



The Basingstoke  
Canal Society

# Basingstoke Canal News

No. 255 Autumn 2017





## Editorial

For most of the last decade, the County Councils have been agonising over what to do with the Basingstoke Canal in order to rid themselves of the cost of maintaining it. Consultants were hired, workshops held and every possibility explored.

Now at last it would seem that a decision has been made. At the JMC meeting in July I got a real feeling that the Counties had finally made their minds up and resigned themselves to the conclusion that the Society reached a long time ago, that the only sensible thing to do was to pass it to the Canal & River Trust. They now have to find a way of doing this that is politically affordable, but discussions with the C&RT have resumed. It clearly won't happen quickly, but a 5 year target seemed to have been proposed.

One thing that was stated at the JMC was that all efforts were to be made to maximise the canal's income stream in order to minimise the endowment for future maintenance. I asked whether this meant that the income from the houseboat licences, fibre optic cable and the café would be coming into the canal's budget and the reply was that this was one of the first things that they would be trying to achieve.

It won't be an easy transfer to organise, but, as they say, where there's a will, there's a way. We wish them well.

## Chairman's Report

At a time when millions have been spent on contractors getting the canal back into shape, the Dogmersfield slip is finally fixed and the BCA is getting praise from all directions for the way the canal is being run, some people may be wondering why there seems to be so much pressure to pass it to the Canal & River Trust. Why mend it if it isn't broken?

I would not dispute the fact that the BCA is currently doing an excellent job of running the canal on a day to day basis. However, this is not the real issue, which is that the County Councils wish to be rid of the responsibility for maintaining the canal. If the canal remains in County ownership it is only assured of the capital contributions for the next couple of years. After that, the signs are that it will really struggle for money because the Counties are regularly reminding us that they have no statutory duty to maintain the canal and that the pressure of expenditure on roads, education, social services etc will inevitably result in significant pruning of the canal budget.

Their only legal duty is to protect public safety, and that does not necessarily mean preserving the canal as a navigation. If one day they had to choose between funding care for the elderly or keeping the back-pumping schemes operating, it is not hard to see which way the decision would go.

When the negotiations with the C&RT were paused late last year (but are now resuming) the County elections were looming. It was therefore no surprise to me that the County Councils were very keen to take the transfer of the canal off the agenda as it would have been

Cover Picture : Trip boat Kitty setting off from Woking Quay on one of its now regular trips. Photo: Martin Leech

# Chairman's report

politically damaging to talk about a multi-million £ transfer when Council seats were at stake.

It has been suggested that the canal should be transferred to an independent trust. This idea has been broached on several occasions but, as far as I'm aware, no-one has produced a credible proposal for a separate trust which would be viable.

If the trust took over the whole responsibility for the canal it would need to generate an income stream many times the size of the current flow of income from operations. How could that be done given that the canal is an SSSI (which it will remain despite all the boating interests wishing that was not the case) and that very little land is available in the canal corridor to establish businesses which would enhance income streams (and remember that the bulk of the C&RT income comes from property development and government grant)?

In my view no individual worth his or her salt (and who realised the implications in terms of threat to public safety) would accept the risk of becoming a trustee of a separate Basingstoke Canal Trust.

Comparisons with the R Wey are sometimes used but it should be appreciated that the Wey enjoys considerable income from investments which were originally financed by the sale of valuable land in Godalming and (I think) Guildford. Operating costs on the Wey should also be lower because it's a river navigation and it has fewer locks. Incidentally, John Gibson (the current R Wey manager) has recently become a JMC member so it will be interesting to hear what he makes of the current position.

It is sometimes suggested that the condition of the Basingstoke is superior to some of the C&RT waterways. I'm not able to confirm that, as I only have recent experience of the South Oxford whose condition was certainly inferior to the Thames between Oxford and Goring.

In summary, I would argue that we should support the Counties (and the BCA which does an excellent job) in seeking a transfer of the canal to the C&RT, which is the only organisation, in my view, offering a relatively stable long term future for it. The Basingstoke would benefit from access to C&RT expertise, including engineering (where, under the present set up, there is a huge deficiency which is partly explains the delay to the repair of Dogmersfield cutting), marketing etc.

With that objective in mind the JMC endorsed the proposition that all members of the Canal Partnership should apply their efforts to making the canal as attractive as possible to the Trust so that the cost of the transfer can be minimised and the timetable accelerated as far as possible.

As the canal may be approaching one of the more crucial stages in its long history, the Society's position on the possible transfer to the C&RT needs to be fully debated by the membership. The views expressed in my note represent the opinion of the Committee. However, we would very much appreciate receiving the views of as many members as possible. If you have an opinion, could you please write to me or Roger with your comments? Thank you.

