



The Basingstoke  
Canal Society

# Basingstoke Canal Bulletin

No. 34 MAY 2018

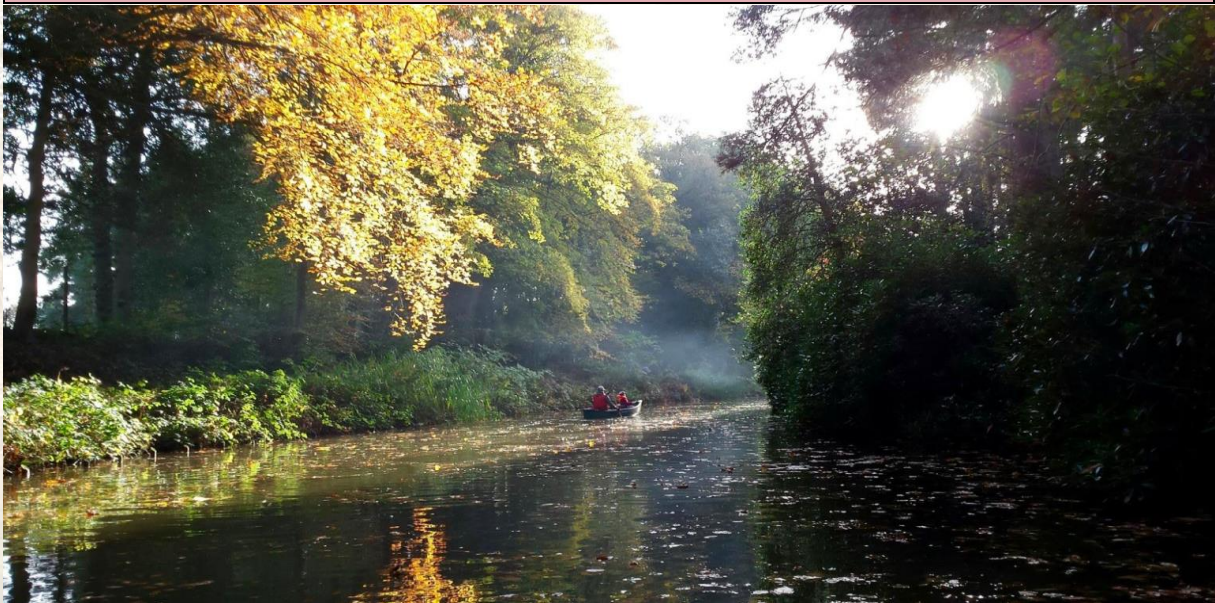


[Become a Volunteer](#)  
[Become a Member](#)  
[Society Website](#)  
[Society/ Canal Links](#)



John Pinkerton  
Canal Cruises

## Photo Competition and Friends Initiative



Firstly, congratulations to Majid Qayyum for winning our Facebook photo competition with the above fantastic shot capturing both the beauty and the mood of the canal. Thank you to everyone who submitted photos (there were over 200) - they were absolutely fantastic. [Have a look at them on Facebook](#). We will do another competition in a few months' time.

In this Bulletin you will find:

- An update on some of the clubs and boating opportunities along the canal
- Details on invasive aquatic plants that we need to manage
- Specific volunteer roles where we need your help
- A bit of history about the old brickworks at Up Nately.

In the meantime, our "Friends" initiative to engage the community continues to gain momentum. We now have nearly 1800 followers on the [Society Facebook page](#) (up 400 in the last two months). With over 1000 now also receiving this Bulletin we are thrilled to be building a substantial base of people interested and keen to support the canal.

With your support we would like to get the Friends total up to 5000 by the end of the year – so please could each of you help by getting at least one of your own friends, neighbours and colleagues to either follow us on [Facebook](#) or become a [Friend](#) by pressing the Big Red Button on our [website](#).

Having a large number of supporters helps us protect the canal by lending weight in discussions with the councils and showing that you, the community, really value the canal as a local amenity.



