



The Basingstoke
Canal Society

Basingstoke Canal News

No. 263 Summer 2019





Editorial

Following so soon on the berievements reported in the last BCN, the death of Robin Higgs is a major blow to us. I think it is probably true to say that but for Robin, the canal would not exist today, except perhaps as a series of isolated ponds.

It may not be apparent to the general membership of the Canal Society, but a great deal of activity has been going on throughout the summer.

The Work Party has of course been slaving away as usual (*page 8*), but the activity that is likely to have the greatest impact on the Society's future has been going on behind the scenes.

The Committee has been joined by several new faces, so I thought it worth including a *Who's who* in this issue (*pages 19 & 20*), but we now also have a number of active sub-groups dealing with things like Events, Fund-raising, Marketing and Liaison with local Councils. Many of the people involved are new to the Society, which is great because they bring a fresh perspective on things as well as new expertise in areas such as corporate management and health & safety.

The new website with its online payment facilities should also be running by the end of the year, so next year will hopefully see a sharp increase in our membership. Fingers crossed!

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Apologies for that late arrival of this issue of the BCN. This was caused by the fact that a number of the people involved with its production and distribution, myself included, had managed to book holidays at the wrong time. However, it does mean that we can have a very up-to-date report on the second Odiham Raft Race.

Cover Picture : Absolutely fabulous "Ladies who Launch" looking very determined in the Odiham Raft Race.
Photo: Jeff Hill

Although hundreds of people were involved in the canal's restoration, it relied on someone being in the driving seat to coordinate the effort and deal with the problems, political, practical or personal, as and when they inevitably arose, and Robin was that man.

He stepped down as Chairman once the canal reopened, but retained to the end a keen interest in what was going on. He was always ready to offer advice when asked and it was well worth listening to.

I think perhaps his biggest talent was as a "people person", and we do well to learn from him. He kept a close watch on what was going on, but on the whole left people to get on with things without the feeling that someone was breathing down their necks. He was also kind and good at thanking people without being in any way condescending; he still used to thank me occasionally for some article in the BCN which he enjoyed. Silly, I know, but everyone needs a pat on the back now and then.

I'll miss him a lot.

Chairman's AGM report

The prolonged heat-wave and dry spell (although, as I write this, there are floods in the north of England and the weakening reservoir dam at Whaley Bridge is causing great concern) has given added impetus to our efforts to secure additional water supplies for the canal.

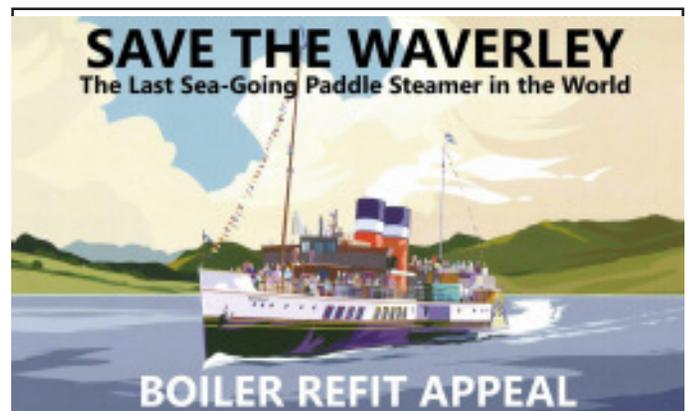
Several ideas have been put forward including storage ponds, further back-pumping, additional boreholes and accessing the reservoirs on the Army land at Bourley. All these options will involve considerable cost and a large measure of engineering input. However, we think that it's well worth putting considerable effort into assessing the various alternatives.

To this end an engineering team, including John How (our Water Strategist) is now assessing the implications of the various schemes. In particular, work is underway to examine the feasibility of providing some storage ponds alongside the Deepcut flight plus back-pumping some of the Deepcut locks (and perhaps the Brookwood flight) which presents the largest challenge facing us.

Discussions are taking place with our friends at the Wey & Arun Canal Trust who have had to install back-pumping at all the restored locks on the Loxwood flight as their water supply is at the lower end of the canal.

However, as John How has pointed out, until we can find additional water supplies, back-pumping at Deepcut alone is not a complete solution. In addition, throughout Deepcut, there are no readily available 3 phase electrical supplies if some back pumping is found to be necessary.

Clearly this will give rise to land ownership issues and the need to obtain approval for the proposals from the regulatory authorities who we know, from experience, are not easy to deal with. Hopefully, if a feasible and financeable project can be put together some of the work could be undertaken by volunteers. In this regard the Society does have considerable relevant experience in constructing back-pumping schemes since, under the very able leadership of Peter Redway, it planned and executed the pumping scheme at the St Johns locks.



Many of our members have enjoyed a trip on the Waverley, but sadly not this year because it failed its boiler inspection. An appeal has been launched to raise £2.3 million to get her seaworthy again. If you would like to contribute, details can be found at www.waverleyexcursions.co.uk and you can donate online there. Alternatively text STEAM followed by £5, £10 or £20 to 70085 or phone 0141 243 2224 during office hours.

The appeal has reached £850,000 and the new boilers have been ordered, but there is still a long way to go.

Odiham Raft



Above: “Badder Belles” and the “Boatyard Buoys” waiting to start (Photo by Paul Drane)

A crowd of about 1000 came to Odiham on Sunday 1st September to cheer on the paddlers in this year’s Raft Race. They enjoyed excellent weather and a colourful spectacle that was at least the equal of last year.

The race last year was to mark and celebrate the 100 years since the forming of the RAF in 1918. Odiham has, of course, a close association with the RAF having been home to an airfield since 1925. It is now the base for heavy lift helicopters with 7, 18 and 27 Squadrons all operating Chinooks.

The race this year differed from the 2018 event in that it started and finished at Colt Hill, the route turning at Lodge Farm Bridge. Last year’s race started at North Warnborough Lift Bridge and finished at Colt Hill.

There were eleven entrants (seven last year) and they started in pairs at 10 minute intervals. There was some barging and water splashing at the start but the race proceeded in friendly competition. The results, with times, are as follows:

1 st	31mins 43s	Boatyard Buoys
2 nd	33mins 34s	In Deep Ship
3 rd	43mins 40s	Bladder Belles
4 th	45mins 34s	Rafty McRaftface
5 th	46mins 08s	Just Add Cash
6 th	51mins 40s	John Sinkerton
7 th	62mins 22s	Piston Broke Rafters
8 th	77mins 26s	Floaty Boaty
9 th	91mins 40s	Ladies Who Launch
10 th	100mins 05s	Good Ship Venus
DNF		Drink or Sink

Race 2019

Report by Jeff Hill

Congratulations to Boatyard Buoys for winning. Chris and Quinny came fourth last year as Blues and Twos so they were well pleased. Thanks should go to all of the other competitors for making it such an occasion including the DNFers whose raft started falling apart as they launched from the wharf.



