



Basingstoke Canal Bulletin

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Not Bikes And Shopping Trolleys, But...



a bag of “swag” was retrieved by BCA rangers from Lock 15 during recent gate repair works. It turns out these 5 silver trophies and lids, all evidently having seen better times, were the proceeds of theft and were dumped in the lock in an aggregate bag. It is understood that these cups may have included some that were stolen from the Lakeside Country Club before Christmas. Let’s hope a reward is forthcoming!

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Lock Flight Opening Times Have Been Extended This Season

The weekly schedule of lock opening times for the 2014 season was recently published by the BCA. James Taylor, Surrey CC countryside manager, explains the changes intended to give more flexibility to boaters:



Following the successful trial of the “managed navigation” policy to control use of the Surrey locks last year, culminating in only the second season since restoration that the Canal stayed open throughout the Easter – October “boating season”, the Canal Management Team reviewed the numbers and concluded that there was room to employ Lock Keepers to cover some extra days with the locks open for 2014.

The Woodham and St John’s flights **will now be open 4 days per week** (Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday). Brookwood and Deepcut flights - which use the most water - will still only be open 2 days every week - principally to allow water levels to recover. If boaters want to use the locks on any of the planned open days they need to [phone the Canal Centre](#) to confirm by 1pm the preceding working day – on the basis that if there are no boats are booked in, our Lock Keepers can be doing maintenance work around the locks. After consultation with boat users **we are able to offer an additional Wednesday open on Brookwood and Deepcut for journeys planned more than 7 days in advance.** This is specifically to help boats based at the eastern end of the Canal.

We are losing one of our Lock Keepers this year, who is moving on to a full-time role, and with almost 7 days a week service we had planned for another member of staff anyway. Adverts will be posted at the end of April to employ two new Lock Keepers.



We hope that you all enjoy another year’s uninterrupted boating, and look forward to seeing all our resident boats and visitors out on the water this season.

James Taylor

Major Canal Development in Woking Shelved – For Now



For around 3 years, work has been progressing on a proposal to undertake a significant development on the Canal in Woking. The Society chairman, Philip Riley has been heavily involved. [Details of the proposal, which include a boat basin accommodating around 30 boats \(left\), have now been published](#), and were tabled at the recent meeting of the Woking Borough Council. Unfortunately, despite their support for the proposal, [the Council decided that the development should not proceed at this time](#) because of other commitments that must take priority. This is a great disappointment but not a surprise to the Society, which will continue to campaign for this exciting and revitalising scheme.

Society Work Party Activities

Previously, we reported that many trees had to be cut down to relieve the load on, and so help to stabilise, the slopes in the area of the Dogmersfield landslip. Hampshire CC had given the Society leave to cut up these logs and sell them to raise funds. And so in January the team were out at the slip, cutting and splitting a vast amount of oak, ash and pine logs. A proportion of these were transported to the Barley



Mow car park and sold to the general public, and we are pleased to say made **£900** towards the Canal. However, with many logs still to be disposed of, [work had to be curtailed because the ground moved again following February's heavy rains](#), and so we made ourselves useful with some bank clearance instead (*above*).

Following a careful study by HCC engineers and the removal of several more fallen trees by the BCA, the slip



has now been declared safe and is now open to navigation once again (though with [restrictions](#)). So, we will return there later in the year to finish the job. In the meantime, the team have returned to the Society's barn at Colt Hill, Odiham to complete phase 2 of the development there (*left*) - phase 1, [the refurbishment of the barn building, having been completed last year](#). To accommodate additional boats, the piled mooring has been extended (a laborious and, as the neighbours will attest, a noisy task), for which an ash tree stump had first to be removed. Soft bank protection has been installed along the remainder of the Society canal frontage,

and along with a new fence. Turf has been laid on the pub side of the new fence, and on the canal side the ground will be landscaped and grassed over, and paving slabs relaid along the mooring edge.

The Society will be hosting the Leader of Hampshire CC, Ken Thornber and other council officials at the barn on May 9th to show our appreciation for his support for the Society's acquisition of the premises from the council. A plaque will be unveiled and lunch will be served during a *John Pinkerton II* trip to Odiham Castle.