## Boats On The Canal At Odiham

### Accessible Boating

The Accessible Boating Association (ABA), is a registered charity set up in 1985 by Mildred Stocks, then Chair of Hart District Council, who wanted to enable people who couldn't use existing canal boats to enjoy cruises on the Basingstoke Canal.

ABA's first 'accessible' day boat, named *The Mildred Stocks* (right), was built by Royal Aircraft Establishment apprentices



and launched in 1986. The charity then decided to buy a holiday boat and, after much fundraising, *Madam Butterfly* (left) was launched in 1995. By 1997 it was decided that a new day boat was needed and so a purpose-built craft was designed, named *Dawn*, which was launched in 1999.

*Madam Butterfly* is a comfortable seven-berth cruising boat, equipped with wheelchair lifts, fore and aft, and a hospital bed. *Madam Butterfly* is ideal for families or groups with little or no

experience of canal boating and can be hired for up to seven nights. Hirers are given tuition in operating the boat and its equipment.

*Dawn* (right, with ABA chairman John Ranson at the tiller) is a 12-person day boat with a wheelchair lift, toilet and a gas hob and is available for trips manned by ABA volunteers or self-drive hire. In recent years ABA have introduced scheduled trips to enable individuals and small groups to enjoy trips on the canal. ABA also use *Dawn* for publicity and fundraising activities such as Father Christmas trips and trips from Old Thatch when open for the National Gardens Scheme.

Both boats are based in Odiham at Galleon Marine's boatyard with trips operating from Colt Hill Wharf from April to October. Over the winter months maintenance of both boats is undertaken by volunteers with professional help when necessary.

For more details see [www.accessibleboating.org.uk](http://www.accessibleboating.org.uk). New volunteers are always welcome; speak to a volunteer or contact John Ranson at [chairman@accessibleboating.org.uk](mailto:chairman@accessibleboating.org.uk).





## *Galleon Marine*



Regular walkers and users of the canal will know that the [Galleon Marine](#) boatyard has been hiring out various water craft for the past 30 years. Proprietors Arthur and Karen McCaffery took over the site in 2014:

“Our aim has been to make the boatyard a welcoming venue for

people to participate in water-based activities such as kayaking, canoeing and rowing or just to take time out and relax by the canal, watching the activities with an ice cream or cup of tea and a slice of cake.

“Since our expansion of the kiosk and better signage, we have noticed an increase in cyclists and walkers that visit the boatyard and we now welcome around 8,000 visitors a year. It gives us the opportunity to promote what we do to the wider and local community but also the other businesses, clubs and charities based at Colt Hill. We have begun to refer to our little community as 'Colt Hill United' as all of us have the goal of supporting and improving the canal, along with getting people to spend their leisure time on a boat for a holiday or to learn a new skill such as rowing.

“Our narrowboat holidays have grown year on year and our ongoing improvements have seen two new engines installed over the winter break and interior refits to two boats. All of this improves the quality of holidays on the Basingstoke Canal and gets people talking about it to friends and family.

“The addition last year of *Juniper* to our fleet has meant that we have a quality purpose-built boat that allows groups of up to 10 to spend time together exploring the canal and surrounding pubs and countryside. A

big attraction for many day hirers is the historically important Odiham Castle which we are lucky to be able to navigate to by canal.”



### **Keeping The Canal Going**

With birds now nesting, the canal rangers' and volunteers' work moves from cutting back trees and vegetation to keeping the towpath and locks tidy. This involves mowing both sides of the towpath (64 miles of mowing – but good exercise!) along with a programme of painting and cleaning up the 29 locks. On top of this they respond to less predictable events like fallen trees (as happened recently in Crookham when the channel and towpath were completely blocked - *see below*).





Unfortunately, there is also the major challenge of managing invasive species along the canal. The Non-native Species Secretariat explains on its [website](#) that “invasive aquatic species can have a devastating impact on British plants, animals and ecosystems. As well as preying on, out-competing and displacing native wildlife, they can spread disease and block

waterways. Their presence can sometimes be so damaging it can lead to significant changes to the entire ecology of a water body”.

