



The Basingstoke
Canal Society

Basingstoke Canal News

No. 241 Spring 2014





Editorial

In recent years, the Basingstoke Canal seemed to be developing a reputation for not being very user-friendly, and the restricted opening times trialled last year were not universally welcomed, although they did allow the canal to stay open throughout the year with about 100 visiting boats.

So it is very good to see the BCA's draft proposals for the 2014 navigation days (*Page 5*), which address many of the criticisms and should make for much more flexible cruising.

Well done!

* * * * *

Well done also to the BCA staff who have had to contend with appalling weather conditions in the last 3 months.

They have had to deal with something of the order of a hundred fallen trees plus other minor damage and have been on 24 hour standby

to monitor and control water levels to ensure that no overtopping of the banks occurred. On occasions I gather that the level of the canal has risen overnight by about 6 inches during some of the storms.

Nice to know that the work of the BCA staff during the last year has been recognised by Hampshire County Council with a staff award.

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Congratulations also to Rangers Jon and Sara Green, who are expecting a baby girl in May!

On the Membership page (22), there is a list of Situations Vacant. Four are listed - Secretary, Newsletter Editor, Events Organiser and Chobham Organiser.

The Secretary post is an essential one because we are a limited company. No secretary, no company, no Canal Society - simple as that.

The newsletter is our only means of communicating with many members of the Society who are not connected to the Internet. Even if it were to become a collection of articles from Martin Leech's excellent email bulletins, it would still need someone to assemble them. Martin has more than enough to do without taking that on as well.

We don't have a huge number of events, but they do play a vital part in showing our face to the public. We need a coordinator to act as a focal point and head up a small team to organise these.

The Chobham talks during the winter months continue to be very popular and David Millett does a great job of finding interesting speakers. Peter Coxhead has been managing the other aspects for many years - booking and opening the hall, organising the raffle, etc. We need to find someone to take over this job or the talks will cease after this season.

We have done quite well in recent years in finding new people to join the Committee, but we need some more now to take on these, and other jobs. If you are interested, please get in touch with someone on the Committee. The future of the Society is in your hands.

Chairman's report

My appearances (fairly rare I'm afraid!) on recent BCS work parties have prompted me to look back over the volunteer support that the Canal Society has provided since the canal re-opened over 20 years ago. In those heady days, it was expected that the Canal Partnership would be able to cover the maintenance costs of the canal without the need for the volunteers to undertake day to day maintenance. The Canal Society therefore decided, at the time, that it would concentrate on improvements to the canal leaving the essential maintenance, including both routine work and repairs to the canal structures, to the BCA and the County Councils.

This led to our promotion of the back-pumping project at Woodham and to the construction, by our volunteers, of the pumping scheme at St John's. Work was also concentrated on improvements to the towpath and the provision of additional facilities for boat owners including landing stages and wharves.

However, as the canal entered its third decade since the re-opening, it became clear to us that available resources were insufficient to maintain the canal in proper condition; this was coupled with a significant reduction in the size of the BCA's ranger force. We therefore decided to shift the emphasis of our work from improvements to assisting the BCA in regular maintenance. This has included bank side clearance and repairs to towpaths and bank side protection. Recently the work party has been sawing up and removing the trees that were taken down at the Dogmersfield slip, hopefully clearing the way for repair work.

We have also helped the BCA to get important items of plant back into operation by repairing

the weedcutter and paying for replacement parts for the dredger. Repairs to some of the structures, including work on the locks at Deepcut, have been undertaken by volunteers from the Waterway Recovery Group. We are also pleased to support the much increased effort by the BCA to use volunteers more extensively and we have been instrumental in organising the Lengthsmen Scheme (under the very effective leadership of Mike Gordon) which now is the 'eyes and ears' of the BCA.

Taking a broad view of all this activity, I think it is true to say that, since the completion of the restoration, volunteer input into the canal is now as high as it has ever been. I also feel that our relationships with the BCA and the Counties are significantly improved – I think we all realise that we each have much to give to the canal and this is the essence of the canal partnership.

As I write this in mid February, we have news of further bank slips at Dogmersfield. It appears that both sides of the cutting have now moved further towards the canal restricting the navigation channel even more than the slip which occurred last spring. Our 2014 programme for *JP2* could be affected by this development as the boat is scheduled to run trips for the Farnborough air show in July and to make a brief visit to Surrey. We also need to get *JP1* to the dry dock for an inspection prior to its sale. We are still assessing the position and considering our options but it does appear that we are facing another set of challenges this summer, courtesy of Mother Nature. It appears that the only craft able to navigate the whole canal will be the canoeists who, I'm pleased to observe, are using the canal in increasing numbers.

Philip Riley

Work on the canal

The Society's work party completed the temporary mooring at the North Warnborough Lift Bridge before Christmas. Work since then has mainly concentrated on sawing up and removing the trees that were felled at the Dogmersfield slip.



Repairs to the crumbling underwater brickwork of Malthouse Bridge in Crookham were done by Dyer & Butler before Christmas. The canal was dammed either side by Rob Locatelli's River & Canal Services and they were contracted to use their crane barge to do a number of jobs on their way off the canal, including removing a boat and taking out some lock gates for replacement.

