



The Basingstoke
Canal Society

Basingstoke Canal News

No. 254 Summer 2017





Editorial

I sometimes feel that we get so bogged down by the problems of the canal that we lose sight of why we got interested in the first place. It was therefore very nice to be reminded why when the opportunity arose to help move some of Galleon Marine's boats from Odiham to Mytchett to avoid the work in Dogmersfield.

The slip work was suspended for a few days to allow passage of boats, so Philip Riley and I spent a delightful day on the canal, which looked absolutely stunning.

The banks were well trimmed so that the spring flowers were visible, the sun shone and herons flapped about. It was a real treat to see everything looking fresh and green.

It was also amazing to read the comments in the hirers' book on the boat. You might expect rave comments about scenery and wildlife from people living in the grottier parts of this country but it was a surprise to see them coming from visitors from Australia, New

Zealand and America. The Basingstoke really is a bit special!

It was also clear from the comments that Arthur and Karen are doing a great job as ambassadors for the canal.

Thanks to them for a great day out!

The Society seems to be heading for one of its periodic crises as the Committee all get older.

Philip Riley, not unreasonably after thirty something years on the Committee, feels that he should make way for some fresh talent. We don't necessarily agree, because he is an excellent chairman, but it is hard to deny his right to take a break. I think he will hang on for a bit, but we do need to be doing some urgent succession planning, because we have no obvious replacement for him currently.

Verna Smith has already stepped down to do more for the IWA following the loss of Ray Cernel, so there is at least one vacant slot on the Committee. If you, or anyone that you know might be a candidate for a seat on the Committee, please don't wait to be asked - get in touch with Terry Inskip, our Secretary.

We are currently trying to devolve some of the Committee's work to sub-groups. We already have the group running the trip boats and we also have a Work Party sub-committee. We have recently agreed to reinstate the Sales & Marketing Group to try to coordinate better the procurement and marketing of the books and other items that the Society sells. I think we could also do with a PR and Recruiting Group to make a better job of promoting the Society.

If you would like to get involved with any of these groups, again, please let us know. As John Dodwell said at the AGM, don't wait for "them" to do something, do something yourself!

Cover Picture : BCS Chairman Philip Riley leading a pair of Galleon Marine boats through the works at Dogmersfield.

Photo: Roger Cansdale

Chairman's AGM report

Annual meetings provide a good opportunity to reflect on the highlights of the previous year and to look forward to the next 12 months. The last year was dominated by two issues – the celebration by the Society of its 50th anniversary and the negotiations over the future ownership and management of the canal.

There is no doubt that our 50th anniversary party in August exceeded all our expectations. The venue in Woking was ideal for us, the spectacle of over 25 working boats visiting the canal proved to be an immense attraction and even the weather stayed fine and clear over the whole weekend. Dick King and his team have already been recognized for the fantastic job that they did for us but I would also like to give my personal thanks for all the hard work that went into planning and managing the event.

The Canal Festival was clearly seen as a great benefit to Woking and it also provided a lot of enjoyment for all our volunteers and supporters who have given so much of their time and effort to the canal over the past half century. I think the Festival also emphasized the important role that the Canal Society still plays in promoting the canal and convincing the local communities of its immense value to the populations it serves. Inevitably it will be some time before we can put on an event on the scale of the Woking Canal Festival but I'm hopeful that we can look forward to more events of this kind, possibly in 5 or 10 years time.

Turning to more problematic issues, we had hoped that the negotiations between the Counties and the Canal & River Trust over the transfer of the canal would have born fruit by the time of this AGM. Sadly this has not been

the case. Those of us who work closely with the Counties and with the other local authority members of the Canal Partnership are very much aware of the difficult financial position that the canal has always faced.

Essentially, given the high cost of maintaining the canal structure and the limited opportunities to increase the revenue from licence fees, rents, sales etc, it is unrealistic to expect that the canal will, in the foreseeable future, pay its own way. Just to give you one example, the cost of repairing Dogmersfield Cutting is likely to be in the region of £1m. Sums of this magnitude simply cannot be raised from operating revenues. However, if we look at the wider benefits offered by the navigable canal we can see its huge value as an important local amenity.

This has always been the dilemma faced by our inland waterways – their value cannot be assessed in purely financial terms. This is also true of the C&RT network which only relies on about a quarter of its income from operations with the remaining funds coming from a range of sources including income from property and a sizeable Government grant.

As far as we are aware, the starting point for the C&RT discussions was an assessment by the Trust of the cost of maintaining the canal over the long term. This involved an estimate of how much it would cost to keep the locks, culverts, embankments etc in safe and useable repair. An assessment was also made of the potential to generate more income by exploiting the canal's assets and improving its attractiveness to users. Using these figures the Trust calculated how much it would need, as a capital sum, to produce the income which

Chairman's AGM report

would fill the gap between receipts and expenditure. We do not know the final figure but it was clearly in the millions of Pounds and was certainly in excess of what the Counties were willing to pay to release the canal to the Trust.

So where does that leave us? We have been told that negotiations with the Trust are continuing and, given that the County elections have now taken place, it is possible that it might be easier for an accommodation to be reached. Time will tell. Are there any other options that could be considered? John Dodwell has mentioned the concept of a new Basingstoke Canal Trust which would bring in additional opportunities to raise the funds needed to run the canal including grant funding (particularly National Lottery) and commercial initiatives.

It has always seemed to me that our Riparian Districts could also do far more to support the canal which provides such an important source of recreation for their residents. At the present time the six Districts do contribute to the annual operating budget (although two authorities consistently fail to pay their full dues) but, apart from one notable exception (Woking BC), the Districts do not use their powers and influence to support the canal, for example through the planning system.