*Philip Riley*

# Dogmersfield slip -



Much to everyone's relief, navigation past the Dogmersfield slip re-opened in July. These photos were taken from *Madam Butterfly*, which passed through without difficulty - plenty of depth of water there.

piles upright looked rather intimidating and dangerous for passing boats.

However, a more recent trip revealed that in front of them there are now rows of wooden

It was clear though that a considerable amount of work still remained to be done and at the time of writing in mid-August it looks as if the contractors will not be disappearing until, probably, October.

Going through in July, the protruding heads of the ground anchors that are intended to keep the



# nearly finished

posts with what looks like nicospan mesh between them backfilled to the piles(*see back cover*). This produces a shelf about a foot wide in which, presumably, plants will grow and eventually improve the look of this stretch of the canal again.

The piles on the towpath side have brackets welded to the top of them which look as if they also will support some sort of protection along the edge of the towpath (*below left*).

The ground anchors were apparently a major cause of delay for the project, as the original design pulled out of the soft ground.

The towpath itself between the slip site and Blacksmith's Bridge has also seen a huge amount of work, intended to raise it and reinforce the embankment. Again, this all looks a bit stark at the moment but will be green again by next summer.



According to the BCA's James Taylor, the work should keep things stable here for at least the next 125 years!

Let's hope that John Pinkerton's cuttings and embankments don't have any more surprises in store for us.

# Volunteering on

The Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA) organises work parties on a Tuesday, doing a variety of work from painting lock gates to bankside clearance. The location can be anywhere from Up Nately to Woodham. This is a good opportunity for people who would like to volunteer and are not available at weekends.

However, these Tuesday work parties are not the only volunteering on the canal. There are lots of other ways people can help.

The BCA runs the boat *Rosebud* from the canal centre at Mytchett; boat trips run at weekends from Easter to September plus Wednesdays and Fridays during school holidays. There are 4 trips a day which all need crewing, mainly by volunteers. One crew has to have been trained to act as skipper (training is available) and the second is there for support and assistance.

The Authority's patrol boat is run by volunteers and is taken along the canal to show the BCA's presence, litter pick off the water, check on licences etc. This is run on an ad hoc basis but requires a qualified skipper and carries a crew of 2 or 3 as are available - all help is welcome.



Above: The patrol boat manned by the BCS Engineering Team.

Then the Basingstoke Canal Society (BCS) has a small engineering team who can put their hand to most jobs in support of the BCA. They have previously refurbished the weed cutter and now operate it when required along the canal, principally in the Woking area where there is a lot of invasive weed. They have rebuilt the patrol boat, reconditioned mowers, made the 'Boys Brigade' boat serviceable, completely re-floored both of the BCA's work boats and made the cabins fit to pass the Boat Safety Scheme. This team normally turns out a couple of times a week when required.

There are the lengthsmen and women who regularly walk, run or ride along sections of the canal and then report any problems back to the BCS organiser (Mike Gordon), who collates all reports and forwards the information on to the BCA, so that they can take the appropriate action. Problems can be trees down, as happened between Eelmoor and Norris Bridges in July, damaged banks or sections where work will need to be done soon to avoid future problems. A number of these 'lengthspersons' also litter pick and cut back invasive brambles etc as they go.

We have a Society Sales stand which we take to local events; this carries a stock of souvenirs, books, leaflets etc. and does a great job in advertising the Society. We urgently need helpers to assist with this periodic task, especially as the lady who does a lot of the work has just been injured.

The Society has a marvellous committee who do so much work behind the scenes that most members are not aware of. But they like all groups need assistance, so if you feel like helping either on the committee or simply as an assistant to the committee please volunteer.

# the Basingstoke

There are a lot of small jobs that you can help with without actually attending meetings.

The BCS has run the *John Pinkerton* trip boat operation on the summit pound of the canal for nearly 40 years, mainly from Colt Hill Odiham but also occasionally from Fleet, and on certain occasions she has even been all the way down to Woking. However, last year the BCS acquired from the Chichester Canal Society a 12 seater trip boat now renamed *Kitty* after the last horse used to pull the working boats along the canal. The main operating stretch for *Kitty* is the 4 mile Woking pound, with one hour trips departing from the Town Wharf opposite the Lightbox Museum (*see cover photo*).

Both of these boats need crew so volunteers are always required.



Above: Society Vice-Chairman Martin Leech taking his Skipper's test on *Kitty*

However, if you feel unable to crew there are other ways you can help: as an example on the administrative side, all well run activities always need the backroom team to ensure things go smoothly, these are the hidden 'lubrication' of all good entities, and this could include building up a network of contacts for both direct and indirect marketing, helping with the stock management for the bar on *JP*,

etc. Finally, both boats have to be maintained, and this planned maintenance usually takes place over the winter months, unless there is a glitch during the operating season. Again anyone who doesn't mind getting their hands dirty and potentially learn a new skill would be more than welcome.

