



The Basingstoke
Canal Society

Basingstoke Canal News

No. 244 Winter 2014





Editor

It is very nice to see the resurfaced towpath at Brookwood and many thanks to WRG for doing it. A few years ago, it seemed that a conscious decision had been made to abandon the old path on the south side of the canal in favour of the new one to the Country Park. There was even talk of a new swing bridge to allow pedestrians to cross over the canal at

Hermitage avoiding the road, which seemed pretty unnecessary.

As it is now, one can walk from Hermitage to Brookwood Bridge, follow the towpath under the bridge and then walk across the tail of the lock to the towpath on the other side without having to cross any roads.

Much more sensible and cheaper.

* * * * *

Another season gone by without a stoppage due to water shortage! Have we seen the end of the Basingstoke's water supply problems?

I guess the answer is probably not, but I think it does give hope that the problems may not be as intractable as they seemed some years ago. Maybe if water abstraction stops at Greywell, as seems likely, and the Aquamatix monitoring and control system lives up to expectations (*see pages 12 & 13*), and perhaps if we got our hands on one of the Bourley reservoirs, we might see an end to empty pounds at Deepcut in the summer.

Let's see what next year brings!

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

We hear much these days about the role of the volunteer and it's true to say that some organisations including, for example, The National Trust and the RNLI, would struggle to exist without very strong volunteer support. Volunteering is not, of course, new to the Basingstoke Canal and there have been volunteers working on the canal since the very early days of the restoration.

In more recent years volunteers have been turning out in increasing numbers on BCA work parties and volunteers are also involved in other roles including support for the very successful Santa Cruises from the Canal Centre.

On the national scene, there has been a significant increase in the number of volunteers working for the Canal & River Trust and this has recently extended to the use of WRG work parties on more skilled tasks such as bridge repairs.

The increasing use of volunteers by the C&RT has not gone unnoticed by the County Councils, who own the Basingstoke Canal, and this fact, coupled with the success of the C&RT in attracting funding from sources which would have been unavailable to the old British Waterways is likely, in my view, to lead to the Counties considering whether the future of the Basingstoke might lie in either a newly established trust or as part of the C&RT.

As to the latter option, it has generally been assumed that a transfer of the canal into the national body could only occur if the present owners (and probably the riparian councils

Cover Picture : The Thames barge approaching Lock 10 on its voyage to the Wey.

Photo: R Cansdale

Chairman's report

who make annual contributions to the revenue budget) agreed to contribute to a capital fund which could provide the bulk of the income to run the canal. That is a very tall order in these straightened financial times.

The subject of volunteering also prompts me to repeat a point that has frequently been made in these columns over the years. Although the Canal Society receives excellent support from its members, many of whom are active in crewing the JP, participating in work parties etc, there are relatively few members who are willing to shoulder the task of running the Society and taking on the key roles.

In my case, I have been a member of the Committee since at least 1980 and, over the years, I have taken on various roles including Secretary, Vice Chairman and now Chairman. Other Committee members have served for similar periods – Roger Cansdale, for example, has been involved since 1985 and his responsibilities have included Chairman of the Boat Company and now editor of BC News.

Although involvement with the canal has been difficult at times (and I'm being polite!), I'm sure I speak for the whole Committee when I say that we find our work rewarding, especially when we can see the practical results of the effort that we put in.

However, organisations must develop or die and it is vitally important that the process of renewal continues to take place. I would be the first to agree that membership of the Committee for 35 years is far too long and it is only healthy

that younger volunteers (hopefully with better IT skills than mine!) come forward to lead the Society in what I believe will be a period of significant change to the way in which the canal is financed and managed.

If any members are interested in learning more about the work of the Committee and the opportunities to contribute towards managing our affairs, please get in touch with me. The whole Committee will be subject to re-election in May next year so I'm hopeful that members will consider putting their names forward for seats on the Committee.

As the year end approaches, the Canal Society is fortunate to find itself in a strong position. Our finances are in good order, we have had the most successful year ever on the JP and our work parties (including the very productive WRG work camp this summer) have achieved excellent results.

We are now looking forward to the Magna Carta at rally at Colt Hill in May and, in 2016, we will be celebrating 'the Big One' – the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Society.

May I wish all members an enjoyable Christmas and a fruitful New Year.

