



BASINGSTOKE CANAL BULLETIN

No. 7 June/July 2011

Runway's End Mooring Completed



The 30m long permanent mooring near Farnborough recently recently completed by SHCS volunteers. "Congratulations to all concerned on delivering an excellent project, which is a fitting tribute to Peter Redway and all he achieved for the Canal" says Andrew Lloyd, Chief Executive of Rushmoor Borough Council, which donated £4000 to the Society for this work. The mooring will be used by the Society trip boat [John Pinkerton](#) to bring visitors to the Farnborough Airshow.

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Basingstoke Canal – How It Used To Be



Two views towards Brookwood Bridge (from different directions) showing the derelict state of the Canal in the sixties perhaps? Actually, one isn't. True, the photo on the left is historical, however the one on the right was taken only a couple of months ago. There are fears that because of a lack of attention over a period of time and long-term closures, parts of the Canal will revert to the overgrown rubbish dump it once was 40 years ago. We cannot allow that to happen again.



Here are a large number of other interesting ["then, later and now"](#) photos of the Canal taken by Tony Clayton.

REMEMBER: If anybody asks, the Basingstoke Canal is OPEN

from West Byfleet to Brookwood – that's over 5 miles of cruising and 11 locks.

Just ensure that a passage is booked at the [Canal Centre](#)

News from the recent Joint Management Council Meeting

Councillors and officers from the county owners of the Basingstoke Canal and from each of the neighbouring borough councils who also contribute funds to run the Canal Authority (the BCA), and invited special interest groups (including the Society, the Inland Waterways Association and businesses) once again gathered at the Canal Centre for the three-times-a-year JMC meeting. The JMC is where all the significant issues relating to the management of the Canal are supposed to be discussed. Since it is a public meeting, there were Society members and others also in attendance, though on this occasion there were a few more present than usual.

It would be wrong to suggest that any of those around the meeting table do not individually have the good of the Canal at heart, but you might be forgiven for wondering if somebody in Surrey County Council really has got it in for the Basingstoke...

It had been previously announced that the term contractor, Dyer and Butler, had been appointed and a list of high-priority structural repairs were scheduled to start in

April – then in May (see the [Summer BCN](#) and the [last bulletin](#)). However, despite assurances being given previously that everything was on track, it emerged at this meeting that this work has *still* not started, and no date could be given when it will actually commence.

It turns out that there has been an ongoing delay in producing paperwork for the Surrey County Council Cabinet to sign off, which (we were subsequently told) will not now happen until mid-July. The best guess for when that translates to boots on the ground is now *September* of this year, when the best weather will have passed.

(Bear in mind that the capital funds to cover the cost of the major structural repairs including to Deepcut locks 19, 20 and 25 for which D&B have been engaged were allocated by Hampshire and Surrey back in April 2010 – Ed).

Can work start in Hampshire at least? you may ask. Well, apparently not, because Surrey CC is the administrator for the term contract on behalf of both counties, and this signoff relates to the contract as a whole. In the meantime, an interim contract will have to be set up in an attempt to get some high priority work going while there is still some Summer left.

The Society is very dismayed at this turn of events, and has been questioning for months why it has taken such an inordinately long time to get a workforce deployed (see [November 2010 Bulletin](#)). Naturally, this does not instil much confidence about whether our proposed celebrations of the 21st anniversary of the Canal's renovation can go ahead at Frimley Park (the wrong side of the Deepcut flight) in 2012.

Not good enough, Surrey.

But there's more... It came to the Society's attention just before the JMC meeting that Surrey County Council had published a paper called [Public Value Review of the Countryside Service](#) (dated 1 March 2011) where it makes two proposals that will seriously affect the Canal:

Firstly, *"It is proposed that management of the Canal (not including structural repair) should be transferred to one or more other bodies, which could provide a more cost effective service, be focused on income generation and be more financially sustainable."* (Elsewhere it talks of "externalising services" to "charitable trusts or other bodies").

Secondly, *"It is proposed Surrey County Council should reduce its financial contribution to the current management arrangements [of the Canal] (not including structural repairs) by about one fifth"* (though in which year is not clear).

Putting aside the enormity of the proposals themselves for one minute, the way in which they came to light has particularly upset the Society committee and others. The above paper is Surrey's response to a consultation of

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The lower wing wall of Lock 19, showing cracking and structural failure. Repairs were due to start in April this year, but are delayed yet again.

Volunteering News

Regular Working Parties

While Surrey CC is getting its act together, the SHCS volunteer workforce continues to make good progress with its projects. We were particularly pleased with the recently completed Runway's End mooring (see above). Work has subsequently resumed on the refurbishment of Lock 17. The upper wing walls were crumbling and, with the help of the [Waterways Recovery Group \(WRG\)](#) visiting workparty, were demolished and rebuilt last year (see [Winter 2010 BCN](#)). Now the intricate task of completing the pointing of the lock chamber brickwork has re-commenced (see right), which will keep the team occupied for several weeks. As can be seen, a lot of bricks will have to be replaced.