The profit that the trip boats make after all the running & maintenance costs are taken out is then spent by the various BCS work parties. The weekend work party spends the majority of this, as it does a large number of jobs to either improve the canal or simply as part of the maintenance in support of the BCA. The engineering team gets a lot of its financial support from the BCA as most of their work is directly on BCA equipment, but this is often supplemented by the BCS.

So what have the various work parties been doing this last quarter? The boat maintenance teams have been getting *Kitty* prepared for her inaugural season; this included getting Boat Safety Scheme approval and lift certification. In addition some of the volunteers have successfully passed the RYAIWHC assessment which is a requirement of the BCA to skipper the smaller boats such as *Kitty*.

The Society Engineering Team has been busy refurbishing the dipping pools at the Canal Centre. Two of three pools were in need of restoration, one required replacement of all of the decking and off cuts from the old decking were used to repair the other. Rotten vertical posts were also replaced as shown. The work took a team of four two whole days in blistering heat but the pools are now ready for visiting school children (*See picture on next page*). Kits hired from the Centre are a useful revenue earner for the BCA.

# Volunteering on



The weekend work party have finished the water point at Mytchett, and this is now classed as the main one, being more accessible on a separate mooring place.

The work then moved to Ash lock where our workboat *Fly II* which was acquired from the National Trust on the Wey needs a major repair and modification. It had never had any means of self-propulsion, the cabin is very low and the hull base is badly corroded. It was ballasted with a concrete floor which has been removed and exposed the base plates which will need replacing in a number of places. The hull has been shot blasted and some badly rusted metal cut out. Initial welding up has started but as this is a long term project other jobs are being undertaken coming back to this as a stop gap job.

Our little work boat *Tank*, (so called as it was originally made by a Kevin Redway from some old oil tanks) has been repaired, repainted including its bottom, and is now ready for use again. The Society was also recently given a small inflatable boat with an old outboard; the inflatable was successfully tested although the outboard is in for an overhaul.



*Above: Duncan Paine using Tank as a push tug to deliver new gates to Lock 13 in 2013.*

A weekend was spent clearing a very large willow tree in Woking that the BCA had cut down but was now considered a fire hazard. All the brush wood was loaded into one of our dumb barges while the solid timber was cut up into log size pieces (*see picture below*).



These logs are now for sale - an aggregate bag of logs is £15 from Colt Hill, requests accepted.

The second weekend in July the *Alan Flight* was taken up the canal, (first boat through the

# the Basingstoke

opened Dogmersfield landslip) loaded with materials to start the repair sections of the towpath west of Colt Hill bridge. This entails reinforcing the bank, with a new system we've not used before, back filling first with clay then rubble. Fold the stuff over making a sausage of those contents, then cover with a layer of silt before reinstating the main section of the towpath with a top layer of roadstone (*below*).



Tricia Paterson has been doing a fantastic job in maintaining the area in front of the barn where we keep *JP*. The grass gets cut regularly and vegetation tidied, which makes this area look very professionally well kept. However her husband is retiring and they are then sailing off into the sunset. We would like to give her a very big thank-you for all her efforts, so well done Tricia. However as a result we are now looking for a volunteer to take over the mantle of cutting the grass once a fortnight, do I hear any volunteers?

Finally, one of the stalwart volunteers on *JP* for many, many years and who was part of the team responsible for the design and procurement of

the *John Pinkerton II* decided, appropriately, to celebrate his decade-changing birthday on the boat this summer. So Happy Birthday and best wishes to Nigel Bird and many more trips on the boat to come (*below*).



So what could you get out from volunteering?

Well, it could be a new skill such as handling a boat, learning how diesel engines work, supporting the increasingly complex software systems on *JP*, physical exercise from either chopping trees down or building wharfs and toilet blocks!

But more importantly a sense of camaraderie with a fantastic bunch of people and the achievement of putting something back into the local community through working with a priceless asset – the Basingstoke Canal.

If anyone would like more information or to follow up any of the volunteering suggestions above please contact Duncan Paine on 01252 614125 or [duncanpaine@talktalk.net](mailto:duncanpaine@talktalk.net).

This includes any requests for logs.

# More volunteering



As a thank-you to volunteers, the BCA organised an afternoon party at the Canal Centre in July. In addition to a barbeque, the Rangers manned a number of competitions that involved throwing things. Some of these proved surprisingly difficult, but making an idiot of yourself was all part of the fun.

*Right: Missed again!*

It was a very nice gesture on the part of the BCA and a great opportunity for Tuesday volunteers, Society volunteers and Rangers to meet and mingle.