BCA Rangers have had to deal with a huge number of fallen trees due to the winter gales. In Hampshire, the dredger *Unity* has been hard at work but in Surrey, as the photo below shows, other means had to be used!



Since before Christmas, the BCA has had to deal with about 150 reports relating to fallen trees or branches, including more than two dozen blockages of both towpath and navigation.

Navigation proposals

Proposed Movement Days April – October 2014

W/J = Woodham and St Johns flights, D/B = Deepcut and Brookwood, (treated as one flight for boat movement). Shading is just used to highlight different lock flights.

| Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat | Sun |
|-----|------|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| D/B | W/J | W/J | D/B | D/B | W/J | W/J |

Thursday requires booking 7 days in advance and is of course subject to water availability. All other days are prebooked 24hrs in advance the same as they were for 2013/4 and equally subject to water availability. We may only take provisional bookings at times if water levels get really low but confirming to boaters 7 days in advance if their trip will be possible. We already did this, last summer.

This would allow a 10 day trip for a visiting boat with 6 days on the Hampshire pound or a 7 day trip with 3 days on the Hampshire pound. Galleon could do trips down to Woking and back up on the Tuesday and Wednesday with the additional D/B day prebooked at least a week in advance. Accessible boating can also do this if they wish. Other boats will also be able to prebook this additional day on Deepcut and Brookwood but only with 7 days notice. This is the day that will most likely get dropped if water levels get low and even boats that have prebooked may lose this day if water is too low, however we should always be able to give 7 days notice of this. The Tuesdays and Wednesdays would be additional days to last year but as we demonstrated, we can manage this financially. As long as the additional D/B day is not used every week we should be able to sustain this financially too, but we are taking a bit of a punt on this one. Someone wanting to visit Woking only coming from the Wey could have a 2, 3, 4 or 6 day trip. This will hopefully also give resident boats more flexibility to get on and off the canal to visit other waterways.

We hope we have managed to address some of the issues from last season and increased our service as much as possible for this year.

Fiona Shipp

These draft proposals have been sent to representatives of all the various boating interests on the Canal and will be discussed at a meeting in the Function Room at the Canal Centre at 7pm on Thursday 20th March. Any questions before then to Fiona Shipp at the Canal Centre, Mytchett.

Lengthsmen

Lengthsman is a term with origins back in the Middle Ages and probably in the Peak District. It refers to a person who keeps a “length” of road neat and tidy. This person was responsible for a few miles (3-6) of road. Employed by the local parish council, his job was to keep the grass and weeds cut down at the edge of the road and the drainage ditch clear. Litter would have been collected and wild flowers tended to.

The term was also applied to workers on the canal system, who were responsible for a particular length of the canal. Many lived in isolated cottages, sometimes close to a lock, in which case their duties would include acting as a lock keeper and managing water levels by the control of weirs. They were also responsible for repair and maintenance of the banks in their “length”, which might include cutting reeds and vegetation, and the treading of puddle clay into sections of the bank which were weak or suffering from leakage. One unusual feature of the Thames and Severn Canal was the provision of cottages for lengthsman which had three floors and were circular. Five of them, dating from the 1790s remain.

The position of the lengthsman began to fall into decline after the late 1880s when road maintenance became the responsibility of county councils. By the 1960s, increasing mechanisation of maintenance and the labour costs involved in keeping lengthsman saw them disappear - and with them their close knowledge of local highway networks and the communities they served. However, in recent years the ancient role of the Lengthsman is being revived across the country, helping cash-strapped local authorities in counties including

Worcestershire, Lancashire, Surrey, Hampshire and Dorset. They are spotting highway problems early before they become too expensive to fix. Nottinghamshire County Council is just one of the latest authorities to reintroduce the scheme, planning to create 40 jobs.

In addition to checking ditches, modern recruits will trim grass verges, clear snow from roads, clean grates and report potholes. A spokesman of the council is quoted as saying; “There is considerable benefit to local communities. It will ensure local concerns are quickly acted on, nipping minor problems in the bud before they become significant and costly. It will also provide local employment and help communities take pride in their areas.” It is a medieval solution to a very modern problem.

The council plans to spend £54,000 on a one-year trial involving four lengthsman and is hoping the scheme can then be extended to a team of 40 workers, with parish councils meeting half the bill. Each parish or town council would benefit from the services of a lengthsman for around 135 hours a year under the scheme.

In December 2002 as a response to increasing numbers of minor road maintenance requests from residents, five Parish Councils in Worcestershire were invited to take part in a Lengthsman trial giving them greater responsibility and a budget for dealing with local priorities. The trial proved to be a resounding success and, as a result, the scheme has now been rolled out to 90% of the Parishes in Worcestershire. A successful Parish Lengthsman trial in Hampshire has led to the

by Mike Gordon

development of the scheme for rolling out in other areas of the county and a proposal to extend the scheme to 43 parishes.

The role of the Parish Lengthsman has been re-introduced to give local communities more say in the upkeep of their surroundings and to play an active role in the highways service to improve their village environments, while adding value to the Council's planned maintenance programmes. Recognising the benefits of community involvement, the County Council works with the parishes, in consultation with the Hampshire Association of Local Councils. The Council's highways teams work closely with local parish co-ordinators to avoid duplication of scheduled maintenance work by the County Council.

