



Basingstoke Canal Bulletin

No. 20 SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2013

Visiting Boaters Express Their Approval

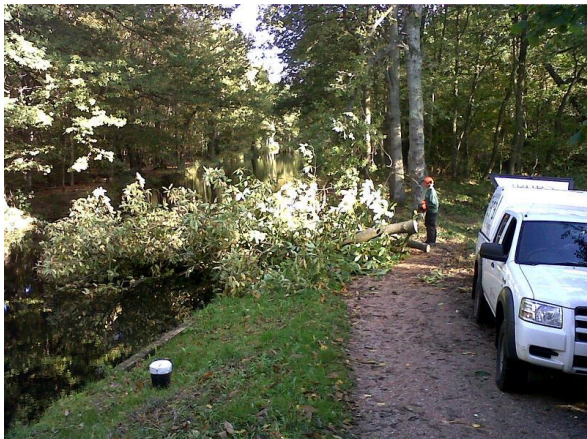


The Society and the BCA have been heartened by the number of boats that have visited the Canal this year, following the opening of the Deepcut flight in the Spring. What's more, some of these visitors, including writers from some national magazines, have taken the time to record their positive experiences, and [we have collected together these articles on the website](#). We would like to thank *Canal Boat* and *Waterways World* and the respective authors for allowing us to reproduce their articles.

In what has been a positive year in many ways for the Canal, sufficient rain and careful water management has made it possible to keep the navigation open throughout the entire season, which has happened only once since it was re-opened over 20 years ago.

Canal Closures

The planned restoration of the [damaged Malthouse bridge in Church Crookham](#) has now started, and the Canal will be closed there throughout November, and maybe longer, for this purpose. However, because of the recent storms affecting much of the South of England, there are many other places where the navigation has been prevented because of trees across the water. The BCA rangers have been



kept busy clearing a dozen or so blockages to the navigation, mostly in Surrey, which have occurred at Sheerwater, Brookwood, at several locations along the Deepcut flight, Mytchett, and near the Swan pub in Ash Vale. In total, they are working their way through more than 70 reported issues along the length of the Canal, which also include leaning trees, unsafe hanging branches and towpath blockages. There are a couple of incidents of properties adjacent to the Canal being damaged, including a conservatory in Woodham, and a deck in Brookwood (*above right*). Many of the issues were raised by the Society lengthsman, and it is in situations like this where the [lengthsman scheme](#) comes into its own, providing vital assistance to the BCA.

Update: The BCA have now stated that all significant blockages due to fallen trees have been removed.

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John Pinkerton News



John Pinkerton Canal Cruises

A report from JPCC Chairman, Dick King:

As the 2013 cruising season closes, I think we can be proud that the first year of operation for the JPCC has proved to be so successful, with profits for the Society anticipated to equal or better last year's results. It has been a long season, running from an early Easter right through to Halloween. The introduction of 'Theme' trips has added interest for all ages; Pirates and Halloween cruises for the youngsters, and Jazz & Ale cruises for the adults. So for 2014 we are planning a few more of these. They do require a bit more organising, and if you would like to help spread the load a bit, do contact us (see below). Thanks go to all concerned in the chain of operation; the Booking Manager, the members of maintenance teams who keep the boat ready to sail by doing the regular servicing, and weekly 'watering & pumpout', the skippers and crew for their continued unstinting support, and of course the publicity and financial teams. Training has taken up a fair amount of extra time this year, learning the different systems and methods of working, and we are indebted to the superb team of trainers, who have quietly instructed and encouraged everyone to reach a high standard. All are volunteer members of the Society, and we appreciate the time they give so that the Canal can benefit. Over the year we have gained some new faces, whilst sadly, a few old faces have retired. So we are continually on the lookout for people who would like to help with the boat in any capacity; if you are interested, or want more information, please contact me, Dick King, on 01730 264178 or by email: (jpchairman@basingstoke-canal.org.uk).



