



The Basingstoke
Canal Society

Basingstoke Canal News

No. 238 Summer 2013





Editorial

I found myself with a choice of several photos for the cover of this issue, but in the end I decided that reopening of Deepcut was the major event for the Canal, and also, I couldn't resist the V-shaped exhaust plume from *Finch's* vintage Petter engine! *JP II* will be on the front cover next time, I promise.

Cover Picture : *Finch* heading up to Lock 25 after Deepcut finally re-opened at Easter. Photo: R Cansdale

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The new boat looks very nice and will, I'm sure, be a great hit with the customers and be easier for crews to operate. But I can't help feeling a bit sad, and sorry for the old *John Pinkerton*, which has served us so well for 35 years.

I've known it for half my life and we had so much fun together during the restoration years, doing the annual spring voyage of exploration into darkest Surrey as the canal gradually came back to life.

We also had some very memorable passenger trips, for a variety of reasons! A very successful party of Japanese visitors and a less successful party of Americans, who all went to sleep due to jet lag, spring to mind.

I do hope that the old girl goes to a good home, where she can continue to give pleasure to both passengers and crew and maybe continue to raise money for some good cause. Any ideas to Dick King please.

Chairman's AGM Report

I am pleased to report that the last 12 months have been a successful period both for the canal and for the Canal Society.

This time last year we were looking forward to celebrating the re-opening of the canal with a rally at Frimley Lodge Park. Unfortunately that was not to be as the work on the locks remained unfinished. However, after what seemed to us to be a slow start, the contractors began to make progress on the Deepcut and Brookwood Locks and, as we all know, this resulted in the re-opening of through navigation in March. The Canal Society has consistently emphasized to the owners of the canal the vital importance of keeping the navigation in full operation - if boats are unable to navigate through to Greywell the canal will eventually die and our support for it will fall away. We simply cannot afford to let the condition of the canal revert to the condition we faced 5 years ago when sections of the canal had almost reverted to their condition pre-restoration. In future we must be more vigilant and we must be prepared to act if we see the owners 'take their eyes off the ball'.

In that regard the indications are very encouraging. After incurring expenditure of about £1.7M for the essential repairs at Deepcut and Brookwood (plus some other culvert and bank protection work in both Surrey and Hampshire), the County Councils have now pledged a further £4M over the next 4 years to bring the canal back into full operating condition. These are large numbers and indicate to us that the Counties are really serious about securing the future of the canal.

The boat gathering at Brookwood over Christmas and the cruise up to Blacksmith's Bridge over the Easter holiday emphasized the importance of showing the public (who largely

Chairman's report

pay for the canal through their taxes) that the canal is a vibrant and active waterway. Great credit is due to Kathryn Dodington for organising these events which did more than anything else to put the Basingstoke back on the canal map.

As I mentioned in my report last year, new County officers with responsibility for the canal have been appointed in Surrey and Hampshire. I am pleased to report that our relationships with the Counties have improved considerably as a result of these appointments and there is no doubt, in my view, that we can achieve so much more if we work together with our local authority colleagues in a true spirit of partnership. As we have often pointed out, the Big Society on the Basingstoke Canal preceded the Government's initiative by at least 40 years!

Last autumn we welcomed Fiona Shipp as the new Canal Manager and, again, I can report that our relationship with the team at the Canal Centre is probably the closest it has ever been.

We have already heard from Dick King about our new trip boat which offers us the opportunity to build on the highly successful John Pinkerton operation developed over the last 35 years. I would like to add a couple of remarks to what Dick has said. Firstly, we should not underestimate the very considerable publicity which our trip boat operation generates. When the original John Pinkerton project was conceived, the trip boat was always seen (in addition to a generator of income) as an 'ambassador' for the canal. So much so that the 'John Pinkerton' name has become a brand in its own right. There is no doubt that the JP has been immensely successful in drawing people to the canal who would otherwise not know about it. Secondly I would like to convey my personal thanks to the team which worked on the design and construction of the new boat. From my personal

involvement, I know that there were many trials and tribulations (not to say sleepless nights) on the way so I think that the new boat is a great credit to the team led by Pete Phillips, Nigel Bird and John Abbot.

Towards the end of last year we completed the rather tortuous negotiations for the purchase of the historic barn at Colt Hill. This will provide our trip boat operation with an excellent permanent base and a mooring for our expanding fleet. A team is already very active in clearing up and repairing the barn and removing adjacent trees. I would like to express my thanks to Hampshire County Council for agreeing to sell the barn to us.

We will hear later from Martin about the activities of our work parties but I would like to stress, once again, the importance of our volunteer teams in carrying out work which, due to pressure on the BCA's resources, simply would not be done otherwise. Our volunteers also play a very useful role in enhancing the facilities offered by the canal, including constructing additional moorings and lock landings. The contribution of visiting groups is also very important and continues a tradition which dates back to the restoration period.

