



The Basingstoke  
Canal Society

# Basingstoke Canal News

No. 256 Winter 2017





## Editorial

It may seem to some people that this issue of the Basingstoke Canal News is a bit obsessed with the possible transfer of the Canal to the Canal & River Trust. However, nobody should be under any illusion that this is another of the critical points in the Canal's history.

**Cover Picture** : Lock 9 and Woodend Bridge drained down for inspection. Spot the kingfisher. *Photo: Roger Cansdale*

It will either go forward to a reasonably assured future with the rest of the country's canals or it will in all probability go into a spiral of decline and decay as the Counties face ever increasing pressure on their budgets.

Philip Riley rightly calls upon the riparian Districts to be a bit more helpful in promoting and enhancing the canal to improve its financial situation. However, there is another member of the Canal partnership that could, if it is not able to help constructively, at least try to be less obstructive.

I'm thinking of Natural England, which has a seat on the JMC but hardly ever attends meetings, and whose only contribution to the Canal's affairs is to object whenever there is a move to do anything. The Canal Society was all set to install new boat moorings at Farnborough Road, but NE raised its usual "concerns" so there will be further delays to this revenue-earning project.

The ecology of the Canal will not be improved if it reverts to the weed-and-rubbish-filled ditch it was in the 1960s!

## Chairman's Report

### A secure future for the Basingstoke Canal?

The announcement by Surrey and Hampshire County Councils in October that they intend to work with the Canal & River Trust to identify a feasible way of transferring the ownership and management of the Basingstoke Canal to the Trust came as very welcome news to us. The Society has been advocating this solution for a considerable period of time and, in our view, the only sensible option to secure a sustainable future for the canal is to pass it over to the C&RT which is uniquely qualified to develop the waterway as part of the national canal network.

Although the direction of travel is now clear, we should not be under any illusion that the transfer can be achieved quickly and without a huge effort being made by all the members of the Canal Partnership to achieve the desired result. As we know, the trustees of the C&RT need to be satisfied that, as a condition of the transfer, the canal must be provided with adequate financial support – in other words it cannot be a financial drain on the Trust.

Clearly this represents a considerable challenge to us all as we are well aware that there is currently insufficient income to cover the revenue budget let alone to provide adequate capital to meet the cost of substantial engineering works such as Dogmersfield Cutting.

# Chairman's report

In their announcement, the Counties referred to the canal business plan which is currently being prepared. The plan will need to show how the canal can become more sustainable in financial terms. Over many years, the Society has fully supported the BCA and the Counties in their efforts to generate additional income and we were recently encouraged by the announcement that the improvements to the camping ground at the Canal Centre will be going ahead next year.

The Canal Society has also indicated its willingness to support projects which will bring in additional revenue. For example, we have been working on a proposal to create additional moorings at Farnborough Road which should enhance revenue streams. Our volunteers have also been working on improved facilities for canal users including the renovation of the water points and disposal facilities at Bridge Barn and Mytchett.

However, we believe that the Canal Partnership, as a whole, needs to step up a gear and we will therefore be encouraging the six riparian Districts to come forward with ideas which will help to place the canal on a more stable financial footing and improve its attractiveness to the Trust.

There are several ways that this could be achieved. We have frequently pressed the Districts to make proper use of planning gain to secure additional funding, and facilities, for the canal. For example, the Wellesley development at Aldershot could provide useful opportunities to create additional boating and waterside facilities. On a smaller scale, boat

basins in Odiham and Woking could attract additional revenue.

The Districts, and indeed the Counties, could also do much more to promote the canal. I am always disappointed that the attractiveness and the amenity value of the canal seem to be little known and appreciated in the local communities. It is sometimes difficult to find any mention of the canal in local authority leaflets and brochures and we need to know why this is the case.

Our experience with the Woking Canal Festival also clearly demonstrated that local people value their canal and would like more opportunities to enjoy it. This point has been amply demonstrated by the success of our new trip boat operation in Woking where *Kitty* has had an excellent first season introducing new supporters to the pleasures of the canal.

The Canal Partnership is very well placed to support the County Councils in achieving their aim of finding a new home for the canal but we believe that they are entitled to receive a far greater contribution from the other partners and particularly from the Districts whose communities derive such a valuable benefit from having a navigable waterway in their localities.

For its part, the Canal Society is determined to re-double its efforts to make the canal an attractive proposition for the Trust. We believe that this is as once in a lifetime opportunity to protect and enhance the canal for future generations and it should not be wasted.