The following are some of the main water-based invasive species that pose a threat to our canal:



**Floating Pennywort** (*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*) - above

This is a species that we have to work very hard at to keep in check and prevent from clogging up the canal. We have mostly managed to contain this below lock 7 with much hard work from our volunteer teams for many years, lifting it out both mechanically and manually to remove every tiny piece that could grow. There was, however, an outbreak in Fleet in 2016 that could have been devastating for the Hampshire section had our volunteers not addressed it so quickly.

**New Zealand Pigmyweed** (*Crassula helmsii*) - right

This invader was in the news a great deal 20 years ago as it began taking over ponds and waterways. It is still very much a live threat today.







### **Carolina Water Shield** (*Cabomba caroliniana*) - left

Mainly seen just below the surface, this plant may look attractive on the face of it, but like the others it is an invasive nuisance. Those with powered boats in particular may notice it tangled around their propellers.

As a Site of Special Scientific Interest, it is vitally important to protect the canal from invasive species, so please help us by:

- Preventing the spread of garden species that are often non-native close to the canal and its banks.
- Not emptying garden ponds or anything from them into the canal. Oxygenating plants are often invasive and we believe that a discarded pot we found from someone's pond in Fleet was the root cause (excuse the pun!) of the hydrocotyle outbreak last year.
- Using native species rather than non-natives – ask your garden centre for advice.
- If you are a boater, clearing your weed hatch regularly especially before coming up through lock 7.
- If you have unpowered boats such as kayaks, canoes and paddleboards or you are an angler, ensuring you use Check, Clean and Dry principles of biosecurity for your equipment and clothing to ensure non-natives are not spread between waterways. See: <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry/>

### **Have Fun Volunteering**

Much of the work on the boats and towpath is done with the help of volunteers. However, there are many other canal-related activities which are undertaken by those willing to give their time. There are [lots of volunteer opportunities](#) but we particularly need more help with the following roles:

- **Organising events**
- **Liaising with local press and radio**
- **Engineer and Maintenance Manager on the [John Pinkerton II](#) trip boat at Odiham**

If you are interested in any of these jobs or what to find out more, then please contact us. It's very rewarding to work in a team for the benefit of the community and the canal. Furthermore, you can learn new skills, meet new people and learn all about the history, engineering and natural environment of the canal.

Please visit our website and see if there is something that appeals to you, or contact the [bulletin editor](#) or call 07850 652769 to find out more details.

### **Focus On: Hart Road Runners**

The Basingstoke Canal has been a key part of [Hart Road Runners](#)' activity since the club was formed in 1982. You are likely to see runners enjoying the towpath tracks and surrounding countryside all year round, although there is a special focus in Spring and Summer when the canal is the centre of a wide range of activity.



From a meeting point at the Barley Mow Slipway Car Park, the club runs a number of trails along and around the canal during the warmer months. There are activities for runners of all abilities, with longer trail runs for more experienced runners, as far as Brookwood or Odiham, combined with shorter routes for those starting out on their running journey. Key to the popularity of the club, they welcome adult runners of all ages and experiences, making sure that no one is left behind!



The club has a wide range of activities each week, with a combination of training runs, track sessions, social runs and sessions for runners recovering from injury, or those wanting to start their running activities at a modest pace. There is something for everyone, including a range of non-running social activities so that runners can catch up with friends in a less active environment!

In addition to social running, the club also takes part in more formal events

such as the Southern Cross-Country League in winter, the London Marathon, Fleet 10 km and Fleet Half marathon. If you want to find out more email [hrrsiteteam@gmail.com](mailto:hrrsiteteam@gmail.com).

### Focus On: Fleet Cycling

Fleet Cycling was formed in 2014 by a group of cycling enthusiasts and is a member group of Cycling UK (CUK). It is a friendly, inclusive cycling club with over 200 members, offering bike rides for all ages and abilities, while promoting safe group cycling.

