



The Basingstoke
Canal Society

Basingstoke Canal Bulletin

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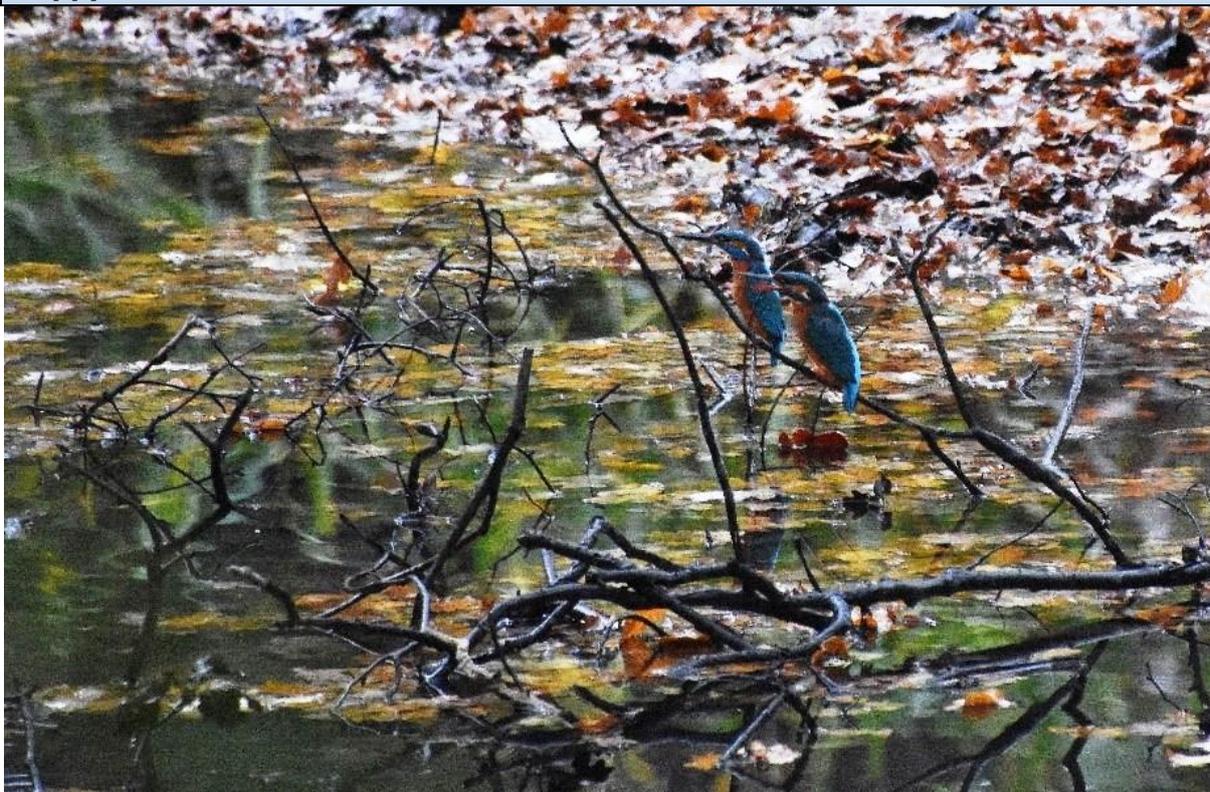


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John Pinkerton
Canal Cruises

Happy New Year...



A (very)lucky photo by the Editor of two kingfishers in the drained Deepcut Flight

To kick off, we would like to wish all of our supporters a Happy New Year from everyone here in the Society.

In this issue:

- Our exciting new season of boat trips from Odiham – already filling fast!
- Photographing the darker side of the canal
- Work on the canal: lock inspections and the new footbridge at Woking
- Rubbish we find in the canal
- Have fun volunteering
- A bent propeller!

But first, an update on the work going on behind the scenes to protect our wonderful canal.

