



The Basingstoke  
Canal Society

# Basingstoke Canal News

No. 260 Autumn 2018





## Editorial

Judging by the continued lack of any response to our requests for someone to organise half a dozen speakers for the Chobham meetings, much of our membership seems to be in all-year-round hibernation, so it is a relief to welcome another new face onto the Society's

Committee, Neil Sutherland. He is another Tuesday work party member roped in by Ken Sankey and they have set out to draw up a vision for the future of the Society and the canal. More of this inside on pages 18 to 21.

Please read this and think about it and let us know what you think about it. You may not like buzzwords like "Vision Statement", but the fact of the matter is that unless you know where you want to go, you are unlikely to get there.

It often helps to have fresh minds doing this sort of thing and Ken and Neil have put a lot of effort into coming up with ideas for the

future of the Canal and the Society.

The most obvious message is that we need people to do the things that are envisaged

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One of these things looks likely to be some heavyweight fund raising.

Swan cutting has been an increasing threat to the operation of the *John Pinkerton II* because the offside bank is slipping. Hampshire County Council have finally turned their attention to

it but we have yet to hear what their engineers have in mind. One thing is certain - it will be expensive. The Society has agreed in principle to contribute to the cost but we don't know yet what it will be.

We also have the hiatus in the transfer of the canal to the C&RT caused by the Counties' current inability to fund an endowment to pay for future maintenance; a figure in the region of £50 million has been rumoured.

Is it beyond belief to imagine such a sum being raised by donations to ensure a secure future for something as valuable as the Basingstoke Canal? I don't think so.

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The more observant among our readers (assuming that anyone actually does read this), will notice that this issue of the BCN, like the last, is labelled as Autumn 2018. The reason for this is that I realised that somehow we had got out of sync with the seasons. It seems daft to be reporting on a late summer event like the Raft Race in an issue labeled Winter.

Henceforth, the Winter issue will cover December, January and February, Spring March, April, and May, Summer, June, July and August, and Autumn, September, October and November.

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*As the festive season is approaching, could we take this opportunity to wish all our members and supporters a happy Christmas and an enjoyable and rewarding New Year both on and off the water.*

Cover Picture : "I first fell in the canal when I was 3", Kevin Redway receiving the Q&AVS trophy from the Duke of Kent  
Photo: Roger Cansdale.

# Chairman's report

Recent weeks have been dominated by two major events – the visit to the canal by HRH the Duke of Kent on 13<sup>th</sup> November to present the Queens Award for Voluntary Service and the statement by the County Councils on the current position regarding the proposed transfer of the canal to the Canal & River Trust.

The selection of the Society to receive the Queens Award was very welcome news and provided all our many volunteers with the recognition for their long and dedicated service which they richly deserve. It was particularly appropriate that the Award should be presented by the Duke of Kent who was present at the re-opening of the canal in 1991 following the completion of the restoration. His Royal Highness met many of the volunteers and came aboard the John Pinkerton II which was moored at the Canal Centre. There is no doubt that this prestigious Award (which is equivalent to an MBE for voluntary groups) is an important feather in the cap for the Society and is something that we can all be proud of.

The announcement about the progress with the C&RT negotiations was considerably less welcome. We had been made aware that the capital sum required by the Trust as a condition of taking over the canal was a large amount although the actual figure has never been disclosed to us. We are also acutely conscious of the political implications of the transfer for the County members who are obviously faced with continuing pressures on their finances. We are told that neither County Council is in a position to raise the capital sums to achieve the transfer or to take forward any of the alternative funding options offered by the Trust to create a sustainable income for the canal. Although the Society was promised that it would be

brought into the discussions and provided with the necessary financial information, regrettably this has not been the case. We do not know, for example, what options were discussed and whether the other members of the Canal Partnership, and in particular the District authorities, were brought into the debate. The Society has always taken the view that all the partner authorities benefit hugely from having a multi-use facility on their doorsteps. Indeed, it is becoming increasingly evident that the use of the canal for a range of recreational activities, including walking, cycling and canoeing is on an upward trend and it is clear to us the local communities value the canal more than ever as a place to enjoy a peaceful rural environment free from noise and congestion. With the growing emphasis on establishing more opportunities for recreation (an especially healthy living) the canal has much to offer. We believe that the District Authorities have a greater role to play and it is by no means clear to us whether this wider debate has taken place.

