



The Basingstoke  
Canal Society

# Basingstoke Canal Bulletin

No. 18 MARCH / APRIL / MAY 2013

## Deepcut Flight Now Open!....



After a period of nearly 5 years, the Deepcut flight was finally opened to boats over the Easter weekend. Twenty-two craft joined the celebratory Easter Cruise, organised by Kathryn Dodington to mark the occasion. The first boats to reach the top lock 28 were nb *Hazel Nut* and nb *Barley Twist*, and the owners paused to partake of a well-earned finger of quality Scotch before departing for the Canal Centre and then overnight mooring at Potters.

## Learn about the Canal by clicking these links

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- [John Pinkerton cruising on the Basingstoke Canal](#)
- [The Canal in pictures](#)
- [Bridges/Locks in pictures](#)
- [The Canal "then, later and now" pictures](#)
- [Basingstoke Canal Wiki Page](#)
- [Basingstoke Canal Authority \(BCA\) Website](#)
- [Joint Management Committee \(JMC\) Papers](#)
- [Map of the Basingstoke Canal](#)
- [John Pinkerton on Facebook](#)
- [BCA Visitor Centre on Facebook](#)



## .... However Dogmersfield Landslip Blocks Through Navigation For Time Being

It is pretty ironic and such a shame that, just as preparations were being made to open the Canal to full navigation from end to end for the Easter Cruise, a major landslip in a Hampshire cutting took place literally just days before (*see right*). The Canal has had to be closed



between Blacksmiths Bridge and the Barley Mow for safety reasons while work goes on to determine how best to stabilise and repair the slope above the towpath. We are

pleased that this did not dishearten the visiting boaters on the Easter Cruise, who accepted that landslips are a fact of life and were at least able to cruise from the River Wey to Blacksmiths Bridge and back. However the consequences have been much more serious for the Odiham-based commercial operation Galleon Marine and also Accessible Boating, who have had to cancel trips and forgo vital income. The John Pinkerton cruises will also be affected, and much creativity has



had to be brought to bear on how to crane in the new trip boat so it could reach Odiham. (*Continued on page 4*)

**REMEMBER: If anybody asks, the Basingstoke Canal is OPEN**

from West Byfleet to Blacksmith's Bridge in Hampshire – that's about **25 miles of cruising and 29 locks each way**. Just ensure that a passage is booked at the [Canal Centre](#)



## Margurite Redway

We were very sad to hear of the sudden but peaceful death of Margurite Redway, wife of our former chairman Peter, and mother of Kevin and Ian. Margurite, who had been recently unwell, had a long association with the Canal. It was she who entered a Spar supermarket national competition for local environmental improvement proposals in 1980, winning £5000, which was the catalyst for getting work started on the restoration of the St John's locks. Not long after, Peter was leading the work parties there. The St John's flight was eventually opened in 1988, and Margurite and Peter led the celebrations aboard the *John Pinkerton* (right).



In recognition of the support given to the Canal by the Redways over many years, Margurite was recently invited to unveil a stone plaque naming Lock 11 as "Redway Lock" (left), where the family's involvement began. She subsequently wrote of her gratitude in the [current Basingstoke Canal News](#). Our thoughts are with Kevin and Ian at this difficult and sad time.

## New Society Trip Boat *John Pinkerton II* Has Arrived!.....

Well, despite our hopes, the new Society trip boat ("JP2") was not quite ready for delivery in March because of a delay with the fitting of some electrics and because the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) inspection revealed a couple of issues that had to be corrected by the builders Lambon of Droitwich.



However, we are proud to announce it is now on the Canal, having been craned in at Colt Hill wharf, Odiham. It was quite a spectacle, watched by a large crowd of Society members and other onlookers. An enormous crane (weighing 80 tonnes unladen) arrived early in the morning and set



up on the wharf (right) in preparation for the arrival of the boat on its transporter a couple of hours later. The first many of us saw of it was as it passed over Colt Hill bridge (left). After some careful manoeuvring of the 56-tonne transporter into the car park and alongside the crane, the big lift took place, and then within a few minutes the boat was lowered gently into the water, a very efficient and smooth operation indeed. The boat really does look very smart and the project team of Pete Phillips, John Abbott and Nigel Bird are to be roundly congratulated. (They can now rest easy for a day or so before starting work on final fitting out and preparing for the final MCA tests.) Later in the day the JP2 was taken on its maiden voyage by Pete's team to the Barley Mow (right).



For more photos of the boat being lifted into the Canal, click [here](#) and [here](#). To see a [YouTube video](#), [click here](#). (A professional video by David Jackson will be available soon.)