Given the current status of the negotiations, the Counties have recently said that they will continue to fund capital costs over the next 3 years so we are encouraged that the lessons of 10 years ago have been learned – that to let the canal fall into dereliction will inevitably involve increased costs in the long run and will also raise important public safety issues.

So we must be patient and hope that the C&RT discussions will make progress. In the meantime we are working in the background to urge the owners to achieve what we believe is the only viable option for the future security of the canal.

This year we lost two key County Council supporters of the canal – Linda Kemeny and Keith Chapman, both of whom have served as Chairman of the JMC. I am particularly indebted to Linda and Keith who have given immense support to us, often in difficult circumstances, to ensure that the needs of the canal have been properly addressed in the Council chambers in Kingston and Winchester.

Verna has also indicated that she will not be standing in the Committee elections today. As many of you know, Verna is very active in IWA affairs and serves on both the local Branch committee and on the national Navigation committee so it is clear that she needs to scale back some of her activities. Verna has made a tremendous contribution to the Society in numerous ways and, on behalf of you all, I would like to thank her for all she has done for us over many years.

Can I conclude by thanking the Committee and you, the members, for all the support you have given me over the last 12 months.

Philip Riley
Chairman

AGM report



Above: John, Liz and Tim Dodwell. Liz is holding a bronze plaque of her mother's horse Kitty and a replica made by Janet Buckley to go on the trip boat named after her.

The 2017 AGM was the year of the Dodwells. Co-Presidents Tim and Liz chaired the meeting and John gave the keynote talk about the Canal and River Trust.

The formal business began with the usual apologies for absence and approval of the minutes of the 2016 AGM and we then got into the interesting bit with Treasurer Guy Faller's finance report (*summary on page 6*).

Both income and expenditure were very similar to the previous year, resulting in a net income of £19,536. Subscription income had increased with membership now standing at about 950. A major difference was the lack of bequests in 2016, but this was due to change in 2017. However, grant income was up thanks to late payment of grants promised in 2015.

The big difference in expenditure in 2017 was the cost of the Woking Canal Festival at just over £10,000. However, spending on equipment maintenance, printing and other items was down to normal annual levels after high costs incurred in 2015.

Mr Faller said that there was a substantial cash balance and finances were strong and adequate to maintain the Society's objectives. There was an awareness that money should be spent and not hoarded and the Society was committed to spending between £65,000 and £70,000 in 2017 on various projects.

A motion to approve the accounts was proposed by Tim Dodwell, seconded by David Junkison and carried unanimously. The auditors were also re-appointed. (*cont. page 7*)

Society Accounts for 2016

Summary of accounts for year ended 31 December 2016

Income and expenditure account

	2016 £	2015 £
Income		
Subscriptions	8,677	8,092
Donations - general	2,981	2,662
Bequests	0	8,000
Grants received	5,600	360
Gift Aid Recoveries	2,133	2,006
Income from subsidiaries	43,762	41,637
Fundraising income	1,693	2,020
Interest received	445	551
	<u>65,291</u>	<u>65,328</u>
Less expenditure		
Projects and working parties	(17,299)	(17,358)
Newsletter	(4,140)	(4,096)
Postage, stationery and printing	(2,448)	(5,949)
Insurance	(3,966)	(4,961)
Depreciation less profit on sale of assets	(1,407)	(1,407)
Equipment maintenance	(1,796)	(4,223)
Rallies and events	(10,114)	(660)
Accountants' fee	(1,975)	(1,625)
Donations / sponsorships	(126)	(1,981)
Travel and subsistence	(168)	(87)
Other expenditure	(2,316)	(4,194)
	<u>(45,755)</u>	<u>(46,541)</u>
Net income	<u>19,536</u>	<u>18,787</u>

Balance Sheet

Fixed assets		
Investment in subsidiary companies	101	101
Freehold land & buildings	50,412	50,412
Plant & equipment	3,091	4,498
Amounts due from subsidiary company		
Loans - JPCC	126,111	133,111
SHCC	3,479	6,979
Profit for year donated	43,762	41,637
Other debtor	2,133	2,006
Cash at bank and in hand	155,518	125,424
Accrued expenses	(3,918)	(3,015)
Net assets	<u>380,689</u>	<u>361,153</u>
General fund	376,960	357,424
Restricted fund	3,729	3,729
Designated fund	0	0
Total funds	<u>380,689</u>	<u>361,153</u>

AGM report



The Robin Higgs Award went to the team who organised the 2016 Woking Canal Festival. Presenting the award to Dick King, Robin said that it was not normally given to members of the Committee, but Dick was also representing others such as Peter Harman and Phil Hardyman who were not at the meeting. Dick thanked him on their behalf and indeed on behalf of the other 70-odd people who had contributed to the organisation and running of the event.

After the refreshment break, during which we were joined by local Surrey County Councillor Paul Deach and erstwhile MP and Society Vice-President Michael Gove, Philip Riley introduced our guest speaker, John Dodwell.

John had been a member of the IWA since 1961 and its General Secretary from 1970 to '73. He was the Chair of the Montgomery Partnership and a Trustee of the Canal and River Trust since its inception, although he was now stepping down from the Board. He had brought his tug *Helen* up the Basingstoke a few years ago.

John's talk was a broad overview of the Canal and River Trust and its history and served very well to illustrate just how far the Trust had evolved from BW since its birth in 2012.

British Waterways' funding came from central government and varied from year to year, making long term planning very difficult. In contrast, the C&RT's grant from the government was defined for at least the first 15 years and every extra pound that it earned or saved could be kept and used for the waterways' benefit. They were also much better placed to attract funding from other sources, including local authorities.