Philip Riley

# Update on the Future Management

*The following report was prepared by the Counties for the Joint Management Committee and has been followed by a recent letter to its members from the Chairman, Mike Goodman, urging them to fully support the canal during the transition period up to the planned transfer of ownership. The report will, I think, be regarded in future as a very important milestone in the Canal's history.*

## 1 Introduction

Hampshire CC and Surrey CC, as joint owners of the Basingstoke Canal, have been working together to identify a long term sustainable solution for the management of the Basingstoke Canal.

Consultants JBA Consulting Ltd, commissioned on behalf of both landowning authorities, undertook a valuation exercise and assessed the most cost effective and suitable options for the future level of navigability and long term management of the Canal. They concluded that continuing the current level of management was the preferred option and recognised that it was likely that there would need to be continued public subsidy to sustain the efficient and safe operation of the Canal unless there is a significant increase in direct income. This report was summarised and reported to the Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee in June 2015.

Since this report the landowning authorities have been jointly exploring the most appropriate business model that would ensure that the safe and effective management of the Canal as well as successfully developing it to realise the potential and secure the long term future.

The purpose of this report is to provide JMC members with an update on the progress made towards a sustainable future management solution for the Basingstoke Canal and make recommendations regarding the long term strategy and business objectives for the Canal.

## 2 Background

The Canal was built in the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century as a commercial concern, but failed to achieve financial sustainability. Subsequent owners asset stripped the land associated with the Canal, and a later owner allowed the Canal to fall into a derelict state due to lack of funds. Severe flooding caused by embankment breaches in 1968, and resulting public campaigning led to the purchase of the Canal by Hampshire and Surrey County Councils (HCC and SCC).

Restoration was undertaken in the 1970s and 1980s by the ranger forces of both authorities, alongside volunteers predominantly from the Surrey & Hants Canal Society (now the Basingstoke Canal Society). Limited capital financing led to economies being made; the ranger forces were combined in 1989 to form the Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA), effectively a management partnership operating the Canal on behalf of the owners.

No appreciable capital was then injected into the Canal for a period of more than 15 years which was by then operational but not complete. By 2009 the Deepcut Locks were in such a parlous condition they were closed on safety grounds, followed shortly after by a breach at West Hart Embankment.

# ment of the Basingstoke Canal

The owners have since 2010 instigated a major capital rehabilitation project to address the backlog of heavy maintenance and complete jobs left unfinished in the 'restoration'. The Canal's Asset Management Plan suggested this capital sum needs to be in the region of £6.8m meet the maintenance arrears and £167,000 revenue per annum (excluding staff costs) then being required by the BCA to maintain the assets in a stable state. This does not include the annualised capital needed to ensure the assets are properly maintained.

The Canal's prime business is in tourism and recreation; visiting boaters, campers, anglers, walkers and cyclists all contribute to the wider local economy by supporting businesses and enterprises located along the Canal, and provide income generating opportunities for the BCA through licensing and secondary spend.

### 3 The Need for Change

In light of the current local government financial situation the owners are looking at different models that can sustain the safe operation and secure the financial future of the Canal. Each County Council is under pressure to reduce their financial contribution by 2019. Each County Council is likely to match the other in equal terms. It is recognised that the riparian District and Town Councils have their own pressures and may need to consider proportionally reducing their contribution

With financial pressures and competing demands for public services both landowning authorities believe that for a secure long term future the Basingstoke Canal may be better

managed by an organisation such as the Canals and Rivers Trust.

### 4 Business Case

Three delivery models have been identified by the landowning authorities:-

- Option A - Both landowning authorities divest entirely of the Canal to an appropriate body who can continue to safeguard the future of the Canal with no further involvement from the County Councils; the only remaining viable organisation is Canal & River Trust. (Preferred long term solution)
- Option B - There is targeted investment in the Canal and the landowning authorities continue to operate the Canal continuing with the current partnership or similar delivery model. (Only viable current option)
- Option C - The landowners enter into a contract with a private sector partner to wholly or partly develop and run the Canal. (Discounted)

#### Option C - Contract with a private sector

This option has been discounted following the response to enquiries made through Knight Frank to establish if there was any commercial interest. Knight Frank concluded that the Canal as a whole was not an economic proposition and transfer to any other party would be the transfer of a liability, not a commercial asset. This mirrored the valuation assessment undertaken by Hampshire Property Services and consequently this option has been discounted.