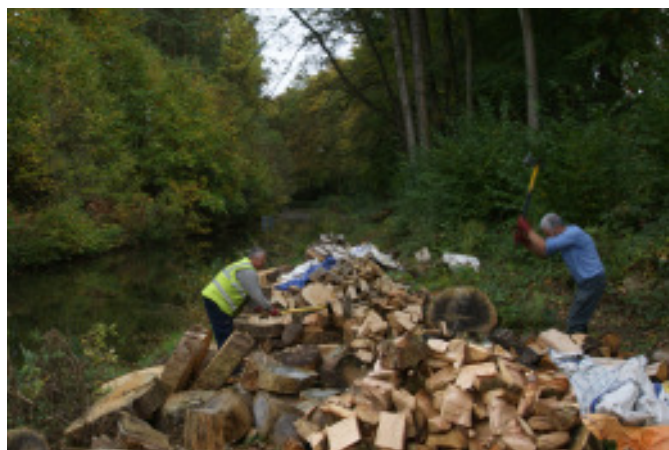
Philip Riley

Chairman



Work parties

The Canal Society's work party has been busy completing the clearance of trees on the Dogmersfield slip site so that contractors can move in. The trees have now all been sawn up and split into logs (*Top right*) and then transported in the *Alan Flight* to Barley Mow for collection (*Upper*). There are still some for sale (contact Duncan Paine).



The *Alan Flight* has also been used to cut back some of the rhododendrons that were hanging 2m over the canal from the offside bank at Chatter Alley (*Lower*). More work is needed there and also at Frimley.



The footpath over Greywell hill runs through Lord Malmesbury's estate and the Society was asked by him to resurface the path that passes over the western end of the Greywell tunnel. He provided a large heap of wood chips and the work party did the rest, turning a very slippery and hazardous surface into a rather nice walk through the woods down to the towpath in Up Nately.



In the bottom photo the entrance to the tunnel can be seen now completely caged over to prevent unauthorised access. Interestingly, there is a boat inside the tunnel, presumably used for bat inspections (*Below*).



Thames barge

The work party found itself doing an unexpected job when an offer to buy the Thames barge came out of the blue. A contractor doing offside bank clearance work on the Wey Navigation suddenly found himself in need of a barge and offered £3000 on condition that it was delivered to Guildford.

According to Tony Harmsworth's book "Boats from the Basingstoke's Past", the Society bought the barge from the Thames Water Authority in 1981. It underwent some welding repairs on the bank at Reading Road wharf in Fleet. Tony Harmsworth attempted to launch it back into the canal using his grandfather's traditional sideways method, but unfortunately one end slid and the other stuck (*Below*).



However, with the aid of a bit of brute force and the old barge jack (*Below*), it finally went in.



However, with a beam of over 12ft and an unladen draught of 1ft 10in, it proved to be too big to be really useful on the shallow Basingstoke Canal and it spent most of its life moored just above the Ash Lock winding hole.

As the cover photos show, towing the barge with the *Alan Flight* and its modest outboard motor was no easy task and of course the barge filled the locks so the work boat had to be taken through separately.



Lock 7 (*Above*) caused problems because the bottom gates were prevented by debris from going back fully and the barge stuck until the tops of the gates could be heaved back to free it. The sheer size of the barge caused progress through the section between Woking and the end of the canal to be very slow indeed.

A larger outboard was borrowed to enable the *Alan Flight* to push the barge up the Wey.

The journey from Ash Lock to the final drop-off on the Wey took the best part of a week and then the *Alan Flight* had to come all the way back.

But that's another story!

Waterway Recovery Group

Our friends from the Waterway Recovery Group organised one of their summer work camps on the Basingstoke again in August.

The programme of work agreed with the BCA was very ambitious - double the length of the visitor moorings at Brookwood Country Park and resurface the whole of the length of towpath from Hermitage to Brookwood Bridge, a distance of about 1km!

Needless to say, a great deal of preparatory work had to be done, mostly by the Society's Vice-Chairman, Martin Leech. However, help came from other sources too. Hampshire County Council provided accommodation at the excellent Runway's End centre in Rushmoor at a very good price and Andy Skilton Engineering went to a lot of trouble to source the unusual tracked dumper trucks (*Right*). WRG insist on using these for work on towpaths because their lower centre of gravity makes them much safer than the normal wheeled ones used on building sites.

The Canal Society footed the bill for the week, which came to over £15,000.

