



# BASINGSTOKE CANAL NEWS

No. 226 Summer 2010



***Canal Society/Byfleet Boat Club event  
at St John's Village Hall, Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> July  
- details on page 10***



**Surrey & Hampshire Canal Society Ltd**

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Rt Hon James Arbuthnot, MP. Rt Hon Michael Gove, MP. Philip Hammond, MP. Gerald Howarth, MP. Maria Miller, MP. Humfrey Malins

# Editorial



The County Councils' decision to put over £1.6 million into the canal over the next 3 years is very welcome, although as Ian Brown pointed out at the AGM, this still leaves the canal well short of what British Waterways would be spending. One can only hope that the decision will survive the torrid financial times that are coming and that Ian Brown's efforts to find other sources of funding are successful.

Although things are beginning to look up, it is pretty clear that there are likely to be a few more nasty surprises before the canal can be accepted as being in a stable condition.

I was about to complete this edition of the newsletter, including the notice of the St John's event, to be held on 26 June with visiting boats from the Byfleet Boat Club, when I received an e-mail from the BCA telling us that the St John's flight was closed due to the dangerous condition of the top gates of Lock 8.

We have decided to postpone the event, to give the BCA a chance to replace the gates, so that the BBC can bring their boats up to the event to remind the public, and the canal owners, that people do still want to navigate the Basingstoke.

Docome and give us your support, and, hopefully, enjoy yourselves on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> July. More details on page 10.

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It's sometimes easy to get depressed by the canal's problems and to imagine that we are the only ones in difficulty and that everything is fine elsewhere. A recent programme on BBC4 about the National Waterways Museum at Ellesmere Port certainly dispelled that idea.

99% of the programme painted a very gloomy picture of lack of funding causing mounting disillusionment in everyone from the new Director downwards, leading to resignations, redundancies and disgruntled volunteers apparently at each others' throats. The museum was also said to have lost £100,000 in the previous year.

Only at the very end was there a glimmer of hope with the setting up of a Heritage Boat Yard and the craning out of the first boat for restoration, and an increase in the number of visitors.

Despite this, they clearly have a huge task ahead to reverse years of neglect and save the many historic boats.

There was no mention of our old dredger *Perseverance*, which is still in bits there, and only a passing glimpse of its hull. Given their problems, it is difficult to imagine them being able to tackle the restoration of something as mechanically complicated as this for a very long time, by which point it may be beyond hope.

We understand that the museum has been discussing the possibility of handing the dredger over to the K&A Trust with a view to the steam enthusiasts at Crofton taking on the restoration. While this breaks the written agreement that was signed when the dredger first went to Ellesmere for the dredger to be offered back to us first, it does seem a potentially good solution. *Perseverance* did work on the K&A, albeit briefly, and Crofton is already a visitor attraction with the appropriate infrastructure, as well as having people with expertise in steam-related areas such as boilers.

Being realistic, at the moment we have enough to do on the Basingstoke to get the canal working properly. It's not far to Crofton and if it works out, maybe one day we can organise a return visit to the Basingstoke for *Perseverance*.

\* \* \* \* \*

My apologies for the late publication of this issue of the BCN due to taking our holidays at the wrong time. Actually, from our point of view, it was the right time because we had a splendid week on a "puffer" and the Crinan Canal was absolutely beautiful.

Quite extraordinary to see a boat as large as this, by our canal standards, wafting along a waterway, which isn't any wider than most ordinary canals, in almost total silence, since this puffer has a condensing boiler and so doesn't actually puff. VIC32 (Victualling Inshore Craft) does however produce impressive amounts of black smoke at times!

Definitely worth a try - the scenery is magnificent, the food excellent and where else would you be entertained by a steam powered 78 rpm gramophone?

\* \* \* \* \*

Unfortunately our timing also meant that I missed the Society's AGM, so my thanks to Verna Smith for providing me with notes of how it all went and to Kathryn Dodington for the photo of Dick & Alison getting the Robin Higgs Award. It couldn't have gone to a nicer couple.

Cover Picture: Repair work on the West Hart Embankment  
Photo: Roger Cansdale

# Chairman's Page

This Newsletter is published very soon after our AGM, with meeting reports, so for this Newsletter I will be including issues raised at the AGM, as well as comments on canal progress.

## Capital Funding

In the February Newsletter, I reported on Capital Funding requirements for structural repairs, and the excellent news is that both the County Council owners have pledged funding for a three year period. The total capital funding for the canal is £1.6 Million.

Hampshire have contractors on site at West Hart Embankment repairing the leaking embankment. Surrey have completed Lock 1 and the bulk of the work on Lock 12. The Deepcut slip has been reinstated and strengthened with towpath surfacing at Deepcut scheduled later in the summer when dredging back fill has consolidated.

All involved in this successful result are to be congratulated

## Towpath Improvements

The towpath has been resurfaced from Lock 15 to the River Wey, but improved access for all users has a down side, in this instance speeding cyclists and cycle signs.

At the AGM, the subject of Public Highway type signs, installed on the canal estate for cycleway routes direction, provoked much adverse comment from members.

Your Committee agree that the signs are not in keeping with the Conservation Status and Historical interest of a 200 year old canal.

We have raised the subject with the Towpath Improvement Steering Group seeking improvements in signage.

## Fleet Town Plan

A second consultation draft for Fleet includes proposals for cycleways, some along the towpath, including a cycleway bridge over the canal (*see map above right*). Proposals for Reading Road Bridge, three options, all include widening the bridge deck but not increasing headroom under the bridge. We advocate raising the bridge if road alterations take place.

The consultation is being studied prior to drafting Society comments, and any Fleet member should make their individual comments on the draft; the more objections the more notice is taken. Details can be found on the Internet at [www3.hants.gov.uk/transport-schemes-index/fleet-town-access-plan](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/transport-schemes-index/fleet-town-access-plan)



## Asset Management

The structure repairs required over the next three years involve culverts, embankments, locks and possibly other structures yet to be surveyed.

The Asset Survey report lists serious defects which are priority, medium and longer term replacements and maintenance.

The Society considers that a programme of work targeting the Serious Defects should be implemented as soon as possible. The Deepcut locks are already closed and summer conditions will speed works.

Lock Gates are also listed for early renewal, so orders should be placed for construction and defective gates replaced as they are delivered.

Support by committee, family, Working Parties and Canal Authority were recorded at the AGM and are duplicated in this Newsletter.

Peter Redway  
May 2010

# Work Party

The number of unfinished jobs has reduced after a concentrated effort on them. For a period we have operated two groups at different localities.

