



The Basingstoke
Canal Society

www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk



1966 - 2026

60th Anniversary



Presidents' Introduction

This year the Canal Society is celebrating ten years since we had that great party at Woking with the beautiful craft from the Historic Narrow Boat Club. And was that really 50 years since the foundation of the Canal Society when the Canal was in such a dreadful state at the beginning of that long fight to restore the Canal culminating in the grand opening by the Duke of Kent in 1991?

This booklet sets out to record significant events over the last ten years and to take a look forward to our aspirations for the future.

Today the Basingstoke Canal Authority (the BCA) continues to run the Canal on behalf of the Surrey and Hampshire County Councils, with a recently appointed new Manager and some changes due to the government's reorganisation of local authorities.

The County Councils have declared their commitment to maintain the waterway but are short of cash and the riparian local authorities have almost all withdrawn their financial support. However, it is good to know that the programme of lock-gate replacement continues. It is to be hoped that this year the programme of lock openings can be restored to its former level to welcome those boats from other waterways which make the Canal come alive and so much more interesting to passers-by.

The trip boats, *John Pinkerton II*, *Kitty* and *Rosebud*, continue to provide a picturesque and wonderful service to the Canal, as well as a very welcome income. We're looking forward to welcoming *Kitty II* to the fleet in Woking on April 18th and hope we shall see many of you there. Are you planning to come on any of the *John Pinkerton* trips with talks?

The Canal Society will continue to support the BCA in maintaining this beautiful waterway for the enjoyment of all. We must make sure that our efforts are not in vain and we look forward to working with the new unitary authorities to ensure that this happens.

So, here's to the next ten years!

Tim and Liz Dodwell

Cover photo:
Tim Dodwell (*right*) with
their boat *Doreen C*

Background

When the Canal Society was formed in 1966, the Canal was still privately owned and becoming increasingly derelict. Its only real source of income had gone when the contract to supply water to the National Gas Turbine Establishment near Fleet was not renewed, and its owner was drawing up plans to fill in parts to be sold off for building land. The Society managed to persuade Surrey and Hampshire County Councils to buy the Canal and restore it as a navigation and, following nearly 20 years of largely voluntary labour, it reopened in 1991.

Maintenance costs were to be borne largely by the Counties with assistance from the riparian District Councils; The Canal Society took the line that they would pay for enhancements, such as the St John's back-pumping scheme (*Right*), but not the regular maintenance costs. These of course rose with inflation but the Canal's budget failed to keep up and after about 20 years a survey revealed that some serious repairs were needed, which were done by contractors at the cost of several million pounds.



Increasing pressures on local government funding and the likelihood of repeated cycles of decay and repair led to an Options Review. The options considered ranged from doing nothing (likely to lead to a return to dereliction and a risk to public safety) to filling it in (unacceptable because of the Canal's designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest). The final outcome was a decision that a change of ownership was needed. There were several possibilities but the only really practical one seemed to be a transfer to the Canal & River Trust (C&RT) which manages most of the country's other canals.

Discussions seemed optimistic: the C&RT were keen to take it on, but with one proviso. As a charity, they could not afford to take on another liability without an accompanying endowment to pay for its future maintenance. The size of the endowment was the subject of discussions, to which the Society was not a party, but it is easy to see that something in the order of

£50 million might be needed, which the Counties felt unable to pay, so the transfer of ownership stalled.

This is the situation that was faced 10 years ago when the Society celebrated its 50th Anniversary. More recently, two of the major contributors to the Canal's budget, Woking and Rushmoor District Councils, withdrew their funding due to their own financial problems, putting further pressure on the Counties. The Society is committed to working with the Counties to find new sources of funding.

Looking back over the Canal's history, the most positive event of recent years may prove to be the impromptu coffee morning shared by Society member Kathryn Dodington and BCA Ranger Chris Healy. As a result of their musings about the Canal, Kathryn organised a small group of her fellow Brookwood WI members to turn out a few days later with shears and secateurs to tidy up a length of the towpath near Sheets Heath Bridge.

This small beginning rapidly developed into today's Tuesday Work Party where dozens of people turn out every week to trim the banks, remove weed, paint lock gates and generally keep the Canal looking tidy and cared for. We also have Corporate Days when companies pay to have team-building exercises run for their staff by getting them working on the Canal.

Right. A Tuesday work party at Dogmersfield.



Not only do these volunteer days contribute enormously to the wellbeing of the Canal, but they have proved a splendid recruiting source for the Society, which has been transformed in the last 10 years.