"In the initial trial, ten parish councils in Meon Valley and Test Valley were given a budget of £1,000 each for work such as minor drainage clearance, grass clearance from the back of footways and sign cleaning. Other parishes in the New Forest and Winchester districts joined the trial in its second year and I'll be considering the lessons learned from those trials and the benefits before I determine whether to extend the scheme to other parishes and towns in the county."

James Morrice, who co-ordinated the Parish Lengthsman work on behalf of Corhampton and Meonstoke Parish Council, said: "This has worked successfully in our parish and we have found it to be valuable and beneficial for the villages. At the start of the year we had a backlog of minor maintenance work from hedge trimming and verge cutting, to clearing highways drainage and footpaths. With the exception of two jobs that are not finished

because of the snow and flooding, a very long list of low level highways maintenance work has been completed and I do hope that the funding can be agreed to continue this scheme in the next financial year."

The 40 Basingstoke Canal Society Lengthsmen are unpaid volunteers who act as the eyes and ears of the canal. While we do undertake some limited light work and tasks, in the main our role is to observe and report. Our unique local knowledge is invaluable in spotting problems before they become disasters and our regular inspections save the BCA rangers many man hours work. As it is probably a 'dead cert' that funding for maintenance and essential repairs of the canal will continue to dwindle in our harsh economic times, the input of the Lengthsmen can only increase in value.

New recruits always welcome.

Ring 07505752157 or e-mail
lengthsmen@basingstoke-canal.org.uk

Weedcutter

Work on the BCA's weedcutter was finally completed and it passed its PUWER test on Friday 24th January.

Very well done to John Wharf, John Abbott, Ian Carmichael, Duncan Paine and everyone else who has been involved with this lengthy and very difficult project.

There should be no shortage of work for *Millie II* once the weed growing season starts.

Around the Canal

Sign of the times

The canalside pub the Fox & Hounds in Crookham Road, Fleet, is about to get a newly painted inn sign, seen below with landlady Caroline Dale, who commissioned it from Canal Society member John Ross.



John is a graphic designer and member of the Waterways Craft Guild and is perhaps best known for his Mirror sailing dinghy *Elizabeth Rose*, decorated in the traditional designs and colours of commercial canal narrowboats.

The Fox & Hounds has been associated with the canal for many years; a photograph of 1926 shows a regatta on the canal at the pub organised by the landlord. The pub opened its doors in 1861 as an alehouse; it was probably so called because one or more of the three local packs of foxhounds met there.

In 1863 the pub was bought by John Fowler Complin who founded the Holybourne Brewery near Alton. The inn had 9 rooms and a kitchen and so was well placed to cater for visitors. The pub subsequently passed into the hands of Courages Brewery of Alton.

Former landlord, the late Ron Kettle, hosted a boat rally on the canal at the pub in 1986 to mark his 20th anniversary as licensee. The rally attracted not only local craft but those further afield, especially members of The Steam Boat Association of Great Britain.

Afterwards Ron suggested forming a Fox & Hounds Boat Club but after discussions among local boat owners, the Basingstoke Canal Boating Club was formed with local boat owner and Canal Society committee member Chris de Wet elected its first chairman. The club has held an annual rally at the pub ever since.

The writer wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Phyllis Ralton of the Fleet and Crookham Local History Group in compiling the above article.



by Dieter Jebens

New business in an old traditional craft

Dogmersfield once more has a blacksmith's forge.

The first forge probably preceded the canal and its existence gave a name to Blacksmith's Bridge. That forge was demolished in the early 1800s and moved to Church Lane in Dogmersfield and that closed in the 1940s.

Now an enterprising young metalworker, Alex Slater (*right*), has opened a blacksmith's shop beside the canal towpath at the bottom of his parents' garden at Towpath Cottage in Chatter Alley (*Below opposite*).

Alex Slater built the new blacksmith's shop with the help of his father Rus, a Canal Society volunteer lengthsman, using reclaimed and recycled materials, including the roof which is surmounted by an attractive terracotta anvil.



The owner of the old Crookham forge kindly sold him much of his equipment but the anvil came from a family in south Hampshire who had had it for over 100 years.

Alex undertakes a wide variety of work from constructing iron gates to staircases, fire tools and candlesticks, as well as repairing garden tools and commercial vehicles.

Alex can be contacted at alex.slater@sky.com or telephone 01252 616346.

See his work at www.primalscape.com.

SUNDAY, 23rd March 2014
SMALL BOAT RALLY AT ALFOLD, Surrey
on the Wey & Arun Canal



Sunday, 23rd March 2014 between 10.45am-4pm

Free entry.

Suitable for canoes, kayaks and small craft only.

Please check in at the Wey & Arun desk which will be situated next to The Three Compasses Pub, Dunsfold Rd, Alfold, Cranleigh, Surrey GU6 8HY

For further information please contact rallies@weyandarun.co.uk or phone 01483 505566.

Events

CHOBHAM SOCIAL MEETINGS

Programme for the remainder of the winter and spring season is shown below:

The meetings are held at the usual venue at The Parish Pavilion, Recreation Ground, Station Road, Chobham, near Woking, GU24 8AZ (See map for exact location)

Meetings will commence at 8pm on the third Wednesday of the month. Raffle and retiring collection. Coffee/tea and biscuits will be available during the interval. Non-members and friends are very welcome.