## WORK BOAT

Good progress has been achieved in fitting out our work boat, and modifications are almost complete, with a ventilated battery installation and a sealed fuel tank compartment. Wiring is well advanced and tested, with a Solar Power trickle charger maintaining battery power when the boat is moored.



Above: The work boat mounted on its launching trolley.

I anticipate a launch in June after a valuation Survey has been carried out, which is required for Insurance and Accounts valuation.

## BROOKWOOD

The change from Three Valleys Water Co. to Velolia was instrumental in our water supply request being delayed, but the process is live once again and the supply should be connected shortly.

## HEALTH and SAFETY

Our volunteer working parties' organisation and practices are being evaluated by the County Councils for compliance with Health and Safety regulations. The County Council Contracting requirements have been amended for volunteer working and I have formal application documents to complete and return.

As a corporate member of the IWA, the IWA / WRG safety documentation and insurance schemes provide us with considerable documentation. We have a considerable number of generic Risk Analysis and Method Statements on file, covering our activities, which we have modified and improved over the years.

The WRG Driver Authorisation scheme has been updated recently and we will need to upgrade some volunteer

documentation.

Recent volunteers will be offered initial training and I am waiting dates for possible training weekends.

## Future Working Party Details

DATE	LEADER	LOCATION
26-27 June	PR/DJ/DL	St John's or Runway End
10-11 July	PR/DJ/DL	Runway End
24-25 July	PR/DJ/DL	Lock 17
7 - 8 Aug	PR/DJ/DL	Lock 17
14-21 Aug	WRG Camp	Lock 17
21-22 Aug	PR/DJ/DL	Lock 17
11-12 Sept	PR/DJ/DL	Lock 17
25-26 Sept	PR/DJ/DL	Lock 17

## Contact Numbers

PR - Peter Redway	01483 721710
DJ - Dave Junkisen	0208 941 0685
DL - Dave Lunn	01483 771294
KR - Kevin Redway	01483 722206

*Peter Redway*

## Lock 8

The sudden announcement of the closure of the St John's flight due to the condition of the top gates of Lock 8, which the BCA viewed as unacceptable for use, came as a shock.

Looking at them, however, it is difficult to argue since there are large cracks and chunks missing from parts of the frames; the bottom gates don't look a lot better. Orders for replacements are being placed immediately.



# Canal news

## West Hart embankment

In the last issue we reported the sudden closure of the canal at Crookham because of concerns about the structural integrity of the embankment west of the village, which was leaking badly. After dams were installed at Chequers Bridge and Double Bridge, pumps began to lower the water level to relieve pressure on the embankment.

Happily, after about 0.5m had been taken off, the leaks stopped, showing that it was the bank rather than the bottom of the canal that was the problem. This eased the job of repair and also meant that some water could be retained in this section so that Dean & Dyball, the contractors, were able to use a boat to move materials and plant from the wharf at Crookham.

After profiling the bank and digging a narrow trench, a waterproof liner was laid into the trench and over the bank (*see cover photo*). The trench was filled with clay and a post and Nicospan edging installed in front of it. A further row of posts retaining coir rolls went in front of this and silt dredged from the canal is infilling behind it all. Clumps of reeds have been planted behind the coir rolls to provide a natural reinforcement.

It all looks a bit stark at the moment, but will probably be invisible in a couple of years time. The main thing is that the work seems to be due for completion on time and the Hampshire pound should reopen some time in June.



## West Byfleet

Work has been done by contractors on the bank edging of the towpath below Lock 1 down to the junction with the River Wey and the foot bridge across it. They have used the usual post and Nicospan system with infill behind it.



## Dogmersfield

Probably as a result of the winter winds putting pressure on snow-laden trees, a significant bank slip has occurred on the offside in Dogmersfield. It doesn't impede navigation but will need attention sometime.



# AGM report

The Canal Society's thirty third AGM was held on 15th May, again in the Ash Centre. Just over forty people attended.

After the usual apologies for absence and approval of the minutes of the 2009 meeting, the Treasurer did the important bit and introduced the accounts.

These now have to comply with Charity laws and include a statement of the public benefit derived from the Society's activities. The Trustee report sets out our objectives and activities. For the record, they are:-

- 1 To promote the Basingstoke Canal as a navigable waterway and a multi-function amenity for the use and enjoyment of the whole community.
- 2 To campaign for responsible ownership of the navigation encompassing appropriate funding levels, necessary maintenance and adequate water supply at all times.
- 3 To support the Basingstoke Canal managing authority by, for example, monitoring the condition of the canal, raising funds and providing voluntary manpower for improvement projects and specific maintenance tasks.
- 4 To protect, conserve, restore and raise awareness of the natural features and historic structures of the Basingstoke Canal for the benefit of present and future generations.
- 5 To seek opportunities to develop the Basingstoke Canal, such as the creation of moorings, improvement of navigation and bankside facilities, and extension of the navigation.

Graham Hornsey said that 2009 had been a good year. The accounts (*opposite*) showed that income from subscriptions was almost the same as the previous year, showing that the membership was not in decline. £2,000 had been recovered as Gift Aid, making a total of £22,000 from this source over the years. Donations and interest were down, but the Boat Company had made record profits.

The major items of expenditure came under Projects and Working Parties, where completion of Lock 22's lower wing walls had cost £13,000 and the landing stages installed at Woodham had so far cost £12,000.

The Fixed Assets shown in the Balance Sheet included the new van (£6,000) and the barge that was bought last year (£3,000).

The Restricted Fund contained the remains of the money received from the HSBC for the environmental improvements at Hermitage, while the Designated Fund was the money being set aside for the eventual replacement of the *John Pinkerton*.

Graham felt that the Society's resources were such that it was well placed to make an early start on the Brookwood back-pumping scheme.

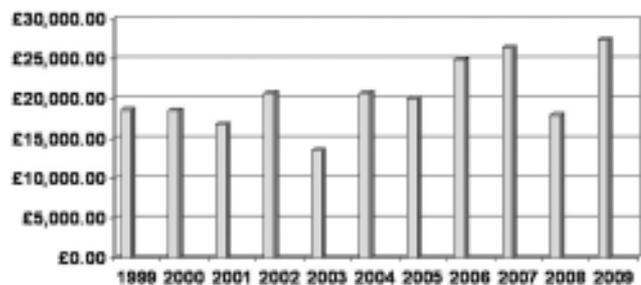
In reply to a question about the increased cost of insurance, he said that the premiums were due in December or January, which meant that some years' accounts contained the cost of two years' premiums.

A proposal to accept the accounts from Peter Coxhead, seconded by Peter Wright, was carried unanimously, as was a proposal to re-appoint the auditors, Rutton Viccajee & Co.

