

No. 286 Autumn 2025



The Basingstoke  
Canal Society

# Basingstoke Canal News



# Editorial

While many of our members have been enjoying a well-deserved break, it has been as busy as ever in the society. The regular work parties have been undertaking maintenance along the canal – and some unusual activity as you can read on page 6-8. The society's website has also undergone a refresh. It is never an easy task when visitors may be well versed with the society and its history, or newcomers who want to find out more.

Thank you to everyone who submitted photographs for the calendar competition. The judging panel met up after the closing date and made

selections for the 2026 calendar. This will be in production soon. You will be able to purchase the calendar from the website shop, on trip boats before the end of this season and also at any events where we have a stall.

It was lovely to receive an email from Roger Caesley with his memories of supporting the Canal restoration during the 1970's (page 10). I also remember the crisps with salt in little blue paper sacks!

As ever, please send any contributions to [editor@basingstoke-canal.org.uk](mailto:editor@basingstoke-canal.org.uk).

***Copy deadline for next issue is Friday 14 November.***

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## 60th Anniversary celebrations

2026 will be the 60th Anniversary of the Basingstoke Canal Society (or the Surrey and Hants Canal Society as it was known from 1966 - 2022). We are planning a number of events to mark the occasion - more details to come in future editions of the newsletter.

Right now we are looking for volunteers to join the 60th celebrations team to help us mark this significant occasion. Any ideas on particular events or memories of previous anniversaries would also be gratefully received.

If you would like to help out, please email [Ken.sankey@Basingstoke-canal.org.uk](mailto:Ken.sankey@Basingstoke-canal.org.uk)



*Front cover image: Elspeth Levi*



# Chairman's Report

Yet another day with no rain, the Basingstoke Canal like many waterways across Europe is starting to feel the physical strain. Hopefully, no illegal abstraction is being conducted to aid in watering gardens, although it's happened in previous drought years.

Having come back from a trip on the Danube it was noticeable that some of the freight barges were only loaded half full, and the navigation authorities were conducting dredging operations. While here in the UK the Canal & River Trust are closing more of their lock flights to traffic in order to manage their water resources.

Another element to add to the mix of challenges is the departure of some Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA) staff members. We wish Tarun, Jon, Sara and Michael all the best for their futures. The Canal has lost an incredible knowledge bank built up over the years, so once again how can the BCS help in stepping up to help out?

As with the last recruitment round, we will be involved in the selection process for some of the new roles, though again like last time we have no idea of their experience and background until we meet them on the day.

Meanwhile, one thing that we continue to do is remove the hydrocotyle from the Woking pound, right down to the junction with the River Wey. Without the orange Conver it would be well nigh impossible to keep it under control. So many thanks to the team. We do what we can on a tactical level to help out.

However, there are some really big changes on the horizon with local Government re-organisation. How this will manifest itself and the impact upon the canal is unknown. Suffice to say we have regular conversations with a number of our elected representatives, from Parish and County Councils and the House of Commons. How these conversations will translate into hard cash for the Canal remains to be seen.

*Ian Moore, Chairman*



*Hydrocotyle harvesting with the Conver*

# What's on

## Chobham Talks

On **Wednesday October 15th** Bob Bailey from The London Bus Museum will chart the history and development of the iconic London Bus.

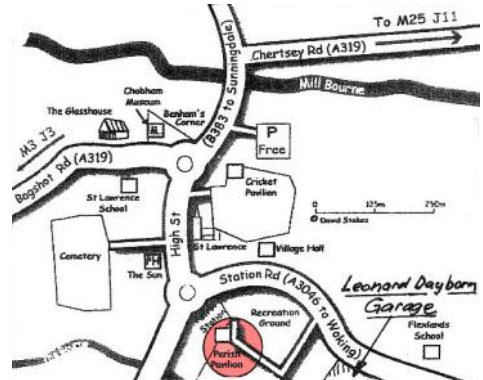
On **Wednesday November 19th** Colin Brown from The RNLI will return to tell us about the various rescue craft now in use on the River Thames and around our coasts.

There will not be any talk in December as experience suggests the numbers attending would be very low.

Please add these dates to your calendar and we look forward to welcoming you.

All talks start at 8pm.

Location: Parish Pavilion on the A3046 Station Road, Chobham



*Graham Deavin*

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## Santa Cruises 2025!

We have received confirmation direct from Father Christmas' elves that Father Christmas will be returning to the Canal Centre this year!

Spaces go on sale at 9am on **MONDAY 29th SEPTEMBER**.

All details (dates, times and prices) will be released within the next few weeks, so keep an eye out!

This will be announced on our Facebook page, which also feeds through to the website.