Fleet Cycling have club rides every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday, leaving from Hart Leisure Centre in Fleet. The rides are 35–60 miles in length, generally averaging 12.5 mph, and always with a coffee and cake stop.







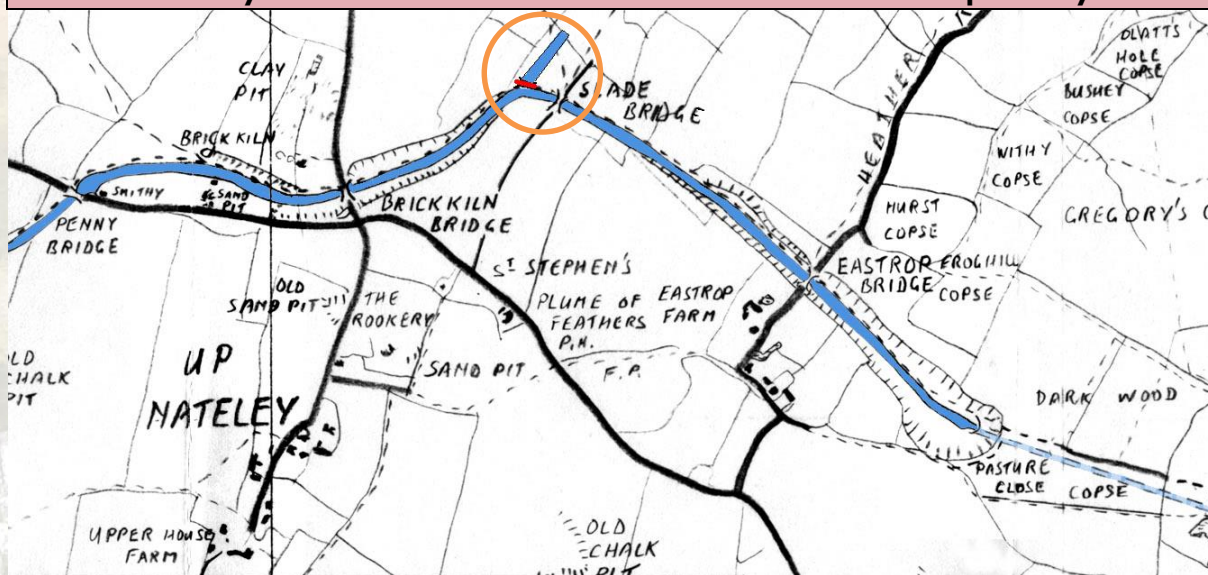
This month the group will be offering shorter/slower rides on 6th May, starting at Hart Leisure Centre. The format will be 20 miles, back to the Leisure Centre, and then another 20 miles for people who would like to do a bit more mileage. These rides are aimed mainly at cyclists who would like to try group cycling or the less experienced cyclist.

Fleet Cycling are very active in the community. They fundraise for charity with the Fleet Flyer, a charity cycling challenge being held on 13<sup>th</sup> May, and also promote the Vision for Cycling Development in Fleet.

Fleet Cycling emphasise safe group cycling, with respect and courtesy for all road users – pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, motorcycles and our 4 legged friends!

Visit [fleetcycling.org.uk](http://fleetcycling.org.uk) for further details or to sign up for the Fleet Flyer and help raise much needed funds for charity, and get fit in the process!

#### **A Bit Of History: Did You Know There Was A Brickworks At Up Nately?**



In 1895, after eight years in the hands of the official receiver, the canal was bought by Sir Frederick Seager Hunt, who formed the Woking, Aldershot & Basingstoke Canal & Navigation Company Ltd. Sir Fred was a Tory MP but made his living by distilling gin.

It is not entirely clear why Sir Fred became interested in the canal. However, he must have seen commercial possibilities and invested a significant amount of money in reviving the then derelict canal.

