

# Basingstoke Canal News

No. 249 Spring 2016



## Editorial

At our last Society Committee meeting, Jeff Hill rather diffidently suggested that it might be a good idea to set up a Sub-Committee to deal with Work Party matters. He felt that this might save time for the main committee.

The idea was greeted with considerable enthusiasm, not least because Jeff said he was willing to chair the sub-committee.

The idea is not a new one and 25 years ago we had several sub-committees dealing with things like Admin & Membership, Sales & Marketing, Trip Boat, Events, Fund Raising, Planning, Social as well as Work Party. For various reasons, most of these withered and died, but we still have the Boat Company and currently a group organising the Woking Canal Festival in August.

Re-establishment of some other sub-committees would not only offload some of the work of the main committee, but would enable

more members of the Society to get involved with running its various interests without having to become Directors of the Society. They would probably also be spared having to attend monthly meetings, as sub-committees could operate on a more informal basis, meeting only when necessary.

In the past, the chairmen of the various sub-committees tended also to be on the main committee, but this was not always the case and it is not necessary; reports can easily be emailed.

There has recently been a stirring of interest in getting a small trip boat, which would be a perfect topic for a sub-group. Monitoring planning applications that might affect the canal is another important activity.

The Farnham Maltings is hosting a Retirement Fair at the end of February. This is a gathering of local societies looking to recruit the newly retired. Several of the posts we will be looking to fill could be connected with such sub-groups, but if any current Society members would be interested in any of these topics, please let us know.

\* \* \* \* \*

2016 could be one of the most significant years in the Canal's history. Whether this is for better or worse is going to depend on the outcome of the deliberations about its future going on within the County Councils.

One thing is for sure. Whoever ends up running the canal is never going to have enough money to do everything that needs to be done and is going to need volunteers to help.

Not since restoration days has the Canal Society had such an important role to play, both in influencing decisions about the canal and supporting the Canal Authority.

We really need all the support we can get. To find out more about what is going on, please come to our Annual General Meeting on 14th May. Details on page 21.

And don't forget that we are still looking for help with our big event in August, the Woking Canal Festival.

Whilst we are still awaiting the outcome of the County Councils' current review of the future options for the management and funding of the canal (and the results are expected in mid-summer) the wheels are obviously churning on the national waterways scene. Although assurances were given by the Government in 2012, when the Canal & River Trust was established, that the Environment Agency's waterways would be merged into the C&RT's system, there has been a lot of foot dragging since then and it was announced in 2013 that these plans would be shelved until after the election. Since then, the debate about the EA's navigations has continued and the IWA has done an excellent job in continuing to focus the attention of the decision makers on this very important issue. In particular the IWA has urged its members to press their MPs to put pressure on the Waterways Minister, Rory Stewart, to hasten what many of us in the waterways movement believe to be a very obvious and much needed decision.

You may ask what the implications of all this activity at national level are for the Basingstoke Canal. In this context I think it is important to recall the vision of the IWA, when it was established in the 1940s under the leadership of visionaries including Robert Aickman and Tom Rolt, that the ultimate aim of the government should be to establish a National Waterways Conservancy embracing not only the British Waterways and EA canals and navigations but also the 30 or so other navigable waterways many of which, at that time, were unrestored.

This concept of a National Waterways Conservancy is as valid today as it was over 60 years ago. If the vision of the IWA's founders

could be realized, it would provide an excellent opportunity to secure the long-term future of the Basingstoke and relieve it from the short term pressures which continue to threaten its future. I think we must all do what we can to support the IWA's campaign and to bring about the change which is clearly needed.

Over the last few years I have been quietly campaigning at the western end of the canal to establish a footpath linking Greywell to the former canal terminus in Basingstoke town centre. Surprisingly, much of the canal line remains although some sections were destroyed by the building of the M3 and housing developments in Old Basing. This project, known as the 'Last 5 miles' (although the distance is at least 6 miles), is now receiving active support from Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council and Hampshire County Council so we are hopeful that the footpath can become a reality in the next few years.

Of course, there will be some members who might question the point of creating the new walking route but I should mention that the restoration of the canal to its final destination in Basingstoke was the original vision of the members who formed the Society 50 years ago so I felt that the new footpath will maintain a tenuous connection with the town that gave the canal its name. Clearly there is no prospect of restoring the canal as far as its original terminus but I like to feel that those that come after us might applaud our foresight in retaining the old canal line. It is, of course, an essential quality of canal restoration societies that we set unrealistic objectives although, on some occasions, we confound our critics!