Wednesday 19th March **Nigel Crowe** **'Conserving the Waterways Heritage'**

Nigel, the Canal and Rivers Trust's Head of Heritage, will describe the work of the Trust in managing and conserving the many and varied historic waterways that the Trust cares for. He will explain what waterways heritage consists of, how heritage assets are maintained and restored and how the Trust deals with archaeology, listed buildings, scheduled monuments, historic boats and its museum collections.

Wednesday 16th April **Dr. David Hilling** **'Inland Shipping in West Africa'**

David is a Vice President of the Inland Waterways Association and a member of its Freight Group. He is UK representative on the Berlin-based European River Sea Transport Union and an academic geographer. His main interest is in port development and inland links of ports. He has studied ports and waterways in North America, Europe, Asia and West Africa where he lived for five years at the start of his career. Both then, and on later visits, he made waterway journeys and examined the



character and significance of the waterways in different environments. His talk will be concerned with some specific examples.

Peter Coxhead, who has been organising the booking of the hall, organising the raffle and collection at the end and the refreshments at the interval, is retiring from this role at the April meeting. Many thanks are due to Peter for undertaking this task for very many years. I will continue to book the speakers for the foreseeable future.

We are looking for a volunteer/s (as the job could be split), ideally from the Woking area, to take over this task. The meetings are the main social contact for members from October to April each year and it is important that they continue.

Please email me or ring me for further information if you would like to volunteer for this vital role.

David Millett
01252 617364
email: d.millett7@ntlworld.com

Events

MIKRON THEATRE COMPANY VISIT 2014

Doesn't time fly? It seems only yesterday that the Mikron were here in Fleet but here we are announcing the 2014 visit!

The annual visit of the Mikron Theatre Company will be on Sunday 27th July 2014 at the Fleet Football Club, Calthorpe Park, Crookham Road, Fleet, GU51 5FA at 7.30pm.

This year's show will be 'The Troupers'.

It's 1914. British entertainment is down on its uppers.

Actor-manager Lena Ashwell OBE has a theatre but no audience.

So she assembles a motley bunch of 'turns' and books a tour with a difference. For her TROUPERS won't tread the boards of Old Blighty but the muddy, bloody fields of France.

Twice nightly, we're here all week, if we're here at all! In a little-told story of the Great War, TROUPERS brings to life the amazingly audacious Concerts At The Front - a hitherto

unsung war effort that's full of guts, gusto and greasepaint. Who better to present this story than modern-day troubadours, Mikron?

2014 will be the 43rd year of touring in their narrow boat 'Tyseley' This year they have three new partners, the YMCA, the Canal and River Trust and Slow Food UK. The four actors are all new this year and looking forward to their new life touring on 'Tyseley'. Last year she had a newly refurbished bathroom and additional soft furnishings and this year the Foyle Foundation grant has allowed the spending of some well needed money on updated windows and additional power points plus some painting and rust elimination work.

Full details will be in the next edition of the Basingstoke Canal News and in the Bulletin and on our website www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk but if you require any early information please contact David Millett on 01252 617364 or email d.millett7@ntlworld.com

Decorated boats in Woking

The pre-Christmas illuminated boat procession in Woking was a very popular event with the public, but, understandably, the Byfleet Boat Club decided that flogging up the Basingstoke in the winter every year was not all that enjoyable and, a couple of years ago, decided to switch the event to Weybridge.

It is very good news therefore to hear that they

will be coming up to hold a decorated boat pageant over the early May Bank Holiday, 3-5 May.

There will probably be a parade of the boats through the town on the Sunday afternoon. See the Society's website for final details nearer the time.

Dogmersfield slip

At the request of the BCA, the Canal Society's work party has spent several weekends sawing up the trees that were felled after the bank slip in the cutting at Dogmersfield last Easter. With the aid of chainsaws and axes, these have now been reduced to logs suitable for a domestic fire place, and several loads have been sold after being transported to Barley Mow.

Removal of the felled trees was seen as necessary preparation for repair work on the banks.

Unfortunately, this work has been suspended because the terrible weather of the last couple of months has, not surprisingly, caused further bank slippage and more trees to fall.



Several trees are now across the canal, while others are leaning the other way, pushing the offside bank across the canal.

These are all on land that does not belong to the County Council, so matters are complicated by negotiations with the land owner.

on the move again



The fence that was installed to stop boats from hitting the crumbling towpath has been pushed over by further slippage of the bank behind the towpath.

It will need to be removed or repositioned before any boat could attempt to get through.

At the time of writing, we are still waiting to hear what options Hampshire County Council's Civil Engineering Department are considering for dealing with the problem. Previous slips in this area have been repaired by cutting back the bank to reduce the slope of the cutting, or, more recently, by the installation of a gabion wall.

With 10 months passed since the original slip and the navigation now apparently blocked, it would be good to see some urgency injected into their deliberations so that work can at least begin before next winter's storms set in.