# Update on the Future Management

## **Option A - Transfer Basingstoke Canal to CRT**

Full asset transfer to the Canal & River Trust (CRT) has been explored which has included a due diligence exercise and asset condition assessment. Whilst this option is currently unaffordable in the short term it remains a longer term ambition for all three organisations with the CRT securing agreement in principle from their trustees for the transfer of the Basingstoke Canal, subject to agreed terms and contract.

Discussions are continuing with the CRT with all parties keen to enable this transfer within a 3-5 year period. The ability to achieve this long term solution will require the BCA to:

- Protect revenue funding. The two landowning authorities currently contribute £153,000 each to the BCA and in addition jointly fund the Strategic Manager position. The other funding partners account for a total of £220,000. Both HCC and SCC are looking to reduce their revenue contribution from April 2019. Both authorities will try to keep this reduction to a minimum in order to protect the Canal and give other funding partners confidence. The key will be not to compromise the future ambition to transfer a safe and sustainable canal.
- Secure further investment in the core Canal assets. HCC and SCC will be looking to secure further capital funding for the next 3 - 5 years. The current £4m capital allocation has been spent or allocated for priority maintenance in 2017/18. SCC has already managed to secure an additional £150,000 every year for the next 3 years. It is likely that more will be required to meet some of the maintenance arrears.

- Develop income generating activity. The BCA has achieved an increase of income of 55% since 2012 all credit to the work of the team. A couple of further opportunities have been identified which will require modest investment namely the campsite and moorings outlined below.
- Continue to increase volunteering activity. The number of volunteers carrying out a range of tasks for the BCA as well as the Canal Society has increased by 142% over the past 5 years.

## **Option B - Targeted investment**

Within Option B, a number of individual business cases have been developed alongside some scenario modelling, ranging from retaining the status quo to reducing the service to investing in income generating opportunities. The tested scenarios are below:-

1. Status Quo – the Canal Management Team continues piecemeal improvements and pursues income opportunities, however, no major investment takes place and some property income from Surrey's assets continues to be retained by the Property Service under its 'corporate landlord' policy.
2. Do less – closure of all 'non-essential' elements of the Canal operation, This would enable a more fundamental change in governance if Members desired. This option means only essential maintenance activities will continue; visitor centre and facilities would close (unless operated by an external group/volunteers etc.), and BCA-run boat trips and events would cease for example

# ment of the Basingstoke Canal

3. Status Quo with added property income - retain the status quo with the exception of adding the property income from Surrey's assets to the Canal as a business unit.

4. Campsite redevelopment – the camp site is an existing use of the site, and can be made much more efficient with a limited development budget.

5. Addition of new moorings – two sites have been identified for new moorings which could provide additional rental income.

6. Canal Visitor Centre redevelopment - the remainder of the investment takes place at the Canal Centre, including a new visitor centre and facilities, plus a small paid entry attraction.

It should be noted that the options above are not mutually exclusive. A combination of investing in the right opportunities, changing the delivery method or reducing or stopping some non-essential activities, and transfer of the revenue streams to the Canal as a business unit is likely to underpin any financial sustainability the Canal can achieve.

These options have been assessed against criteria with Options 1 and 2 scoring poorly as the status quo is unsustainable and reducing the service is undeliverable. Options 4, 5 and 6 score relatively well on the Canal strategic objectives, however Option 6 scores badly on deliverability due to the affordability of the investment and the timescales for financial return.

Therefore a combination of 3,4 and 5 would be the preferred approach. This would also help the BCA to work towards the longer term ambition of transferring to the CRT.

## 5 Proposed Action

Appraisal of the options results in the following actions:

1. Establish the Canal as a business unit and ensure that all income generated by canal assets is retained by that unit.

2. Refine and seek approval for the proposed campsite development business case with a view to seeking funding for implementation.

3. Refine and seek approval for the proposed moorings business case with a view to implementation in the short term.

4. Consider any efficiencies that reduce the revenue requirements without having a significant impact on the level of service. Currently options are being explored with HCC Countryside Service to see if there are any options for resource sharing. Any opportunities are likely to have minor impact on savings.

5. Strengthen the confidence and collaboration amongst the funding partners to support the longer term strategy that will remove the reliance for ongoing revenue funding from the partner authorities in the future.

6. Produce a 5 year capital priority spending plan to form the basis of a request to the landowning authorities as part of the long term strategy.

7. Continue to liaise and work closely with Canal and River Trust.

# Letter

Dear Philip and Roger,

In the autumn issue of BCN you asked for members' views on a future relationship between the Basingstoke Canal and the Canal & River Trust. So here goes.