Ambitious Target To Raise Money

We are ringing in the New Year with ambitious plans to secure a thriving and sustainable future for our much-loved waterway.

Alongside routine maintenance and ongoing improvement projects, our vision includes:

- Improving facilities for visitors
- Reducing the environmental impact of our boats while enhancing their capability
- Building a schedule of events for canal users throughout the year.

The canal is a beautiful and important amenity for communities up and down its 32-mile length. As a Site of Special Scientific Interest, it also plays a vital role in supporting nationally rare species of flora and fauna.

Unfortunately, austerity budgets continue to take their toll and now we must call on local people and businesses to pull together to help us secure the Canal's future.

Our role has always been to muster volunteers and funds to support the upkeep of the canal. Sadly, the canal has never been in greater need of our help since it was saved from dereliction in the 1960s. Therefore, our ambitious goal for 2020 onwards is to increase our income to over £200,000 per year – and once again, we need the community's help to achieve it.

There are three ways that you can help:

1. **Become a member of the Society.** It costs £20 per household; you receive four newsletters per year and are invited to our social events.
2. **Volunteer.** The Society is always looking for people to help with 'front line' practical tasks on the ground, but we also have a huge number of exciting roles 'behind the scenes' that are fundamental to the Society's success.
3. **Donate.** If the canal is important to you, show your appreciation by popping a pound or even five in our fundraising pot. You can donate on our [website](#).

For all the above visit basingstoke-canal.org.uk, or email enquiries@basingstoke-canal.org.uk

New Season Boat Trips – Have You Booked Yours?

We are pleased to announce our 2020 cruise programme aboard *John Pinkerton II*, based at Colt Hill Wharf, Odiham in Hampshire. The programme includes many old favourites plus some completely new events that we are really excited to tell you about.

Charter Trips

Planning an event in 2020? The *John Pinkerton II* (below) offers a unique and attractive venue, ideal for a birthday celebration, club or business away day.

There is a licensed bar on board, we can arrange catering and we will configure the boat interior to perfectly meet your requirements.

Charter trips can be booked for morning, afternoon or evening, from April to October, for up to 50 guests. The friendly skipper and crew will man the tiller and galley, leaving you and your guests to relax and enjoy a cruise through beautiful Hampshire countryside (*see below*).

Public Trips

Our popular 2½ hour round trips run east or west from Odiham, taking you on a relaxing journey through sublime countryside. And many Public Trips have themes:

Bookings and information:

- johnpinkerton.co.uk
- jpbookings@basingstoke-canal.org.uk
- 0750 686 4411 (10am-6pm)



Theme Trips

- **Mother's Day Cruise:** Sunday 22 March, with flowers and chocolate for every Mum
- **"Old Thatch" National Garden Scheme Open Day Cruise:** Sundays 5 April, 7 June, 6 September. Visiting the gardens of this 'chocolate box' thatched cottage, a well-known landmark on the Basingstoke Canal with attractive gardens.
- **Easter Egg Hunt:** Easter Sunday 12 April. Chocolatey fun for all the children.
- **Gin Tasting Cruise:** with Nibbs Spirits, Friday 15 May. Speaks for itself!
- **Grand Café Afternoon Tea Cruise:** Friday 29 May, 17 July, with Prosecco, fine food, complemented by china tea sets and table cloths, with live piano accompaniment. A great opportunity to spoil someone special.
- **Cream Tea Cruises:** Wednesdays 10 June, 8 July, 9 September. Cream teas served with china tea sets and table cloths, with live piano accompaniment.
- **Midsummer Night Cruise:** Celebrate the height of summer with us on Wed 24 June.
- **Tapas and Wine-Tasting Cruise:** Friday 12 June, with authentic tapas dishes and acoustic guitar music.
- **"It's up to us now!":** Friday 10 July, Saturday 11 July. An evening of drama, comedy and song set in July 1940 as England is braced for an expected German invasion and the Basingstoke Canal is designated the last line of defence. Performed by the Hampshire Theatre Group and friends, period dress is strongly encouraged but not essential. Fish and chip supper is included; real ale, wines and spirits available for purchase.
- **Extended One-Way Cruises (Between Odiham and Fleet):** Sunday 19 and Saturday 25 July. An opportunity to see a lovely stretch of the canal which you may be less familiar with.
- **Ramble and Cruise, or Cruise and Ramble:** Tuesday 4 August and Thursday 27 August. Cruise one way and walk the other between Colt Hill Wharf in Odiham and Barley Mow Wharf in Winchfield. Includes ploughman's lunch.
- **Traditional Jazz and Ale Cruise:** Friday 11 September. A special trip for traditional jazz enthusiasts. With music and fish and chip supper. Real ale, wines and spirits available.
- **Sea Shanties and Ale Cruise:** Friday 2 October. An evening of authentic sea shanties and folk songs with The Shanty Hounds. Sing along to the ones you know and enjoy a fish and chip supper.