## Nature and Wildlife on the Basingstoke Canal

Back in October, the newsletter featured an appeal for people to help write a booklet about the natural world of the Canal. Nearly 20 people came forward, amongst them experts in plant life, insects, fungi, birds, and fish. We received over 200 photographs! We were also supported by Tarun Ingvorsen at the BCA, who supplied copies of recent research studies concerning the Canal.

We started with a booklet that was written in 1972 by Jutta Manser as part of the campaign to restore the canal. However, so much had changed since the Canal was re-opened that we felt we needed to start pretty much from the beginning.

We are now finalising a 40 page A5 colour booklet, aimed at people who are interested in nature but are not experts. It has taken a bit longer than we expected to compile but we expect to have the booklet published in early autumn, available from the BCS online store and at future events.

*Neil Barton*



Photo credit: Fern Sarah Doyle  
([sdtakespictures.com](http://sdtakespictures.com))



Photo credit:  
Comma Butterfly. Sarah Doyle  
([sdtakespictures.com](http://sdtakespictures.com))



# Weekend Work Party

Our work party activities have continued as normal over the summer months. However, one task turned out to be a far greater project than anyone of us originally envisaged.

*Jim Douglas* (referred to as *JD*), was originally purchased by the Society back in 2017. *JD* had served her time on the River Thames and was a retired dive vessel from the Environment Agency. The intention was to use *JD* as a second workboat. Unfortunately, it quickly became apparent that the draft of *JD* would not play nicely with the water levels on the Basingstoke Canal. After slowly rusting away at Ash Lock for a number of years, a decision was made to sell the boat. The weekend work party did a great job in sprucing *JD* up, ready for sale. After some changes were made in relation to the battery covers and removal of all gas-related appliances, the Boat Safety Scheme (BSS) certificate was obtained.

Kevin Pizzey decided to take on the task of selling *JD*. Little did he know at

this time the challenges that lay ahead. Marketing of the boat was stepped up with a new listing and this resulted in several viewings. At last, we had a serious buyer who wanted to turn it into a floating leather workshop. There was only one slight snag, could we deliver *JD* to Alperton in London? We agreed to meet them halfway at Shepperton Marina.

We then moved into the mobilisation phase for the transit of *JD*. At the time the Ash aqueduct was being relined and the canal was closed on just the section we needed to use to transport *JD*. When the lining work was completed we then faced another issue in relation to some overtopping near the aqueduct. After much liaison with the Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA) we obtained special permission to pass the affected area with ranger supervision.

*Jim Douglas at Ash Lock*



## by Greg Sutton

We were then able to complete the first stage of our journey to the Basingstoke Canal Centre at Mytchett in time for the BCS AGM. During this initial leg of the journey, we were dogged by the engine overheating and it was frustratingly slow having to stop frequently to wait for the engine to cool down.

For reference, the engine cooling system on *JD* draws water up from under the hull, which goes via a filter then through two water pumps to the heat exchanger and exits out of the side of the boat.

This method of water cooling works fine in a deep river, like the Thames, but not so well on our canal as it was frequently getting blocked and not allowing a good flow of clean water to cool the engine down. We realised that

unless we found a solution for this we would not make it to the handover point at Shepperton Marina. After much head scratching we decided to use a temporary water cooling solution which involved bypassing the intake from under the boat and replacing this with a large waterbutt on the stern. This in turn would be filled up at frequent intervals using a petrol powered water pump sucking up water from the canal.

The next leg of our journey was relatively short but allowed us to test out our new water cooling solution. We moved the boat from the Canal Centre to Frimley top lock. The engine cooling worked perfectly and gave us confidence for the remainder of the journey.

Next it was time to start our descent through the lock flights starting with Lock 28. No sooner had we started then we encountered technical issues again. This time it was related to a miscalculation about how much diesel we had in the tank due to the triangular shaped tank coupled with growing concerns about the longevity of the current drive belt.

Manual power was used to pull the boat between the locks while other members of the team sourced some diesel. It was tough work especially as the boat kept naturally pulling towards the bank and having to be punted off with a long pole. After a long day and an essential stop for ice lollies we finally made it to our overnight stopping point which was Hermitage Flash.

We had sourced replacement drive belts from 2 different suppliers as they were quite a rare item due to the nature of the engine but these had to be ordered in for collection the next day.



