No. 290 Autumn 2026

The Basingstoke Canal Society

Basingstoke Canal News



Editorial

While we all enjoy some sunshine, the weather since the last newsletter has been unprecedented. I have enjoyed walking in the shade along the canal; however, the water levels are some of the lowest I've ever seen due to lack of rain. This summer's drought has obviously impacted the Canal in many ways: closure of locks to preserve water, impact on marine life and also the trees and plants along the towpath.

The back cover shows BCA Senior Ranger, Chris Irvin, clearing yet another fallen tree near Great Bottom Flash. There is a risk during the summer of trees shedding branches. This is caused by sudden limb drop, also known as summer branch drop syndrome (SBD), a natural phenomenon where a mature, seemingly healthy tree unexpectedly sheds a large branch on a calm, hot, dry day. Large, ageing trees are most susceptible. Species like Oak, Beech, Elm, Horse Chestnut and Willow are particularly prone to dropping limbs - trees that are very common along our canal.

The lengthsman will move smaller branches, and report to the BCA if it is too large to remove. If you are using the towpath, please be aware of the potential of falling branches. If a limb has come down, please report it to the Basingstoke Canal Authority on 01252 370073, along with a What3Words location if possible.

Current news reports are predicting a stormy and wet autumn and winter, due to El Nino. Hopefully this will fill the Canal again, and not cause too many fallen trees.

Elspeth Levi

Cover photo

The front cover photo (taken by Ken Sankey) shows a cheerful group of volunteers from the Tuesday Work Party on 18th August. Jim Levi, who was part of the group that day provided a report of activities.

"This week's task was a summer cut of vegetation along the towpath around Sprat's Hatch Bridge, near Winchfield. The Four Seasons Hampshire Hotel kindly let volunteers park on its land and we then had easy access to a particularly rural part of the canal.

A summer cut involves a select few (fully trained) volunteers strimming and brush cutting around 18 inches either side of the footpath (making sure no nesting birds or wildlife is disturbed). The rest of the working party rakes and clears away the vegetation and cuts back saplings or large branches of mature trees that are partially blocking the path or are at risk of falling into the canal. This stretch needed some large branch removals and tested the pruning saws to the maximum!

While working on this stretch we saw every single active long boat on the upper part of the canal passing by, as well as several canoes. Unlike some lower parts of the canal, the water level remains good. It was also a pleasure to see a number of walkers and runners, even on this relatively remote part of the canal."

Chairman's Report

For very many years, the Society has made a very significant contribution to the Basingstoke Canal. We have made a huge impact through thousands of volunteer hours, funding projects, financial donations and equipment purchases which have all gone into supporting the maintenance of the Canal. Our trip boats at Odiham and Woking provide a well-loved leisure destination for both the local and broader communities.

When I joined our committee in 2021, Fiona Shipp, the then Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA) Canal Manager, told me that the BCA do the things that are necessary to maintain the canal and its environment and the BCS are involved with those things which are nice to have. Two organisations, interlinked but with differing objectives, and at a time when the 'rules' from the Covid pandemic had brought the canal to the attention of a wider audience.

Times change. Post Covid, the squeeze on public finances has left the BCA with an operational budget which reflects the perceived minimum needed to cover their statutory obligations. Not what we want, but understandable given the circumstances. This, together with changes of staff and ownership (brought about by council restructuring), has enabled a positive reset of the relationship between the canal owners, the BCA and the Society.

Within the next couple of months, we hope to have agreed a Memorandum of Collaboration between the parties. The key message being **collaboration**. A genuinely collaborative working arrangement will be far more positive than the three organisations following individual paths. There is only one joint objective for all three parties and that is the continued wellbeing of the canal and its environment. This will not, however, mean the Society becomes a formal funding partner with year on year obligations.

Collaborative working is a positive change, built on respect, understanding and a shared sense of purpose. At the BCA's request, our volunteers have successfully assisted with lock-keeping duties, and the Society is now being asked to lead on projects where the BCA acknowledges that it does not have the necessary capacity. We are also looking to share skills and knowledge, strengthening the partnership for the benefit of the canal.

The information flow at our monthly BCA/ BCS meetings is more open and detailed, giving us a better understanding of the processes that the BCA must go through to deliver projects. We now receive monthly updates on the BCA annual capital works projects and the intention for future years is to jointly assess what works are necessary and what non-essential projects would be of benefit to the canal and its environment.