Despite this set-back, the Society has re-affirmed its commitment to work with all the partner authorities to develop the canal and to protect it from unsuitable development. We have always taken the long view and I have no doubt that the C&RT discussions will recommence at some point in the future. In the meantime our work parties will continue to work on new facilities and will support the BCA in maintaining the canal infrastructure. Our trip boat operations will develop (with the possibility of a hybrid boat in Woking) and we will re-new our efforts to promote the benefits of the canal to the wider community.

Philip Riley

# No go to the C&RT

*It was with regret but not really great surprise that we received recently the following message that went to all members of the Canal's Joint Management Committee:*

I would like to update you on recent developments regarding the potential transfer of the Basingstoke Canal away from the ownership of Surrey and Hampshire County Councils. During early October Senior Officers of Hampshire and Surrey County Council met with Canal and River Trust (the Trust) – it was agreed that a transfer of the Basingstoke Canal assets was not viable at this time. We have agreed the canal operating and maintenance costs with the Trust, however neither landowning authority are in a position to raise the capital sums or take forward any of the alternative funding options offered by the Trust, to create the sustainable income for the canal necessary to facilitate the transfer.

The Trust has undertaken some work to assist in understanding the risks associated with owning and operating the canal. Our view is, based on initial feedback, that the risks are perhaps lower than our previous perception. This also weakens the case for transfer.

Officers agreed that there would continue to be cordial relations with the Trust, and will continue to tentatively explore alternative options with them, however, there are no immediate solutions that would be mutually beneficial to all parties. The Trust has confirmed that it is willing to explore other ownership and maintenance options that the councils wish to propose.

There are a few options that we are now considering to secure the long term financial sustainability of the Canal:-

1. Continue exploratory talks with the Trust and identify if there are any further options for working closely together
2. Develop an 'invest to generate income' programme (based on the approach Hampshire County Council are taking with their Country Parks)
3. Explore potential partnerships with other organisations to align and exploit skills in order to reduce costs

If you have any questions, please do get in touch with either myself, James Taylor or Richard Plummer.

Mike Goodman

Acting Chairman – Basingstoke Canal JMC

*The Canal Society has sent the following Press Release to the JMC members, local press and national waterway press:*

The Society was extremely disappointed to receive the recent announcement by Surrey and Hampshire County Councils to the effect that the proposed transfer of the Basingstoke Canal to the Canal & River Trust was not considered to be viable at the present time. In the opinion of the Society, the transfer would offer the most attractive option to secure the long-term future of the canal by integrating it more fully into the national waterways network.

The Society has supported the canal, both financially and in terms of volunteer effort, for over 50 years and it is fully committed to continue that support and to play a very active role in the Canal Partnership. In view of the recent decision by the County Councils, the Society believes that all the members of the partnership, including the District Councils and the special interest groups, should renew their undertakings to work with the County Councils in promoting the benefits of the canal and in supporting initiatives which will increase its income.

Philip Riley, Chairman of the Canal Society, said:

“Clearly this is a significant set-back for the canal and leaves it in a position where there must be some uncertainty over its future. However, the fortunes of the canal have always been subject to wide fluctuations and this is just the latest chapter in its long history. I have no doubt that the canal has a bright future and we will enthusiastically work with our partners and with the local communities to achieve the secure and stable long term future which we all seek and which the canal deserves.”

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So where do we go from here?

It is good news that the Counties are intending to develop investment to generate income. The first step is already under way with the redevelopment of the Canal Centre camp site that we reported in the last BCN. This will be good for the canal, provided that it leads to extra income for it. It won't help if the extra camp site income is used as an excuse to reduce the County's funding for the canal.

It would be very interesting to know what figure was agreed with the C&RT for the operating and maintenance costs of the canal. In the past we were told by the C&RT's predecessor, British Waterways, that they would spend between 2 and 3 times as much as the current Basingstoke budget on such a canal.

This may have reduced if the C&RT have more efficient ways of operating, but it is still likely that the canal's budget needs to increase significantly if it is not to start slipping into decay again, as was starting to occur in the 20 years following its reopening in 1991. The inevitable result will be the same too - a sudden need to find millions of pounds to restore the canal to a safe condition.

Where could extra money be found when the counties are desperately trying to look for cost savings by closing what many people would regard as essential services? What, if anything, can the Canal Society do to help?