The Basingstoke

Doug Morgan kindly sent me this article by Edgar Pallant from the Burghfield Island Boat Club Newsletter, Spring 1987

My interest in the Basingstoke Canal goes back many years. As a youngster I fell into it, later I learned to row on it and as a young man I sometimes hired a lovely outrigger double-sculler from old Mr. Harmsworth at the Ash Vale boat house. With my brother or my wife we would manage the Ash Lock to Frimley Aqueduct pound at a fine speed. Our real boating interests in those days centred on our boat in Chichester harbour but in the early 1960's the harbour began to get very crowded and we lost the old free and easy ways we had enjoyed for nearly 30 years. With a young family the inland waterways seemed to offer a solution with plenty of locks to keep them busy and towpaths for the dog walks. Also, after many years of having to contend with tides and rowing ashore in the dinghy, rivers and canals seemed very relaxed.

At first we based at Shalford, on the River Wey near Guildford. When an IWA rally of boats was proposed for Spring 1962 we were the first to enter and joined in the weekly working parties to clear the canal, locks and towpaths so that boats could get from the Wey, up the Basingstoke to Woking. Woking UDC was asked to provide a lorry to remove the rubbish and agreed to do so. They did not expect up to 10 lorry loads each weekend!

About 30 boats managed to get to Woking but the lock gates were not really safe and lost so much water that tarpaulins had to be draped over them to make it possible to work the lock. Only 15 years before this, timber barges were taking timber from London port to Spantons Yard on the canal at Woking.

My father used to deal with them for his timber requirements and I visited the yard with him and saw the barges being unloaded. I can't remember if they were Harmsworth barges or those belonging to Harry Stevens of Guildford.



*Above: Clearing the canal for the 1962 rally
Below: Edgar Pallant (left) and current Society President, Tim Dodwell (right) in 1962*



Canal in the 1960s

The canal enthusiasts on the Basingstoke in those days were led by a young solicitor, Tim Dodwell, who had (no doubt still has I think) lots of drive and personality. The gang included a young chap called Huge Macnit, (now known as Hugh McKnight the canal photographer). One of the worries was losing the 'right of navigation' and to this end we used dinghies to cover the length of the canal, not always in one go, but always documented with photographs to use as evidence.

After the Woking Rally and another the following spring at Godalming on the Wey, local interest looked up and Tim and a few of us quietly carried on with working parties, mainly in the Woking area. The canal owners were not on our side as they wanted to re-develop the canal for other purposes for personal gain. Mrs. Joan Marshall was the Canal Manager in those days and allowed us to carry on with our activities as Tim was to become her son-in-law.

In 1966 a meeting at Brookwood became the inaugural meeting of what was later to be called the Surrey & Hampshire Canal Society. I listened to a lot of guff from various sources about approaches to the canal company but finally suggested to the Chairman that we were all wasting our time and that the only chance of ever getting anything done was to interest our two County Councils (Surrey and Hampshire) with a view to, if need be, compulsory purchase of the whole canal as a linear park for leisure use; the then canal company were interested only in building plots and fishing ponds. Things went fairly quiet after that and the meeting broke up, but in fact my suggestions were carried out and about 8 years afterwards the purchases were completed

and the canal company pushed off.

Much of the fund-raising for the Basingstoke restoration is from the efforts of the 'wide boat' JOHN PINKERTON, working the Hampshire end on trips. Our Club has been on this trip once or twice but I can never understand why their boat is so successful financially, making over £10,000 per annum. I bet Norman Briggs wishes LANCING could equal this and personally I consider the Kennet a much more interesting trip visually. The Basingstoke Canal seems more closed in but has a lot of interest for botanists and naturalists and is a fine canal for walking.

At present it seems that the Basingstoke Canal may be opened throughout before the K&A but when it does I envisage severe restrictions on power craft, and rightly so, as a few idiots could undo much hard-won restoration. The Surrey CC engineers are not so waterway orientated as David Gerry and have different sized spindles on the top and bottom gate paddles, but no doubt our members with their great travels over the network will have windlasses to cope with this, but you have been warned. Also, never fall in when draining a lock; there is a tie-rod across the paddle opening so you would never have a chance of clearing that and would be pinned against it until the flow stopped. I am looking forward to our first trip up the Basingstoke Canal almost as much as our first trip to Bristol; but don't forget the small boat rally in June - there are often some nice little steamers there and plenty of other waterway nutters too.

Edgar Pallant
Icebird, 1987

John Pinkerton

After a fantastic first year with the Society's new boat, the JP Committee have been working hard to ensure 2014 will also be a memorable year. Winter maintenance is well under way, and some of the little niggles have been lovingly crafted, so both crew and passengers should see immediate improvements to the little things that probably got overlooked during build, adding more comfort and ease of use. Thanks again go to John Wharf and his team for all their dedicated work.

This year we will be continuing the successful members' cruises on the second Monday evening each month (bar July). All Society members are entitled to enjoy a free evening cruise, departing Colt Hill wharf, Odiham at 7.30pm. The dates are: 14 April, 12 May, 9 June, 11 August and 8 September; why not put a note in your diary now? Please remember to pre-book with the JP Booking Manager, David Horwood (01256 765889).