The relationship between the parties is becoming more open and relaxed. It is far easier to work with people you want to, rather than those you are told to work with. I'm feeling rather positive.

John Turner
Chairman

Chobham Talks

The Society's Chobham Talks have been running for most of our 60 year history. Six times a year, on a Wednesday evening, members get together and listen to a guest speaker on topics related to canals, waterways or transport.

Our next scheduled talks are:

Wednesday October 21st, 8pm
Speaker: Jo East, Basingstoke Canal Authority
Jo East, Operations Manager for the Basingstoke Canal Authority, will be talking about her role, her observations since joining the BCA, and the plans for the coming years. She will also take questions from the audience.

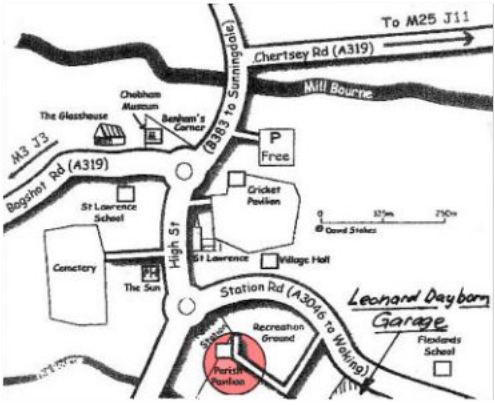
Wednesday November 18th, 8pm
Speakers: Chris Davidson and Nick Hobley, Basingstoke Canal Canoe Club
Topic: The Yukon 1000.
Paddling 1,000 miles down the Yukon River, the world's longest canoe race, following a route from the 19th century Klondike Gold Rush.

Talks are held at the Chobham Pavilion (map below). The talk and parking are free. Tea, coffee and biscuits are served in the interval. There is a loyal core who attend most months, but many society members have not come to a Chobham Talk before.

We're running a short online survey to learn what members would like from the talks. The web survey is at https://tinyurl.com/ChobhamTalks. You will also receive an email from the society inviting you to respond. We would love to hear from you, even if you don't normally come to the talks. This will help us plan the programme of speakers for next year.

If you are a regular attendee and would prefer to complete a paper survey, rather than going online, then we will bring paper copies of the survey to the October meeting.

If you would like to be added to the email list to be notified about future talks, or you have any questions about the talks, please contact Neil.Barton@basingstoke-canal.org.uk.



Corporate Membership

Recently we launched our Corporate Membership Scheme, offering local businesses a membership designed with them in mind! We recognise that many companies have corporate social responsibility goals. Team building, donating or volunteering can help them achieve these goals - and help the Canal too. Participants on team building days have said that they are proud to have helped support this important community resource and that it was a great way to connect with colleagues.

Thanks to Explore, Farnborough Airport, Firebird Events and SC Johnson who participated in working groups and donated to the Society this year so far.

As part of our Corporate Membership scheme, we recognise the support on our website, across our social media platforms and in our newsletter. Welcome and thank you to our first corporate members: Horizon Imaging, Greenford Park Homes and Eversley Storage.

For local organisations that wish to show their support for the Society, we have produced window stickers and posters to help promote the Canal Society. If you have a notice board, shop window or an employee intranet, please get in touch to obtain these for your company.

If you would like to find out more about these corporate schemes, please visit our website - https://basingstoke-canal.org.uk/corporate-supporters/ or email corporate-engagement@basingstoke-canal.org.uk.

Andy Brown

David Hogg from Horizon Imaging shared his reasons for supporting the Canal Society:

"As a Church Crookham resident since 2019, I've been incredibly grateful to live so close to the Basingstoke Canal.

I walk along the canal most days, and because the seasons, weather, lighting and wildlife are constantly changing, even the same routes never feel the same twice.

My favourite route is from the Zebon Copse swing bridge (which is the closest point on the canal to where I live) to the Chequers Bridge and back. It sums up everything that makes the canal so special to me – the feeling of being away from the hustle and bustle, being able to immerse oneself in nature and spot a wide range of wildlife, beautiful vistas across unspoilt countryside and the calming presence of the water. I also find the canal (and I suppose nature in general) to be a real constant in my life – no matter what one goes through, the canal is always there to inspire and provide a mental reset. If I haven't walked along it for a few days, I start to miss it!"