Sponsorship by local companies might help. We already have roundabouts sponsored by local garden centres, so why not locks? An adopt-a-lock scheme whereby local companies could pay for new gates every 25 years and get their staff to go on occasional Tuesday Work Parties in return for some modest advertising might appeal. The Society could present an annual trophy for the best kept lock.

If the Counties were willing to give this a try, perhaps the Society could do the leg-work in going round local companies.

Perhaps we could also slip in the suggesting of a contribution to an endowment fund to pay for future maintenance of the canal under C&RT ownership!

# A fun weekend



The fun started on the evening of the last day of August with a combined BCA/BCS barbecue at the Canal Centre for the volunteers. It had been planned as the event at which the Lord Lieutenant of Surrey would present the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service to the Society, but a message came that a senior member of the Royal Family wished to do this at some later date. Nevertheless, the BBQ was a great success, with about 150 people enjoying a hog roast, jazz band and a great opportunity for many old friends to meet for the first time in many years. Thanks to everyone who helped to organise it.

Two days later, on the Sunday, the fun transferred westwards to the first Odiham Raft Race. 8 teams had entered and went off at 10 minute intervals from the start line at the North Warnborough Lift Bridge, bound for a finish at the eastern end of the Colt Hill wharf, about 2km away.

The event was blessed by ideal weather, which was just as well for such a potentially wet event for the participants. A large crowd turned out to see the start (opposite top) and finish.

The fastest time of just over half an hour was set by the Basingstoke Canal Authority team, thanks to the muscle power of four Rangers and a cunning raft design that featured wooden framework wrapped in layers of Clingfilm. It looked flimsy but was very stable and held together; well done Mark Foster, designer, builder and paddler (*see back cover*).

Second fastest time, 47 minutes, was logged by "In Deep Ship", just beating "BAD Idea", the Basingstoke & Deane Canoe Club entry; the club also did a great job of providing canoe escorts for all the rafts. Fourth place went to the Galleon Marine entry "Blues & Twos" after surviving a capsiz before they had even started.



# at Mytchett and Odiham



Just behind them came another 2-man crew aboard the “John Sinkerton”, finishing well despite its name and a very low freeboard (*below*). Last in were the “West Street Wafters” and “Crafty Bu\*\*ers”, who might have gone faster if their beer supply hadn’t run out.



Finally there was a short race for children’s teams, with BAD Idea doing well again.

A trophy for the winners and medals all round were presented by Air Chief Marshall Sir Joe French, one time CO of RAF Odiham. A great crowd turned out to watch the fun and there seems to be a determination to make this an annual event, despite all the hard work organising it. The actual course may change next time in the light of this year’s experience.

Thanks are particularly due to Odiham Parish Councillor David Stewart, whose idea it was, Philip Riley, Chairman of the Basingstoke Canal Society, Arthur and Karen McCaffery of Galleon Marine and, not least, to Fiona Shipp, the Canal Manager, for allowing the lunacy to take place!

# Royal visit to

A sunny day on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> November welcomed HRH The Duke of Kent back to the Basingstoke for the first time since he performed the Royal Re-opening in 1991. This time he was at the Canal Centre to present the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service to the Canal Society and to meet representatives of the various groups of volunteers. A vast amount of preparation had gone on beforehand, including checking the position of lifebelts in case he fell in (he didn't). About 60 Canal Society members turned up, including our Presidents, Tim and Liz Dodwell, the latter proudly wearing the same hat that her mother, Joan Marshall, had worn at the re-opening (*top right*).



The Duke arrived just before 11am and was greeted by Philip Riley, who then introduced him to the various local dignitaries, including Mrs Linda Kemeny, who was Chairman of the JMC at one time and who kindly proposed the Society for the award, and Cllr Jonathan Glen, the current JMC Chairman (*below*).

responsible for running the Society's two trip boats, *JP11* and *Kitty*, headed by Dick King and Ian Moore. He was then shown a display of photographs showing the various Work Party projects and met Janet Buckley, Mark Coxhead, Brian Smith, Kevin Redway and Duncan Paine (*below*).



The Duke was then taken on board the *John Pinkerton II* to meet some of the volunteers. The first group of these represented the team

Then off to the meeting room to meet Mike Gordon and his team of lengthsmen and patrol boaters, and finally the sales and marketing group with Denise and Verna Smith, Roger Cansdale and Ken Sankey to talk about Social Media etc.