The next item on the agenda was the appointment of the Committee. In addition to the existing members, Martin Leech would be making up the full complement of twelve.

This ended the formal business of the AGM.

Peter Wright then gave his Chairman's report on the Boat Company's season. 2009 had been very successful with record profits (including the Society's Sales account) of £27,371.



Winter maintenance had included a complete re-paint of the outside of the boat, in very difficult conditions, and he thanked all those responsible for completing this on time.

Peter then outlined plans for qualifying more captains, and the financial implications of doing so, and the plans for a new boat.

The final item before the interval was the presentation of the Robin Higgs Award, which went jointly to Dick and Alison Snell, two of the longest standing and most supportive members of the Society. Dick's reaction was "What me? You must be joking!" but it was very well deserved.



# Canal Society accounts for 2009

## Income and expenditure account - 1 Year ended 31 December 2009

	2009 £	2008 £
<b>Income</b>		
Subscriptions	9,735	9,523
Donations - general	2,774	6,777
Donations - balance of Alan Flight bequest	-	15,400
Profit of boat company	27,371	17,894
200 Club profit	705	842
Other fundraising income	159	898
Interest received	3,493	13,184
	<u>44,237</u>	<u>64,518</u>
<b>Less expenditure</b>		
Projects and working parties	(31,019)	(16,831)
Brookwood habitat creation	(2,721)	(5,100)
Newsletter production and postage	(3,972)	(3,838)
Stationery and office costs	(1,753)	(1,799)
Insurance	(3,332)	(1,200)
Depreciation	(4,445)	(1,961)
Equipment maintenance	(1,190)	(629)
Brookwood boaters' rally	(1,238)	-
Legal fees	(1,411)	-
Accountants' fee	(1,660)	(1,753)
Other expenditure	(975)	(2,412)
	<u>(53,716)</u>	<u>(35,523)</u>
<b>Net income/(deficit)</b>	<u>(9,479)</u>	<u>28,995</u>

## Balance Sheet Year ended 31 December 2009

	2009 £	2008 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>		
Investment in subsidiary company	100	100
Fixed assets	12,396	5,521
<b>Amounts due from subsidiary company</b>		
Loan	8,152	8,152
Profit for year	27,371	17,894
<b>Cash at bank and in hand</b>	206,668	232,449
<b>Accrued expenses</b>	(1,700)	(1,650)
<b>Net assets</b>	<u>254,687</u>	<u>264,116</u>
General fund	222,034	252,476
Restricted fund	3,729	6,450
Designated fund	27,224	3,540
<b>Total funds</b>	<u>252,987</u>	<u>262,466</u>

*This is the summary account presented to the Annual General Meeting. The complete accounts may be obtained from the Treasurer. If a printed copy is wanted, please send a stamped, addressed A4 envelope. The Treasurer's address is to be found on the back page.*

# AGM continued

After the interval the less formal but perhaps more informative part of the meeting began with Peter Redway's Chairman's report. He concentrated on a number of topics, the first being the need for capital funding.

The continuing lock problems and the findings of the condition survey emphasised the fact that the backlog of maintenance was catching up. He applauded the fact that the two County Councils had decided to make funding available over the next 3 years, but cautioned that it could disappear again under pressure from Central Government. We may have to go into campaign mode yet again.

Peter's second topic was the towpath in Woking. This had been resurfaced with funding from Sustrans, the cycle path organisation. When this was first suggested the Society had concerns about cyclists speeding and causing problems for other users. However, the current major concern was the crop of signs that had appeared all over the towpath. He felt that these were obtrusive, unnecessary and totally out of place in a Conservation Area. No Planning Permission had been applied for (unlike the actual resurfacing) and no real attempt had been made to consult with local people.

Third issue was water supply. Various options were being explored. Bourley reservoirs seemed again to be a possible source for the canal and were actively being pursued. The eventual development of the Deepcut barracks site might also allow the building of a new reservoir at the top of the Deepcut flight. Peter hoped that work would start this year on the Brookwood back-pumping scheme.

He ended as usual by thanking the Committee and the BCA for their assistance and his family for their efforts and support for the canal.

Ian Brown then gave an update on the management of the canal as seen from the Director's position.

He said that it had to be recognised that the canal was built by hand 216 years ago, largely on greensand, which would not be done today. There had been long term decline. The Canal Society had campaigned for restoration, but now needed to continue campaigning for maintenance through local MPs and Councillors.

After the restoration period from 1976 to 1991, it had been expected that the owners would keep the canal in good order. "We failed."

The situation he inherited when he took over as Director in 2006 was of many deferred maintenance issues. These had arisen because of difficulty in getting consistent grant support from some local authorities, leading to a 12% average annual deficit, no significant capital investment, except for 'fire-fighting', and management had been reactive with no strategic asset management plan in place.

He noted that British Waterways invested revenue of £6 million per annum to maintain the Kennet & Avon Canal, which is about three times bigger than the Basingstoke. On this basis, the BCA should be receiving £2 million per annum rather than the £650,000 they actually get.

The designated Site of Special Scientific Interest was in decline and this needed to be reversed. One step would be to reduce tree shading, with an intention to do this by some 10% each year for the next 10 years.

The towpath was the main recreational asset and needed to be kept safe, accessible and clear. There were problems of local erosion caused by dogs, ground slippage caused by bad weather (eg Deepcut in 2006) and vegetation that needed to be controlled (Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed).

The navigation channel also needed bank protection, as well as dredging, and suffered from invasive species such as Signal Crayfish, Floating Pennywort (Woking), Swamp Stonecrop and mink.

The condition surveys were a necessary first step to determining where capital investment was needed. The asset inventory included 32 miles of navigable main channel and towpath, 56 miles of embankments and cuttings (both sides), 25 sluices and weirs, 29 locks and 1 dry dock (57 sets of gates), 42 culverts and drainage features, 3 pumping stations, 4 aqueducts and 1 tunnel.

Ian then touched on the West Hart embankment that was currently under repair and showed the likely extent of the flooding that would have occurred if this had failed.

Real restoration progress was being achieved. The by-passes at Locks 1 and 12 had been repaired. At Deepcut, the bank slip had been stabilised and half a mile of bank had been repaired. The towpath was being reinstated and should reopen later this year (*Below*).



# AGM question time

7 sets of new lock gates had been fitted this year and the West Hart embankment repair was nearing completion. Work to repair other bank problems was planned later this year, including bank protection work in Woodham. The condition survey of the culverts, weirs and sluices would be completed.

It was hoped that the Society's volunteers would rebuild the upper wing walls of Lock 17 and use the new workboat to assist with offside bank vegetation management.