Above. Double trouble for the “John Sinkerton” and the “Good Ship Venus”.(Photo by Paul Drane)

Rumour has it that one of the boats lost two bottles of rather nice gin at Colt Hill Wharf. One was salvaged using feet as location devices but there is a bounty for someone when the canal gets dredged.

The competitors all received medals from Lord Malmesbury and the Boatyard Buoys were awarded the winners’ cup.



The crowd of onlookers and supporters were entertained by members of the Basingstoke Canoe Club whose clubhouse is adjacent to the wharf. The Canoe Club also accompanied the rafts on the race to provide safety cover.

Additionally, there were stalls selling ice cream, pancakes, burgers, gin, beer, pickles and preserves and sand art as well as others promoting the BCA, Accessible Boating and, of course, the Basingstoke Canal Society. They reported good business and were very happy with the afternoon.

One problem last year was the parking and so this year we were ‘loaned’ the field on the opposite side of the canal to the Waterwitch.

We are grateful to Anthony and Daryll Bancroft-Cooke for this loan . Access to the field was via a single track from the bridge approach and this was marshalled superbly by the Air Cadets from RAF Odiham. Well done to them. At one point, the field was filled almost to capacity. Our thanks must go to all of the organising committee and especially to Arthur and Karen at Galleon who did a lot of the hard work. Thanks also to David Harris who was the official timekeeper and Jim Goodman who provided the commentary

Already thoughts are being voiced about 2020 and the success of this year would certainly make that more likely. We hope that everyone enjoyed themselves.

Pinkerton report by Dick King

The *John Pinkerton II* canal trip boat was launched in 2013 and is now in its 6th year of operation. August saw the busiest period of operation this year, and trips going out nearly every day, with:

20 private charters, from many local groups, covering birthday parties, a golden wedding celebration, and tour company trips from Lancashire, Yorkshire, Sussex; 15 public trips, plus a Jazz & Ale Theme trip, and a Volunteers evening cruise.

Currently we have about 70 active volunteers who give up their time to crew these trips, but there are times when we could do with just a few more to fill holiday periods when regulars are away, so we are constantly on the lookout for new volunteers to join us. Training is likely to begin in the autumn, and continue in the new year in March.

For the boat to be available we need a team of maintenance engineers to keep the boat in tip-top condition. Low water levels put additional stress on the gear, so we will be docking the boat during October to effect repairs. Again, more volunteers are very welcome.

In 2013, Dick King took over the responsibility of ensuring the boat complied with all the MCA requirements, and overseeing the maintenance schedule – on a **temporary** basis. He's still there, but a suitable volunteer would be very welcome to understudy, and eventually take over.

The recent loss of our booking manager David Horwood has caused the committee to rethink the booking system. We envisage a lead person supported by others who would handle

incoming telephone calls, and trials this summer have shown that this works well; our thanks to the various volunteers who have undertaken this job for a month at a time. However, there are 12 months in a year, so we desperately need a few more people to come forward. The requirements are a telephone line, home or mobile, able to take messages, and a little bit of available time. Training in answering queries will be given, and support is always available from our knowledgeable team, so you don't need to be a crew member.

The new web site, hopefully available in the Autumn, is anticipated to put all the booking system on-line. Prospective charterers need to see when the boat is available for hire via the web, and we will strive to make this happen for next year.

In summary, the JP trip boat is still the major source of other income for the Society, but it needs more people to get involved in Booking, Maintenance, and Crewing. Please think whether you could help next year, and contact any committee member.

A new source of donation income has arisen with some of our skippers volunteering to stand in for the regular crew of the Four Seasons trip boat *Louise* over holiday and work periods. This has given our team an insight to their manner of working, and experience with a different boat. Great fun to do, but very demanding.

If you think you might like to help maintain the boat or help with bookings, please contact Dick King (01730 264178 or jpchairman@basingstoke-canal.org.uk)

Kitty report by Ian Moore



In her third year of operations along the four mile Woking pound, the Society's 12 seater trip boat has had an outstanding record in terms of passengers safely carried; thanks should go to the team of trained and qualified volunteers who crew and maintain her. In addition thanks should go to the BCA who maintain the water levels via the Woodham back pumping scheme – this means that *Kitty* does not suffer from low water levels as badly as JP2.

This season *Kitty* has carried over 1,600 passengers, compared to just 405 in her first year of operating. They included many visitors from overseas, from east of the Urals, via the Great Plains of the US, to from down under to the roof of the world in Nepal, as well as most of the European countries and a fair sprinkling from Africa.

As we increase the number of trips and passengers we always welcome new crew

members to join the team, this year we have welcomed Bob, Richard, Niki, Ken and Mike to team *Kitty*, and we look to recruit more into the team, so please get in touch.

Kitty plays a major role in highlighting the experience of seeing the Borough along the unique ecosystem that the canal corridor creates.

This year *Kitty* 'kick started' the Woking Living Well programme of events by running 5 trips from the Wharf near the Lightbox along to the Grade 2 listed Peace Garden on Horsell Common.

We always take our friends from Belarus on special trips in July, they come to us via the Friends of Chernobyl's Children charity.

Kitty will end the season by supporting the Heritage Open Days programme, with all spaces on the 6 trips already fully booked.

Work Party

Because of Natural England's insistence that something might be disturbed by pile driving during the summer months, the Work Party has had to leave the Farnborough Road mooring job and turn their attention to installing a new water point for boats at Ash Lock.

This involved digging a trench from the existing tap on the end of the barn down to the new installation at the water's edge just west of the slipway. Easier said than done because the first 20 feet or so had to be cut through 6 inches of concrete. (Above) However, this was all done and the pipeline was laid the first weekend.

The following weekend saw the construction of the base and housing for the water point (Below).



The refurbishment of the Society's second work boat, *Fly*, is also continuing at Ash Lock. The bottom has been replaced and Kev will soon be turning his attention to the cabin which needs raising to allow it to accommodate anyone other than midgets. A door will also be fitted to allow access to the stern, where a mounting for the outboard motor will be built on.