### .... But The JP2 Delivery Was Not Originally Planned This Way

The efficiency with which the *John Pinkerton II* was delivered to Colt Hill (right) belied the amount of planning that took place in the background to overcome several obstacles that hindered the project, not least of which was the blockage due to the landslip at Dogmersfield (see page 2), which threw a very large spanner into the works. Originally it had been proposed to launch near the Farnborough Road in Aldershot because of the relatively easy access this affords,



but on hearing the news of the slip, the project team (left, with Steve and Mark, the Lambon reps) had to rethink – and rapidly. It was essential that the new boat be taken to the base in Odiham for security reasons and so that fitting out could take place. However, there really are very few options upstream of the landslip where such large vehicles can be taken next to the Canal: the Barley Mow car park (discounted because of access difficulty near the water); over the Odiham bypass bridge (discounted because of road closure complications); and Colt Hill itself. The haulage firm agreed it was possible the JP2 could be delivered right to the Colt Hill wharf, provided that a gate and a few concrete bollards were temporarily removed and, most importantly, that Hampshire County Council highways department approved the use of the Colt Hill bridge by the crane and transporter. Luckily, much to the relief of the project team, the all-clear was given and final arrangements for delivery were quickly made.



### John Pinkerton II Naming Ceremony And First Public Trip



**John Pinkerton  
Canal Cruises**

The Naming Ceremony for the new Society trip boat *John Pinkerton II* will take place on **Sunday 2nd June at 11.00am** at Colt Hill Wharf, Odiham.

We are delighted that our guest of honour will be [Sally Taylor](#) of the [BBC South Today news programme](#) (right). Members are invited to come and watch and join in the fun! There will be other attractions set up on the day. We will require a few volunteers to help us on the day to set up, marshall, and clear away. If you are able to help please let me, Dick King, know at [jpcrow@btinternet.com](mailto:jpcrow@btinternet.com). Please note there will be very limited parking at the wharf - please share cars if possible, and park away from the site and walk down.



The first public trip on the new boat is expected to take place in the afternoon of Sunday 2nd June following the naming ceremony, but please book well in advance as spaces will be limited.

The new boat is not expected to be fully operational until June, but if it is ready it will be used for the following trips: the May evening trip for members and friends and anybody interested in finding out more about crewing on the *John Pinkerton II* will take place on **Monday 13 May at 7.30pm**. Pirates public trips will take place on **Thursday 30 May and Friday 31st May at 2.30pm** - fun for all the children, crew will be dressing up, and lots of pirate's clues to solve. All bookings should be made through David Horwood on 01256 765889 or at [jpbokings@basinstoke-canal.org.uk](mailto:jpbokings@basinstoke-canal.org.uk)

*Dick King, Chairman, John Pinkerton Canal Cruises*



**The Basingstoke  
Canal Society**

### Annual General Meeting

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2013 at 2.00pm**

at the [Deepcut Village Community Centre](#)

Our guest speaker will be Mike Rodd, previously chairman of the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust

**Click here to join The Basingstoke Canal Society**

## Landslip (continued)

(Continued from Page 1) Canal cognoscenti will be aware of the “Great Wall of Dogmersfield” that was constructed 30 years ago to repair a similar slip right next to this site - that was a major undertaking which took months to complete. Let us hope this one (*right*) will not result in the same delay. We know that Hampshire CC are doing all they can to return the Canal to full navigation as soon as possible and get a temporary repair in place, though the situation is complicated because the majority of the slip has occurred on privately owned land. At the time of writing, the term contractor has felled most of the trees on the slope, and the slip now appears to have stopped moving, but this is to be confirmed with surveying equipment. The originally straight towpath has been pushed out towards the Canal, narrowing the navigation, and has broken up in places (*see page 1, left*). Meetings have taken place between the Canal Management and HCC engineers to determine an appropriate course of action, and meanwhile a press statement has been published. The Society is keeping a watching brief and we have offered the use of our workboat, manpower and anything else we can provide to assist with the speedy return of navigation along this section. (For a local news report, see [here](#)— Ed.)



The Hampshire County Council press office has released the following statement about the landslip: "Hampshire County Council was made aware of the landslip along the banks of the Basingstoke Canal at Dogmersfield (between Fleet and Odiham) on March 25 thanks to a canal volunteer. That section of the canal is now closed to all boating, and the tow path closed to pedestrians and other users. The decision to close the canal navigation and tow path has been taken on health and safety grounds in case the land slips further. The land is currently unstable, the towpath has been damaged by the landslip, and is unsafe. It is too early to say whether the land has stopped slipping. An initial engineering inspection has been undertaken by specialist geotechnical teams but an in depth investigation will be required to try to establish the cause of the slip and to help identify what work must be undertaken to make both the canal and towpath safe for the public to use again. All unstable trees have already been removed and in the interim regular inspections will be undertaken by canal staff with the situation being monitored daily."