Another major change was in the use of volunteers, who in 2016 had contributed £9 million worth of time. C&RT staff were now more used to working with volunteers; where previously a job had to be done by two members of staff for safety reasons, it was now common for the second person to be a volunteer, so more work could be done for the same cost.

The C&RT had a number of other interesting ideas that could perhaps be applied on the Basingstoke.

One was for Open Days at sites where major works were being undertaken. This encouraged public interest and helped to recruit Friends of the C&RT. Over 3000 people had come to view the work on the St Pancras Lock. Friends typically contributed £6 a month to the C&RT and currently there were 20,000 of them. The aim was for 100,000.

Engagement with local communities was a big theme and could happen on various levels.

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Adoption Groups, based on local organisations such as Scouts, a pub or, in one case students studying tourism management, could adopt a length of local canal or a lock. So far there were 170 such groups and they were a counter to people saying “they” should be doing something.

At a higher level, regional partnership were set up with local authorities, who recognised that waterways benefited health, tourism, drainage, etc. The C&RT wanted to canals to be seen as an integral part of the local community.

John touched on the C&RT’s attitude to taking on other waterways. In the case of the EA waterways, there were complications about flood control, which was not something that a charity could be responsible for. The C&RT’s primary role was to look after existing canals. It was willing to advise on restoration projects but did not have the resources to do them. To take on a new canal, such as the Basingstoke, the right financial package was needed to pay for future maintenance.

John finished his very interesting and well-illustrated talk by thanking the Society for its vision and persistence (even obstinacy!)



John’s talk was followed by Dick King’s *John Pinkerton* report.

The *JP* had done its first cruises to the Farnborough Air Show and the clients were delighted with the extra facilities offered by the new boat, and the charter contributed well towards another great year for *John Pinkerton*.

Charters were again slightly up. All Public Trips and the popular Theme trips were now booked on-line; this works well although it does involve a little extra expense. During the season, over 6100 passengers were carried.

The report for JPCC – the boat charter subsidiary company - shows that from a gross turnover of £52,871 we had an operating profit of £32,599, - just slightly less than in 2015. S&HCC – which operates the galley and souvenir sales on board, and the sales stall at other events - shows an operating profit of £11,163, up from £8,820 in 2015. The combined result from both companies yielded a total paid to the Society in 2016 of £43762 - £2000 up on 2015.

JPCC also spent £7000 on the capital purchase and refurbishment of *Kitty*. Since 1978, the total amount raised by the *JP* operation is now over £760,000.

Each year Dick thanked the Committee and Crew members for all their hard work and support. Without their willingness, the *JP* operation would simply grind to a halt. So well done everybody, including the unseen Booking and Maintenance teams – thank you, and keep up the good work.

Crew numbers continue to be maintained. As

AGM report

older ones retire or move on, new volunteers come forward. Chris Hunter and Ken Sankey were new skippers last season. Sadly two of our longstanding skippers were going this year – Peter Wright and Bob Malcolm, both of whom have been heavily involved with *JP* for many years. Thanks to both. Another batch of skippers would be trained during the coming winter, so they would be looking out for willing candidates.

Last year the purchase of *Kitty* was reported. It operated as a water-bus at WCF, and has undergone more refurbishment over the winter; it will return to its new mooring site in the centre of Woking next week. Ian Moore is now the Manager for her and her crew, and trips will commence at the end of the month. Initially on

offer will be Charter trips on Wednesdays, and Public Trips on Saturdays & Sundays – all bookable on-line, going live very soon. Some trips are being planned in conjunction with group visits to the Lightbox. If any Society member want to make use of her, she's there for the asking; other times may be available. Just check out the *JP* website.

Finally, Dick reminded Society members about the regular FREE evening cruises on *JP* - one evening each month in season starting from Colt Hill wharf, Odiham. They are titled Volunteers' Introduction Trips, and this is where Society members can help. Bring along a friend, or two, and introduce them to the many ways they could volunteer on the Canal.

Volunteers' Trips: Bring a Friend



Fri 26 th May	Fox & Hounds Fleet 7.00pm
Mon 5 th June	Colt Hill Odiham 7.30pm
Mon 3 rd July	Colt Hill Odiham 7.30pm

Seats bookable on-line

Jeff Hill then reported on the activities of the Society's Work Party in the last year. These included the rebuilding of the sanitary station opposite the Bridge Barn in Woking, site work at the Woking Canal Festival, re-laying the

quadrants at Locks 23 and 24, cleaning and painting the *Alan Flight* and *Beth*, and extensive offside bank clearance between King John's Castle and Barley Mow.

AGM report

Fly II

Fly has had the concrete taken out so that the hull can be inspected and repaired. The stern is to be remodelled so that it can take an outboard engine.



Recently, the work boat *Fly II* had been taken out for work at Ash Lock. The concrete had been removed from the hull and it had been grit blasted. Although welding was clearly going to be needed, it was in a better state than expected.

The water point at the Canal Centre has been rebuilt and re-plumbed, not without difficulty due to the number of tree roots.

In addition, sales of logs have raised £450 and three volunteers have completed the RYA helmsman's course, five a Natta Working in Confined Spaces course and nine the RYA First Aid Course.

John Wharf and the other boat builders had replanked the bottoms of the BCA's two work boats and done several other jobs for them.

Plans for the coming year are primarily the installation of moorings at Farnborough Road, to which the Society has committed £50,000.

Other jobs could include

- Improving the towpath from Frimley Aqueduct to Deepcut Bridge
- Improving the towpath at Colt Hill opposite the barn
- Improving the lock landings for the Woodham Locks (1-6)
- Repairing Little Tunnel Bridge
- Developing the footpath covering the last 5 miles to Basingstoke
- Repairing and developing Ash Wharf

Jeff ended by thanking the Work Party for all their efforts.

