



# Basingstoke Canal Bulletin

No. 41 JULY 2019



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John Pinkerton  
Canal Cruises

## Welcome..



*Inaugural Odiham Raft Race in 2018*

A busy summer so far, both on the water and on land. There has been sufficient water to keep the navigation open, but with the recent soaring temperatures the level has dropped requiring the temporary closure of the Deepcut and Brookwood flights from today (Friday 26<sup>th</sup>).

Behind the scenes we are working hard organising this [September's Raft Race at Odiham](#) – have you entered your raft yet? For more details, see page 3.

### In this edition:

- Visit to Old Kiln Light Railway
- Mikron theatre visit
- Raft race
- Crucial planning guidance to protect our canal
- The new Woking Wharf
- Councillors explore our wonderful amenity
- Children visiting from Chernobyl
- Volunteers

**We now have over 5400 Friends and Followers but we still want to reach more local residents and users.** So what can you do? – quite simply:

- please tell other people and get them to [join as a Friend](#) of the canal and receive this regular update
- Or get them to [join as a volunteer](#). We already have over 240 volunteers but need more!

In the next edition we will tell you more about our fundraising initiatives and plans for a new Membership package.



## Visit To The Old Kiln Light Railway

In late June, the Society paid a visit to an old friend – a locomotive which we formerly owned and used on the [Basingstoke Canal Railway](#) during the restoration of the canal in the 1970s. The loco now resides at the [Old Kiln Light Railway near Farnham](#), Surrey, where it is lovingly cared for by volunteers and regularly pulls visitors around the Rural Life Centre open-air museum.



During the restoration of the canal, the Society built a narrow-gauge railway along sections of the towpath to carry away the spoil from dredging. The Society purchased the locomotive which had been in service for many years at the Enfield Steel Works. It is a Hudson Hunslet with a diesel engine of 20 horsepower, built in 1939. Since it moved to OKLR it has been repainted from red to green and the cab added by the Society has been

removed. The loco is now the oldest working example of its type, still fitted with its original Ailsa Craig engine.

It was a great pleasure to have Geoff Helliwell and Dave Jacobs along for the ride, both of whom drove the



*Stan Meller and his sons on the railway near Lock 25, late '70s locomotive during the canal restoration (above and left) – our thanks to them for bringing the history to life. Geoff certainly seemed to enjoy getting back*

on the footplate, some 40 years after he drove it at Deepcut!



[Take a ride on the train](#)



We are hugely grateful to volunteer Jenny Pateman for organising the trip along with James and the other enthusiastic volunteers at OKLR for taking such excellent care of us. We would also like to thank the Rural Life Centre for hosting us on their site – the museum is a fascinating day out for young and old in a beautiful setting, so please do make an effort to visit.

The locomotive will now be out of service for some time as it needs some fairly major repairs to a crack in its frame, but hopefully it will be back in service for a repeat visit in the future.

### **Mikron Theatre Visit Odiham**

A beautiful summer evening in June saw a good crowd at the Waterwitch in Odiham enjoying another excellent performance by the [Mikron Theatre Company](#).

This year's original production entitled 'All Hands on Deck' recounted the trials and tribulations of a couple of WRENs in the Second World War, having to deal not only with the enemy but also with the prejudices of some of their male colleagues in the Royal Navy. It was an amusing and at times quite touching tribute to the vital part played by women in wartime.

The Mikron Theatre tours the country in their narrowboat 'Tyseley', but on this occasion came all the way down from Tring by road to perform. They first visited the Basingstoke Canal in 1980 and the Canal Society is one of their regular supporters.



### **Odiham Raft Race – 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019**



Back by popular demand the second Odiham Raft Race promises to bring more maritime mayhem to one of the most scenic parts of the canal. On **1st September**, this year's rafters will race along a slightly different course from Colt Hill to Lodge Farm Bridge and back – so the racing will be condensed in a shorter section of the canal – with more fun and chaos all round!

