



# BASINGSTOKE CANAL BULLETIN

No. 6 May 2011

## Entertainment at the Woking Canal Festival



The [Karen Clark performers](#) putting on a show at the Woking Canal Festival, which took place at [Bridge Barn](#) over the Easter weekend. The lively two-day event, run by the Canal Society, benefitted from glorious weather and the crowds were entertained by local bands including [Charley Farley's Sunday Four](#), and also the [Kelalou Irish dancers](#) and [The Thames Valley Morris Men](#).

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## Woking Canal Festival 2011



The sun shone and the rain stayed away for this year's Easter Event. The miniature railway was a welcome addition and we were delighted to welcome the mayor and mayoress of Woking on Saturday. Thanks to an excellent programme of music and dance, some special boats and lots of help from SHCS members this year was 'the best ever' according to Peter Coxhead, who started the event some 14 years ago.

Verna Smith

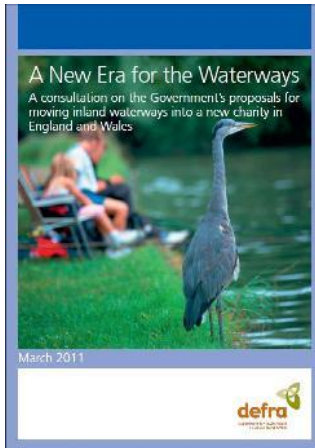
[Listen to a podcast from Brooklands Radio](#) of interviews of some of the Festival attendees - Ed

## Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society Annual General Meeting Saturday 21st May at 2pm

[St John's Memorial Hall, St John's Lye, Woking, GU21 7SQ](#). For a map, click [here](#).

Do come along and hear what the Society is about and what it has achieved over the last year. Our guest speaker will be **John Gibson, Wey Navigation manager**, who will talk about the running of that navigation, including their use of volunteers, among other things.

## New Waterways Charity



Many of you will know that last October, the Government [announced](#) it would be placing those waterways in England and Wales which are currently state-owned in trust to the nation through the establishment of a civil society organisation, dubbed for now the New Waterways Charity (NWC). The Government believes that transferring ownership to a charity will result a more secure long-term financial future for our waterways by releasing them from the strictures of public ownership, and will open the way to increased funding by commercial sponsorship and charitable giving, economies of scale and also growth in volunteering. A two-phased transition is proposed: firstly to transfer all waterways and assets currently operated by British Waterways to the NWC next year, and to commit to it a long-term funding contract. Secondly, subject to agreement of the NWC trustees and available funding, those waterways managed by the Environment Agency would transfer around 2015. Recently, a [consultation document](#) was published, and comments are invited by the Department of Food and Rural Affairs from all waterways users and interested parties on their proposals for how our network should be managed, how the NWC should be governed, and how to engage people with their local waterways.

You may ask, what is the significance of this consultation to the Basingstoke Canal, which is managed by neither BW nor the EA. Philip Riley explains the Society's viewpoint:

The Society is closely following the proposals recently put forward by the Government (through Defra) to move British Waterways into the third sector by transferring it into a new charity (yet to be named) in April 2012. These proposals are contained in a consultation document issued by Defra, which envisages that, at a later stage (and possibly in 2015), the waterways managed by the Environment Agency will also move into the new charity. The [consultation document](#) mentions that the new charity will be set up in such a way that, over time, it may agree to partner or merge with other navigations not currently managed by BW and the EA. The Society has long held the view that, in the longer term, the future of the Basingstoke Canal lies with a much larger navigation authority which has the critical mass, economies of scale and range of skills and expertise to manage, maintain and improve the canal as a fully operating navigation. In responding to the consultation, the Committee is intending to take this line.

*Philip Riley, acting Chairman*

The Society is in the process of assembling its detailed response to the [proposals](#). The [Inland Waterways Association \(IWA\)](#), which has raised some concerns in its [initial response](#), is encouraging its members to respond to the consultation as individuals to ensure their collective voice is heard, and the Canal Society urges its members to do the same. We ask you to [write in](#) and support the Committee, who believe that the future of the Basingstoke lies in being an integral part of the national waterways network. The closing date for comments is 30 June 2011 - Ed.

## Structural Repairs



The new Canal term contractor has now been appointed. Dyer & Butler will start as soon as possible on the priority plan\* presented at the last Joint Management Committee meeting in February. This will primarily focus on the Deepcut Flight and mitigation plans for high risk areas identified in the recent structural condition surveys. Later in the year when it is possible to draw down the water level on the Hampshire Pound, the term contractor will

fit a number of standardised stop plank grooves to prime bridge hole locations. This will enable ease of stop plank installation and control over sections during the event of emergencies and repairs. The BCA would like to point out that this is a fixed term contract for two years initially and is to enable work that requires civil engineering skills which the ranger team do not have. In the future we need to be in a position to use various specialist contractors that will work in harmony with a reduced but dedicated ranger team that will provide the capacity for a well maintained and sustainable canal.

