



# BASINGSTOKE CANAL BULLETIN

No. 13 May 2012

## BW Chairman Tony Hales visits the Basingstoke

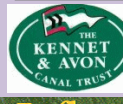


We are delighted that Tony Hales, British Waterways Chairman, and Chairman of the Trustees of the Canal and River Trust (CRT) visited the Basingstoke Canal recently. Following a trip to St John's Castle on the [John Pinkerton](#)

(above, with Society chairman Philip Riley and councillors from Surrey and Hampshire), he attended the Society's Annual General Meeting, where he spoke about progress made towards the CRT launch, and the Charity's priorities. For a full account of the meeting, see the [Summer edition of the Basingstoke Canal News](#), when this is published.

## Learn about the Canal by clicking these links

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- [Basingstoke Canal Wiki Page](#)
- [Basingstoke Canal Authority \(BCA\) Website](#)
- [Map of the Basingstoke Canal](#)
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Join us at the

## Canalside Jubilee 2012

**Sat 2nd June ,Sun 3rd June ,Mon 4th June 2012 12.00pm – 5.00pm  
at [Frimley Lodge Park](#)**

This 3-day family event is being organised by Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society to celebrate the **21 years since the Royal re-opening of the Basingstoke Canal** and Her Majesty the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, with as many boats as are able to get there, one way or the other, by

**Live Entertainment**

water or by road. In addition to the entertainment on stage in the main arena, there will be a variety of stands and stalls, a craft marquee, fun activities for children, boat trips and a beer tent. Click [here](#) for a [full programme of events](#), and for general, boaters and stallholders information, please visit the [Canalside Jubilee website](#). The show will run from **12.00 pm to 5.00 pm each day. Entry is FREE.**



**Boat Trips**

The site, which is adjacent to the Canal, provides ample parking, toilets and a permanent café in the pavilion, plus further refreshments in the outside area. There is accommodation for camping and caravans and a permanent miniature railway.

## Do come along and support this event

Help is urgently needed – if you are able to lend a hand in any way please contact Verna Smith at [events@basingstoke-canal.org.uk](mailto:events@basingstoke-canal.org.uk) or on 01252 517622.

**Click here to join the Surrey and Hants Canal Society**

## Water Situation again

Well, having written at length in the [last bulletin](#) about shortages of water following a period of such dry weather, we then have the wettest drought on record. You may well have noticed that the Canal water levels have been high, but that is hardly surprising. The River Wey has been in flood and boat movements were temporarily curtailed. It is ironic that a number of outdoor events in the South East, including the Surrey Heath Show at Frimley Lodge Park have had to be cancelled because of waterlogged sites. We were fearful that the same fate would become our [Canalside Jubilee](#) event at the Park (see page 1), however with the change of weather to the opposite extreme, that now seems less likely.



However despite all that rain, the problem of shortage of water, arising from severely depressed aquifers is, as the Environment Agency continues to tell us, fundamentally unchanged, and the Canal will continue to be managed accordingly. As already indicated, the Deepcut flight will not be filled for some while, though there is a remote possibility it may be reopened in the Autumn. Navigation notices from the [Basingstoke Canal Authority](#) will be issued from time to time to report the latest situation. Since the Brookwood Flight will also remain closed for the time being, boaters coming up the Canal for the [Jubilee](#) event will need to moor at Brookwood Country Park and will be provided with transport to Frimley Lodge Park.

## All change at the Basingstoke Canal Authority



Ian Brown the Canal Director (*right*) has announced his retirement, and will be leaving the BCA at the end of June. The Society wishes him all the best for the future.



Hampshire County Council (of which BCA staff are employees) has decided that the Canal Director's post will be split in two, one being a "strategic" role, and the other "operational". We would like to welcome Phil Allen (*left*), who has accepted the former position, and will be a HCC Countryside Department team leader having responsibility for the Canal, the [Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership](#) (a "sister" organisation to the BCA), and also other sites and partnerships across the county. Phil, an HCC countryside manager for 23 years, has already taken the opportunity to visit the Canal and to become familiar

with the key issues, and is working closely with Ian on a handover. The Canal operations manager post has yet to be filled, though it has now been approved for external recruitment. Since the Society will be working closely with this individual, it has requested HCC if it can be involved in the recruiting process.