Other activities planned include a visit by the Waterway Recovery Group's Tree Surgery gang in September to sort out the trees identified as being in need of attention in the Sheerwater woodland owned by the Society.

Work on the moorings will resume in the autumn and hopefully the Holland Moorings (named after the family bequest that has paid for them) will be open for business next year.

BCCC 40th Anniversary

FLEET CANOE CLUB?

As a result of the success of the Canoe Trials over the last two years, there has been great interest shown in canoeing especially in and around the Fleet area. We are aware of many canoes either being purchased or built from moulds in the garage, and requests have been received for the formation of a canoe club where people of all ages can get together to learn all aspects of canoeing. Already one member, who is a qualified canoe instructor, has offered his services. If any member is interested, or has a son or daughter who might be interested, would they please telephone David Millett on Fleet 7364 as soon as possible. If enough interest is shown a meeting will be called and hopefully a club can be formed with affiliation to the Canal Society. As well as learning to canoe properly the club will enable its members to meet socially and organise canoe outings on the canal and elsewhere.

This notice appeared in the August 1979 edition of the BCN and began what must be one of the most successful canoe clubs in the country. Initially based in Fleet, the Basingstoke Canal Canoe Club moved to the Canal Centre in Mytchett in 2003. Several of its members have represented the UK in international competitions, including Helen Reeves who won a Bronze Medal at the 2004

Olympic Games in Athens.

As well as David Millett's initiative, other Canal Society support came from Dick Abbott who became the Club's first Secretary. Dick was also one of the first Directors of the boat company that ran the *John Pinkerton*. Great to see Dick in the photos of the Club's 40th Anniversary event on 20th July.

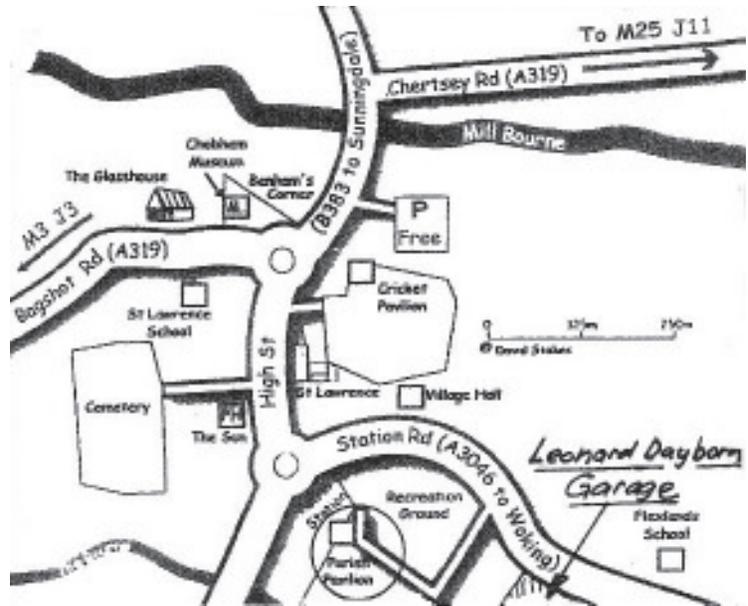


Above: Dick Abbott and his daughter Gerry enjoying a paddle on the Basingstoke again at the BCCC's 40th Anniversary celebrations at the Canal Centre in July.

Events

Winter 2019/2020 Chobham Talks programme.

As usual meetings will be held in the Parish Pavilion, Recreation Ground, Chobham, near Woking. GU24 8AJ. Talks will be held on the third Wednesday of each month from October until April. Talks will frequently cover topics related to canals and boats but some will be of a more general interest, particularly to local residents.



October 16th.

Fiona Shipp, Canal Manager:

Management of the Basingstoke Canal.

Fiona will describe the day to day operations of the Basingstoke Canal Authority and how they work with neighbouring local authorities, volunteers and the Canal Society to manage the Canal.

20th November.

Rosie Jordan:

Surrey Search and Rescue.

Surrey Search and Rescue is a professional but unpaid team who are on call to assist Surrey Police 24hours a day to search for and rescue vulnerable missing persons. They search on land and in or near water, sometimes from their boats and from the air with drones.

18th December.

Film evening. From the BCS archives.

Archive film about one of the last commercial voyages from the Wey Navigation into London's Royal Docks. The film was made in the 1970's by Tony Harmsworth but has recently had a commentary added and now presents a vivid picture of life and work on the Wey navigation and the River Thames at this time.

15th January.

Lester Hillman:

When London had an inland Port.

The arrival of the completed Regent's Canal with a huge terminal at City Basin was a game changer for London. Hear about the politics, engineering marvels, commerce and the crime linked to this project. What of the future of the City Basin?

Events

19th February.

Ms Jo Gosney:

100 years under the flightpath.

Jo Gosney's talk is about Farnborough and the impact of aviation on the people, workplace and economy for over a century. Farnborough is renowned for its International Air Show but its inhabitants know a different history. At the beginning of the 20th century the army moved its Balloon Factory to Government land in South West Farnborough. This marked the beginning of an era of experimental flying and research that took Britain to the forefront of aviation development. With the evolution of flight the town expanded and developed rapidly. This talk charts that progression with photographs of various aspects of daily life in the shadow of the airfield.

18th March.

Alan Norris:

Woking's Railway.

Alan describes the coming of the railway to Woking in the 1830's and how the London Necropolis Company's cemetery at Brookwood affected the town's development. The talk will also include the Brookwood Cemetery railway and the Bisley Tramway.

15th April.

Tim Knox:

The Electric Boat Association.

Tim is a committee member of the Electric Boat Association and owner of Mothership Marine. He will tell us about the association, the advantages of electric propulsion for canal boats and the current state of electric boat technology.

Dieter's books

Dieter Jebens, for reasons best known to himself, appointed me as his literary executor, which basically gave me the job of sorting out and disposing of his collection of books.

