basingstoke Canal flights of locks by rangers, to ensure that lock gates and paddles are caulked up* after use to minimise water loss. This means that locking can be done only during certain times to coincide with the duty ranger's working hours. It also means that, because caulking up is a relatively hazardous task it can only be done by two rangers (on safety grounds) – and with only one ranger now on duty at weekends and bank holidays, boats effectively cannot enter or leave the Canal during the potentially most busy times. As a result, and with the long-term closure of Deepcut, the Canal has not surprisingly acquired a reputation for being generally "closed for boats".

At the last Joint Management Council meeting, it was agreed to adopt an "Open Access" policy for the Canal, that is, to implement a series of measures that would allow boaters to enter and leave the Canal without the need for a ranger escort, just like on most other canals, and to re-establish the reputation of the Canal as "open and welcoming boats". The detail of these measures is still being worked on, however a mini-trial of unaccompanied boater lock operation by a flotilla of boats visiting from the Byfleet and St Pancras Boat Clubs was conducted recently (*above, having reached Bridge Barn, Woking*).

There are lots of issues to be resolved to make Open Access work, not least including how licences will be distributed and checked, minimising the amount of water loss resulting from badly fitting gates or "boater error", and dealing with house boater concerns regarding more variable water levels. Nobody, including at the BCA, is under any illusion that such a policy will not be challenging to implement. However some significant benefits to the Canal will result. For example a new "boaters guide" is being produced that will be issued with each licence; also it is hoped that an application will be successful to increase the amount of water that is allowed to be pumped back into the Woking pound by the Woodham backpumping (recycling) scheme, to replenish that lost through lockage. But most of all, the Canal will hopefully over time become a vibrant navigation again, after many years of abandonment by the boating community.

**Caulking up is the process of blocking leakages through lock gates and paddles by dropping materials such as sawdust or ash down the cracks – Ed.*



Basingstoke Canal Authority News



We received a report that a canoeist had hit a probable 'white goods' type object under Deadmans Bridge in Ash Vale, unfortunately putting a hole in his canoe. We recovered what looked like an entire kitchen, including radiator (*see right*). We managed to get some time to carry out off-side cutting in the centre of Woking, much to our delight, although some residents complained to a local councillor that we had cut too much. One of the days down there we stopped for lunch under Chobham Road Bridge, which turned out to be a bit of a mistake as litter thrown by pedestrians into the canal rained down onto our sandwiches! That's a first for me. We have been allocated about five miles of canal each to



carry out various inspections as required. So far we have walked our sections carrying out an initial survey of immediate works required for safety reasons. The list is incredibly long! Tuesday's volunteer group (*set up by ranger Chris Healy in January – Ed*) goes from strength to strength, working on Tundry Embankment, painting Ash Lock and repairing the by-pass fence (*see left*) as well as a spring clean at the grounds of the visitors centre. We had about 30 volunteers from the [Rushmoor Community Matters Partnership](#) spend two days clearing Ash Embankment, continuing the good work started by the [Waterway Recovery Group \(WRG\)](#) last October. There were a real mix of people and



organisations represented and we look forward to more work with them in the future. We have spent time assisting the Term Contractors installing stop planks at Double Bridge, Poulter's Bridge in Hampshire and at Lock 1 in Woodham. Andy Loader has met them to go through the lock gate measuring process. A new metal lower jack head has been installed at Lock 26 (*see page 3 – Ed*). I was sadly called to collect a dead swan at Barley Mow, which turned out to be the cob of a pair which have nested for years at the foot of Barley Mow House. He had a large fresh wound behind his right wing, which obviously proved fatal. The pen has three eggs on the nest so it will be interesting to observe how she fares this year.

James Emmett – BCA Ranger

News from the John Pinkerton Boat Company

From Peter Wright, the retiring chairman of Surrey and Hampshire Canal Cruises

Society Trip Boat (John Pinkerton) Replacement

Having decided upon an outline design for the new boat, the "JP2" team (Pete Phillips, John Abbott and Nigel Bird) met with various potential builders with a view to placing a single contract for the design and construction. With agreement from the Canal Society committee they approached one company, initially the preferred choice, and early discussions looked favourable until they were notified of a significant increase in price and a delay in construction. As it was becoming obvious that we were unlikely to have a replacement boat for the 2012 season the team decided to take advantage of the delay to investigate alternatives. Another builder has been approached and has now emerged as the preferred supplier. The JP2 team with Society chairman Philip Riley have met with this company again and following productive discussions, hope to enter into a contract for a design and build in the near future. If all goes well, we should have the boat delivered for the 2013 season.



John Pinkerton Winter maintenance

You will be pleased to know that the JP passed its main Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) check in February. It seemed straight forward as there were few things that had to be inspected this time. Also as the poor boat was frozen into the mooring we could not even have a "running check". Instead a selection of forward gear and then reverse seemed sufficient! Thanks must go to John Wharf and the maintenance team, and John Kilburn for keeping an impressive library of manuals for the inspector.

New skippers recruited

I am pleased to say that we now have 9 new skippers after six months of hard work. They have been learning not only the practical side of the operation but the theoretical and legal aspects of being a captain in this day and age! The MCA Captain passed the final four during two return trips between the winding holes at the Barley Mow and Blacksmiths Bridge. The nine are Phil Jackson, Graham Nicholson, Phil Hardyman, Graham Deavin, Steve James, Mark Griffiths, John Wharf, Tim Cadle, and Bob Malcolm. Congratulations to them!