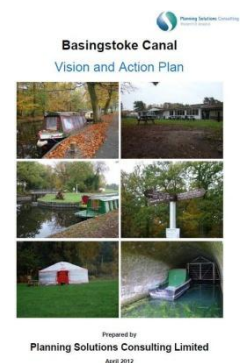
We would also like to welcome another newcomer to the Canal, James Taylor (*right*), who is a Senior Countryside Management Officer at Surrey County Council. James replaces Rod Edbrooke, and is one of Phil Allen's opposite numbers in Surrey. James also has a steep learning curve ahead of him, having among other things taken on the role of "client" for the remedial works being done by the term contractor at Deepcut.



## Canal Questionnaire

As reported in the [Spring edition of the Basingstoke Canal News](#), Surrey and Hampshire County Councils have commissioned a consultancy company to create a "vision" for the Canal, which will deliver financial sustainability, propose some governance alternatives, and maximise its recreational and tourist value among other things. The primary purpose of the study is to support an application for significant funding through the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Society has had sight of a first draft report and together with the local IWA branch, has produced a detailed set of comments.

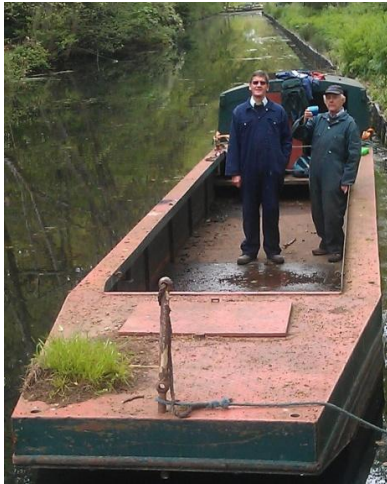
The consultants (Planning Solutions Ltd) have as part of this brief issued a [questionnaire](#) to be filled in by users of the Canal. **We strongly urge you to complete this questionnaire if you are local to the Canal, or even if you are not but have visited it in the recent past.** This will help the consultants to build a picture of what visitors to the Canal have enjoyed, what you expect from it, and no less importantly, how much you value it.





## Society Work Parties

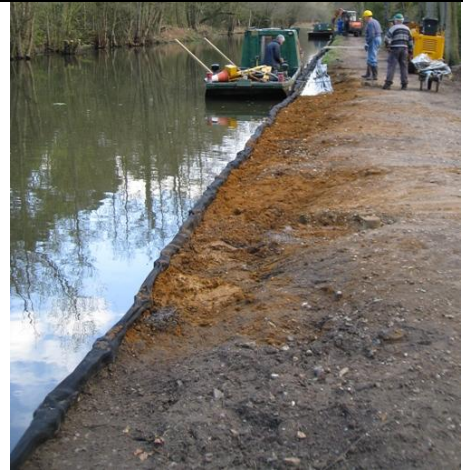
The regular Society work party continues to install soft bank protection along the towpath bordering the Frimley Lodge Park (right). The process was described briefly in the [last bulletin](#). It is a slow job, but we have developed some sort of rhythm and hope to complete the section from the Guildford Road Bridge to the existing landing stage near the model railway club in the next couple of months. As can be seen, the amount of bank erosion that has occurred, and therefore the width of the repair, is quite significant in some places.



The River Wey Navigation management have very kindly donated to the Society a workboat which is surplus to their requirements. The boat, called *Fly 2* (left), increases our “fleet” of workboats to two (the other being the *Alan Flight*, which can just be seen above right).

*Fly 2* was moved off the Navigation by a work party expeditionary force in the last couple of weeks, and is now moored above Lock 11, pending a decision on what work needs doing to it.

Members of the [John Pinkerton trip boat](#) crew, led by Duncan Paine (right), have also been out recently to build a temporary extension to the landing stage outside the Odiham barn where the boat is usually moored. This will provide safer access to the boat at the pub garden end.



The next regular work party take place at **Frimley Lodge Park** on **June 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup>**. If you would like to know more about what we do and maybe come along and join us, then please contact Janet Buckley at [workparty@basinstoke-canal.org.uk](mailto:workparty@basinstoke-canal.org.uk) or on 01252 620787.