*Innovative water cooling solution*

# The Saga of Jim Douglas (Cont.)

But the fun wasn't over yet . . . as we feared the drive belt snapped which meant the battery drained. This was due to heavy wear from an alignment issue. Human power was needed to progress . Luckily our volunteer arrived with a replacement belt, which was fitted and the alignment issue resolved with the gentle tap of a hammer

Two of the team jumped off the boat at Woking and travelled on foot to pick up the pre-ordered backup drive belt. The boat continued on its journey and as if we'd planned it to the second, the boat, and the team that collected the drive belt, arrived at the next lock at the same time. From that point onwards it was plain sailing all the way down the flight of locks until *Jim Douglas* said goodbye to the Basingstoke Canal for the last time and entered the River Wey at Woodham Junction.

The final weekend saw *Jim Douglas* head down the River Wey, navigating the remaining locks before the large Thames Lock where the Wey joins the tidal Thames. After navigating a short section of the Thames, the team arrived at the handover point and met up with the new owner. Hands were shaken, photos were taken and we wished them the best of luck with the refurbishment and their future plans for *Jim Douglas*.

Unfortunately there was one last surprise in store. Shortly after the handover there was a panicked phone call saying that the control had been lost on the boat and they needed urgent assistance.

It was now a rescue mission! After locating and boarding the boat, Kevin Redway was able to locate the source of the issue (which was related to rods

working themselves loose due to the vibration), and that really was the last chapter.

We wish the new owner and their leather business great success for the future. We would like to thank the large numbers of volunteers that were involved at various points of this process, probably well over 20 people. Special thanks go to **Kevin Pizze** for his project management skills and communication with all parties; **Kevin Redway** for his extensive technical skills which literally cover everything apart from computers; Ian Moore and David Wall from the committee in relation to the sale, and lastly the BCA for allowing us safe passage past Ash Lock and for the various rangers assisting us through the locks.



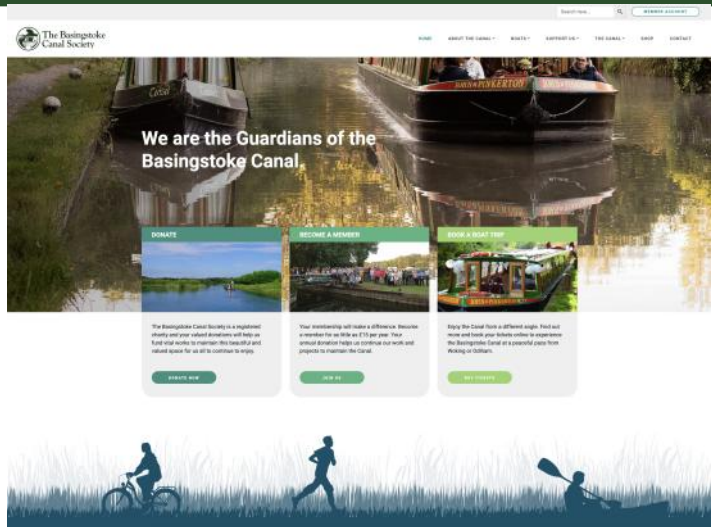


# Website refresh

It was decided in Summer 2024 to update the website ([www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk](http://www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk)). Over the years, new pages had been added in response to specific requests, which had led to some duplication and unclear paths to find the information required. We wanted to make the website as easy to use as possible for all our visitors, whether they knew the BCS or not.

As all the boat bookings are also managed through the website, it was not an easy task. A small team assembled and work began in September 2024 to map out the existing pages and (with committee approval) agree an updated structure and narrative. The team were keen to stress the fact that the Basingstoke Canal Society is a charity. The key “calls to action” are for people to book a boat trip, donate or volunteer.

The first stage was to examine the current site and find out what was working well, and which pages lacked visitors. Initial research also unveiled the fact that the vast majority (63%) of visitors to the site use a mobile phone, therefore we needed to optimise the visitor experience for mobile phone users. We also knew that many people come to the website via our Facebook page so it was important to incorporate this into our refreshed site. The small group involved in the new



website were all working, so this process has taken some time. However we were delighted to launch in early August 2025. It is still work in progress as we fine tune some of the complex add-ins to the site to ensure it runs smoothly and meets the needs of visitors.

**New features:** We now have a direct feed of Latest News from Facebook onto the home page, so you can catch up directly. Our policies and a new volunteer handbook will be available shortly and of course it's refreshed with a beautiful new look and feel. Importantly, you can still book that all important boat trip, look back at previous BCNs, manage your membership and find out about events in our calendar!

Thanks to all the volunteers who supported the refresh and we hope you all appreciate the efforts and enjoy the new site.

*Charlotte Rodgers*

# Restoration memories

Thank you to Roger Caesley who provided his memories of the Canal restoration following the article in the last edition on the Light Railway.