WRG were under great pressure to finish the job because the various bits of equipment on hire - excavators, dumpers and rollers - were due to go back at the end of the week. At one stage it didn't look as if it would all be done, but in the event it was, thanks to some very long hours worked by some of the team.

Thanks very much guys! A great job.



Above: The WRG team



Below: The finished job.



Milestones



After years of patient negotiation and nagging by Philip Riley, we have finally succeeded in getting a permanent, albeit fairly modest, display about the canal into Basingstoke's Milestones Museum. Seen above are John Ross, who designed the display, Louis Mackay, Milestones Museum, Philip Riley, who wrote the words and Duncan Paine, who built the stand for Tony Harmsworth's model of one of his grandfather's boats.

VICTORIA M for sale

Unique boat for sale, Jan Smith's replica Inspection Launch, *Victoria M*. This boat was built, launched and fitted out at Ash Vale, on the Basingstoke Canal, and its design is based on the *Waterwitch*, a Leeds & Liverpool Canal Company Directors launch of 1900. The dimensions are 50' by 6' 10" wide with 5' 10" air draft to get under the bridges of the Basingstoke Canal, where it is moored at present. Propulsion is by Ford XLD 416 diesel, with an Aquadrive coupling. Hot water is by an engine heated calorifier. Fixed double berth, kitchen & shower room. Diesel fired c/h & gas stove, secondary glazing throughout, open plan sitting room. Trophy winner at the 1991 IWA National Rally, and featured in a *Waterways World* article in May 1998.



Asking price £45,000. For full specification, ring 01420564456.

Wouldn't it be nice if some public benefactor were to buy Victoria M and present her to the BCA as an inspection launch? What better way of showing the canal off to local councillors to persuade them to fund it properly!

Basingstoke Canal Authority

A Good Season On The Basingstoke. - It Figures!

Well it's been a quiet summer for Navigation updates, but no news is good news and it simply means we haven't had any traumas. A few trees have come down but we have managed to clear them all promptly and nothing else too significant. However there will be some updates going out soon about our planned winter works and on-going improvements.

It Figures!

We recently had our end of season boaters meeting with the groups representing the canal. At this meeting we looked at the figures for numbers of boats on the canal this season and compared them with last year.

As with all statistics a variety of interpretations can be put on them. I include below my summary and interpretation based on comparable figures with 2013 season up to the 21st October 2014 season.

There has been an increase in boats using the Woodham flight of locks, 150 boats in 2013 and 173 boats in 2014. I hope that our increased movement days on the Woodham flight has enabled our boats moored in the Woodham and Woking pounds to come and go

with more ease and confidence and caused this increase.

There has however been a decrease in movement up the Brookwood and Deepcut flights, 204 boats in 2013 and 174 boats in 2014. I attribute this to the fact that we have sold more 2 week and 1 month licences this year and less 1 week licences (i.e. less going up



Above: One of the many visiting boats at the Canal Centre this summer

and down). Are boats perhaps now feeling more confident to stay longer on the canal?

Our number of powered visitors has actually decreased slightly from 110 in 2013 to 91 in 2014. However as more of these licences were for longer period licences, the income has in fact increased slightly. This surprised me as I felt I had seen more boats about this season, but evidently I was just seeing the same boats who were staying with us for longer! And perhaps also seeing our resident boats moving around

from Fiona Shipp

more (as the Woodham lock usage figures indicated).

Back pumping electricity costs were a quarter of those from last year. Which is totally bizarre and we are obviously looking into this. Who ever trusts a strangely low electricity bill!!

We had 5 boats who left their permanent mooring or sold on their boats and we had 8 new boats come onto the canal. This is very pleasing to know that boaters want to moor on our Canal.

We had a small increase in numbers of unpowered boat licences sold. We also managed to sell 105 of these through our new online payment system for unpowered boats. This is a real success and a significant decrease in calls to the office and associated administration. Unfortunately we can't provide this service for powered boaters yet.

Navigation lock open days

We intend to operate the same days of lock operation next season.

Twittering News

For those IT wiz's out there our facebook page has been going really well, now with 500 followers. Don't forget to check us out. Search for Basingstoke Canal Visitor Centre. For those tweeters out there (currently 717 followers), our facebook automatically updates our tweets.