Of course the CRT should have the Basingstoke Canal within its remit. It has been obvious ever since it was set up that it should do so. Indeed it was empowered to include other navigations that wished to join; but not compulsorily.

Having had to purchase the canal, it might be thought unfair for the CCs to now give it away, and to pay to do so! BUT I see no reason whatever why they should not continue to own the freehold, and lease the canal to CRT long term, on an agency basis. To run it, maintain it, develop it, and take the income from it. An "Agency Fee" or "Reverse Rent" if you like, would be payable from the landlord (S+H CCs) to the tenant (CRT). So the CCs could explain to their ratepayers that they are still the freeholders. The advantages would seem to be:-

1. The CCs might find it much more palatable to make smaller annual "grants" or "agency fees" or "reverse rents", rather than what would need to be a one-off, but very large, "dowry" if it were to be transferred wholesale. Such an annual payment would have to be index linked, and tied to a minimum term of years, much like the Govt Grant to CRT (15 years I believe).

2. The lease or agency agreement would have to be for a long term, to give the tenants the confidence of continuity, and to put money

into development—much like the rail franchises.

3. With a land holding as long, thin and disparate as the Basingstoke Canal, an enormous sum of money (legal expenses mainly) would need to be spent on plans, boundaries, documents, for any freehold transfer by both parties. And all this could be saved if the freehold did not change hands.

4. Being a Trust, CRT can raise money from other sources, which the Counties cannot do. And they have been successful in this so far.

5. There could be the possibility of increased boater traffic (both ways) with being included in a national licence.

6. EA waterways will undoubtedly get transferred to CRT at some stage (if we have a Waterways Minister who is allowed to stay more than 3 weeks in the job!), and the optimum time for a transfer would be contemporaneous with the Thames.

7. I don't claim this as a fully thought out strategy; more the germ of an idea that could be developed. I hope I live to see it, or something like it, happen. So let's start pushing.

Kind regards, Tony Davis

*An interesting idea, but I fear that the CRT might want an annual "Agency Fee" that is more than the Counties are currently spending, which rather defeats the object of the exercise. I gather also that the CRT would prefer full ownership to a management only role.*



# Men at work

The BCA's little trip boat *Rosebud* has had a very busy summer and is about to have an even busier December doing Santa Special trips. However, some time was found for the Society's small band of engineers to install a new aft partition in the boat (*below*).



The same team has also built some racks for boat storage at the Canal Centre (*below*) and a frame to support a cover for the BCA's safety boat (*top right*).



Meanwhile, the Society's weekend work party has made a start on getting the work boat *Fly* back into a serviceable condition. After the concrete was removed, it was clear that some areas of the bottom were beyond patch repair. These were in the bows and have now been cut out (*below*) ready for new metal to be welded in.



# BCA Operational

*For the benefit of those unable to attend the last 2017 meeting of the Joint Management Committee, here is the report to the committee from Fiona Shipp, written in late October.*

The BCA Canal Manager reports that:

## **BCA Maintenance & Inspection Works**

- Upper and Lower gates replaced at Lock 22 and associated works to replace cills etc
- Winter cut started and already completed between Ash wharf bridge and Claycart bridge Farnborough
- Summer towpath cutting completed several full cuts (64miles/cut) and also mowing and strimming of all lock tops
- Water levels were an issue this summer after a dry spring and Deepcut and Brookwood lock flights had to be closed for 7 weeks between 23<sup>rd</sup> June and 14<sup>th</sup> Aug. An indicator of how dry it has been is that it is still more than 100mm down even now in October, which has meant only 64 visiting boats so far this year. (40% less than would be expected)
- Investigation works into seepage at Sycamore Crescent, Fleet
- Japanese knotweed injection in August
- Himalayan Balsam pulling Deepcut and Crookham areas, staff and volunteer sessions
- Repair of large towpath washouts near Greywell
- Towpath and lock top collapse at lock 4 repaired
- Annual Lock inspections completed

## **Events/Visitor Services**

- Santa cruises sold out
- Staff and volunteers attended the River Wey festival with the Canal stand at Dapdune wharf in Guildford.
- Attempted break-in thwarted at canal centre. After improvements to security of doors last year after previous break-ins. We found that our new improved systems had worked and they hadn't managed to gain entry and broke their tools in trying. Nothing of great value is kept on site anymore anyway but it was still quite satisfying.
- A very busy summer on site with record takings for *Rosebud* trip boat with her new cream tea trips going down very well. The unpowered boat business also had a record year helped by all that hot and dry weather and additions to the fleet of boats.
- We now have 2,281 followers of our Facebook page and a post last month regarding Santa cruises received our biggest ever audience of 23,653 people. Many concerned over our lack of online booking facilities.