Volunteering is becoming an integral and increasingly essential part of operating the canal. As Duncan Paine points out, it is no longer just work parties doing things like bank clearance, but also volunteers acting as the



eyes and ears of the canal as lengthsmen and crew of the patrol boats. They are also helping to increase the canal's income by running trips from the Canal Centre in *Rosebud*.

Ken Sankey and Richard Kelly are running regular meetings aimed at co-ordinating the various efforts to make it all more effective.

# New work boat?

The Canal Society Work Party has been looking for another work boat for some time so as to have a boat available on both the upper and lower parts of the canal and avoid the need to negotiate the Deepcut flight.

Our friend Rob Locatelli located two former Environment Agency work boats and has bought the larger one. The sister ship, currently named *Jim*, should be small enough to fit on the Basingstoke Canal and under our bridges. It is their ex-Upper Thames dive boat and was built for them. The boat has a punt hull like *Alan Flight*, is 10 ft wide and about 40 ft long i.e. like the BCA work boats. A ½ ton crane is mounted on the bow.

The cabin is probably longer than we need and some of the stuff on the roof will have to go to



enable it to go under all our bridges, but that can all be fixed. The engine is a Ford 4D with Sabre marinisation. The hull is in good shape (the upper Thames is non-acidic so kind to steel) and everything is dry inside.

The expected price is £5000 + VAT and as the boat is on the Thames at Staines, it can be driven back when we acquire it, avoiding the costs of a lift and road haulage.

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## David Junkison

Congratulations to David Junkison, who was one of four finalists in Towpath Talk's 2016 Volunteer of the Year competition. He is seen here receiving his trophy and certificate, and the Society got a cheque for £100.

I'm amazed that David didn't actually win, because it is hard to imagine how anyone could put more time and effort into canal restoration (on both the Basingstoke and Wey & Arun) for so long.



## JPII

★ Roger Stanwell and Cheryl Richards have joined the Boat Company's committee. Roger is replacing Penny Cadle doing publicity and Cheryl will be acting as back-up to David Horwood on bookings when he goes on holiday.

★ Following a very successful sample meal earlier in the year, the Water Witch has been added to the recommended food providers for the JPII, specialising in curries.

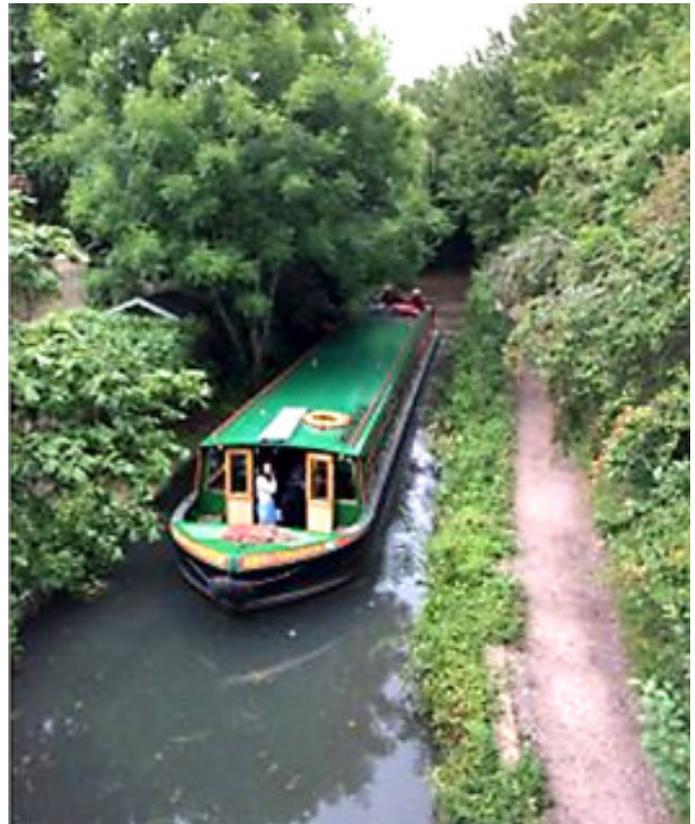
★ The monthly Volunteer's Introduction trips on the JPII have become increasingly popular, with over 30 volunteers on the last one. The final trips this year will be on 4<sup>th</sup> September and 2<sup>nd</sup> October. More details and how to book can be found on the website at <http://www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk/jp/get-involved/>.

★ An end of season skittles evening for crew will be held in the Hale Village Hall on Friday 20th October.

★ New crew member David Tagg came on the June Cream Tea theme trip, and recorded his experience as a customer. This can be seen at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=7r7LEpq7Pow](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7r7LEpq7Pow) and lasts for nearly 15 mins. A nice bit of publicity.