The final report came from the Chairman, Philip Riley (*see pages 3 and 4*).

Michael Gove then asked to say a few words. He said that it had been a pleasure to listen to John Dodwell's talk, thanked the Society for all its volunteer effort and pledged his support for it in future.

AGM report

The final item of the AGM was an Open Forum for questions.

Q. Robin Higgs said that he hoped John Dodwell's replacement would also be a canal man. He asked John whether he thought that the C&RT had the right balance of staff, contractors and volunteers.

A. John said that the C&RT had a core skilled work force to do routine jobs and deal with emergencies. They had a 5 year contract with a firm to provide effort for more specialised work. Volunteer work was becoming more ambitious, following the Basingstoke's example and they hoped to get them doing more of the routine maintenance work. The balance was continually developing so might never be right.

Q. Brenda King asked what training was offered to volunteers.

A. C&RT had a training budget and provided any necessary training, but did try to get some return on their investment in volunteers.

Q. David Junkison commented that restoration of the Montgomery Canal was complicated by its SSSI designation and asked what contribution was made by Natural England.

A. John explained that NE was a regulator only and did not make any contribution. Offline reserves were being built.

Q. Roger Cansdale commented that the lesson from the Basingstoke was that restoration was easy compared to keeping the canal going. He asked how maintenance of the Montgomery would be funded.

A. John said that fortunately the Montgomery did not have embankments, cuttings and lots of locks, so maintenance costs should be low.

Q. Peter Jones commented that some canals had turned into linear housing estates and wondered if the Farnborough Road moorings would be the start of the same thing.

A. Philip Riley said that there were very few moorings on the canal and more were needed. There had to be agreement with Natural England about suitable sites, so there was no risk of a Basingstoke Canal housing estate.

Q. If the Society is investing its money in these moorings, should it be asking for a share of the income?

A. Philip Riley said that there was no point, but that the Society would insist that the income goes to the BCA and not to the Counties.

Q. There is a perception that the C&RT wastes money on non-navigation things like poetry on lock gates.

A. John Dodwell said that that particular feature would not be repeated but he made the point that the Government grant could not all be spent on the minority interested in boating - the waterways must have a wider appeal to the public.

Philip Riley presented a gift on behalf of the Society to Verna Smith in thanks for all her efforts.

Liz Dodwell wound up the AGM by saying that we must all go out and get more people interested in the canal!

Work Party

The work party continued with the off bank clearing so that we have reduced a vast majority the off bank growth along the normal *John Pinkerton* cruising routes from Odiham. The final push was the stretch above Broad Oak bridge. We could not access any other areas of the canal as we were restricted by the work on the land slip, which stopped us taking the work boats down the canal any further. We did take advantage of any large timber we removed and especially some that the Canal Authority contractors had cut down and left on the canal bank. We logged this up and sold it which more than covered the fuel used on the boats and chainsaws during the winter.

All bankside clearance work has to stop by end of March as it is the start of the bird nesting season. So in April we moved on to a job requested by the BCA for us to install a second water point at the Canal Centre, to avoid people filling up from the tap in the Elsan disposal point. That is another job that the BCA want done, to upgrade the Elsan point, but that will need to be done out of camping season!

When the BCA were asked where the water supply pipes were we had a sketch map showing that they left the canal building and vaguely headed across the lawn turning somewhere to head towards the Elsan. We knew there was also a main electrical supply cable to the power for the pump out, so we needed to hand dig a number of holes with the water pipe supposedly 30inches deep somewhere in amongst the large tree roots. After 3 or 4 holes we found the electric cable which meant that we could now use a machine to dig in about the only



remaining space (*see picture above*). We then found the water pipe at about the regulation depth. While clearing it enough to be able to join in to it, like buses we found a second one. This one appeared to run in contrary directions so we establish that the first was the one we could turn off and ignored the second one.

During our exploratory digging we unearthed an unknown manhole cover, this appeared to be a storm drain that ran into the canal. We now started using the digger to produce a trench to lay the new water pipe. And like buses we again unearthed another manhole cover. This one was that connected to the Elsan and it then drained into the main sewer which passes under

the canal at this point. Further digging with the digger ran into so many very large tree roots we reverted to hand digging and burrowing under the heavy masses of roots. The problem then arose of threading a heavy duty plastic water pipe through the small holes we had made (*see picture left*).



Report

by Duncan Paine

When this was achieved we laid a concrete base and built a brick structure for the water point. (*see picture below*)



In the meantime a breakaway group had migrated to Ash lock to start work on *Fly II*. Since we had it a couple of years ago, there have been doubts about the state of the hull. So we have stripped the concrete out of the bottom and decided that it was only this that was keeping it afloat, but at the price it was still a bargain.

The separate engineering work group has recruited a new member, Bill Mitchell, following retirement from his full time engineering job. They have been very busy continuing work to refurbish the second BCA workboat which is nearing completion with a new deck throughout and a partially refurbished cabin. (*see picture right: Peter Philips, Bill Mitchell and John Wharf*)

They also get asked to sort out other engineering problems for the BCA. The engine on the saw

bench at Ash Lock would cut out after 30 seconds. Some diagnosis revealed a faulty spark plug which was changed and that got it running again. They have also repaired a sit-on lawn mower based at Mytchett which was shedding its cutter belt; a refurbished idler pulley will hopefully do the trick.

They have also had the Weed Cutter working in the Woking area where it has also been in use clearing a number of logs, so have been kept very busy.