They go on to say: "Hampshire County Council is requesting the patience and co-operation of canal users and the general public in terms of respecting the closures posted on site, which are there to protect against the dangers of entering a currently unstable and potentially dangerous stretch of the canal. Hampshire County Council realises this landslip will cause inconvenience and is doing all it can to deal with the situation."

## Last Minute Preparations For The Easter Cruise



As mentioned in the [last bulletin](#), a lot of work had been going on behind the scenes by the BCA and the term contractor Dyer and Butler to get the Deepcut flight open for Easter. Predictably, preparations carried on right up to the wire, and the test run (on the BCA's Rosebud – left at Lock 17 – the first boat through the Deepcut flight in nearly 5 years) had to be delayed until just two days before the Easter Cruise flotilla was due to set out. Starting from Lock 28, the test run went reasonably smoothly – there was the occasional

jammed paddle and lock gate not quite opening, but nothing you would not expect on a lock flight that had been out of use for so long. It was only at the bottom Lock 15 that



there were problems that had to be fixed before Rosebud and other boats could use it. The following day (Good Friday, with one day to go before boats arrived) the BCA team and the contractor were out in the bitter cold, repairing a broken paddle (*right* – Sara Green donned her dry suit again), and a broken lower cill plank (*lower left*). The result was that the Easter Cruise could go ahead and boats reached the top of the Deepcut flight without incident (*see page 1*).



This is indeed a tribute to the efforts of the BCA and County staff, and the contractor D&B, who worked tirelessly over many weeks to ensure the flight would be open and the Easter Cruise a success.



## Reflections on the Easter Cruise

*A lot of credit must go to Kathryn Dodington, who, as a parting gesture before her departure from the area organised a band of boaters willing to cruise to the Basingstoke and celebrate its reopening. In the end, 22 boats arrived, in two flotillas, most making their way up the Canal from West Byfleet to Blacksmith's Bridge via the Deepcut flight over the Easter weekend and back again the following week. Here are Kathryn's reflections on the successful event – Ed.*



It was really just a throwaway remark in a phone call to my friend Rodney who was on the other side of the world in New Zealand: shall we do a Basingstoke at Christmas to Brookwood village and then one again to the top at Easter? Well we did the Christmas cruise without any issues and managed to obtain the blessing of the Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA), the two Counties and the Chair of the JMC to have a go at Deepcut over Easter. We publicised the cruise on the Byfleet Boat Club (BBC) website, we had the support of the National Trust who contacted Wey based boaters and we called our friends and colleagues in the waterways fraternity. A short time later we had 47 boats ready to go, some of whom could only commit to either Woking or Brookwood but the vast majority were on for the limit of the navigation. As luck would have it the Thames was on red boards for most of March and the

weather forecast was chilly, not to put too fine a point on it (*actually, it was freezing! – Ed*), so we ended up with 22 boats ready to accept the challenge of Deepcut.

The BCA moved heaven and earth to get the canal navigable over the four major flights of locks (Woodham, St Johns, Brookwood and Deepcut) and through the Society and the Basingstoke Canal Boating Club (BCBC) we had volunteers available to help with, and caulk, the locks. The first group of boats assembled at Lock 1 on Maundy Thursday and made swift work of the flight. On the Friday the first group tackled St Johns whilst the second group started at Woodham. The big push, and the one that created most interest, was the challenge of Deepcut as no boat, apart from a BCA test trip the previous

week, had traversed this flight in over four years (*right*). There was intense interest in the cruise with a number of [waterways publications](#) sending reporters to witness the first 15 boats to go up Deepcut. (*For local reports, see [here](#) and [here](#) – Ed*)



There were a few issues but none that caused too much concern. By 6:30pm we had 15 boats moored in Potters (*above left*) with a further seven expected the following day. There was quite a celebration in Potters that evening tinged with a little sadness that *Rowan* had experienced what we thought was, and turned out to be, a major engine malfunction on the way up Deepcut. In true boating style Mike and Lorraine Skeet on *Winging It* made sure *Rowan* arrived at the Canal Centre. The following day the remaining seven boats made it to Potters whilst some of the first 15 made their way towards Hampshire (*below left*). We had been advised that we were not to travel past Blacksmith's Bridge winding hole due to a slippage at Dogmersfield. A bit



sad but we had made it up Deepcut and safety comes before anything. We all had a wonderful time proving the Basingstoke, despite the intense cold, was fit for purpose and no worse than a number of well-travelled waterways.