The County Councils were now out of denial and recognised the need for capital investment. Some £1.6 million had been promised over the next 3 years. Major efforts were also under way to identify additional income generation options.

The canal was now high on the County Councils' agenda and there was some enthusiasm - as well as being a major corporate risk to them, it is recognised as a major asset. The full Asset Management Plan would be presented to the June meeting of the Joint Management Committee.

Ian felt that at last good news was beginning to outweigh bad and he greatly appreciated the Society's help. The canal still needed our support.

After Ian Brown's presentation, there was a short time for questions and comments.

Peter Coxhead noted that only 6 boats had made it to the Bridge Barn event at Easter due to the condition of the canal. Ian replied that it had cost £26,000 to clear the canal in Woking of rubbish and weed. The cost of dredging 3 miles of canal would be some £150,000. He guaranteed that the structures on the Woodham flight of locks would be sound. Deepcut would take rather longer, but the extra capital would help. One of the restoration legacies was that all the gates were now beginning to fail.

Kathryn Dodington mentioned her concerns about the Sustrans signs that had been erected in Woking. These gave times to various places which would be seen as targets to beat, encouraging cyclists to speed on the towpath putting other users in danger.

On the subject of improving water supply, Ian said that various options were being studied. The use of Bourley reservoirs between Fleet and Aldershot was one, thanks to the efforts of Phil Riley, while others included the use of the Greywell end as a reservoir with stop gates at Lock 30, and a new reservoir on the Deepcut development.

John Ross reminded everyone that there was a need for a slipway at the Canal Centre.

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## Walks booklet

The Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust have recently published a very nice booklet describing nine walks in the Lodden and Eversley Heritage Area that includes the Western End of the Basingstoke Canal. Three of the walks include sections along the towpath, at Odiham, Winchfield and Mapledurwell.

The booklet, which was produced with the aid of a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, has excellent maps, photos and details of local flora and fauna.

The Mapledurwell walk is perhaps the most interesting from the canal's point of view since it starts at Mapledurwell Church and goes via



Five Lanes End to Greywell Mill and the canal. It then goes over Greywell Hill to the Western portal of the tunnel and continues to the site of Penny Bridge. They have obtained permission from the owner to then follow the line of the canal to Little Tunnel before returning to Mapledurwell.

Priced at £4 (inc £1 p&p), the booklet can be ordered from the Wildlife Trust's website [www.hwt.org.uk/shop.php](http://www.hwt.org.uk/shop.php), and we hope to have it available also from the Society's sales.

The more keen-eyed may have noticed that the cover features our Vice-Chairman, Phil Riley. He assures us that he has no connection with the young lady and child! They, like him, got roped in by the photographer.

# Events

## ***Free Members Event July 31<sup>st</sup>***

We are holding a joint event with the Byfleet Boat Club and the Basingstoke Canal Boating Club at St. John's Memorial Hall on July 31<sup>st</sup> 2010.

There will be small exhibitions, SHCS sales stand and refreshments available from 2 to 5:30pm and an evening of live music from 7:30pm-10:30pm. The music will include familiar tunes and dance music from the '60s' onward. Please bring your own refreshments for the evening event.

Do come along and share your thoughts about the canal past and present and enjoy an evening of lively music. Free parking nearby (*See map below. Post Code GU21 7SQ for your Sat Nav*). Do contact me if you require more details.

*Verna Smith*



## ***Summer Cruise on the Basingstoke Canal***

Guildford & Reading Branch of IWA is arranging an evening cruise aboard the John Pinkerton on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> July. This will be a two hour trip leaving Odiham at 7pm with a fish & chip supper at the halfway point. There will be a pay bar on board. The cost, including the supper, will be £12 per person.

If you would like to join us, please send your name, phone number and Email address together with a remittance (for the full amount due) payable to 'IWA Guildford & Reading Branch' plus SAE to Gareth Jones, Hill House Farm, Misbrooks Green Road, Beare Green, Dorking RH5 4QQ. Expressions of interest or further enquiries in advance of a firm booking may be made by Email to [hhel@btconnect.com](mailto:hhel@btconnect.com) or phone 07850 819 071. The closing date for applications is end June but tickets will be allocated on a 'first come first served' basis so early booking is recommended.

***Gareth Jones***

*Please note that this is a different Gareth Jones from the Secretary of the Surrey & Hants Canal Society, so please respond to the address given above and not the one on the back page*

# Events

## ***Mikron Theatre Company***

Date: Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2010

Time: 7. 30pm

Venue: The Canalside Garden of the Fox and Hounds, Crookham Road, Church Crookham, Fleet.

Show: STRIKING THE BALANCE - Fighting all the way for equal pay.

Set against the turbulent backdrop of the 1960's, 70's and 80's, three working women take on the might of a discriminatory establishment.

Fast paced, inventive and a whole lot of fun, this new Mikron show, complete with original music, takes you on a moving journey, introducing a host of colourful characters - including special guest appearances from Labour's Red Queen and the Iron Lady herself.

Inspired by the heroic stories of machinists from Dagenham, cleaners from Belfast, dinner ladies from Yorkshire and cooks from Liverpool, Striking the Balance chronicles the continuing struggle for Equal Pay.

"If you want a revolution, you must do it yourselves" Ethel Chipchase. TUC Women's Officer 1968

2010 will be the 39<sup>th</sup> year that the company have toured the waterways of England in their 75 year old narrowboat 'Tyseley No. 183', although time does not permit them to bring it up the Basingstoke Canal even if it was open. As usual come along by boat, car or on foot and enjoy another gem from Mikron. Bring along a folding chair or rug or just sit on the grassy bank. The Society always looks forward to this annual visit with good attendances who have proved loyal to the Company over the years. Make a diary note now so that you do not miss the show as your support is vital in the current difficult financial climate. Their grant funding is under even more threat as each year goes by.

Admission is free but there will be the usual collection after the show. Come early and enjoy a meal before the performance (Tel: 01252 663686). Indoor back-up in case of rain.

For further information contact David Millett on 01252 617364 or email: d.millett7@ntlworld. com

## ***IWA National Rally***

The Inland Waterways Association National Rally is back again this year at Beale Park on the Thames near Reading from 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> August. The Canal Society will have a stand there and Verna Smith would be very grateful for members' assistance in manning it. You might even get in free if you are part of the team!

## ***Fox & Hounds Rally***

The Basingstoke Canal Boating Club's annual rally in Fleet will take place on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> September.

## ***Illuminated Boat Procession***

Given the various problems that have beset the canal this year, it is perhaps risking fate to plan anything so far ahead, but, all being well, it is intended to hold the Illuminated Boat Procession from the Lightbox to the Bridge Barn in Woking on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> November. This is jointly organised by the Byfleet Boat Club and the Canal Society.