Let's get more boats on the canal!

A core objective when the Canal was restored was to protect the navigation for powered boats. A group of volunteers have undertaken work to raise the profile of the Basingstoke Canal and to make it easier for boaters to visit and use the Canal when the water levels permit.

Earlier this year you may have seen the launch of our Volunteer Lockkeepers Scheme with great success! The team of volunteer lockkeepers help boats through the Brookwood and Deepcut flights (see photo below). To date, we've helped 34 boats through the locks and received fantastic feedback from the boaters.

We are using this feedback to create positive news stories to share across the boating network, helping to encourage more visitors to the Canal.

Unfortunately, the current drought and lock closures don't help - and the search for other water sources is another project!

We have also been looking at our own website to ensure that this is as helpful as it can be to boaters. We have added new information to our navigation page, including helpful links to the BCA's navigation pages (their Boating Information Pack is very useful), as well as practical information for visiting boaters, such as locations for pump-outs, fuel, water and other essential facilities. Have a look at our updated web page at https://basingstoke-canal.org.uk/boating/.

There's lots more to be done to encourage more navigation on the Canal. So watch this space for details of a new boaters group coming soon and hopefully you'll also notice more boats along the Canal before long.

Ken Sankey



Volunteer lockkeepers assisting a visiting boat

Recognition award for the BCS

John Turner (Chairman) and Charlotte Rodgers (Marketing & PR) were delighted to be invited to the recent Pride of Rushmoor Community Awards where they were presented with an award for the Longest Serving Charity, in recognition of the Society's 60 years of Charitable Service to the Community.

Charlotte commented "It was a real honour to accept the award on behalf of the volunteers who have given so much to the community over the last 60 years. During the evening we heard speakers from Farnborough Sixth Form and it was very interesting to meet representatives from other volunteer organisations and local businesses."

This award is a great highlight of our 60th year and our year long celebration of all the Society's charitable efforts and activities to campaign and support the sustainable future of the Basingstoke Canal.



Above: John Turner (left), Charlotte Rodgers (Centre) and Mara Makunura, Founder and CEO of Rushmoor Community Awards CIC. Mara is a former Mayor of Rushmoor and founder of Rushmoor Cultural Day.

Tony Haynes

I was contacted recently by Steve Haynes, younger brother of Tony Haynes, with the sad news that Tony passed away recently, aged 84.

Tony was actively involved in restoration of the Basingstoke Canal in the 1970s. He ran the trip/restaurant boat with his partner Jackie for many years and was also Vice-Chairman of NABO (National Association of Boat Owners).

If you would like to contact Steve, please do so through editor@Basingstoke-Canal.org.uk and your email will be forwarded.

Join in June winner

Congratulations to Ellen Pirie from Woking whose name was drawn from all the new members who joined during our "Join in June" campaign.

Ellen won a trip for 2 on any of our trip boats and selected to go on *Kitty II*. She wrote, "We had a lovely trip on *Kitty II* today and really enjoyed it. *Kitty's II's* electric engine is so quiet that it is a very peaceful journey and doesn't frighten the birds. We saw a heron close up and a cormorant and lots of moorhens. It was interesting to see Woking from a different perspective.

Thanks very much for the free trip! We'd definitely recommend it to others."

Ellen and guest are pictured below next to *Kitty II*. Thank you for supporting the BCS, Ellen.



Kitty II

We had an unusual three hour charter today and my skipper, Stuart Pink and I decided to attempt to reach the first of the locks in the Woodham flight. This we did with only minor issues with weed.

This is way beyond *Kitty II*'s normal turn round point when doing her more usual 75 minute trips.

It shows that despite the reduced summer canal level, this section of the canal remains navigable.



Kitty II photographed at Woodham Flight.

Graham Deavin

Is it too early?

2027 Calendar

Bring the beauty of the Basingstoke Canal into your home with our 2027 calendar. Featuring a stunning collection of photographs taken along the canal throughout the year, it's a celebration of our much-loved waterway.

The calendar will be launched at the Odiham Raft Race on 6th September and will be available from our online shop www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk/shop, then at future events and onboard the John Pinkerton II.