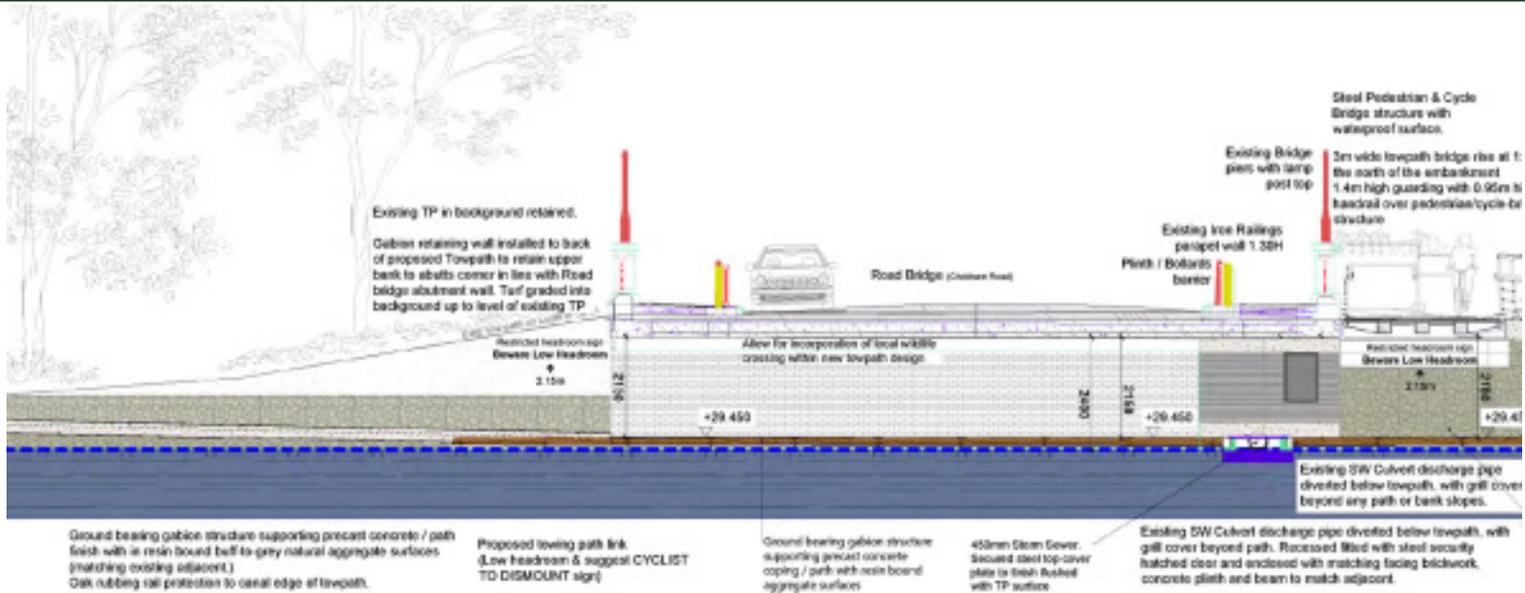
Apart from directing me to offer his 150 books about the Thames to a bookshop in Henley (who didn't want them), I had no other instructions. So the Thames books are going to the River Thames Society and I am left with a fair number of canal books, which I propose to bring to the Chobham meetings.

Many of these are the David and Charles series, including some of Paul Vine's well known titles, but there are many others.

When I have got shot of the Thames books, I will try to make a list of the others, so if there is a title or subject that you are looking for, drop me a line. I am really looking to see them go to a good home rather than aiming make large sums of money, although anything I raise will go to the Society.

Roger Cansdale

New footbridge for Woking



The towpath changes from one side of the canal to the other at Chobham Road Bridge in Woking, which means that walkers and cyclists have to go over the bridge and cross a busy road. A new footbridge was planned to have been installed last winter to allow them to avoid this. However, things slipped and this will now be done during the coming winter.

Coupled with this, the design has been modified. The towpath from the east will still be extended under the present road bridge and will loop back and up, roving bridge-style, to take walkers and cyclists across the canal on the new footbridge to the towpath to the west. The original design was planned to be light with 2 tall pylons supporting the U-shaped bit of the walkway via cables. Further analysis revealed that high winds could cause unsafe vibration motion that meant everything had to be beefed up. This removed the advantage of the pylon design, so a more conventional layout is now planned.

From the Canal Society's point of view the main concern is having adequate room for wide-beam boats, such as dredgers or this hotel

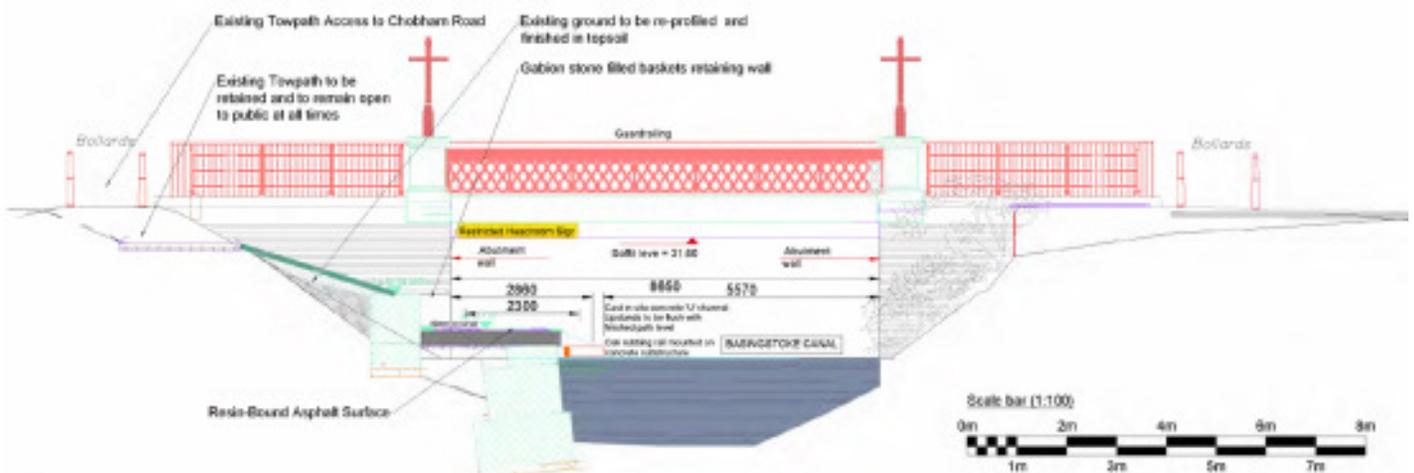
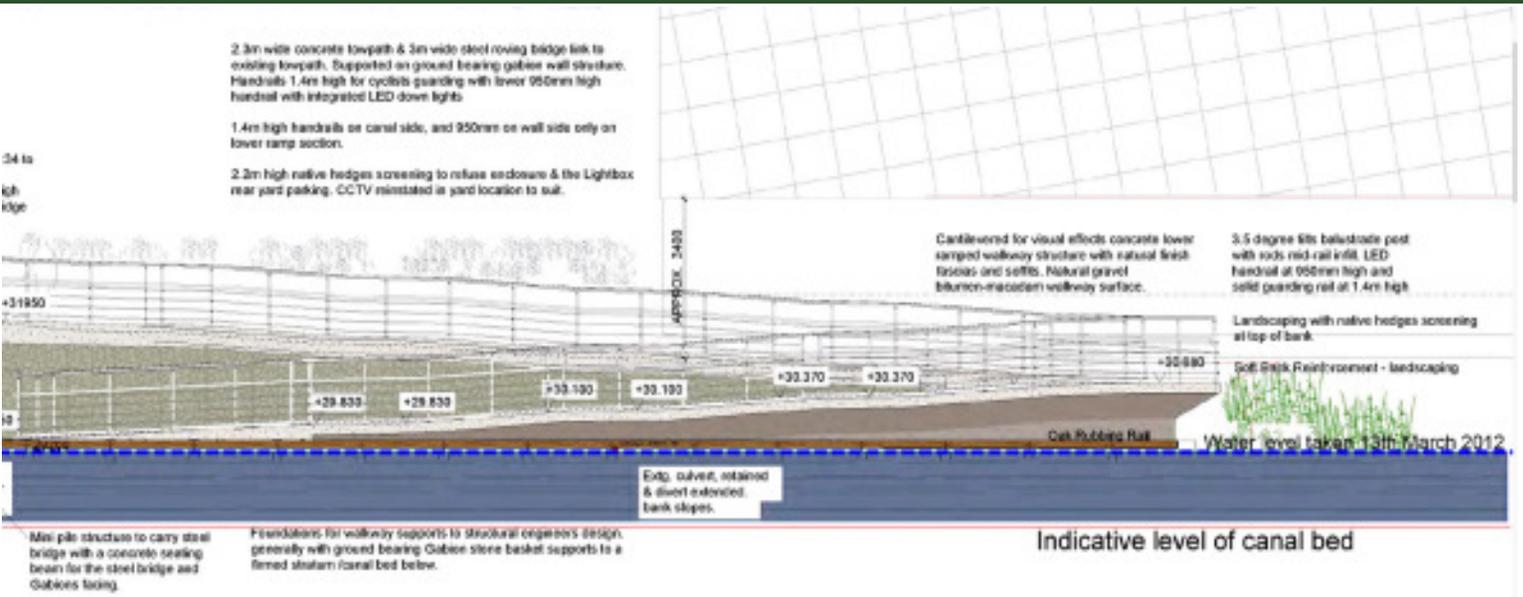


