



BASINGSTOKE CANAL NEWS

No. 232 Winter 2011



**waterway
recovery
group**





Surrey & Hampshire Canal Society Ltd

A Non-profit Distributing Company, Limited by Guarantee, Registered in England No. 1296593. Registered as a Charity No. 273085. Affiliated to the Inland Waterways Association.
President:

Vice-Presidents: John Humphries, OBE. Paul Vine. David Gerry. Robin Higgs, OBE. David Millett
Rt Hon James Arbuthnot, MP. Rt Hon Michael Gove, MP. Rt Hon Philip Hammond, MP. Gerald Howarth, MP. Maria Miller, MP. Jonathan Lord, MP

Just as the leaves start falling and the rest of nature begins to think about going to sleep for the winter, the Basingstoke Canal seems finally to be stirring into life.

Not that I'm complaining! It is very nice to be able to report activity and real progress on the canal. Although it may have appeared otherwise to some people, we have taken no pleasure in criticising the slow progress that has been made since the two Counties announced their intention to spend £1.7 million on the canal, so it is a great relief to see things happening.

Cover Pictures: T-shirt for the Waterway Recovery Group's Peter Redway Memorial Weekend and two of the projects, at Woodham and Crookham

The Term Contractor, who seemed to be in danger of achieving some sort of mythical status, has finally appeared and work has started on the locks. There doesn't appear to be a huge sense of urgency in terms of the number of people I've seen on site, but that is probably just the way contractors work and this type of work always seems to go in fits and starts, with no apparent progress and then the whole thing transformed by a bit of concrete pouring or brick laying. We must just hope that the weather is kind this

winter.

* * * * *

One pleasing aspect of the current activities is the spirit of cooperation between the rangers and the Canal Society that seems to be growing.

This is apparent in many of the activities reported in the issue, from the Redway Memorial weekend to the repairs to the weedcutter and Chris Healy's initiative, and also in the BCA progress reports that James Emmett and Dean Wall have supplied. It has been quite difficult in the past to find out what the BCA staff have been doing, which ran the danger of giving the impression that there was no activity apart from volunteer effort. This clearly isn't the case and it is nice to be able to publicise their activities.

* * * * *

A number of people have been kind enough to take the trouble to tell us that they like the new format of the Newsletter and, remarkably, nobody has complained! Perhaps I should have made the change earlier, but it is the advent of digital printing presses, making colour printing more affordable, that has really made it a practical proposition for us.

The considerations of possible further changes to the Canal Society's name and public image are progressing slowly. There seems to be a fair amount of support for a change of name, but this could involve significant costs as the Society is a Limited Company. One suggested solution that seems likely to be adopted if we do go for a change is for us to become "The Basingstoke Canal Society incorporated as The Surrey & Hampshire Canal Society Ltd". As far as the public would be concerned, we would be the Basingstoke Canal Society, but we would retain our current name for legal purposes. This appears to be perfectly in order and a proposal based on this idea will probably be put to the next AGM.

The first step in any other "rebranding" will be to do some careful consideration of exactly who or what we are trying to appeal to.

* * * * *

Our decision to make the Canal Bulletin available to non-members of the Canal Society seems to have borne fruit in that a couple of non-members have come forward offering help in running things. One has in fact volunteered to join the Committee, although clearly he will have to join the Society first!

In fact, it is also worth remembering that participation in activities such as crewing the *John Pinkerton* is only open to members of the Canal Society, for insurance reasons.

* * * * *

Finally, a rather early wish for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone!

Chairman's report

Over the last 18 months or more it has been necessary, in our reports, to level criticism at the owners of the canal for the pedestrian pace at which the contract for the essential repairs to the infrastructure of the canal has been handled. It therefore gives me real pleasure to start my report this time on a very positive note. All of a sudden, it seems, work is underway on both the Deepcut and Brookwood lock flights. The contractors appointed by the County Councils, Dyer & Butler, are working at Locks 19, 20 and 25 in Deepcut. Meanwhile the BCA rangers have re-fitted the upper gates at Lock 12. All this activity augers well for our recently re-stated intention to see the navigation in full operation next spring which will enable us to hold a boat rally at Frimley Lodge Park in June 2012 to celebrate the 21st anniversary of the re-opening of the canal.

The other major event over the last few weeks was the highly successful Waterways Recovery Group weekend held as a tribute to Peter Redway. For many years, Peter organised summer work camps for WRG and they held him in very high esteem. The weekend involved work parties tackling a variety of jobs along the whole length of the canal from Lock 1 to Up Nately west of Greywell Tunnel. Apart from the considerable amount of work undertaken over the weekend, the WRG visit also gave an excellent illustration of what volunteers can achieve. This provides us with invaluable publicity and supports our efforts to engage the Canal Partnership in the continuing debate over the long term sustainability of the canal. Although many of our members were involved in organising the work parties, I would like to express particular thanks to Martin Leech, our Vice Chairman, who took on the immense task of planning the work programme and Verna Smith who ensured that the WRG volunteers were provided with suitable accommodation.

In recent months we have launched a number of new initiatives. Recognising that the canal has always suffered from water shortages, especially in dry summers, we have established a Water Resources Group to examine the various options for improving the water supply. These range from further back-pumping schemes (at Brookwood and Deepcut) to

accessing water from Bourley reservoirs. We are also trying to secure further supplies from reservoirs which could be associated with new developments on the canal and we are also looking at options for further abstraction. The Committee received a very well researched and argued case, prepared by Tony Clark, which put forward some positive proposals to improve the management of the water resources at the eastern end of the canal. We must accept that there will never be a single solution to the water supply issue so it is our intention, in co-operation with the BCA, to pursue all the opportunities which have been identified.

We are also taking a much greater interest in planning issues. At the present time there are at least 4 major developments planned along the length of the canal and we are pressing the local planning authorities to accept the principle that the canal should benefit from new housing and office schemes.

Looking to the future, we are continuing to follow closely the progress of the Government's plans to transfer British Waterways (and, at a later date, the navigable waterways managed by the Environment Agency) into a third sector charitable body to be called the Canal & Rivers Trust. It remains our belief that if a suitable opportunity arises, it would make sense to transfer the Basingstoke Canal into the CART. In the meantime, the County Councils are commissioning a consultants report on the long term vision for the canal. We expect to be asked to contribute to the report and I am hopeful that the results of this work will enable all the members of the Canal Partnership to adopt a clear and consistent approach to the future management and financing of the canal and a shared understanding of the value of the canal to the local communities.

