



BASINGSTOKE CANAL NEWS

No. 212 Winter 2006



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sold



Surrey & Hampshire Canal Society Ltd

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Editorial



Now that the immediate threat to the Canal as a navigation has receded somewhat, we can draw breath and take stock of the situation.

Surrey County Council's financial problems have not been solved at all, but they never were going to be given the small size of the Canal budget compared to the sums they were trying to save. What the review has done is expose the need for firmer and more formal partnership arrangements than the gentlemen's agreements that were thought adequate in the euphoria of the Canal's re-opening.

The counties as the two owners are also looking at an updated joint partnership agreement for the operation and management of the Canal. This would help to put an end to the daft attitude of the Environment Agency in not recognising the BCA as a navigation authority; as a result they have to pay the EA an abstraction licence to pump water from one part of the canal to another. Interestingly, SCC's legal advisor was of the opinion that the EA's position could be challenged now and this move would strengthen the counties' hand.

Cover Picture: Complements of the season from 50 years ago.
Photo: Joan Marshall (See page 5)

I think it is a pity that the option to pass ownership to British Waterways was dismissed without further comment. Clearly BW's current financial difficulties do not encourage them to take on another canal with the problems of the Basingstoke, but I think this should be retained as a long term aspiration.

It is to be hoped that the iniquitous cuts that DEFRA have made to BW's funding will be restored in response to the campaign being waged by the IWA and others, and that BW will return to the upbeat mood of a few years ago.

There was a mood of huge optimism when things that were thought to be pipe dreams suddenly became real projects, such as the Thames and Severn.

In perhaps 20 years time we could have a network of waterways in the South of England, but if things continue as they are, there will be a multitude of different owners, which will hinder their development. Far better if they all came under one management.

Let's hope that the better times return. Do please help by writing to your MPs to get their support for BW.

* * * * *

If you look at the Work Party page, you will see that a number of weekends are to be spent at the Western End in Up Nately. The usual spring clear-up did not take place this year because of work on the back-pumping scheme, so there is much to do. Any offers of help will be welcome.

Things seem to be stirring over this lost end of the Canal. The Society has proposed a package of work to the BCA, which would include making a proper car park at Penney Bridge.

The Society would also like to do work on the Brickworks Arm, which is currently very overgrown, with trees sprouting out of the brickwork. However, it is still privately owned, which makes it impossible for us, as a charity, to do this.

This might change if the owner gets permission to build houses on the site and were to hand the arm over to the County. The alternative is to re-instate the pig farm which is an unappealing idea!

* * * * *

I should have known better than to boast about getting Paul Dyson's picture on the cover of the 40 years booklet, because I then managed to put his name to a photo of Bill Nicholson of the Newbury Group in the last issue. My apologies to both of them. Here is Paul (I hope).



Dieter Jebens, founder member and original editor of the BCN, has moved house. His new address is
Flat 3,
Tall Pines,
Gally Hill Road,
Church Crookham,
Fleet,
Hants GU52 6RX

and he also has a new phone number 01252 622614.

The property is immediately on the right just after you go over Malthouse Bridge from Crookham Village and his flat is on the ground floor overlooking the canal. The property has electrically operated gates, so press button 3 and smile nicely at the camera and he might let you in.

One of the items that came to light during his move was this issue's cover picture.

Chairman's Report

I am writing his report with more optimism for the future of the canal than when we campaigned against the cuts in canal funding last March.

The Options workshops on the future of the canal continued through the summer, culminating with a series of recommendations to the Joint Management Committee (JMC) in October. A thank you to all members and organisations that supported our cause and wrote to your Councillors and MPs; your letters certainly helped to change Council policy on the canal. A thank you also to the members of the options teams is appropriate; the frequency of meetings and action deadlines were demanding.

A full report on the recommendations and actions ratified by the JMC is reported elsewhere in this Newsletter, but the key decisions are:

- The canal will not be closed to through navigation.
- Riparian Districts contribution formula to be re-negotiated and formal agreements signed.
- County Council funding retained.
- Canal condition survey to be commissioned, this identifies the repair work outstanding and enables Capital funding to be estimated and prioritised
- The Canal Authority continues to manage maintenance work within the Revenue Budget, essential tasks taking priority. Non essential tasks may be out-sourced rather than not carried out.

- A feasibility study on setting up a Trust for maintaining the canal, later evolving to repair and maintenance as the backlog of work is completed. The evaluation and setting up of any Trust is estimated to take two years

The need for vigilance has not passed, but we have drawn back from the brink of canal closure. Hard work, I am sure, will eventually achieve a sustainable future for the canal.

A benefit of the option meetings is a dialogue developing with the Wildlife Trusts and English Nature (Natural England). Recognition that our respective objectives are not mutually exclusive has begun to emerge. The agreement for the construction of a reed bed around the winding hole at Hermitage accepts that boats and ecology can be accommodated and a healthy navigation emerges if opportunities for joint action are taken.

The dry summer and low water levels resulted in closure of the canal, and flash flooding on 13th August then resulted in a landslip in Deepcut cutting and scouring of the Deepcut weirs. The canal water levels have recovered but repairs to the Deepcut slip have not been started, Surrey County Council have not yet contracted for this repair work. Through Navigation is dependant on the slip being repaired—we urge that repair work is commenced as soon as possible.

Peter Redway.

HSBC donation

One of the suggested advantages of having a Trust running the Canal is that money might be raised from sources other than the councils. In fact this is already happening thanks to the interest and generosity of some local firms.

Foremost among these is the HSBC, whose employees have provided volunteer work parties for some time. In addition, earlier this year, the bank made a donation of £20,500 to the Society to enable environmental improvements to be made to the Canal. These will take the form of bankside protection in Brookwood.

The Society is extremely grateful for this very generous donation.

Thanks also to Brian Timms for his part in making this possible. He is seen on the right receiving the cheque from Gary Willens, HSBC's Commercial Manager in Guildford.



Work Party

Working Parties in July included the recovery of the temporary slipway at Hermitage Bridge Winding Hole. The slipway was dismantled and materials stored for future occasions. Clearing the barge used for site services followed, with the effluent container and water tank also returned to store.

It was August before working parties started surveys at Brookwood for the next phase of the pumping project. Towpath levels and water depths under Bagshot Road Bridge were taken, followed by trial hole excavations to establish the line and levels of the byewash pipes and weir connections.

Murphy's law then entered the equation; at Lock 13 trial excavations located a dropped byewash pipe and some subsidence. We repaired the joint with cement mortar and back filled the excavation; at this stage the canal was dry and no water was flowing in the pipes. As we were clearing up a thunder storm started. This brought the torrential rain which caused the landslip at Deepcut, and by 17.30 the canal levels at Brookwood were over-topping the towpath. The Lock 12 to 11 pound rose by 450mm to normal level and water flowed into the empty St. Johns pounds. What chance for the lock 13 repairs?

Earlier this year we attempted to purchase a workboat at the BW Auctions without success. Information in September located a workboat for sale at Leigh-on-Sea Marine; a visit, followed by negotiations and we were the new owners.

The price reflected the condition of the cabin interior, which had been stripped, but the steel was sound, since confirmed with a survey report.