The moment then came for the actual award, with first the impressive citation read out by Mr Michael More-Molyneux, the Lord Lieutenant of Surrey. The Duke presented the

# present the QAVS

award to Kevin Redway, who thanked him on behalf of all the volunteers past and present and confessed, after the Duke asked him if he had been involved for a long time, that he had fallen in the canal for the first time at the age of 3 (*see cover*).

The Duke was then invited to unveil a small commemorative plaque in the boat cabin display and was presented with a bound edition of the Society's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary booklet as a souvenir of his association with the canal (*right*).

After briefly meeting Fiona Shipp and the BCA team, the Duke departed at midday, and the volunteers set about the Danish pastries.



The award and citation will probably be going on display in a case in the foyer of the Canal Centre, hopefully as an encouragement for people to join the Society.



# Events

## Chobham meetings

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

This 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.

### Wednesday 19 December 2018

#### *David Linsell: Power from Poo*

This talk will introduce Thames Water with an overview of the company, it's geographic coverage, customers and handling volumes of clean and waste water, plus tonnes of dry solid material for disposal. It will describe the sewage treatment with historical development, basic elements in a sewage work, sludge processing, anaerobic digestion, pasteurisation and thermal hydrolysis. Finally, power generation in combined heat and power plant plus future developments will also be discussed.

### Wednesday 16 January 2019

#### *Pete Starling: By Barge to Blighty, - The role of inland waterways and the evacuation of casualties in the First World War*

During the first world war with the number of casualties being on unprecedented scales, evacuation to the base hospitals at the coast became a major problem. This talk will highlight the role of the inland waterways as a means of casualty evacuation.



### Wednesday 20 February 2019

#### *Malcolm Head: Archaeological Treasures of the Thames*

This show and tell discussion will feature a number of artefacts that have been recovered from the River Thames during dredging operations conducted over a number of years. Of varying ages, it's remarkable that the objects, some of which are very fragile, have survived mechanical dredging and are available to enjoy today, many years after they were lost or discarded.

### Wednesday 20 March 2019

#### *David Rouse: 200 Years of The Thames and Medway Canal*

The Thames and Medway Canal, originally built in the early 1800s, now running from Gravesend to Higham in North West Kent has an interesting military, engineering and social history. Unfortunately, the canal was never the commercial success hoped for.

This talk traces the timeline from initial fundraising, construction challenges, the impact of railway fever, and eventual demise of the canal. Looking forward, the canal could be

# Events

developed into a green safe water corridor, supporting fishing, informal boating and other activities.

**Wednesday 17 April 2019**

***William Sargent: Marine Policing Unit***

This talk will discuss how the Marine Policing Unit (MPU) is responsible for policing the 47 miles of River Thames within the Met area (Dartford to Hampton Court) as well as providing a specialist response to over 250 miles of canals and waterways, lakes and reservoirs and other bodies of water in London.

Further information at

<http://www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk> or contact

[chobham.talks@basingstoke-canal.org.uk](mailto:chobham.talks@basingstoke-canal.org.uk).

To receive free reminder emails sent about a week prior to each talk, contact Mark Coxhead at [mark@coxhead.org.uk](mailto:mark@coxhead.org.uk)

**We are still looking for an organiser for next year's talks. If nobody volunteers, this will be the end of the Chobham meetings.**

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## Letter

*Nice to be appreciated!*

Dear Mr Chairman,

On my marriage in 1971 I left Woking, and the U.K., only returning occasionally for family visits. Now retired, my husband and I have recently bought a holiday apartment in Woking and you cannot imagine the joy, and my surprise, to discover the delights of cycling along the tow path.

When I think how many years I have been driving over bridges but can now ride safely and quietly UNDER them is such a treat.

If we want a pub lunch we cycle to the Wheatsheaf, if we need to go to Wicks we cycle in one direction or to Asda in the other. Who knows how much further we shall venture on our next visit.

It is a different world and all thanks to the hard work, and persistence, of you volunteers over the years so thank you very, very much.

Jackie and Yves Delfino,  
France.

# Work Party



Work continued on the wharf at Chequers and this included brick laying in the rain. Yes, it might have been a dry summer but it rained on us very well that Sunday. Despite it we managed to finish laying all the bullnose (edge) bricks ready for the next weekend to allow us to lay the hard under surface in preparation for the top coat the following weekends.