boat that came up earlier this year, to pass through, but the plans seem to show adequate space. Some concern has also been expressed about the bank next to Kingswood Court on the north bank just east of the road bridge, where building has left a narrow bank that has already had one collapse and could be vulnerable to erosion.

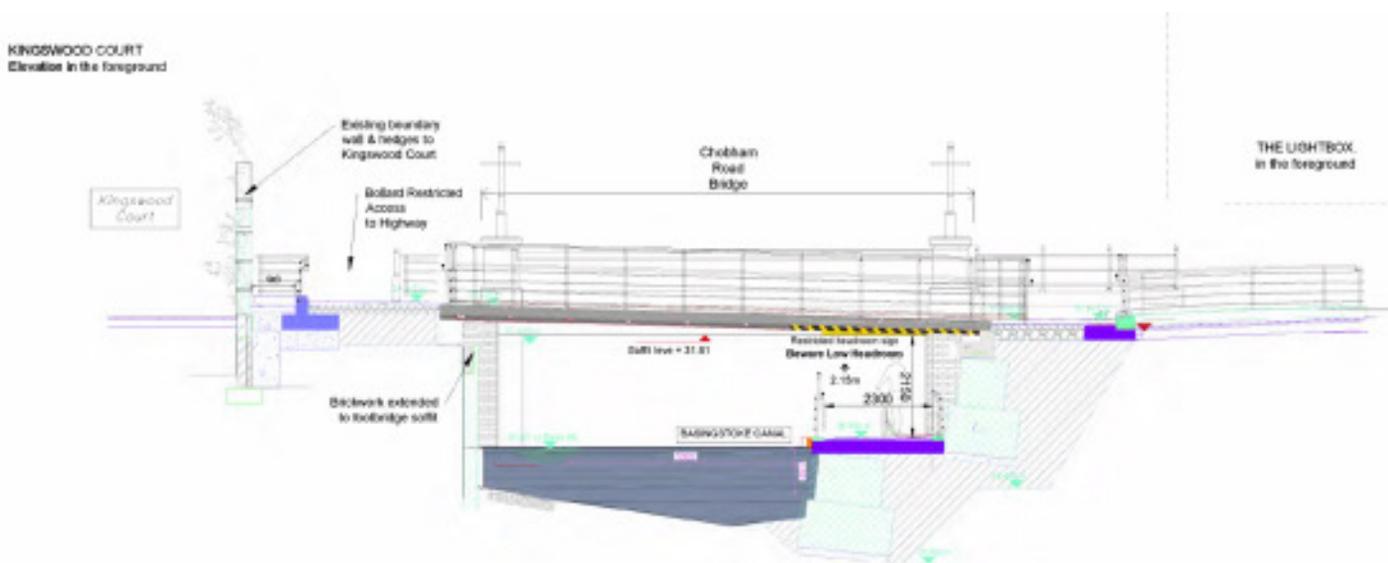
Anyway, the project is being closely monitored by the BCA.

The plans shown here, rather poorly, I'm afraid, can be viewed much better on the Woking BC website. Go to <https://caps.woking.gov.uk/online-applications/> and then search for PLAN/2019/0729.

Latest proposals



EASTERN ELEVATION D-D: Proposed Towpath Eastern Link



WESTERN ELEVATION A-A: Chobham Road footbridge

Mikron theatre



A good sized audience greatly enjoyed the Mikron Theatre's annual performance on a beautiful evening at the Water Witch.