Road transport was arranged from Leigh-on-Sea to Shepperton Marina with work party support and an early start. Passage from Shepperton via the Thames and River Wey was sponsored by Pinewood Services assisted by working party crew. An outboard engine supplied motive power from lock 1 for the passage to St Johns. Vega 1



assisted with a tow from lock 6 to lock 7 - thanks Paul and Pablo.

Some initial welding to the Hatch runners has been carried out and the boat has been surveyed and confirmed to be in sound condition, but passage to Ash Lock and the slipway there is required for out-of-water renovation works. The stern will be modified to allow an engine, propeller and rudder to be fitted, and the cabin will be fitted out to provide basic amenities. It is much shallower draught than the tugs and should be a very versatile craft.

Chairman buys work boat from hospital bed

What Peter fails to mention here is that the purchase and delivery of the new work boat took place during and just after a stay in hospital for an operation on the shoulder that was damaged earlier in the year in an accident.

However, it takes more than a surgeon to slow our chairman down and with the assistance of his family and members of the Society, the boat joined other bits of the Society's fleet outside Redway Cottages at St. John's.

FUTURE WORKING PARTIES

DATE	LEADER	LOCATION
2 - 3 Dec	KESCRG /WRG	Woodham Christmas party
9-10 Dec	PR, DJ, DL	Workboat to Ash Lock
27-30 Dec	KR	Workboat/Tug at Ash Lock
13-14 Jan	KR, PR	Workboat/Tug at Ash Lock
27-28 Jan	PR, DJ, DL	Up Nateley
10-11 Feb	KR, PR	Workboat/Tug at Ash Lock
24-25 Feb	PR, DJ, DL	Up Nateley
10-11 Mar	KR, PR	Workboat/Tug at Ash Lock
24-25 Mar	PR, DJ, DL	Brookwood

Leaders:

PR	Peter Redway	01483 721710
DL	Dave Lunn	01483 771294
DJ	Dave Junkison	020 8941 0685
KR	Kevin Redway	01483 722206

Peter Redway

Left: The Society's new work boat moored at St. John's before being moved to Ash Lock for fitting out.

Mark Hicks



The picture on the cover was used by Mrs Joan Marshall, then manager of the canal, as a calendar that she sent to friends at Christmas 1956. Mark Hicks, "Old Mark" as he was affectionately and appropriately known, served the various owners of the Basingstoke Canal for an astonishing 82 years.

At the time the cover photo was taken, Mark was 82 years old and still had another 10 years to go on the canal. He started working for the London & Hampshire Canal Company, the third owner of the canal, in 1884 at the age of 10 and was still working as a canal bailiff up to 4 days before he died in 1966.

He lived in the cottage next to Chequers Bridge, which, as can be seen in the 1962 photo above, had a stable for the horses. The one here is probably Captain and on the cover is Kitty. The stable now forms part of the home of Charles and Katie Hicks (no relation to Mark), well known to canoeists on the canal.

This photo is one of a very interesting series of pictures taken by Kenneth Cattley that has recently come to light. They were taken during the course of two trips on the Canal organised by the IWA in 1957 and 1962.



The first of these, on 22nd September 1957, seems to have set out from Colt Hill (*below left*) on a working punt drawn by the faithful Kitty with Old Mark at the helm.



Some of the other bridges are more difficult to identify. The one above is clearly in a bad state. It could be Broad Oak that the Society rebuilt. Below looks like Barley Mow.



Can anybody put a name to any of these faces?



Canal Options Review

The findings and recommendations of the Options Review were delivered to the October meeting of the Canal's Joint Management Committee. Lynn Mead of Hampshire County Council had done a very good job of pulling together the outputs of the various study groups into an intelligible and reasonably concise report, which she presented to a full house of the JMC at the Canal Centre.

After reviewing the background to the review, and explaining its findings, she invited the members of the JMC support the following key recommendations:-

1. Until such a time that an alternative funding model and contractual framework have been agreed, that all authorities accept their ongoing obligations to the Canal on the current basis.
2. Agree the principle that any option for the future management of the Canal requires long term guaranteed funding from all local authorities - the two owners and the riparian partners.
3. In the first instance officers develop alternative funding formula models and a formal funding agreement, using a service level agreement format, including required performance measures.
4. That senior elected Members then agree the principles of a long term rolling three or five year funding commitment for the Canal, to be effective from the financial year 2008/09, using the information prepared by officers, to ensure that the actual running costs enable the Canal to operate as a safe, navigable waterway and the towpath remain open for recreation, meeting minimum legal requirements.
5. That SCC and HCC develop an updated joint partnership agreement for the operation and management of the Basingstoke Canal as the two owners.
6. That further discussions are held with SWT, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and the Canal Society developing the potential for partnership working.
7. That further work is undertaken by the Canal Director in reviewing the potential to reduce current operational costs and realise further income streams. This is to ensure current costs are at the optimum level for practical and operational efficiency, and also in preparation for any potential move to charitable trust status in the future.
8. That the Income Generation sub-group continues its work in developing the most viable additional sources of income, including exploring the HLF as a source of income to support the capital works to the Canal.
9. Whilst the formula allocation and funding agreement are being developed that following options are pursued further:
 - Outsourcing to a private sector company
 - Charitable Trust
10. That the Regional Park Authority option is not pursued further given the lack of support for this option as a viable way forward for the future management of the Canal.
11. That given the cost implications set out in the Structural Engineering Report that closing the Canal to navigation (between Deepcut and Brookwood flights) is not pursued further at this time.
12. That the two owners commission a Condition Survey for the Canal as this is imperative for any future model, which will lead to the production of an Asset Management Plan for the Canal.

The only dissenting voice came from the Runnymede representative who was unable to accept the first recommendation because his council felt that it could not afford to pay its full share of the budget. This was not well received by one of the councils that has always paid in full; their representative remarked that he thought that the JMC had suffered from being too polite and that speaking plainly, he felt that patience was running out with this attitude.

Apart from this, the recommendations were all accepted unanimously.

From the Society's point of view, this is a very good outcome, but it has to be recognised that the hard work is just beginning. The councils' financial problems are not solved yet, but at least some of the more unacceptable options have been dismissed, possible ways of spreading the load identified and basic principles established.

Most significantly, the option to close the canal as a navigation was declared to be a "no-brainer". The SSSI status would not accept lowered water levels and without these, the risks remained. Replacing locks with weirs would be very costly (~£50k per lock) and the canal would then be subject to the requirements for a reservoir, which would be even more onerous than those for a navigation.

The review acknowledged that any attempt to close the navigation would be met by a legal challenge, but the decision above means that the conflict between legal opinions about rights of navigation (1 against a public right by SCC's advisor and 3 for it from the Society's legal advisors) becomes an irrelevance.

No. 5 is significant in that it would help to establish the

and JMC meeting

County Councils as a bona-fide Navigation Authority which would help in dealing with the Environment Agency about abstraction licences for the back-pumping schemes.

No. 9 will be subject to further study. Outsourcing to a private company appeared as a surprise option following interest shown by Landmarc Services. This company has a multi-million pound contract to manage MOD estates round the country. As far as is known, however, they do not manage any navigations, and the Society has some concern that profit would be the main motive with a consequent loss of influence for the various canal user groups. Landmarc is a hard-nosed commercial company that will be seeking to make a profit, so it is hard to see how such an option would save the owners any money.