It's the best way to find out what's happening on the canal day to day. For bloggers, this boat has recently visited the canal and documented their journey. <http://nbepiphany.co.uk/2625-a-second-bash-at-the-bassy>

Working Our Way Into The Winter

- A principle inspection of Ash aqueduct and clay repuddling of the canal bed on either side of this while the water is out.
- Repairs to the landslip at Dogmersfield.
- Replacement of 3 more sets of lock gates.
- Hopefully resurfacing of the towpath between Eelmoor bridge and Ash lock, although I am awaiting confirmation on the timescale of this at the moment.
- Further investigation and potential associated repair works to 2 culverts in the Dogmersfield area.
- Engineers to draw up designs for repiling work near Swan bridge and associated towpath repair and considerations for depth issues in this area.
- 800m of soft bank and 100m of hard bank protection along the Frimley Lodge embankment near the canal centre in Mytchett.
- Tree works to be carried out as a result of the recent full canal tree survey which identified 600 trees requiring works. (Apparently this is very good considering the thousands of trees along the canal!)

BCA report

- Crayfish fishing currently underway in Hampshire and we hope this to continue up to Christmas.

I will confirm dates of work that will effect the Navigation as soon as I have dates confirmed. However expect that these works are likely to be taking place between January and March 2015.

Boat Auditing – A Productive Outing

The final thing I wanted to mention was the boat audit we have been carrying out this summer. We have gradually been walking each stretch of the canal with houses and gardens joining the canal. Armed with maps and the lengthsmens boat survey we checked and recorded every boat moored on the canal and also noted gardens with boats in them as well. Addresses were figured out and we then knocked on doors speaking to as many people as possible and leaving them letters if they were out. Basically we were chasing up unlicensed and abandoned boats and ensuring that as many people as possible are aware of the new licencing fees and the simple need to buy a licence to use the canal. This has resulted in new mooring

*Right: John Wharf and the refurbished weedcutter doing battle with the Hydrocotyle weed in Woodham.
(Photo by Paul Drane)*

income for the canal and helped to clear off some abandoned boats. We are still working with some boat owners as a result of this survey so I will report more fully on this at a later date.

Society Support Gratefully Received

We have been really pleased with the support we have received from the Canal Society again this year with volunteers helping out in a variety of ways, practical volunteering on the canal, cutting back vegetation, painting lock gates, endless weedcutting, carrying out weekly length inspections and generally being the eyes and ears of the canal. Also the committee has as usual put in a massive amount of their time working hard with us to try and secure revenue funding and supporting larger projects on the canal such as the new visitor mooring and towpath at Brookwood which looks amazing.

Thanks to All

Fiona Shipp
Canal Manager



Dogmersfield slip

Work has begun on the bank slip at Dogmersfield. Contractors employed by the land owner have reprofiled the offside bank and removed trees and earth from the top of the bank (*Right*).



The Society's Work Party has been busy cutting and splitting the felled tree trunks on the towpath side into logs and removing them using the *Alan Flight*. Sales of logs so far exceed £1000. Also on this side, an access ramp has been dug from the top of the bank down to a terrace above the towpath, from which, presumably, further work can be done. (*Below*)

The County is still intending to do the piling and dredging necessary to re-establish the full navigation channel by Easter next year, although the towpath may take a bit longer. Two culverts in the Barley Mow area are also in need of repair, which will cause a navigation closure, but no idea when.



There will be closures in January/February for the inspection and other work on the Ash embankment and to replace gates on Locks 20, 23 & 26.

The bank protection work at Frimley Lodge should not require a closure and may be left till after the winter.

The Internet of Things comes

Aquamatix brings the Internet of Things to the Basingstoke Canal

In case you, like me, are not entirely familiar with the Internet of Things, Wikipedia offers the following introduction:

“The **Internet of Things (IoT)** is the interconnection of uniquely identifiable embedded computing devices within the existing Internet infrastructure. The interconnection of these embedded devices (including smart objects), is expected to usher in automation in nearly all fields, while also enabling advanced applications like a Smart Grid.

Things, in the IoT, can refer to a wide variety of devices such as heart monitoring implants, biochip transponders on farm animals, automobiles with built-in sensors, or field operation devices that assist fire-fighters in search and rescue. Current market examples include smart thermostat systems and washer/dryers that utilize wifi for remote monitoring.”

All OK now? Read on....

The Basingstoke Canal has contracted with Aquamatix, pioneer of the Internet of Things in water, to provide real-time monitoring and control of water resources, to allow the public to access information about the canal, and to reduce energy consumed by canal operations.