There is no doubt that the profile of the Basingstoke Canal has been significantly raised over the last 12 months and I think we can allow ourselves a little cautious optimism that the canal may be looking forward to a brighter future. Time will tell.

Philip Riley

Events

Fox & Hounds Rally

The Basingstoke Canal Boating Club's annual rally in Fleet took place back in September with support from old faithfuls such as Jan and Pam with *Victoria M* (right)



and the usual collection of launches from the Steamboat Association of Great Britain (left).

Nice to see some relative newcomers such as *Barley* (right)



Thanks to Freddie and Peter Dawson for the photos and congratulations to *Athai* for being the best presented boat for the second year running.

Events

CHOBHAM SOCIAL MEETINGS

The rest of the winter and spring programme is shown below:

The meetings will be held at our usual venue at the Parish Pavilion, Recreation Ground, Station Road, Chobham, near Woking, GU24 8AZ.

Meetings will commence at 8pm on the third Wednesday of the month (See map for exact location).

Coffee/tea and biscuits will be served during the interval. Non members and friends are very welcome to come along. Retiring collection.

Wednesday 18th January 2012

Chris Witts - 'My Life on the River Severn'

With forty years of experience with shipping on the longest river in Britain on a variety of vessels including hoppers, barges and lighters, Chris is uniquely qualified to illustrate his life on this fascinating waterway in film and pictures. He started working in 1960 on a tanker barge as a deckhand and ended as skipper on motor hopper barges in 2000.

Wednesday 15th February 2012

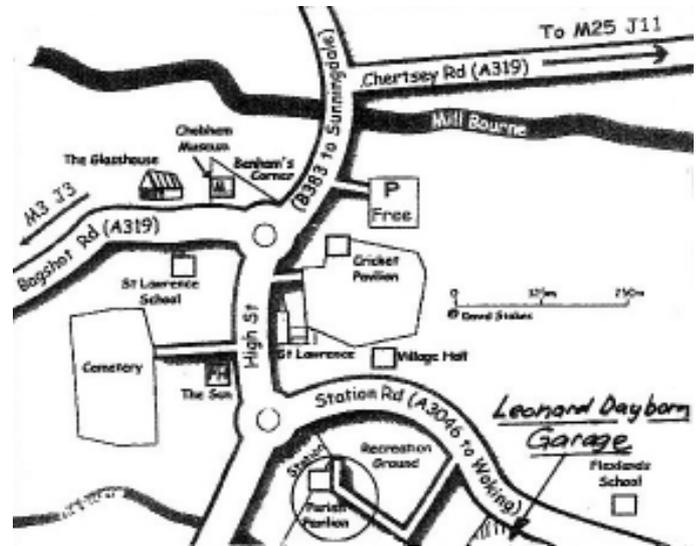
Robin Higgs OBE - 'Canals and Rivers of Eastern France'

Our former Chairman and current Vice President Robin Higgs will be showing a selection of slides from his boating holidays in Eastern France in 2010 and 2011. Waterways to be featured include the Canal L'Est and the River Saone.

Wednesday 21st March 2012

Dick Skeets - 'The Hereford and Gloucester Canal'

Dick Skeets will be visiting us to talk about the history of the Hereford and Gloucester Canal and bring us up to date with all the restoration work that has taken place over many years and which, of course, is still continuing.



Wednesday 18th April 2012

Paul Gosling - 'Southampton Shipping with Railway Connections'

With a long term interest in shipping and transport in the Southampton area, Paul will be visiting us to illustrate the story of shipping in Southampton Water and the Docks from 1970 to the present day. The presentation will include scenes of boat and freight trains which are integral to the dockland scene.

Further information from David Millett on 01252 617364 or email d.millett7@ntlworld.com

Illuminated boats

Sadly, the pre-Christmas illuminated boat procession in Woking will not be taking place this year.

The Byfleet Boat Club, which has provided the vast majority of the partaking boats in the past, has decided to have a change and go to Weybridge this year. The boats are assembling above Town Lock at 6pm on the 26th November and proceeding to the Pelican Inn, where the landlord has promised them a warm welcome at the pub.

JMC report

The meeting of the Canal's Joint Management Committee in mid-October was a good deal more positive than many recent ones.

Cllr Linda Kemeny, the new Chairman, was able to report that the repair contract had been let at the end of May and Surrey County Council had given the go-ahead in mid-July. The contractors had fixed the leak at Mabel Street in Woking and would be starting on the Deepcut locks and fitting the new gates on Lock 12 within days.

She said that they had taken on board the concerns expressed about the delays in getting the work started and would be trying to do better in future.

Rod Edbrooke of SCC said that he hoped that by the middle of next year they would have a good idea of what in total needed to be done to the Deepcut flight and the associated cost. An application to the Heritage Lottery Fund was a possibility, although it was pointed out that HLF bids took at least 2 years.

The new Leader of SCC, Cllr David Hodge, had been taken for a boat trip on the canal and was reported to be very supportive, as was the new Countryside Leader, Lisa Cray-Griffin, who said that they intended to get consultants in to discuss a vision for the future of the canal with stakeholders.

Linda Kemeny said that she hoped that we had reached a fork in the road and that the consultants work would inspire more commitment from all.

There were in fact some signs of greater commitment from the new Surrey Heath representative. As reported previously, they had already found £25,000 for towpath work from a fine paid by a local firm for environmental infringements, and they would be looking for other sources of money. People were also encouraged to lobby their councillors in Runnymede to support the canal better.

Ian Brown, the Canal Manager, reported that he was drafting a Sustainability Plan that would show the cost of getting the canal into good order and

then keeping it there.

Work planned in Hampshire included bank protection and earthworks, installation of stop plank grooves and completion of the culvert survey. At the Mytchett Canal Centre, the bat survey had been completed, so hopefully progress could be made on the canoe clubhouse extension. If planning and funding were OK, he hoped that the building could be in commission by 2013. Some dismay was expressed about this timescale; Cllr Kimber suggested that Aldershot College of Building might be approached for help with the construction.