**Have you started building your boat yet? If you want**

to enter a raft then see the [Raft Race website](#), or get in touch with Galleon Marine on 01256-703691 or [info@galleonmarine.co.uk](mailto:info@galleonmarine.co.uk)

Even if you don't participate, it's a great day out for all the family, with lots of food and drink stalls including Andwell's Brewery and ice cream at Colt Hill. Also, there are promotional stalls for various canal and local organisations and businesses. **There is no entry charge and there will be ample parking in an adjacent field.**

## Other Local Events

The Canal Society events team will also be at the following events along the canal so please come and find us. Indeed we are always looking for people to help tend the Society's sale stall at events so **please [contact us](#) if you can come along and help for an hour or so.**

**Fri 30th August –** [Woking Food Festival](#) – One of the premier outdoor foodie festival  
**Sun 1st September** in the South East, with upwards of 200,000 people attending over the three days  
**Sun 1st September** [Odiham Raft Race](#) – see above.  
**Sat 21st September** [River Wey Festival](#), Dapdune Wharf, Guildford.

## A New Planning Policy Guidance Document

In each Bulletin we aim to tell you about some of the work the Society is doing to protect and improve our canal. One particularly important activity we undertake behind the scenes is the careful scrutiny and management of development near the canal.

**For a long time, the Society and the Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA) have wanted to compile a single comprehensive document that sets out the principles which *all* local authorities should follow when considering planning applications along the canal.**

The route of the canal passes through seven local authority areas, all with slightly different planning policy and Local Plans at various stages of preparation or review. The canal corridor is under constant pressure from third-party developments and this [new document](#) will help provide sufficient protection for our precious resource that we all enjoy.

Many canals have similar policy documents, either ones prepared by the canal owners themselves, such as the National Trust for the neighbouring River Wey, or by local authorities in the form of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).

Taking the lead, two Society volunteers – Graham Corser and Nick Silvester– have worked with the BCA to draft this new policy document. It was considered by the canal's Joint Management Committee at its June meeting and it is hoped that, following consultation with the planning departments of each of the local authorities and other stakeholders, it will eventually be ratified by the Committee as Canal Partnership policy.

Hand-in-hand with this initiative, the Society now has a dedicated team with experience of planning matters who monitor planning application lists for each of the seven local authority areas along the entire 37-mile route on a fortnightly basis, to assess whether and how proposals are likely to affect the Canal.

The BCA and BCS will seek to ensure that they are advised by local authorities of all proposals which could affect the Canal, whether or not they have reached the stage of a formal planning application. These will usually be proposals on land adjacent or close to the Canal but they may include development some distance away. Applications will be reviewed for potential implications for traffic generation, recreational pressure, loss of habitat, views, pollution, noise, flooding, or damage to canal structures.

A [management introduction and overview](#) to the document can be found [here](#), and the [draft planning guidance document](#) itself can be found [here](#).





Graham and Nick are now looking at opportunities to re-establish a walking route along the [last 5 miles of the canal to Basingstoke](#). Wouldn't that be great?

### The Formal Opening of Woking Town Wharf

**On 31st May we had the grand opening of the Woking Town Wharf, which was funded as a joint initiative by Woking Borough Council and Surrey County Council with a contribution from the Canal Society.** River and Canal Services were the main contractor, who are a local specialist company for Inland Waterways.

Ten boats and over 50 guests attended. Refreshments and cakes were provided over in the Lightbox. The wharf was opened by the Deputy Mayor, hosted by Society chairman Philip Riley, and a new information panel at the wharf was also unveiled.

Thanks to Richard Kelly who arranged the celebrations and behind the scenes has built a great working relationship with local Woking councillors. The waterside has been



considerably enhanced by the World Wildlife Fund building, the Lightbox, the Bedser Bridge and now the new wharf. Further improvements are planned including a new turnover bridge at Chobham Road, which will improve safety by keeping towpath users away from traffic.