Over the past year, the Canal Society has made some other significant contributions to the canal. I would mention, in particular, the work of the Water Resources Group which, under the leadership of John How, has made significant progress in our understanding of the hydraulics of the canal (essentially understanding where all the water comes from and where it all goes to) and in examining ways in which the supply of water to the canal can be increased. There are no easy or quick solutions to this issue but we do need to find more water to enable the canal to remain open for the whole of the summer.

In recognition of the immense contribution to the canal made by the Redway family over many years, we were pleased to be able to name Lock 11 the Redway Lock. It was appropriate that the commemorative plaque was unveiled by Margurite Redway, whose passing last month we very much regret.

At the last AGM a proposal was made to change the name of the Society to 'The Basingstoke Canal Society'. This led to a decision by the Committee to embark on a wide-ranging re-branding (I hate the phrase) of the Society in recognition of the fact that we had made no changes to our house style since the Society was formed over 40 years ago. I appreciate that some of the changes have not met with universal approval but we have tried to strike a balance between our traditional values and a more modern and forward-looking style. From a personal point of view, I much prefer the name 'The Basingstoke Canal Society' which is easier to say and instantly conveys exactly who we are. I would particularly like to thank Stuart Black and Martin for the very considerable effort that they have put into the re-branding exercise which has taken many months to bring to fruition.

Finally can I thank all the members of the Committee for their support throughout the year and for all their hard work in sustaining the Society as the Guardian of the canal. Given the investment being made by the County Councils and the renewed commitment to maintain the canal as an operating navigation I think the canal can look forward to a bright future.

Philip Riley
Chairman

May 2013

The Society's Annual General Meeting again took place in the Deepcut Village Hall. With over 50 people present numbers were a bit down on last year's high but it was an interesting afternoon thanks to the speakers.

After approval of the minutes of last year's meeting, our new Treasurer, Guy Faller, took us through the accounts for last year. These showed a surplus of over £60,000, compared to last year's deficit. This was due to a large legacy that we received from our late member David Enticknap, a grant from Hart DC, larger Boat Company profits and lower Work Party expenditure of Society money.

Guy stated that he was satisfied that we had sufficient funds to further our objectives and that after paying for the new boat and the barn at Colt Hill, there would still be over £70,000 in the bank. He thanked Graham Hornsey for his work as Treasurer. The accounts were accepted and the accountants reappointed.



The Robin Higgs Award went to Kathryn Dodington in recognition of all her efforts to promote boating on the canal.

Society Accounts for 2012

Summary of Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2012

<u>Income and Expenditure Account</u>	2012	2011
	£	£
Income		
Subscriptions	10,392	10,537
Donations - general	5,048	4,246
Bequest	41,156	-
Grant received	5,352	-
Profit of boat company	28,732	22,773
200 Club profit	869	606
Other fundraising income	706	275
Interest received	5,460	2,536
	<u>97,715</u>	<u>40,973</u>
Less expenditure		
Projects and working parties	(8,782)	(22,279)
Newsletter production and postage	(5,052)	(5,053)
Stationery and office costs	(1,881)	(708)
Insurance	(4,735)	(4,905)
Depreciation less profit on sale of asset	(3,964)	(4,325)
Equipment maintenance	(1,745)	(2,323)
Rallies and events	(6,086)	(1,599)
Accountants' fee	(1,740)	(1,840)
Other expenditure	(2,991)	(4,983)
	<u>(36,976)</u>	<u>(48,015)</u>
Net income/(deficit)	<u>60,739</u>	<u>(7,042)</u>
<u>Balance Sheet</u>		
Fixed assets		
Investment in subsidiary company	101	100
Freehold land & buildings	50,412	-
Plant & equipment	8,272	11,057
Amounts due from subsidiary company		
Loans - JPCC	107,150	-
SHCC	8,000	8,000
Profit for year - SHCC	9,922	22,772
Other debtor	-	352
Cash at bank and in hand	140,411	221,881
Accrued expenses	(2,407)	(3,040)
Net assets	<u>321,861</u>	<u>261,122</u>
General fund	238,027	182,640
Restricted fund	9,081	3,729
Designated fund - John Pinkerton replacement fund	71,213	71,213
Other	3,540	3,540
Total funds	<u>321,861</u>	<u>261,122</u>

Canal Society Annual

The Society's Committee still had a full complement of 12 members, with Dick King, Jeff Hill and Kevin Redway replacing Dieter Jebens, Kathryn Dodington and Peter Wright.

This concluded the formal business of the AGM.



We then had a talk from Mike Rodd (*above*), who stepped down as Chairman of the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust earlier this year. He spoke about the relationship between the newly formed Canal & River Trust that has taken over BW's role managing most of the country's canals, and the Canal Societies and their volunteers.