*Philip Riley*

## Greywell Area

A kilometre of tree thinning took place between Greywell tunnel and Odiham castle as part of a Higher Level Stewardship programme of works. The rangers spent almost 2 months clearing trees and scrub from this area to open it up and let the light back in. A corridor of trees has been left to benefit the bats who use this area when entering and leaving the tunnel.

An annual engineering inspection of the tunnel has taken place and also the first bat hibernation count of the season, with the second one happening at the end of February.



Photo by Paul Hope

This area is now looking thoroughly spruced up, especially after the work the Canal Society did last year to tidy up the entrance as well. We hope to see an improvement to the levels of plant life in the canal this spring.



## Lock Gates

Gates were measured up and ordered and have now been delivered ready for installation as soon as we can free up staff to work on this. Lowers at 11 and uppers and lowers at lock 19 will be replaced. We also plan to remove a sandbar below lock 11 at the same time.

## Farnborough Road Car Park

Unfortunately this car park suffers from regular antisocial behaviour and fly-tipping. After removing several bathroom suites over the last few weeks and then a lorry load of fly-tipping, we have been forced to take more drastic action and have now installed a new gate and height barrier.



As I type, the gate is still closed awaiting the new height signs before we re-open it. If the new height barrier doesn't work we may be forced to consider even more drastic action and potentially look to close the car park to the public, leaving it only accessible to boaters using the slipway.

We will consult further if our latest solution doesn't work.

## Santa Cruises

Two thousand people visited our December Santa cruises, 169 trips and 130 written compliments. (and over £20K of income) Job well done!

## Staff

Chris Healy has left BCA and gone to pastures new, we wish him well and thank him for his 7 years of service. Lock Keeper Matt is helping out until we can fill the post.



Above: Chris Healy and other BCA personnel conducted by Fiona Shipp at the Volunteers Xmas party singing the "12 Days of Christmas". Words above right.

Steve LB broke his foot but is thankfully now back to full health after 6 weeks off work recovering.

Unfortunately Sara has now broken her wrist after tripping next to the canal and is now deskbound, much to her dismay!

## The BCA's 12 Days of Christmas

*On the 12<sup>th</sup> day of Christmas, my true love gave to me*

- 12 Strimmers strimming
- 11 Painters painting
- 10 Locks a-leaking
- 9 Santas laughing
- 8 Forms a-filling
- 7 Swans a-swimming
- 6 Boats a-floating
- 5 Mooring rings!
- 4 Green mugs
- 3 Santa hats
- 2 Fallen trees and
- A crusty cup of tea!

## Social Media

Our social media headed up by Betty is going from strength to strength. Just before Christmas we hit 1,000 Facebook friends who follow our pages. Our most popular posts last year were the Swan at Claycart (over 2,000 people saw this), Santa Cruises

and anything to do with litter collection. In addition we also have 1,060 twitter followers. While we try to keep our general website up to date via the Hampshire web team, our facebook page is definitely the place to check for regular news on what's happening on the canal. [www.facebook.com/basingstokecanal/](http://www.facebook.com/basingstokecanal/)

## Volunteers

The number of volunteers seems to go from strength to strength and we are lucky to now have help in many areas of our work.

Tuesday volunteers have carried out sapling cutting from Mytchett through to Ash wharf and also days at Claycart (see cover photos) and at Colt Hill. They also had two sessions in Up Nately fighting back the vegetation and rediscovering this beautiful spot. More recent sessions at Hermitage carrying out bankside vegetation cutting and at the canal centre for our annual pond clearout are helping us keep on top of the enormous work load.

Our Canal centre office volunteers have been welcoming visitors and helping sort out our map mountain so we can find things again! They have also helped with Santa cruises and been helping to update our boat database. The lock model is now working again thanks to Keith and his electronic skills.

Ranger Steve has been working more with corporate volunteers this last year with several sessions from Vodaphone.

We'll soon be in the spring where volunteers will be back out on *Rosebud* running trips and also hopefully helping to man our Patrol Boat.

Restoration works took place to clear back and reposition WW2 defence dragon's teeth in Crookham and also another day carrying out works to the pillbox in Brookwood. This has been vastly helped with input from the Pilbox study group. They will

also now be working with ranger Sara to make new interpretation signs for the features on the canal.

Two further volunteer days (with 50 people in total) were held with volunteers from MOD and Aspire to finish sapling cutting in preparation for the new towpath in Aldershot. The first section of the path from Ash lock to Mons bridge is already complete (below). The path will be resurfaced right up to Eelmoor bridge by the end of March.