“All Hands on Deck” was the usual quirky and amusing Mikron take on a bit of social history, in this case the introduction of women into

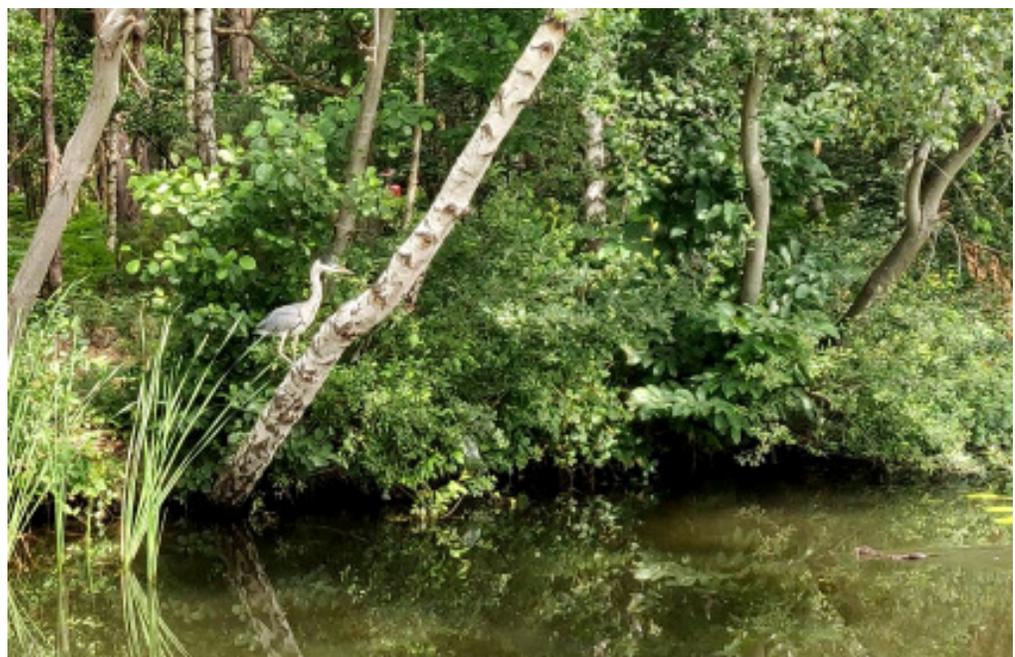
the Royal Navy.

A big thank-you to the four cast members, who afterwards had to drive all the way back to their boat *Tyseley*, which was moored somewhere up the Grand Union.

Another otter?

Peter Holland and his son Philip saw this animal swimming in the canal in Woking recently. It looked a bit big for a mink, but Philip's photo hasn't got enough definition to make a positive otter identification and there are known to be mink in the area.

Probably not an otter this time but a great photo nevertheless.



A day on the Wey



Having hosted a party from the Wey & Arun Trust on the *JP II* earlier in the year, we paid a return visit in July to sample their electric-powered trip boat *Wiggonholt* and to see how they back-pump their locks.

We enjoyed a very pleasant morning on the Wey starting from the base at Loxwood behind the Onslow Arms pub. We greatly admired and envied their little centre and shop and agreed that something like it would be very nice to have at Odiham.

It was interesting to compare *Wiggonholt* with the *JP II*. They are very similar in size and both have open space for a few passengers in the bow. The electric propulsion is obviously very quiet, but some remarked that they quite liked the gentle purr of the *JP II*'s diesel engine.

The major difference between the boats is the absence of a bar or means for brewing tea and coffee on *Wiggonholt*. We gathered that this lack was due to influence from the owners of the Onslow Arms, on whose land the Trust's shop resides, but it did make the boat feel a bit austere. However, the design may also have been influenced by the inclusion of a wheelchair lift, which the *JP II* lacks.

We also thought that some traditional canal paint work would go down well with customers even if it wasn't traditional on the Wey (it wasn't on the Basingstoke either). We did like the tables in the cabin though!

It all also brought back memories of our restoration years and the voyages of exploration that we had in the old *JP* as more of the canal opened up each year.

Water supply report, 1825

The Report of Mr. GILES, Civil Engineer, to the PROPRIETORS of the BASINGSTOKE CANAL., at their Meeting, held at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, in London, on the 7th of November, 1825.

“ GENTLEMEN,

“ From the Examination which I have made of the Basingstoke Canal, I am well persuaded that the present supply of water is not only adequate to the present Trade, but also to a much more extensive Trade; but this supply is not properly preserved.

“ The Summit Pounds of the Canal are, in dry seasons, sometimes sunk 12 to 18 inches under top-water level. This is occasioned principally by Leakage through the tops of the Banks, as well as through the Lock-Gates, and by some partial Leakage in the bottom of the Canal, at Maplederwell.

“ The Summit Pounds have been made to contain 5 feet 6 inches depth of water, and the Lock Pounds 4 feet 6 inches . -The latter Pounds are also partially leaky, but not much so.

“ The tops of the banks must therefore be opened and re-puddled where necessary. The Lock-Gates must be repaired, and the partial leakage at Maplederwell stopped by lining. The Canal must also be cleaned out.

“ These works will securely retain the present supply of water. A further provision of about 8000 Locks of Water, can also be obtained by Reservoirs on the Commons near Farnham.

“ The Tunnel at Grewell has been made 15 feet wide at the east end, and 14 feet 1 inch at the west end; but the width of 14 feet 1 inch only extends about seventy yards into the Tunnel. The depth of water through the Tunnel is uniform, and this depth will be nearly seven feet when the Summit Pound is kept up. The western end of the Tunnel, for the above length of seventy yards, can be easily enlarged, if necessary, for the Barge Trade; but will never be required for the Small Boat Trade, nor would it be so for the Basingstoke Barges, if they had been built within proper dimensions, similar to the new Barges at Guildford. The Small Boats, however, are now found to answer the general purposes of Canal conveyance so well, that I hope to see these altogether finally adopted.

“ Two or three of the Bridges are built too low, but those must be raised. The other Bridges are generally of ample dimensions, and in substantial repair, except that they want Pointing, &c. which must of course be also attended to.

“ The Towing-Paths are good throughout.

“ When the above Works are completed, the Basingstoke Canal will afford an ample accommodation for any reasonable extent of Trade between London and Bristol; and I am decidedly of opinion, that the Trade and other means which this Canal possesses, will fully enable the Company to execute those Works within the period that must be occupied in the construction of the intended Berks and Hants Junction Canal.