## **Volunteers**

- Successful volunteer summer BBQ social held at the canal centre with food and games and over 40 people.
- Floating pennywort clearance over many sessions from lock 7 down to the River Wey. Massive impact on controlling this invasive species and keeping the navigation open to boats.
- Four volunteers and a member of ranger staff from the Tuesday group undertook a 6 week canoe course, completing their



# Report to JMC

BCU 1 star award. Thus enabling them to use canoes to get at the smaller sections of floating pennywort. Another group will hopefully complete the same course in the spring.

- Already starting the winter sapling cutting currently working on sections between lock 2 and lock 4 in Woodham.
- *Rosebud* was fully crewed and skippered by volunteers and further training planned for the spring as new skippers are required to keep up with the hectic rota for the trip boats.
- Farnborough road car park has had a volunteer session by Aspire who came for a corporate day and helped to reorganise the car park layout and carry out cutting back and surfacing repairs. This was followed up by the Tuesday team and the results are quite dramatic with the canal now very visible from the road slipway and providing great natural advertising for the canal.

## Management Team

The BCA Canal Manager and Strategic Manager have been working on:

- Update of Conservation Management Plan completed in draft form ready to be discussed at next Conservation Steering Group Meeting
- Drafting of a new **tree management policy** for the whole of HCC Countryside Service, so that in respect of the Canal it also fits with SCC's tree safety policy.
- Concerns have been raised by Natural England regarding boat use on the Canal following the submission of the assent application to build Farnborough Road moorings. The Management Team has

been engaging with NE to ensure that all factors are properly considered in NE's decision making processes.

## Capital/Strategic Works

The Strategic Manager reports the following works have been undertaken or are planned:

### Surrey

- **Woking town wharf** – work was expected to start in September, but during neighbour consultations an issue was raised about possible soil contamination, a specialist has had to be brought in to test samples and offer advice. This has meant that the contractor's autumn window of availability was missed. Start on site delayed until January 2018.
- **Bank protection** – a prioritised list of sites have been surveyed by the BCA and SCC Engineer for a scheme of bank protection throughout the Surrey half of the Canal. Expected work to start in spring 2018.
- **Heath Vale Road Bridge** – the site has posed a number of complex issues and constraints but the contractor has now commenced repairs of the towpath under the bridge, they will also be doing short sections of bank protection on the towpath side at Ash Wharf and at Deedman's Footbridge whilst in the area.
- **Chobham Road turnover bridge** – the Strategic Manager is engaged with design and consents approvals for a Woking Borough Council / SCC project funded by EM3 to provide a new turnover bridge at Chobham Road, Woking. A planning application is expected at Woking BC



# BCA Operational Report

imminently. The bridge will be owned by Woking BC under an agreement with SCC as Canal owner.

- **Lock inspections / repair** – the St John's Locks will be drained for inspection and maintenance Nov – March.

## Hampshire

- **Dogmersfield landslip** has finally been completed – however time has been expending in dealing with matters around the conclusion of the project, which went

considerably over the estimates in terms of contractor's bills and engineering costs.

- With only about £30k remaining in the HCC capital budget a small number of high priority **bank protection** sites will be added to the SCC bank protection contract in the spring.
- **Swan cutting** – the Strategic Manager has instructed HCC Estates to open discussions with the 12 neighbouring properties.



*Above:* The Dogmersfield slip repair finally completed. Over 50 back anchors secure the piling on the offside and a similar number under the towpath. A line of soft bank protection will keep passing boats clear of them and will allow a line of vegetation to eventually grow up to screen the metal piling.



# Canal Society Work Party

A section of the towpath to the west of Colt Hill Bridge at Odiham had become seriously eroded. At one point exposed tree roots were a trip hazard and made passage dangerous for bicycles and almost impossible for pushchairs.

This was now been repaired by the Society's work party. Their work was interrupted from time to time by members of the public who seemed unable to understand "Towpath closed" signs and got upset when they found that it was,

because people were trying to work.

"It's a public right of way" claimed one and it had to be pointed out to him that it wasn't. Most of the towpath is in fact a Permissive Footpath that may be closed at any time without notice.





