



Basingstoke Canal Bulletin

No. 43 NOVEMBER 2019



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John Pinkerton
Canal Cruises

Welcome Back!




Autumn and winter are a time for bankside maintenance on the canal. With over 60 miles of banks there is always plenty to get on with – and the photo shows improvements work going on at Ash Lock by the Society weekend work party. With beauty and wildlife all around it certainly beats the office! A new water point has been installed, piling of the bank and paving done to improve boaters' experience at the lock. This job will soon be completed and the team will return to complete the construction of the new moorings at Farnborough Road.

In this edition:

- Keeping the Canal alive
- Leaving a gift for future generations
- New children's book
- Our intrepid volunteer in Bangladesh
- Fun with the *Kitty* crew
- 2020 Calendars
- Have fun volunteering

History Repeats Itself – Fighting To Keep Our Canal Alive

<p style="text-align: center;">THE SOCIETY'S WORK</p> <p>The Society's primary concern is for the Basingstoke Canal which, unlike the majority of our canal system, is privately owned by the New Basingstoke Canal Company Limited. Our immediate task has been to seek the owners' permission to clear the towpath of undergrowth and to remove refuse from the Canal. As yet this permission has not been granted.</p> <p>At the same time the Society is campaigning for the restoration of the Canal based on a policy of public ownership or administration by a Trust. We use every opportunity to put our case to M.P's, the Government, County Councils and Local Authorities. Interest and support for our campaign has been most encouraging.</p> <p>The Society directs its campaign through the Press, by issuing reports, letters to editors, exhibitions at local events, entries in local carnivals and lectures to other Societies.</p> <p>For our members we organise boat trips on the Canal, rambles, talks and meetings together with the publication of a regular newsletter. During the Summer months we assist the National Trust by supplying volunteer lock-keepers at Bowers Lock on the River Wey.</p> <p>Our ultimate aim is to see the Basingstoke Canal restored to a fully navigable condition for the enjoyment and pleasure of many people with a wide variety of interests.</p> <p>But time is against us — action is needed <u>now</u> before the Canal gets beyond repair.</p> <p>DEMAND ACTION NOW! GIVE THE CAMPAIGN YOUR SUPPORT BY JOINING THE SURREY AND HAMPSHIRE CANAL SOCIETY</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MEMBERSHIP FORM</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SURREY AND HAMPSHIRE CANAL SOCIETY</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>The Society was formed in 1966 to campaign for the restoration of the 37-mile long Basingstoke Canal which passes through some of the most attractive parts of Surrey and Hampshire.</p> <p>The Canal is rapidly deteriorating being overgrown and neglected and the less accessible parts are used by people to discard refuse.</p> <p>The Society believes that the Canal has great potential in providing a unique setting for a wide variety of leisure interests, but unless action is taken NOW the opportunities it offers may be lost for ever.</p> <p>WILL YOU SUPPORT OUR CAMPAIGN?</p>
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We were instrumental in saving the canal 50 years ago. Now we must step up again.

Looking back in the records we found an old membership form from the late 1960s when the Canal Society was attempting to save the canal from total dereliction (we were known as the Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society back then). Through an extraordinary and united effort, the community, County Councils and hundreds of volunteers stepped up to the challenge and successfully restored the canal, reopening it in 1991. What a fantastic achievement!

Unfortunately, it is no exaggeration to say that the Society faces a challenge on a similar scale now. On the surface, the canal may appear as serene and beautiful as ever – the County Council staff do a fantastic job with support from volunteers – but years of austerity have cut funding to the bone and it can't go on like this much longer. If we are to keep our canal alive it is now crucial for the community, businesses and the Canal Society to play a greater role.

We have launched an initiative called “*Keeping the Canal alive*” with 4 defined objectives:

- Promoting the future of the canal
- Protecting our environment
- Providing community leisure activities
- Preserving our heritage

Our strategy is to raise funds and then, working closely with the councils, to progress various projects which will improve the canal for the community and all users. So the words of the 1966 prospectus “Will you support our campaign?” still remain very apt.