Regarding future developments on the canal, a possible site for a small mooring basin near the centre of Woking had been identified. Grainger, the developers of the Aldershot Urban Extension, had a plan which now showed a loop off the canal, but actual construction could be 15 years off. Meetings were planned with Surrey Heath and Guildford Councils to talk about the Deepcut Barracks redevelopment in relation to the canal.

Ian reported that he had received a huge number of complaints about thoughtless behaviour by some cyclists on the towpath in Woking and there had been 2 or 3 nasty accidents. (*Sadly, this is exactly what the Canal Society predicted would happen when the Sustrans proposals were made.*) In reply to a question about plans for extending the cycleway, Ian said that he did not think it was suitable for the towpath in Hampshire. Times to destinations were to be removed from the signs in Woking.

Gareth Jones of the IWA commented that the majority of the houseboat owners at Woodham were irritated by a minority who were effectively abusing the canal. He believed that the boats and their moorings should be able to tolerate changes of water level and that this should be specified in the lease agreements. Rod Edbrooke said that the leases were due for renewal next year. He said that for various reasons the rent account for the houseboats was £150k in arrears.

Continued opposite

IWA Call to Arms!

Things are at a critical juncture for the transfer of British Waterways' managed canals and rivers into the Canal and River Trust. The money is everything. A good deal from Defra will deliver a significant Big Society project, and secure the future of a national asset. IWA is concerned however, that Defra is playing hard ball, and trying to impose a lean deal just to get BW off its books.

IWA is asking all waterway supporters to urgently:

1. Write to your MP drawing their attention to the fact that the waterways are being transferred over into the charitable sector, and that it is vital that the funding package is sufficient that it allows them to be maintained in a sustainable condition. Let them know that you don't want to see the waterways become another Defra inspired 'forestry' type disaster.
2. Please also ask your MP to contact the Waterways Minister Richard Benyon MP, directly, to register their concern, and to ensure that he knows that there needs to be more money put on the table.

Here are IWA's Key points:

- Government has initially offered to transfer the British Waterways (BW) property portfolio to CRT and to provide a 10 year funding contract indicated at cash £39 million per year. (so no index linking with the consequence of erosion in value over time by inflation). This is just not enough.
- BW has thoroughly updated its financial projections. It says that for its waterways to be reasonably

maintained, with an acceptable level of risk, it has an annual funding deficit of £20 million. The CRT would inherit this annual deficit. The BW new projections do not appear to embrace the remedy of a repairs deficit which was already significant and has been growing in recent years [in 2007 reported to EFRA Select Committee as being an accumulated figure of £107million].

- British Waterways also has a pension deficit of £65 million. Nearly three quarters of which is in respect of previous employees. Ought this huge state incurred liability be transferred over to the new charity?

- The revised annual deficit does not take account of a large dredging backlog incurred as a result of chronic underfunding, that requires £8-12 million per year to stabilise, and ensure drainage, navigation and environmental requirements are properly supported.

Don't let the proposed transfer of BW assets become another 'forestry' debacle for Defra through underfunding!

Please act now - Please write today. You can find out who your MP is and write to them directly by using this link <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/>

A downloadable template letter for your MP is available here http://www.waterways.org.uk/documents/dear_mp

Thank you.

Jo Gilbertson, IWA Campaigns Team

Tony Clark of the Basingstoke Boating Club stated that he believed that the BCA's practice of caulking up the lock gates after use was unnecessary as well a hazardous, if the back-pumping system was used properly. Because of the cost of ranger time spent on doing this, visiting boats actually cost the canal money rather than providing income as was the case on all other canals. Since the water was pumped back to the top of the flight, it was in fact essential to have some flow down through the locks to fill the intermediate pounds. (*Tony has done a large amount of work on water levels and controls and has presented this to all interested parties, resulting in some management changes.*)

Jan Piele of Galleon Marine requested a discount on the licence fees because of the inability of their customers to be able to use the whole canal; they had not been able to sell week-long holidays. Tony Clark agreed and suggested that the proposed licence fee increases should be put on hold until the canal was fully open.

Finally, it was reported that £190k of Higher Level Stewardship money was to be made available for tree management and marginal improvement works. It was agreed that Natural England should be requested to attend the next JMC meeting to explain what was proposed.

BCA update

Canal Centre update

Despite June being a washout this year, we have had another successful year Camping. Currently the BCA has taken just short of £30,000 since April. Which is £3000 up on this time last year.

Customers are coming to stay from all over the country, with weekend breaks being our biggest market. Also there has been a growing number of campers bringing their own canoes to explore the canal.



Although it is mostly the hardened campers or motor-home owners, we have taken bookings for the 2012 Lakeside World Darts Championship in January. We've already taking bookings for the Farnborough Airshow weekend next year, with airplane enthusiasts coming from all over the world coming to stay on site. The campsite is becoming frequently used to support local events in the area. So we are expecting that 2012 to be extremely busy.

Santa Cruises

It's come to that time of year when our Santa Cruises are just around the corner. Just under 2000 people will be attending the event, not just from the local area but also from far afield. This year we have a family coming down from Chester as well as Cheltenham!

In total, there will be 164 trips running, starting from the 3rd December and finishing on the 23rd December. The families will start at the canal centre, taking a short cruise down the canal on our boat

Rosebud. The little ones then lead the way through the woods finding Father Christmas in his grotto. The good children receive a gift (Father Christmas' policy), then head back down to the jetty where Rosebud will be waiting to take them back to the centre for hot drinks and mince pies. It is estimated that the event will help to generate in excess of £19,000.

Once again this year we will be using our Yurt (pictured below) for Father Christmas's Grotto.



It's certainly worth all the effort of organising and running the event, not just for the income generated, but also when we you see the children's faces light up when they find Father Christmas in his grotto!

Dean Wall

Recreation and Visitor Services Manager

I think this report provides the answer to the "Bah-Humbug Brigade", who say "What have camping and Santa got to do with the canal?" The answer of course is nearly £50,000 for the canal.

This sort of work is an area where volunteers might be able to help, perhaps freeing up BCA staff for more directly canal related activities. If anyone is interested, why not visit the Canal Centre at Mytchett and have a word with Dean in the office there, or phone on 01252 370073.

BCA update

Rangers Bulletin, November

James Emmett reports -

Rain finally arrived (just in time for bonfire night) bringing the water level in Hampshire from 120mm below weir level to 10mm over weir level in less than 24 hrs. Now all we need is somewhere to store all this water!