# New work boat



We reported in the last BCN that the Society was contemplating buying a work boat from the Environment Agency. This has now happened and the *Jim Douglas* has been

brought back from Staines to its new home on the Basingstoke. First stop was the dry dock for some work and a change of colour (*below*). More needs to be done, however, and the first





# “Jim Douglas”

thing will probably be to get rid of the small crane that is mounted on the bows. This is not really man enough to be of use to us and it is also high enough to be a problem with some of the bridges. The rails on the roof have already been removed for clearance reasons.

The boat formerly served as a base for divers and has a workshop, galley, and space for a toilet and shower. It also has two steering positions, one in the forward cabin and one on the aft deck.



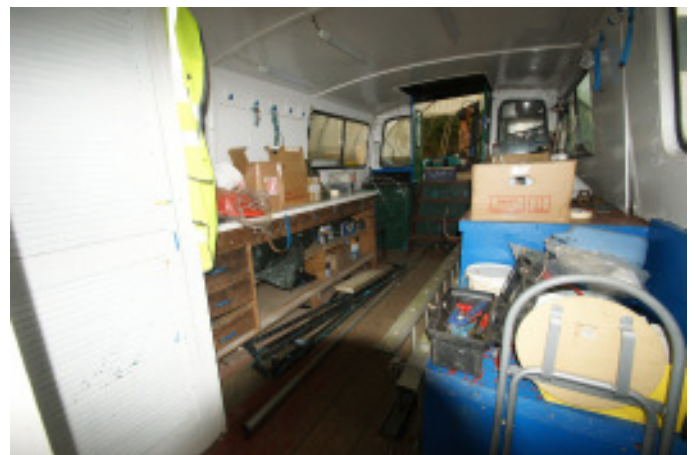
*Above:* Galley/eating area

What it doesn't have at the moment is a great deal of space for the usual loads of branches that accumulate during the Work Party's offside bank clearance efforts, although the fore and aft deck areas are quite sizeable.

It may well be that some of the cabin will have to go to make way for more load space, but it seems a shame to lose any of the current useful facilities. Perhaps it could become a floating hostel for visiting work parties?



*Above:* Forward helm position with the crane visible through the door.



*Above:* Cabin/Workshop looking forward and

*Below:* Workshop looking aft



# Odds & ends

The canal had a narrow escape recently when a container lorry nearly shed its load at Kiln Bridge, St John's. The railings were damaged but at least the container didn't end up in the canal.

Thanks to Ian Redway for the photo.



---

Thanks to Nigel Searle for pointing out that official planning applications have now been lodged for the towpath link at the Chobham Rd Bridge (PLAN/2017/1226/BRB) and installation of '11 Illuminated featured Glass Art panel privacy screening panel' (PLAN/2017/1227/BRB) and can be found on the Woking Council website.

To view the plans, accept the copyright at the bottom of <https://www.woking.gov.uk/planning/publicaccess> then enter just 2017/1226 or 2017/1227 in the 'Enter a keyword, reference number, postcode or single line of an address.' box; the plans can be found in pdf form listed under the 'Documents' tab. Clicking on them will cause them to download onto your computer.

The design is quite ingenious and impressive, but whether it will be to everyone's taste remains to be seen.

---

## Christmas cards

Basingstoke Canal Christmas cards are on sale at the Canal Centre and from Denise Smith. Packs of 10 cards cost £3.60 or 2 for £7 at the Canal Centre, but Denise will have to charge extra for postage.

There are two designs, both at the Canal Centre, one a photo at dusk of a Santa cruise waiting to go off and the other a painting by the late Nancy Larcombe of boats moored there in the snow.



# 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, December through April inclusive.

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

Non-members and friends are very welcome.

**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.



**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 its fascinating history and beautiful fabrics.

**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.

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)

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



# Voices from the past

One of the pleasures of editing the BCN is the occasional email that arrives out of the blue from someone in the Basingstoke's past.

The most recent of these came from Delia and Ron Wells in Australia, who lived on the houseboat *Althea Wynne* near Scotland Bridge in the 1960s. They wondered whether there was any contact with former residents.

I was able to send them a video clip of a Pathé news item about the houseboats being fitted out and I also referred them to David Horsfall's book "Adelina" on our website.

I got a return email from Delia saying that they were "gobsmacked" by the video as Ron had worked for Floating Homes Ltd, fitting out the boats, and one of the ones featured in the film was *Althea Wynne*.



Above: Houseboat build at Scotland Bridge

Tim and Liz Dodwell, who lived on *Adelina* for a few years, have been in touch with them and I have asked Delia whether she would like to try to write down some of their memories of those far-off days for the BCN. Fingers crossed!