All proceeds go directly towards helping us care for and preserve the canal for everyone to appreciate.

Santa Cruises

Rosebud - Mytchett

Tickets for the popular Santa Cruises go on sale on **Monday 28 September** at 9am. Departing from the Canal Centre at Mytchett, the cruises run from 1st to 23rd December and offer a gentle journey aboard *Rosebud* along the Basingstoke Canal to the start of the tinsel trail. Children can follow the trail through the woods to find Santa in his canal side grotto and receive a special gift. Cruise back to the Visitor Centre and head into Santa's Workshop for some fun Christmas colouring activities, warm drinks and mince pies.

More information is available at: https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/culture-and-leisure/countryside/sites/visitor-information/basingstoke-canal/santa-cruises. Please note bookings can only be made in person at the Canal Visitor Centre or by telephone: 01252 370073.

Dawn - Odiham

The Accessible Boating Association is once again bringing Father Christmas to the Canal this December! Families can enjoy a special cruise aboard Dawn, departing from Galleon Marine Boatyard in Odiham. Trips will run in the afternoons on Saturday 12, Sunday 13, Saturday 19, Sunday 20 and Monday 21 December. Booking opens on Monday 21 September via the waving Father Christmas on their website: www.accessibleboating.org.uk. With just nine places available on each trip, these magical festive cruises are sure to fill up quickly.

Tickets are £15 per head, free for babies under 12 months. 9 places are available on each trip. Please call the Elf-line on 07934 926683 if you have any questions.

Pulled – or Not – by Kitty

In the Spring BCN 288 article about Kitty the barge horse, I promised to expand on the eventful Railway Enthusiasts Club Farnborough (REC) boat trip which was pulled – or not – by Kitty. This trip was organised by Hugh Davies, REC Secretary and Founding Member, with Mrs Joan Marshall, BC General Manager. I was delighted to introduce Chris Davies (son of Hugh) and Liz Dodwell (daughter of Mrs Joan Marshall) to each other at our recent 60th Anniversary BBQ.



Departing from the derelict wharf at Farnborough Road bridge.

The REC was founded in 1953 for like-minded young people to share their passion for exploring little-used railways and other forms of transport. Today's Health & Safety Managers would have despaired as club members enjoyed many a trip along forgotten tracks, often standing in an open coal truck behind the engine! In 1957, the Basingstoke Canal was navigable, albeit in a serious state of disrepair, making it the perfect setting for another REC adventure.



The punt laden with refreshments - note the wooden plank off the bow.

On 24th August 1957, 40 REC members paid up to 1/9d. to be crammed into the dredge punt *Ida* for a journey from Queen Anne's Bridge (Iron Bridge), Farnborough to Colt Hill, Odiham. There was an option to join the boat along the route for a lesser fare, with a souvenir Edmundson card ticket issued showing the fare paid.

The punt was well stocked for the journey, with a tempting selection of refreshments, such as KP Salted Peanuts, Mint Rocks, Nestle's Milky Bars, Mackintosh's Toffo, pies and bottles of pop. The trip began sedately, with everyone sitting along the punt's sides in their Sunday best, Mark Hicks on the rudder and Kitty hauling the boat.



A souvenir Edmundson card ticket.

Unfortunately, disaster struck at Fleet when the punt sprang a leak and the passengers were forced to “abandon ship”. A simple plank of wood provided the means of getting on and off the punt from the canal bank. You can imagine the scene: 40 people in their best clothes scrambling desperately ashore, with the narrow plank sloping precariously upwards from the sinking punt to the canal bank. Yet, to the REC members, this was excellent fun and some even stayed on board to help bail out the water. Hugh Davies remarked, “The refreshments were nearly swept away!” (Aldershot News 30.8.1957).



Bailing out the punt

Once the leak had been plugged and the water bailed out, the adventurers continued their journey towards Odiham. The reason why so many photographs of the trip exist is that the REC ran a photographic competition that day with three ten-shilling prizes.

All went well until they reached Chequers Bridge, Crookham, when 27-year-old Kitty needed a rest, then refused to pull the punt any further. Eight strong REC members took over the towline from Kitty and managed to pull the boat as far as Barley Mow Wharf at Winchfield before finally giving up.