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In the summer of 1974, I joined RAE Farnborough after completing two years as one of the four Air Engineer Officers in 809 Naval Air Squadron responsible for the maintenance of the Buccaneers of HMS Ark Royals Air Group. I came across an article in Waterways World on the Basingstoke Canal's restoration.

One Saturday I went to Odiham and found Perseverance (the steam dredger) and was recruited by Ian Cripps to help. After work we used to retire to the New Inn, now the Water Witch, for a beer. This was served in the house's front room, by two old ladies who went out the back to where the beer barrels were stored to get our pints. The only food was packets of Smith's potato crisps with salt in little blue paper sacks.

At the time Dave Gerry was the Hampshire canal manager, and I joined the engineering team he had formed to plan the work. The first aim was to dredge up to the winding hole just past King John's castle, which would help clear the flow of water from the springs in the Greywell Tunnel. The dredger working hard could dig out about a cubic yard of mud every minute. The problem was how to get rid of it.

At this time the society had obtained the light railway. The leading light was Stan Meller who was known as "Stan, Stan the Railway Man", who was very enthusiastic. Dave had negotiated with the local farmer that we could dump

the mud on a field which is now between the Odiham bypass and the canal. It had the advantage that the canal overlooking the field was on an embankment so the mud would flow away and there was no risk of it flowing back into the canal.

The railway track needed constant maintenance, and skips had a habit of derailing. It was necessary to build a gantry out into the field so that the mud could be tipped clear of the embankment. We realised that if this was the only way to do it, it was going to take many years to restore the canal.

Dave then came up with the idea of a "Mud Slinger". This was a diesel engine mounted on a platform with a hopper that would feed the mud onto a conveyor belt set up at an angle pointing over the dump site. The conveyor belt would be driven at quite high speed so that when the mud reached the elevated end it would be thrown into the field. Dave had it built but when we trialled it the mud went **everywhere!**

The obvious answer was to use mud barges to float the dredgings back to the dump site. One day I noticed while walking down Connaught Road, Fleet that a Ruston Bucyrus dragline, ideal for emptying the mud barges was abandoned in the garden of a house for sale. It was no longer wanted, so Roger Thomas and I went to test it armed with a can of diesel and a large battery. The engine sprang into life and ran very smoothly. Very slowly we trundled it down Connaught Road and managed to get the dragline to the canal. A few days later the Army very

## by Roger Caesley

kindly agreed to move it to Odiham, which is how the Canal Society became the owners of a dragline that was a key to solving the problem of dealing with the mud.

Eventually we found suitable barges and two tugs which Johnson Wax provided funding to buy. I remember spending many hours sitting in the drag line emptying barges.

All too soon it was the end of my time at the RAE and I left to join HMSTS Adventure for the Whitbread Round the World Yacht Race.

Fast forward 50 years. My daughter and her family had moved to Hook and

as a present for my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday had arranged for the family to take a Sunday morning trip on the John Pinkerton on 13<sup>th</sup> July. It was a beautiful and hot summer's day. The Pinkerton's crew welcomed us on board and looked after us very well.

The trip reminded me of what a beautiful part of Hampshire the Canal winds its way through. But most of all it was all the people who were enjoying the Canal, walking the towpath and taking part in activities on the water that justified all the efforts that were made to restore the Basingstoke Canal.

Long may it continue!



***Perseverance at North Warnborough***

The book "Perseverance - Dredging the Basingstoke Canal" is available from our shop: <https://basingstoke-canal.org.uk/product/perseverance-dredging-the-basingstoke-canal-roger-cansdale/>

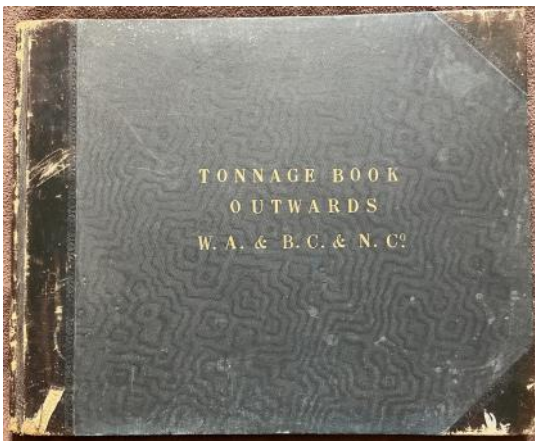


# From the Archives

## The First World War – Lock-keepers' ledgers

The Society archives include five lock-keepers' ledgers that cover the period from 1896 to the 1930s although some of these do not show the full period. The ledgers are for the Woking, Aldershot & Basingstoke Canal & Navigation Co. 1896 to 1905 (in liquidation 1900 to 1905) formed by Sir Frederick Seager Hunt who purchased the canal in 1895. They were also subsequently used by later owners.