If anyone does remember Ron and Delia, please let me know and I'll put you in touch.

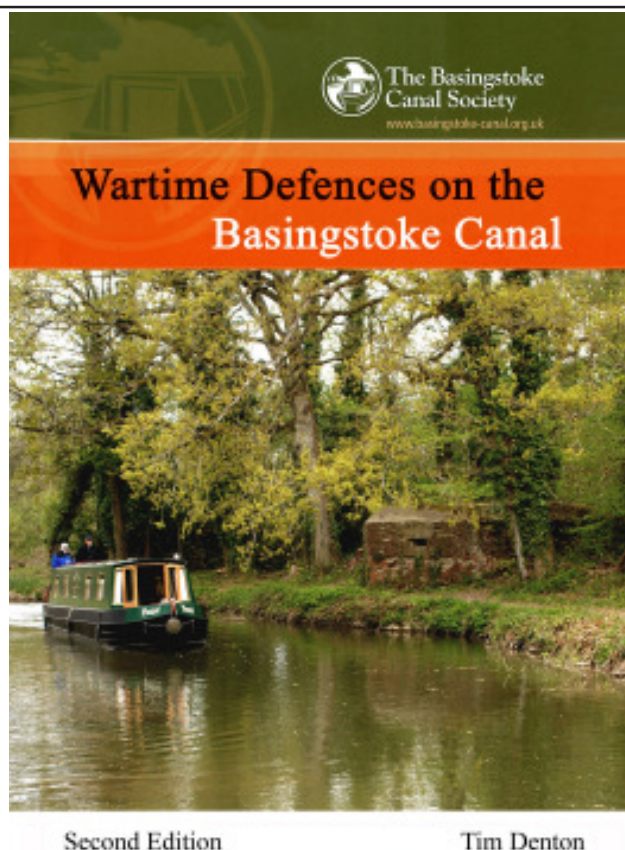
## New book

The latest addition to the Canal Society's range of books is the second edition of Tim Denton's best-selling "Wartime Defences on the Basingstoke Canal". This was originally an article for the BCN but proved to be one of our most popular books when it was later published.

It has now been completely revised with fresh maps, photos and some new discoveries by Tim.

Price £3.50 including p&p from Denise Smith or the Canal Centre.

Other titles are the Guide, Rambles, History and Boats.



# Sales stand



In the previous BCN we mentioned the accident that wrote off our sales stand at the Dogmersfield Flower Show, so it is good to be able to report this time that Denise Smith's broken leg has mended and that compensation has been received from the driver's insurance for that and also for the cost of the wrecked gazebo (*right*).

A very smart new sales stand made its debut in September at the Wey Festival at Dapdune Wharf in Guildford, as usual manned by Denise and Verna (*above*).

***We are, however, still looking for people to help the Canal Society's sales team.***

This is quite an important activity as it is one of the main interfaces of the Canal Society with the general public. If you are one of our newer



members who indicated an interest in helping with admin on your membership form, this could be just what you were looking for.

If you would like to know more, please contact Denise (01252 517779) or me, Roger Cansdale (01252 678608).



# Trip boats

The Society's trip boats have enjoyed a very successful season in 2017. The *John Pinkerton II* has carried 5378 passengers on 187 trips including 118 charter trips, 39 public trips and 9 themed trips. The themed trips included the ever-popular Jazz & Ale Specials and our cream tea trips (with piano accompaniment!). We also arranged a special trip for the Hampshire Emergency Services and Police in order to improve their knowledge of the canal and facilitate access to the boat to attend incidents. We also invited a number of councillors on another special trip, a few of whom took the helm, including Mike Goodman, Chairman of the Canal's Joint Management Committee (below right. Thanks to Cllr Paul Deech for the photo).

In Surrey our 12-seater trip boat *Kitty* had an excellent first season of operation on the Woking pound where trips were offered from Woking Town Wharf eastwards towards the top lock on the Woodham Flight. 56 trips took place, carrying nearly 400 passengers, and many complimentary comments were made in the visitor book. We now have a dedicated *Kitty* team in Woking who are enthusiastically supporting the new operation. We believe that there is considerable demand for public boat trips in the Woking area and we are looking forward to building on our successful first year by offering more trips next year including trips which are being operated in collaboration with The Lightbox.



The *JP II* was the venue for a 50th birthday party in September, with the cabin and furnishings magnificently decorated.