“ I have the Honor to be,

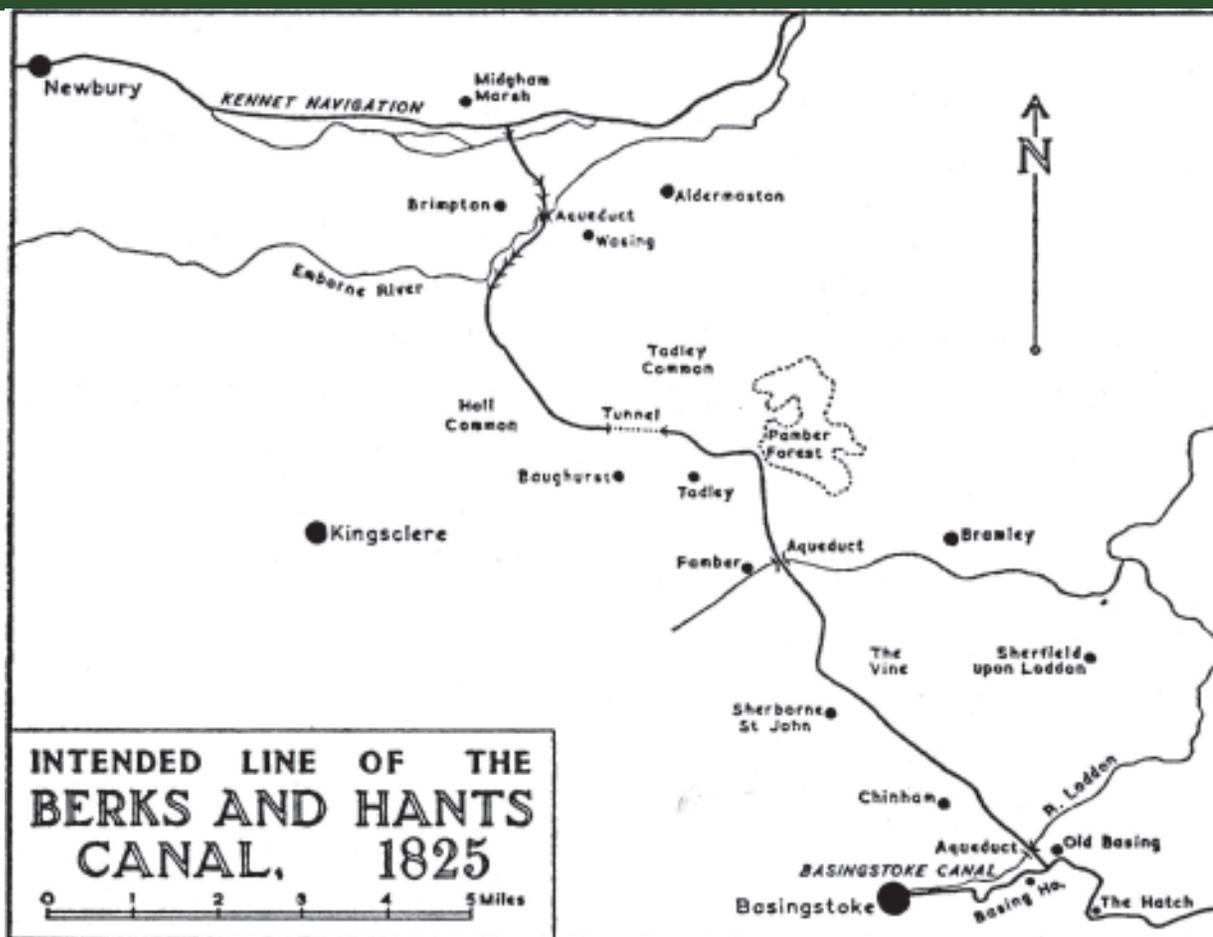
“ GENTLEMEN,

“ Your very faithful Servant,

(Signed)

“ FRANCIS GILES.”

Francis Giles



From Paul Vine's "London's lost route to Basingstoke"

The author of the report on the left, Francis Giles, was appointed 4 years later as consultant engineer to the Basingstoke Canal Company. He had previously assisted John Rennie on numerous surveys including the disastrous Portsmouth & Arundel Canal and the Great Imperial Ship Canal of 1825 which never got built.

His water supply survey was done at the time when various schemes were being hatched to improve the Basingstoke's commercial chances by linking it to, amongst other waterways, the Kennet & Avon Canal, which had opened in 1810. Giles proposed a route from Old Basing to Midgham, a couple of miles west of Aldermaston.

Although the link was only 13 miles long, they

were far from flat miles. The canal would have had half its length in deep cuttings or embankments and its notable features included a half mile tunnel under Tadley, an inclined plane at Sherborne, and a dozen locks. There were also two aqueducts and 38 bridges and water was to be pumped up from the Enborne River about a mile away either by wind or steam power. No surprise that it never got built.

Giles then turned his attention to railways and became engineer of the Newcastle & Carlisle Railway in 1830 and the Southampton Railway four years later, a post from which he was forced to resign in 1837 on the grounds of mismanagement.

Perhaps we shouldn't place too much faith in his 1825 water supply report either.

Committee



Philip Riley became **Chairman** in the spring of 2011 having previously been Vice-Chairman. He joined the Society in 1978 and worked on the Deepcut and St Johns locks. He came onto the

Committee in 1982 taking on the post of Secretary which he held for 21 years. Phil has a legal background which has proved very useful on occasions. He lives near the canal at Broad Oak.

Martin Leech joined the Committee in 2010 and became **Vice-Chairman** in 2011. At the same time he took on the running of the Society's Work Party. He has been heavily involved in the Water

Resources Group and the first re-branding exercise. He instigated the Society's email bulletin and organised our Data Protection.



Guy Faller joined the Committee in 2013, taking on the **Treasurer's** job soon after joining the Society. He is a **C h a r t e r e d** Accountant. He lives next to the canal near Hermitage Bridge.

He speaks Norwegian, having lived there for 9 years.

Celia Griffiths lives in Farnborough. Until recently a full time insurance broker, now semi retired. Celia has taken on a secretarial role for the Society as well as helping out with fund

raising and marketing. Celia also enjoys travelling, live music and the garden.



Ken Sankey joined the Committee just over a year ago and has led an ongoing drive to restructure the Society by introducing sub-groups to run its affairs. He has also,

via the Tuesday work group, been remarkably successful in recruiting people to man them.

Neil Sutherland says he's the newbie on the canal! Recently retired after 30 years as an accountant and business consultant, and has lived in the area for 40 years, walking and cycling the canal with children and now grandchild. As Ken's right hand man, he is very involved with reshaping the Society and revamping the website.



Who's who

Dick King joined the Committee in 2013, having taken on the job of Boat Company Chairman the previous year. He also reluctantly does maintenance of the boat and bookings, both, hopefully, on a temporary basis! Volunteers are urgently sought for both.