Finally a number of Society members, especially those who find it hard to turn out at weekends, attend the BCA work parties on Tuesdays. These do a big variety of work along the canal from vegetation clearance on the towpath to painting lock gates.

For anyone interested in helping them please contact the BCA. They provide appropriate training in the use of power tools, as, of course, the Society does for its volunteers.



Winter & spring

It has been a very busy time on the canal, with contractors and Rangers working at a variety of sites in both Surrey and Hampshire.

The major operation has been the bank slips at Dogmersfield. As the photos on the front and back covers show, huge amounts of very heavy duty steel piling have been driven in on both sides of the cutting. Further work is going on to install the anchors to ensure that everything stays put (for at least the next 125 years according to James Taylor).

A lot of spoil has been removed and this has been used to shore up the bank behind the



Above: Galleon Marine boat passing the pillbox opposite Tundrey Pond and some of the newly reinforced bank.

towpath between the slip and Blacksmith's bridge. It doesn't look very nice at the moment but will soon grow green again.

The work at Dogmersfield is scheduled to end some time in June, but the work on the culvert west of Barley Mow is complete already, so no obstruction to JPII eastward trips now.

Below: Contractors finishing up the culvert work in Winchfield.



As well as the Galleon Marine boats, both the JP II and Madame Butterfly have been taken through the slip area, so the contractors seem to have got the depth right.

Speaking of which, a depth survey of the

works on the canal

whole canal has been carried out. The results were better than expected. An estimated 43,000 m³ of silt needs to be removed but it is localised and most of the canal is felt to be deep enough. Don Barber reports that contractors appeared to be doing some sort of levelling of the bottom in Fleet recently. The BCA's dredger is still out of action but tenders have been requested.

Another problem that has been attracting attention is damage to the towpath caused by dogs scrambling out after swimming. Contractors have been installing soft bank protection and they will be back-filled in due course. Again, they don't look very nice at the moment but should soon blend in.

Right: Contractors at work repairing a wash-out near Mytchett Lake Bridge.

Thanks to our ex-Secretary, Gareth Jones, for the photo.



Below: Another bank repair near the Canal Centre.



In addition to all this, parts of the Deepcut and Brookwood flights were drained to allow engineers to inspect the locks, and rangers replaced gates on Lock 7. They were also intending to replace those on Lock 22, but this was overtaken by events when one of the top gates on Lock 14 suddenly failed. Measurements showed that the gates made for Lock 22 could be made to fit 14 without too much difficulty and a great collaborative effort

swung into action to get things fixed as quickly as possible. Rob Locatelli delivered the gates to Lock 15 to be loaded onto one of the BCA's work boats, brought up by Society volunteer Ian Moore, to be transported down to Lock 14.

After 3 days the lock was back in action. *Photos on following page courtesy of the BCA.*

Lock 14

Right: Broken heel post at Lock 14 caused by failure of the tenon on the balance beam.



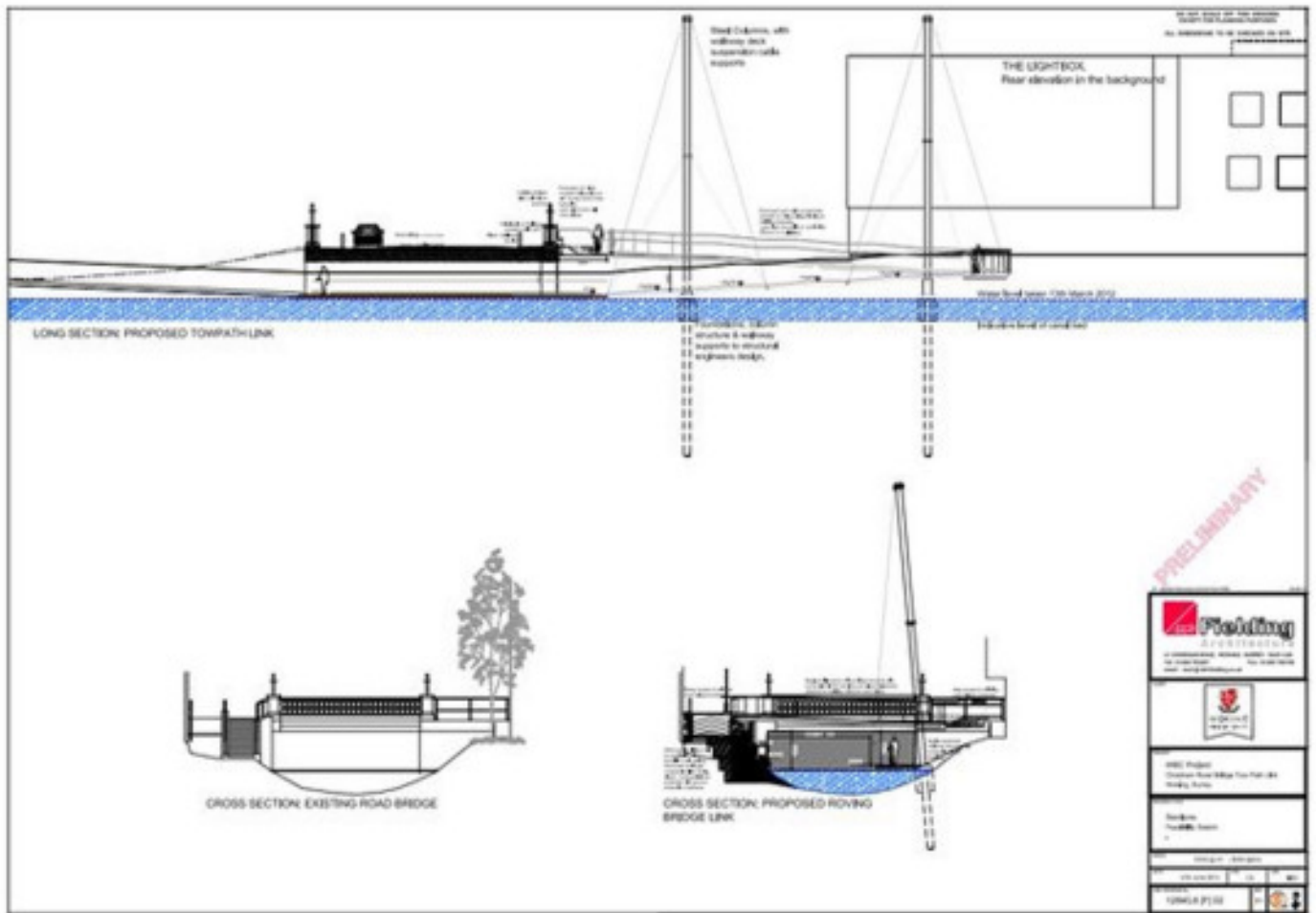
Left: Loading the new gates at Lock 15.