Of the four options for management by a charitable trust, two were discounted. Full ownership by a trust was felt to be impractical because the canal would probably be uninsurable at any reasonable cost. A local authority trust was not felt to offer any significant advantage over current arrangements. The option that found most favour was for a trust to manage the canal under contract to the owners, who would continue to be responsible for ongoing repairs and insurance. If this was seen to be working, it could gradually transform into the final option under which the trust would lease the canal and be responsible for repairs, although the counties would retain ownership and responsibility for insurance.

A trust would have certain advantages. The trustees would be selected for the individual skills that they could bring to the job, leading hopefully to a more focussed management than the JMC can provide. Other funding opportunities might present themselves, but these could be negated by the fact that some of the basic costs would rise.

It was suggested that the Canal Society might transform itself into a trust to manage the Canal. The Committee's view is not in favour of this. The Society does not have the manpower resources to do this and could not guarantee that it would in future. It is felt that the Society's best role is as a stakeholder, lending such support as it can and continuing to be able to offer an independent view.

In the shorter term, the Counties will be trying to persuade the riparian Local Authorities to enter into Service Level Agreements that would guarantee funding over the period of the agreement, suggested as a minimum of 3 years with 5 preferable. Currently Guildford already has such an agreement and is one of the authorities that does pay its full share. It would certainly be good if the other authorities could agree to similar arrangements, which would help to give the BCA's management plans some reasonable chance of success.

The formula used to calculate the contributions from the Local Authorities will also be reviewed. Originally this took

account of their length of canal, the population and the rateable value, but this was subsequently simplified and is now believed only to consider length. Whether any other system could be accepted as more reasonable remains to be seen. The money has to come from somewhere though!

There is a lot of work still to be done, much of it by Ian Brown, for whose presence in the Canal Director's job we have to be profoundly thankful. Without his management background and apparently limitless energy and enthusiasm the BCA would be in dire straits.

The Society also needs to consider its future role. After the Canal was re-opened it was accepted policy that routine maintenance was the responsibility of the BCA and owners and that the Society would focus on improvements, such as the back-pumping schemes and towpath surfacing. It is becoming clear that the BCA's resources are unlikely to cover much more than routine safety monitoring and remedial work, and that major work such as dredging will have to be outsourced.

The need for dredging is becoming very pressing in some parts of the canal. The management plan has an aim to redredge the whole canal every 10 years, which implies about 3 miles a year. So far the only work done has been from Barley Mow westwards and the Brookwood pound. The Society's tug with its 3ft draught struggles to get along the Mytchett pound even when levels are up and there are several bits of spot dredging that need doing urgently; the landslip currently blocking navigation above Lock 28 is a typical example.

Unfortunately, the BCA's dredger Unity is out of action due to hydraulic problems. The machinery was made by Smalley and spares are no longer available. Even if this were not the case, the Deepcut flight of locks is a big obstacle to moving the dredger from Surrey to Hampshire in a hurry.

A possible answer lies in a dredger that was recently declared surplus to requirements by the Environment Agency. This has been acquired by a local consortium and could be made available to the Society for use on the Canal. The BCA is very keen to make use of this answer to their problems, so if members are prepared to lend a hand, we could be back in the dredging business.

The work boat that has been acquired could also be used for spot dredging work since it is capable of carrying a small excavator and it is going to be fitted with stabilising legs. It will be self-propelled.

I always regretted not having had a go on *Perseverance*, so perhaps this is another chance!

Bridges

Sheets Heath Bridge has had some long awaited repairs.

The bridge has an interesting history having been originally longer when it spanned the railway at Brookwood to allow passengers access to and from the opposite (Cemetery) side of the railway line. In about 1878 the railway was widened to '2 up 2 down' and an enterprising gentleman called Mr Benwell (who owned a considerable amount of land in the Brookwood area on the north side of the canal) had the bridge shortened and moved by traction engine to span the canal at what was, presumably, the end of Sheets Heath Lane. A large estate of very nice Victorian houses was built with one of the roads being named in honour (or perhaps memory) of Mr Benwell.

The bridge was in those days known as Ha'penny bridge as there was a toll cottage (long since gone) in Sheets Heath Lane which I understand collect 1d from pedestrians and 2d from the owners of horses.

The users of the bridge have enjoyed free(ish) use of the bridge since it was given to Woking Urban District Council by the then owner (a Mr Dance) on his death in about 1956. Woking Urban District Council had the foresight to refuse the gift and its ownership has since remained in limbo with Woking Council, Surrey County Council and the Canal Authority all refusing ownership. However Woking have some kind of responsibility for it as they own and run a Recreation ground and an Allotment Society on the north side of the canal for which access is generally regarded as being by the bridge, and they have finally taken ownership.

The modern day cars and four by fours have caused the oak planking wear and the hot summers (and lack of sustained winter rain) contributed to it drying out and becoming very noisy. After constant pressure from the writer, Woking Council, to their credit, brokered a 60/40 split of the costs

between themselves and the residents who gain vehicular access to their houses via the bridge. It is this work that TJ Hunt have now carried out to very strict specifications.

Some repairs to the ironwork of the bridge were found necessary and it has been planked with African hardwood. This has been bolted down with the nuts welded to ensure that they do not come loose.

It was re-opened in October and the residents of Brookwood can again enjoy walks along the canal in the autumn and the homeowners on Sheets Heath no longer have to endure the rumbling of cars over the bridge.



*Above:*The re-opening. Left to Right: Neil McEllistram (WBC), Tim Hunt (TJ Hunt, the contractors), Philip Goldenberg (Local Councillor) and John Crook (Chairman of Sheets Heath Residents Association)

Although the bridge looks, at first glance, like a Bailey Bridge it isn't and although not beautiful has a certain style about it. There has been a certain amount of correspondence about it in recent issues of *Waterways World*.

Kathryn Dodington

Rare opportunity to buy a canalside house with mooring

Two bedroom semi-detached bungalow at the end of Sheets Heath Lane, Brookwood.

Mooring for two 60 foot narrowboats - land in two titles including canal bank. Just 150 yards from mainline railway station and close to M3, A3, M25 and M4. Just 30 mins from Heathrow and 45 mins from Gatwick. D Council Tax rate.

New conservatory with under-floor heating. Gas central heating boiler recently replaced. Recently completely reglazed. Two bedrooms (11' 9" x 8' 9" and 8' 8" x 6' 8"),

sitting room (14' 9" x 10' 2"), kitchen (9' 7" x 8' 1") and conservatory (18' 5" x 11' 1").

Front garden laid out with shrubs and bushes and rear garden laid out with decking with small garden shed.

Bridge at end of garden gives access to towpath midway between Brookwood 3 and the start of Deepcut.

£349,950 - please contact Kathryn Dodington on 07768 770070 (Daytimes/weekends) or 01483 473630 (evenings/weekends) if interested.

Bridges

Baseley's Bridge is in dire need of repair to counter subsidence caused by the summer drought which has produced cracking so severe as to threaten collapse.



The crack can be clearly seen on the Odiham side of the bridge (*above*) and is just as bad on the other side, although partly masked by ivy. The abutment on the towpath side seems to have dropped back, and there must be great stress on the bottom of the arch.

Baseley's and the nearby Stacey's Bridge (*below*) have very flat profiles and the latter also has cracks, although not as bad as Baseley's. Other bridges in Dogmersfield, such as Barley Mow and Sprat's Hatch, have more arched parapets and seem to be surviving better.