Somehow, the special bus service which was due to collect them from their final destination, met the stranded party at Winchfield. The passengers were driven back to the REC clubrooms in Farnborough, where their day concluded with a “Colour Show – a display of colour transparencies on a screen.”

Far from being put off by their eventful voyage, the REC members considered the trip a success and rebooked for the following two years: in 1958 North Warnborough to Chequers Bridge and in 1959 Farnborough – Tundry Pond – Chequers Bridge with Captain, as Kitty had sadly died.

How do we know all the details? Hugh Davies carefully kept the paperwork and photographs, preserving a wonderful snapshot of life on the Basingstoke Canal in the late 1950s. We are very grateful to Chris Davies who has kindly made this remarkable collection available to the BCS.

The 58 photographs and original documents can be viewed here: www.flickr.com/photos/16972432@N04/albums/72177720332137508/.



Taking over from Kitty

Hudson Hunslet

Some of you may recall an article by Kevin Pizzey and Geoff Helliwell in BCN 285 (Summer 2025) on the Basingstoke Canal Light Railway, which was in operation as part of the restoration of the Canal from 1976. The first engine to be used on the light railway (HE1944) is now undergoing restoration at the Old Kiln Light Railway (OKLR), near Farnham.

I was delighted to speak to Peter Smith, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the OKLR, and Ian Burrell, a volunteer and part of the consortium who purchased the engine, to find out more about its history and what is happening now.

The Hudson Hunslet had been in operation at Enfield Rolling Mills, London. It was then sold to ME Engineering (a plant dealer in Cricklewood). Sadly, at this time it was dropped from a crane, and the axle and front frame were cracked. The fractured axle was repaired by Blacknest Engineering after it was sold to the Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society (SHCS, predecessor of the BCS).

In 1995, James Hay, a member of OKLR, purchased the Hudson and spares following a pub conversation and then took it to his Mum's front garden. It was in a very poor state, rusty and graffitied after being in storage for many years. Amazingly, when it was fuelled up, the Hudson Hunslet started with the second swing of the handle. After firing up for the first time at James' mother's house, the locomotive went straight to Tilford, where it remains today.

James Hay used to buy railway stock alongside a "Rick Stewart" who lived in Cleveland. James sold the Hudson in 1997 after placing an advert in a narrow-gauge newsletter. Richard Bentley, an OKLR volunteer, contacted him to purchase it and kept the locomotive at Tilford. Richard then removed the cab and radiator guard to take it back to the factory standard.

Ian Burrell serviced the locomotive, and it ran for 3 years until it was discovered that the cast iron frame had a big chunk missing. The consortium repaired the frame using a specialist cast-iron repairer (whose next job on the list was Parliament Bridge).



Image of Hudson Hunslet, courtesy of Old Kiln Light Railway

Hudson Hunslet (cont.)

The engine was then serviced, and it ran for another year; unfortunately the clutch then stopped working. The volunteers at OKLR are now stripping it down to get it working again and returning it to its appearance when owned by the SHCS.

HE1944 is now the oldest surviving example of its type and is still fitted with its original Ailsa Craig engine.

Thanks to Peter and Ian for their time and I hope that this article may encourage some readers to visit the OKLR (https://oklr.org/), located at the Rural Life Living Museum near Tilford, Farnham.

Elspeth Levi



The Hudson Hunslet in operation during the Canal restoration.

Will Writing Service

A gift in your will could help protect the Basingstoke Canal for many generations to come. As a charity, we rely on donations from those who enjoy and value the Basingstoke Canal to help us continue our work and campaign for its sustainable future.

We've partnered with will writers Kept Assets to help our members write a new will or review an existing one, free of charge and without obligation. If you don't currently have a will, Kept Assets will write a simple one for you, or if you already have one, they can review it.

This also provides an opportunity to leave a gift in your will to help preserve the Basingstoke Canal for future generations. Gifts in wills can also be very tax efficient for beneficiaries.

We will have appointments available on Thursday 19th November in Fleet. To make an appointment for a no obligation meeting, please contact our friendly volunteer Gren by email gren.gale@basingstoke-canal.org.uk.

You can find out more about leaving a gift in your will and the Basingstoke Canal Society on our website too - https://basingstoke-canal.org.uk/legacy-donation.