He began by saying that he had boated the Basingstoke, courtesy of Galleon Marine, and he was particularly complementary about John Dodwell, the brother of our President, who he said was by far the most visible of CRT's Directors to boaters.

Mike clearly had some major concerns but emphasised that there was no "Plan B" - the

setup had to be made to work.

His main worries were the effects of funding shortfalls and the need to get rid of the bureaucracy that had been inherited from BW.

The need for CRT to increase its income was having a number of unfortunate effects. Moorings had been sold to private companies, making life difficult for visiting boats. Disingenuous attempts to recruit "Friends of CRT" to the detriment of existing Canal Societies. He also feared that canals such as the Mon & Brec with its history of expensive repairs and the isolated Bridgewater & Taunton with its few boats might be at risk from some future financial squeeze. CRT would be under no obligation to take on any of the canals currently being restored and certainly would not do so without an endowment to pay for their upkeep. The Cotswold Canals and the Wilts & Berks were doing a lot of work to enhance their potential financial viability.

The consultants employed to produce the report that led to the formation of the CRT had not spoken to any of the 200 or so canal societies. The ongoing bureaucracy, couple with heavy-handed Health & Safety management was causing problems with volunteers. Mike hoped that the new CRT Chairman might sort this out, because it was vital for CRT to work with the volunteers of the various societies.

In answer to questions, Mike said that if a dowry was found to enable CRT to take on the Basingstoke Canal, it would probably not be automatically ringfenced. He thought that the canal societies needed to be better organised to work together to sort out a way ahead with CRT; Robin Higgs' Southern

General Meeting

Canals Association was an example of how this might be done.

All in all, it was a very interesting talk. His concerns mirrored on a national scale many of the concerns and difficulties that we have had on the Basingstoke.

The Boat Company report from Dick King followed after a refreshment break. He paid tribute to the hard work of the crews and all concerned which had resulted in the second highest profit ever.

After much careful planning the JP II had been successfully launched at Colt Hill (*see photo on back cover*), and the initial MCA survey had gone well. It was hoped to have the boat ready for full use by the beginning of June and the official naming would be done by Sally Taylor of BBC South Today at 11.30am on Sunday 2nd June.

Dick thanked the JP II team for all their hard work.



L to R: John Abbott, Steve Lambon, Mark Thomas, Pete Phillips, Nigel Bird & Dick King.

Philip Riley then gave his Chairman's report (*see pages 2 to 4*).

A summary of the Work Party's operations over the last year came from Martin Leech. Although they had spend less of the Society's money than in 2011, this was because the work on the Frimley towpath had been paid for with money that had come via Surrey Heath, and some other material costs had been met by the BCA. The jobs tackled included

- Completion of towpath at Runways's End
- Completion of Lock 1 landing stage
- Extensive bankside clearance work
- Canal debris removal (bicycles and shopping trolleys)
- Frimley Green towpath repair
- Ash Lock towpath repair (WRG)
- Lock 19 piling and Lock 19 & 22 brickwork repair (WRG)
- BCA weed-cutter repairs
- Work on the Colt Hill barn and landing



Above: The Work Party making good use of the *Alan Flight* workboat to do offside bank clearance work.

An Operational Update from Phil Allen of Hampshire County Council was the final item of the afternoon. (*see next page*)

Operational Update from

Phil began by thanking all those who had been involved in making the reopening at Easter happen. He particularly thanked Kathryn Dodington and Jon Green. Jon had made a huge personal effort that included strimming whole pounds to remove weeds before they were refilled, and unblocking bypass channels at some risk to himself.

Future Capital Schemes in Hampshire were

- Culvert repairs
- Weir/slucice additions and improvements (flood plan)
- Further strategic stop plank grooves (flood plan)
- Soft bank protection and towpath repairs
- Strategic tree management to avoid breaches (linked to HLS)
- Hard bank protection (Swan Bridge)
- Emergency stand-by contract
- Telemetry (water, user data)
- Non-Highways bridges

and in Surrey

- Mytchett Lake
- Weir/slucice additions and improvements (flood plan)
- Strategic tree management to avoid breaches (linked to HLS)
- Emergency stand-by contract
- Telemetry (water, user data)

Many of these were self-explanatory but Phil mentioned that Mytchett Lake was classed as a reservoir under the 1976 Reservoirs Act and the embankment had been assessed as being in need of reinforcement; £800k had been set aside for this work this year.

A formal Flood Plan was being produced to detail the action needed in the event of a breach.

There was to be a practice Emergency Exercise next month.

Repairs to a culvert near the North Warnborough Lift Bridge were nearing completion. Dyer & Butler had used their linkable pontoons to provide a work platform for an excavator.



Stop plank grooves had now been fitted at Pondtail and Coxheath Road Bridges (*below*) in Fleet. The new grooves had been deliberately positioned outside the bridges to enable planks to be inserted by rangers working on both sides of the canal.