## Other activity on the Canal

At the time of writing, the term contractor (Dyer and Butler) has nearly completed the scheduled replacement of lock gates along the Woodham and St John’s flights (locks 1, 4, 5, 6 and 9), and is in the process of replacing gates at selected Deepcut locks, including 17, 22 and 26. We were given to believe that the Woking section of the canal would be closed for most of May though this in fact wasn’t the case – although the removal of the wooden bridge at Brewery Road did result in an unexpected 8-day closure. It is indeed unfortunate that closures to the navigation cannot be more predictable, and boaters have no choice but to check with the Canal Centre (on 01252-370073) before planning any trips.

A list of “snags” in the Deepcut works has been put together by the BCA and is to be presented to the contractor. The protruding concrete shelves at Locks 19 (right) and 25 (far right) have been modified, but their potential to cause damage to boats is still a concern. We hope that these will be given further attention so that even the slightest risk of boat damage is eliminated.



## John Pinkerton News

### *Contract for new JP signed*

We are pleased to announce that a contract for the formal design of a new John Pinkerton trip boat (the so-called "JP2") was recently signed. We have chosen to go with the [Lambon Boats partnership](#), based in Droitwich, which we believe to be a professional organisation that produces boats of a high standard. We expect that an MCA\*-approved design will be available around late July, at which point a build contract will be entered into. Assuming all goes well, delivery of the new boat will take place in early 2013, and it will be ready for next season. There will be regular updates on the progress of the JP2, so watch this space. Also, see the [Summer edition of the Basingstoke Canal News](#) for more about the new boat.

A lot of work has gone on behind the scenes to get to this point. Thanks must go to the "JP2 team", namely Pete Phillips, Nigel Bird and John Abbott, who have spent many hours researching an appropriate specification for this boat. Also, having a lawyer in the Society is a distinct bonus, and we acknowledge Chairman Philip Riley's efforts in drawing up the contract materials.

*\*The Maritime and Coastguard Agency is the regulator for public passenger boats - Ed*

### *Volunteer Booking Managers urgently needed*

At the end of the year we will be losing our Booking Managers Marion and Hugh Gough who will be retiring after about twenty years. **If you think you would be interested in taking over the position of taking enquiries and bookings for the John Pinkerton could you please [email Peter Wright](#)**, or call him on 01344-772461 to have a chat. We run, on average, about 170 cruises a year. This usually translates into around £30,000 of profit that will be paid direct to the Canal Society, forming approximately two thirds of its income. This money goes towards making improvements to the Canal.

## Other News

### *Canal "Open Access" update*

An article recently appeared in the waterways press indicating that the "Open Access" scheme described in the [last bulletin](#) (which is a series of measures allowing boaters onto the Canal without booking and unaccompanied by a ranger) is already in operation. This is to make it clear this is **not** the case. Boaters visiting the Basingstoke Canal should continue to make arrangements with the Canal Centre (01252-370073) as usual, and access will continue to be restricted to the times given on the [BCA website](#). That is not to say that efforts are not being made to implement this scheme, but it won't be easy. An announcement will be made when there is more to report.

### *Lock Model at the Canal Centre now working*

As reported in the [last bulletin](#), a volunteer to repair the lock model at the Canal Centre had been identified. I am pleased to say that Keith Pratt has now got the model working again.

## Forthcoming events

Here are some dates for your diary:

- [Canalside Jubilee event](#)  
Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> June to Monday 4<sup>th</sup> June, 12.00 – 5.00pm, at **Frimley Lodge Park** (see page 1).
- [Mikron Theatre Company](#)  
Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 7.30pm at **Fleet Football Club Clubroom, Calthorpe Park, Crookham Road, Fleet** – "Can you keep a secret?" – A story of the rise and fall of the Yorkshire Luddites. For more details, please refer to the [latest BCN](#).

## Contributions to the Bulletin are welcome..

**Short articles about the Canal with accompanying photos if possible would be appreciated.** Please send them to the [bulletin editor](#). The copy date for bulletin articles is the **last day of each month**. Publication (if it occurs) will normally take place towards the end of the following month.

Please also let the [bulletin editor](#) know if there are any articles or information you would like to appear in future bulletins.

*Published by the Surrey & Hampshire Canal Society Ltd*

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*The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Society.*

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