The Basingstoke Canal was built without a summit level reservoir, relying instead on springs and streams for its water supply, which was never really adequate. In order to use a limited water supply as efficiently as possible while reducing the energy consumed in managing the canal operations, leading edge technologies from the Internet of Things will be supplied by Aquamatix.

The system will provide a variety of tools for canal rangers to monitor water levels and flows and pumping station activity. Information from the system will also be available to the public via a website, allowing canal users to better enjoy and understand the canal and its

environment. The project has been jointly developed by public agencies including Surrey and Hampshire County Councils, the volunteer sector in the Basingstoke Canal Society, and the private sector in Aquamatix, an SME based in Surrey.

James Taylor, Strategic Manager for the Basingstoke Canal said “We are delighted that both owning County Councils are investing in this leading technology so we can provide a better service to all users of the canal and neighbours. By monitoring and controlling the water in the canal we will improve our control of winter flood waters, whilst reducing canal energy use, and allow more boats to enjoy the beautiful canal environment through more efficient water use in dry summer months.”

Laurie Reynolds, MD of Aquamatix noted “We are delighted to be working with the Basingstoke Canal in this UK-first implementation of Internet of Things technologies to this unique environment.”

to the Basingstoke Canal!

The system will be deployed over the winter, ready for the start of the season in April 2015.

Right: Laurie Reynolds, Managing Director Aquamatix; James Taylor, Strategic Manager Basingstoke Canal; John How, Volunteer (IWA & BCS).



This really is a good news story and represents the culmination of a lot of imaginative and forward-looking work over several years by the team above.

John How, who worked for many years in the water industry and is the Society's advisor on everything relating to the canal's water supply, has been very instrumental in getting this very advanced technology applied to the Basingstoke: a first for any British waterway. Aquamatix, based in Redhill, Surrey, is pioneering the Internet of Things and new wireless sensor networks in the water industry and is using the Basingstoke to trial their system.

What it will do is allow the Canal Authority to monitor the condition of the canal without having to rush about taking depth measurements as they do at present. This will save a huge amount of ranger time. Instead of, say, driving

from Mytchett down to Scotland Bridge to check that the houseboats aren't going aground, a ranger will be able to do this using his mobile phone. Equally, if some idiot has been interfering with the paddles, the system should be able to sound the alarm before too much water is lost.

The system could also be used to automatically control the back-pumping schemes.

The canal has remained open for a record two years now, thanks in part to better water management and conservation by the rangers. This new system will help them to do this even better and may help to reduce, if not entirely eliminate, the need to look for new supplies of water for the canal.

It will be very interesting to see how it all works next year, but don't bother to go looking for the water level and flow-rate sensors though - they will be very carefully hidden to avoid any interference!

Events

CHOBHAM SOCIAL MEETINGS

The meetings will be 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. Further information from David Millett on 01252 617364 or email: d.millett7@ntlworld.com

17th December. **Richard Thomas**

‘A Day In The Life Of. . . . A Thames Tug’

Richard will update his talk from October 1996 with a close look at the work done by Cory tug *General VIII*, which is one of a fleet of seven vessels engaged in the movement of the refuse lighters for the Western Riverside Waste Authority. The talk features a voyage from Wandsworth to the aptly named Mucking in Essex. It gives an insight into one of the remaining commercial operations on the tidal Thames and how this has changed since the closure of the dumping ground at Mucking in 2010.

21st. January 2015. **John Gibson**

‘National Trust and the Wey Navigations’

John, the Manager for the National Trust on the River Wey, will give us a presentation on the history of the Wey Navigations and the half century since the Trust’s acquisition of the Navigations from the Stevens family in 1964. Although local to us this waterway has not featured previously in our Talks programme before and this talk will bring us up to date.



18th February. **Liz Payne**

‘Restoration of the Cotswold Canals’

Liz is the Vice Chairman of the Cotswold Canals Trust and will outline the history of the Cotswold Canals, one of the most important in the South of England which connected the Severn Estuary and the River Thames. She will describe the restoration work to date over many years and bring us up to date with the current progress along the length of the canal.

18th March. **Jon Wills**

‘The History and Restoration of the famous Crofton Beam Engines’

Jon will describe the facinating history of the Crofton Beam Engines on the Kennet and Avon Canal at Great Bedwyn and all the work that has gone on over the years to restore them to their current gleaming operating condition which attracts an increasing number of visitors to the various open days thoroughout the summer.