Phil then came to the current burning issue - the Dogmersfield bank slip.

Phil Allen (HCC Team Leader)

The slip had first been reported by one of the Canal Society's lengthsmen, Rus Slater, on 25th March, who noticed cracks in the towpath.

Jon Green, the Head Ranger came out to inspect and decided that the navigation and towpath had to close. Sadly, this meant that the visiting boats at Easter were unable to reach Odiham, but further slippage occurred over the next week or two despite the felling of all the trees on the embankment.



Above: The slip is clearly to be seen just beyond the gabion wall on the right of the photo that was installed in 1982 to fix the previous slip.

Below: Offside slip with pipe installed to allow water flow in the event of further slippage blocking the canal completely.



In fact there were slips on both sides of the canal. The cause was almost certainly the prolonged heavy rain that had produced an underlying layer of clay and sand that had the consistency of melted peanut butter. An estimated 4000 tons of material had moved.

Core samples have been taken using a drilling rig (*below*) to establish where the slip plane is.



Laser targets had been fixed on either bank to enable precise distance measurements to be made. If engineers can be satisfied that no further slippage is taking place, it may be possible to reopen the canal for some navigation while repairs are planned.

Options for repair include another gabion wall tied into the previous one or re-profiling the cutting. Piling is not favoured because this could result in water being retained in the bank leading to further problems.

Progress meetings were taking pace at least once a week and the problem was being given very high priority.

Phil was thanked for his update. He may derive some amusement from the next page.

Basingstoke Canal 1804

Basingstoke Canal Office,

*Hambro Wharf, the Bottom of Queen Street,
Cheapside.*

February 16th, 1804

THE rainy, and tempestuous Weather, which has prevailed through the last, and present Months, has been near proving Destructive to various Parts of the Canal, particularly at Mitchet, and Ash Valley. In these Places the bursting of the Banks, would have been productive of immense Loss, by overflowing all the neighbouring Lands, and from the great height of the River above the Level of the Country, in those Parts, the renewal of the Banks, would have been difficult, and extremely expensive.

Fortunately, and through the diligence of RICHARD ALLEN, the principal Surveyor, no serious Accident has happened, and the only Loss the Company has experienced, consists in the Expence incurred by employing Twelve or more extra Hands for the space of about Two Months, first in supporting, and afterwards in repairing, and strengthening the Parts that had been strained, and injured.—When these Objects shall be completed, the Men will return to their Employment of lightening the Banks at Gruel (*Greywell*). That vast Mass of Clay, in the Year 1794, sunk down and filled up the Canal, for the space of more than One Hundred Yards, and it has lately threatened a similar Catastrophe, having laid the Piles and Planks, with which it was attempted to be restrained, almost flat, and actually reduced the Channel, to half its Width. Its further Progress however is stopped, and after removing a few Thousand more Loads of Earth from behind, and taking out what has encroached on the Canal, Mr. ALLEN thinks he can put in such a stay, as will prevent its ever moving further; he then proposes going on with repairing, or rather rebuilding the Wing Walls,

and Sides of the Locks, which to the Disgrace of the Contractor, as well as of the Company's then resident Engineer, and Inspector, are put together, excepting the outer layer of Bricks, with a Composition of Sand, and Rubbish, almost without Lime. Thus owing to the unfavourable Nature of the Strata, through which a Part of the Canal runs; to the inequalities of the Ground, requiring Works of immense Magnitude, and from the Locks being put together with bad Materials, the expences for Repairs, and Works, during almost the whole of the last Year, but particularly during the Two last Quarters, has been prodigiously great; yet even under these Circumstances, and with a considerable diminution of the Trade, the Committee are happy in acquainting the Proprietors, that there has still been, at the End of every Quarter, a small surplus, which will be employed in farther reducing the old Debt. As such a Season as this has been, can hardly soon again happen, and the Trade is manifestly reviving, the present, and future Years, may reasonably be expected to be more productive than the last.

Nothing changes!

The bank slip referred to was just west of the Greywell Tunnel. Despite Mr Allen's hopes, it did move again as we can see today.

I wonder if Richard Allen was any relation of Hampshire County Council's Phil Allen? It would be nice if a family tradition of dealing with the Basingstoke's problems was still continuing.

The report is part of a small collection dating from 1797 to 1818 that was obtained by Eric Stokes when writing a history of Basingstoke, and passed to us by Derek Wren.

Easter re-opening

Although the contractors had been working on the canal for nearly eighteen months, there was still a lot to be done at the beginning of the year when the request for an Easter cruise up the whole of the canal was made. The decision by the BCA and the Counties to support this was therefore quite a brave one, that may have given them some cause for regret as the deadline approached!

However, everybody got stuck in, including the Society's volunteers, who provided transport for 4 lock gates from St. John's to Lock 13 (*Below: Passing Redway Cottages*).