How you can help:

- If you are not already a member of the Canal Society, please [join us](#)
- Find out about [volunteering](#) (contact Ken Sankey: 07850 652769; ken.sankey@basingsstoke-canal.org.uk)
- Send us a donation
- Remember the canal in your Will

Leaving A Gift In Your Will



A lasting gift will help keep the canal alive for future generations – a truly amazing legacy.

If you read our [March 2019 Bulletin](#) you might remember an article about the redevelopment of the Farnborough Road Moorings. This was only possible thanks to a generous bequest from Peter and Margaret Holland. This new amenity will be renamed the Holland Moorings in recognition of the generous donors. In 2020 it will be hosting its first visitors, helping to raise revenue for the canal. We like to think that Peter and Margaret would be pleased that their gift has been used to create a lasting and much-needed addition to the canal and we are very grateful to them for their foresight and generosity.

Indeed, over the years, much vital Canal Society income has come from people who have left a gift in their will – for example, the *John Pinkerton II* boat was purchased with a generous bequest from former member, Alan Flight. Put simply, we couldn't have done what we have over the last 50 years without them, and for that support we offer our sincerest thanks. The benefit such legacies bring for the community and the environment is unquestionable.

You don't have to be wealthy to leave a gift in your will; whatever the amount – large or small – we are extremely grateful for any gift that you leave after you have looked after family and friends.

If you enjoy the Basingstoke Canal, whether you walk, cycle, fish, boat or simply find peace there, please consider leaving the Society a gift in your will, helping us to keep our canal thriving in years to come. It's a lovely place to be.

We will be putting information about legacy giving on our website, and developing a new legacy pack shortly; if you have any questions in the meantime please contact us at enquiries@basingstoke-canal.org.uk.

Debbie Broughall – Canal Society Fundraising Team

New Children's Book Ready For Christmas

Skip's Waterway, the new children's book featuring the Basingstoke Canal, is now on sale following a successful [crowd-funding campaign](#).

The author of the book is Jenny Pateman, a Canal Society volunteer and local mum of two. Having written and illustrated the story, she set up a crowd-funding project to raise the money to print it.

Jenny said: "It was a bit of a nail-biter for a while – we met the £2000 funding goal with just hours left on the clock – but the important thing is we got there in the end! I'd like to say a huge thanks to everyone who has supported the project. It's been great fun so far and I hope your little ones enjoy the book and it encourages more families to visit the canal."

The story follows the adventures of two children aboard "Baisey" the talking narrowboat, as they try to save the canal from closure by navigating all the way to the end at Basingstoke. It's inspired by the true story of the last attempted navigation in 1913. There are colour illustrations on every page, many featuring real scenes from the canal.



Order now and receive
your copy in time for
Christmas

£6.99
(+2.99 P&P)

www.skipswaterway.co.uk

You can now order a copy of the book by visiting www.skipswaterway.co.uk or emailing Jenny at skipswaterway@gmail.com. It will be printed and delivered in time for Christmas. A donation from book sales will go to the Canal Society.

Recommended for age 5+

Price £6.99 (+£2.99 P&P, local collection can be arranged in the Odiham area)

Our Intrepid Young Volunteer In Bangladesh

Martin Thompson, our enthusiastic Work Group volunteer has been on a world of adventures since featuring in the [March 2019 Bulletin](#).

Martin is passionate about the benefits volunteer work can bring to society and the world at large. Earlier this year he spent 3 months in Bangladesh



volunteering with VSO – the first time he had been abroad! (Martin is the tall one in the photo).

He spent his time there organising and running training events for local people in tailoring, electronic repair, chicken farming, cattle welfare, digital literacy skills and business development skills. The events directly reached over 200 people, 41 of whom went on to set up their own businesses at the end of the program.

Upon returning home to the UK he continued with what VSO calls “Action at Home”. This is where you take part in at least one project that benefits your local community.

Martin told us: “This is something we agree to do prior to being sent out to Bangladesh to show that we genuinely want to help rather than just going on a jolly for 3 months in a foreign country. We were told it would be sufficient to just do volunteering in the local community. Taking into account that I already volunteer on the Basingstoke Canal I thought I wouldn’t count this as one of my actions at home and instead thought about what else I could do.