Events

MAGNA CARTA

After 1066, 1215 is perhaps the most famous date in English history and next year will see the 800th anniversary of the day when Bad King John was forced to sign the Magna Carta.

This actually had little to do with human rights and more about the barons airing their grievances at the various taxes that John imposed to compensate for the loss of revenue from the lands in France that Phillip II had retaken. The famous bit about “No free man shall be imprisoned, or outlawed or exiled, etc” only comes in at Clause 39.

Anyway, King John had a castle at Odiham, so the town is getting in on the celebrations next year with a variety of events including medieval archery in the Chalk Pit, a hog roast and a journey from Odiham Castle to Runnymede on foot, horse and by canoe, bicycle and canal boat. There will also be a concert, a medieval market, unveiling of the Odiham embroidery, and medieval living in the field next to the castle, so if you fancy a

bit of Monty Python-style filth and squalor, book your hovel now.

The *JP II* will be providing the main means of transport to get people to the otherwise rather inaccessible castle and as there is also a plan to get 500 people to dress up in 1215 costume, this will provide another excuse for the JP crew to wear funny outfits!

We also plan to organise a modest boat rally at Colt Hill over the Whit weekend, 23/24 May, but the one thing we are missing at the moment is someone to organise this. There are plenty of people willing to help but we must have someone pulling it all together and in overall control.

If this is something you would like to take on, please get in touch with Philip Riley. This is urgent - the rally may be 6 months away, but planning needs to start now!

15th April. Clive and Jill Field ‘Narrow Boats to Norway’

Clive and Jill will give us an illustrated talk about the exploits of four narrow boats and their crews who ventured to Tilbury Docks under their own power before being taken to Sweden on a cross North Sea ferry where they explored the scenic Gota Canal and the connecting lakes. They will tell us of their experiences whilst taking in the Scandinavian waterways scenery and getting to know a country very different from England.

ANNUAL GENNERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Canal Society will again take place at the Deepcut Village Centre, starting at 2pm on Saturday 17th May 2015.

The agenda and more details will appear in the Spring issue of the BC News.

John Pinkerton

The 2014 cruising season ended with two successful Halloween Cruises on the hottest Halloween day since the 1980's. Both crews entered fully into the spirit of the theme trip, although the proliferation of similar events reduced passenger numbers slightly from last year. Thanks go to Penny and her friend Emma, who worked really hard to prepare, and entertain the children. Mummies abounded on the way to King Johns



Castle, where the children were able to 'fly' their bats in the sunshine! Well done to you all – its only 360 days till the next one!! More pictures have been posted on JP Facebook.

Season Statistics

The inclusion of our biennial Air Show charter helped to make 2014 another record cruising season, utilising both the old and new boats on the Surrey and Hampshire pounds respectively. The total number of trips was slightly up, but the ratio of charters to public trips was considerably increased. It was particularly gratifying to note that although the number of public trips was less than last year, passenger numbers were identical. We undertook twice as many theme trips, and all again proved extremely popular.

The trips breakdown and passenger numbers carried are shown in this table, together with the 2013 figures for comparison:

JP TRIPS	2014		2013	
	Trips	Passengers	Trips	Passengers
Charters	140	4533	123	4075
Public Trips	35	1005	45	1004
Theme Trips	12	429	6	242
Specials, promos etc	7	134	2	60
Members' Trips	6	80	11	55
Boat transits	9		5	
Training	19		25	
Maintenance, etc	0		7	
Total	229	6181	224	5436

The success is solely due to the enthusiasm with which our volunteers throw themselves into working for the John Pinkerton. Thanks go to you all, whether you crewed, did the paperwork for organising, talked customers into taking a trip, did maintenance work, weekly cleaning, or the less publicised regular pumpouts, – or in fact, doing anything not specifically mentioned. Give yourselves a pat on the back – it's a great team effort! The finances still have to be finalised,

Report by Dick King

but we expect the money available for sustaining the Basingstoke Canal will be comparable to last year.

We have recruited several new volunteers over the year, and we are pleased to welcome recent additions Ruth Dillon, Steve Lavender and Simon French, who joined for next year after an introductory cruise. However, we need to keep on recruiting to replace those who are no longer able to crew, so if any of your friends have an interest in the Canal, spread the word!