In 2016, its membership was falling and its Committee becoming increasingly aged and ill-equipped to take advantage of the digital era and the opportunities afforded by Social Media and the Internet. Now the membership is back over 1200 and rising, while thousands of other people follow the Canal's life via Facebook and other platforms. Sales of books and other items via the Society's website has raised over £15,000.

Volunteers now contribute over 25,000 hours of work annually, as lengthsman, boat crew and maintainers, work party members and in many other activities.

The running of the Society has been re-invigorated by a flow of professional people with backgrounds in finance, health & safety, fund raising, project management etc, and a bit of time on their hands and a desire to put something back into their community. Notable also is the number of key posts that have been filled by women, who have helped broaden the range of experience and perspectives within the organisation.

The Canal faces serious threats from falling public funding, but the Society itself is perhaps now better equipped to deal with these than it's been since the Restoration, so here's to the next 10 years, which will be crucial to deciding its fate as a navigation.

Review of the decade 2016 - 2026

Work Parties

Volunteers have been vital to the Canal for the last 75 years. Joan Marshall was appointed as the New Basingstoke Canal's General Manager in 1949 and had about a dozen paid employees to help her, together with about a hundred unpaid volunteer bailiffs, whose only reward was permission to cycle on the towpath which the general public were not supposed to do.

After the Canal Society's founding in 1966, thousands of people were involved in the Canal's restoration. The "Deepcut Dig" alone in 1977 saw 600 people working on the Canal.

The last 10 years has seen a considerable increase in the number of non-members of the Canal Society volunteering to join the Tuesday Work Parties run by the BCA, largely thanks to regular posts on social media such as Facebook. The Society's membership has also seen an upward turn.

The Tuesday Work Party focuses largely on bank clearance and weed removal from the navigation. Floating Pennywort is a very vigorous invasive species that can completely choke the Canal if not kept under control. Initially this was done largely using the BCA's work boat and rakes to manually lift the weed out but the Society's funding of a *Conver* weed control boat has enabled this to be done much more efficiently. However, it's a never ending task.

Right:

A good morning's work - a boat load of Floating Pennywort at Woking wharf.



Right:

The BCA's previous weed-cutter boat *Millie II* in action after refurbishment by the Society's Engineering Team. However old age and unreliability led to its replacement by the more modern *Conver*.





The *Conver* boat in action in Woking operated by volunteers.



With the skill and expertise of the Society's **Engineering Team**, many boats have been brought back to life which otherwise would have been left to rot. They rebuilt the BCA's patrol boat after it had spent several years deteriorating in the mouth of Greywell Tunnel.



Below left: The Engineering Team, John Wharf, John Abbott, Pete Philips and Martin Leech (behind the camera).



Above right: The results of a Patrol Boat trip to remove rubbish from the Canal.

The Engineering Team has also on several occasions revived the BCA's old weed boat *Millie II* and the dredger *Unity*. The dry dock at Lock 28 has been an invaluable asset to the Canal. Volunteers carry out the annual maintenance on the BCA's boats and the Society's trip boats there.

Below: The BCA's *Patrol Boat* and *Rosebud* getting a repaint.



The Society's **Weekend Work Party** has completed some major bits of work in addition to the never-ending task of trimming the bankside vegetation.

Crookham wharf was designed to allow barges to be loaded and was much too high for use by canoes, and even the *John Pinkerton II* struggled, so the decision was made by the BCA to have it lowered by the Work Party.



The result, completed in 2018, is a much more accessible wharf with brickwork repaired and the whole site landscaped and tidied up. Canoeists no longer have to get in and out under the bridge.



An unexpected legacy from the Holland family paid for the installation of 200m of new boat moorings near Wharf Bridge in Aldershot to supplement those at the Canal Centre. These were proposed by the Canal Authority hopefully to increase the Canal's income by encouraging



more people to keep a boat on the Canal. The work took a long time because of the COVID outbreak and Natural England restrictions on when

the driving of the dozens of piles could be done, but the moorings were finally opened formally by the Holland family in 2021.

The Work Party has also installed several water points on the Canal. The sanitary station and water point opposite the Bridge Barn in Woking was completely rebuilt, and opened in time for our 50th Anniversary event in 2016. In 2017, the facilities at the Canal Centre in Mytchett



were updated and in 2019 a water point for boats next to the canal at the Ash Lock depot was installed (*above*). The water point at Colt Hill was also rebuilt after being knocked over.