Ian Brown was standing next the Baseley's when a tractor went over it and saw the bridge move. He has notified Hampshire County Council about the situation and it is to be hoped that urgent repairs will be done before there is a catastrophe.

Landslip at Deepcut

The downpour in August that ended the drought was something of a mixed blessing because it caused landslips above Lock 28, as we reported in the last BCN.

The SCC civil engineers were being consulted about the best way to stabilise the bank to prevent a recurrence, but at the time of writing in mid-November the debris had still not been removed. Since the Deepcut flight has been closed, this has not caused any difficulties, but unless a passage is cleared soon, it will prevent the *John Pinkerton* being taken down to the dry dock for its annual refit and inspection.

Part of the difficulty lies in the fact that the dredger *Unity* is out of action, but the job ought to be do-able with an excavator.



Canal news

Osprey seen

One of the Canal's fishing bailiffs reported seeing an osprey taking a fish from the canal at Eelmoor.

This rare bird lives mainly in Scotland and Cumbria but has also been introduced to Rutland Water. They migrate to West African for the winter, so this one was probably in transit.

Problems for anglers

The Basingstoke Canal Angling Association has called an Extraordinary General Meeting of its members on 16th November to agree some constitutional changes aimed at finding an answer to a crisis that it is facing. Currently the association has nobody to take on the jobs of chairman, secretary, treasurer or match secretary. If the posts cannot be filled, the association will be disbanded.

Fishing could still continue on the canal, but there would be nobody to manage fish stocks or check licences, unless the BCA took this on, which they are unlikely to do in their current resource-strapped situation.

Inquest held

An inquest into the death of Susan Stewart took place in Woking recently. She was a member of the crew of a boat being worked down Deepcut back in April and had gone on ahead to prepare Lock 22. She is thought to have fallen in above the lock and was drowned.

David Berezynskyj of BW had been called to the scene to give an independent opinion. In evidence, he said that the locks on the Basingstoke Canal were similar to those elsewhere in the country and that there was nothing significantly wrong with this one; it was in quite good order. The coroner said that it was unlikely that anyone would ever know what really happened. She felt that she had taken the inquiry as far as she could and that the death was purely an accident.

Sadly accidents do sometimes happen but the verdict must come as a relief for the BCA. At the same time, the tragedy does emphasise the need to keep the locks in a good state of repair. Had some defect been found in the paddle gear, the findings might have been different.

Milestones

The Milestones Museum in Basingstoke gives a great picture of the town's history except that there is nothing about the Canal! This is about to change as Jill Haworth and Philip Riley have put together a display that will open on 30th November. This will be only be a temporary exhibit, but if it produces enough interest, perhaps they might find a permanent space for it. Do go along and have a look.

Illuminated boat procession

With the spring rally moving from the Bridge Barn to Brookwood this year, Woking missed out on its Easter procession of illuminated boats. To compensate, the Byfleet Boat Club is organising an event in December.

On Saturday 2nd December, a procession of illuminated boats will leave Monument Bridge at 5pm. They should pass through the Town Centre about half an hour later and should end up at the Bridge Barn at about 6.15pm.

A similar event was also being planned in Fleet, but has had to be abandoned because of lack of boats due to the current impassability of Deepcut.

Seagull

If you fancy a walk down to Up Nately, there is the best opportunity for some time to view the remains of *Seagull*. The old boat's remains are still lying in the Brickworks Arm, now clearly visible thanks to the low water levels produced by the summer drought. Although the steam engine was removed some years ago, the propeller and shaft are still there.



Canal Director's First Year

My first Year as Canal Director has been far more productive than I first thought it would be back in February. After being plunged into the fray so to speak with the task of coming to terms with a host of legacies ranging from failed bypass channels, lower wing walls and blocked up towpath ditches that had flooded gardens. This actually represents only the tip of the iceberg with the huge backlog of maintenance issues due largely to under-funding and lack of focus and capital investment in the past.

When I took the tiller, I knew that the canal's sustainable future lay in the balance and depended wholly on finding a better way to manage and fund it. At this same time, barely two weeks in post, joint owner Surrey County Council, declared that they proposed to cut their share of funding by a third in the coming financial year and another third the following year.

Doom and gloom one might say, but I for one firmly believe in this canal. I know its potential and am well aware of its very special features, amenity and heritage value shared by so many.

So losing no time we set out to work closely with all the major stakeholders and interested parties to carefully and painstakingly appraise the options that lay before us. Project teams were assembled and meeting upon meeting was held to take forward this process of review. The result was that every one who has taken part has given 100% in effort and commitment to try and find a sustainable future for the canal.

The final message is positive but still depends on the support of the two County Councils as owners and the boundaries of six riparian local authorities that the canal's 32 miles runs through. We shall be putting our house in order by identifying and securing capital funding for projects such as lock rebuilds, a long term dredging program, bank side reinforcement and improved water retention in order to bring the canal into good order.

A refined operations plan will deliver a focussed and efficient service by switching as much funding as possible to maintenance. Some of the current added value activities will have to be cut or delivered by different means.

Without delay we shall carry out a full canal condition survey that will give a clearer view of the structural problems and costs involved in the long term.

We shall agree a fairer proportional funding formula for partners and actively encourage long term formalised funding support from them based on a service level agreement approach. Where partners are unable to meet funding proportions in full, we could agree a form of payment in kind. For example the refurbishment and maintenance of tow-

paths, tree and shrub clearance, litter picking and removal of fly tipping as part of other ongoing service contracts within their Boroughs.

A taste of improved focus on canal maintenance this year has resulted in putting right some of those legacies mentioned earlier. After one of the worst droughts experienced for many years, we now have a much better understanding with both the Environment Agency and Natural England on what we hope to achieve by using the back pumping schemes; we shall be closely working together as partners on this topic.

The lower wing wall at lock 22 was replaced with a good temporary repair in order to make it safe for boats wishing to visit the Brookwood Rally Festival and Campaign. We shall be closely looking at this type of defect and problem in the 'full condition survey' to be carried out next year. This will lead to a full 'asset management plan' and become part of our long term management business plan.



Construction of a new open channel bypass at lock 27 was completed in October (*above*) replacing an old underground concrete pipe that was prone to fracture and collapse.



A new upper lock gate (*above*) made by our rangers is fitted at lock 11 and is a perfect fit! In future gates will be made to order by external suppliers but fitted in-house as part of a scale of economy and in order to meet the gate replacement program.
Ian Brown

Letters

cc.bb@wanadoo.fr

Avec la Communauté de Communes du Bassin de la Bourbeuse, mettons notre patrimoine en valeur et développons le tourisme...