The bank at the back of wharf has been sloped up to the open grassed area (*above*), and most of the wharf length has been finished with a different BCA specified surface. The new square wooden bollards have been installed with alternative mooring rings also fitted. So far the only visiting boats seen have used the mooring



rings. The sloped bank has then been turfed, (*above*) and the area immediately at the top reseeded with grass. A new Canal Authority sign was installed on the top of the bank with with sponsorship from an advert for the nearby Exchequer Pub.

The far end of the wharf is still closed off as can be seen in this picture as we are re-profiling the towpath to the height of the new wharf and widening it out to the same width as the wharf, there being a 1/2m difference in height and about 3/4m erosion of the towpath (*below*).



The next picture shows the posts being installed for the new bank limits. This work is continuing and is hoped to be complete before Christmas.



The following picture, opposite, shows the Geotextile membrane in place and the towpath dug out with the back anchor poles in the towpath cut outs, prior to back filling, wiring up and then covering with further dredgings.



This was done over the Remembrance Day weekend in WW1-type muddy conditions (*top right*). The final stage will see the towpath finished with several tons of rolled-in road stone and a top layer of finer stone.

During one of our work parties, which we appeared to time for the only weekends when

it rained this summer, we found that part of the car park flooded so we dug away the bund, inserted some land drains and built a soak away using some of the broken bricks from the wharf.

Once Crookham wharf is finished, the Work Party will return to the Farnborough Road mooring project and the refurbishment and modification of the workboat “Fly” which is sitting at Ash Lock.

# Emergency dam practice

*Thanks to John Abbott for this report:*

It was very festive at Ash lock just in time for Halloween. The Engineering Group were asked to open and inspect the flat-packed emergency dams. Folded up they are a dead weight but quickly inflated with a leaf blower are easy to manoeuvre. In fact the slightest gust of wind and they are away.



In use they would be taken to the point of the emergency, inflated, secured in place, then water pumped in expelling the air and sinking across the canal forming the dam.

The two dams stayed inflated and showed no signs of damage so by treading the air out, and with some difficulty, they were folded up and packed away ready for deployment.



# John Pinkerton

After the trips had ended in October, the JP11 went down to the dry dock. The latter part of the trip from the winding hole opposite Wharfenden Lake to Lock 28 was in reverse as the boat is just too big to turn at the dry dock and the Deepcut flight was closed.

The hull was pressure washed (below) and blacked, but the main job was the replacement



of the prop shaft and associated bits and pieces, and refitting of a straightened propeller.

That was all done in time for the boat to return to Mytchett, where it played host to the Duke of Kent on 13<sup>th</sup> November (*above*).

## "JP"

Josh Kerry sent this photo of our old boat looking rather smart again.

He asked if he could name it simply "JP" and we have agreed to this as he is no longer intending to use the boat commercially. Rather nice that it should retain this link with its early history. It is currently somewhere around Hungerford on the K&A.



# Report from the

The final 2018 meeting of the Canal's Joint Management Committee took place on 22<sup>nd</sup> November. It began with the election of Cllr Jonathan Glen as the new Chairman.

He began by stating that despite the recent decision not to proceed with the transfer of ownership to the C&RT for financial reasons, he intended that cordial relations would be maintained, hopefully leading to a transfer one day. He intended to progress the business side of the canal to reduce its dependence on external financing, and would be setting up a small group from suitably inclined and qualified members of the JMC to do this. Volunteers were asked to send their CV in. One objective could be to build up a sum of money for a dowry some time.

Before business started, Julia Jacs asked a question about the £45,000 that was being charged annually for administering the houseboats. How was this justified and how was it spent? It was explained that this was all done by Surrey Estates; a written reply had been requested but not received yet.

One interesting point that came out during the financial review is that a new charge is proposed to cover closures of the navigation and towpath requested by third parties (eg: Network Rail, utility companies) which appear to be increasing in frequency. These charges closely match those on medium use Canal & River Trust waterways (eg: Monmouth & Brecon Canal); the prices are designed to encourage works to be planned in winter.

Fiona Shipp reported on a year which had seen closure of Deepcut due to lock gate damage, but also record takings from small boat hire

during the hot summer. James Taylor reported on the programme of works during 2018 and the plans for the coming winter:

## *Surrey*

**Woking town wharf** – works took longer than expected but are now complete.

**Bank protection** – a scheme of bank protection throughout the Surrey half of the Canal will begin in early October.

**Deedmans Bridge** – works started to widen the towpath around the bridge that had become too narrow – contractor to rectify snags.