New Crewing Roster Managers recruited

Thanks to the publicity through the Society we have been able to fill the two vacancies for organising crews for the boat with Dick King and Graham Nicholson. Both are experienced with the JP operation and no doubt will run a really good system. At the end of last season both our Crew Roster Managers retired: David Easter, who is also our Auditor, has helped us over the last couple of years; and Mike Hammersley, who has still been using pen, paper and telephone until this last autumn! I am sure many thanks will be wished to them from our members as they have done a brilliant and vital job setting up crews for the boat, enjoyment for us, and raising money for the Society and ultimately the Canal. Mike has been with the JP, I think without exaggeration, from the beginning, so is due a special "Thank you" for all the work he has done for probably over thirty years.

New Crew Training Manager recruited

Since about 1995 captains on boats that carry more than 12 passengers have had to have a licence from the MCA and the legislation has not stopped there. Checks on the boat's maintenance have become more rigorous and now crews have to have a brief refresher trip every two years. This has meant that our training organisation has increased in size. We now we have a training manager Tim Cadle and assistant Robert Pring to organise trips on the boat for new captains, regular crew refreshers, and new crew throughout the year.

New Uniform manager recruited

Trevor Carter has kindly offered to help by organising our crew "uniforms". Thanks to Andy Beale for covering this position for us for many years.

.. but additional volunteers needed

At the end of the year we will be losing our Booking Managers Marion and Hugh Gough who will be retiring after about twenty years. **If you think you would be interested in taking over the position of taking enquiries and bookings for the John Pinkerton could you please contact me, Peter Wright,** on 01344-772461 to have a chat. We run, on average, about 170 cruises a year. This usually translates into £20,000 to £30,000 of profit that will be paid direct to the Canal Society forming approximately two thirds of the income for the Society.

Lastly for my part, this year sees my eighth year as boat company chairman. Next year I am hoping to use my own boat for more trips and so if I am going to be in remote places and out of contact it might be the time to take real retirement! I will therefore be stepping down as chairman, but I hope to remain on the committee for continuity, but not in an executive role.

Peter Wright

Other News

Volunteer Help required by Water Strategy Group

A small group of people led by John How, a water engineer, a member of the IWA and consulting on behalf of the Society, is currently working on various initiatives intended (but not guaranteed!) to result in additional supplies of water to the Canal. We are looking for an individual, perhaps with experience in water engineering, hydrology or telemetry, to help us in a number of areas. In particular, we are hoping to investigate “wet areas” identified by local councils as potential new sources of water (which will require liaison with their respective drainage engineers). At some time in the future we hope to conduct a depth and width survey of the whole Canal. **If you think you would be able to participate in this Group, please contact the [bulletin editor](#).**

Work started on Bedser Bridge in Woking

As reported in the [last bulletin](#), following a large popular protest, the design of the link between the new WWF building in Brewery Road to Woking centre was [revised by Woking BC](#), to lower the new (“Bedser”) bridge and shorten the ramps and stairs. The Canal towpath will be closed from 23rd April to allow construction work to proceed, but [much to the concern of locals](#), the diversion for pedestrians and cyclists will be in place until early 2013. However it is understood that the Canal navigation will **not** be affected by these works, except for temporary overnight closures while the old bridge is demolished (end of this month) and the new bridge lifted in (end of May/early June). Further details on the closures can be found on the [Bedser Bridge website](#), and additional information will be posted on the [BCA website](#) from time to time.

Lock Model at the Canal Centre

A request was made in the [last bulletin](#) for a volunteer model engineer to repair the working model of a lock in the Canal Centre foyer. There were a lot of you interested in this, and it had to be a case of first come, first served. I have asked Keith Pratt to take this on, and he has started work already. Many thanks, Keith.

Skeletons...

Quite the most bizarre photo I have seen from the Canal appeared on the front of the [last bulletin](#), of two model skeletons seen hanging from some trees near Frimley Lock Cottage. I asked if anybody would suggest what one might be saying to the other, and I got several inevitably predictable responses, which were mainly on the lines of “So you have been waiting for Deepcut to open for while then...?”

Forthcoming events

Here are some dates for your diary:

- The 2011/12 season of the [Chobham Social Meetings](#) is taking place at The Parish Pavilion, Recreation Ground, Station Road, Chobham, at **8pm** on the **third Wednesday** of the month. Non members and friends are very welcome. Refreshments will be available at the interval. Please email [David Millett](#) or call him on 01252 617364 for more information. For a map and for more details about the talks, please refer to the latest [Basingstoke Canal News](#). The last of this season’s talks is:
- **18th April 2012 at 8pm** - Paul Gosling – “Southampton Shipping with Railway Connections”
- [Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society Annual General Meeting](#)
Saturday 12th May 2012 at 2.00pm at the [Deepcut Village Centre](#), Cyprus Road, Deepcut GU16 6TB (for directions, see the latest [Basingstoke Canal News](#)). We are delighted that **Tony Hales, Chairman of the Trustees of the new Canal and River Trust (CRT)**, has agreed to be our guest speaker. **Please make a special effort to attend this meeting.**
- [Canalside Jubilee event](#)
Saturday, 2nd June to Monday 4th June, 12.00 – 5.00pm, at **Frimley Lodge Park** (see page 1).

Apologies

Some may have noticed that there has been no Bulletin published for some while now. That is because other commitments have had to take priority. I have to say producing one of these per month was always going to be a challenge, but I hope to resume a more regular frequency, for the time being at least – Ed.

Contributions to the Bulletin are welcome..

Short articles about the Canal with accompanying photos if possible would be appreciated. Please send them to the [bulletin editor](#). The copy date for bulletin articles is the **last day of each month**. Publication (if it occurs) will normally take place approximately in the middle of the following month.

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