In between these activities, the Work Party has refurbished the work boat *Alan Flight* and used it when cutting back bankside growth (*Right*) and doing towpath repairs.



Another major task was to fell a row of aged Leylandii trees, that were becoming a hazard on the land at Colt Hill acquired by the Society, grind the stumps out and landscape the bank.

Work has also been carried out on converting the work boat *Fly II* into a useable vessel and taking the *Jim Douglas* work boat off the Canal to its new owners. Its deep draught had been found to limit its potential use on the Basingstoke Canal.

The Society's **Boat Company** has had two boats to manage for the last decade. The *John Pinkerton II* has proved to be a very popular successor to the original *John Pinkerton*, not least because of the innovative special trips such as the ones to greet the sunrise on midsummer's day.

Right:
Midsummer
morning.

Photo by
Peter
Johnson



The second boat, *Kitty*, was bought from the Chichester Canal Society. After being named by Liz Dodwell at our 50th Anniversary event in 2016, it rapidly established itself as one of Woking's leading attractions, seen here at the official opening of the Society-funded extended Woking Wharf.

The two boats continue to be the Society's most reliable source of income. *Kitty* will be replaced in 2026 by *Kitty II*, a brand new, all-electric boat built for the Society thanks to a fantastic bit of fund raising that resulted in Gren Gale and Diane Henderson being awarded the Robin Higgs Trophy for their efforts.

Right: Kitty II afloat at the boat builders



Installation of the electric charging station has been more complicated and prolonged than expected but it will be a valuable resource for the Canal in years to come as more and more boats switch from diesel to electric propulsion.

Events Group

For many years the Sales Stand was taken to local events by Verna and Denise Smith but sadly we lost Denise in 2020. However, Heather Sloane offered to take things over and formed a very active group, which takes our Sales Stand to over a dozen local events each year. The hiring of a garage to store gazebos and sales items etc. has also relieved the pressure on some Society members' domestic space.

The Events Group not only brings in income from sales of merchandise but more importantly advertises the Society and its activities to the general public, many of whom are completely unaware of the Canal and its history. Chatting to people is one of the pleasures of the job.

Right: Heather Sloane and Mark Gaines with the Sales Stand at the St John's Village Fete in June 2025.

If you fancy joining this, or any of the other volunteer groups, contact volunteer@basingstoke-canal.org.uk.



The Sales stand is one of the main outlets for the Society's range of books. This has been widened in 2025 by the publication of a new Nature and Wildlife booklet, Liz Dodwell's very entertaining "My Mother Bought a Canal" and Peter Whitlock's extremely detailed "The Bridges of the Basingstoke Canal", which contains some fascinating historical information.

Archive Group

There have been several attempts to tackle the mass of documents and photographs of the Canal accumulated over the years and stored at the Canal Centre and in various people's homes. David Tonkinson spent a great deal of time on it and a concerted effort is now being made to bring everything together by a three man team headed by Peter Whitlock.

Peter spent years trawling through the Counties' archives to gather information for his Bridges book and volunteered to take on the Society's archive. Storage space is now being hired (to free up space in his house!) so that members need no longer feel guilty about unloading their own holdings on the group. One of the tasks they are doing is clearing out the many duplicate copies of various documents.

Many of the collections of slides have been scanned and, importantly, labelled with details of who, what, where and when. Ultimately, it should be possible to digitise the more significant documents and produce a database of all of them including some code words for each to enable searches to be done for specific things. There might be potential for the archives to become a revenue-generating resource.

In the meantime, the Archive Team has written some interesting articles for the Basingstoke Canal News based on things that have come to light. Doubtless there will be many more. Peter has asked for requests for specific subjects of interest to be sent to archivist@basingstoke-canal.org.uk.

Right: From the archives, a page from the Outwards Ledger for Pirbright Lock dated March 1918.

OUTWARDS									
WOKING, ALDERSHOT & BASINGSTOKE CANAL & NAVIGATION CO.									
Account of Rings and Boat passing Pirbright Lock during Week ending March 1918									
No.	Date	Time	Name	Boat	Particulars	Rate	Per Cent	Total	Balance
1	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10
2	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10
3	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10
4	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10
5	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10
6	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10
7	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10
8	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10
9	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10
10	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10
11	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10
12	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10
13	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10
14	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10
15	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10
16	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10
17	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10
18	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10
19	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10
20	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10
21	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10
22	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10
23	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10
24	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10
25	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10
26	10	10	Boat	John Hall	Boat	10	10	10	10

Recognition of the contribution of the Canal Society and the Canal

The Canal Society was honoured to be nominated for a Queen's Award for Voluntary Services (QAVS) in 2018 and delighted by the return of HRH The Duke of Kent to present the trophy to us (see *photo on back cover*). In return he was presented with a specially bound copy of our 50th Anniversary book as a souvenir of his previous visit in 1991 to reopen the Canal officially (*Right*).