Kevin Redway has been involved with the Society's work parties for many years and plays an invaluable part in the logistics of moving plant and equipment thanks to his lorry. He is co-owner of the dredger *Belfast Girl* and received the Robin Higgs Award for his efforts in 2008. He joined the Committee in 2013.



Roger Cansdale joined the Society in the 1970s. He became the Boat Company Chairman in 1985, joining the Society's Committee at the same time. He resigned the post in 1994, but became the Newsletter Editor in 1998. He regularly gives talks about the canal on behalf of the Society.



Janet Buckley has the main co-ordinator of Work Party activities for about 5 years. Once an IT specialist, she is now a qualified plumber, which comes in handy when they are installing new water

points. She lives in Church Crookham.

Ian Moore joined the Society in the 1990's and has been a Skipper of both *John Pinkerton* trip boats for over 20 years. Ian has been running the Woking based trip boat *Kitty* since 2017 and became a Committee member in 2019. His family roots from both sides of the family are either Merchant Navy or watermen on the Rivers Weaver and Mersey. He works in the oil and gas industry.



Jeff Hill joined the Canal Society in 2012 soon after retiring from teaching and came onto the Committee a year later. He helps organise the Work Party and has also been involved in the organisation of this year's Odiham Raft Race.

Obituary - Robin Higgs



Phil Riley with Robin enjoying a last nostalgic go at the helm of the old John Pinkerton.

In June we received the very sad news that our Vice President, and a former Chairman of the Canal Society, Robin Higgs, had died.

It is difficult to over-estimate the immense contribution that Robin made to the Basingstoke Canal. He was involved in the early stages of the successful campaign to persuade Surrey and Hampshire County Councils to take the canal into public ownership. He then led the Society's involvement in the hugely successful partnership with the County Councils which resulted in the restoration of the canal and its re-opening in 1991 by the Duke of Kent.

In the late 1970s Robin put forward a proposal to acquire a passenger trip boat which resulted in the establishment of the John Pinkerton operation, a very popular activity which continues to flourish today. Robin was extremely successful in putting together and

leading a team which was totally committed to supporting and developing the canal. He recruited me as Secretary in the late 1970s and I worked closely with him, over many years, on the many issues that we faced then and which we continue to face today. He had a great ability to work with people and to secure their respect. If we had a problem, he always had a helpful suggestion on how to fix it and his wide range of contacts (including many in the fields of railway preservation and industrial archaeology) were second to none.

I will miss Robin for his friendship, his positive approach to life and his good humour. He set an example to us all and we owe it to him to ensure that the canal continues to provide pleasure and enjoyment to the communities that it serves. He would have wished for nothing less.

Phillip Riley

Obituary - Roger Thomas



Roger Thomas and Frank Jones using muscle power and a Tirfor winch to move the old Harmsworth boat Glendower near Arthur's Bridge in 1977. When this part of the canal was finally restored, the boat was deemed to be beyond repair and it was broken up.

Also very sad to hear that Roger Thomas had passed away in July whilst on holiday in Canada.

His name may not mean anything to anyone who has been a member of the Society for less than about 30 years, but in the early restoration years, he was a major player.

He worked for County Commercial Cars of Fleet who built huge tractors on the site where Waitrose is now. He got involved with the dredging operation early on and was in charge of bankside operations and silt disposal.

His fellow worker Roger Caesley recalls that his physical strength was very useful at times, particularly on the railway, heaving mud trucks back onto the track. Roger T was always very active and the source of many good ideas and was by nature an optimist. They had many entertaining evenings in the New Inn in

Odiham after a long and muddy Saturday working on the canal. The two Rogers were also responsible for the surreptitious acquisition of a dragline from a back garden in Fleet.

When Frank Jones took on the job of managing the Youth Training Schemes at Deepcut, Roger Thomas stepped in as Work Party Organiser for a year or two before handing over to Mike Fellows.

County Commercial Cars eventually moved to Knighton in Wales and Roger went with them, but he retained an interest in the Basingstoke and came back for occasions such as the arrival of *Perseverance* in Fleet in 1990 and its final departure three years later.

Our condolences go to Alison and Roger's many friends.

BCS Membership

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY REPORT

Dear Member,

The most significant thing to report this month is that you have a new Membership Secretary! After 15 years of sterling work, for which she was deservedly awarded the Robin Higgs Award earlier this year, Doreen has handed over the reins. For my part I have been a member of the Society since 1991, mainly crewing/skippering the John Pinkerton(s). One element of this new role is to oversee the transition to an online membership system. Watch this space!

As ever, of course, a warm welcome to the following members who have joined us in the last few months:

Chris Bale of Fleet

Timothy Harris of Woking

Paul Hampshire of Farnborough

Nicola Williams of Basingstoke

Robert Cosgrove of Basingstoke

Julie March of Woking

Phil Knott of Ash

Jeff & Jess Groom of Farnborough

Steve & Diane Humby of Hamble

Eric Bradshaw of Camberley

Christine Cattini of Farnborough

Mike Hill of Fleet

Brian Reader of Woking

Stuart Green of Blackwater

Kevin Pizzey of Farnborough

Andrew Levey of Farnborough

Nicoleta Cotet of Woking

John & Deborah Broughall of Ash Vale

Kind Regards

Andy Beale

New Membership Secretary!

New Company Secretary

The Society has a new Secretary. Mrs Celia Griffiths has taken over the post from Terry Inskip and has also taken on the job of looking after the Society's various insurance matters. This has been a bit of a millstone round the neck of previous incumbants, but Celia working in the insurance industry and was happy to take it on.

A newcomer to the Society, Celia was looking for something to do after retirement and says how pleased she has been to join the Committee, what a worthwhile cause the Canal is and what a great bunch of people volunteer to keep it running . She also says that she

would welcome any enquires however small or large and will always find a home for them.

Even better from my point of view is that she is also taking the minutes our Committee meetings, which I have been doing for longer than I care to remember.

Meanwhile, Terry Inskip finally seems to be recovering from a mysterious ailment that has laid her low for nearly 3 months. The cause remains unclear but a dose of steroids recently seems to have worked wonders, so we wish her well for a full recovery.

BCS information



The Bulletin is now up to Issue 41.

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

To join the Society, please contact the Membership Secretary, Andy Beale, whose contact details are below.

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Odiham Raft Race



Above: The “Badder Belles” celebrating their very well deserved third place in the Odiham Raft Race after being edged out by “In Deep Ship” (*below*)