Celebrations aboard JP

It was lovely to receive an email from Ted Williams along with some photographs. Ted and his wife, Maureen were the first couple to hold their wedding reception on board the *John Pinkerton*. Ted wrote, "I lived in Basingstoke from 1973 to 1987 and became a life member of the Surrey and Hants Canal Society soon after arriving in the area. I was Membership Secretary for a couple of years.

On 19th August 1978, Maureen and I held our wedding reception on board the *John Pinkerton* becoming the first newly weds to use it in this way. The JP was an ideal reception venue. We were paying for our wedding and, having the passenger numbers on board strictly limited, ensured there was no pressure on extending the invite list!

These days, from our home in the Cotswolds, I am a volunteer lock keeper on the Stratford Canal and a supporter of the Cotswold Canal Trust."

Thanks for keeping in touch Ted.



Ted and Maureen aboard John Pinkerton



Long-standing fellow members Peter and Ray Fethney, together with Janet and George Hedger, did us proud as crew in traditional costume.

Weekend Work Party

At the end of May, the weekend work party ventured to Up Nately. A few months ago a large tree had fallen on Slades Bridge and caused substantial damage to the parapet. We retrieved bricks from the site, including the half moon bricks, to be used in future bridge restorations.

In mid-June, we started our major summer project, resurfacing the towpath from Wilk's Water to beyond Broad Oak Bridge. This area is notoriously muddy during the wetter months and virtually impassable without wellington boots, so it has been high on the priority list for some time. Appropriate governance, paperwork and funding had to be put in place before the work could be scheduled. On the Friday evening we prepped the site ready for the delivery of the roadstone. We had an early start on Saturday morning, ready for the 8am delivery of three lorry loads of roadstone totalling 60 tonnes. Due to the narrowness of Broad Oak Lane and lack of suitable turning area for the large lorries, each lorry had to be reversed in turn along the full length of Broad Oak Lane to the dumping area at the end. In the following weeks there were a further 2 deliveries of both roadstone and also 'fines' which are dust and small particles used to fill the gaps between larger stones when compacted.

Diversion route signage was installed and temporary fencing panels were erected. We then set to work removing the towpath foliage, widening the towpath and scraping away the top surface of accumulated leaf litter and dried mud to get down to the previous roadstone surface. After this the new roadstone could be laid and levelled manually with rakes but with a camber allowing water to run off instead of pooling on the towpath. After this the road roller and vibrating wacker plate were used to compact everything. Finally, a layer of 'fines' was added to bind everything together, followed by further road rolling to create the finished surface.



One of the delivery lorries with roadstone for the resurfacing of the towpath.

Weekend Work Party (cont.)

The following work party weekend, at the end of June, was cancelled due to the extreme high temperatures, but the team were back in mid-July to continue the resurfacing work. It was hot, hard and dusty so frequent water stops were required. We continued on at the end of July, steadily working our way back from Wilk's Water to Broad Oak Bridge.

At the beginning of August, we focused on the length from Broad Oak Bridge to where the upper footpath meets the towpath. By the end of the weekend, we had completed the bulk of the towpath resurfacing work. A total of around 250 metres in length.

We received lots of positive comments from local residents and towpath users, who were delighted to see the work taking place and the improvements being made for everyone to enjoy.

Greg Sutton



Roller in operation to smooth the path.

Up Nately Brickworks

In 1897, the owner of the Woking, Aldershot & Basingstoke Canal & Navigation Company, Sir Frederick Seager Hunt (who made his money distilling gin), was determined to bring trade to the upper reaches of the canal. Brick making at Up Nately was already established on a small scale before the building of the canal.

The Hampshire Brick & Tile Company was formed in October 1897 with a capital of £20,000 (£3m today) to purchase the existing brick company at Up Nately and to open up the brick fields on nearby woodland. The company purchased 20 acres of land from the Duke of Wellington and a further 10 acres from Mr. John Pink of Odiham. The first shareholders included a solicitor, a doctor, a builder, a farmer, a brewer, a coal merchant, a theatrical manager and the Reading Brewer, Louis Simmonds.

A 100-yard-long arm (known as the Brickworks Arm) was constructed in 1898-1899, near Slade's Bridge, to enable boats to unload the coal needed to fire the kilns and to reload with newly-made bricks. Work to construct the buildings on the brickworks involved 9,000 tons of material.