Left: Philip Riley and Martin Leech, then Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Society, attended a garden party at Buckingham Palace for award winners.

The Canal's influence on **Health and Wellbeing** was recognised in a 2021 news article about the results of a Member survey asking "Why do people come to the Canal?"

The top reasons for choosing the Canal over other outdoor places were: the pleasure of being by the water (96%), pleasant views and scenery (95%), it being a quiet and peaceful area (87%) and because of the variety of attractive wildlife (77%). It is also chosen over other outdoor places for being convenient (85%) and because it is free to visit (82%).

Health and Wellbeing was incorporated in the new Society Objects and Articles of Association that were adopted at the 2022 AGM, when the Society's name was also formally changed to The Basingstoke Canal Society.

Other Matters

The last 10 years have seen a lot of things happening to the Canal and its management that were not directly influenced by the Canal Society.

Basingstoke Canal Authority

Management of the Canal has had some significant changes. We were sorry to say goodbye to Fiona Shipp in 2023 when she stepped down as the BCA Operations Manager. Her replacement, Torun Ingvorsen, has since moved on, together with Senior Ranger Jon Green and his wife Sarah, unfortunately taking many years of accumulated knowledge of the Canal with them; we wish them well in their new jobs. We now look forward to working with Jo East, the new Operations Manager.

A national campaign to remove a destructive foreign species, mink, has been extended to cover the Canal, so we hope to be seeing water voles on the Canal again soon; they have been reintroduced on the Wey already. Another wildlife first was a sighting of an otter at Colt Hill.

Management of the Canal has been reorganised. There is now a Management Team, which comprises the BCA Strategic Manager plus the Heads of Countryside from the two County Councils and the partnership's Treasurer, (currently a senior Finance Officer of Hampshire CC); they are all officers, i.e. employees of the Counties.

Oversight is now provided by the Basingstoke Canal Joint Board (two elected Councillors from each County Council), which has replaced the old Joint Management Committee (JMC). The Joint Board's role is to act as a scrutiny body for management decisions. Its purpose is to "oversee the management and maintenance of the Canal as an environmental, navigational, and recreational asset, ensuring we balance the interests of all users while protecting the natural environment for future generations".

The seats that used to exist on the JMC for Special Interest Groups, such as the Canal Society, Inland Waterways Association and Natural England have not been replaced directly. However, representations to the Canal Management in future should still be able to be made via other lower level meetings and via the members of the Joint Board.

Navigation Authority status

Surrey County Council managed to rectify a peculiar legal situation caused by the improper conveyance of the Canal in 1871 which failed to transfer the rights and obligations of the original Canal Company to the new owner. As a result, the Environment Agency (EA) refused to recognise the Basingstoke Canal Authority as a bona fide navigation authority and charged a licence fee for water abstraction even when the water was being put back into the Canal higher up by the back-pumping schemes. Happily a QC was able to demonstrate that the BCA was acting in every respect as a navigation authority whether or not they possessed the original Statutory Undertaking, and the EA accepted this. There was even a refund of the licence fees.

Colt Hill

When the Canal opened in the 18th century, Odiham was the only town on it, apart from Basingstoke itself. It was a major centre for loading agricultural produce and the barn which now stores the *JPII's* stuff is said once to have been a store for cheese; its oak timbers have been dated back to the 15th century although the building itself is younger.

Ever since the 1970s, Colt Hill has again been a major centre for some of the Canal's activities. Galleon Marine provides an important local amenity and is the only boat hire company on the Canal. It also provides a base for the two boats for people with mobility or socialising difficulties; *Madame Butterfly* and *Dawn* are operated by Accessible Boating, who were awarded a Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2021. Galleon Marine also allows the *John Pinkerton's* fuel bowser to be kept there.

Galleon Marine has played a major part in planning and running the annual Odiham Raft Race which first took place in 2018 and draws hundreds of spectators to the Canal in September. We look forward to another in 2026. The Basingstoke & Deane Canoe Club is also based at Colt Hill and provides safety boats for the Raft Race as well as sometimes entering a competing team.