1ère PHASE

CREATION ET REALISATION D'UNE HALTE FLUVIALE

PLAN DE FINANCEMENT POUR UN MONTANT TOTAL DE 147 375,10€
(Réalisation des aménagements courant 2005)

Partenaires du projet	Montants des Subventions
Union Européenne	58 950,04 €
Conseil Régional de Franche-Comté	44 212,53 €
Conseil Général du Territoire de Belfort	14 737,51 €
Communauté de Communes	29 475,02 €

2ème PHASE

CREATION ET REALISATION D'UNE AIRE CAMPING-CARS ET CYCLOTOURISMES

PLAN DE FINANCEMENT POUR UN MONTANT TOTAL DE 140 384,60€
(Réalisation des aménagements courant 2006)

Partenaires du projet	Montants des Subventions
Etat	56 153,84 €
Agence Saône-Ithin	28 076,92 €
Conseil Général du Territoire de Belfort	28 076,92 €
Communauté de Communes	28 076,92 €

NOS PARTENAIRES

C.C.B.B. 5 rue de la Libération 90130 MONTREUX-CHATEAU 03 84 23 32 31

Dear Roger,

I took the photograph in France this Summer on the Rhone à Rhine Canal at the village of Montreux-Chateau where they were constructing a new "Halte Fluviale" (overnight mooring point with services) and an "Aire" (camping ground) for campervans and touring cyclists. •147,375 is approximately £100,000 and •140,384 is £95,000. Not bad for a small village, but you will see where the money comes from. About one-third in each case is from the European Union; then some from the State; the Regional Government; the County; and the grouping of Parish Councils. Oh, and there was no charge to boaters unless you needed electricity. Not bad if you can get it!

I wonder if the canal twinning might open up some avenues of finance for us?

Yours,

Tony Davis

I understand that both Surrey and Hampshire County Councils have offices in Brussels whose job is to try to extract money from the EC. Ian Brown has already been in contact with them so we might get lucky. Apparently it is easier to get money for large projects, so we shall have to think big. How about the José Manuel Barroso reservoir for Deepcut?

Mr, Rodney T. Smith,

30th, October, 1972,

Dear Sir,

We thank you for your letter of the 27th instant, and have noted your comments regarding organising a working party for tidying up part of the Basingstoke Canal at Ash.

In principle, we agree to your request, but before definite arrangements are made, shall be pleased to receive further information from you.

We would like to know how many helpers will be undertaking the work and when you would like to commence.

The work would have to be done under the supervision of one of our Lengthsmen, to ensure that no damage is done to the canal and banks. Clearing of towpath must not be more than 12ft from waters edge, and no trimming is to be undertaken on the opposite bank.

We confirm that you would be responsible for any injury or damage suffered by your volunteers, and that we cannot accept responsibility for whatever contingency may transpire. Also the working party must not contain any members of the Committee of the Surrey & Hants Canal Society, and the entire project must in no way be associated with that Society either directly or indirectly.

We therefore look forward to your acceptance of the above terms, and await the further information as requested.

In the meantime, we take this opportunity of thanking you for your interest, which is indeed appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

THE NEW BASINGSTOKE CANAL CO.LTD.

Secretary

Another item from the archives.

Fortunately our relations with the current owners of the canal are now a little more friendly than they were in 1972 and our working parties are rather more welcome.

A rose by any other name...

Dear Roger,

What's in a Name?

Alison and I recently spent a very happy few days helping Verna and Denise on the SHCS stand at the IWA Festival at Beale Park. Well done both of you, and thanks for all your efforts. (See below - l to r: Verna, Dick, Denise & Alison Photo by Dave Dawes)



Having the pleasure of chatting with all sorts of people at the Festival brought back memories of "the campaigning days" in the '60s, when early members, including myself, attended numerous events in order to gain publicity, and to try and convince people that we were not all completely mad to advocate restoration of the Basingstoke Canal.

However, in 2006, forty years after the founding of our Society, it came as quite a surprise to realise that many people at the Festival did not directly connect the title of "Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society" with the Basingstoke Canal. It was even more surprising to find that it was not only those with merely a passing interest in waterways who did not make the connection, but also canal enthusiasts.

I am sure most members will know why the society was not called the "Basingstoke Canal Society" from the very beginning, and of course we are all now very familiar with, and have affection for, "SHCS". However, my experience at Beale Park has led me to wonder if the time might now be ripe to consider a change of name to the "Basingstoke Canal Society", or something similar.

At the present time, when the future of the canal as a navigation is in danger of being threatened by insufficient funding, it is not inconceivable that the Society might find itself engaged in a second campaign, but this time for "Retention" rather than "Restoration". If such a situation did arise, it would surely be an advantage that our title left no doubt as to what we were about - unlike the conclusion come to by a lady I met at Beale Park who assumed that because we had "Hampshire" in our title we would be a good source of information about the Itchen navigation and the long lost Andover Canal!

I wonder what other members might feel about this.

Dick Snell

Dick is not the only one to have suggested recently that we should be making our involvement with the Basingstoke Canal a bit clearer. If we were to change our name, we would certainly include "Formerly the Surrey & Hampshire Canal Society" in our letterhead and website.

If one of the Strategic Review's proposals comes to pass and a trust is created to manage the canal, it will need a name and the "Surrey & Hampshire Canal Trust" might appeal to the two county councils. If this were the case, it might be less confusing if we called ourselves the Basingstoke Canal Society.

It is certainly also my experience that the general public really have no idea of our specific interest in the Basingstoke Canal, and they probably don't know which counties it goes through anyway. There were good reasons originally for our name, but maybe now the time is ripe for a change.

What do you think?

Mail Order Sales

Verna Smith has handed over the job of dealing with mail order sales to her sister Denise. Her address is

48 Maple Close, Avondale, Ash Vale, Aldershot, Hants GU125JZ Telephone 01252-517779

Don't forget we still have supplies of the Society's two Christmas cards, excellent value at £5 for 10. See page 17 for Christmas gift ideas.

Chobham Social Meetings

The first Chobham meeting on 18th October got off to an excellent start with an illustrated talk by Mr. Runnalls Davis. In 2005 Runnalls gave an informative and unusual talk entitled "Idle Women" about the life of a group of women who took over the rôles of the canal men who went to fight in WWII.

This year there was a different theme entitled "The Venice of the Midlands" in which he described the extensive network of waterways in and around Birmingham. His presentation covered a variety of aspects of the canals from their origins, subsequent decline into dereliction and the restoration into active leisure waterways. His lecture was supplemented with much anecdotal knowledge gained from his extensive touring by boat on much of the network. He explained that, in his opinion, much of the concern over vandalism and personal safety was a myth. There were several shots of the Black Country Museum that the Canal Society visited on 16th July 2000.

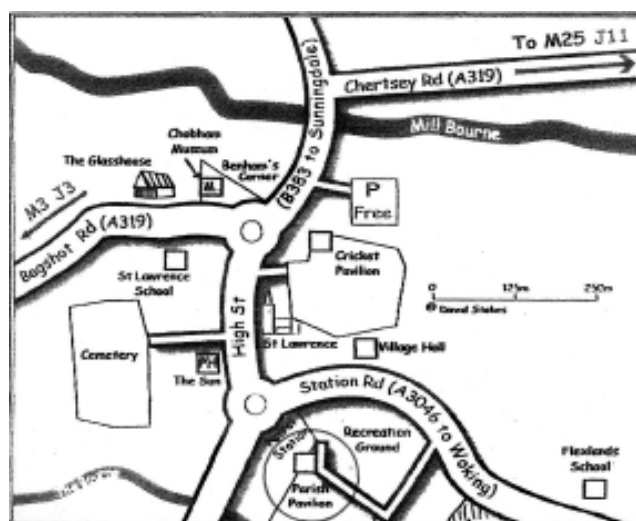
At the refreshment interval members were treated to a decorated iced fruit cake to mark the Society's fortieth anniversary. We understand the inaugural group of nine "founding fathers" assembled at Jim Woolgar's home on 23rd September 1966 and subsequently a public meeting was held at Brookwood Memorial Hall on 18th November 1966. The date of the October Woking (Chobham) meeting being therefore an appropriate date to hold a further 40th anniversary celebration as not all members present were able to attend the earlier official anniversary reunion at the Brookwood rally in May. Peter Redway who had just recovered from a major operation on his shoulder, performed the first ceremonial cut (*below*).



