



The Basingstoke
Canal Society

Basingstoke Canal Bulletin

No. 30 MAY 2017

Kitty Trip Boat Operation Launches

Following its introduction to the Canal at the Woking Canal Festival last summer, the trip boat *Kitty* is gearing up to provide regular trips in Woking from the May Bank Holiday weekend.

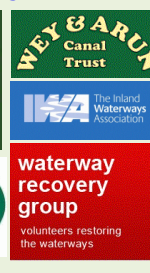
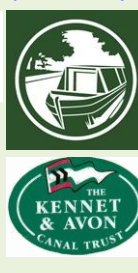


Kitty turning at Woking Town Wharf

Kitty was acquired by the Society last year with the intended purpose of raising interest and awareness of the Canal at the eastern end. It accommodates up to 12 passengers, and has provision for up to 2 wheelchair users. The provisional schedule of cruises available for booking includes public trips (for individual bookings) twice each day at weekends, and charter trips for groups twice every Wednesday. Trips depart from the Woking Town Wharf, adjacent to the WWF building, and last approximately 1¼ hours. See the updated [website](#) for more information and to book tickets.

Learn about the Canal by clicking these links

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Click on the [website links](#) in the Bulletin articles to read more

2017 Kitty Trips Announced And On-line Booking Now Available

It has been a while coming, but we are pleased to announce that the *Kitty* operation will shortly be up and running in Woking. As already stated, we have decided upon a [provisional schedule of available trips](#) which start on the May bank holiday weekend. However we fully expect to modify this over time to meet demand. All trips (both public and charter) on *Kitty* can be [booked online](#), however those needing assistance can contact our booking team on 01256-765889 (10am–8pm). To find out the latest situation on when trips are available, please visit the website and [booking system](#). A printed brochure will shortly be produced and will be reproduced on this site. Click on the button to the right to book your trip!



BOOK YOUR TRIP >

Need an idea for a birthday present? Give a Kitty Cruise Voucher

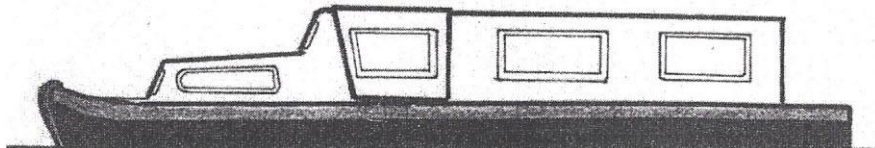
If you are struggling to find a special present, then here is an idea: give a [gift voucher](#) for a [Kitty Public or Charter trip](#) taking place sometime this year. Vouchers to the value of between £10 and £60 can be purchased on-line by simply filling in a [form](#) and making a card payment. You can then email or give them to your intended recipient(s), who can redeem them as part or full payment against any [Public or Charter cruise on Kitty](#) that can be booked through the on-line system (or by calling our booking team). Click below.

Buy A Cruise Gift Voucher

More About Kitty

Ian Moore, has kindly taken on the management of the Kitty trip boat operation. Here he brings us up to date with progress – Ed

The Canal Society new trip boat *Kitty* was bought last year from the Chichester Canal Trust with a view to putting her in service as a trip boat on the Woking pound. As she is only 32 feet long she is not constrained to only turning at winding holes. We understand that *Kitty* was originally used as a house boat based in London (*looking very different then, below*), and was then modified by the CCT to be a trip boat with a hydraulic lift giving her the capability to take 2 wheelchairs in the main cabin. She has fixed seating arranged around a centre table giving passengers the opportunity to spread out their meal – if they are bringing food and drink on board.



Kitty will be operating from the Town Wharf outside the WWF offices, and the trips will be just over an hour's duration. It is anticipated that a number of trips will be in conjunction with the Lightbox, and may include cruising down to the wharf at Monument Bridge for access to the Peace Garden on Horsell Common. Next year, being the 100th anniversary of the ending of the Great War, will also add a degree of poignancy at the Peace Garden. In addition there are also two Bronze Age burial barrows nearby, the only two within the boundary of Woking Borough Council. More details will soon be available from the Lightbox.



Of course the famous science fiction writer HG Wells wrote 'War of the Worlds' (published in 1898) while he lived in Woking, the sandpits of Horsell Common being the landing site of the 'aliens' while they built their fighting machines – *example left*.