Last year the theme cruises contributed considerably to the JP income, and we are extending the range on offer to include as much variation as possible:-

- Pirate Fancy Dress, Friday 30th May at 10.30am & 2.30pm.
- Jazz & Ale Specials, 23rd May, 11th July, 12th September at 7.00pm.
- Acoustic & Ale Special, Friday 27th June at 7.00pm.
- Cream Tea, with piano accompaniment, Wednesday 18th June at 2.30pm.

- Cruise with Blues, Sat 23rd August at 7.00pm
- Halloween Fancy Dress, Friday 31st October at 10.00am & 2.00pm.



Above: The pirate crew for one of last year's theme cruises.

Below: The Excel Jazzmen, led by Tony Karavis (right) on trumpet, who was the JP's Booking Manager back in the 1980s.



News for 2014.

New this year are cruises from Ash Lock to view the Farnborough Air Show Flying Display from the towpath, on Saturday 19th & Sunday 20th July.

And to promote the Canal to the main stakeholders - parish, town and county councils - on a more personal and informal basis, the Society will be showing off their new boat at Frimley and Woking with special cruises during the third week of July. Extra interest will be added for all Canal Enthusiasts by using the transit trips as public one-way trips.

For full details, see the JP website (<http://www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk/jp/>), or the 2014 brochure available for download or from the Booking Manager.

The JP operation relies heavily on the goodwill of its volunteer members, and we are constantly on the lookout for fresh people to help out in many capacities. If you are interested, please contact the JP Chairman, or come on one of our members' cruises for a chat to find out more. The JP AGM will be held on 21st March at 7.30 in the Canal Centre - another opportunity to learn more.

And a really good piece of news received recently is that our PR Manager Penny Cadle won a competition run by Eagle Radio; the prize was a year's free advertising with Eagle Radio for the JP operation. We'll make use of that - well done Penny!

Dick King, *Chairman JP Canal Cruises*

JP I

We have been trying to find a buyer for our old trip boat ever since the JP II came into service and now, thanks to an advertisement on the website "Apollo Duck" (<http://www.apolلودuck.co.uk/>), we may have succeeded. Dick King has conducted 5 viewings and we are hopeful that these will lead to a new home for the old lady. We understand that the interested parties were planning to turn her into a residential boat.

The only fly in the ointment currently is the Dogmersfield slip. It remains to be seen whether the JP can squeeze through on its way off the canal.

The boat had a lucky escape before Christmas when one of the fir trees that line the canal next to its mooring was blown over by the wind. Fortunately no damage was caused.



Lookback

From Society Newsletters No. 114 March 1984 and No. 115 May 1984

- After pressure from the Society, Hampshire County Council have submitted planning applications to Rushmoor BC for a slipway at the western side of Farnborough Road Bridge and to Hart DC for three slipways, one at Colt Hill, one adjacent to the new by-pass bridge and one at Barley Mow, Winchfield. The intention was to build one only in Hart and eventually the Barley Mow car park site was selected. .
- The need to get boats using the canal was stated as 'critical' by Peter Fethney, Chairman of the John Pinkerton trip boat company, as the build up of weed growth and silt was threatening to put an end to the operation of the *John Pinkerton* at the upper end of the canal. Boats using the canal help to maintain the waterway by reducing the weed growth and keeping the silt in suspension and so preventing it from settling and building up in deposits.
- The target of raising at least £5000 from this year's Sponsored Walk has been set by the Society committee, to match the target set for the previous two years. The walk will once again be between Woking and Fleet (or vice versa) and the date is 20th May, so members are asked to start lining up sponsors now. Other organisations and schools are invited to join us on a 50-50 basis.
- The following four projects have been selected by the committee as a priority, using funds added as a donation from members when renewing their annual subscriptions. ie: Langman's Bridge £5,000 (to be restored by contractors), woodworking tools £600, a Cowley level £175, and some tree planting at £200.
- In 1983 the *John Pinkerton* operation on the canal made a net surplus of £10,502 and the net proceeds from operating the NB 'The Return' was £1,668 making a grand total of £12,170. These funds are used to fund the main working parties operating along the length of the canal.
- Although the canal was yet to be dredged from Dogmersfield through to Fleet, a 70ft ex-Thames gravel barge with damaged internal structure needed to be moved to Reading Road Bridge, Fleet for hauling out and repair. The only way was to be pulled by the the canal's mini tractor with Tony Harmsworth at the wheel and David James at the barge tiller. The journey was difficult with problems at the Swing Bridge due to

Right: Sponsored walkers at Lock 1. The walk actually went from the Wey to Fleet.



- David Millett, VP

vandals having stolen most of the cannonball-sized bearings, but the mini tractor dragged the bridge open and then closed it. Next the barge stuck fast at Malthouse Bridge having to be freed by winches and pulley blocks attached to successive trees. The last two miles took five hours!

- The next epic journey was to try and get the *John Pinkerton* into Surrey for the first time on a trial trip. The journey through Fleet was difficult with help from the mini tractor at times. It did go under Reading Road Bridge! Locking down Ash Lock - the first commercial boat through the lock for about 60 years - the journey continued to Ash Wharf but that was it, it was too shallow to reach the Swan at Heathvale Bridge. The mini-tractor helped turn the *John Pinkerton* and the return to Fleet was made during the afternoon and the return to Odiham the next day.