Above: Newly refurbished pillbox below Lock 15, now looking a bit like a pre-fabricated concrete garage, but doubtless the ivy will soon camouflage it again.

## Deepcut Works

Kenward Groundworks have been working at various locks in Deepcut finding and plugging holes in lock wing walls.



Above: Void filled above Lock 22.

Network rail are due to carry out works to their railway embankment and the next month and will be transporting material over the canal at lock 20.

## Ash Embankment

Works at Ash Embankment are due to start with two drain downs and fish rescues followed by relining of two sections of Ash Embankment with bentonite to stop low level leaks.

## Woking Rive Ditch

The drain down is fully underway and the fish rescue almost complete as I type. The number of fish removed has been far higher than expected which is great news for the BCAA, but has taken longer than expected. Kenward Groundworks will begin in earnest now to replace the Rive ditch culvert. Hopefully all works will be complete by the end of March.



Above: Magnificent specimen carp

So far we have spotted 4 bikes, 2 shopping trolleys and numerous cones and signs!

Below: Rangers loading the first of several trailers with rubbish removed from the canal in Woking.



## Tree Safety Work

During March over 100 trees are having urgent safety works completed on them throughout the canal. Contractors will be carrying out this work assisted at times by the ranger team.



Photo: Verna Smith

Our friends from the Kent & East Sussex Canal Restoration Group paid a visit to the canal recently and spent a very productive weekend hacking back the rhododendrons that grow on the offside bank near Wharfenden Lake in Frimley. This was a job that was long overdue and the canal looks much wider there as a result.

With the aid of a chipper, hired by the Society and installed in one of the BCA's work boats, they managed to clear a lot more than was anticipated, to the extent that a proposed visit by WRG to finish the job has been switched to the Wey & Arun because there wasn't enough work left to do.

## More News from the BCA

### Hermitage Weir

Work is now finally complete on the new sluice and overtopping weir at Hermitage.

local resident until the problems are resolved. We will also hopefully finally get the barrier put back on at the picnic area at Reading road.

### Other Random News

We are planning to put a barrier on the car park at Crookham. There have been a few issues there recently so we will do some temporary closures overnight with help from a friendly

Repairs have been carried out to several small leaks at Broadoak and by Odiham bypass bridge.

### Double Bridge

Double Bridge in Dogmersfield was damaged again, when a Transit van skidded on an icy patch and knocked a large lump out of the parapet that was repaired only a couple of years ago.

The van was lucky not to end up in the canal and its insurance will be paying for repairs yet again.



### Dogmersfield slip

Sadly this project continues to slip. The final stage of the remedial work was originally scheduled to start last autumn, but apparently the HCC engineers were not happy with the preparatory work that had been done by the landowner's contractors. Further grading of the offside bank was carried out and it was hoped that things would begin after Christmas. Now, however, it has all been put back to next autumn.

little sign that anything is going to be done quickly to deal with the very narrow and shallow length of the canal just west of Swan Bridge in North Warnborough.

This is causing our Boat Company great concern because they need to get the *John Pinkerton* through the slip in July to fulfill their contract at the Farnborough Air Show. Hopefully it will still be navigable.

The Society is trying very hard to get this progressed but the County does not appear to have it high on its list of priorities, as it is not regarded as a safety issue.

### Joint Management Committee

In this context it was very disappointing to hear that the planned meeting of the JMC in February had been cancelled, as it was not felt that there was enough business to discuss!

### Swan cutting

It is sad also to report that there seems to be

Hmm.....

## Navigation Update

The initial work on the Dogmersfield slip to reduce the gradient of the slope either side was completed last year, but apparently not to the satisfaction of the HCC surveyors. This delayed the start of the final phase, but we were being advised that work would start this month, and plans made to allow transit past the slip at weekends, and other weekdays when no work was being done. This would have allowed us to complete all the anticipated trips.

Some re-grading was done on the off-side; however we learnt this week that the contract has not yet been placed, and completion will be delayed to the Autumn - - - 2016.

So once again JP will be constrained to the same conditions imposed last year. We can only hope that the aquifers, which now must be full, will eke out the water supply till at least mid-July to enable JP to fulfil the Air Charter contract. This most disappointing news compounds the difficulties for BCS in trying to persuade the powers that be of the need to dredge the Swan cutting. Progress is slow, but we will keep pushing. Watch this space.

## Crew Information

Committee meetings over the winter discussed various items, and the following clarifications made. Public trips are advertised generally as going westward towards King John's Castle, so to promote the interest of our passengers, skippers are requested to use this direction where navigation issues allow. Vaping is a subject with no clear legislation, but the committee agreed that for the comfort of other passengers, this should be covered by the No Smoking requirement.