# Rally roundup

## Bridge Barn

The Bridge Barn event at Easter was a bit low-key this year due to the various problems on the Canal, with only half a dozen boats present. Perishing cold weather at times didn't help either, but there were stands and music to entertain the shore-based public.

All credit then to those who made the effort and did come. Particular mention might be made of *Finch* and Nigel and Laura, her Easter Bunny crew! They were joint winners of the Best Decorated Boat prize with Phil & Carol from *Water Lily*.



## Little Venice

Kathryn Dodington very kindly invited us to go with her on *Leo II* to the IWA rally at Little Venice. We formed part of a flotilla from our friends, the Byfleet Boat Club. It was a super opportunity to go down the Thames, which I hadn't done for many years, and to see the Paddington Arm of the Grand Union, which I had never done before.

The BBC distinguished themselves at the rally with Kathryn coming second in the Boat Handling competition at her first attempt, and Mick Wilson, who fitted her boat out, winning the prize for Best Presented boat with his own immaculate *Aqua Vitae*. The BBC's greatest impact on the rally, however, was the amateur entertainment that they organised on the Saturday evening. The quality ranged from excellent to mildly ghastly (as one would probably expect), but it was a great success and will, I'm sure, be a feature of future rallies at Little Venice. Well done to the persuasive powers of the organisers and to all those who were brave enough to perform.

*Left.* Familiar BBC boats and hats on the Thames.

*Right.* Kathryn reversing in the Boat Handling competition with a precision that, I think, surprised even her.



# Letters

Hi Roger,

I was pleased, yet saddened, to see a mention of Roy Fowles in the last edition of the BCN (Lookback).

I consider myself very fortunate to have known Roy – albeit only too briefly. He was one of life's true "characters of the countryside", with a very ready wit, bringing a lifetime's wealth of practical knowledge to his employment as one of the first Basingstoke Canal wardens.

I was helping alongside him on occasions in the early days of the *John Pinkerton* operations. I also knew his wife, Rose, who worked in the main canteen at the Royal Aircraft Establishment (RIP) at Farnborough.

One day during the restoration on the canal, Rose phoned David Gerry (David was our first Canal Society chairman and became the first Canal Manager when it passed to public ownership) to ask why Roy was late home, as he was usually very punctual?

David then told her that Roy was not at work, but had been on holiday for over a week!

It seems that Roy's enthusiasm had got the better of him – for he had been leaving home for work at the normal time but going to the Deepcut flight of locks to operate the Society's dragline as a volunteer!

Part of that work was increasing the size of the pound above Lock 24 for extra water storage. This included producing a small island to help encourage wildlife.

Tragically we were to lose Roy at an all too early age with a fatal illness.

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*Howard Diamond's letter and the mention of the crane from Lower Heyford in David Millett's "Lookback" page reminded me of another story.*

After Martin Bowers and his team finally managed to dig the crane out and install it at Ash Lock, it could not be used because one of the gear wheels was broken. I offered to take it in to the RAE to see whether the wood-working apprentices could make a pattern to get a new one cast. The Apprentice Master rather dourly told me to leave it with them, but some weeks later I got a phone call to say that it was done.

It was a beautiful job and I complimented him on his apprentices. "We haven't got any" he said. This was the sad beginning of the end for the old RAE and I can only assume that the pattern had been made as an "official" job.

David Gerry got the wheel cast in Woking and we then had



In a very fitting gesture, this island was officially named "Roy's Eyot" (*Above*). It will hopefully be a lasting memorial to his personal efforts towards restoring the Basingstoke Canal from its state of dereliction.

Roy was just one of many stalwarts from all walks of life who put immense efforts, over many years, into the Basingstoke Canal Restoration for Navigation.

I truly hope their exertions will not have been in vain and trust that some of us will still be here to see the canal as a fully funded, operational navigation giving pleasure to future generations all year round.

Yours sincerely

Howard Diamond

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the problem of getting it machined to fit the axle, so back it went to the RAE, this time the Machine Shop. "Leave it with me" said the Foreman.

I heard nothing for many months until I got a call from Howard one day: "Is that your wheel in the shop?" he said. "Yes" I replied, "What's happening to it?"

"Nothing" he said, "The Foreman belongs to the Watercress Line and we spend all our time making bits for railway engines. But he's going on holiday next week so we'll try to do it then."

Howard was as good as his word and the wheel was duly fitted to the crane, enabling it to be used to replace the original engine of the *John Pinkerton*. However, it now needs to be tested before any further use to comply with Health & Safety Regulations.

# Embankments - a letter

Dear Editor,

While the recent newsletter made me sad it also caused a few wry grins and mutterings of "told you so".

The major concern is for the West Hart embankment, I have not looked at it since leaving the County Councils' employ. When I worked on the canal I made a point of surveying all the structures on my patch annually, and much more frequently after periods of bad weather, my patch being the Hampshire section from 1974 to 1989 and the whole canal in the counties ownership from 1989 till 1994. So I know the West Hart bank well having walked along top and bottom of both sides many times. The offside (non-towpath side) was always very wet; is it just very wet, or is there a land slip, or land slide? The latest beating of the towpath telegraph suggest that this one is a land slip with a mass of material rotating on the slip plane.

For the non-technical readers, a landslip occurs when two layers of different soils move one upon the other because the friction between them is not enough to maintain stability, the upper layer maybe very heavy with water due to bad weather or the upper layer may have lubrication material between it and the lower layer, water or rotting vegetation perhaps. Tree avalanches occur in New Zealand because trees growing in a very thin layer of soil that is lying on a very steeply sloping layer of rock suddenly takes off and slides to the bottom of the slope. I've not seen one go, but the results are very dramatic.

The earth movement that has occurred in the Deepcut is almost certainly just such a slide. When the cutting was dredged during restoration, and with the canal empty, excavators standing on the towpath just picked up the silt and dumped it higher up on the cutting side, and on top of anything that was growing there, that foliage has now decayed, and left a lubricant layer so the dredgings have slipped down onto the towpath. Surry CC were warned at the time that this might happen, but decided to take the risk. They did the same thing on the Ash embankment, so watch out land slips may yet happen there.