Volunteer Skills

Its quite a long time since we took stock of the various specialist skills available from amongst Society members. It never ceases to amaze what skills are out there, and it is often useful to be able to call on someone to help with a specific task. If you have, or had, a skill in your everyday job that you would be prepared to offer on a casual basis, please do let me know. In particular, we are currently seeking volunteers to expand the dwindling band of helpers engaged on the winter maintenance. Historically, we have utilised retiring engineers from places like RAE Farnborough, but there must be many other sources of engineering skills! Some jobs though, really only need DIY skills! The group meets on Mondays for about 3-4 hours.

We also had feedback recently that we ought to promote JP through the medium of Twitter; is there anybody who understands how this ‘new-fangled technology’ works, and would like to undertake the job?

There are other jobs that involve admin work, including running the various theme trips. If this is your skill, please don’t be shy about coming forward – it won’t take up a lot of your time! The Society is also seeking opportunities to comment on planning applications which could be useful in furthering the sustainability of the Canal – do you receive these in your area as part of a n o t h e r _____ interest?

Dick King, JPCC Chairman

As we reported last time, our old boat has gone off to begin a new life on the Kennet & Avon. I found her looking a bit lonely about a couple of miles west of the Bruce Tunnel. I understand that Josh Kerry and his father have been doing some rewiring work. I hope to be able to report the opening of his new business next year.

Editor



Out and About



Changes at the Ash Lock site

The BCA finally managed to complete negotiations with the MOD for the acquisition of some surplus Army land next to the canal depot at Ash Lock. The site now looks significantly more roomy and the BCA have wasted no time in moving the gate and clearing the site to make way for a couple of large containers to house the pumps that they recently bought for use in emergencies.

New Canoe Clubhouse

The Basingstoke & Deane Canoe Club's new clubhouse next to the wharf at Colt Hill appears to be nearing completion.

Let's hope it won't be too many years before the Basingstoke Canal Canoe Club get theirs too as part of the redevelopment of the Canal Centre site at Mytchett.



Out and About

Spindleberries

The length of the canal to the west of Greywell tunnel is always nice in the autumn and I was glad to see that the Spindleberry bushes are flourishing.

These were a favourite of Margurite Redway and I remember her going round draping them all with yellow tape when the Society's work party was clearing the towpath there. It made it look a bit like a Police crime scene but it stopped them being accidentally cut down.



Tony Harrison



For those of us who knew Tony Harrison, we were very saddened to hear that he died this summer. In waterways circles, Tony was probably best known for his work for the IWA as Chairman of the Restoration Committee and as the Association's Hon Consulting Engineer.

Tony was a great friend of the Basingstoke Canal. Using his extensive experience in hydraulics and hydrology, Tony provided expert advice to the BCA on the management of the water supply to the canal. His work laid the foundations for the current studies and water supply management proposals which are being ably led and promoted by John How. I was fortunate to meet Tony on numerous Southern Canal Association visits and I always found his views on a wide range of waterway issues both extremely well informed and of great practical help. Tony was a very unassuming person who was happy to work behind the scenes where he used his knowledge to great effect. He will be sorely missed by the inland waterways movement and particularly by the charities involved in current restorations whose campaigns have always benefitted immensely from Tony's involvement.

Philip Riley

From Society Newsletters No. 118 November 1984 and No. 119 January 1985

- It is over ten years since restoration work started and seventeen years since the Society was formed and the Society has been pressing Surrey County Council at the monthly Forward Planning meetings for a plan of action to complete restoration. A target date would give all parties involved a more definite objective to aim for and heighten public interest and support to help achieve the aim.
- The “John Pinkerton” looks set to make a £13,000 surplus this season which will be a record. In addition this year’s Sponsored Walk has brought in £4000 to date with more to come. The new slipway at the Barley Mow at Winchfield is almost complete with plenty of parking and elegantly finished off by Hampshire County Council.
- A further meeting with Surrey County Council decided that a target date of 1988 will be set for completing the restoration of the 16 mile Surrey Section of the canal. With dredging the major remaining task in Hampshire this date should see the whole canal fully re-opened by that date. (*In the event it turned out to 1991*)
- A very successful public event was held on the canal at the site of the long gone swing bridge near Double Bridge, Dogmersfield to celebrate our steam dredger “Perseverance’s” 50th. birthday. Recent rain has revived the canal from 9-10 inches down to 2 inches above normal levels. A television crew from TVS arrived and filmed the whole event. A total of around 300 people turned up to pay their respects to a grand old lady.
- This summer’s Work Camp was held at St. Johns, Woking and turned out to be one of the biggest and most ambitious ever held on the waterways. Over 80 volunteers arrived from all over the country including two lads and a girl from America, a girl from Iceland and another from West Germany. SCC officials who visited the work camp went away very impressed with the standard of work.
- A chance meeting at a Christmas party with a member of SCC’s exhibition unit resulted in a spare Portakabin being made available, and using some of the Society’s interesting archive material, it was transformed into a travelling exhibition of the canal’s history and restoration work. It toured the entire length of the canal and was visited by thousands of people who learned something of the canal for the first time.
- A further study has been made of the remains of the NB “Seagull” in the Brickwork Arms at Up Nately. It now seems that the bottom of the “Seagull” is longitudinally planked. The curator of the British Waterways Museum at Stoke Bruerne says this is very unusual and dates its construction date to c.1850 or possibly earlier. This is the only known example of this type of construction and extensive measurements and drawings are being prepared.