After time spent testing and refining our requirements, the Online Booking system for public trips went live a few days before Christmas. This included the facility to purchase vouchers redeemable for any trip, charter or public; it was pleasing to see that purchases were made the same day. The Jazz & Ale and Airshow trips seem to be the most popular this early in the year.

The result is that David Horwood can now concentrate on charter bookings without being called to the phone to take a large number of individual bookings through the season for public trips, necessitated by the requirement to pre-book.

## Winter Maintenance

Winter Maintenance started well at the end of last season by volunteers painting the topsides, as reported earlier.

The biggest job undertaken this winter was to try to prevent the windows leaking. To access in the first place, the timber frames had to be removed, followed by trimming back the fireproof board to give access to the window mounting screws, since the builders didn't allow for subsequent removal. Each window was removed, disassembled, tracks and glass cleaned, and rubbing strips replaced. The two halves of the middle bar are screwed together, with the suspicion that water leaked through the screw holes; these were sealed. The contact surfaces were cleaned and new seals used to re-install. The first window took an exceptionally long time to work round all the pitfalls, but eventually the team were turning round three windows in a session. Well done to the dedicated team of Dave Foster, Chris Hunter, George Rhoades and Martin Leech; they worked hard

to achieve completion of the sixteen windows by the end of January.

Safety is a prime consideration for us all, and the height of the top of the bow lockers from the well deck has been a problem from the start. This winter, we made the decision to install fold-away steps either side, and this should greatly improve accessibility.

The galley has been re-organised to include a second bottle chiller, without sliding shelves, for larger items. The glass-washer has been slightly re-sited to reduce obstruction in the galley space, and yet still allow dirty glasses to be stacked in the basket ready for cleaning.

The work on the water tank compartment has also been completed.

Assuming Dogmersfield would be unavailable earlier, painting and dry-docking has been arranged for April. Volunteers requested please, to clean off, scrape, wire-brush and paint the hull, starting Monday 4<sup>th</sup> April.

## Members Cruises 2016

We will continue with the Member's Cruises this year, as below. There will also be an induction cruise for new crew members on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> March, from Odiham at 2.00pm.

The dates are:

- Mon 11<sup>th</sup> April
- Mon 16<sup>th</sup> May
- Mon 13<sup>th</sup> June
- Mon 4<sup>th</sup> July
- Mon 5<sup>th</sup> September
- Mon 3<sup>rd</sup> October

All leave from Colt Hill wharf, Odiham at 7.30pm, last for about two & half hours, and are free to any member of the Basingstoke Canal Society. Please reserve your seat by telephoning the booking manager 01256 765889. New crew members always welcome.

## John Pinkerton AGM

Notice is hereby given that:

The Thirty-Seventh Annual General Meeting of the Surrey & Hampshire Canal Cruises Ltd. (S&HCC Ltd.)

and

The Third Annual General Meeting of the John Pinkerton Canal Cruises Ltd. (JPCC Ltd.) will be held on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2016 at the Basingstoke Canal Centre, Mytchett at 1930 Hours.

## AGENDA

1. Welcome & Apologies for Absence
2. To approve the minutes of the 36<sup>th</sup> AGM of S&HCC Ltd.
3. To approve the minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> AGM of JPCC Ltd.
4. Matters Arising
5. Directors' Report
6. Presentation of Accounts
7. Composition of the JP Companies Directors and Committee
8. Any other notified business

Tea / Coffee Break followed by:

- Summary of Winter Maintenance
- Crew Discussion
- 2016 Brochures Available

Hope to see you all there.

Dick King, *Chairman SHCC & JPCC Ltd*

## CHOBHAM SOCIAL MEETINGS

The final meetings for this season will, as usual, be held at the Parish Pavilion, Recreation Ground, Station Road, Chobham, near Woking, GU24 8AZ (see map for exact location).

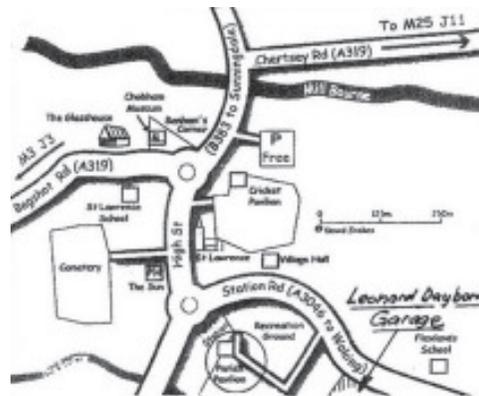
Meetings will start at 8pm on the third Wednesday of the month. Raffle and Retiring Collection. Coffee/tea and biscuits will be available during the interval. Non-members and friends are very welcome.