The first consignment of bricks was delivered by the narrowboat 'Mabel' on 13 January 1899 bound for Mapledurwell and Basingstoke. This was followed by a further dispatch of 18,000 tons of bricks for builders at Odiham, Crookham, Fleet, Aldershot, North Camp, Frimley and Pirbright. Demand for bricks at the time was strong.

Around this time, the wooden huts of the Aldershot Military Camp were being replaced by brick barracks, not only in Aldershot but also Deepcut, Pirbright and Bisley. Also towns such as Fleet were beginning to expand, so there was a considerable demand for bricks locally.



Layout of the Brickworks at Up Nately

From the Archives (cont.)

The kilns at the brickworks consumed 50 tons of coal each week which arrived by train in Basingstoke, then was barged to Up Nately. The brickworks also had its own tramway/light railway to move the clay to the kilns which ran over a series of raised arches as the surrounding area is quite hilly.

By the end of 1899, the output from the brickworks exceeded 2 million bricks, representing half the canal's brick traffic. By the end of the century, both the canal and the brick works were doing quite well and several million bricks had been made.

However, in 1899, a bank breech occurred 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 decided to go 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.

Details of brick traffic on the canal 1896 - 1900

Year ending 30 June	Number of bricks carried on the Basingstoke Canal	Tons
1896-7	489,100	1,650
1897-8	727,000	2,450
1898-9	2,133,936	7,100
1899-1900	4,034.031	13,500
Jul/Aug 1900	432,850	1,450



Labourers at the brickworks



The chimney at the Up Nately Brickworks

From the Archives (cont.)

It is also possible that the Army contracts had been completed and demand had dropped.

Sir Frederick disposed of most of his shares (100 £10 shares (£160,000 today) between the end of 1899 and 23 February 1900, before the company was wound up and went into liquidation in 1901. The Brick Company owned several barges, most of which were sold to Alec Harmsworth when the company folded.

That was not the end of brickmaking, the new owner of the canal, William Carter, made use of the brickworks to develop a housing estate under the name of 'Homesteads Ltd'. Bricks were still being made at Up Nately until 1908.

The entrance to the Brickworks Arm is crossed by a fixed foot bridge. Going from the towpath, there is public access to the left-hand bank of the arm, where the remains of the steam powered barge "Seagull" lie (more of that in future article). Remnants of the brick works also remain, including the bases for the clay milling machines and a mysterious brick arch which may have supported some sort of overhead railway.

My thanks to Roger Cansdale for his assistance in creating this article.
We hope you find 'From the Archives' articles interesting and we are happy to receive requests and suggestions for future editions. These can be sent to us at archivist@basingstoke-canal.org.uk.



Remains of tramway/railway arch



Post and pulley recovered from Brickworks Arm

Events Review

This summer we have not been able to attend all the original planned events, due to lack of volunteers to support on the day. However, during June and July we attended seven events, with two of them in locations that were new to us. Some were more successful than others.

Ash Village Fete, Zebon Copse Residents Association, Frimley Green Carnival and Dogmersfield Flower Show were all locations we have been to in the past and on the whole met expectations. All generated visitor questions or comments that were fed back to the BCA ,who then followed them up and added posts on social media. At Zebon Copse, we were grateful to James, one of the Tuesday volunteers, who helped us pack away the stall at the end of the event.

The Sunday of the Armed Forces Weekend in Aldershot was Community Day. We were squeezed into a 3.5 metre space between two stalls who had been there the day before. It was a long, but quite fun day; but not as well attended as the Saturday. We were a long way from all the displays.



Event volunteers with some unexpected visitors at the Armed Forces Event in June

Events Review (cont.)

The second of our 60th Anniversary year celebrations was a barbeque and pleasant canal side afternoon at The Fox and Hounds in Fleet on Saturday 11th July. The food and music available at the pub were very good and many people enjoyed a trip on Accessible Boating Association's (ABA) trip boat "Dawn" to Reading Road Bridge. Passengers could get off there to see the Archive Display, games and sideshows. Our thanks go to the ABA and their crews for supporting this event. We also appreciated the support shown by Alex Brewer, MP for North East Hampshire, who dropped in with her family. It was an extremely busy day in Fleet, with a local derby football match and several other events taking place at the same time. Despite the many competing attractions, we were pleased to meet those who came along, although attendance at Reading Road was lower than we had hoped.