The 1966 public meeting at Brookwood has often been cited to illustrate how well the Society has progressed. However, during the early campaigning years there were several others held along the length of the canal. I joined the society at another extremely well attended meeting held in West Byfleet church hall. In acknowledgement I received the two previous editions of the typed newsletter on the day we went to visit the Tutankhamun exhibition at the British Museum. Whilst queuing for two hours I remember reading these two early newsletters. I managed to find the postcard, complete with the 3p Tutankhamun stamp, that sent myself as a souvenir. It was dated 10th May 1972 and so I reckon the West Byfleet public meeting would have been in April 1972. I wonder how many others in our extensive membership joined at the same West Byfleet meeting?

Special thanks to David Millett for organising and co-ordinating such a varied programme of talks throughout the winter months.

Mark Coxhead



The season of social meetings continues until May next year at our regular venue at the Parish Pavilion, Recreation Ground, Station Road, Chobham. The meetings will continue at 8pm on the third Wednesday of the month. See map for exact location. Coffee/tea and biscuits will be available during the interval. Non-members and friends of members are very welcome.

Wednesday 20th December 2006

Dr. Roger Squires - 'The Thames Creeks'

Roger Squires, the Deputy National Chairman of the Inland Waterways Association and Chairman of the London Branch will be illustrating and describing the St. Pancras Cruising Club's various visits to the fascinating Thames creeks.

/cont inued opposite

Chris Wilson



Those involved with the *John Pinkerton* were greatly saddened and shocked by the news of Chris Wilson's sudden death in August; it came just too late to include in the last BC News. Well over a dozen of his fellow crew members attended the funeral in Woking, where very moving tributes were paid to him by his family and also by Peter Wright, the Boat Company Chairman.

Chris had been part of the winter maintenance gang for several years, as the photo shows. He had also taken over the essential job of keeping the *Pinkerton's* bar stocked some years ago and did an exemplary job, which no doubt contributed to the record profits made last year. He took this very

seriously, as I discovered last year following my daughter's 21st birthday party on the boat. Her friends decided that this was to be a pirate party and consequently drank rum during the trip. I met Chris about a week later and he mentioned that he was worried that all this rum, about a year's normal supply, had gone missing. I was able to tell him where it had gone and assure him that it had been paid for it – by me. Ever after when we met, Chris would politely ask me whether I needed any further supplies brought in!

It was this sense of humour that will be most missed. The reason that the *Pinkerton* has kept going for 28 years is not just the people who do the essential maintenance, etc, but the fact that people are willing to give their time to crew it. They do this largely because it's fun and the thing that makes it fun is the company of fellow crew members such as Chris. The first reading at his funeral said it all:

To laugh often and much.

To win the respect of intelligent people, and the affection of children.

To earn the appreciation of honest critics.

To appreciate beauty, to find the best in others.

To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, or a garden patch.

To know even one life breathed easier because you have lived.

This is to have succeeded.

Chris certainly succeeded. It was a pleasure and a privilege to have known him.

The Society received some very generous donations in memory of Chris – thanks to all concerned.

Wednesday 17th. January 2007 **EGM followed by Tony Ellis - 'A Future for the Thames Sailing Barge 'Cambria'**

The evening will include an introduction to the world of the Thames Sailing Barges and the significance of the 'Cambria', the last British registered vessel to trade under sail alone.

Wednesday 21st. February 2007

Bob Tough - 'The RNLI Teddington Lifeboat Station'
Bob Tough, of the well known Thames firm of Tough Bros. will be illustrating the work of the Teddington Lifeboat Station and cover its formation, its current work and operation.

Wednesday 21st. March 2007

Richard Thomas - 'The Manchester Ship Canal'
Richard Thomas makes a return visit to illustrate the construction of the Manchester Ship Canal and takes us on a journey from Eastham at the eastern end to Manchester and return.

Wednesday 18th. April 2007

Robin Higgs - 'The Canal de l'Est and the Rhone au Rhin'

Robin will be showing slides from his barge holidays in 2005 and 2006 in France when his cruises included the Canal de l'Est and the Rhone au Rhin. A great opportunity to see the waterways and countryside of rural France, this time in the South East area.

Wednesday 16 May 2007

Pablo Haworth - 'The Story of Bailey Bridging'
Pablo will start with detailing the Inglis Bridge of 1914 (which crosses the canal near Farnborough Road. and carries the sewerage pipe) and continues with Donald Bailey's famous design of 1940, ending with showing Eelmoor Bridge over the canal between Fleet and Alder-shot.

For further information: David Millett 01252 617364

Society news

2005 Accounts

We had hoped to be able to publish a summary of last year's accounts in this issue of the BCN as is customary. Unfortunately this will have to be postponed due to events beyond the Society's control.

The accounts were prepared in draft earlier in the year, by Hilton & Co as usual, and were approved at the AGM and we waited for them to be finalised.

For various reasons, unconnected with the Society, this has not happened and the firm that we appointed at this year's AGM as auditors for the 2006 accounts, Hilton Evans & Co, no longer exists. The 2005 accounts are however currently being audited by Norman Hilton.

What all this means for the Society is that we need to appoint some new auditors and an Extraordinary General Meeting is needed to do this.

We propose to hold this in conjunction with the January Chobham meeting:-

S&HCS Ltd Extraordinary General Meeting

The company appointed at the 2005 AGM as auditors for 2006 is no longer in business. It is therefore necessary to appoint new auditors.

A motion will be put to an E.G.M. of the Society, which will be held at 8.00pm on Wednesday 17th January 2007 at the Parish Pavilion, Recreation Ground, Station Road, Chobham.

Members of the Society are invited to attend and the monthly Chobham meeting will follow (see page 15 for details).

By order of the Board of Directors
Verna Smith, Honorary Secretary
12th November 2006

Website

The Society's website is up and running again thanks to Andy Beale, who also manages the *JP* website. He will be running it in future, but we hope that Arthur Dugate, who put all the effort into building it in the first place, will continue to be involved.

200 Club Winners

February		August	
Mr J Simpkins	£64	Mr A Scammell	£64
Mr K Parratt	£32	Mr B Smith	£32
Mr WF Herbert	£15	Mr JM Foss	£15
Mr J Meridith	£15	Mr A Scammell	£15

April		October	
Mr & Mrs Redway	£64	Mr J Riley	£64
Mr B Holmes	£32	Mr R Follett	£32
Mr A Stumpf	£15	Mrs Redway	£15
Mr G Hibberd	£15	Mr A Shilling	£15

June		December	
Miss J Connel	£64	Mr R Charles	£64
Mr C Bristow	£32	Mrs M Marchant	£32
Mrs S A Trott	£15	Mrs DA Paine	£15
Mr & Mrs Redway	£15	Ms E Fairless	£15

Well here we are heading for the end of another year, thank you all for your extra support, and congratulations to all those lucky winners. Please find enclosed in this edition a copy of the new membership form.