### 16th March 2016. **Ian McKechnie** **'Coals to Croxley (and beyond)'**

When Ian was a student at Birmingham in the 1960s, he and a group of colleagues bought a redundant wooden coal boat from a coal yard compulsorily purchased to take one of the supports for the 'Spaghetti Junction' motorway interchange. Later they bought a derelict ex-GUCC and Willow Wren Large Northwich motor, and, after fitting it out, decided to bring it south to the London area. After loading with coal in conjunction with the Ashby Canal Society they delivered the coal to John Dickinson's famous paper mill at Croxley.

### 20th April 2016. **Dave Jones** - **'What happened when the money ran out - 18th Century Canal Tokens'**

Dave is a collector of 18th Century Canal Tokens, especially those concerning waterways. He has written articles on canal tokens and will talk about how tokens were made, why tokens came into being at the end of the 18th Century and those specific to the Basingstoke Canal plus other canal tokens, including the Cotswolds Canal tokens. He will bring along some examples plus other



Basingstoke Canal ephemera, share certificates and the original Act of Parliament.

*Mark Coxhead operates a free email reminder service. Reminder emails are sent about a week prior. To be included on the list please contact [Mark@coxhead.org.uk](mailto:Mark@coxhead.org.uk)*

Further information from [www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk](http://www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk) or from David Millett on 01252 617364 or email: [d.millett7@ntlworld.com](mailto:d.millett7@ntlworld.com)

*When I took over organising the speakers from Arthur Dungate in 2004 it was on a temporary basis. However as no one came forward I have carried on ever since. I would now like to stand down at the end of this winter and am looking for a new volunteer to take over. Please contact me on the above telephone number or email if you are interested for further information.*

**David Millett**

***Please give this some thought - No new organiser = no more Chobham social evenings!***

## Historic Narrow Boats coming to Woking for a Double BCS & HNBC 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

*Celebrate 25 Years of Navigation on the Basingstoke Canal since Restoration*

**Planning for this event is now well underway, but we are still looking for people to help!**

**We particularly still need**

- ◆ Volunteers to help set up the site, stewarding during the event, and break-down afterwards.

If you want to be involved, whether taking on one or two small tasks or a lead role, please contact **Dick King** on 01730 264178 or by email at [wheelers.farm@btinternet.com](mailto:wheelers.farm@btinternet.com).

*It is vitally important for the future of the Society to make this event a success - please contact Dick and help us to make it so.*

## Canal clean-up in Woking

To allow repair of the culvert that allows the Rive Ditch to pass under the canal in Woking, over a mile of the canal has been drained, from Monument Bridge to Skew Bridge. Sadly, the BCA did not feel able to use their inflatable dams to enable a shorter length to be drained because of the almost inevitable vandalism that these seem to attract.

However, vandalism is nothing new (*see page 15*), and the good news is that the number of fish rescued from the drained stretch is much greater than expected and the amount of rubbish - shopping trollies etc - is much less.

Let's hope that the Canal Festival in August further encourages respect for the canal.

# Woking Canal

# Festival 1962

From *The IWA Bulletin No 67, November 1962*

## Basingstoke Canal

At Easter, our London and Home Counties Branch organised a small boat rally at Woking, which proved highly successful.

*Below:* The rally site at Monument Bridge



There were water sports, a fireworks display, and illuminated boats. Mr. Nicoll's "Arcturus" provided the public with waterborne excursions. Captain Munk attended the Rally which was formally opened by the Chairman of the Woking Urban District Council, Cllr. T. Leam.

The latter remarked very appropriately that "if we don't keep the canal clean, we may lose it forever."

*Right:* Wide-beam horse-drawn boat *Firebrand* and trip boat *Arcturus* waiting at Sheerwater.



*A good deal of preparatory work for the rally had to be undertaken, as Tim Dodwell reported some years ago:*

I took part in my first canal working party, with some twenty others, on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1961 in the first in a series of nine in preparation for the 1962 Woking Rally in April of that year.

The work that first Sunday consisted of clearing rubbish from Monument Bridge and the immediately surrounding area, and opening up the overgrown winding-hole to the west opposite what was then the Woking gasworks, which had once been supplied with coal by canal. By the end of the day a truck-load of rubbish had been piled on the bank for the Council to collect. That was to be the pattern of subsequent working parties, working down the canal towards Sheerwater Lock clearing the channel, with particularly rewarding sessions opposite gaps in the fence along the Sheerwater Estate.