# Farewell

## Ron McLaughlin

His many friends will be very sad to hear of the passing of Ron McLaughlin.

He and his family joined the Canal Society in 1984 and soon got involved in a practical way. Ron was a member of the gang that operated our dredger *Perseverance* for many years and also got involved with the *John Pinkerton*. He took over as Chairman of the Boat Company in 1996, finally handing over to Peter Wright in 2005.

After struggling with an increasingly unreliable engine for a couple of years, Ron finally organised the installation of a new one in 1999. This was done at Aldermaston and was followed by a 4-day trip on the K&A, Thames and Wey before returning to Odiham. The new engine proved to be a vast improvement in terms of noise, vibration and smoke!

Ron had many other interests including St



Peter's Church in Ash, the Scouts, motor bikes and playing in the Farnham Town Brass Band. He was altogether a very nice guy.

Sincere condolences to Dorothy and the rest of Ron's family.

---

## John Kilburn

Sad also to hear of the death of John Kilburn, another stalwart of the Pinkerton operation. He apparently suffered a massive heart attack recently and passed away the same evening.

John and his wife Yvonne joined the Canal Society in 2006 and got involved with the *John Pinkerton* more or less immediately. When Janet Moore stepped down as Crew Organiser in 2008 they volunteered to take it on. They

did the job until David Easter took over, but John still helped with the maintenance of the boat and played a key role in making sure that all the relevant documentation was available for the annual inspection of the boat by the MCA.

Our best wishes and condolences to Yvonne and their family.

# BCS Membership

## MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY REPORT

Dear Members,

Unfortunately, we still have quite a few members who have not paid their subs for 2017 which were due on 1<sup>st</sup> March. As reminders have been sent out and no response received, I must assume that these members no longer wish to belong to the Society and I will therefore cancel their memberships.

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

Jean & David Pragnell of Eastleigh  
Keith Chapman of Pamber Heath  
Jeremy Martin of Brookwood  
Rod Cooper of Farnborough  
Meyrick Williams of Winchfield  
Malcolm & Lesley Hawkes of Ascot  
John Oates of Alton

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

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

---

## 200 Club Winners

Here are the 200 Club winners for the latter part of 2016. This marks the end of my first year of running the club and I would like to thank all the members for their support. Well done to the winners and better luck next year to the others.

### October

Mr B Holmes	£40
Mr R H Malcolm	£20
Mr S J Murrell	£10
Miss G L Miller	£10

### December

Mrs S M Anderson	£40
Mrs V Vine	£20
Mr J T Carter	£20
Mrs G J Browne	£29

If anyone else would like to join, they would be very welcome to do so. Just fill in the form that comes with this newsletter and return it to me. Could I also ask existing members of the Club to fill in a new form in order to comply with new Data Protection law which will come into effect next year? Thanks very much.

Don Barber

# 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.

**Date for next copy 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018**

*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 Knoll Road, Fleet, Hants GU51 4PT  
01252-678608

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

## **Presidents:**

**Chairman:**

**Vice-Chairman:**

**Hon. Secretary:**

**Hon. Treasurer:**

**Tim & Elizabeth Dodwell**

**Philip Riley\***

**Martin Leech\***

**Terry Inskip\***

**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*

<b>Membership Secretary:</b>	Doreen Hornsey
<b>Working Party Information:</b>	Janet Buckley*
<b>Trip Boat Manager:</b>	Dick King*
<b>Trip Boat Bookings:</b>	David Horwood
<b>Events Organiser:</b>	Vacant
<b>Sales Manager &amp;</b>	
<b>Mail Order Sales:</b>	Denise Smith
<b>Exhibitions Manager:</b>	John Ross
<b>Website Manager:</b>	Craig Shanks
<b>Press Officer:</b>	Roger Cansdale*
<b>External Talks Organiser:</b>	Roger Cansdale*
<b>Lengthman Organiser:</b>	Mike Gordon*
<b>200 Club organiser</b>	Don Barber
<b>Archivist</b>	Rev David Tonkinson
<b>VP &amp; Chobham talks:</b>	Malcolm Brickwood
<b>Director</b>	Kevin Redway*
<b>Director</b>	Jeff Hill*
<b>Director</b>	John Wall*
<b>Director</b>	Stuart Black*

**General Canal Society contact number: 07768 410920**

**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)



# Kingfisher



The drain-down of the St John's flight has proved very popular with this local resident, who has been zipping up and down between Locks 7 and 11 picking off all the small fish that have been left stranded in the remaining shallow pools.