Jim Johnstone

Membership report

I am pleased to welcome the following new members to the Society:

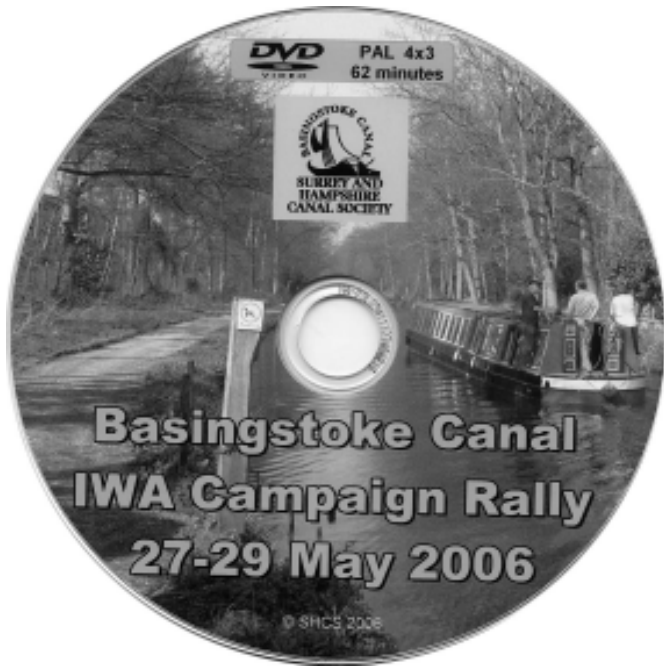
Bryan Porter of Fleet
North Hampshire Downs Ramblers' Group of Basingstoke
Millicent Neff of Hartley Wintney
John Burrell of Hagley, West Midlands
David & Sandy Redman of Church Crookham
Peter & Penny Webster of Fleet
Colin & Jackie Burton of Overton
Marten Keys of West Byfleet
Sandra Pearce of Woodham
Aubrey Hawkins of Farnborough

Thank you all for your support.

Reminder letters have been sent to all members who have not paid their 2006 subscriptions. Unfortunately, any members who have not responded to the reminder letters by the end of the year will have to be taken off the distribution list for newsletters so this issue will be the last one they receive. I hope any of you who have not renewed will reconsider. We need and value your support!

Doreen Hornsey, Membership Secretary

Christmas presents

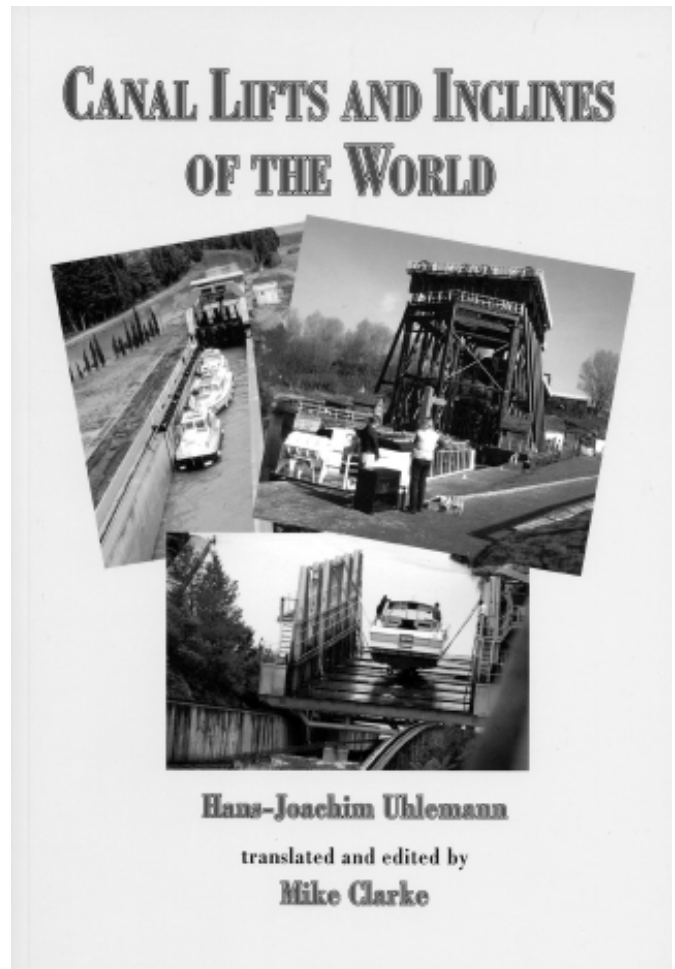


If you enjoyed a visit to the Campaign Rally at Brookwood back in May and would like a souvenir of the occasion, or if you didn't and want to know what you missed, this CD is just the thing for you.

David, Penny and Vicky Jackson are to be congratulated and thanked for producing a very professional film that has none of the shaky, hand-held shots and bad sound of my attempts at film making. It seemed to me to cover every aspect of the rally (including some of the more exotic entertainment!) and I was able to catch up with the Society's party which I had missed due to hosting the French visitors. They too feature on the CD. There are a lot of memorable sound bites ranging from the oldies reminiscing about their days restoring the canal to young Christopher Knight knowledgeably describing the boatman's cabin on one of the Narrowboat Trust's working boats.

The film lasts just over an hour and costs £10.

Both these items are available by mail order from our new Sales Manager, Denise Smith; her address is 8 Maple Close, Avondale, Ash Vale, Aldershot, Hants GU12 5JZ 01252-517779



Peter Redway has been presented with 10 copies of the book "Canal Lifts and Inclines of the World" by Hans-Joachim Uhlemann, translated into English by Mike Clarke.

If you want to know how to move boats up and down hill without using locks, this is the definitive book.

The sponsor is Michael Reed (IWA Treasurer) and the books are on sale for between £15 - £20 at IWA and some canal societies. We are selling them for £15.

Denise Parkes

Denise Parkes died in September. She and her husband Mike were members of the BCBC and attended many of the club's rallies with their narrowboat *Finlandia*. Our condolences go to Mike and her family and friends.