Ray Oakhill on *Stronghold* stepped forward to take *Rowan* in tow for the trip back to Pyrford Marina – there was no one better to show the true spirit of boating than Ray who has a huge amount of experience with the Narrowboat Trust on *Brighton* and *Nuneaton*.

There's no doubt the Basingstoke is fit for purpose; the boaters had a wonderful time, we proved to the waterways community nationwide that the Basingstoke is open for business and we thank the BCA, the Counties and all the volunteers for their professionalism, their enthusiasm, their sense of humour and their plain hard work. It is now up to the BCA to keep the canal navigable and to the boaters to support that initiative and use this lovely canal and preserve it as a navigable waterway for the future.

*Kathryn Dodington*

*For more about the Easter Cruise, please see [Kathryn's blog](#). She is right about getting the Canal patronised – the refrain "use it or lose it" about the Basingstoke has been heard many times over the last few weeks – Ed*

## Society Work Party Activities

Since the [last report](#), the Society work party has been out to clear overhanging branches and rhododendron bushes downstream from the Guildford Road bridge at Frimley. However there is much to do there to make any sort of impression. Since the bird nesting season has now commenced, this work will have to be completed in the Autumn.

The team has since moved on to working at the 18<sup>th</sup> Century barn at Colt Hill, Odiham, where the *John Pinkerton* is moored and which the Society acquired recently. The following “first phase” work is underway: clearance of ivy, replacement of broken tiles, removal of trees on the Waterwitch pub land that are leaning on the building, repairs to broken/subsided brickwork, and the



laying of a 240 volt power cable to points near the water's edge to supply the new tripboat (*in progress, right*). Permission has also been obtained to fell the large ivy-encrusted ash tree near the canal (*left*) which will reduce bird fouling of the boat, and to trim the pub's willow. Longer term, the Society plans to lengthen the piled mooring along part of the pub frontage and to put in soft bank protection along the rest. Remedial work to the barn's party wall will also be done in due course.



## Lengthsman's Diary

The following report was recently submitted by one of our lengthsman, Rus Slater. It is entitled “You should have seen the one that got away!” – Ed

Species: *Compta Laptoppus*  
Genus: *Hewletti Packardae*  
Type: dv9000



The Basingstoke Canal is a Site of Special Scientific Interest or SSSI, due to the variety and particular species to found in its waters. So you won't be surprised to hear that an unexpected, foreign invasive species was discovered in the waters last week. After a long struggle, Rus Slater, the 'lengthsman' for the Dogmersfield area, landed the beast near the Barley Mow Slipway. He had originally spotted it lurking on the bottom in the clear water beneath the Barley Mow Bridge. It was partially concealed in the shadows with a light camouflage covering of silt and leaves. Weighing in at over 2.5 kilos this monster is over 15.8 inches in length and packs a vicious byte. Rus had initially flipped it over and trapped it against the brickwork of the bridge banks before managing to net it and haul it in. As the photo shows it has clearly been through some serious fights during its life and is probably now well

past its prime. Since the species originates in the Far East and is not indigenous to the UK, it is most likely it has been 'released' off the bridge by someone who has illegally 'liberated' it from its rightful owner. The proper authorities have been notified and the beast has been taken into protective custody by the Hampshire Constabulary. If anyone has any information on either its rightful owner, or how it came to be running loose in the Basingstoke Canal, they are requested to contact Hampshire Police on 0845 0454545. Rus Slater

## Forthcoming Events

- **Basingstoke Canal Society Annual General Meeting**  
Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2013 at **2.00pm** at the [Deepcut Village Community Centre](#), Cyprus Road, Deepcut GU16 6TB. We are delighted that Mike Rodd, recently retired chairman of the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust, has agreed to be our guest speaker. **Please make a special effort to attend this meeting.**
- **John Pinkerton II Naming Ceremony**  
is planned for **Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2013 at 11.00am** at the Colt Hill wharf, Odiham, where guest of honour will be [Sally Taylor](#) of the [BBC South Today programme](#). Naming ceremony and other attractions.

## Your Feedback Is Welcome...

We would of course welcome your feedback on this Bulletin and on the Society's new look. Please send this to the [bulletin editor](#). Short articles about the Canal with accompanying photos if possible would be appreciated. The copy date for bulletin articles is the **last day of each month**. Publication (if it occurs) will normally take place towards the end of the following month.

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*The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Society.*

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