



BASINGSTOKE CANAL BULLETIN

No. 5 March/April 2011

Bank Clearance near Odiham



The regular work party has continued bank clearing around Odiham during March. Such is the amount of overgrowth on the Canal that it took less than 2 hours for the team to accumulate this enormous bonfire of cuttings from only a short stretch of bank. Good progress has been made but now that the nesting period has started, this work must be curtailed.

Quick Links

- [Join the Society](#)
- [Contact the Society](#)
- [What the Society is about today](#)
- [SHCS Website](#)
- Sign up to receive future bulletins (if this one was forwarded/downloaded): [Members](#) [Non-members](#)
- [Read previous Basingstoke Canal Bulletins](#)
- [Read the latest Basingstoke Canal News \(BCN\)](#)
- [John Pinkerton cruising on the Basingstoke Canal](#)
- [The Canal in pictures](#) • [Bridges/Locks in pictures](#)
- [Basingstoke Canal Wiki Page](#)
- [Basingstoke Canal Authority \(BCA\) Website](#)
- [John Pinkerton on Facebook](#)
- [BCA Visitor Centre on Facebook](#)



[Link](#)



[Link](#)



[Link](#)



[Link](#)



[Link](#)



[Link](#)

Woking Canal Festival 2011

Easter Weekend, Sat/Sun April 23/24, 11am – 5pm, at the [Bridge Barn public house](#).



The Canal Festival is a well established family-friendly event in the Woking calendar, and is a chance to see the Canal Society showcase its work. This two-day event highlights the Canal in Woking and provides boat trips, stalls and a good programme of live entertainment, including two excellent local bands. On Saturday there will also feature a display of Irish dancing, and on Sunday we are pleased to welcome the renowned [Karen Clark performers](#).

All boats welcome!

Help is urgently needed!

This will be the main outside event organised by the Society this year and we need your help to run the car park, boat trips, publicity, site services, set up and break down. Do come along and support us, or even better give a hand for a couple of hours.

Verna Smith

We urge you to support the Bridge Barn event. If you are able to help or would like to find out more, please email [Verna Smith](#) or call her on 01252 517622, or call Peter Coxhead on 01932 344564.



Basingstoke Canal Authority News

The Basingstoke Canal Authority Director, Ian Brown, has recently announced the re-structuring of his organisation. The ranger force, which currently numbers 10, is to be reduced to 6 with 4 redundancies. In future, the rangers will concentrate on countryside work and all construction activities (other than minor repairs and maintenance) will be undertaken by a contractor. It is anticipated that the 'term contractor' will be appointed in late March and work will start on the Deepcut Flight in May. The priority work on the flight will be repairs to locks 19, 20 and 25 and will include removal of voids, repairs to by-pass channels and the re-building of wing walls. A number of lock gates will also be replaced and essential bank protection work will be carried out on a number of sections including the badly eroded towpath in the Frimley area. The Canal Society has stressed to Ian Brown the importance of drawing up a programme which will enable all the work required to put the Canal back into full operation to be completed by early spring 2012 in time for the 21st anniversary rally at Frimley Lodge Park.

Philip Riley, acting SHCS chairman

The sharp-eyed reader will note that much of the priority work listed above was originally to have been completed by now under an interim £400,000 contract prior to the appointment of the term contractor (see [Bulletin No. 1](#)). Unfortunately bad winter weather among other things has put paid to this. Let's hope the term contractor lives up to expectations and gets on with the long list of work waiting to be done – Ed

Here is an update on the Mytchett/Frimley towpath situation from the BCA:



The plan is to put in place some diversions for walkers down at the Frimley Lodge Park area. That will entail using some of the wooded area near to the model railway to bypass the towpath where erosion is a problem. The very bad wash out near the swing bridge has been temporarily repaired and we do not now need to close this section. The Canal Director is hopeful of some capital funding coming from Surrey Heath Borough Council to help cover the cost of the repairs. We are working closely with Surrey Heath BC officers and members along with help from the rangers that look after Frimley Lodge Park to make the necessary preparations for the diversions.

Dean Wall, BCA

Volunteering News

Regular Working Parties

The regular SHCS working party meets every second and fourth weekend of the month (ie every two weeks mostly). A meeting of the working party members and the Society committee took place recently to work out who will now be responsible for arranging these activities, and carrying out the many organisational tasks that Peter Redway did on their behalf. No decisions have yet been made though it is likely that a small group of volunteers working together will henceforth lead the work party efforts, one of whom will be the primary contact.

As has been said before, it would be a fitting tribute to Peter that work parties continue in future as they have done for many years under his leadership. This requires that people step forward as team leaders to help with work party organisation. Also we need more regular volunteers. If you feel up to the job and are able to help in any way, do please email [Roger Cansdale](#), or call him on 01252-678608, until the primary work party contact is identified.

Work Party Dates

As planned, work has started on building a **permanent mooring near the Runway's End at Farnborough** and will continue on the following dates:

- **9th/10th April**
- **23rd/24th April.**

(For a [streetmap.co.uk](#) map, see [here](#))

Piling commences at Runway's End, Farnborough (right), which will form a 30m long permanent mooring intended primarily for John Pinkerton passengers. This project has been part-funded by a grant from Rushmoor Borough Council.