Visiting Work Party

We hosted the "Bit in the Middle" (BITM*) [Waterway Recovery Group](#) (WRG) team for a weekend in March, led by Dave Wedd and Jeff Hill. They tackled some of the overhanging rhododendron bushes downstream from Wharfenden Lake near Frimley, which have for a long time obstructed the navigation along that section. Unfortunately, not everything went to plan, so they did not clear as much as was hoped. Nevertheless, we thank them for their perseverance and making a start on a difficult job. (*If you wondered why the name, BITM is so called



because it takes members from parts of the country falling in between other WRG membership areas).

John Pinkerton News



John Pinkerton Canal Cruises

The AGM of the John Pinkerton boat company took place in March, where it was reported that a record profit of over £34,000 had been made from trips during 2013, which it was agreed had been a “brilliant year”. 2014 looks as if it could be even better, with charter bookings reported to be well up compared with last year at the same time, and public trips growing fast.

Winter maintenance on the *John Pinkerton II* has now been completed, and it has been readied for the

forthcoming cruising season. The maintenance team, led by John Wharf, undertook an extensive list of snagging jobs, and several improvements, particularly in the galley (for example, refitting of shelves, refurbishment of the stable and hatch doors, more counter space created etc) have been made to make the operation of the boat generally easier. A regular Tuesday night cleaning shift has also been established, for which volunteers would be welcome.



Crew training has been taking place during March and April, and 4 new skippers have now undergone examination by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) and are now qualified. They are (*above*), with Tim Cadle (training manager, *second left*), Peter Close, Matt Stanley, Jeff Hill and Dick King.

A new sign has been installed at the Colt Hill wharf advertising JP trips (*left*), and seems to be attracting a lot of attention.



JP1 News

We are fortunate that the [advert posted on the Apollo Duck website](#) has generated some interest in the *John Pinkerton I*, and some prospective buyers have now come forward. An out-of-water hull survey has been conducted at their

expense, and arrangements have been made for a sale using sealed bids which will take place at the end of the month (**note**: the closing date for bids is now past). We understand that the JP1 will be converted for personal living accommodation.

[As previously reported](#), the Dogmersfield landslip had thrown a bit of a spanner into the cruising plans for this year, which include our regular trip service at the Farnborough Air Show. Even though [the navigation is now open again past the slip](#), it is clear that the JP2 cannot get by. However, luck has come to the rescue: firstly, the narrower JP1 has been able to navigate past the landslip, and secondly, the prospective



buyers of the JP1 have agreed that handover can be deferred until August, allowing us to use it to fulfill our airshow commitments.

As a quid pro quo, the Society has agreed to undertake some smartening up of the boat; John Wharf and George Rhoades (*left*) have recently repainted the roof.



Online Jigsaw Puzzles



One thing that can be said about the Canal is that, over the years, thousands of photographs have been taken of it. So, the opportunity has been taken to convert some of these images into [online jigsaw puzzles](#), because, well, you can. If you have a few minutes to spare, why not have a go at solving some of these [puzzles](#), which depict scenes from the Canal both past and recent.

Forthcoming Events

- [The Basingstoke Canal Boating Club Rally](#)
Saturday 10th May 2014 from around midday, at the [Fox and Hounds, Crookham, Fleet, GU51 5NP](#)
This year, the Basingstoke Canal Boating Club is celebrating its 25th anniversary at a special Fox and Hounds rally. BCBC and Byfleet Boat Club boats will be present at the event. There will be boat trips and music and entertainment, and food will be available throughout the day. [More information available on the Society website.](#)
- [The Basingstoke Canal Society Annual General Meeting](#)
Saturday 17th May 2014 at 2pm, at the [Deepcut Village Centre, Cyprus Road, Deepcut, GU16 6TB](#)
The 37th AGM of the Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society Ltd will be followed by presentations by the Society Chairman, Philip Riley, and by guest speaker Roger Flitter BEM, Secretary and Technical Advisor of the Passenger Boat Association, who will talk about the work of the PBA. **Please make a special effort to attend this [meeting](#).**

The [Illustrated Talks season](#) at the Parish Pavilion in Chobham has now concluded. Look out for the announcement of the next series of talks in the Autumn.

Bulletin Articles Welcome

We welcome short articles about the Canal with accompanying photos if possible. Please send them to the [bulletin editor](#)

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