Andy Foster, with assistance from James Emmett and Sara Murray, spent some time crawling in the underbelly of the dredger fitting new hydraulic pipes and topping up the tank with 220 litres of hydraulic oil. Preliminary tests seem to show the dredger up and running at full power again, which is just great news. There remains a small issue with the electrics, but this doesn't affect the operational use. Many thanks to the Canal Society for providing the funds to allow Andy to carry out the repairs.



Above: Andy Foster fixing the new pipes.

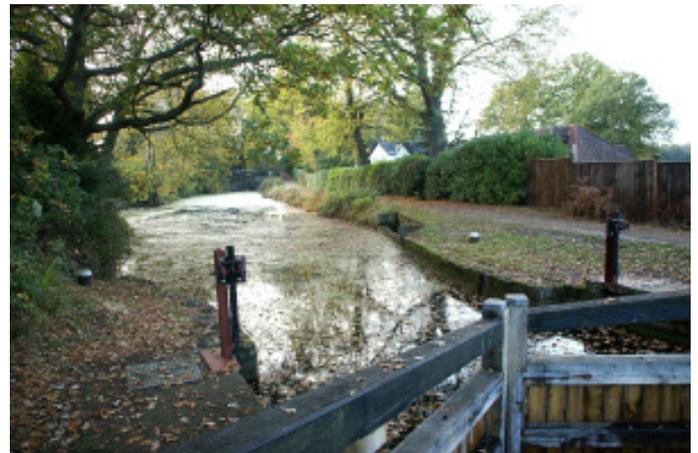
Right: Newbury WRG taking a break from bank clearance in Hampshire.

Chris Healy, with assistance from student placement Dan, reduced the height of the holly hedge alongside the barn at the Canal Centre in Mytchett. It had become far too big for its location and its reduction has improved the seating area around the café.

Andy Loader has continued with the installation of the jack heads and has now almost finished the

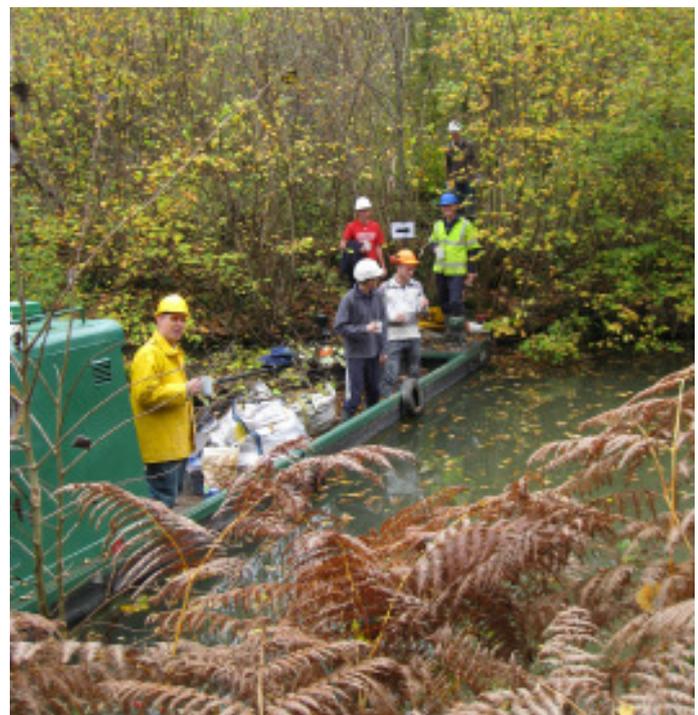
Brookwood flight of locks. The York Stone slab on the off-side at Lock 14 to which the jack heads are attached is particularly thin and brittle, creating a slight conundrum and a momentary halt to the job.

Below: The re-filled pound above Lock 12 showing the new, safer, paddle gear.



Still on the Brookwood flight, rangers fitted a new cill to the lower gates of lock 12 and replaced the paddles and paddle frames.

Off side cutting is continuing in Hampshire, we have



BCA update

completed the stretch along Coxmoor Wood. This area was particularly dense and we are really grateful to the teams of volunteers who have come from WRG, the Canal Society and the local community who in recent weeks have been out coppicing and reducing growth on the waters edge along this stretch. We are now heading back towards Malthouse cutting.

Jon Green is organising the loan of a small tractor and flail from the Rights of Way team at Hampshire County Council, so we can start our winter tow-path cut. This is to remove woody growth and bramble from the waters-edge side of the towpath as well as cut back the hedges that grow out. This is a particular problem in some areas of the canal, particularly where the towpath is narrow.

In addition to the items in James' report, Ian Brown's Weekly Updates list the following works as completed, in progress or to be undertaken as a priority:

- The work to seal the

leak at Mabel Street in Woking has been completed. (*Below left*)

- Other locks on the Brookwood flight will be visited by engineers and work schedules and estimates will be produced.
- A completed and revised schedule of works and replacement programme for lock gates is to be produced and confirmed by the BCA.
- Contract works continue to Lock 19. These works being very much a test case for other lock



related works. The damaged sections of the by-wash outfall have been removed and are currently being rebuilt. (*Above*)

As usual with work at Deepcut, access to the offside bank is not easy. 10 tons of concrete were wheel-barrowed across the foot bridge of Lock 19, but a track way for vehicles has been made above

BCA update

Lock 20 (Below).



- Works have started to lock 20 (*Below*).



In addition to rebuilding the bypass channel outlet, the contractors are installing stone-filled gabions in the canal bed below the lock to prevent scouring undercutting the wing walls.

- The towpath between locks 17 and 25 is being closed during the working week as a safety measure.
- Lock 25 has been visited and a works schedule has been sent to the Contractor for pricing.
- The other locks in the Deepcut flight have been visited and a work schedule will be costed to apply for further funds.
- The area of subsidence at lock 12 has been filled but the developing depression in the towpath is to be further investigated.
- Quotes have been obtained for tree and bank works at Woodham; task orders will be placed when funding is clarified by the BCA and SCC.
- New iron pins for the gates have been made and delivered from the Wagstaff Iron Foundry in Slough.
- Works to enable initial estimates for solutions to the Mytchett embankment are to be progressed by SCC.