Right: Spider crane in use to remove the old gates.



Full marks to the BCA staff and everyone else who helped to get this fixed so quickly.

Developments in Woking



The Town Quay, opposite the Lightbox, is to be extended along in front of the WWF building. The work will be done by Rob Locatelli's River & Canal Services company and the Society has pledged £12,000 towards the cost.

Another project that seems likely to go ahead is a new foot bridge at Chobham Road Bridge where the towpath swaps sides. It will allow pedestrians and cyclists to avoid crossing the busy road by extending the towpath westwards under the road bridge and then looping back to the new footbridge that will be attached to the road bridge. As the preliminary drawing above show, it is quite an imaginative and striking design, and certainly much better than the swing bridge that was suggested some years ago.

These two projects are part of a bundle of schemes that was put before Woking Council a few years ago and failed then to get support. It is very encouraging that things are now happening; did our Woking Canal Festival have a part in encouraging this?

The really exciting prospect is the mooring basin that was proposed on the Brookhouse Common site, where we held the rally. It was clear that the common is relatively little used (hardly anybody in Woking seemed to know where Brookhouse Common was) and a basin for perhaps a couple of dozen boats with associated shore-based facilities such as a cafe or restaurant could transform the area. Let's hope that this gets the go-ahead one day.

Bits and pieces

Nice to see our old friends from the Byfleet Boat Club back on the canal at Easter. Here they are at Brookwood Country Park.



On the subject of boating, at our AGM, Tim Dodwell was talking of trying to revive the Basingstoke Canal Boating Club and its Fox & Hounds rally later in the year, perhaps early September. Keep an eye on our website for further news.



The Tuesday work party continues to flourish and they do like a good bonfire, left at Up Nately and right at Lock 15.

Canal Authority website

The BCA's website has been a source of frustration for some time because any alterations had to be done through the County, but at last they have taken control of it and Dean and Betty have been hard at work giving it a total makeover. The excellent result can be seen at the same address as before:

www.basingstoke-canal.co.uk, which takes you to
<https://www.hants.gov.uk/thingstodo/countryparks/basingstokecanal>

With control now in their own hands, the BCA should be able to keep it bang up to date with details of stoppages and any other problems.

The Canal in Woking during WWI

Introduction

During the First World War the canal was used to convey government stores and munitions from Woolwich to Aldershot. The control of the canal was vested in the Inland Waterways and Docks Department of the War Office and managed by the Royal Engineers using German prisoners of war to unload goods and help with canal maintenance work.



German prisoners of war unloading timber from a barge on the Basingstoke Canal, in 1918. They were in a German P.O.W. camp at Dersent

With the **one hundredth anniversary** of the war, I set out to discover how the war influenced the canal in **Woking**. From the snippets of information I have managed to extract from newspapers, clearly the canal was used for military purposes – though not of the normal conventional format in terms of logistics and supply chain.

BATHING FACILITIES – June 1915

The staff captain of the 40th Infantry Brigade at Inkerman barracks had written to Woking Council asking for permission for the garrisoned soldiers to bath in the canal between Hermitage Bridge and Brookwood Stumps Bridge, before 9.00am and after 6pm. A sentry would be posted at each flank of the bathing area to alert passers by that bathing was taken place. The council had no objections.

WOKING WAR TRIBUNAL - July 1918 Importance of the Canal: A busy Lock-Keeper

(I think the war tribunals were local committees set up that basically exempted people in reserved occupations from the call-up).

The Basingstoke Canal Co. applied in respect of a lock-keeper, John Denyer (44), married, Grade 2, Goldsworth Road, St. Johns'. Denyer is also a fishmonger, and a foreman of the St. John's section of the Fire Brigade. A representative of the company stated that Denyer had four miles of canal and eight locks to look after, and he was also responsible for the upkeep of the whole of the canal banks. **Three hundred and six barges** passed through his section during the preceding six months, practically all of them carrying Government material.

The Chairman, Mr. A. H. Godfrey, J.P. M.B.E., said it was quite easy for a bargeman to let himself through the locks. He had been to the very end of the canal, and had negotiated every lock without difficulty.

Denyer said he worked **18 or 19** hours a day on average. He had to close the sluices when the barges had passed through, otherwise the water would overflow its banks. Only a fortnight previously Mr. Butt's house at St. John's was nearly washed away owing to an accident of that kind.

Six months' conditional exemption, and released from service with the Volunteers.

(to be continued in future issues)

Mark Coxhead

Sales

Latest addition to the Society's range of books about the Canal is "Rambles on the Basingstoke Canal". This is a revised edition of the book that was published some 20 years ago; all the walks have been re-walked and checked by the Ramblers and a new set of maps drawn.