**Lock inspections / repair** – Deepcut Locks 18 – 24 Principle inspection has been done with follow-up works planned for Jan – Feb.

## *Hampshire*

**Bank protection** projects were delayed due to contractor availability, but are still planned in Hampshire, but unfortunately a substantial part of the money allocated for these works had to be diverted to deal with a leak which suddenly worsened at Pyestock shortly before the Farnborough Airshow in July.

**Crookham Deeps** – The embankment between Poulter's Bridge and Chequers Bridge has been leaking ever since restoration in the 1980s. Several schemes of repairs have been tried over the years which have only worked partially. A scheme of bed lining (similar to the successful works at Ash Embankment in 2016) is planned for the New Year.

**Swan "cutting"** – The Canal Society's Engineer has submitted some outline proposals for how the issues experienced in the Canal channel at Swan might be addressed. This has been carefully considered by HCC's Engineering team. Their view is that further information is required before a detailed design can be arrived at, as there is some evidence that

the issues are wider than the Canal. The Strategic Manager has now instructed HCC Estates and Engineering to liaise with the landowners so the additional data can be obtained.

Planning permission for the camp site improvements at Mytchett is still awaited, but no objections have been raised.

A potential grant of £250,000 may be made available from EU funding(!) to reduce tree shading to enhance the SSSI. A representative of Natural England was welcomed to the meeting for the first time in many years. The Conservation Management Plan was accepted after he had explained that without such a plan, any activity on the canal that might affect the SSSI would have to be individually approved and charged for. The original stipulation in the plan that there should be no boat movements for a year through any length that had been dredged, had been replaced by a speed limit.

It was mentioned that the Canal had been purchased by the Counties under legislation relating to recreational use, but there was also a duty to conserve the SSSI, so there is something of a legal conflict and a clear need for compromise.

On the financial side, the shortfall in funding from Surrey Heath and Runnymede was again noted. Runnymede, however, are trying to do something about this and intend to use income from the Scotland car park to finance it once the car park work is done (Runnymede's representative on the JMC actually owns a boat yard). Surrey Heath continues to be an embarrassment with pressure from the JMC continuing.

## **Cycling policy**

James Taylor introduced a paper about the problem of the clash between cyclists and pedestrians, particularly in Woking, where Sustrans resurfaced the towpath.

With hindsight it was clearly a mistake to allow them to do this, because although it greatly improved the then muddy towpath, it was not done to the 3m wide standard now defined for shared use and it gave the impression to cyclists that it was a cycle track. In fact the towpath is not a Right of Way and cyclists only use it with the permission of the owners. One of the measures suggested in James' paper was the erection of signs clearly stating the rule that pedestrians had right of way.

The developers of the new village at Deepcut want the towpath down to Brookwood to be useable for cycling commuters, but widening of the towpath to 3 or 3.5 m would have to be done, at the developers' expense.

The Canal Society's report was presented and the Society was congratulated on its QAVS award.

The next JMC meeting is scheduled for 26 June 2019.

Given the not entirely unexpected bad news about the C&RT decision, the meeting was actually quite positive. There seems to be an air of determination, at least on the part of the Chairman, to continue to try to find a way of getting the deal done and the Canal Society would be very willing to help. Anyone with business experience or connections who would like to be involved, would be more than welcome to contact the Society's Committee.

## Looking to the future of the Canal and the Basingstoke Canal Society

It is an immense credit to the Society that this year it has been awarded the Queens Award for Voluntary Service which coincides with the just over 50 years of restoring and helping maintain the Basingstoke Canal. But how do we see the next 50 years?

Looking forward there are major challenges facing the canal and our involvement with it.

Firstly there is the major issue of the ongoing ownership and management of the Canal. Very disappointingly, the owners of the canal, Surrey and Hampshire County Councils, have recently announced that the proposed transfer of the Basingstoke Canal to the Canal & River Trust is not considered viable at the present time (see page 4 for full details). Clearly this is a significant set-back for the canal and leaves it in a position where there must be some uncertainty over its future.