Peter Redway



The Waterway Recovery Group clearly had very high regard for Peter Redway and paid a very handsome tribute to his memory with a weekend that saw over 100 people working all over the canal, from West Byfleet to Up Nately.

Organising work for this many people was an enormous challenge, and the task fell largely to the Canal Society's Vice-Chairman, Martin Leech, who agreed the jobs with the BCA's Jon Green.

WRG was keen to be able to offer a variety of types of work to attract as many of their volunteers as possible. Although the volunteers and effort were divided equally between Surrey and Hampshire, the end results may have appeared to favour Hampshire because scrub-bashing and towpath surfacing produced a more obvious result than the lock landing construction, wash-out filling and tree felling in Surrey did.

Organising accommodation for such a large group was also not easy, but Verna Smith managed to find an excellent venue in the St John Ambulance Youth Activity Centre in Hawley Lane, Farnborough.

The logistics involved in delivering 3 excavators, 3 dumpers, 2 rollers, 1 generator, 2 work boats, 1 barge and dozens of assorted tools to the right places, together with 100 tons of stone for the towpath work and several tons of other miscellaneous materials were frightening. Kevin Redway and his lorry played a huge part in this, and 4 vans and 5 mini-buses carried the WRG volunteers and their equipment to the various sites.

New Committee member Freddie Dawson and her husband Peter took their newly-acquired boat *Athai* to the Ash Embankment to provide facilities for the team clearing the offside embankment.

We estimate that some 280 man days of volunteer effort went into the weekend, equating to value-in-kind of about £18,500, and the Canal Society contributed about £4000 to the cost of accommodation, plant hire, etc.

Huge thanks to all these people and the other members of the Society's regular Work Party who turned out to assist and, of course, to the Waterway Recovery Group for their continuing support to the Basingstoke Canal.

Memorial Dig



Starting at the eastern end of the canal, the first group was mainly occupied in carrying on the work started earlier in the year by WRG on the landing stage below Lock 1. Some finishing off remains to be done, but this will certainly provide a much better welcome for visiting boats than at present.



Further up the Woodham flight, two further groups were at work. One was occupied in filling in some of the wash-outs in the towpath edge. Many of these seem to have been started by dogs scrabbling at the bank to climb out after being allowed to swim in the canal. Nicospan material and posts driven into the bed of the canal were used to retain the back-filling material.

The second group was in the woodland behind the towpath, which was given to the Canal Society not long ago. Ownership incurs responsibility, so permission had been obtained from Runnymede's Tree Officer for WRG's tree specialists to remove a few trees that had died and a fence was installed to stop people falling into the Rive Ditch which runs through the woodland.



Peter Redway weekend

On the county boundary a major task was undertaken to clear scrub and saplings from the off-side of the Ash Embankment to enable the BCA rangers to inspect it for leaks and burrowing animal activity. *Athai* provided a floating tearoom/toilet.



A bit further on at the West Hart Embankment, the Canal Society's work boat and barge were in use by a bank clearance work party.

Further on into Hampshire, a group was trying to fill in a missing bit of towpath resurfacing near Norris Bridge. Unfortunately the 100 tons of stone had to be dropped off about half a mile from the site and transported down the towpath by dumper, which slowed progress. Nevertheless, some 300 yards of towpath were resurfaced.



And finally, at Up Nately, Dave Wedd and his group spent Sunday refurbishing the storage building near Slade's Bridge.



In Crookham Village, the brickwork of the wharf near Chequers Bridge was in need of attention. The BCA's work boat provided a work platform for the bricklayers.



Thanks to Martin Leech, Duncan Paine, Nigel Searle and Peter Dawson for photos.

Work parties

The volunteers have not been standing idle since the Redway weekend.

The BCA's weedcutter has been sitting forlornly on the bank at Ash Lock for about 3 years, awaiting repair. John Wharf, Peter Philips and John Abbott of the *John Pinkerton* maintenance gang have recently been helping ranger Andy Foster to stir it back into life. Remarkably, the engine started and the hydraulics operated, but, unremarkably, there are electrical problems and the hydraulic pump seems to need an overhaul. Nevertheless this useful piece of equipment should be available for use again next year.



The Work Party returned to the towpath at Norris Bridge and laid a further 300 yards of resurfacing over a weekend. One more weekend should see the work complete and an end to the current muddy and pot-holed mess.



Some while ago, the wooden gate to the tunnel under the railway, that gives access to Cowshot Manor Bridge and Lock 17, was smashed. Kevin Redway found a metal gate in the canal in Woking, fished it out, did some welding and painting and it now more provides a rather better deterrent to improper use of the towpath by vehicles.



The tedious job of re-pointing Lock 17 has been finally completed and it also has a new number courtesy of Janet Buckley. She is working on a stone for Redway Lock (11).



Alarms!

A report on the Narrowboatworld website of an explosion on a boat on the Basingstoke Canal appears to have been mistaken, but a car had to be removed from the canal below Scotland Bridge recently after being dumped by thieves.

Boat building on the Basingstoke



The dry dock above Lock 28 has been an invaluable facility for boat operators on the canal, enabling the periodic mandatory out-of-water inspections of boats such as the Canal Society's *John Pinkerton* to be made by the Maritime Coastguard Agency without the trouble and expense of going off the canal.

Currently it is also the venue for some good old fashioned boat building. The tug *Christopher James* has been a familiar sight on the canal for some years with its usual mooring next to the lock cottage at Lock 28. A recent inspection revealed some signs of rot in the wooden hull and its owner, Andy Hall (*above*), decided that it was a job that he would tackle with the aid of his friend, ex-ranger Peter Munt.

Not a job for the faint-hearted! Several of the 1½" oak planks at the stern needed replacing and then the stern post itself was also found to be going soft

in places and had to come out. The shape of the planks is far from simple and certainly not rectangular and the edges have to be bevelled to the correct angle. Andy borrowed a steam box to enable the new planks to be bent to shape (*below*).



We wish Andy luck with the project and look forward to seeing the *Christopher James* back afloat.

Future work parties?

From: Chris Healy, BCA Ranger
To: Kathryn Dodington, S&HCS

Dear Kathryn,

I have been asked to contact you with a view to organising some further work party days on the Basingstoke Canal. There are several important jobs to undertake over the coming months in order to have as much of the lower end of the canal ready for navigation in 2012. One important and very much needed job is to tackle the invasive Hydrocotyle weed that blights the canal from the junction at the River Wey to just below Lock 7 at St John's.