The ledgers record the traffic passing through Woodham Lock (Lock 3), and the Deepcut Flight both Frimley Lock (Lock 28) and Pirbright Lock (Lock 15). The Woodham Lock ledger records traffic in both directions but for the others there is a separate ledger for travel upstream and downstream through the relevant lock. The ledgers show the increased traffic on the canal during the First World War (1914-1918).



*Image on left shows Outwards Ledger, Frimley Lock (Lock 28)*

In London's Lost Route To Basingstoke, The Story of The Basingstoke Canal by P.A.L. Vine (1994 2nd Edition page 178) it says that *"During the First World War the waterway was used to convey government stores and munitions from Woolwich to Aldershot as well as such miscellaneous items as beds, clinkers, flour, hop-strings, oats and oil cake. The main down traffic was timber from Fleet and Frimley and horse manure from the camp at Eelmore to the wharves below Brookwood."*

The ledgers that we have do not show any cargoes containing munitions. All but the Woodham Lock ledger only show war traffic from early 1916 onwards. It is also possible that separate ledgers were kept for the government stores and munitions or even that the sensitive cargoes such as munitions were not recorded.

The Inwards ledgers (upstream) show numerous barges transporting clinkers (a waste product from burning fossil fuels and other industrial processes) throughout 1916 after which they largely show barges as being "empty" or "light" with over the next 2 years a dozen or so carrying timber or sawdust. There are no cargoes of oats shown until May 1918 after which there were about half a dozen per month. During the whole period there was only 1 barge carrying oil cake. No other cargoes are shown.

# By Peter Whitlock

OUTWARDS.											
WOKING, ALDERSHOT & BASINGSTOKE CANAL & NAVIGATION CO.											
Account of Barges and Boats passing Pirbright Lock during Week ending March 1918											
Arrival.	Depart.	Barge.	Owner.	Captain.	Outlets.	Where From.	Where To.	Gauge and Tonnage.	Rate.	Amount.	Remarks.
Day.	Hour.							Dry Tons.			
1	9	4.0	Graves	Inland Water Department	Manure	Eaton	Charley Bays	28			
8	4.0	William	"	"	Manure	Eaton	Arthur Bays	28			
9	2.15	Northam	A. J. Hamworth	J. Hootley	Manure	Eaton	R. Wey	33			
8	5.15	Grounds	"	R. Goble	Timber	Y. List	Hamlets Bays	28			
16	10.45	Bassano	Inland Water Department	Manure	Eaton	Walter on Thame		33			
16	3.45	Emily	"	"	Manure	Eaton	Arthur Bays	28			
16	3.45	Samuel	"	"	Manure	Eaton	Charley Bays	28			
18	3.15	Soho	"	"	Manure	Eaton	Charley Bays	28			
18	3.15	Jack	"	"	Manure	Eaton	Harold Wey	28			
19	2.10	Lepton	"	"	Manure	Eaton	Harold Wey	28			
19	2.10	Graves	"	"	Manure	Eaton	Charley Bays	28			
20	2.40	Hamlets	"	"	Manure	Eaton	Harold Wey	27			
21	10.20	Hamlets	A. J. Hamworth	W. Walker	Round Timber	Y. List	London	36			
21	1.30	Redditch	Inland Water Department	Manure	Eaton	Harold Wey		26			
22	0.0	Hamlets	A. J. Hamworth	S. Sigmund	Round Timber	Y. List	London	40			
22	2.30	Bassano	Inland Water Department	Manure	Eaton	Walter on Thame		31			
23	1.45	William	"	"	Manure	Eaton	Harold Wey	26			
25	1.30	Eaton	"	"	Manure	Eaton	Harold Wey	26			
26	1.30	Emily	"	"	Manure	Eaton	Harold Wey	28			
27	2.45	Lepton	"	"	Manure	Eaton	Harold Wey	28			
28	1.30	Soho	"	"	Manure	Eaton	Charley Bays	28			
29	1.40	Bassano	"	"	Manure	Eaton	Walter on Thame	31			
30	5.0	Jack	"	"	Manure	Eaton	Harold Wey	28			

March 1918 page of Outwards ledger, Pirbright Lock (Lock 15)

The Outwards ledgers (downstream) from 1916 show a few barges carrying sand but many more carrying timber which continued throughout the war. In 1918 the barges started transporting manure and there were a few other cargoes of old shoes and the odd unique cargo such as 4 tents, empty cases, rubber tyres, old iron, oil cans and aeroplane pieces albeit that the last of these was only shown just after the end of the war in November 1918.