In our view it is most important now that all members of the canal partnership, including the district councils, work closely with the County Councils in promoting the benefits of the canal and in supporting initiatives which will increase its income. There is a challenge here for us all to support in getting the message across to your local councillors that the canal is a wonderful amenity that can be enjoyed by everyone - please write to your councillors to tell them how important the canal is to you.

Secondly the canal is something of a well-kept secret. Yes, you as a reader of this article are interested and we have over 4000 Friends and Facebook Followers and 900 Members of the Society who share your interest - but think of

how many people there are within a short walking or driving distance of the canal who know nothing about it and who are, like you, fellow ratepayers or residents who could both enjoy and support the canal. With health, fitness and relaxation absolutely essential to us all, we effectively have our own gym, spa and relaxation facility on our doorstep, walking, cycling, fishing, boating, canoeing or just enjoying the natural environment. We need to make more people aware of the canal - and then get them to be involved and supporting it.

So what are our plans? Quite simply we have agreed on four major initiatives to support the canal:

- Build Community Involvement through Members, Volunteers, Friends and Followers, along with active local groups at key community centres along the canal
- Provide a rewarding Visitor Experience with, in time, a range of Visitor Centres at strategic points along the entire length of the canal supported by technology providing mobile information
- Provide, in time, a range of easy to book, environmentally friendly Trip and Hire Boats. In some cases these will have disabled access and will encourage more people to experience the canal.
- Increase income and fund a rolling programme of projects to support the canal. Projects will be promoted and fundraising will come from increased membership,

# the Future

donations, sales and the involvement of the local business community

Throughout we will work very closely with the County and District Councils to encourage them to both support and promote our wonderful amenity to their residents and ratepayers. And as mentioned above, you can help here by emailing or writing to your local councillors telling them how important the canal is to you and to their constituencies.

And finally we need help with Volunteers to help us put these objectives into practice and help protect our beautiful canal. When the canal was restored in the 70's there were huge numbers of volunteers involved. Today we have over 200 volunteers currently supporting our work on the canal but we are looking for more people to help us in a variety of ways including:

- project management
- press and marketing
- fundraising
- organising and supporting local events
- approaching and involving local businesses
- maintaining and running trip boats
- ensuring that developments in the canal corridor produce direct benefits to the canal

Without more support this vision for the future simply cannot be realised and the Society will slowly lose support. We need volunteers to come forward and work with us in whatever way they can. It can be as little or as much as you are able to contribute. It doesn't matter what skills you have - what is important is the

ability to work in a small team and to enjoy the rewards that participation in our work can provide.

In joining us you will also be doing something that helps the whole community. Please have a look at the list of openings on the following pages or our website [basingstoke-canal.org.uk](http://basingstoke-canal.org.uk).

To let us know that you want to help or if would like to find out more about what we do, just email [volunteer@basingstoke-canal.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@basingstoke-canal.org.uk) or ring 07850 652769.

Come and join the team!

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## Volunteer uniform



Volunteers on the canal who wish to do so can now get themselves kitted out with one of these jerseys and a name badge to let the public know who and what they are.



# Opportunities to help sustain and

## Committee Members

An opportunity to use your strategic thinking, management skills and teamwork experience to help move the Canal forward, especially bringing new & creative ideas to the management team.

## Support on managing and maintaining our boats

We need practical help in managing & maintaining the John Pinkerton II trip boat moored at Odiham. Working with the current leader, we need in particular help with planning and organisation, maintenance (day to day and winter checks), and ensuring compliance with regulatory procedures. In fact all aspects of running a revenue generating public carrying waterborne vessel. This is really interesting and rewarding work

## Help with Boat Enquiries / Bookings

As the number of trips grow, while the main booking system is “semi” automated, we need some part time support to assist with boat enquiries.

## Press, Media and Marketing support

A key role in the future of the canal. It is essential that we raise the profile of the canal and ensure that we get the local community, along the entire length involved. Accordingly we need support from people with press liaison, marketing or promotional skills. This can be very flexible and again will be working as part of a bigger team. Specifically we also need marketing and press support to promote our boat trips

## Deputy Lengthsmen

We have over 60 lengthsmen (men and women!) who regularly walk their local patch of the canal and act as the ‘eyes and ears’ for the Council Rangers who look after the entire length of the canal. We are always happy to increase the number of lengthsmen. A fresh pair of eyes will always bring a different perspective!  
With the growing number of Lengthsmen we also need some folks to help coordinate this operation with Lengthsman Organiser.