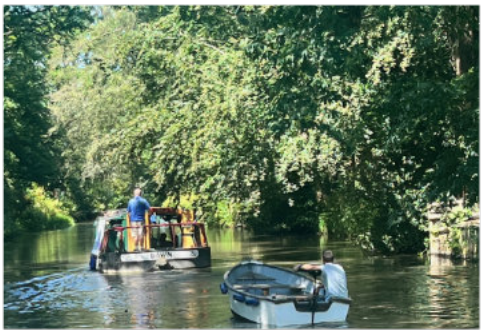
Another new addition for us was at Friends of Oakley Park in Fleet. This was a pleasant small event with plenty of space, a good turn-out of supporters and some entertaining displays. As it covered the late morning and lunchtime period of Airshow Saturday, we were packing up to the sound of display aircraft overhead. I then went on to Dogmersfield for the end of the event there.

The attendance at The Mikron Theatre's performance of "Wensleydale Whey" at The Mill House in North Warnborough was quite incredible. It was fantastic to see so many people come along to support this performance, which the Basingstoke Canal Society is proud to champion at this venue.

It was also wonderful to see so many of our members there, and to chat with other visitors during the interval, when we handed out our "60 Things to Do on the Canal" and membership leaflets.We even managed to recruit some new members, so it was a great success.

These events can only take place if we have enough volunteers to transport, set up and run the stall. You would be most welcome if you have an hour or two to spare to help at an event near you. If so please send me a message.

Heather Sloane - Events Coordinator
heather.sloane@basingstoke-canal.org.uk



ABA boat Dawn *transporting guests along the Canal from the Fox & Hounds, Fleet.*

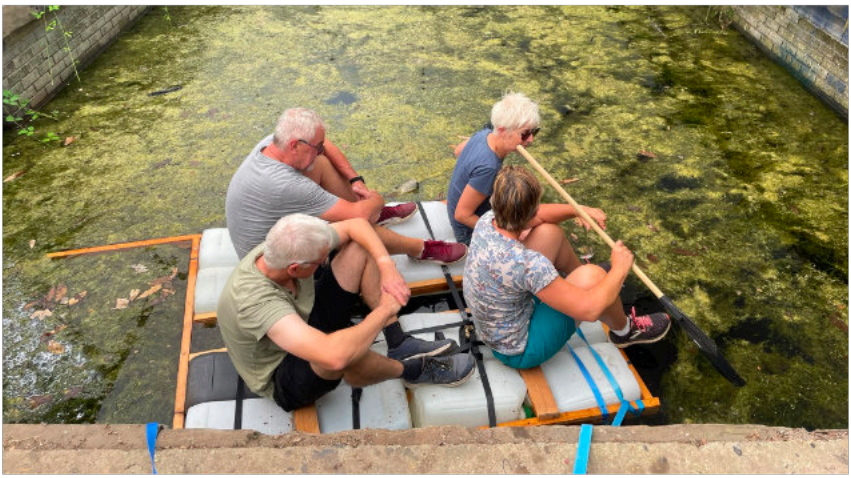
Forthcoming Events

When	*Where*	*What*
Monday 31st August 2-4pm.	Mytchett Family Fun Day at Mytchett Community Centre, 140 Mytchett Road, Mytchett, GU16 6AA	Another new event for us. As it is close to The Canal Centre, we are hoping to attract some new members.
Sun. 6th Sept. 1 – 5pm	Odiham Raft Race at Colt Hill, Odiham, RG29 1DH	Canoe & kayak display, The Raft Race, Raft Tug-of-war, stalls and food.
Sat. 19th Sept. 12 – 5pm	Weyside 2026, Byfleet Boat Club, Old Parvis Road, West Byfleet, KT14 6LE	Byfleet Boat Club are hosting a boat rally on the River Wey as there is no Wey River Festival this year.

Odiham Raft Race 6th September

This year, some members of the Tuesday work party will be entering a raft on behalf of the BCS.

Pictured below are some of the participants testing out their construction in the dry dock. Thanks to Garrie Hunter for the photo.



BCS Information

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Chris Irvin, BCA Senior Ranger clearing a fallen tree near Great Bottom Flash