The Woodham Lock ledger only goes up to February 1915. This however shows little or no evidence of any war related traffic with almost all of the barges carrying coal from the Wey to Woking (for the gas works) and then returning empty. A few barges were transporting timber upstream to Woking or Frimley. There is only 1 barge shown with a destination of Aldershot carrying 40 tons of flour.

# From the Archives (cont.)

## A Lock-keeper's story

In the county archives at The Surrey History Centre in Woking I came across the story of the lock-keeper for the St John's Flight that made interesting reading, and the ledgers that we have provide some evidence in respect of his story even though we do not have ledgers for his locks.

During the First World War the lock-keeper on the St John's Flight (then called the Goldsworth Flight) was a Mr J Denyer. He was not only a lock keeper but also a fishmonger and foreman of the St John's section of the fire brigade.

In hindsight we know that in 1918 the First World War was nearing its end. However men were still being called up to replace those that had been killed or injured. In June 1918 Mr Denyer received his call up papers however his employer, the Canal Company, did not wish to lose his services and supported an appeal made against the call up. This was on the basis that he was already serving his country with vital war work on the canal not to mention his other occupations.

The following is the report published in the *Woking News and Mail* on Friday 5 July 1918 of the War Tribunal held on Wednesday 3 July 1918 when Mr Denyer's appeal against the call up was heard.

*"The Basingstoke Canal Co applied in respect of a lock-keeper J Denyer (44) married, Grade 2, Goldsworth Road, St John's. Denyer is also a fishmonger and foreman of the St John's section of the Fire Brigade. A representative of the company stated that Denyer had four miles of canal and eight locks to look after and he was also responsible for*

*the upkeep of the whole of the canal banks.*

*Three hundred and six barges passed through his section during the proceeding six months, practically all of them carrying government material. The Chairman said it was quite easy for a bargeman to let himself through the locks. He had been to the very end of the canal and had negotiated every lock without difficulty. Denyer said he worked 18 to 19 hours a day on an average. He had to close the sluices when the barges had passed through otherwise the water would overflow its banks. Only a fortnight previously Mr Butts houses at St John's were nearly washed away owing to an accident of that kind."*

The tribunal then made the decision that Denyer would be given a six-month conditional exemption from call up and that he would also be released from service with the volunteers. The war had ended before the end of the six-month exemption so that nothing further would have been required.

There are a number of points that jump out from the report. Firstly, how late in the war that Denyer had been called up. Secondly, and more striking, his age at 44 which shows how many younger men had been lost in the first four years of the war. Thirdly, the amount of traffic on the canal that was claimed at 306 barges in the preceding 6 months.

The Frimley Lock and Pirbright Lock ledgers for January to June 1918 do show in the region of 300 barges moving in each direction which supports the number cited at the War Tribunal.



## By Peter Whitlock

The majority of these were transporting manure from Eelmoor to destinations downstream on the canal at Brookwood, Horsell Wharf, Chertsey Bridge with a few going to Walton-on-Thames or London, and then returning to Eelmoor empty. The page of the Outwards ledger for Pirbright Lock for March 1918 (as pictured on page 13) shows 24 barges of which 20 were transporting manure and 4 timber with a total 640 tons of cargo.

The entry in the ledger for 22 March 1918 records the barges Mapledurwell and Greywell owned by A J Harmsworth and worked by Mr Sam Seymour.

They were carrying 40 tons of round timber to London where they would have been cut into planks for use in

the trenches in France. These barges were taken to Great Bottom Flash, Ash Vale at the start of the Second World War in 1939, where they were moored in the flash as anti-invasion obstacles to prevent the Germans landing flying boats as part of an invasion force.

After the war ended in 1945 they were allowed to sink and the sunk barges, that were actually a matching pair of narrow boats, can still be seen today!

We hope that you will find the From the Archives articles interesting and we are happy to receive requests and suggestions regarding what you the members would like us to write about. These can be sent to us at [archivist@basingstoke-canal.org.uk](mailto:archivist@basingstoke-canal.org.uk)