The schedule for [our other trip boat in Woking, Kitty](#), has also been [announced](#).

Photographing The Darker Side Of The Canal



If you are a regular visitor to the canal you are doubtless familiar with the beautiful wildlife and spectacular scenery. But Liz Murnaghan, who runs the Basingstoke Canal Canoe Club at Mytchett, provides some thoughts on the less appealing side to the Canal.

Liz was recently involved in a photography competition to raise awareness of the spread of INNS (invasive non-native species). The upside is that she kindly donated her

winnings to the Canal Society – many thanks, Liz.

The INNS she photographed include the Demon shrimp, *Dikerogammarus haemobaphes*. Liz told us that she found the first one in the canal in 2017 and went back to the same place to find more (see photo from Wikipedia *above*, as you need a close up!). The



green stuff that fills Great Bottom Flash and up towards Ash Lock is also an INNS known as Carolina Watershield, *Cabomba caroliniana* (*above right*, again photo from Wikipedia)



Sadly, the kayak laden with rubbish (*above left*) was also taken on the Basingstoke Canal, and won a prize in the Scavenger Hunt category.

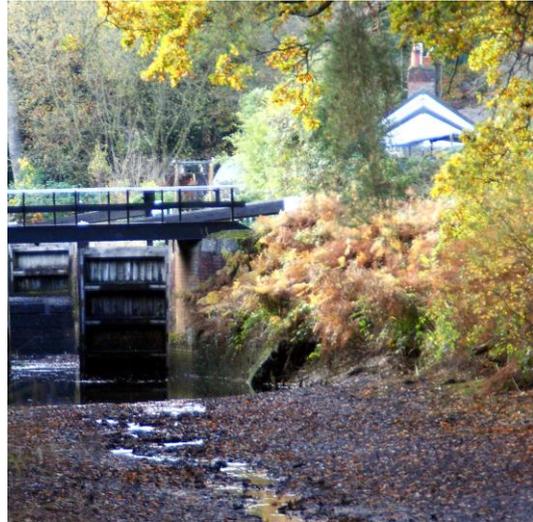
But as you know, the canal is mostly a tranquil haven for leisure and wildlife – you can see the canal in a better light in the delightful “Pup on a SUP” video shot by Brian Biffin, which also won a prize: <https://vimeo.com/user3151337>.

Winter Works On The Canal

Work starts this month on the Deepcut lock flight following a Principal Inspection (carried out by an engineer every 10 years). This is an ongoing programme of inspections, targeting approximately 6 locks per year on the current cycle, to ensure the canal is maintained in a safe and useable condition. This year we are looking at Deepcut locks 25–28 (*below*), the Dry Dock and Ash Lock (Lock 29).



The Engineer inspected the Deepcut locks in November (*below left*). A list of works was drawn



The Dry Dock was inspected in late summer; works have already been carried out and it is now back open. Ash Lock will be drained down for its inspection later this winter.