The boat is now out of service for its winter maintenance, which will incorporate many of the suggestions for improvements from the crew, and complete any outstanding MCA requirements, enabling JPCC to achieve full passenger certification. We look forward to the 2014 season – perhaps you know a group or friends who would like to enjoy a celebratory cruise on the Basingstoke Canal. Please keep talking about the John Pinkerton!

Dick King

Work Party Activities

The regular Society work party have continued work on refurbishing the barn at Colt Hill, Odiham, which is the base for the [John Pinkerton trip boat operation](#). The works on the building itself have now been completed. [To see what has been done on the barn](#), including photos of how it looked before the workparty got started, please [click here](#). The workparty has already moved on to the next job, which is to install a piled landing next to the North Warnborough lift bridge (*right*), to make it easier for boaters to step off and board when operating the bridge. We would like to thank the homeowners living near the bridge for their forbearance while we undertake this noisy task. We will return to the Odiham barn in the next few months to complete the extension of the piled landing there, and to tidy up the barn "garden".



Latest On Dogmersfield Landslip



At the time of writing, we do not have an update on when works will start on the Dogmersfield landslip, nor how it will be repaired. The lead officer in Hampshire for this, Phil Allen, is currently unwell (and we wish him a speedy recovery). However the navigation remains open past the slip, though the towpath is closed for the foreseeable future.

The Society workparty has started to saw up the trees that were felled on the slip slope, with a view to distributing logs to those that want firewood in exchange for a donation to the Society (those interested please contact Duncan Paine at duncanpaine@talktalk.net). However there is a lot of wood there, and we don't expect to complete this any time soon.

Mytchett Lake Embankment Works

The repairs to the Mytchett Lake embankment are nearly completed (please see [here for an article](#) that describes what has been going on).

Piles have been inserted all the way along, the towpath has been raised 50 cm, and a 1m “wave wall” (an extra precaution against water over-topping) has been installed along the towpath margin.

When the job is completed, around 150m of temporary moorings will be created for visiting boats, which will be within a short walk of the Canal Centre, pubs and local shop.



Water Strategy Group Progress



The Water Strategy Group (WSG) continues to pursue a variety of initiatives to try to secure more water for the Canal. Progress has predictably been slow, but the WSG has notched up a few successes so far.

A [report on our website from John How, the leader of the group](#), sets out the areas currently under investigation, and those which have been discounted.

John Pinkerton I Trip Boat For Sale

[The Society has been actively trying to sell the old John Pinkerton](#), and would like to see it go to a good home, preferably to another canal where it can carry on providing good service as a trip boat.

The JP1 (seen on the [cover of a recent IWA Waterways magazine](#), and *right* undergoing winter maintenance last year) is being sold because we have had the opportunity and good fortune to be able to buy another, the *John Pinkerton II* (see above).

For more information about JP1 please [click here](#). If anybody knows of a potential buyer, [please let us know](#).



Lengthsmen's Get-together

A group of lengthsmen gathered for a “social” on the John Pinkerton recently.

Read the [report by Senior Lengthsman Mike Gordon](#) for a review of the occasion.

If you would like to know more about becoming a lengthsman, see the [lengthmen's web page](#).



Forthcoming Events

The new [Social Events and Illustrated Talks page](#) shows the latest list of events and venues.

- [2013/14 Chobham Illustrated Talks Season](#)

All the talks for the current season to be held at [The Parish Pavilion in Chobham](#) have been [announced](#). The next talk will be:

- **Wednesday 20th November at 8pm – Alan Smith – ‘Canal and River Cruising US style’**

For more details of this and other talks, see the [Talks page](#).

Your Feedback Is Welcome...

We would of course welcome your feedback on this Bulletin, on the new websites and on the Society's new look in general. Please send any comments you may have to the [bulletin editor](#). Short articles about the Canal with accompanying photos if possible would be appreciated. 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.

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