Above: The BCA's winning team at the start of the first Raft Race in 2018.

Deepcut

3.2km of towpath from above Lock 28 down to Pirbright has been widened and resurfaced as a shared-use path for walkers and cyclists using finance from the Mindenhurst development on the old Deepcut Barracks site. It looks very nice and pleasantly puddle-free despite some heavy rain.

It still looks like a towpath rather than a cycle track and hopefully the widening will avoid some of the clashes between walkers and cyclists that occurred when the towpath in Woking was simply resurfaced.



Water

Pressure on water supplies has increased everywhere in recent years, and this has not improved the Basingstoke's already marginal supply from the Greywell springs. Considering that 35,000 gallons of water is moved downstream every time a lock is opened, the issue of water supply is critical to the Canal's survival. Water abstraction at Greywell by the South East Water Company was due to stop in 2025 but has yet to do so. When this finally does happen, we will look forward to seeing whether this will make a significant impact on the Canal's ability to maintain levels during the summer and allow the locks to remain open.



The scheme that was installed soon after the Canal re-opened to pump water accumulating on the London to Basingstoke railway line into the Canal at Frimley Green would have proved very useful in recent hot summers when even canoes were forbidden to use the top pound in Surrey owing to the very low water level (*Left*). Unfortunately, it has been out of action for many years now, due to

a leak somewhere in the pipeline. Investigation was apparently difficult because it passed under land belonging to Network Rail and further changes of land ownership have taken place. However it is good to hear that moves are afoot to re-establish this potentially valuable source of water for the Deepcut flight.

Searches for other sources of water have continued but little progress has been possible. Unfortunately, a project to install water level sensors on the Canal to allow remote monitoring foundered due to a combination of reasons, and data transmission used the 3G mobile phone network, which is no longer supported.

Nevertheless, the "Smart Canal" concept was a good one that might one day be revived using more modern technology.

Media coverage

Robbie Cummings was invited to hand out the prizes at the 2024 Odiham raft race and actually bought his boat *Naughty Lass* up the canal in 2025, so the Basingstoke Canal featured in his *Canal Boat Diaries* TV programme. He struggled a bit at times with low water levels but got all the way to King John's castle. Here he is at the Canal Centre.



Local Government Reorganisation

A very topical subject taking place in the 60th Anniversary year.

Surrey and Hampshire County Councils have been responding to HM Government's requirement to consider the adoption of single-tier local government, in which the Counties, the current owners of the Canal, and all Districts would disappear, to be replaced by a number of Unitary Authorities. This is believed to be the most significant factor affecting the future of the Canal since it became publicly owned in the 1970's.

At the time of writing, we know that Surrey has decided to split into two, and Hampshire possibly into four, meaning the Canal will reside in a new (smaller) West Surrey and a new (smaller) NE Hampshire, which is likely to include Basingstoke & Deane, Hart and Rushmoor. The inevitable reduced budgets could compound what has already been deemed an unsustainable funding model.

Nevertheless, the reorganisation could be a window of opportunity and another Options Review might be in order. It is to be hoped that the Society could be part of it with recognition of the Society's ability to raise money and effort from sources not available to public bodies, as was the

case 60 years ago when the Counties were persuaded to make the decision to restore the Canal and its locks as a navigation for canal boats rather than just canoes and rowing boats.

Maintenance of the Navigation

The BCA has continued to fulfil its main job of making sure that the water in the Canal stays in the Canal by focussing on the integrity of embankments, culverts and lock structures. The Ash embankment was relined to prevent a recurrence of the 1968 breach and a leak in the West Hart embankment was also fixed after a false start by a contractor. Regular inspections and organising any necessary repairs of the Canal structures form a major part of the BCA's responsibilities.

However, there are some major issues on the Canal which were noted at our 50th Anniversary that are still unresolved.

The Frimley pumping scheme is one of these as noted previously.

The big issue though is Swan cutting in North Warnborough, which continues to get narrower as the bank slowly slips down. A lot of work was done by the County engineers to research the problem and devise a solution and we were told that money had been set aside. However, more recently we were told that the problem was not as urgent as previously thought (i.e. not endangering the houses), and the engineering solution to stop the slip would be very difficult and perhaps prohibitively expensive, so the money was withdrawn and no further action was contemplated.