The Canal Society has always believed there is huge potential to develop the canal in Woking as a place for quiet recreation in the heart of the town. The new Town Wharf



came about as an idea from Woking Borough Council and the Society to attract visiting boaters to stop off and enjoy Woking's many and varied attractions and facilities as part of their longer visit to the Basingstoke Canal.

The wharf also creates an attractive area for the wider public to enjoy, whether it be a lunchtime escape from the office, a place to simply get a few minutes' peace and quiet, or the start point for a jog along the canal. It also provides a focal base for the [Woking trip boat Kitty](#) and accessible trip boat *Maggie G*, offering an exciting new attraction for the town and enabling all visitors and residents to explore their local waterway by boat.

### **A Visit From The Children Of Chernobyl...**

Once again the *Kitty* crew welcomed our visitors from Belarus who have been hosted by local families in the Woking area, under the banner of the charity [Children of Chernobyl](#). Some of the children were on *Kitty* last year, at this rate we will sign them up as crew!

[The Friends of Chernobyl](#) charity

works to relieve the suffering of children from the resounding after-effects of the 1986 nuclear disaster, which are still

devastating families across poverty-stricken Belarus. It funds yearly visits to the UK for children from the most desperate circumstances, the children receiving recuperative healthcare, English lessons and, most importantly, lots of loving tender care from their UK host families - and a trip on *Kitty* was part of the experience.

Derek Taylor was once again the Skipper, supported by Ian Sutherland. The main challenge, according to Derek, was getting the children to stand still for the group photo welcoming them to the canal! Herons, ducks, moorhens and dragonflies were among the wildlife that displayed for the children on the day.

As a thank-you to the host families who look after the children for the two weeks we have offered them a complimentary trip on [John Pinkerton](#) in September.



### **... and A Visit By Local Councillors**

A group of over 20 councillors took a trip on the *John Pinkerton* trip boat at Odiham to experience the wonderful canal first hand.

Pictured in the photo are three borough councillors for Basingstoke and Deane: Cllr Mark Ruffell (Planning Committee Chairman), Cllr Onnalee Cubitt and Sven Godesen.





## Volunteering On The Canal

Firstly, a big thanks to **Odiham Cubs (right)** who did a first-rate job of litter-picking around **Colt Hill wharf in June**. This activity has contributed to their Environmental Conservation Activity Badge.



The Canal offers a broad range of activities and benefits for young people. **To find out what's available for your local youth group or school, email us on [schools@basingstoke-canal.org.uk](mailto:schools@basingstoke-canal.org.uk).**



Meanwhile, we have over **240 volunteers of our own looking after the canal**. These range from crew on the boats, working parties (see photo at tea break!, *left*), lengthsman regularly walking local sections of the canal, through to fundraising, publicity, marketing, events, lobbying local councils, bookings and maintenance. **So if you have a few hours free and would like to find out more just email**

**[volunteer@basingstoke-canal.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@basingstoke-canal.org.uk).** (We particularly need more help with publicity, marketing and boat bookings.)

Not only is volunteering fun and rewarding in its own right but our team of volunteers was recognised by no fewer than three awards recently when Hampshire County Council celebrated its green volunteers at a ceremony in Winchester. The County Council's former Chairman, Councillor Elaine Still made the awards. Mike Gordon (*right*) received the Chairman's Award for leadership of the Lengthsman and various trip boats. Other awards went to Steve Livsey-Bennett, the BCS ranger who looks after the Tuesday volunteer group, and Ken Sankey (Editor, skipper and committee co-vice-chairman). **But most importantly, the awards recognise the outstanding work of all 240+ volunteers working on the canal**



## So How Can You Help Your Canal?

Well, come and [join us as a volunteer](#), get more people to [become Friends](#), enter a raft in the [2019 Raft Race](#), book a boat trip... the opportunities are endless!

**Quite simply, help the whole community to enjoy the canal.**

And next edition we will tell you more about our plans going forward, including a new Membership scheme, and some fundraising initiatives.

Thanks for your help,

*Ken Sankey*

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