Betty Scammell

Very sad to report the passing of Betty Scammell, who was one of the stalwarts of the canal restoration. Thanks to Janet Greenfield who sent these memories of her friend.

Betty Scammell 1928 – 2014

Betty Scammell came from Dorset and trained as a nurse in the days before the National Health Service came into being. After her marriage, she came to live in Ash and joined the Surrey & Hants Canal Society, together with Bert, her husband and Andrew their son.

Betty and Bert ran bank clearing parties in the Ash area during the 1980s, which was when I got to know Betty as a member of her working party and we became friends. Betty was a cheerful person and we always enjoyed our days out on the canal. I remember an extremely cold day when the canal was completely iced over. We had the obligatory huge fire at the water's edge and we stared in astonishment at the people walking past us – on the ice.



Betty and Bert also undertook marshalling duties for the Sponsored Walks and delivered the Society's newsletters in their area. Betty was an enthusiastic member of the 'painting parties' – a group of ladies who met to adorn various objects with 'roses and castles' which were sold on the Society's Sales stand.

- On the 4th. December the "John Pinkerton" became the first boat to navigate the centre length of the canal since the water level was lowered to stem the water seepage at Ash last June. With levels approaching normal the boat was taken down to the dry dock above Lock 28 to have anodes welded onto the hull as a rust prevention measure.

They owned aailable motor cruiser 'Suzi' which they used on the canal in the days before narrow boats could access the waterway, attending campaigning rallies on newly restored sections of the canal .

In recognition of her volunteer work, Betty was one of the people selected to have the honour of being presented to the Duke of Kent at the re-opening of the canal in 1991.

BCS Membership

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY 200 CLUB REPORT

Many thanks to those members I contacted back in August who have now paid their outstanding subs for this year.

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

Peter Curtis of Wymondham, Norfolk
Chris Hunter of Hartley Wintney
Simon French of Fleet
Mr & Mrs G & R Woods of Fleet
Jean Belgrove of Fleet
Mr & Mrs S Lavender of Fleet
Carl Boyde of Chertsey
Mr & Mrs B Price of Knaphill

Richard Kelly of Woking
Mr J M Homer of Windlesham

Doreen Hornsey
Membership Secretary

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

***Ideal Xmas present!
Basingstoke Canal Tea Towel***



Winners for second half of 2014

August

Mr A Hocking	£47
Mr P Riley	£23
Mr J Carter	£11
Mrs J Tyrrell	£11

October

Mr R Cobley	£47
Mr K Bullus	£23
Miss P Ford-Young	£11
Mr G Codling	£11

December

Mr K Bullus	£47
Mr N Mayne	£23
Mrs M J Marchant	£11
Miss P Ford-Young	£11

Congratulations to winners of the 200 Club for the second half of 2014. Sorry if you have not won but you have contributed £540 to the Canal Society this year; thanks to you all. You should also find an application form to the 200 Club for 2015 in this issue of newsletter. If anyone wants set up an annual standing order please send me an e-mail.

All the best for the New Year
Jim Johnstone

By the time you receive this, the new tea towels should have arrived. Made of the best linen and priced £6.50, they are available from Denise Smith whose details are on the page opposite.

BCS information



The Bulletin is now up to
Issue 24.

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.

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Thames barge on the Wey



Photo by Martin Leech