Land slides occur when the strength of the soil that comprise the sides of a cutting or embankment is either left by the diggers at to steep an angle or the soils becomes overburdened by weight lying on it, or large trees growing on it perhaps. Or the nature of the soil changes because in the case of a cutting the soil has been under great pressure for millions of years and suddenly that pressure is removed and the soil expands and changes. Land slips almost always move in a circular path and the soil that is moving rotates around on the slip plane until stability results, this is what happened at Dogmersfield during restoration, but also happened on the towpath side of West Hart bank, and on both sides of the East Hart bank. I remember seeking advice

from a senior engineer working for HCC as to the best way forward. In a very professional way he started to tell me what to do, all very expensive, and I could hear the cash registers running like mad. So I stopped him and said my budget has little cash left in it. So he paused and said Oh! and he thought a bit and then said "what we want David is Third World Engineering." I probably looked puzzled and he explained that what we needed was lots of natives with baskets on their heads to move a large amount of soil from some where and dump it at the bottom of the slip to create a weight block to stop any further movement. I asked whether silt would do 'cos I'd got plenty of that and a good team of Natives who would move it for me without charge, providing I kept supplying fuel for their dredger. He confirmed that it would certainly do, even when wet it was heavy, and when it was dry it would be super. And that of course is what happened and members of the old steam dredger crew can feel very proud that they saved HCC a considerable sum of money.

If the West Hart bank is still just wet, why is that? The soil used in the construction of the bank almost certainly came from the hillside where the canal passes through cuttings. It would not have been just dumped but would have been placed in layers and the layers would have been well consolidated, but the flanks of the bank would have been left steeper than it would have been left today; that would have meant a wider land take and cost more and money was short when the canal was built. John Pinkerton took a chance and we now know he ought not to have done, but today civil engineers still take chances and we see land slips occurring alongside new motor roads today. But the bank is wet! In order to have a puddle soil must contain about 20% of clay fines and obviously this bank has in excess of that or it would not have held water for best part of 200 years.

When the canal was moribund and without much water, trees growing on the bank would have had to send their roots down further to reach water. Trees generally don't like standing in too much water, so when the water levels came up again on a fairly permanent basis, the trees would probably have abandoned some of their roots that were too wet, and those roots would gradually die back leaving porosity in the soil. All soil has a water table and the soils within an embankment are no different, but "table" is in this case a misnomer because it lies at an angle somewhere below the surface. In summer the trees will keep the water lower down but once they have lost their leaves they drink less and the water table/slope within the bank will rise, and if that table breaks surface, some where down the side of the bank then it will be wet. It does not in my view mean that disaster is about to happen but there is a need for regular monitoring. I assume that that is what has happened and so

# from David Gerry

the canal water level has been locally reduced. The only sensible way for long term stability of this bank is for a massive weight block to be created at the toe of the bank. This however is one of the most difficult lengths of the canal for access, I suggest that when the dredger crew dumped all the silt on the opposite bank they dumped far more than was actually required so I suggest two ways forward provided calculations confirm my suspicion. 1. Re-water the canal and use barges to move the surplus across from one side to the other. or. 2. Leave the canal in its dewatered state and using a mineral conveyor ship the surplus from one side to the other, importing material would be too difficult and too expensive. A land drain would need to be laid at the toe of the bank before placing the weight block material.

Work to resolve the problem by using clays and bentonite along the bank in the top meter or more from the water line may not solve the problem because once the canal is in water again water will tend to rise up behind the new impermeable layers and probably get back to the old level within the bank and if the canal is re-watered in summer time the growth on the bank will be drinking more, but when the "fall" comes and winter rains set in we may find that the problem returns. Trials done on one of the locks and around weirs in Hampshire using Bentonite were inconclusive. There is no doubt it works in new build situations but canal staff were not impressed with it as a repair material. I do hope my fears are unfounded.

Throughout my time on the canal I had battles with others over trees. The old British Waterways Board published an environmental handbook many years ago, that gave invaluable advice on a wide range of canal related topics, trees being given an important section. I think it is fair to say that no reservoir engineer worth his salt will tolerate trees on an embankment. But BWB, being aware that trees are a very emotive subject and that many canals had trees where they should not have been, due to neglect in times of war and so on, took a slightly more practical and softer approach, there should not be any trees growing in the top third of the bank, shrubs were to be allowed in the middle third, and large trees could be tolerated at the bottom of the bank. I seem to remember that while canal rangers did trim the very top of the West Hart bank, no major trees were removed, so those trees still standing and rocking about in the wind generate a threat to stability, and have to go.

When restoration started to get underway I explained to naturalists, Parish Councils and so on, that some trees had to go, and Oh! boy what a can of worms I opened that was not resolved by the time I left. I remember standing with a member of staff from Runnymede Council and explaining that some trees at waters edge had to go because if they fell then the canal would flood the nearby electricity sub-station and that it was not only canal water that would be a problem,

but the Wey Navigation would go as well. I was told in no uncertain fashion that I did not know what I was talking about. I believe complaints were made about my awful attitudes. I became so concerned that I called a conference of Trees Officers from all the riparian authorities to discuss the matter. I remember that the only support came from the then Trees Officer from Hart District Council and he had a considerable effect on the others and during the following weeks I had several calls apologising and pledging support. Now the naturalists want trees out for very different reasons, a major turn around and another wry grin from me.

If an artificial pond exceeds a certain volume of water then the safety of reservoirs act comes into force. I guess the calculations for Mytchett Lake put it into the reservoir category, and hence the trees on the embankment must go. Locally the safety of reservoirs act is administered by the county council concerned.

There was a mistaken view, held by many, that trees within a conservation area were protected and could not be felled without local authority agreement. In the case of canals this is not so, and in fact the legislation for conservation areas and tree preservation orders specifically exempts canals from the act. The canals were established by act of parliament and one set of legislation cannot override another, unless the later act specifically says so.

And now my last wry grin, I read with interest that it has been suggested that the nerve centre for canal maintenance should be moved to Ash Lock. Well I never did, I fought long and hard for that before I left; to me it was so obvious. But at that time all efforts would be put into facilities for the visiting public and forget maintenance; the canal restoration was complete and no maintenance would be needed for years. Budgets for maintenance and visitor services now need to be completely separated.

SHCS you are needed now as never before, good luck. Judith and I often think of you all.

Regards

David Gerry

*Happily, the problems of the West Hart embankment do not appear to have been caused by a landslide, but rather by leakage through the top levels of the bank. These could have been caused by rotten tree roots, burrowing crayfish, etc, but hopefully the measures installed by Dean & Dyball will fix them. The fundamental problem, as with many of the current troubles, is the standard of design and building of the canal back in the 18th century. Jessop and Pinkerton have much to answer for!*

# Counter View

## *A Canal trust: the bigger picture*

The Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA) is renewing its efforts to seek more cash for the waterway in view of the backlog of maintenance task; to this end the two county council owners of the canal are once more investigating the benefits of setting up a charitable management trust.