Kitty spent the winter at Ash Lock whilst various bits of maintenance were being carried out, including producing a winter cover, an overhaul of the electrical system, better lighting – both internal and external, a rudder position indicator for the helmsman, and more. The wheelchair-lift has also been serviced and certificated. The boat is now back in Woking and at her new mooring. A big vote of thanks to Dick King, Graham Deavin, Martin Leech and Derek Taylor who got us to where we are today.

Bookings will be done on-line, using a separate copy of the JP booking system and linked through the original expanded JP web pages (*see above*). Currently, the schedule will include Charters on Wednesdays, and Public Trips on Saturdays & Sundays plus bank holidays. Other dates may become available depending on demand. See also [here](#).

The boat will be available for crewed charter for groups of up to 12, and Society members are welcome to take advantage of this additional facility.

We are seeking more volunteers who would like to assist with crewing *Kitty* through the season – please contact me, Ian Moore, via email (ian.moore55@btinternet.com) if you are interested.

Ian Moore – Kitty Trip Boat Manager

So Then, Why Has The Boat Been Named "Kitty"

For those wondering why we apparently named our second trip boat after a cat, well, actually we didn't. *Kitty* was in fact a horse that worked on the Canal in the 1950's, and was owned by the then manager of the Basingstoke, Joan Marshall. Joan's daughter, the Society's co-President Liz Dodwell explains:

"Kitty was used as a barge horse pulling work boats and giving boat trips on the Basingstoke Canal. Joan Marshall bought Kitty just after the second world war and used her to pull a gypsy caravan (below left) for family holidays. After Joan became general manager of the Canal, Kitty was used as a barge horse pulling work boats and giving boat trips in the 1950s.



She was looked after by 'Old Mark' Hicks at Crookham Wharf.

Liz NB our nickname for my mother was 'Butty'."

(The gypsy caravan still exists and was inherited by Liz.)

To read more about the history of the boat itself, and its naming ceremony which took place at the Woking Canal Festival, see the [Our Boats page](#) on the website.

Kitty Plaque

Hanging inside the Dodwell's gypsy caravan is a bronze plaque that Liz had made of Kitty the horse by a professional artist.

She was kind enough to lend this to workparty coordinator Janet Buckley who has made a very good bronze-impregnated resin replica (*to the left of the original in the photo*), which will be mounted in the cabin of the boat *Kitty*. Many thanks to Liz for the loan and to Janet for the handiwork!



Work Party Activity



The regular Society work party led by Kevin Redway has been busy since the publication of the [last bulletin](#) (yes, this was a while ago...). Following major works to rebuild the Bridge Barn water and waste disposal point (*above left*), a lot of bank and overhanging tree clearance took place over the winter, particularly along the course of the *John Pinkerton II* trip boat route in Hampshire. Many, many boats-full of cuttings were burned (*above right*).

The team has also repainted our workboat *Alan Flight*, and undertaken some major repairs to our smallest (and most useful) barge and working platform *Beth*. More recent works have included installation of a second water point outside the Canal Centre at Mytchett (*left*) and undertaking hull repairs to our second workboat *Fly II* (*below left*). We intend to upgrade this boat to be of the same standard as the *Alan Flight*, but a considerable amount of welding will need doing first...



The Society engineering team led by John Wharf (*right*) has also been busy. They were asked to refurbish the two somewhat battered BCA workboats. The decks of each have been retimbered, new bilge pumps fitted and they have been repainted, and the cabins are now nothing short of opulent. They have also built some racks for the BCA's canoe shed, and fixed their sit-on mower and band saw motor.

Finally, I should mention the BCA's Tuesday working party group which goes from



strength to strength. Led by BCA rangers, this group has undertaken a great variety of work on the Canal, from tidying up around locks, painting lock gates, and towpath and hedge clearance among other things, all of which enhance the appearance of the waterway.

Editors Comments...

It has been a while since the bulletin was last published as has been said. Not my intent, but other things have just got in the way. I hope it will not be so long until the next one...

I always appreciate contributions from readers, so please send to me, the [bulletin editor](#), any short articles about the Canal you may have, with accompanying photos if possible.

Published by The Basingstoke Canal Society

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