Fortunately much of the Hydrocotyle weed should die back once the water temperature drops to near freezing point. However, we are likely to encounter re-growth problems again next spring as vegetation on the canal banks overhanging the water will protect small pieces of Hydrocotyle from the frost.

There are three ways we can tackle the weed. The first way is to pull it out once sections of it have become large and well established. This is back breaking work and I fully appreciate that it is not a task welcomed by volunteer workers. The second and most effective way to manage the weed is to hit it hard early in the spring before large sections become established. It is this approach I would like to implement with a work party in the early spring. Starting at Lock 7 and moving down stream we will attempt to remove as many of the small sections as possible from the canal. It can work but it requires a big effort from a number of people to virtually eradicate the weed from the canal. That way the BCA with our limited resources would stand a better chance of dealing with regrowth before it becomes established.

The third approach is to remove large sections using machinery; the dredger is fairly effective for this and I hope the Canal Society will be able to undertake some of this work over the coming winter months. However, using machinery does not remove the small sections of weed and these are then left in the canal to regenerate the following spring. Therefore just pulling large sections of weed will never actually rid the canal of the weed and we will have to continue this approach year on year.

I have been assured that volunteer workers will not need to be interviewed and treated as volunteer Council employees should they wish to offer their services. I hope this is something you can assist with - I know having a fully open navigation means a lot to you and tackling Hydrocotyle weed really is a very important aspect of the future management of the canal for both a good working navigation and for the conservation value of the canal.

I would also like to continue work party days for bank side vegetation cutting (desperately needed in the Brookwood Lye section again) and once the better weather returns in the spring there will be a lot of painting required on lock gates and bridges in both Brookwood and Deepcut and any help with these tasks would also be greatly appreciated.

My real long term aim is to establish a Ranger-led volunteer work party one day a week every week, in much the same way as Surrey Wildlife Trust and the Blackwater Valley Trust do. This would be so beneficial to the canal and hopefully offer a good day out for members of the community with a little spare time to offer.*

Please let me have your thoughts and ideas on how we could move forward and give me an indication of the level of support you would be able to offer me.

Yours sincerely

Chris Healy, Canal Ranger

Chris,

I'd love to see a volunteer work party on a weekly basis working in the Brookwood area. May I suggest that you and I walk the stretch from Pirbright Bridge to Hermitage Bridge as a starter just to identify what needs doing and if any 'out-of-the-ordinary' equipment is needed (e.g. the weed growth in the flash between Sheets Heath Bridge and Pirbright Bridge). I think it would help to be able to identify what we are asking the volunteers to do.

Kind Regards
Kathryn

***Stop press:** Regular Tuesday work parties are due to start in Brookwood on 10th January 2012.

From Society Newsletter No 100 December 1981

- To mark the 100th edition of the Newsletter, the front cover featured a large rare photograph, taken in 1904 or 1905, showing two narrow boats owned by the Hampshire Brick and Tile Company, believed to be 'Maudie' and 'Ada', entering Little Tunnel Bridge at Up Natley, when that section was still in water.
- An article by June Sparey, who was the editor and producer of the Newsletter from 1968 to 1973 as well as being the Society Secretary from 1969-1971, covered the early days of the Society. Edition No. 1 of the Society Newsletter was issued in January 1967 and reported on the Members' Meeting held in November 1966, the year the Society was formed. 60 members attended the meeting out of a total membership of 75. A three part talk was given on the history of the canal, and the meeting concluded with a slide show by Dick Snell of local canals including the derelict Wey and Arun Canal.
- She recalled that first Good Friday, the traditional day of protest, when a small flotilla picked its way through the weeds to the gates of Lock 1 and hung a notice up saying "Amenity or eyesore, Beauty or decay, Action's needed now. Please save the waterway". The protest cruise made the local television news. June remembered the Sunday morning when the North Warnborough lift bridge was raised for the first time in years. Hundreds of spiders disturbed from their slumbers scurried forth, and the local milkman skidded to a halt as the road in front of him reared heavenwards.
- Blacksmiths Bridge in Dogmersfield has been finally completed. Peter Hurley has now finished the wing wall which has been outstanding after the bridge was restored in 1975.
- The first meeting of the newly formed Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee took place on the 13th November 1981. The committee comprised councillors from the two county councils, local borough and district councils and local groups including the Society and the Inland Waterways Association.
- The houseboat 'African Queen' has been removed from the canal by Surrey County Council from its mooring near Arthur's Bridge, Woking and burnt. Whitbread Beefeater Steak Houses Ltd have agreed to pay £20,000 to Surrey County Council for general restoration work as part of the planning agreement to convert the derelict Bridge Barn, Horsell into a pub and restaurant.
- The (late) Ron Jesse wrote to the newsletter about his 14 years involvement with the Society. His involvement had mainly centred around the steam dredger 'Perseverance' and he had been very active in its refurbishment and maintenance. Considering it was built in the early 1930s to widen the summit pound of the Grand Union Canal at Tring, it is a tribute to her makers that she is still performing efficiently as designed, only more so. Having been transported overland from Reading to Odiham in 1975, it has subsequently removed 20,000 tons of mud and silt per mile from the Whitewater aqueduct at North Warnborough to Dogmersfield Park.
- Ron Jesse also recalled the trial hydraulic dredger which could be useful for awkward places like bridge holes and sidecuts but it is considered too hairy for main dredging. It was built by ex-member Lt (E) Roger Caesley RN, mounting an old Whitlock 403 Backacter on a barge with an engine donated by Hampshire County Council. Although hydraulics and mud are not usually compatible, Ron recalled removing a bridge cornerstone from the canal bottom in two minutes flat - how else could such awkward lumps be raised? However, the Bacacter did not prove successful and didn't last long on the canal.