The Counties appear to be increasingly forced to take the line that their prime responsibility is to protect public safety and that they cannot afford to preserve navigation by large boats like the *JPII*. We cannot argue with the safety concern. Nevertheless, the Canal Society is now the largest funder of the Canal apart from the County Councils and the *JPII* is one of its biggest sources of revenue and the favourite trip is still the visit to King John's castle, which is becoming increasingly difficult. It is also worth remembering that the Canal was originally designed for use by 14ft wide boats, not just 7ft narrow boats, so the *JPII* is well within that standard.

It is also important to emphasise that as the number of BCA staff and budgets have reduced, the maintenance of the Canal has become increasingly dependent on volunteers, who need to feel that they are part of a team that is determined to keep the Canal “Alive and Vibrant”, as our campaign slogan put it. If they begin to feel that their interest and enthusiasm is being taken for granted or ignored, they could start voting with their feet.

However, a recent Facebook message from the Chairman of the Canal Joint Board said:-

“We all owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the Basingstoke Canal Society; their vital involvement and tireless dedication are vital to everything the authority achieves.”

We may not be entirely without friends and influence! We will try to do everything necessary to keep the route to King John’s castle open for large boats. We owe it to all those people who gave 20 years of their spare time in the 1970s and 80s to restore the Basingstoke Canal as a navigation.



People

The Robin Higgs Award is presented annually to some person or persons judged by the Canal Society's Committee to have given exceptional service in some way:-

2016 David & Rosemary Millett. 50 years of service to the Society. David was its Chairman in the 1990s.



2017 50th Anniversary Event Team (Dick King, Peter Harman & Phil Hardyman). Organised the very successful rally in Woking.

2018 Mike Gordon. Managed the Lengthsman scheme and crewed the BCA patrol boat.

2019 Graham & Doreen Hornsey. Graham was the Society's treasurer and Doreen its Membership Secretary for many years.

2020 Denise & Verna Smith. They ran the Society's Sales stand at events for many years. Verna was also the Society's Secretary for a period.

2021 Roger Cansdale. Chairman of the Boat Company for 8 years. Editor of the BC News and producer of most of the Society's publications.

2022 Dick King. Chairman of the Boat Company for 10 years and still active with trip bookings and crew organisation.

2023 Ian Sims. Significant IT support for the Society.

2024 Gren Gale & Diane Henderson. Massive fund-raising effort for the purchase of *Kitty II*.

2025 Heather Sloane. Events Co-ordinator and team leader.

2026 (*To be decided*).

Farewell

With 60 years gone by since the founding of the Canal Society, it was sad but inevitable that we were going to be saying goodbye to some of those who helped to launch the restoration of the Basingstoke, but the last decade has been a bit brutal. Thanks to these and many others -

Paul Vine, author of *London's Lost Route to Basingstoke* that set it all off.

Jim Woolgar, whose letter to the local press led to the formation of the Canal Society, and his then wife, **Flo Fleming**.

David Gerry, first Chairman of the Society and then Canal Manager in Hampshire during the restoration.

Robin Higgs, OBE, who took over from David as Chairman and guided the restoration through to the re-opening in 1991.

Dieter Jebens, who edited *Basingstoke Canal, the Case for Restoration* and recorded the progress via the Basingstoke Canal News until 1991.

Pablo Haworth, who led teams restoring the Woodham locks and his wife **Jill** who looked after the Society's archives for many years.

Peter Coxhead who worked on the restoration, was Vice Chairman of the Society and organised many events in Woking with his wife **Maureen**.

David Junkison, stalwart of the Society's Work Parties for 40+ years.

Denise Smith, MBE, a very distinguished disabled sports person, who ran the Society's sales and events stand with her sister Verna.

Dick Snell, founder member of the Society and photographer.

Ron McLaughlin, Chairman of the Boat Company in the 1990s.

Clive Durley, the original *John Pinkerton* Bookings and Crew Manager.

Tony Davis, a great supporter of the Canal in the IWA and promoter of the attempted twinning with the Canal d'Orléans in France.

Pam Wait and **Jan Smith**, who built *Victoria M*, a splendid replica inspection launch that was a feature of the Canal for many years.

Ian Cripps, who was involved in launching the dredging programme in Hampshire with *Perseverance*.

Peter Caiger, driver of the steam dredger *Perseverance* on Saturdays for nearly 20 years.

Frank Jones, who arguably did more than anyone else to restore the Canal. He started as a volunteer in 1968 and went on to manage the Youth Training schemes that restored the Deepcut Flight, and much else.



Kevin Redway receiving the Society's QAVS award from HRH The Duke of Kent in 2018