Above: Passing *Perseverance* and into the undredged section in 1984.

- A plan has been worked out to salvage some, if not all, of the wooden hull of the 90 year old steam powered narrow boat 'Seagull' from Brickworks Arm at Up Nately. Stan Meller and John Peart of the Railway Group will be masterminding the operation but much more help will be required and more volunteers are required. The task will involve work with shovels, wheelbarrows, pumps and other machinery. It will be very muddy!
- Hampshire Canal Manager David Gerry, who was the Society's first Chairman from 1967 to 1973, has been awarded a prestigious Churchill Foundation Scholarship to study how national park and outdoor leisure facilities, especially connected with canals and waterways, are made accessible to disabled people. David has chosen to visit North America and Canada with his wife Judy and hopes to put some of the ideas he finds into practice on the Basingstoke Canal, including a possible holiday boat designed for disabled people.
- The death of Alexander Thomas Harmsworth has been announced. He was the second son of Alec Harmsworth, owner of the Basingstoke Canal from 1922 until he died in 1947. He was responsible for the lighterage, lorries and the wharfage side of the family's haulage business. He was born on the family's houseboat at Ash Vale and was the last person to work a boat through Greywell Tunnel. Tony Harmsworth, the present Senior Canal Ranger is the son of Alexander's brother W. H. Harmsworth who still lives by the canal at Ash Vale.

Canal Society AGM

NOTICE is hereby given that the Thirty Seventh Annual General Meeting of the Surrey & Hampshire Canal Society will be held on Saturday 17th May 2014 in the Deepcut Village Centre, Swordsman's Road, Deepcut GU16 6TB, commencing at 2 p.m.

The formal Agenda for the meeting is as follows:-

1. To hear apologies for absence.
2. To confirm the minutes of the Thirty Sixth AGM held on 18th May 2013.
3. To approve the Annual Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2013.
4. To appoint the Independent Accountants.
5. To elect or confirm the appointment of the members of the Board of Directors (Executive Committee).
6. To transact any other business relative to the Annual General Meeting of the Society.

By order of the Board of Directors

Gareth Jones, Honorary Secretary
16th February 2014

Following the formal business of the AGM there will be reports from the Chairmen of the Canal Society and Boat Company, presentation

of the Robin Higgs Award and a talk by Roger Flitter, Secretary of the Passenger Boat Association.

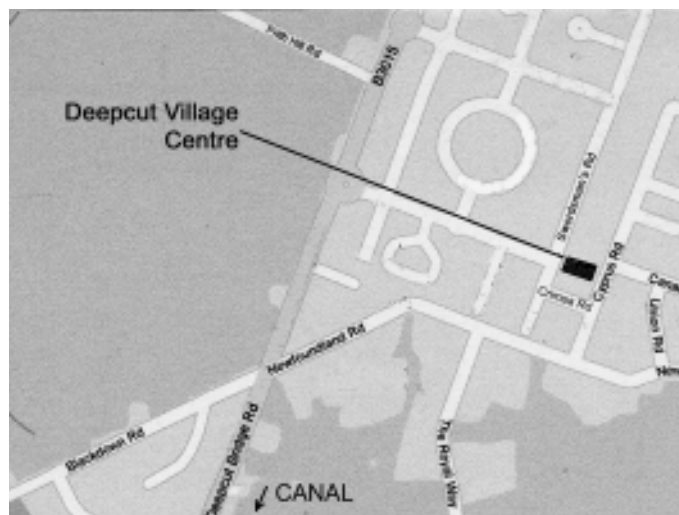
AGM Notes:

- a) This Notice is issued from the Honorary Secretary's address at 9 Mytchett Lake Road, Mytchett, Camberley, Surrey GU16 6AW.*
- b) Every member of the Society who is entitled to vote at a General Meeting is entitled to appoint a proxy, who need not be a member, to attend and vote in his/her stead. Forms of Proxy can be obtained from the Honorary Secretary.*
- c) Only paid-up members are entitled to attend and vote at the meeting.*
- d) Copies of the Accounts can be obtained from the Honorary Secretary prior to the AGM upon receipt of an SAE. In accordance with normal practice the Accounts, when approved, will be published in summary in the Basingstoke Canal News.*
- e) Nomination forms for the election of the Board of Directors can be obtained from the Honorary Secretary.*

AGM Venue

The Deepcut Village Centre is again the venue for our AGM. It is not hard to find and there will be signs off the main Deepcut Bridge Road.

Turn off onto Newfoundland Road, follow this round, turn left when you come to Cyprus Road and then immediately left into Crimea Road. The hall and ample parking is on the right.



For sale

For Sale

40 ft Traditional Canal Boat

Built 1991. Springer hull with 30hp Thornycroft 80 engine (2400hrs), fitted out in knotty pine, set up as 2 berth, with wood burning stove, Vanessa 2 ring cooker oven and grill, Paloma, Porta-Potti and Dometic gas fridge. Safety Certificate, regularly serviced, blacked in 2012. £21,500.