## Organising and supporting Events

To help raise the profile of the canal we will be increasing the number of local events. We have a small team at present but need more help. Again this can be very flexible just helping out at one or two events but if you have interest in meeting people and helping the canal please get in touch.  
We also need support in planning the regular series of local talks at Chobham.

## Helping build links with local councils

We need to work closely with both the County Council (Surrey & Hampshire) owners of the canal to help them get the best use out of the canal for both residents and users of this wonderful asset. We have a team already linked into the councils but there is always more to do - so please call us if you have experience in working with local councils.

# promote the Canal and the Society

Planning experience	Working with local councils and other volunteers to help review local plans and maximise the benefits for the canal & also minimizing the potential negative impacts from any new developments. Knowledge of any of the following: Environmental Issues, SSSI, Town and Country Planning, Local Planning, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) etc. in relation to waterways would be a great asset.
Project management experience	We have many ongoing projects which will benefit the canal, but which require planning and project management. These currently include Swann Cutting, various plans at around Woking and the Moorings at Odiham - and indeed projects all along the canal. Come and join our project team to help bring the projects to life.
Fundraising	Looking forward it is important that we increase our income in particularly through donations, membership, sales and engaging local businesses. We are looking to build a team to support fundraising and welcome help from anyone with experience and ideas in this area.
Help in building links with Schools and Business	We want to build stronger links with Schools to help educate our youngsters and expose them to wonderful world of the canal and its' heritage, nature and health benefits. Alongside this we also see a real opportunity to involve local businesses in supporting the canal with a benefit to all concerned. So if you are interested in helping us build these key relationships, have ideas, and would like to work as part of these teams please contact us.
Canal Champions in local centres	In developing the canal we want to increase the profile and involvement the local communities and local clubs, in particular Woking, Mytchett, Fleet, Odiham and Basingstoke. We are looking for people to help act as a focus, and to link into, 'what is going on locally in that area', e.g. events, local groups, social media, local press, etc.
Administration	There are opportunities to help in either the BCA's office (at Mytchett) or with the Canal Society's team in supporting the day to day work of the Society. This can be helping with customer enquiries, day to day organisation, etc. - please call us to find out more.

The above are just some of the roles where you could help, but there are lots of other opportunities to be involved so please call 07850 652769 or email [volunteer@basingstoke-canal.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@basingstoke-canal.org.uk) to find out more.

# BCS Membership

## MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY REPORT

Dear Members,

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

Colin & Margaret Winterburn from Camberley  
John Ranson from Hook  
Mr Duckworth from Frimley Green  
Howard & Marion Swalheim from Odiham  
Nick Ralph from Caversham  
Martin Andrews from Farnham  
Debbie Aitkin from Woking

Debbie Barton from Frimley  
Neil Barton from Frimley  
Nigel Williams from Church Crookham  
Linda Hallam from Fleet  
Colin Simpson from Aldershot  
Linda Kemeny from Woking

Many thanks to you all.

Doreen Hornsey  
Membership Secretary

## Christmas cards

Once again we have Christmas cards for sale: *Zebon Copse swing bridge (right)* or *Boats at the Canal Centre (below)*.



Price for a pack of 10 is £3.50 +p&p.

Order from Denise Smith at

[sales@basingstoke-canal.org.uk](mailto:sales@basingstoke-canal.org.uk)

or phone 01252 517779.

They are also available at the Canal Centre at Mytchett.

## 200 Club winners

October

Mrs J C R Tyrrell	£40
Mr T Dodwell	£15
Mr R G Gunner	£10
Mr J Simpkins	£10

December

Mr R M Tinsley	£40
Mr A J Welsh	£15
Mr D J Wilkinson	£10
Mr J A Riley	£10

# BCS information



The Bulletin is now up to Issue 37.

If you want to keep up with the latest news about the canal, please click on the Friends button on the Society

website at [www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk](http://www.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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*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

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**200 Club organiser:** Don Barber  
**Archivist:** Rev David Tonkinson  
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**Director:** John Wall\*  
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Canal Authority Internet Website: [www.basingstoke-canal.co.uk](http://www.basingstoke-canal.co.uk)

# Raft Race winners



*Above:* The four man crew from the Basingstoke Canal Authority heading for victory in the first Odiham Raft Race. Raft designer and builder Mark Foster starboard side aft.