Volunteer Lengthsmen wanted

Several years ago, the Canal Society instituted a “lengthsman” scheme, the idea behind which is that volunteers should walk a given stretch (length) of canal at regular intervals (preferably at least once a week) with a view to reporting to the Canal Management any unusual occurrences that they may observe. By acting as the eyes and ears of the Canal and giving early warning of problems, lengthsman play an essential role in helping to avert disasters, such as the breach of an embankment, and in identifying and prioritising maintenance requirements, thus ensuring a better service for all canal users. This scheme is operated with the full support of the Basingstoke Canal Authority. Lengthsmen are asked to look out for a variety of conditions including: dumping of rubbish; vandalism; leakage and flooding; pollution; fallen trees and branches etc etc. Needless to say however, many participants have dropped out or moved away and as the result the Society would like to revitalise this important scheme. **So, if you are a regular canal walker and would like to participate as a lengthsman, please email the Senior Lengthsman [Graham Hornsey](#), or call him on 01252 623591 to find out more about what is involved.**

John Pinkerton now re-certified ready for the cruising season

Inspections by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) are cyclical and not every test is required every year (thank goodness). This year, the [John Pinkerton](#) required an external and internal hull inspection, the removal and inspection of the propeller shaft, and a “running check”. The first and second items of course required the boat to spend a period in the dry dock at Deepcut. The hull inspection was straightforward with no issues found by the MCA. Even the perennial concern with the second hull seemed this year not to be an issue. After removal of the prop shaft by the evergreen pair of Bob Power and John Abbott (see below) some wear was evident and although the MCA offered an alleviation for one year only it was decided to replace it, thus removing the burden of replacing it next year from any potential buyer (we have a replacement JP scheduled for next season) or ourselves. A supplier was identified and amazingly produced a replica of our shaft in three days, including delivery. It was fitted successfully and the boat taken temporarily to the Canal Centre where other routine maintenance was performed and the running inspection performed for the MCA. This also was satisfactory and the boat received a clean bill of health and its passenger carrying certificate for the new cruising season.

John Wharf – Winter Maintenance Team Leader

If you have any questions about the boat or its operation please email trip boat manager [Peter Wright](#) or call him on 07788-780917



Cleaning of the John Pinkerton under way in the Deepcut dry dock. Among other jobs done this year the hull was pressure washed and repainted, and the rest of the bodywork was cleaned and touched up.



The prop shaft being replaced (left) and in place (right).

It was found that the prop shaft had become very worn last season, and a decision was taken to have another made. Some of you may have seen the replaced shaft at the Boat Company AGM. Crew members are reminded to ensure the prop shaft is greased at the end of every trip!



Other News

Canal-side development in Aldershot

The developer for the first phase of the [Aldershot Urban Extension](#) (the re-development of the former army camp south of the canal and west of Queens Avenue in the Army Town) has now been selected, and the Society, supported by the BCA, will be pressing for some Canal-related benefits to emerge from the scheme which involves the construction of 4500 houses. We would like to see some boat facilities (possibly including a boat basin) and some development which makes effective use of the waterfront. *Philip Riley*

Vacancies on Society Committee

As previously reported, there are three vacancies on the SHCS main committee, resulting from the death of Peter Redway and from two resignations, so we are urgently looking for interested people to fill these positions. **If you would like to become more involved with the Society and think you could contribute as a committee member and manage a few meetings a year, please email the Society's secretary [Gareth Jones](#) or phone him on 01252-690024.**

Society Boat Company AGM

The boat company, Surrey and Hampshire Canal Cruises Ltd, is the trading subsidiary of the Canal Society, and it held its AGM in March. The principal business of the subsidiary company is to run the [John Pinkerton](#) trip boat. It was announced that the JP had conducted over 200 trips and attracted a profit of over £30,000 in 2010. In total, the JP has contributed over **£500,000** to Canal causes during its 33 years of operation. The results of the winter maintenance programme were discussed (see above). In addition, the progress made with the replacement trip boat (JP2) was presented – so far replies had been received from all 3 companies invited to quote for the proposed design (see [Spring BCN report](#)), and refinements of the quotes (ranging from around £105k to £165k) were being worked on. The one vacant committee post has been filled.

“Fleet to Odiham in 9 Minutes” video

In an earlier bulletin I featured a [YouTube video that was taken by a Basingstoke Canal user that compressed the 4 hour trip from Fleet to St John's Castle into 9 minutes*](#). The effect is to appear to travel that section of the Canal at over 60 miles per hour! At the time, I was unable to credit the creator of this video as I did not know his or her name. I have since managed to contact Steve Morris who says that he and his wife spent a superb week on the Canal last July. Thanks Steve. Apart from being of general interest, his video is a useful resource that shows the state of the Canal at the time, indicating where weed and overgrowth need attention etc. *Note*: sometimes it is necessary to refresh the screen in order to get the video to play – Ed.*

Forthcoming events

Here are some dates for your diary:

- **Chobham Social Meetings** at The Parish Pavilion, Recreation Ground, Station Road, Chobham, take place at **8pm** on the **third Wednesday** of the month. Non members and friends are very welcome. Please call David Millett on 01252 617364 for more information. For a map and for more details about the talks, please refer to the [BCN](#)
 - **20th April 2011** – John Ross – ‘Roses and Castles – Canal Boat Decoration’
 - **18th May 2011** - Pablo Haworth – ‘The Making of the Forth Bridge at Walton-on-Thames’
- **“The Basingstoke Canal – the last six miles” – A talk to be given by Roger Cansdale**, director of the Canal Society, on the closed section between the Greywell Tunnel and Basingstoke, **Thursday 21st April at 7.30pm** at the Willis Museum, Market Place, Basingstoke RG21 7QD
- **Woking Canal Festival**, outside the Bridge Barn public house, Woking, **23rd/24th April 2011**
- **Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society AGM**, **Saturday 21st May 2011 at 2pm**, at the St John's Memorial Hall, St John's, Woking.

Have your say..

Please send any feedback you may have about this bulletin 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 approximately in the middle of the following month.

For various reasons, this issue has been unavoidably delayed, so it is not proposed to produce a separate issue for April.