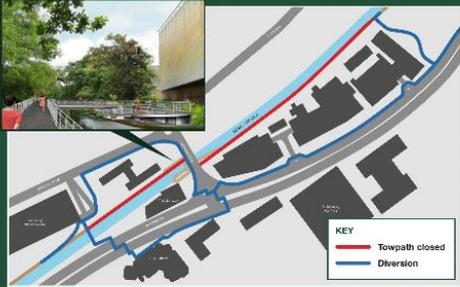
Lock repairs can be varied but have previously included replacement of upper and lower wing walls, lots of pointing to replace mortar in the brickwork and packing clay behind the walls to stop leakage. This year we will also be trialling a new longer lock ladder, replacing a particularly short one, to improve boater safety.

up and given to a contractor. Leaving the locks empty for a few months means that we don't have to carry out multiple drain downs and fish rescues, which would ultimately cause more harm to the canal and its wildlife.

To give you an idea of the scale for these intermediate repair works, £90,000 was spent on Locks 19–24 last year.

TEMPORARY TOWPATH CLOSURE

Please follow the diversion route



We are building a new pedestrian and cycle bridge to connect the canal towpaths, scheduled to open April 2020.

Please follow the short diversion route shown on the map in blue. Land closed to the public is marked in a solid red line. (National Parks and Access to The Countryside Act 1949 Part V).

For further information please visit woking.gov.uk/footbridge



Meanwhile, over in Woking there is a large drain down so a new turnover bridge can be built underneath Chobham Road bridge. This is funded by Woking Borough Council and will allow towpath users to stay on the towpath while it swaps sides, without having to cross the busy road (*see above, right*).

James Taylor, Strategic Manager – Basingstoke Canal



Clearing Rubbish



Before the water is put back into the dewatered canal at the end of March ready for boating season, volunteers from the Basingstoke Canal Authority's (BCA) Tuesday Group have been clearing rubbish from the canal bed (left). They have removed lawn mowers, TVs, bikes, car tyres, bike



tyres, numerous plastic bottles and cans. Ultimately, floating rubbish will otherwise find its way via the Wey and the Thames to the sea.

The photos above show a safe found by the Weekend Work Group while building the Farnborough Road Moorings (sadly empty!), and our volunteer leader Kevin Redway with laptop and bugle!



During the dewatering process fish are rescued and placed into fully watered sections. Among the many species caught were eels, a fish that has a remarkable life cycle. They spawn in the Sargasso Sea before travelling with the Gulf Stream to Europe. They mature over a period of 12–14 years in the rivers and canals before

migrating the 3,700 miles back across the Atlantic to spawn.

Is One Of Our Volunteer Roles Perfect For You?

We now have over 250 volunteers and our friendly, enthusiastic team is expanding every week. There are 'front-line' roles like boat crew, lengthsman and working parties, but also a whole raft of interesting 'behind the scenes' opportunities like organising events, fundraising and promotions.

Give as much time as you like, with flexible hours, at home or on the canal – there is [something for everyone!](#)

Just in the last couple of months, people have joined us to help with boat bookings, an ex-councillor is liaising with the canal owners, experienced fundraisers are bringing in donations, and some great organisers are providing vital administrative support.

In particular we are currently looking for:

- **Boat engineer:** working with our existing maintenance team
- **Marketing support:** help get news stories out to local press
- **Grant applications:** help prepare and submit applications
- **Lobbying:** bring us your experience in lobbying and liaising with local councils
- **Lengthsman administrator:** collate and send lengthsman reports to the Canal Authority

Have a look at our [website](#) for details, then email volunteer@basingstoke-canal.org.uk or call the Editor on 07850 652769.

And Finally....

As always thanks for your support and we look forward to an interesting and active 2020.

Finally, we thought that you might like to see the 'before' and 'after' picture of a bent propeller from the *John Pinkerton II*. Nice and shiny now for the cruising season ahead.

Ken Sankey, Editor



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