Things did, however, go right down to the wire, with the BCA's little trip boat Rosebud doing a trial run down the Deepcut flight only a couple of days before Easter (*Below: Leaving Lock 25*).



This went fairly smoothly until they reached Lock 15 at the bottom of the Deepcut flight, where the need to replace a cill board and one of the paddle rods was discovered. As a result, Good Friday saw contractors Dyer and Butler and BCA staff still at work.



Ranger Sara Green was in her usual role as resident water nymph, up to her neck in near freezing water, albeit in a dry suit, fixing the paddle rod; still not a lot of fun though.

However, the locks did open for the Easter cruise and the 22 visiting boats had no major problems with them.

A great credit to the BCA staff, Dyer & Butler's men and everyone else who helped.

A great team effort!



Return to the Basingstoke

It was really just a throwaway remark in a phone call to my friend Rodney who was on the other side of the world in New Zealand: shall we do a Basingstoke at Christmas to Brookwood village and then one again to the top at Easter?

Well we did the Christmas cruise without any issues and managed to obtain the blessing of the Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA), the two Counties and the Chair of the JMC to have a go at Deepcut over Easter. We publicised the cruise on the Byfleet Boat Club (BBC) website, we had the support of the National Trust who contacted Wey based boaters and we called our friends and colleagues in the waterways fraternity.

A short time later we had 47 boats ready to go, some of whom could only commit to either Woking or Brookwood but the vast majority were on for the limit of the navigation. As luck would have it the Thames was on red boards for most of March and the weather forecast was chilly, not to put too fine a point on it, so we ended up with 22 boats ready to accept the challenge of Deepcut.

The BCA moved heaven and earth to get the canal navigable over the four major flights of locks (Woodham, St Johns, Brookwood and Deepcut) and through the Society and the Basingstoke Canal Boating Club (BCBC) we had volunteers available to help with, and caulk, the locks.

The first group of boats assembled at Lock 1 on Maundy Thursday and made swift work of the flight. On the Friday the first group tackled St Johns whilst the second group started at Woodham. The big push, and the one that created most interest, was the challenge of



Deepcut as no boat, apart from a BCA test trip the previous week, had traversed this flight in over four years. There was intense interest in the cruise, with a number of waterways publications sending reporters to witness the first 15 boats to go up Deepcut.



Above: Boats at Deepcut Top Lock 28

There were a few issues but none that caused too much concern. By 6:30pm we had 15 boats moored in Potters Pub in Mytchett with a further seven expected the following day. There was quite a celebration in Potters that evening tinged with a little sadness that *Rowan* had experienced what we thought was, and turned out to be, a major engine malfunction on the way up Deepcut. In true boating style Mike and Lorraine Skeet on *Winging It* made sure

The Easter Cruise

Rowan arrived at the Canal Centre.



The following day the remaining seven boats made it to Potters (*Above*) whilst some of the first 15 made their way towards Hampshire.



Above: Rodney Wardlaw back in Hampshire at last at Ash Lock.

We had been advised that we were not to travel past Blacksmith's Bridge winding hole due to a slippage at Dogmersfield. A bit sad but we had made it up Deepcut and safety comes before anything. We all had a wonderful time proving the Basingstoke, despite the intense cold, was fit for purpose and no worse than a number of well-travelled waterways.

Ray Oakhill on *Stronghold* stepped forward

to take *Rowan* in tow for the trip back to Pyrford Marina (*Below*) – there was no one better to show the true spirit of boating than Ray, who has a huge amount of experience with the Narrowboat Trust on *Brighton* and *Nuneaton*.



There's no doubt the Basingstoke is fit for purpose; the boaters had a wonderful time, we proved to the waterways community nationwide that the Basingstoke is open for business and we thank the BCA, the Counties and all the volunteers for their professionalism, their enthusiasm, their sense of humour and their plain hard work. It is now up to the BCA to keep the canal navigable and to the boaters to support that initiative and use this lovely canal and preserve it as a navigable waterway for the future.

Kathryn Dodington

The good news now is that at the time of producing this newsletter, a further 14 visiting boats have already come up the canal since Easter. Let's hope that they keep coming because the more the canal gets used, the easier it becomes.

Letters

Dear Sir,

I wonder if I am alone in being very disappointed with the new Society Logo. So ordinary. The previous logo, which echoed the design of the 1789 John Pinkerton shilling token, was distinctive and well-known throughout the waterway world.

It is also very dispiriting that the new Trip Boat has no access for the disabled. Surely, a missed opportunity for real change for the better – not just change for change's sake.

Perhaps, in future, Society members should be consulted when such important irrevocable decisions are to be made.

Yours faithfully

Janet Greenfield

It is also very disappointing that Mrs Greenfield seems to think that the Committee makes decisions without consulting members. Society members are, and were, consulted, but it is still the Committee's duty to run the Society. If members are not happy with the way this is done, then it is up to them to get elected to the Committee or to get people elected to the Committee who will do it differently.