Available from our Sales Manager, Denise Smith (details page 23) for £4 inc p&p.

Other books available are

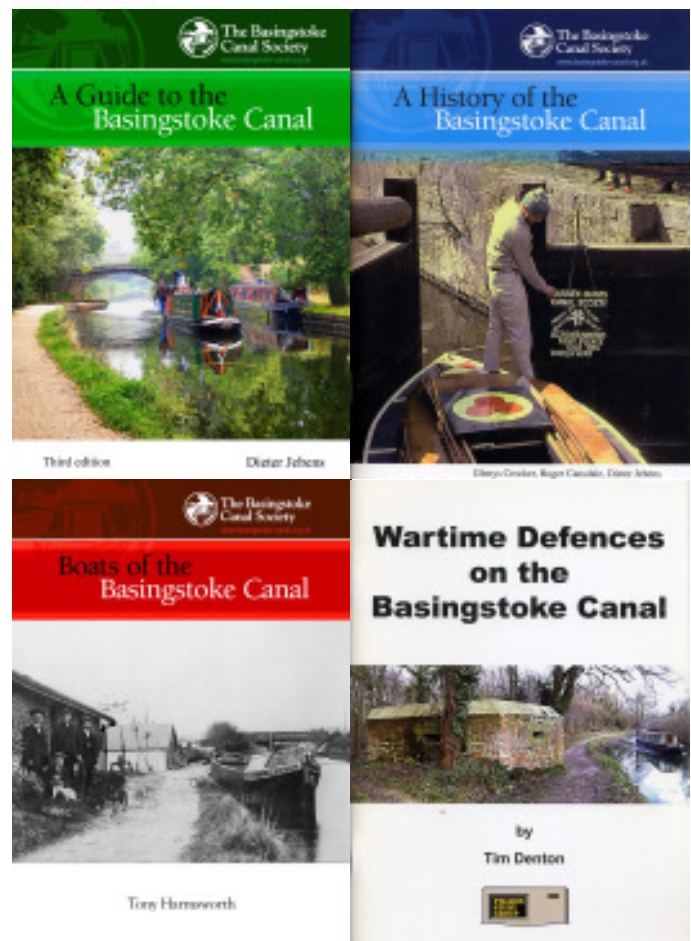
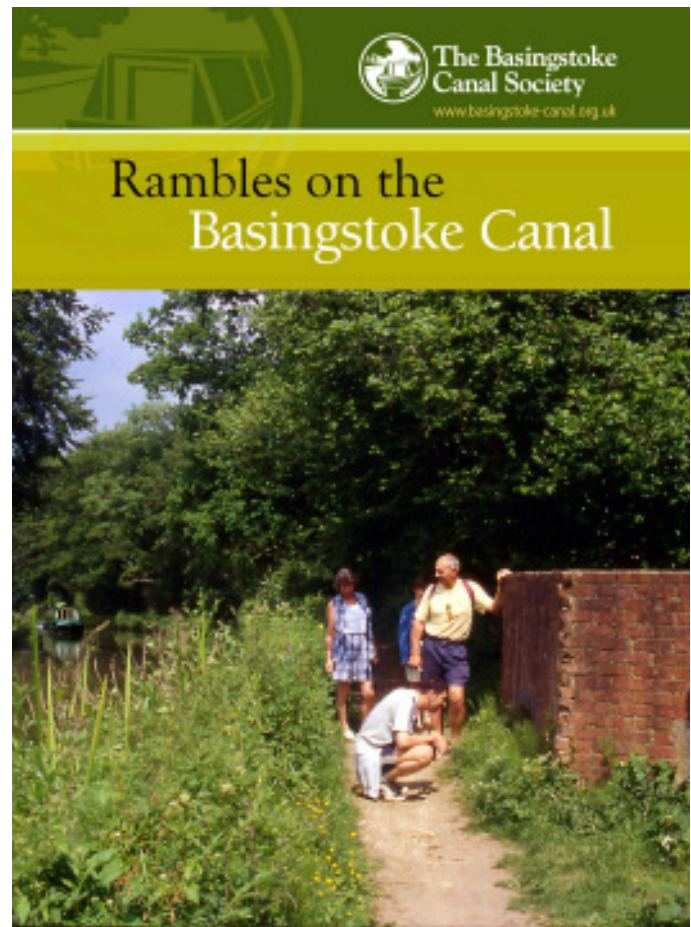
Guide to the Basingstoke Canal
History of the Basingstoke Canal
Boats of the Basingstoke Canal
Wartime Defences on the Basingstoke Canal

The last of these is due to be reprinted soon in a revised edition.

Help wanted

Denise and her sister Verna have been taking the Society's Sales stand to local events for many years and are looking for more help to do this. As well as making a bit of money for the Society, it is one of the main ways of communicating with the public and recruiting new members. The stand goes out half a dozen times a year, but could do more with more help.

If you would like to spend a few hours chatting to people at events like the Dogmersfield Flower Show or Weyfest in Guildford, why not give Denise a ring on 01252 517779?