*The boats lying in Great Bottom Flash in 1970*

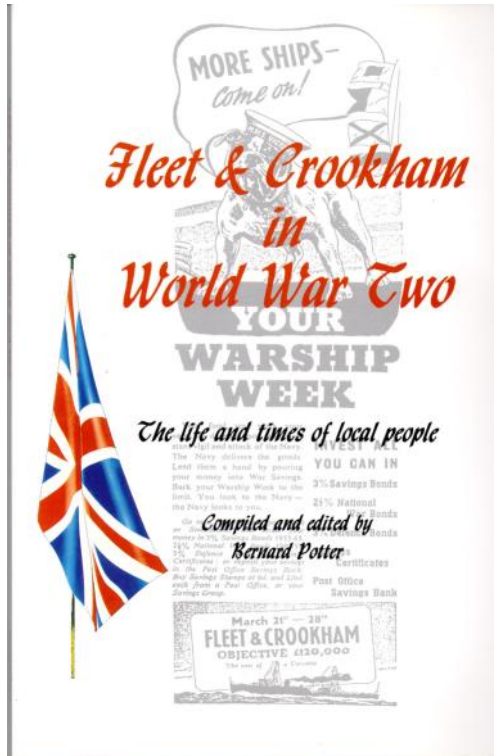
# News in Brief

## Local history

At one time the BCN was printed in Fleet by a firm called Charterlith, run by two brothers, Philip and Bernard Potter. Sadly Philip died not long ago but Bernard is still with us, aged 95. He still takes an interest in the canal and has very kindly donated a 35mm slide projector to the Society, which the Archive Group needs to view the hundreds of slides that have been added to the archives by various people.

Bernard has also donated about 80 copies of a book that he produced entitled "Fleet & Crookham in World War Two". This is a year by year account of the war and its effect on the town and its inhabitants. It is very well researched and full of illustrations. A4 size and about 100 pages, it will be for sale via our website shortly.

*Roger Cansdale*



## From the Basingstoke Canal Authority:



**Basingstoke Canal**

14 August at 10:57 · 🌐

Greetings towpath users!

Over the next few weeks our Ranger Team will be undergoing phase three of the summer cut.

'The Summer Cut - A strip of vegetation is cut either side of the towpath, enabling good public access while preserving the vegetation for all the cool stuff like bees, birds and other pollinators. At the same time all access areas and lock tops are mown and strum to ensure safety.'

Be vigilant if you are out on the towpath during this time.

If you do spot the team, please allow them time to stop their work, they will see you, and then you can safely pass.

Thank you and enjoy the Canal.

# News in Brief



## Free boat trips

Did you know that, as a member of the Basingstoke Canal Society, you are entitled to a free trip on our boat John Pinkerton II? The last trip of the year will take place at 10am on Sunday 14 September.

There is free parking available at Colt Hill Wharf, Odiham, Hook RG29 1DH, and the trip will last between 2.5 and 3 hours. Please be at the wharf before departure time to allow boarding.

There's always a committee member on board to update you on what's going on in the Society and answer your questions.

If you are thinking of volunteering with the Society, you can also book the trip to find out what skills we're looking for and how you could help. When booking, it would help if you specified your main interest in the Additional Comments box.

To book, please follow the link below:

<https://basingstoke-canal.org.uk/events/members-volunteers-trip-john-pinkerton-5j14p1/>



# News in Brief

## Supporting the Samaritans

The Basingstoke Canal Society was proud to support the Bracknell, Wokingham Ascot & District Samaritans fun run. The event took place on Saturday 21st June 2025 at Easthampstead Park, Bracknell

Our support was in the form of a raffle prize of a trip on John Pinkerton II.

The event raised a fantastic £13,500 (net of all costs) which may yet increase as sponsorship monies are still being received. Every penny

raised will be used towards the running costs, maintenance and development of the branch so they can continue to be there for callers in their time of need.

The Bracknell Samaritans Run is a very popular and fun running event for the local community, open to the whole family. Additionally, it is the key fundraising event for our local Samaritans branch.

The 44th Annual Run will be on 20th June 2026 More information can be found here: <https://www.bracknellsamaritansrun.com/>



## Will writing month

In June this year, we provided a free Will writing service through Kept Assets. Thanks to Julie Lysaght and Gren Gale who ensured the day ran smoothly for all our visitors.

The service was provided in an office at Ancells Farm Business Park to ensure privacy.

We will be offering the service again next year, so please look out for announcements on the website, or in the newsletter.

# Ash Village Fete

Thank you to Ash Parish Council, who chose the Basingstoke Canal Society as their nominated charity for 2025. This means that they will donate moneys raised from the Summer Fete and the Christmas event to our charity.

The Village fete was held on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> June at the Ash Centre and recreation field. The Canal Society was well represented by Heather Sloane and the events team and generated a lot of interest in the canal and hopefully some new members and volunteers. It was a beautiful sunny day, and it got extremely hot in the Society's gazebo (pictured below).

Two trail boats from the Wilderness Boat Owners club were in attendance at Ash Wharf and enjoyed many visitors during the day. 'Grey Owl' and 'Toad Hall' had made their way along the canal from Winchfield on Thursday and Friday and were in place at Ash Wharf during the Fete.