We were well aware that there was an attachment to the old Society logo, but the main purpose of a logo is to advertise to the public what the Society is about and a square rigged sailing boat does not say "Canal" to most people. The change was not made for change's sake but to try to promote the Society and recruit new members, without whom the Society will cease to exist.

We also thought very long and hard about disabled access on the new boat. Had it been just a question of fitting a lift somewhere, it might have been possible to do this, but doing this then means that all sorts of other regulations have to be complied with, relating to things like the width of aisles. Altogether these would have reduced the boat's passenger carrying capacity by about a third.

The Boat Company already has to spend thousands of pounds and huge amounts of time on certification of the boat and its crews and disabled access would require extra specific disabled-handling training. The whole operation is already very arduous for volunteers to cope with and it is greatly to the credit of the Boat Company that it still does, but there is always the last straw that breaks the camel's back.

There is also the point that there are already two boats operating from Colt Hill that are specifically designed for the disabled, Dawn and Madame Butterfly, from whom we don't want to take business. In fact, we actively encourage the use of our "sister operation" in the JP brochure.

The Pinkerton's main purpose is to raise funds for the Society and the Canal, so with great regret, it was reluctantly decided that it would have to do without a lift. Hopefully, the different access into the boat from the stern deck will make it easier to get wheelchairs in and out on the few occasions when this is necessary. There may be other things that can be done to improve this further - it's early days yet for the JP II!

Letters

Dear Philip,

I was dumbfounded this afternoon when my name was announced as the recipient of the Robin Higgs award. I'll never forget to come to committee meetings again!

I feel very honoured to be considered worthy of such a prestigious award and would just repeat that I only did what I thought was right each and every time I was entrusted to do something for the Society.

It's been a pleasure to work with all of you and I shall look back on my time spent standing up

for the Basingstoke as rewarding time, well spent and I thank you all for the opportunity to have had something so worthwhile on which to expend my energies.

I would like to extend an invitation to any member of the Society, who finds himself or herself in Stoke Bruerne, to knock on my door where a warm welcome awaits them.

Kind Regards

Kathryn

EVENTS

MIKRON THEATRE COMPANY

Date: Sunday 28th July 2013

Time: 1.00pm

Venue: Fleet Football Club Clubroom,
Calthorpe Park, Crookham Road,
Fleet, GU51 5FA

Show:

DON'T SHOOT THE MESSENGER
Adventures in the post

Did you know?

The Isle of Tonga once issued a stamp in the shape of a banana, Australia issued a stamp cut like a gem designed to glow in the post. Bhutan issued one in the shape of a record that played the national anthem on a record player.

When a gun toting hoodlum holds up a village post office, the Postmasters want justice...of the restorative kind, by any means necessary.

But can a comical journey through five centuries of postal history rehabilitate the rascally rogue? And what of the Postmasters' own motives - a noble act of public service or the desperation of the doomed? Will they get closure or just get closed?

A story of deliveries and deliverance.

Come along by car or on foot to the Fleet Football Club and enjoy another Mikron masterpiece. The Society always looks forward to their annual visit and a good attendance will be appreciated. A collection will be made on exit.

Make a diary note now so you do not miss the show. Bar available.

For further information contact David Millett on 01252 617364 or Roger Cansdale on 01252 678608.

Launch of the

The delivery of a new boat to the canal always needs careful planning but seldom can it have caused so many sleepless nights as that of the Society's new trip boat. Original plans to launch at Farnborough Road were wrecked by the bank slip at Dogmersfield and the options were immediately narrowed down to the Odiham or Winchfield area.

Barley Mow was ruled out because of the difficulty of getting a crane close enough to the canal. Hoisting the boat off the Bypass Bridge at Odiham would have been physically possible but for the difficulty and long time scale necessary to get permission to disrupt such a major road. That just left Colt Hill itself.

When the John Pinkerton was launched in 1977, the Odiham Bypass did not exist and the lorry and crane were able to come straight down from Hartley Wintney and turn off only the land beside the canal. Today this is no longer possible, so the only option was to come down Odiham High Street and turn down past the Water Witch and over Colt Hill Bridge.

Would this be strong enough? Could the vehicles get round the right angle bend at the bottom?

Happily HCC's engineers confirmed that the old bridge was strong enough and the driver of the lorry reckoned it would go round. Even more happily, they were both proved right on the day.

The crane arrived early in the morning and was set up on the towpath. Local residents had been asked to all park on one side of the London Road, but there was still a good deal of nervousness as the massive lorry made its way



down to and then over the bridge. (*Above*)

The turn at the bottom of the road was made very slowly and was clearly a very tight squeeze even with the lorry being able to steer all its back wheels. (*Below*)



The lorry then went down to the end of the car park and even more carefully reversed all the way up to the edge of the canal. A gate way and concrete posts had been temporarily removed by the Society work party.