Ian Cripps

Ian Cripps 1950 – 2017

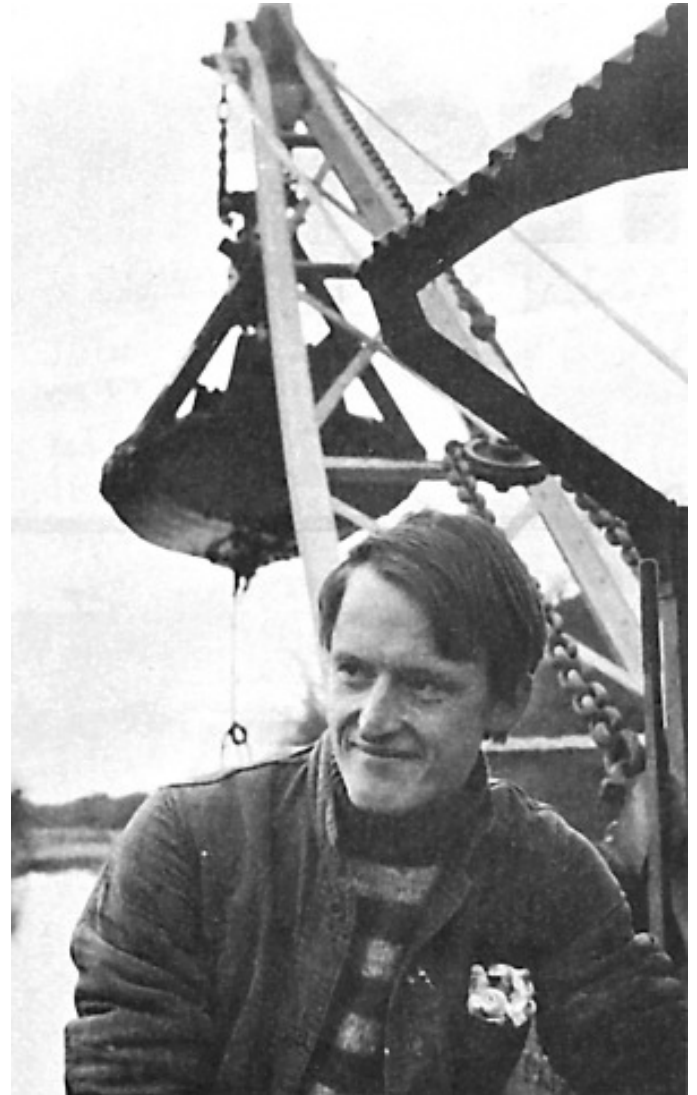
Ian Cripps, who died unexpectedly on the 6th February 2017, at the relatively early age of 67, will be remembered by all ex-dredger crew and many of the other Society members of the mid to late 1970s.

Ian, together with Ron Jesse, was deeply involved in the acquisition and re-commissioning of the Society's Grafton steam dredger No. 14 (subsequently named *Perseverance*), between them supervising a motley band of volunteers to successfully put the machine back into steam and into use on the Canal, with subsequent stints of maintenance and boiler re-tubing.

Ian was a highly skilled engineer, designer and draughtsman; using his extensive mechanical and steam engineering experience to good effect in the voluntary field; following on from the dredger by setting up a volunteer team of engineers for Hampshire County Council Museums Service to restore some of their Tasker collection of steam traction engines. Spells at the Mid-Hants Railway and the embryonic Kew Steam Museum followed.

After moving back to his native Northeast, Ian volunteered at Tees Cottage Waterworks and briefly on the Tornado Project whilst working for British Steel Redcar (Corus – Tata) suffering several redundancy/rehiring episodes, from where he finally retired in December 2015.

Ian was a consummate model engineer and prior to retiring had built up an enviable home workshop comprising three lathes, two milling



machines, a small shaper and many other tools in anticipation of a long retirement making model steam locomotives, launch engines, armillary sundials etc. Sadly, not to be.

Ian never married and is survived by his mother and brother Gordon. Our condolences to both of them.

John Peart

BCS Membership

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY REPORT

Dear Members,

Many thanks to all those members who have paid their subs for 2017 promptly and special thanks to those of you who very kindly included a donation to the Society. Your generosity is very much appreciated.

We still have quite a few members who have not yet paid. If you are one of these members we would be very grateful if you could pay your subs as soon as possible. Sending out reminders is expensive and time consuming.

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

Roger Stanwell of Odiham
Tim & Anne Lamb of St Johns Woking

Richard Crittenden of Ash
Mark Stevens of Woodham
William Mitchell of Farnborough
Mr Warmington of Virginia Water
Mr Hayward of Mytchett
Christopher Knight of Alton
Alan Baker of Southampton
Charles Jenkins of Devizes
Mary Hunt of Wimbledon
Philip Nathan of Woking
Duncan Wilkinson of Winchfield
Paul Way of Woking
Peter Taylor of Farnborough
John King of Odiham
Paul Whitehead of Windlesham

Doreen Hornsey

E-Mail:

membership@basingstoke-canal.org.uk

John Ross

John Ross, well-known on the Basingstoke for his amazingly decorated boat *Elizabeth Rose*, has been appointed as a Master in Decorative Canal Art of the Waterways Craft Guild, their highest honour. Congratulations!

John was responsible for the lettering and decoration of both the *JP11* and *Kitty*.

Thanks

A big thank-you to one of our members, Roger Woodcock, who has kindly donated an inflatable dinghy and a 7½hp Evinrude outboard motor to the Society.

Could be very useful if the Work Party ever need to get afloat somewhere on the canal where no other boat is available.

200 Club Winners

February		April	
Mr D Paine	£40	Mr H Ray	£40
Mr J Meredith	£20	Mr W A Carter	£20
Mr T Dodwell	£10	Mr R W White	£10
Mr J T Carter	£10	Mr A J Smith	£10

BCS information



The Bulletin is now up to
Issue 30.

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 31st July 2017

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

Dogmersfield slip works



What a difference a couple of weeks makes! *Madam Butterfly* at Dogmersfield at the beginning of May. Compare with the front cover photo. The work is due to be finished in June. *Photos by Duncan Paine*