- The meeting of the Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee on the 20th October was undoubtedly the most important meeting since the committee was formed in 1981. The 82 page report on the Options Appraisal for the long term future of the finances and management on the canal charts a way forward for its ongoing sustainability. The recommendations, if implemented, and they must be, are in line with how we see the canal going forward. However, it does mean that all the local authorities, both counties and boroughs and districts, must continue to be contributing financially on a more secure basis.
- At the time of writing (the end of October) the last few weeks have brought much needed rainfall bringing the canal levels back to normal. Water started to flow over the fixed overflow weir near Reading Road Bridge, Fleet for the first time since early last winter. Let's hope it continues above average for the rest of the autumn and winter so that the underground aquifers, which feed the springs at Greywell, are re-charged.
- Good to hear that the Accessible Boating Association (Madam Butterfly and Dawn) have had an excellent season in spite of reduced water levels. It is fortunate that they operate from Galleon Marine at Odiham on the long Hampshire pound.
- A surprise at the first autumn meeting at Chobham was a 40th Anniversary cake kindly donated by Mark Coxhead who missed the occasion at the Brookwood Festival at the end of May. Thank you, Mark, and I can assure you that everyone present (nearly 50 members and friends) thoroughly enjoyed their slice. At the meeting Runnalls Davis gave a very interesting illustrated talk on the canals of the Black Country.
- Members will remember that many years ago, at an AGM, Arthur Dungate showed some of his 16mm collection of BBC Newsreels. These included a 40 second clip of a Gaumont-Graphic newsreel of the barge *Basingstoke's* attempted voyage to Basingstoke to try and maintain the right of navigation on the canal in November 1913. In addition the BBC TV Newsreel film of the public meeting on Reading Road Wharf, Fleet in February 1949 prior to the canal auction in Aldershot was shown. These clips have now been transferred to video and DVD and we will show them again in the future at an AGM or one of the winter meetings.
- At the recent meeting of the Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee, the Canal Director indicated that he would be presenting a full Canal Management (Business) Plan for approval by the committee. At the same meeting, Society Chairman Peter Redway reported on recent Society volunteer work on the St. John's backpumping scheme. The total Society expenditure on the scheme was £152,000 which showed the JMC members that the Society is still fully committed to improvements along the canal and that we are playing our full part in the partnership. This sum is in addition to the figures shown in the JMC accounts.
- The MP for North East Hampshire, the Rt.Hon.James Arbuthnot MP, was taken for a two hour cruise on the Basingstoke Canal in September from Fleet to Crookham Wharf and return. Even though it was pouring with rain he thoroughly enjoyed the trip and heard about the issues facing the canal during the cruise. Thanks to David Ward for the use of his Wilderness cruiser and Doreen Ward's excellent refreshments. He had earlier that month visited the Canal Centre to present certificates to the Basingstoke Canal Canoe Club in respect of Top Club and Club Mark awards. He also had an outing in a Canadian canoe and met the Canal Director, Ian Brown.
- Whilst our canal's future was being discussed, British Waterways were suddenly faced with a £9.1M cut in their £62.5 grant from DEFRA right in the middle of their financial year. This was due to DEFRA's mismanagement of the Rural Payments scheme and overspending on the Avian flu scare preparations. The Treasury refused to bail them out so they have made cuts all round including the Environment Agency and Natural England (formerly English Nature). As a result BW have had to urgently re-organise their business units and have to shed 180 jobs by April 2007.
- It is doubly ironic since John Prescott boasted in his speech at the Labour Party conference that when he was in charge he helped to re-generate the canals in and around Manchester. With the BW cuts, if there is a sudden breach in any of these canals there will not be the funds to repair it.

E-mail to: Rt Hon James Arbuthnot, MP

As you are a Vice-President of the Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society, could I urge you to support Charlotte Atkins' Early Day Motion No 2757 protesting about the cuts to British Waterways budget? The fact that DEFRA has made a mess of payments to farmers has no relevance to canals and the cuts are totally unjust.

Thank you.

Roger Cansdale (SHCS director)

From Society Newsletter No 72 February 1977

- Greywell Parish Council passed a resolution calling for a ban on boating above North Warnborough Lift Bridge as they do not wish their peaceful village to be disturbed by engine noise. They wish to leave the last half mile of canal as a nature reserve.
- Some residents are concerned about delays in crossing the canal at North Warnborough Lift Bridge as at present it takes 15 minutes to raise the bridge. Society engineers believe the time can be much reduced by modifying the hydraulic mechanism.
- Odiham Parish councillors have also passed a resolution calling for a ban on larger craft upstream of Colt Hill. The Society pointed out that this would deny people the pleasure of cruising the last 1½ miles to the Whitewater winding hole. The boats would also help to control weed growth and keep accumulating silt 'in suspension'.
- The Society also pointed out that the Society was formed with the purpose of restoring the canal to a navigable waterway for use as a multi-purpose amenity, as much for the enjoyment of those who live and work nearby as for boating, angling, walking and natural history conservation. Our members represent all these interests and more.
- Hampshire County Council is about to circulate their consultative draft management plan covering their section of the canal. Whatever the recommendations it won't eliminate fears of the unknown for those who have only known the canal as a derelict ditch. We hope the plan will view the canal as a navigational. The plan will be presented at a public meeting at North Warnborough Village Hall on 1st. February.
- Frantic winding with an old Basingstoke Canal windlass, a great rush of water and the new weir at Farnborough Road bridge was officially commissioned on Sunday 12th December 1976. Work commenced in September 1975 and had taken 800 hours by Peter Mayne and his team of helpers. The work saved £2,000.
- What started as a ten-day dredging operation between locks 25 (Curzon Bridge) and 24 on the Deepcut flight is now expected to continue to March. The canal bed has been dredged by Hymac excavator from lock 25 to a point half way between locks 27 and 28. Below lock 25 the Hymac has reached lock 20. The high standard of work and the dramatic transformation is well worth a visit to see.
- Volunteers are now laying railway tracks along the towpath west of lock 25 which will be used to transport building materials to locks 26,27 and 28.
- Many thanks to the engineering staff of Blacknest Engineering Ltd for a superb job in reprofiling the wheels of the Society's narrow gauge Hunslet locomotive. In addition during cleaning of one of the axles, a serious fatigue crack was discovered and efficiently repaired with a shrunk and welded sleeve, thus saving a costly replacement axle.
- At an Extraordinary General Meeting on 15 December, 130 members of the Society voted unanimously to form the Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society Limited. Chairman, Robin Higgs, explained that the change was necessary for legal reasons. As an ordinary society, the Executive Committee and possibly members, could be made liable for the Society's debts if it went into liquidation. As members of a limited liability company, members would be liable only for £1 in the event of the Society's liquidation and there being insufficient assets available to meet the liabilities. Robin thanked member John Dodwell for drafting the Articles of Association.
- Richard Allnutt, a member of the Society's fund raising committee, has been presenting our restoration project to trustees of foundation and trust funds which have a special interest in supporting environmental projects. As a result of Richard's work the Baring Foundation and the Peter Nathan Charitable Trust have made donations.
- The Trip Boat Appeal is now only £4,500 short of the target. To help us further a member has generously promised £2,250 IF the Society can raise an equal amount. As a result of the Appeal so far, the Executive Committee has decided to proceed with the project and on 16th December 1976 the boatyard of Hancock and Lane was instructed to start work with the intention of delivery in March 1977.
- The Society's membership now stands at 2,278, Alan Babister reported.

Dear Roger

Thank you for your email of October 19th regarding EDM 2757 and British Waterways.

I can confirm that I have signed EDM 2757 and I agree with it entirely.

Yours sincerely

James Arbuthnot

Well done to our Vice-President!

Let's hope that the wave of protest currently being organised by the IWA has some effect.

SHCS notes

E-mail

Because of a double booking at the Canal Centre, the Options Review briefing meeting had to be re-arranged after the Newsletter went out. We notified those who had kindly complied with our request and told us they would be coming, but it would have been much easier if we could have used e-mail. A snap survey at the meeting suggested that perhaps 50% of our members can now receive e-mail, and this is sure to rise, so we would like to start to compile a list of e-mail addresses for the Society membership. This will only be used to communicate directly between the Society and its members, so you will not be overwhelmed by spam. If you would like to be able to receive messages from the Society by e-mail (including perhaps a colour version of the Newsletter), please contact me at roger.cansdale@ntlworld.com.



Anyone interested in joining the Society should contact the Membership Secretary, Mrs Doreen Hornsey, whose contact details are listed below. The annual subscription is Adults £10, Junior £3, OAP £5, Family £12, 2 OAP £7, and Group £15, payable on March 1st each year.

Date for next copy 31st January 2007

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Canal Society Internet Website: www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk
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