★ Crew who have struggled to get the JPII through Swan cutting will be pleased to know that Peter Close may have a very passionate appeal for action at the last meeting of the Canal Joint Management Committee. He made the point that it might not be a safety issue, but it would be very bad indeed for the Canal's image if boats had to turn at Colt Hill and also a serious

blow to our JP operation. It seemed to be well received and James Taylor was told to upgrade its repair priority from 2 to 1 and to initiate contact with the neighbouring householders. Now that the Dogmersfield slip has been dealt with, perhaps we may get some action.



Above: A tight fit in Swan cutting.

## Kitty

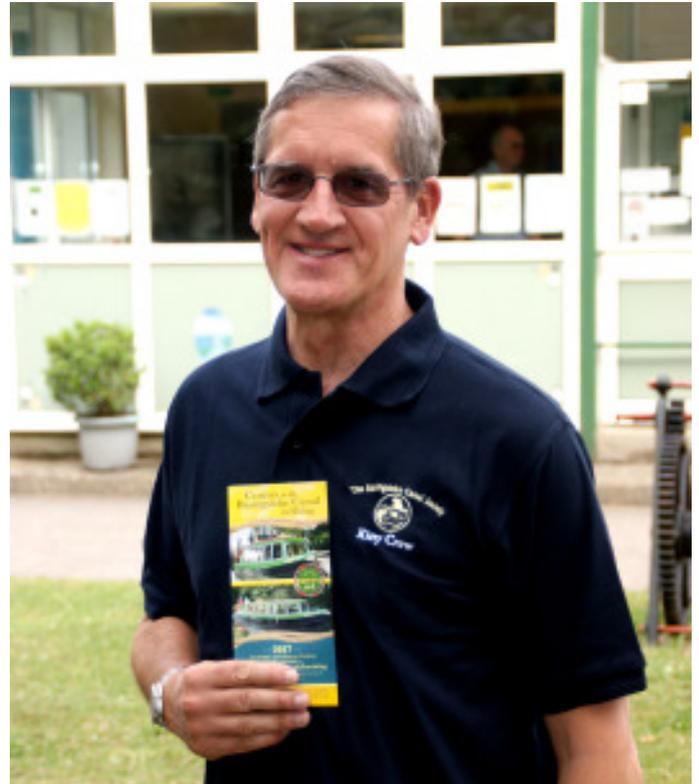
★ After a slowish start, Kitty's first season has developed well. The website has obviously played a big part in this, because passengers have come from Australia, the USA, Belgium and the Netherlands as well as Wales and Scotland; there have even been a few from Woking too! Year's income so far is £750.

# Report

★ The new brochure for Kitty has been printed and distributed, shown off here by Martin Leech who is also modelling the smart new *Kitty* crew shirt. Martin and Ian Johnson recently both passed their skippers' RYA IWHC assessment run onboard *Kitty* by an instructor from the National Sports Centre at Bisham Abbey.

★ *Kitty's* final mooring has still to be decided. What appeared to be a secure site next to the Capgemini offices turned out to be a public footpath, so further deliberations are necessary.

★ We had the pleasure of taking local MP and Society Vice-President Jonathan Lord and his daughter for a trip on the boat. Philip Riley was on hand to brief him on current affairs on the canal and we gave him a copy of our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary booklet, which he described as a fascinating story of the saving of the canal and altogether really rather uplifting.



This trip was highlighted in the local press with a large article about the canal, and generated an increase in bookings.

In addition we have been working with both the Lightbox Museum and Woking's Twin Town Committee with a view for more charters coming from their direction in the future.



# Cream Tea cruises

It's not only the *JPII* that does cream teas. The BCA's little boat *Rosebud* has been taking visitors down to Lock 28 where tea is served on the lockside.

The trips started in July and run every Thursday afternoon until the end of September, starting at 2pm from the Canal Centre.

12 spaces are available on each trip and cost is £12 a head for adults and £9 for children under 13. Trips have to be booked in advance and need at least 6 passengers to run. This however has not been a problem since business has been brisk.



*Above:* Volunteer crew doubling as waiters to serve tea.

All part of improving the Canal's income stream!

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## ***BCBC gathering at the Swan, Ash Vale on 9-10 September***

Tim Dodwell writes:

“The Basingstoke Canal Boating Club warmly invites boat owners on the canal to join them for a social evening moored on the towpath opposite the Swan PH in Ash Vale. There will be no formal activities, just the chance to meet together, have a drink and perhaps eat in the pub.

If you would interested in joining in, please contact Tim Dodwell, Birches, Balmer Lawn Road, Brockenhurst SO42 7TT – tel 01590 623434, e-mail [timandlizedodwell@btinternet.com](mailto:timandlizedodwell@btinternet.com) as soon as possible.

Water conditions permitting, we hope to bring our own boat up the canal over the previous two days, and it would be great to have some company. If the water conditions are a problem, we shall launch on the top pound or at Mytchett.”