They went to explore Hampshire after Ash, to see King John's Castle and Greywell tunnel. They stayed an extra night to come and see a Morris dance evening at The Mill House, North Warnborough.

The Christmas Fantasia will be on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November at the Ash Centre Ash Hill Road, Ash, Surrey. GU12 5DP from 1pm - 4.30. So please mark the date in your diary to support an event which supports the BCS.

*Elsbeth Levi*



*Toad Hall and Grey Owl moored at Ash Wharf*



*Toad Hall at Ash Wharf*



*Visitors to the BCS stall*

# Events Team - Summer 2025

The success or otherwise of the events we attend falls largely to '*the weather*'. It is rather topical, but it is evident that if a Dog Show is cancelled because of the heat, then many people stay home too. A dull day can bring success, or if it rains people run for cover and we welcome them.

We have absolutely baked in our green gazebo, trying to block the sun and pull tables back to give a little shade to our visitors. We have been soaked to the skin and had some down-right miserable days this year too. There are pros and cons for all of them. For example, at Edenbrook Country Park, it was dull all day, but families came out to a local event rather than heading to the beach and traffic jams. The Buzzer Box was going ten-to-the dozen with dads challenging other dads and groups of children giggling at the noise they can make. I must admit that we had a complaint from neighbouring stalls about the noise we make!

Every time we go out to an event, we learn something new. Either from one

of the valued volunteers or from someone who comes to speak to us. Many people who visit our stall, love the canal as much as we do and love to tell a story. But occasionally someone comes who has never heard of the Basingstoke Canal; then we explain a bit of the history and the management of the councils, the Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA) and how/where the Basingstoke Canal Society fits into the organisation. We send them off with a map and leaflets about the boats or BCS membership and volunteering opportunities. If they buy a book too, then we feel that our job is well done.

We occasionally must listen to complaints and this year we have heard much disappointment in the lack of control of fishing practices and fishing licensing. Many feel that people out on inflatable kayaks or paddleboards are unaware that they need an unpowered boat licence. We have as much information as we can in our folder and do what we can to share this information. We also pass on comments to the BCA.



A busy stall at Zebon Copse



# Heather Sloane



*At Frimley Green Carnival*

## Come along to see us in action or join our team.

With no Odiham Raft Race this year, we have just one more late summer event. The Wey River Festival will be held a little later than usual this year, on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> September at Dapdune Wharf, Guildford GU1 4RR. We will be there, so do come along and say 'hello'.

We usually attend some volunteer events during the autumn and also Christmas events organised by local councils or charities. We will keep you informed of dates in the Bulletins.

We have welcomed some new volunteers to our team this year as well as others who volunteer in other roles in the society. We all experience the great pleasure of the canal by **joining in** and **having pride** to improve just a small area. It makes us feel good to know we have **helped to make a difference** for the future.

If you are interested in helping with our events membership stall, please contact me on [heather.sloane@basingstoke-canal.org.uk](mailto:heather.sloane@basingstoke-canal.org.uk)

*Heather Sloane, BCS Events Coordinator*

# Membership

Membership is steady at 1202 with 32 joining over the last few months. It does mean that we have a level of drift so it is as important as ever that we recruit new members.

The updates to the website (see page 9) means it as easy as ever for people to join. Refer your friends to to: [www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk/join!](http://www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk/join!)

I understand that some of the technicalities of an on-line membership system can be a bit confusing so there is now a Help Tab (Member FAQs) on the Members Account page. Login to your account to see it. Examples shown below.

*Andy Beale*

Membership Secretary

Membership@basingstoke-canal.org.uk



How do I access my Account Page?

I have forgotten my Password. How do I change it?

I have forgotten my Username. How do I find out what it is?

Can I change my Username?

The 'Date of Joining' on my account page seems wrong. Can I correct it?

How do I find out what my Bank Reference is?

What is the difference between 'Subscriptions' and 'Payments' on the Account Page?

What is the significance of the (R) or (A) after my membership type?

How do I change the Debit/Credit card I use to pay my membership?



# BCS Information

Published by The Basingstoke Canal Society, a non-profit distributing company limited by guarantee and registered as a charity. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Society. Executive members of the committee are shown in bold. \* indicates Director of the Society.

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Chobham Talks	<i>Vacancy</i>	Planning	Graham Corser
Events Co-ordinator	Heather Sloane	Projects & Fund Raising	John Turner *
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IT	<i>Vacancy</i>	Weekend Work Party	Janet Buckley *
JPII Trip Boat Manager	Chris Hunter *	Work Site Manager	Kevin Redway

## Useful Information

General Enquiries: 07305 340547

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*Walker at  
Baseley's Bridge  
by Elspeth Levi*