- Glad that at long last the term contractor, Dyer and Butler, has started work on the canal. With emergency repairs on a leaking bank at Woking having been completed, they are now starting work on the Deepcut flight of locks, not before time. Let us hope that it turns out to be a mild winter so that the work can progress well and get completed in time for the 21st Anniversary Festival planned to be held at Frimley Lodge Park at the end of May next year. It seems a long time ago that the Duke of Kent performed the re-opening ceremony in May 1991 at the same venue. Who would have thought at that time that it would be necessary to hold a second re-opening ceremony at the same venue. Let us hope that this time will be the last!
- Congratulations to the Accessible Boating Association on the 25th. Anniversary of their formation in 1986 by the then Chairman of Hart District Council, Mildred Stocks. During her year as Chairman of the council she used her Chairman's Charity Appeal to raise funds for their first pontoon type boat which was named after her. Subsequently, of course, fund raising took place to build their current day boat 'Dawn' and their current holiday boat 'Madam Butterfly'. At a ceremony at Colt Hill, Odiham, their patrons Timothy West and Prunella Scales met past and present volunteers and presented plaques which are being installed on each boat. They themselves were presented with a framed photograph of the two boats on the canal.
- Our neighbours the Wey and Arun Canal Trust continue to make good progress along the line of their canal at many sites, including their lock re-building site at Southlands Lock 7 where a contractor is undertaking the major work (assisted by volunteers) at a cost of £175,000. An additional £65,000 will be needed to pay for the gates and back-pumping, all this being raised by the Southlands Lock Appeal Fund. The Trust has almost completed building their new environmentally friendly green Canal Information Centre next to the canal alongside the Onslow Arms at Loxwood. Congratulations to the Trust on winning the Community Category at the 2011 Waterways Trust Renaissance Awards ceremony held in Birmingham. The award was given for the massive Loxwood Canal Crossing Project.
- The new National Waterways Charity to replace British Waterways is to be called 'Canal and River Trust' and will come into operation in April 2012. Complex negotiations are taking place between the interim trustees and the government to finalise all the arrangements but the crucial issue is future funding. The present proposals will not enable the new organisation to fund the canals properly especially with the increasing backlog of repairs and maintenance required to keep the national navigations in good order. We can only hope that agreement is reached on adequate funding before next April. In the longer term, of course, we would like to see the Basingstoke Canal become part of the new organisation, but much water needs to flow under the bridges (excuse the pun) for this to happen.
- Members will recall that our steam dredger 'Perseverance' (now in bits at the Ellesmere Port Boat Museum in Cheshire) completed her dredging part of the restoration of the Hampshire section of the canal at the Old Pondtail Bridge in Fleet in 1993 where a ceremony was held to mark the occasion and a plaque unveiled on the bridge railings. Glad to to see that Southern Gas Networks have just finished repainting the railings with gleaming white paint, to compensate the Basingstoke Canal Authority for allowing them to install a new gas pipe under the bridge. This repainting was long overdue as the railings had nearly lost their original paint altogether and were looking very shabby.



Letters

Dear Roger,

I wanted to say that I like the new handy A5 format of the magazine.

You've managed to produce 13 photos in colour compared with only 4 in black and white, so I don't think it's worth the extra expense of printing the whole publication with colour – or not unless there's such a radical redesign that colour is appropriate on every page. As it stands, the magazine is predominantly text, which is businesslike and conveys the information we want to know, and it's written in a readable style. I don't think you need worry (as you suggested in your Editorial) that your background of writing technical reports is a handicap.

Your Editorial also mentioned the idea of a name change for the Society. I agree with that. Everybody knows the canal as the Basingstoke Canal, and no-one calls it the Surrey & Hampshire Canal. We should be the Basingstoke Canal Society.

A name change would also make the logo simpler, with only the word 'Society' needed underneath the sailing barge, instead of the five chunky words we have at present. As for the sailing barge itself, it does have some history behind it, and replacing it with a narrowboat would just be like several other societies' logos. I would keep the distinctive barge.

Regards
Guy Consterdine

Dear Roger,

Just received the new A5 version of BCN. Thought I would let you know I think its great. Good colour pics, especially of lock on page 12. Only slight negative is the small text, but you can't have everything.

Regards
Roger Reed

JOHN PINKERTON

We have had an excellent response to the request for volunteers to be new skippers for the John Pinkerton trip boat. All these volunteers are now training before they start as skippers next season.

This time we are asking for a volunteer, or volunteers, to organise the rostering of crews for our summer 2012 operation. In the past there have been two crew managers: one for weekend trips and evenings during the week, and one for daytime weekday trips. However, this could be done by one person with more time! Crews could be contacted either by email or telephone. By using email all crew can be sent a list of trips each month and can then reply with their choice of dates to crew the boat.

The crew manager only operates during the trip season of Easter or 1st April to the end of October

each year. On average we run about 140 trips a season.

The time taken by two crew managers to organise crew will of course vary with the trip numbers. Typically with two people this may be a couple of hours a week.

This will help us considerably, and bring in the twenty five to thirty thousand pounds that we then give to the Canal Society for supporting the Basingstoke Canal, each year.

If you would like more information, please email me on petejwright@btopenworld.com, or phone 01344772461 or mobile 07788780917.

Peter Wright
Chairman Surrey & Hants Canal Cruises

Letters

Dear Sir,

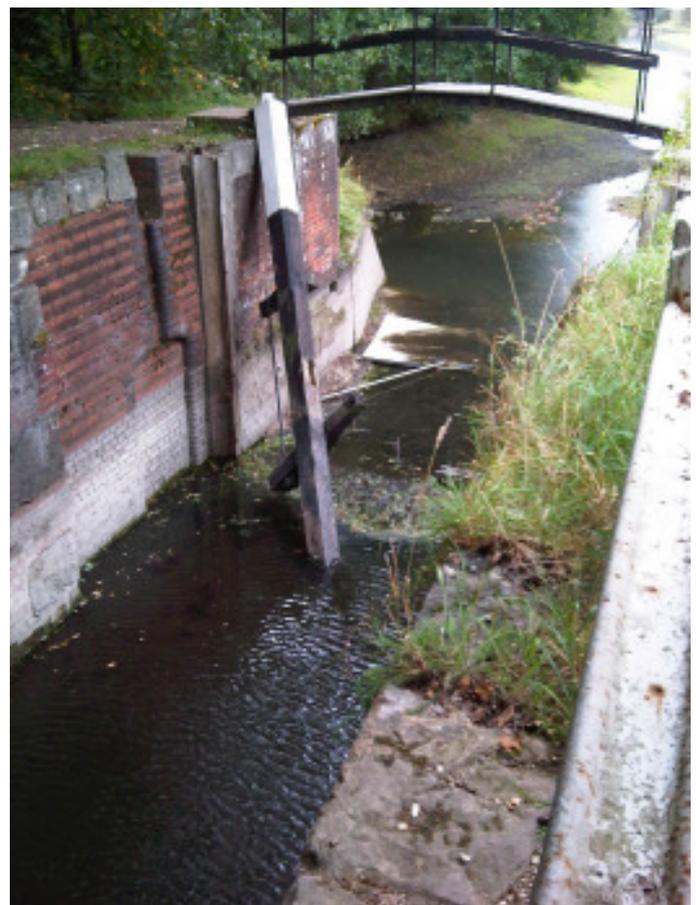
I have been meaning to write a few lines to express my dismay, anger but most of all sadness to see the slow demise (and if action is not taken now) the probable eventual second dereliction of the Basingstoke Canal. It is a very sad paradox to see the general dereliction and the lack of general maintenance; particularly between Deepcut and Woking. I'm sure a few litres of paint to restore a sign do not cost that much? What are the local authorities and governing bodies actually doing to deal with this terrible situation? I imagine that all those volunteers who gave up 1000's of hours of hard work and graft restoring the waterway only 20 years ago, are disheartened and disillusioned by what they see and read today.