*Ian Brown, BCA Director*

\*The plan lists the following jobs to be started first:

Hampshire:

- Bank protection at Poulter's Bridge (Crookham), where a leak was reported a few months ago
- Building up towpath and bank protection at Swan Cutting, North Warnborough

Surrey

- Reconstruction of the upper and lower wing walls in Locks 19 and 20 at Deepcut
- Bank protection near junction with the Wey Navigation - Ed

## Volunteering News

### ***Regular Working Parties***

The regular SHCS working party meets every second and fourth weekend of the month (ie every two weeks mostly). The work parties exist to turn the money raised for the Canal (principally [John Pinkerton trip boat](#) income, but recently also some bequests) into tangible improvements along the navigation. Work has continued on the permanent mooring near the Runway's End near Farnborough during April and May and, as can be seen, is taking shape. It is hoped this will be completed by early June. (This landing stage is being provided primarily for John Pinkerton passengers who are visiting the Farnborough Air Show and has been part-funded from a grant from Rushmoor Borough Council.)



*The nearly-completed 30m long permanent mooring built by Society volunteers at Runway's End, viewed from Eelmore bridge.*

Progress is being made in reorganising the regular Society work party following the death of Peter Redway. We believe we now have a better understanding of what needs to be done to plan for a work party on the canal, and hope that we will be appropriately prepared for the next projects (which include completion of the rebuilding of lock 17, and mooring sites on either side of the Zephon Copse swing bridge near Church Crookham).

### ***Work Party Dates***

As indicated above, work will continue on the permanent mooring near at Runway's End and this will take place on **14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> May** and **28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> May**. (For a map of the location, see [here](#).) If you are interested in helping on the Canal and don't mind getting a bit dirty, then please email [Janet Buckley](#) or call her on 01252 620787.

### ***Visiting Working Parties***

Every year we benefit from groups of people turning up from all over the country to work on the canal, and this year is no exception. Two major projects are to be undertaken by Waterways Recovery Group (WRG) visiting work camps, each of a week's duration: building of a lock landing below Lock 1 at the end of June, and scrub clearance along the whole Ash embankment in September, the latter to be a gathering in memory of Peter Redway. However, with Pete's passing, we have not been as efficient as we would have liked in preparing for all the visits that he planned and regrettably will have to cancel at least one weekend session. We look forward to welcoming back our regular visitors next year.

## Other News

### ***Canal-side development in Brookwood***

Yet another Canal-side development is in the early stages of consultation. The proposal is to create a country park at Brookwood Farm, on the land that borders the Canal from Sheets Heath bridge right the way down to Hermitage bridge (that is, on both sides of the A322). Houses will be built, but these will be set some distance away from the Canal. For further details, please refer to the [project website](#). The Society Committee will follow this closely. Some members have already had an initial meeting with the developers (CALA) to discuss how the Canal could benefit from this development, and have proposed a balancing reservoir (which could supplement the water supply to the Brookwood flight), and the possibility of a small boat basin. Once again, the Committee urges individuals to [respond to the proposal](#) in support of the Canal.

### ***Vacancies on Society Committee***

We are looking for interested people to fill vacancies on the SHCS main committee. To find out more about what we do, come along to our AGM (see above). **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.**

### ***Volunteer Lengthsmen***

Thanks to all of those who responded to the request in the [last bulletin](#) to be volunteer lengthsmen (who patrol the canal looking for and report unusual occurrences and problems). The Senior Lengthsman, [Graham Hornsey](#) (01252 623591) will get back to you shortly. If you too are a regular canal walker, and would like to become involved, please contact Graham for more details.



## We could do without this...



Most people are aware that some very inappropriate items are disposed of in the canal. This was very obvious when it was frozen and items stayed on the surface. These items can be dangerous - a shopping trolley or bicycle can damage the propellers of a powered boat or rip a canoe. Some are simply a nuisance. The rubbish bins installed by Surrey Heath Council tend to last only a few weeks at most though it is in no-one's interest to destroy them. And some instances of this behaviour are potentially very hazardous. Missing coping stones on Mytchett Lake Road bridge led to the placing of a breeze block which, if tipped over onto a passing boat would have caused serious damage or injury.

*Gareth Jones*

*The breeze block on the parapet (and some others lying around) have of course been removed – 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](#)  
- **18th May 2011** - Pablo Haworth – ‘The Making of the Forth Bridge at Walton-on-Thames’  
(Subsequent meetings to be announced)
- ***Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society AGM***, **Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2011 at 2pm**, at the St John's Memorial Hall, St John's, Woking.
- ***Mikron Theatre Company 2011 Visit***, **Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2011 at 7.30pm**, at the Fox and Hounds, Crookham Road, Fleet (Fleet Football Club if raining). The open-air show is called “[Hell and High Water](#)”, which is an enactment of the building of the Bridgewater Canal in 1761. This year is the company's 40<sup>th</sup> year of touring the waterways of England.

## Have your say..

Please send any feedback you may have about this bulletin to the [bulletin editor](#). **Short articles about the Canal with accompanying photos would be appreciated.** 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.

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