In fact, the Army camps around Aldershot, Deepcut and Pirbright were being upgraded and large quantities of bricks were needed. Sir Fred bought a small brickworks at Up Nately and again spent a significant sum to enlarge it, creating the Hampshire Brick & Tile Company. A 100-yard long arm was dug near Slade's Bridge (see map) to allow boats to load the bricks and to unload coal to fire the kilns. About 50 tons of coal were carried from Basingstoke per week, where ironically it had been delivered by rail. Shareholders in the Brick Company



included a Clerkenwell gas-meter maker, three City solicitors, a coal merchant, a theatrical manager and the Reading brewer Louis Simonds.

By the end of the century, both the canal and the brickworks were doing quite well and several million bricks had been transported, but in 1899, there was a catastrophic bank breach near the Step Bridge in Woking (still an area prone to problems) and the canal was closed for 14 weeks. The Canal Company blamed Woking Council for putting a sewer under the canal but the Council resisted the claim and by the time the case came to the High Court, the Canal Company had gone into liquidation.

The Brick Company also went into liquidation the following year. It has been said that the clay was unsatisfactory and that the bricks were not very good, but there are houses still standing that were built using Up Nately bricks. It is also possible that the Army contracts had been completed and demand had dropped. Sir Fred disposed of most of his shares before the company was wound up, but bricks continued to be produced there until about 1908.

The Brick Company owned a number of boats, most of which were sold when the company folded. Two of them, *Maudie* and *Ada*, were bought by a man from Richmond who, with his wife and children, started hauling the boats down the canal. They got as far as Lock 15 at



Pirbright but found it closed for repair, so moored in the flash above the lock to wait for it to re-open. However, the children contracted diphtheria and were taken away to the isolation hospital in Guildford. Their parents went with them and none of them ever returned. The boats eventually sank and were finally removed in the 1980s when the canal was restored.

A third Brick Company boat, called *Seagull* (left) still remains in the Brickworks Arm. In 1985, using a grant from the Science Museum in London, the Canal Society salvaged its single cylinder inverted steam engine, which is now in the Waterways Museum in Gloucester. The remains of *Seagull*, including the iron 'knees', propeller shaft and propeller, can still be seen when water levels drop.

The entrance to the Brickworks Arm is now crossed by a fixed foot bridge (right), constructed from the old Zebon Common swing bridge. When the Zebon Common bridge (near Fleet) was upgraded in 1993, the old structure was in turn used to replace a very rickety wooden bridge at Up Nately. In the process, a post with a pulley on top was discovered lying beside the canal and it is believed that this formed part of a lifting bridge that allowed boats to access the arm when it was in use.



Going from the towpath, there is public access to the left-hand bank of the arm, but the other side is privately owned. Remnants of the brickworks also remain, including the bases for the clay milling machines and a mysterious brick arch which may have supported some sort of overhead railway.



## **Tell Everyone About The Canal – Love It, Share It, Support It**

Please continue to tell everyone about your wonderful Basingstoke Canal, along with posting your stories and pictures on [Facebook](#) and encouraging them to become Friends by registering on the [website](#). If you are a club, society or school along the canal please let us have “Focus On” articles that you would like us to publish (send them to the [bulletin editor](#)).

And don’t forget that it is important to take every opportunity to remind local council representatives of the wonderful amenity value of the canal. When it comes to protecting its long-term future, it is vital to ensure our council leaders are fully aware of how much the canal is valued by you, the community

Enjoy the Canal.

*Ken Sankey*

---

### ***Published by The Basingstoke Canal Society***

A Non-profit Distributing Company, Limited by Guarantee, Registered as *The Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society Ltd* in England No. 1296593 and as a Charity No. 273085. Affiliated to the Inland Waterways Association.

**Presidents:** Tim and Elizabeth Dodwell.

**Vice-Presidents:** Paul Vine MA, Robin Higgs OBE, David Gerry, David Millett, Dieter Jebens, Lord Arbuthnot of Edrom, Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP, Sir Gerald Howarth MP, Jonathan Lord MP, Rt Hon. Maria Miller MP, Rt Hon Anne Milton MP, Ranil Jayawardena MP, Cllr Alan Rice TD

***Bulletin Editorial Team:*** Ken Sankey, Jenny Pateman, Martin Leech

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