We had the use of a large wooden dredge-punt, and later the help of a small Maid Line cruiser, *Maid Melorna*, loaned by Captain Lionel Munk, then Chairman of the IWA, as a tug. As the date of the rally approached we moved further west, finishing up by literally hand-dredging silt from Chobham Road Bridge with a small dredging-spoon into the dredge-punt and bucketing it out onto the bank subsequently.

*IWA Bulletin No 67, November 1962, also contained the following comment on the Basingstoke Canal and the attitude of the local inhabitants to it.*

We have observed on several occasions that hooliganism, on the waterways at least, steadily intensifies as one travels south. The Basingstoke Canal is a particular sufferer. On 19<sup>th</sup> May, the "Surrey Times" interviewed Mr. Valdar Woolls, who hires out boats at Ash Vale, on the subject. Mr. Woolls had just removed a wheel-barrow and a bubble-gum machine from the waterway near his boat-house, and pointed to a sign which had been torn down though secured by more than 150 nails. The bubble-gum machine

had been stolen from outside a local shop, and carried a considerable distance before being thrown in the canal. "It is a terrible thing, this hooliganism," said Mr. Woolls. Nor are the customers always much better: "Some of them get tired of rowing and abandon my boats miles away. I or one of my daughters have to go along the towpath, sometimes for four miles, to retrieve them. Sometimes these tired people forfeit the deposit they leave on a boat rather than bother coming back for it. It can be much as £1." Mr. Woolls also remarked that his best customers were Scottish soldiers. "The Scots can't resist a boat. The Irish don't care much for rowing. The most careful people are the West Africans. They have a feel for a boat."

From: Society Newsletters No. 125 January 1986 and No. 126 March 1986

- The Society's 70 ton steam powered dredger 'Perseverance' has crossed the line from Dogmersfield to Crookham Village in October in the heart of the Hampshire countryside. The occasion was celebrated in the time honoured way with beer glasses raised aboard the dredger by members of the crews, members of the Crookham Village Association and local parish councillors, led by the (late) Parish Council Chairman Stan Knight (*back row 3<sup>rd</sup> from the right in the photo*).

and the Society since we too want to see the bats protected. The NCC is proposing to designate the tunnel as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The consequence is that Hampshire County Council supports us in acceptance of the SSSI, providing it does not prejudice 'the future restoration and use of the Greywell Tunnel or any rights of navigation which may exist on the Basingstoke Canal'.

- Courage Brewery have constructed a new landing stage at the bottom of the pub garden at the Fox and Hounds in Crookham Road, Fleet. So Courage ales can reach boat crews other beers cannot reach! Well done Courages, another useful facility for those out on the canal.

- Boat Company profits from the 'John Pinkerton' operation in 1985 are expected to be up to the level of last year despite a poor start to the season. The Company's decision to operate from Aldershot during August and run shorter one-hour public

cruises attracted full trips and additional turnover without which profits would definitely have been down. The final figure was actually up on the 1984 season at £14,049 and included a profit of £2,700 made in the last six weeks of the season.

- The local free newspapers in the Fleet area are reporting on the apparent controversy over 'bats versus boats' which has arisen over the Nature Conservancy Council's plan to install a grille across the eastern portal of the Greywell Tunnel and lock it up to safeguard a colony of bats. In fact there was no fundamental conflict between the NCC

- When angler Jon Davies of Old Basingstoke caught a pike in Crookham Deeps recently

he sent the scales whirling round the clock trying to weigh it. Then Nigel Newport of Western Fuels, the fisherman's Aladdin's cave In Fleet Road, came to the rescue with a more substantial balance to weigh the catch which registered 17lbs 12 ozs. Has it been bettered on the Basingstoke Canal?

- About 100 people attended a public meeting organised by the Society's marketing group at the Chernocke Hall, Fleet recently. Guest Chairman Mr. Robin Cowen, Vice Chairman of Hart District Council praised the team spirit and dedication of the vast army of volunteers who work on the canal and said he was impressed by the co-operation that existed between the Society and local authorities in restoring the canal and he appealed for more local firms and commercial companies to get involved.

- An appeal by Charles Church Developments against Hart District Council's refusal to allow the Company to build 130 houses on land at Hatchwood Farm, Odiham has been dismissed by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Mr Kenneth Baker. The land in question is between the By-pass bridge and Galleon Marine. (*Note: the land is now being developed after all!*)

- At a public meeting held at the Centre Halls, Woking, various canal issues were raised including planning in Woking. Mr Douglas Spinks, Planning Officer for Woking Borough Council said that the Council saw the canal as a tremendous asset for the town. "The canal is so close to the town centre" he observed, "that we must find a way of integrating the facilities and bringing the canal into the town centre".