I am not politically minded, motivated or other but it is plain to see that red tape and bureaucracy prevail over common sense. On reading your latest bulletin it is obvious that the society is just as frustrated. The current condition is an insult to those who have given up time / effort over the years and to those that are passionate about our heritage and the future. I feel that it is wholly unacceptable and abhorrent that a 'term contractor' has been appointed and work has still not started.

As stated my only motivation to write this correspondence is one of concern and anger. I have included some photographs that I have taken in the last few weeks. Similar pictures appear elsewhere, but the point is that this is what national and international visitors actually see. I wonder what HRH The Duke of Kent thinks about the situation?!

Yours faithfully,

J. Lehan



As can be seen elsewhere in this issue of the Newsletter, things are at last beginning to happen on the canal. The signs are certainly in need of replacement and need more than a bit of paint. They would be an ideal subject for some sponsorship and the Canal Society has someone looking into this possibility.

SHCS notes

200 Club

Congratulations to all the winners in the 200 Club prize draws; unfortunately the summer draw went astray in the last newsletter so here is the complete list for the whole year. Thank you for your participation; we raised £582 for Society funds this year but also gave the same amount away in prizes - lucky people. If you would like some of this cash next year, please complete the entry form included in this newsletter.

Jim Johnstone

February		April		June	
Mr D Paine	£49	Mr S Murrell	£49	Mrs J Tyrrell	£49
Mr DA Smith	£24	Mrs J Hunter	£24	Mr B Savill	£24
Mr N Mayne	£12	Mr JT Lyddon	£12	Mr J Riley	£12
Mrs E Gemson	£12	Mr J Debenham	£12	Miss P Ford-Young	£12
August		October		December	
Mr I Davey	£49	Mr D Lloydlangston	£49	Mrs MJ Marchant	£49
Mrs E Hawkins	£24	Mrs V Vine	£24	Mr J Meredith	£24
Mr T Dodwell	£12	Mr A Shilling	£12	Mrs J Tyrrell	£12
Mr DA Webber	£12	Mr A Stumpf	£12	Mr R Cobley	£12

Duncan and Ann Paine

Duncan and Ann Paine had had a 40th wedding anniversary recently and had requested donations to the Canal Society in lieu of presents. The result was a £220 donation.

Congratulations to Duncan and Ann and many thanks to them and their family and friends for the donation.

We have also received a donation of £204 from the family and friends of the late Mr & Mrs Marett Tims, who were great supporters of the canal, so thanks also to them.



Joan Dyson

1918-2011

Joan was made to join the Society, as her son Paul was one of the original founding Committee members.

However she rapidly became very much involved in our activities and was one of the leading lights of our first fund raising venture, a Jumble Sale, at Brookwood Village Hall. She proved her experience in these things.

Not long afterwards, she signed up as Society Newsletter deliverer for Normandy, Wyke and other parts, and for many years she was a familiar sight on her bicycle; it was not that long ago that she gave it up.

Sadly, she recently passed away and will be missed by her family, especially, Paul and Lisa, Val and Jane, and all her friends.

Jim Woolgar

SHCS information



The Bulletin is now at Issue 10. If you would like to receive it, please send your e-mail address to membership@basingstoke-canal.org.uk

Anyone interested in joining the Society should contact the Membership Secretary, Mrs Doreen Hornsey, whose contact details are 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 2012

Published by the Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society Ltd., a non-profit distributing company limited by guarantee, registered as a Charity. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Society. Executive members of the Committee are shown in bold type and Directors of the Society have an asterisk () after their name.*

Editorial Team: **Editor:** Roger Cansdale* 29 Knoill Road, Fleet, Hants GU51 4PT 01252-678608
e-mail: roger.cansdale@ntlworld.com

President:

Chairman: Philip Riley*
Vice-Chairman: Martin Leech*
Hon. Secretary: Gareth Jones*
Hon. Treasurer: Graham Hornsey*
& Gift Aid manager

Membership Secretary: Doreen Hornsey
Working Party Information: Janet Buckley
Trip Boat Manager: Peter Wright*
Trip Boat Bookings: Marion Gough
Events Organiser: Verna Smith*
Sales Manager & Mail Order Sales: Denise Smith
Exhibitions Manager: John Ross
Website Manager: Craig Shanks
Press Officer: Roger Cansdale*
External Talks Organiser: Roger Cansdale*
Lengthman Organiser: Graham Hornsey*
200 Club organiser: Jim Johnstone
Archivist: Rev David Tonkinson
Woking Organiser: Peter Coxhead
VP & Chobham talks: David Millett
Director: Kathryn Dodington*
Director: Dieter Jebens*
Director: Freddie Dawson*
Director: John Wall*

The officers of the Canal Society may be contacted by e-mail via the Society's website at

***www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk/directory.htm
or by telephone on 0796-4357442***

General Canal Society contact number: 0796-4357442

Basingstoke Canal Authority Canal Centre, Mytchett Place Road, Mytchett, Surrey GU16 6DD 01252-370073

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

A small token of our appreciation...



**PETER REDWAY
MEMORIAL DIG
BASINGSTOKE
CANAL 2011**