At the Canal Society's recent AGM, Canal Director Ian Brown told members that British Waterways spent £6 million to maintain the Kennet & Avon Canal which is three times the size of the Basingstoke Canal; in context Mr Brown considered that the BCA should be allocated £2 million but was actually only receiving £650,000 as a revenue budget. The Canal Director also told members that the BCA experienced difficulty securing consistent grant support from some riparian local authorities which had reneged on agreements made.

The last Government gave its approval for British Waterways' (BW) plan to move into the so-called third sector, operating as a Trust, free of Government control but, presumably, still with DEFRA's annual grant-in-aid. The Inland Waterways Association (IWA) welcomed the announcement.

The British Waterways Advisory Forum (a conglomerate of user groups) also welcomed the plan but said it should be independent of BW and work towards encompassing Environment Agency controlled navigations as well.

The IWA went further by suggesting that the new organisation should also include other navigable waterways and become a National Waterways Conservancy, a concept advocated by the Association ever since its formation in 1946.

The IWA has also observed that a conservancy would be in a position to maximise available funds in terms of administration and waterway maintainability economy of scale, central buying and deployment of plant and equipment. A conservancy would also be well placed to recruit and utilise voluntary labour.

While inclusion of the Basingstoke Canal would not be its salvation, inclusion would be worth exploring so that the canal might at last become a real part of the national network and not simply a T-junction connection with the Wey Navigation at Byfleet.

Hopefully the Wey would also be a candidate for a national navigation authority.

The two County Council owners of the Basingstoke Canal recently announced an allocation of a total of £1.635 million of capital funding over a 3-year period. Mr Brown also told members "in line with the benefits associated with the canal, major efforts are underway to identify additional income generating options."

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## *Nancy Belle*

In the last issue we reported the sale of Nancy Larcombe's boat, *Nancy Belle*. We left her sitting opposite the Fox & Hounds waiting to be craned out.



This has now happened and the overhaul and refit has begun. Dick King obviously doesn't believe in hanging about. She should be back in the water in time for a ceremonial full re-opening of the Canal, hopefully, in 2012.



*Thanks to Alison Snell for the above photo.*

# Canal Society

## New Director

*Martin Leech has joined the Committee of the Canal Society recently and I asked him to introduce himself:*

"I currently live in Bracknell and have enjoyed walking the Basingstoke canal for many years. I don't own a boat but did enjoy narrow boating holidays in my youth. I took up helping with canal work parties last summer and was a member of the John Pinkerton winter maintenance team, and I recently started crewing the JP.

Since then I have learned a lot about the canal and have become interested its management and water supply and maintenance issues, and at the same time aggrieved at its current lack of repair and navigability. By joining the Society committee I hope that I can contribute to the significant efforts that I know are going on to improve the state of the canal.

As for my background, I took my degree in mining engineering and geology at Nottingham University though have spent most of my working life in the computer industry. I retired from Hewlett Packard last year after 26 years. I am chairman of the Crowthorne Symphony Orchestra (I am a bassoonist) and help run the Trinity Concert Band (based in Earley). I have also recently elected treasurer of the Woodley (near Reading) Festival of Music and Arts."



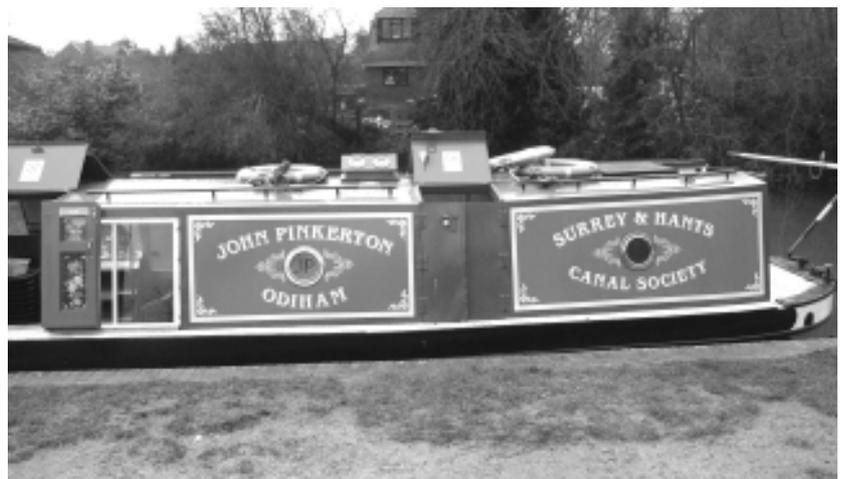
*Thanks Martin and welcome aboard!*

## John Pinkerton

As a result of the efforts of Peter Phillips and his gang in the dry (but b\*\*\*\*\* cold!) dock during the winter, the Society's 32 year old trip boat is looking better than it has done for some years after a complete external repaint.

The season started inauspiciously with a race to get back to Odiham before the canal closed at Crookham and also before the MCA hull inspection had been done. Fortunately they were understanding and agreed that the out-of-water inspection could be done next year.

We are now crossing our fingers that the work to repair the West Hart embankment will be completed in time for the dams to be removed and the water level restored to allow the boat to meet its booking at the Farnborough Air Show in July. As noted elsewhere, progress at Crookham looks good and all should be well.



David Easter has taken on the job of Crew Organiser and would love to hear from crew members. He can be reached on 01252 544957 or DAVIDEASTER789@aol.com.

# Towpath or cycle track?

When the idea of Sustrans resurfacing the towpath to improve it for cycling was first mentioned, the Canal Society voiced reservations about it. Although recognising that the towpath needed improvement, we felt that there was a very real danger that cyclists would speed along it, putting other users in danger.

What we did not anticipate was the degree to which the cycling fraternity would try to take over the towpath, apparently oblivious to the possibility that anyone else might object to what they were doing.

First we had the proposal to install three new swing bridges between Brookwood and Woking. No consultation with other users of the canal before money was wasted in drawing up quite detailed plans. After objections from several quarters (including some cyclists, who felt them to be quite unnecessary), it is now intended to hang a fixed bridge off the road bridge at Hermitage and to run a path past the Lightbox to connect up to the existing footbridge. They are still talking of a swing bridge at St John's but hopefully will run out of money before then. There is a perfectly good pedestrian crossing available for them to cross the road in safety if they are prepared to get off their bikes.

The latest piece of arrogant lunacy is the erection of signs all over the towpath. These large, multi-coloured reflective signs are completely out of keeping with a Conservation Area and obscure some existing signs – it actually says "Basingstoke Canal" behind the one shown here. Protests by local residents about the lack of consultation or planning permission were met with the reply that permission was not needed as it was a public highway. It is not! According to Hampshire County Council's website, the towpath is a Permissive Footpath. This means that nobody has a right to use it without the permission of the owners, the County Councils.