The actual lift and launch went without any problem (*see back cover*) and the boat settled nicely into the canal looking as if the ballasting was exactly right. (*Right*)

John Pinkerton II

The builders were clearly delighted with the way the boat looked and I was very pleased to find that the cabin allowed my 6ft 4½in frame to stand upright with room to spare! Despite this, the JP II is no higher than the old boat, as the photo of them moored together at the barn shows. (Below)



The cabin is fitted out very nicely, with tables that can be folded away when not needed.



Once the launch proceedings were complete, the team took the boat over to Galleon Marine to fill up with fuel and then had an inaugural trip to Barley Mow and back (Below).



About a week later, the Maritime & Coastguard Agency came to do their inspection and granted the JP II a licence to operate subject to a few minor items being sorted.

John Ross has been hard at work when the weather has been suitable and has completed the signwriting.



Sally Taylor will be formally naming the boat at 11.30am on Sunday 2nd June and it will then swing into operation. All that remains then is to find a buyer for the old *John Pinkerton*.

The Basingstoke Canal and

Dear Mr Cansdale,

I am a member of a number of waterway societies, including the SHCS as from 2006. I have family in Fleet. I have been asked to advise the Society through Philip Riley and David Millett in the past (2006 to 2008).

Since April 2011, I have been following the creation of the body that is now known as the Canal and River Trust (CRT) and, as a member of the Society, communicated then with Gareth Jones on the likely implications for the Society and the Canal.

Overt recent weeks I have been preparing an analysis of the combined effect of the Articles of Association of CRT and the documents signed by CRT and the SoS (DEFRA). Such analysis together with its references is some 20 pages long.

I will be writing to Gareth Jones with a copy of such analysis in case it may assist the Committee in their deliberations.

However, I have produced a one-page note that is, I trust, addressed to the interests of the Basingstoke Canal and of the Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society Ltd.

I enclose a copy.

Yours sincerely

John Burrell

John has for many years acted as a legal advisor to both the Society and the IWA. His note is printed here. Some of his concerns echo those expressed at our AGM by Mike Rodd.

What might happen if the ownership of the Basingstoke Canal were to be transferred to the Canal and River Trust

At present, the Basingstoke Canal is owned - each as to the part that is in their respective area - by the two County Councils (Surrey and Hampshire) and receives financial contributions from the six District Councils along its length.

Central Government has transferred the ownership of the former British Waterways Board [BWB] owned canals to a company known as the Canal and River Trust [CRT]. CRT has the legal capacity to take on other canals if the present owners thereof wish it to do so.

CRT has entered into a number of documents with the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) that, together, give the SoS greater control over the activities, properties, plans, proposals and finances of company CRT than she ever had over the former statutory BWB. Under one of the documents the SoS can transfer the ownership of the waterways from CRT to another company.

There are no members of the company, CRT, other than the up to 50 'A' Class Members, plus the SoS as the sole 'B' Class Member. In a number of circumstances, the SoS, as such 'B' Class Member, has 'Special Powers' over CRT that enable her to get rid of the Directors and the 'A' Class Members.

A present major source of income to CRT is an annual payment from the SoS conditional upon CRT meeting a large number of pre-agreed standards relating to such waterways.

the Canal & River Trust

The SoS has announced that she is mindful of transferring the responsibility for the inland waterways presently administered by the Environment Agency to CRT in 2015.

CRT itself - and the SoS, both, as its 'B' Class Member, and as a party to the other documents - would need to be satisfied that CRT would receive sufficient additional income to meet both the running costs of the Basingstoke Canal and the financial implications of any major disaster thereto. Such suggests that the Canal would need a substantial dowry from its present owners or some other source.

If it should be that the Basingstoke Canal came to be part of CRT the control and financial responsibility would have been switched from the local authorities in whose areas it exists to a company that is, while ostensibly independent, in practice controlled by Central Government.

The Society may consider that the present ownership by the relevant local authorities is better for the Basingstoke Canal than would be an ownership by the Canal and River Trust or any replacement therefor. It will also recognise that should members of the Society be invited to become 'Associate Members' or 'Friends' of CRT they will have no voting rights therein. If the Society itself were to be invited to nominate one of the 50 'A' Class Members it may think that the influence of the latter is extremely limited, both as such and because of the powers of the SoS over CRT.

It is worth remembering that the Society already has no actual voting rights on the Joint Management Committee under the current arrangement. The main argument for putting the Basingstoke under the CRT's management would be the practical one of being able to make use CRT's professional expertise and equipment for operating and maintaining waterways.

Basingstoke & Deane Canoe Club

There has been good news for the Basingstoke & Deane Canoe Club, who operate on the canal from Colt Hill, Odiham.