*The usual BCBC venue behind the Fox & Hounds in Fleet was unavailable due to a previous wedding reception booking there, but the Swan should make a very nice substitute.*

# Sales

We have recently resurrected the Sales & Marketing Group to try to coordinate the Society's various sales activities a bit better.

Our sales activities really have two functions, firstly to make a bit of money for the Society and secondly to attract visitors to the Sales stand, where we can talk to them and try to promote the Canal and the Society and, hopefully, recruit some new members.

Denise and Verna Smith have been taking the Sales Stand to local events for many years, but could now do with a bit of help as Verna has got herself deeply involved in the very time-consuming business of the IWA. It would be a good way for newer members to get involved with the Society's activities.

This year, the stand will be going to 9 or 10 local events, such as the Fleet Pond Wildlife Day and Weyfest at Dapdune Wharf in Guildford.

It is a very pleasant way to spend a day or an afternoon, chatting to people and sharing your



*Above:* The sales stand at last year's Weyfest in Guildford.

enthusiasm for the Basingstoke Canal. It does, however, involve a bit of effort in setting up and taking down the stand. Fortunately Denise has a vehicle that can carry everything from her garage in Ash to the event location.

If you fancy lending a hand, please contact me or Denise. ([roger.cansdale@ntlworld.com](mailto:roger.cansdale@ntlworld.com) or [smithy.dj48@gmail.com](mailto:smithy.dj48@gmail.com).)

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*Very, very rarely do we have a bad day at an event, but this year's Dogmersfield Flower Show was one such. For the first time ever it rained all afternoon and, worse, a car driven by one of the other stall holders went out of control before the show opened, demolished our stand and knocked Denise out of her wheelchair, breaking her leg.*

*Good to report though that she is recovering and coping with it all with her usual fortitude.*

*An insurance claim has of course been submitted and the driver accepted full responsibility for the accident.*

*Thanks to all the people on other stands (some of whom fortunately were also Canal Society members) who helped to rescue our sales items.*

*This was a bizarre, one-off accident, so please don't let it deter you from joining the Sales Team!*

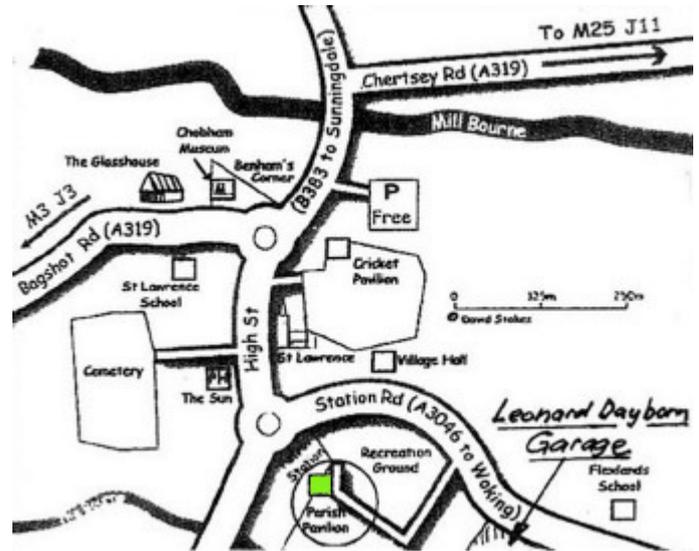
# Chobham Talks

Meetings will be held in the Parish Pavilion, Recreation Ground, Station Road, Chobham, Woking, Surrey GU24 8AJ (see map for exact location).

The meetings will start at 8pm on the third Wednesday of the month, October through April inclusive.

Coffee/tea and biscuits will available during the interval. Raffle and retiring collection.

Non-members and friends are very welcome.



## **18th October 2017** *Clive and Jill Field* *“History and Restoration of the Cotswold Canals”*

The 60 minute presentation takes the audience on a journey through history of the two waterways that make up the Cotswold Canals. We examine the rationale behind the need for water transport to bring heavy materials from the River Severn in Stroud - in 1779! We also consider the influences, past and present, of recreating the 36 mile link between the Rivers Severn and Thames.

## **15th November 2017** *Colin Brown* *“The RNLI ‘it’s not all at sea’”*

Our volunteer lifeboat crews rescue 24 people a day. The RNLI is a charity which provides a 24-hour lifeboat search and rescue service around the coast of the UK, plus seasonal lifeguard patrols on over 250 beaches, a Flood Rescue Team, water safety advice and training at home and abroad.

## **20th December 2017** *Dave Williams and Kathryn Killner* *“Wildlife along the Canal”*

The talk will start with a general overview of habitats along the canal and their importance to wildlife. It will then provide some specific information about things to look out for, in particular how to spot signs of otters, water voles and dormice, amongst other species.