### e-mail BC News

Nearly one hundred people agreed to receive their copy of the Basingstoke Canal News by email, which saves the Society a substantial amount of money for printing and postage. There is a snag, however.

If you are one of them and have resorted to reading the BCN on the Society's website, but would like to receive it by email again, please let me know and I will add your address to my circulation list.

I send out each issue as one email with the BCN as an attachment to a circulation list of email addresses. Every time I do this, I get about half a dozen messages saying that some of them could not be delivered. Unfortunately, the messages do not appear to say who the intended recipients are. As a consequence, I fear that some people are not getting their newsletter, but I have no way of finding out who they are.

Anyone else about to change their email address, please don't forget to let me know ([editor@basingstoke-canal.org.uk](mailto:editor@basingstoke-canal.org.uk)). Equally, if anyone else is prepared to forgo the printed edition, please let me have your email address.

Thanks.

Roger Cansdale (*Editor, BCN*)



*The following article was written by Fiona Shipp for the Ash Parish magazine to explain to people who knew nothing about it how and why the BCA has to manage water in the canal. However, it is such a good piece (I particularly like the bath analogy) that I felt it was worth repeating here.*

**The Basingstoke Canal** is owned by Surrey and Hampshire County Councils and managed on their behalf by the Basingstoke Canal Authority. As Canal Manager, I recently met the Ash Vale Flood Forum who felt some information about how and why we manage the canal would be helpful to parishioners in the area.

A canal is very much a man-made and managed waterway. Consider it like a big bath tub: the taps are like the land drains and rainfall, over which we have no control. Our two main points of control are the bath plug (our sluices), and the overflow hole (our weirs). We try to optimise our comfortable bath by keeping it at a good level where our rubber ducks (boats) can float along and we don't spill over and make the bathroom floor all wet. This is our ideal water level and we call it design water level or level zero. When the Canal has extra water in it we then say it is plus, by however many millimetres (mm), or minus by however many mm. We then have actions that are triggered by these readings which can vary up the Canal.

We actively watch the weather forecasts and are on the warning alerts from the Met office, pre-warning us of an impending bath time! Before substantial rainfall we let some water out of the bath to pre-empt a sudden influx. The water we let out is either encouraged to flow quicker down the Canal (via the use of lock bypass weirs and lock gates) and/or out of our sluices such as at Ash Vale, allowing large rainfall to easily be accommodated when it



*Above: 'A wet bathroom floor', in this case the Farnborough airfield on the first day of the 1968 SBAC Air Show, following a bank breach the previous evening.*

*Below: RAE personnel surveying the damage. (Photo. D Jebens)*



hits. This also means our main loading of local rivers is before any major rainfall and thus when they can comfortably cope with it. We have many large sluices on the canal, several of these are upstream of Ash and help to remove storm water before it even reaches this area.

Where possible we want to keep water in the Canal to feed our flights of locks which are mainly downstream of Ash. The Canal actually has a water shortage issue and has done for the last 200 years. Most Canals have a river feed, however our main feed of water comes from springs under the Greywell tunnel and a feeder stream at Broadoak, Hampshire. In the summer months when we have lots of lock use, we can easily run out of enough water and find that we have to close lock flights to boats.

We have a Canal ranger on duty 24/7, 365 days/year to manage the Canal levels with other staff

on-call as back up during periods of bad weather. This system will soon be made even more efficient with the installation of a new telemetry scheme, allowing us to remotely view the level of water on any of our larger pounds (stretches of water between locks) and see when water is flowing over our main weirs.

The Canal is far from just a ditch, but with many houses being built up around it for the last 200 years it is now very much an integral part of the water drainage system. It also supports a host of wildlife (it's nationally renowned for plant life) and recreation for powered boats from all over the country and also 3 canoe clubs, charity trip and hire boats and commercial boat businesses and an angling club. It is a highly valued recreational resource, with over a million people using it for informal recreation and commuting every year.

Fiona Shipp

## Boat evicted from the Canal

A narrowboat on the canal has recently been evicted for a number of breaches of boating terms and conditions, by-laws and failing to pay their mooring and navigation fees. To be fair to all boat owners the BCA is trying to crack down on boaters who do not pay or comply with the rules. Boating on the canal is for leisure purposes only and living aboard or continuous cruising will not be accepted.