Worse still is the fact that the signs quote times to various places. By my calculation, these assume an average speed of about 10 mph. In my view this is too fast – would cyclists be allowed to do this on an ordinary pavement used by pedestrians? - and the times will also undoubtedly serve as a target to beat, encouraging people to go even faster. Nowhere on the ones I have seen is there a mention of the need for caution, or even that other people may be using the towpath.

I'm not anti-cycling. I own a bike and regularly cycle along the towpath, but I don't use it to get anywhere in a hurry and I do have a bell on it, which seems to be regarded as uncool by most cyclists these days. I do think that the Cycle Woking management needs to recognise that other people have the right to use the towpath and to have views as to what is put up along it. I think their recent actions are incredibly arrogant and irresponsible and I wonder who will

be sued when the inevitable accident occurs.

Paul Fishwick, the man responsible for all this is also facing a great deal of local hostility over "Fishwick Island" that, to quote the website [www.fishwick-island.org.uk](http://www.fishwick-island.org.uk), has been dumped in the middle of the filter lane into Brookwood at a notoriously badly designed road junction. The apparent intention is to assist cyclists to cross the road, but it is only 25m from an existing Toucan crossing. The island's cost is estimated at £25,000.

One can't help feeling that the money spent on all these schemes would have helped cyclists more if it had been used to fill in the pot holes left by the winter frosts.

Our Chairman has written a paper for the Basingstoke Canal Towpath Improvement Steering Group on the signage issue, recommending measures to address the current objections.

We shall see what happens, but if you have an opinion on this, please forward it to [paul.fishwick@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:paul.fishwick@surreycc.gov.uk).



Above: The view from the end of Sheets Heath Bridge and Below, the Basingstoke Canal sign now peeping out from behind it all.



From Society Newsletters No. 91 June 1980 and No. 92. August 1980

- The Working Parties Report detailed nine different locations where volunteer work on restoration was taking place including locks 17 and 19 and bankside clearance at Deepcut together with dredging in Hampshire with the steam dredger 'Perseverance', the narrow gauge railway group on the Ash Embankment, bankside work in Hampshire, work on the Broad Oak and Wilderness weirs plus Locks 1 and 5 at Woodham.
- As the Society has undertaken to deliver clay along the Ash Embankment with the narrow gauge railway skips, many more volunteers are needed to deposit the clay in the canal bed so the County Council can puddle over the entire length. The Society is looking for outside groups to help, with up to 20 able-bodied navvies for just one day at one weekend this summer. It doesn't require skills, just a bit of muscle and willingness to do a rather different job in the open air for a day.
- Last year a Fleet member noticed an interesting canal-side crane standing on the site of a disused nursery near Lower Heyford on the Oxford Canal. The site was a canal wharf many years ago. After making enquiries the Society were offered the crane for £150 which the Society committee accepted with alacrity. It will be dismantled and transported to the HCC maintenance yard at Ash Lock for re-assembly and restoration. The crane was originally built by a railway company about 100 years ago and came to the wharf sawmill site in 1912.
- Following the approval of a new Manpower Services Commission scheme to last for another year, the Society has decided to employ two labourers full time. As it is Project Based Work Experience, a balance is required between training young people and the need for speedy restoration of the canal. Their duties will vary from preparation of locks before the main team arrives, assistance with supply of materials, general labouring plus landscaping and tidying up afterwards.
- 460 canoeists and kayakers took part in the third annual Canoe Tourist Trials in April which were jointly organised by the Society and the Westel Canoe Club and based at Reading Road Wharf in Fleet. Each entrant chooses one of four distances to paddle ranging from 6 to 30 miles and chooses one of three set times in the chosen distance. All finishers received an engraved mug and a certificate to record their time and distance. The star attraction was a demonstration on an International K4 racing canoe by members of the Wey Kayak Club. There are only about six of these canoes in Britain and are used for International and Olympic canoe sprinting events.
- A report on the survey undertaken by divers of the Southampton Underwater Explorers BS-AC in the Greywell Tunnel was reproduced from the article in the 'Diver' magazine. The survey was for the Canal Society and they used inflatables and measuring instruments to have a cursory look at the whole tunnel above and below water level. However, the main purpose was to inspect the 'adits' closely. These are small tunnels cut into the porous chalk to increase the water supply. One adit measured 41 inches high and 39 inches wide just enough for a diver to squeeze inside wearing an air bottle.
- As part of the Hampshire Offside Bank Working Party, Bill Bourlay organised a Sponsored Work-In to raise funds for the Farnborough Oxfam Group. About 20 people took part, raising over £100 which will go towards a village project for the needy in India. The party finished the complete clearance of the offside bank on Crookham Deeps. During the afternoon our Vice-President and local MP, Julian Critchley visited the work site with his family and chatted to all the volunteers.
- The Society had an exhibition stand on the occasion of the opening of the new St. Mary's Community Centre at St Mary's Church, Ash Vale. The opening ceremony was performed by Princess Margaret and afterwards she toured the stands of the various local organisations. She showed interest in the Society and the canal restoration and asked some questions about the work of the Society.
- To celebrate the completion of the restoration of Lock 16, a party was held at the bottom of the lock at the end of June. In attendance were the Cup Hill Morris Men who danced on the bottom cill. The party was organised by Peter Jones (who is a Cup Hill Morris Man) and the party was attended by those members who had assisted at some time or another in the restoration of the lock. An even more unusual sight was that of our Chairman, Robin Higgs (complete with Wellie boots but lacking bells on his legs) 'assisting' the dancers on the lock-side!
- Our steam dredger 'Perseverance', with her steam grab newly repaired and refitted, is fast approaching Barley Mow Bridge at Winchfield. When she has dug out the winding hole, allowing the 'John Pinkerton' to cruise eastwards from Odiham to Winchfield, she will then set off once more towards Crookham and Fleet. With both tugs in service to support her more volunteers are needed to cater for her needs on the new section of dredging work.

# SHCS notes

## E-Mail

There are, from time to time, occasions when it would be very useful to be able to contact the members of the Canal Society rapidly, either, say, to acquaint them with some forthcoming event or to appeal to them to write to their local MP about some canal issue. It would be really helpful if this could be done by e-mail for reasons of both speed and economy.

Could we appeal therefore for members to let us have their e-mail addresses if they have not already done so. We promise not to misuse them. A message to [Membership@basingstoke-canal.org.uk](mailto:Membership@basingstoke-canal.org.uk) will do it. As a bonus you could also, if you wish, receive your newsletter by e-mail, in full colour - let us know if you would like to receive this.



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 1<sup>st</sup> each year.

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