## **17th January 2018** *Nathan Ellis* *“The Thames Tidal Defences”*

An introduction to the past, present and future of the Thames Barrier and its associated Gates, tidal Walls and Embankments.

## **21st February 2018** *Dr Roger Squires* *“Exploring the Caledonian Canal”*

The talk will discuss Telford’s masterpiece. A ship canal across Scotland using the natural fault line of the Great Glen and its series of fresh water lochs.

# 'Juniper' at Galleon Marine



Galleon Marine now have a very attractive little self-drive day boat for hire called *Juniper*. It takes up to 10 people and has a galley and toilet. Dogs are welcome on board too.

Hire fees are £160 for 3 hours, £190 for 5 and £220 for 7. Cruises start and finish from the base at Colt Hill.

What a nice idea for a family outing!

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## **21st March 2018 Deborah Wheeler** **"Whitchurch Silk Mill"**

Join us for a guided tour of a Georgian silk weaving water mill, see, hear and feel it's fascinating history and beautiful fabrics.

Further information at <http://www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk> or contact Malcolm Brickwood at [chobham.talks@basingstoke-canal.org.uk](mailto:chobham.talks@basingstoke-canal.org.uk)

## **18th April 2018 Neil Owen** **"Canal & River Trust Engineering a 200 Year Old Infrastructure"**

The presentation will discuss the way in which Canal & River Trust are managing their Engineering Assets, including future improvement and the implication on the possible adoptions of Waterway managed by other Navigation Authorities.

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](mailto:Mark Coxhead) at [mark@coxhead.org.uk](mailto:mark@coxhead.org.uk)

# Woking Grand Prix?



*I was wondering how to fill this last page when Nigel Searle flagged this bright idea up:*

McLaren has unveiled “absurdly ambitious” plans to bring a round of the Formula 1 World Championship to the streets of Woking.

A statement said: “The team believes that a street race around some of the Surrey town’s most famous and celebrated spots would raise Woking’s profile, enabling it to join the ranks of Monaco and Singapore as one of Formula 1’s most glamorous and iconic race locations.

“The main thrust of the project is to create a world-class Formula 1 venue – the Woking International Circuit – that will link elements of the town’s commercial, industrial and residential centres.”

The proposed 4.85km circuit would include Victoria Way, Boundary Road, Albert Drive,

back down Maybury Road, cutting down Stanley Road and along Church Street East. McLaren said it has yet to formally present the plans to Woking Borough Council.

McLaren said it believes that the Woking International Circuit would be one of the fastest and most demanding street tracks in the world, with a projected top speed of 195mph for the front-running cars along the longest straight on the circuit.

McLaren’s submission involves a number of new and innovative proposals, **including the hosting of the Formula 1 paddock on floatable pontoons that will be anchored along the Woking-Basingstoke Canal.**

*What’s the usual canal licence fee for Grand Prix cars?*

# Farewell

*It has not been a good summer for long time supporters of the Basingstoke Canal and sadly we have to report the loss of five more.*

## Les Harris

Les was one of the very first enthusiasts who inaugurated the Surrey & Hampshire Canal Society. He was a professional Quantity Surveyor for the Greater London Council.

He lived with his family at St John's, Woking, with a property adjoining the Basingstoke Canal. This site became a very useful asset for official and unofficial Society boating exploits.

As one of the small team of regular active members, Les's enthusiasm knew no bounds. In those early years the canal was not only derelict but also private property, and so access for remedial work was "difficult".

One of Les's schemes, in 1967, was to bow-haul his dinghy up the canal with a token "cargo" of potatoes, thus exercising the right for commercial navigation of the Basingstoke Canal (*below*).

Les subsequently created his Basingstoke Canal "Monster" out of painted oil drums and miscellanea – mounted in his old rowing skiff. It even had smoke issuing from its dragon-like head, courtesy of some strategically placed smouldering oily rags! This "Monster" was successfully displayed at local street carnivals and later took pride of place being towed up the River Wey to Guildford on a Society publicity boat trip, with a young lad (volunteer?) bailing the craft continuously.

Les Harris was also a keen member of the local archaeology group and he came up with the novel idea that an unrecorded Roman road once ran across his property. His friends scoffed at this seemingly farfetched notion, but with dogged determination he finally proved his theory correct and 'his' road was officially recognised and added to the Roman map of Britain.

*Howard Diamond*



*Above: Les chatting to fellow founder member, Dick Snell at the Bridge Barn event in 2011.*

# Farewell

## John Humphries OBE

We were very saddened to hear the news that one of our Vice Presidents, John Humphries OBE, had passed way on 30<sup>th</sup> May.