The newly refurbished Patrol Boat will be active this summer carrying out more regular patrols and licence checks of all boaters on the canal.

# Canal Society AGM

## WELLESLEY WOODLANDS Duke's Wood



People driving along the A323 Fleet to Aldershot road in the last year will have noticed the fencing that has gone up on the north side of the road all the way from Eelmoor Bridge to the junction with the A325 Farnborough Road.

This marks the boundary of a new SANG - a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace. This is a piece of land designated for recreational use to replace land lost to building, in this case the Aldershot Urban Extension.

The area has been named Wellesley Woodlands, Duke's Wood in honour of Wellington whose statue is nearby. Part of it borders the south side of the canal and there is a small car park, where this sign is to be found, off the A323 near Claycart Bridge.

A lot of offside bank clearance was done at Claycart last year and there are now some very pleasant walks to be had there, with both sides of the canal now accessible.

**NOTICE is hereby given that the Thirty Ninth Annual General Meeting of the Surrey & Hampshire Canal Society will be held on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2016 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 Eighth AGM held on 16th May 2015.
3. To approve the Annual Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2015.
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  
Freda Dawson, Honorary Secretary  
29th February 2016

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.

### AGM Notes:

- a) *This Notice is issued from the Honorary Secretary's address at Targa Studio 2, First Floor, 127 Lynchford Road, Farnborough, Hants GU14 6ET.*
- 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.



Dear Members

The 2016 Membership subscriptions are due on 1<sup>st</sup> March. If you pay by cash or cheque you will have received a reminder letter. I would appreciate it if you could send me your subs together with the details slip on the letter as promptly as possible. As I am sure you will appreciate, it is time consuming and costly to have to send out reminders.

Thank you for your cooperation and your support.

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

Cheryl Richards of Hook  
Gillian & Walter Hulatt of Woodham  
Ron Millington of Woking  
Nick Habgood of Wokingham  
Mark & Sheila Forrester of Odiham  
Basil Groundsell of Church Crookham  
Paul Deverell of Deepcut  
Philip Waters of Frimley Green  
Malcolm & Sylvia Brickwood of Chobham  
David Lodge of Woking

**Doreen Hornsey**  
Membership Secretary

**E-Mail:**  
[Membership@basinstoke-canal.org.uk](mailto:Membership@basinstoke-canal.org.uk)

## Paul Buck

The news of Paul Buck's death at the age of 82 came through just as the last issue of the newsletter went to the printers, so apologies for this late notice.

Howard Diamond remembered him from the very early days of the canal restoration when small working parties were operating in the Odiham and Crookham areas. Paul ran the Market Square Bakery in Alton and used to turn up with food for the workers. Curried pasties were apparently a particular favourite. The 14<sup>th</sup> issue of the newsletter thanked Paul for providing bread rolls for a Society barbecue in 1968 and the 44<sup>th</sup> issue in 1972 had a report that Paul had said that he was able to provide food for a weekend work party of up to 250 people!

Paul later became one of the founder members and first vice-chairman of the Basingstoke Canal Boating Club and helped to organise the boating activities at the Woking Canal Festival that was held in 1989.

*Below:* Fox & Hounds rally with Paul on the right.



The Bulletin is now up to Issue 27.

If you want to keep up with the latest news about the canal, please send your e-mail address to

[membership@basinstoke-canal.org.uk](mailto:membership@basinstoke-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 1<sup>st</sup> each year.

**Date for next copy 30<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

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

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

*e-mail:* roger.cansdale@ntlworld.com

### Presidents:

Tim & Elizabeth Dodwell

**Chairman:**

Philip Riley\*

**Vice-Chairman:**

Martin Leech\*

**Hon. Secretary:**

Freddie Dawson\*

**Hon. Treasurer:**

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](http://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

**Website Manager:**

Craig Shanks

**Press Officer:**

Roger Cansdale\*

**External Talks Organiser:**

Roger Cansdale\*

**Lengthman Organiser:**

Mike Gordon\*

**200 Club organiser**

Jim Johnstone

**Archivist**

Rev David Tonkinson

**VP & Chobham talks:**

David Millett

**Director**

Verna Smith\*

**Director**

Kevin Redway\*

**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](http://www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk)  
Canal Authority Internet Website: [www.basingstoke-canal.co.uk](http://www.basingstoke-canal.co.uk)

# Claycart work party



BCA ranger Chris Healy (*centre*) with his last Tuesday work party carrying out bank clearance at Claycart. On the offside is one of the new walks through the “Duke’s Wood” SANG.