“I started off by walking the Pembrokeshire Coast Path with 2 friends in support of the Alzheimer’s Society. We walked 15–25 miles a day, up and down hills, being blown over with the strong winds and carrying a heavy rucksack – it was even more exhausting than Bangladesh! However, our efforts were rewarded with us smashing our £1,000 target – raising just over £2,000 for the Alzheimer’s Society.

“After recovering from Pembrokeshire, I still felt I could do more things. One of these was going on BBC Radio Surrey to spread the message about volunteering as well as talk about some of my experiences in Bangladesh. This was the first time I had spoken on the radio; it gave me the realisation of what talking to people directly can achieve. After I came off the air I looked into public speaking, as it could be instrumental for getting my message across to people. So I contacted VSO and I was pleased to hear that they provide courses and resources on public speaking.”

We will bring you the next chapter of Martin’s amazing adventures in volunteering in a future Bulletin – watch this space....

A Bit Of Fun...

To celebrate the success of the *Kitty* boat operation in Woking the 37-strong crew were presented with end-of-season prizes.

The pound through Woking is currently being dewatered, but that didn't dampen the party spirit when the *Kitty* crew gathered to celebrate carrying over 2000 passengers to date. They met at the Grade II-listed Bridge Barn Pub next to where *Kitty* is moored when not in service.

After a brief slide presentation of the year's achievements by Ian Moore, a number of light-hearted awards were distributed to worthy winners.

The Pirate Parrot Award (for hobbling around on one leg) went to Phil Hardyman, while the title of **Weedhatch Champion** was awarded Greg Moore for the most unusual and biggest item pulled through the weedhatch – a substantial chunk of AstroTurf. And finally, the **Shopping Trolley Award** for pulling this year's most unusual piece of junk from the canal went to... *drumroll please...* Graham Deavin (*above*) for recovering a rather worse-for-wear "keep left" traffic bollard.

Other prizes included Russian/English phrase books (in recollection of our Chernobyl Friends' visit), a Haynes User Manual, and the perennial wooden spoon.

Ian Moore, Manager Kitty Trip Boat



2020 Society Calendars – Selling Fast

The Canal Society produced a very popular 2019 calendar using images taken by our members and followers for a photography competition.

We plan to do this again in future but this year we opted to pay tribute to the extraordinary efforts of our many hundreds of volunteers over the

years, particularly celebrating the lives of Robin Higgs and Dieter Jebens who were instrumental in the restoration and sadly passed away in 2019.



The 2020 calendar features fascinating colour photos illustrating the truly groundbreaking and historic feats of our volunteers during the restoration. We hope it is a fitting commendation of all of our volunteers, members and supporters, who have worked for over 50 years to transform a derelict eyesore into the stunning canal we enjoy today.

Last year's calendar sold out quickly, so order yours now to avoid disappointment.

It is A4-size when hanging on the wall and it makes a lovely gift: £5 (+1.50 postage). Pick one up at Mychett Canal Centre or Galleon Marine in Odiham. Or send your email address and your postal address to gillphipps26@gmail.com or [@basingstokecs](https://www.facebook.com/basingstokecs) (Facebook/Messenger).

Have Fun Volunteering

We have over 240 volunteers helping not just with the physical work, but also the really interesting behind-the-scenes tasks. For example, in just the last month people have joined us to help with promoting the canal, boat bookings and fundraising.

Quite simply there are roles to fit everyone, be it just a few hours, or from the comfort of your own home, we aim to be completely flexible and accommodate your every individual need. We also pride ourselves on being welcoming and friendly, so come on don't be shy, take a look at the roles on our [website](https://www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk).



We are also looking for a new Chair and Treasurer as both will move on in 2020. These are very interesting roles and an opportunity to help guide the Society forward. For further details please email volunteer@basingstoke-canal.org.uk or ring 07850 652769.

Together We Will Keep The Canal Thriving

It can feel like we are living in dark times right now, when even places of sanctuary like the canal are facing existential threats.

However, the canal's historic restoration shows that when the community comes together, we can achieve astonishing and wonderful things. It may be a long and hard road, but make no mistake, we can and we will overcome the challenges that lie ahead. Many hands make light work and we've never let a bit of work stop us before!

Have a great festive season.

Ken Sankey – Editor

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