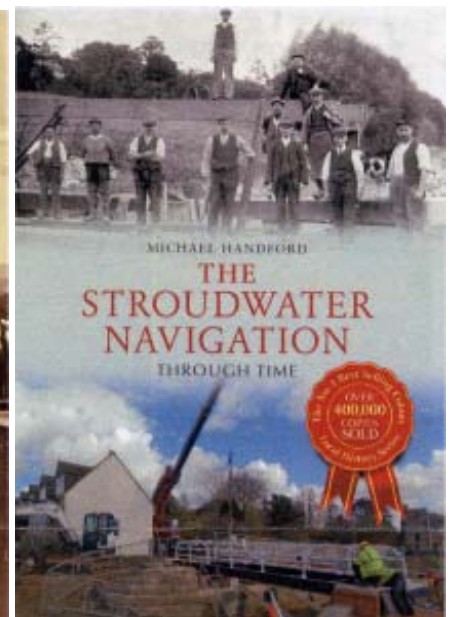
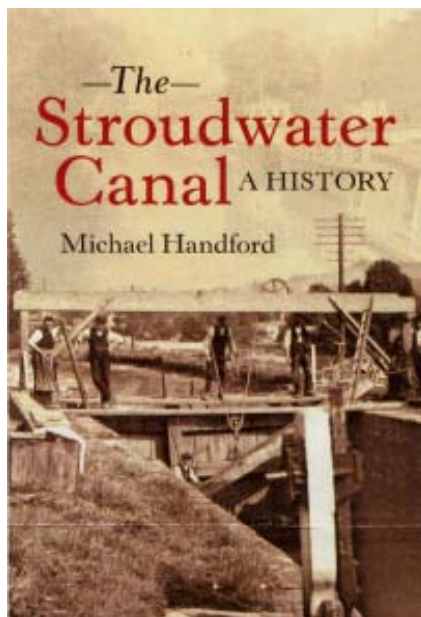
Contact Don Barber 01252 692494



Stroudwater Canal books

The Stroudwater Canal has many claims to fame, the most remarkable being that it is still owned by the original Company of the Proprietors of the Stroudwater Navigation.

Anyone interested in its history will be delighted to know that Michael Handford's history of the canal has been updated and reissued. He has also published "The Stroudwater Navigation Through Time", which tells the story of the canal through a selection of photographs including the current restoration work.



"The Stroudwater Canal - A History". ISBN 978-1-4456-1943-9. Paperback. £16.99

"The Stroudwater Navigation Through Time". ISBN 978-1-84868-842-1. £14.99

Available from bookshops or directly from Amberley Publishing. www.amberley-books.com
Telephone 01453 847800

BCS Membership

Membership Secretary Report

May I please remind all our members that the annual subscriptions are due on 1st March. All those of you who pay by cash or cheque will receive a reminder with a form to return to me with your payment. It would be much appreciated if you could pay your subscriptions as promptly as possible to save the expense of having to send out reminders. If you pay your subs by bankers order, please would you ensure that you are paying at least the appropriate amounts as shown below:

Adult £10, Family £12, Senior £5, Senior (pair) £7, Group £15

Thank you for your cooperation.
A warm welcome to the following members who have joined us in the last few months:

Georgina Tomkins of Sandhurst
Katherine Waters of Sandhurst
Mr & Mrs M R Millar of Frimley
Jill Lowe of Yateley
Maureen Ford of Frimley Green
Edwin Brady of Basingstoke

Doreen Hornsey
Membership Secretary

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

Situations Vacant

Secretary. Gareth Jones has announced that he will be stepping down as our Company Secretary after the AGM.

This is an essential post to fill as we are a Limited Company, but it is perhaps the least onerous of the Officer posts. Gareth would be happy to brief anyone interested on what the job entails.

Editor. Having just passed my 72nd birthday, I am increasingly keen to find a successor to edit this newsletter. It could become just a compilation of bits from the bulletins, but would still need someone to put this together and get it printed.

Events Organiser. Verna Smith has been organising events for the Society for many years but stepped down last year.

We don't normally have more than one major event in a year, and the job should be largely one of coordinating the various aspects of the event rather than trying to do it all. Verna is still around and willing to provide advice to anyone willing to take this on.

Chobham Organiser. The monthly talks at Chobham are booked by David Millett, but we need someone to take over from Peter Coxhead, booking the hall, organising the raffle, etc.

BCS information



The Bulletin is now up to Issue 21.
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.

Date for next copy 30th April 2014

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Editorial Team: Editor: Roger Cansdale* 29 Knoill Road, Fleet, Hants GU51 4PT
01252-678608

e-mail: roger.cansdale@ntlworld.com

Presidents:

Chairman:

Vice-Chairman:

Hon. Secretary:

Hon. Treasurer:

Tim & Elizabeth Dodwell

Philip Riley*

Martin Leech*

Gareth Jones*

Guy Faller*

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

Membership Secretary: Doreen Hornsey

Working Party Information: Janet Buckley

Trip Boat Manager: Dick King*

Trip Boat Bookings: David Horwood

Events Organiser: Vacant

Sales Manager &

Mail Order Sales: Denise Smith

Exhibitions Manager: John Ross

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Director Verna Smith*

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Director Freddie Dawson*

Director Jeff Hill*

Director John Wall*

Director Stuart Black*

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**

Winter morning



Dredger *Unity* waiting to remove yet another tree from the canal, in Coxmoor Wood