John was a great friend of the Basingstoke Canal having supported it from the early days of the restoration when he was National Chairman of the IWA. John was a popular speaker at our members meetings when he regularly attended with his wife, June, to show films of his latest continental waterway expeditions aboard his steel-hulled

cruiser, *Avonbay* crewed by his daughters and his close friend and author, Hugh McKnight. This was at a time when very few people had ventured on to the waterways of France, Germany and countries further east so John and June's exploits were always a subject of great fascination to those of us whose horizons were more limited to our local waterways.

Some time ago John offered to make a donation to the Society to establish an annual award for volunteer achievement. I can well remember visiting the Silver Vaults in Fetter Lane to select a suitable trophy to be given at the AGM each year and this is now known as the Robin Higgs award. John had tremendous drive and enthusiasm and he made a very significant contribution to inland waterways movement. I feel very privileged to have known him.

*Philip Riley*

## Clive Durley

Clive was one of the key members of the organisation that was set up in 1978 to run the Society's new trip boat *John Pinkerton*. Clive unwisely agreed initially to be both Bookings Manager and Crew Organiser, but soon discovered that this involved him spending about 20 hours a day on the phone, so the crew job had to go. However, he and his late wife Barbara did the bookings for many years and his son Nigel was a member of the dredger crew.



Clive worked as a photographer for the Road Research Laboratory, a job that took him all over the country. In between photographing roads, he usually managed to take a look at the nearest canal and his knowledge of them was encyclopedic. I can well remember him taking his fellow Pinkerton directors, Peter Fethney, George Hedger and myself on a fascinating conducted tour of the Birmingham canals.

His photos of the canal were not only technically very good, as would be expected, but also captured the beauty of the canal artistically, particularly in its pre-restoration days.

*Roger Cansdale*

# Farewell

## Jan Smith

Jan was the man who hand built one of the best-known boats on the Basingstoke, *Victoria M*, a replica Victorian inspection launch.



*Photo by Dieter Jebens*

Jan and his then partner, later wife, Pam loved to take the boat to events on the canal, usually dressed in period costume as on this occasion when they introduced the Bishop of Guildford to the canal. Jan and Pam were long term members and great supporters of the Basingstoke Canal Boating Club.

Their boating was not confined to the Basingstoke Canal as they took *Victoria M* off on a grand tour all round the country.

Because of ill health, they had to sell *Victoria M* a couple of years ago and it is sad to think that we will not be seeing either Jan or perhaps his masterpiece on the canal again.

We send our deepest condolences to Pam.

## Terry Harrison

Very sad to report that local artist and one-time member of the Canal Society, Terry Harrison, passed away recently at the age of only 66.

Terry's art would probably be looked down on by the more highbrow critics as "chocolate box", but his pictures of the countryside and, particularly for

us, the Basingstoke Canal, probably brought more pleasure to ordinary people than all the efforts of Lucien Freud and Francis Bacon.



Having spent some time at Farnham Art College, he began doing aviation painting (his father was in the RAF) and did the designs for the boxes of Airfix kits. His painting of Concorde landing at Farnborough was one of his best selling prints.

He then turned to landscapes and the canal and developed a very distinctive style and deceptively simple technique, which he demonstrated at a Society meeting in Brookwood.

Terry was always generous in encouraging and helping other people to have a go at painting and wrote numerous books about it. He made a genuine contribution to making the canal known to the public, as well as being a very nice bloke. We shall miss him.

# BCS Membership

## MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY REPORT

Dear Members

Unfortunately, we still have quite a lot of members who have not yet paid their subs which were due on 1<sup>st</sup> March. I will be sending out reminders to those members shortly and I hope that many of them will decide to pay their subs as we need the support of our members. I would appreciate it if you could let me know if you no longer wish to be a member so that I can remove your details from our database.

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

Mark, Rosie, Josh & Ben Leakey of Farnborough  
Derek Buckle of Farnham  
Geoffrey Locket of Woking  
Philip John Airey of Odiham  
John & Valerie Clack of Addlestone  
Jenny Pateman of Odiham  
Laura Pummell of Ash Vale  
Daren Williamson of Hersham  
P Jake of Odiham  
Gary Griffiths of St Johns Woking  
Trevor Mulford & Ann Rogers of Church Crookham  
David & Linda Tagg of Chineham  
Deborah Hickman of Woking

**Doreen Hornsey**  
**Membership Secretary**

**E-Mail:** [membership@basingstoke-canal.org.uk](mailto:membership@basingstoke-canal.org.uk)

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## 200 Club Winners

June		August	
Mrs J B Keep	£40	Mrs Y A Chappell	£40
Mr H J Williams	£20	Mr B C Smith	£20
Mrs V Vine	£10	Mr K A Astley	£10
Mrs J Sladen	£10	Mr P J Hattersley	£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](mailto: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 1<sup>st</sup> each year.

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# Dogmersfield slip works