They acquired the land next to the wharf, opposite Galleon Marine, some years ago with a view to building a clubhouse there and received planning permission for this in 2008. Now Hart District Council has approved a grant of £60,000 to the club.

Earlier this year Sport England said that they

too would support a request for grant aid if other partners such as the district council did likewise. Now that Hart has done so, the future looks promising for the canoe club.

They have already cleared the site and planted saplings to form a hedge round the boundary.

The clubhouse will have changing rooms, toilets, kitchen, classroom and storage for members' boats, and will cater for the disabled.

Just a thought -

Canal Centre

At the last meeting of the Joint Management Committee there was a brief presentation of the results of a study by Colliers International of options for the Mytchett Canal Centre.

Their preferred option was for major capital investment in a new Canal Centre building, café/bistro and a new Amenity Block. More ambitious suggestions included a maze attraction and an artificial surf lagoon!

Although I don't disagree with the recommended option, I can't help feeling a bit disappointed by this study. The more imaginative ideas don't really go particularly well with the canal and they have missed one which I think would fit in very nicely.

How about a craft centre, formed of a collection

of small units, in which local people could practice crafts such as traditional canal painting (John Ross could run courses), pottery (how about "Mytchett ware" for boats instead of the traditional, but, in my view, hideous Measham ware?), wood work (plenty of local timber), glass blowing and engraving, jewellery making, etc. This could start in a fairly modest way and expand if it was a success. There is a huge demand for high quality hand made products, as we saw when we went to the Craft & Design Fair at RHS Wisley over the May Bank Holiday. Come to think of it, the Canal Centre would make a good venue for that too.

Such a craft centre would be less likely to raise objections from local residents than some of the more boisterous ideas and could provide a great visitor attraction for the Canal Centre.

WANTED – “Professional Volunteers”

We are not after people who make a profession out of being a volunteer, but people with expertise derived from their professional life, who could apply it as a volunteer.

The Canal Society finds itself increasingly in need of specialist skills for things like fund raising, dealing with planning applications affecting the canal, organising events and exhibitions, producing this newsletter, etc. Even where we already have people covering some of these roles, they have often doing the job for a

great many years and would like to take a break.

We would like to have a register of members to whom we could appeal for help when a need arises.

If you have any skills or competencies that you think might be of use to the Society, please let us know. Contact Doreen Hornsey or any of the Committee who might be concerned with your particular interest.

On the Canal

New BCA Ranger



Welcome to Alexander Foy. He has previously been working on the Isle of Wight and replaces James Emmett on the BCA team.

World's largest fishing rod seen at Colt Hill



The huge crane that launched the JP II fishing for whales (or maybe just attempting to retrieve a cover that had blown into the canal).

FOR SALE

23ft Springer narrow boat for sale in very good order. BSS Certificate to 2016. Inboard 10 HP Mitsubishi/Thornycroft engine.

Contact John Abbott on 01252 621496 for further details.



BCS goodbye & hello

Margurite Redway

It is very sad to report that we have lost Margurite Redway. She had been feeling unwell for some time but passed away peacefully in her sleep a few weeks ago.

Margurite did a great deal for the canal, both by winning the £5000 prize in a national competition that funded the start of the restoration of the St John's flight, and perhaps more by her constant support for Pete and Kev in all their canal activities. She had a very warm personality and will be greatly missed. Kev and Ian have all our sympathy.



Above: Margurite and Pete on the Pinkerton at the opening of the St John's locks in 1988.

Bob Power

It was also sad to hear that Bob Power had died unexpectedly in hospital after a short illness. He had been one of the stalwarts of the Boat Company, taking care of the mechanical maintenance of the John Pinkerton, and will be much missed by his friends.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY REPORT

Many thanks to all those of our members who responded promptly and have paid their 2013 subscriptions. If you are among those who have not done so would you kindly let me have your payment as soon as possible. As a reminder, the subs due are as follows: Adult: £10, Family: £12, Senior (single): £5, Senior (pair): £7, Group: £15.

I would very much appreciate you paying your outstanding subscription or letting me know that you no longer wish to be a member in order to save the expense of having to send out reminders.

A warm welcome to the following members who have joined us in the last few months:

B Yost of Alabama USA
Arthur & Margaret Cosgrove of Fleet
David Arnold of Epsom
Roger Coombes of Yateley
Susan Mepham of Deepcut
P West of Winchester
Michael & Ruth Woolfson of Fleet
Robert Clifford of Woking

Doreen Hornsey
Membership Secretary

E-Mail: Membership@basingstoke-canal.org.uk

Right: Bob on the John Pinkerton



BCS information



The Bulletin is now up to Issue 18. If you want to keep up with the latest news about the canal, please send your e-mail address to

membership@basingstoke-canal.org.uk

To join the Society, please 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.

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JP II craned in at Colt Hill



The Canal Society's new trip boat "John Pinkerton II" was launched at Odiham on 30th April.