Volunteers from the Canal Society removing damaged bricks and loose pointing from the chamber of Lock 17.

Regular Work Party Dates

Work will continue on Lock 17 over the Summer. The next work parties will take place on **9th/10th July** and **23rd/24th July**. (For a map of the location, see [here](#) - access to the canal is through the tunnel). If you are interested in helping on the Canal, trying your hand at laying bricks and don't mind getting a bit dirty, then please email [Janet Buckley](#) or call her on 01252 620787.



Zak, the "million-mile dog", so-called because that is the distance he is thought to have travelled in the vehicles of his owner Kevin Redway during his lifetime. Somewhat arthritic, and prone to falling in the Canal, Zak has become something of a SHCS working party mascot.

Projects Undertaken

To give an idea in what the Society team of volunteers has been involved, the following projects have been completed over the last 3 years, led or planned by the indefatigable Peter Redway:

- Reconstruction of Locks 22 and 17 wing walls and other refurbishment
- Refurbishment of the "Alan Flight" workboat
- Installation of a drinking water supply at Brookwood
- Extensive scrub clearance around Odiham, Brookwood and elsewhere
- Constructing the permanent mooring at Runway's End

The next project after Lock 17 will be to build new mooring sites on either side of the Zephon Copse swing bridge near Church Crookham. Boaters will find it easier to tie up as they open and close the bridge.

Visiting Working Parties

At the end of June the Society also hosted a team of 17 visitors from WRG. The team stayed for a week, during which they were busy building a landing below Lock 1 near West Byfleet, as well as with a variety of maintenance jobs around the area. Easier mooring while operating the lock has long been on the request list for boaters entering the Canal. We thank Paul Shaw and his team of enthusiastic volunteers for their help in further enhancing the Basingstoke.

We shall see WRG in much larger numbers in October, when up to 100 people will be visiting to do work along the whole length of the Canal, with a focus on scrub clearance to protect the Ash embankment. This gathering will take place in memory of Peter Redway, who was a staunch supporter of WRG and who hosted many working parties over the years.



Members of the WRG team constructing the mooring below Lock 1.

(continued from p2)

public value of the Countryside Service issued last Autumn on which the Society and others including the Inland Waterways Association (IWA) were invited to comment. However that consultation bears little relation to the outcomes proposed above and furthermore, the document was effectively hidden on the Surrey CC website. Its existence was a surprise to many. The Society feels badly let down that these damaging proposals have not been raised at any JMC or other meeting for that matter between Society members and Surrey County Councillors and officers, and requests that it now be given the opportunity to express formally its grave concerns. A public request to discuss the paper in the JMC meeting was refused by the chairman (because of rules regarding pre-submission of agenda items). We await with interest Surrey's response to the strength of feeling voiced at that meeting.

With regard to the proposals themselves, the Society's stance is unequivocal. To further starve the BCA of funds when it is already running on empty would be very serious indeed, and could accelerate the Canal into a steady decline. We were told that, even before a 20% funding shortfall from Surrey, at least another £30,000 in savings will have to be found, over and above what have been made over the last few months. We are concerned that Surrey's action could precipitate yet further domino-effect cut-backs from other Canal partners.

To suggest that the management of the Surrey section of the Canal be "externalised" to a third party so that it is effectively split in two and no longer managed as a single integrated entity would, we consider, be a disaster, because that could lead to the eventual permanent closure of the navigation. Let it be known that the Society will campaign vigorously and publicly to oppose this proposal.

Think again, Surrey.

Other News

Society Committee Members for 2011/2012

At the recent Committee meeting, election of officers took place, as follows: Philip Riley has been appointed Chairman, and Martin Leech as Vice-chairman. Gareth Jones was re-elected as secretary, and Graham Hornsey as Treasurer. Kathryn Dodington, Verna Smith, Roger Cansdale, Peter Wright and Dieter Jebens agreed to remain as Committee members. We also welcomed a new member to our number, Freda (aka Freddie) Dawson. There are now 2 vacancies. We are continuing to seek 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 AGM 2011

The Annual General Meeting of the Society took place in May. Of particular interest was a talk by guest speaker John Gibson, the navigation manager of the River Wey. He gave a very interesting talk about how the Wey Navigation operates under the ownership of the National Trust, and what contrasts there are with the Basingstoke! Read the [Summer BCN](#) for an account of the meeting and of John's presentation.

Forthcoming events

Here is a date for your diary:

- **[Mikron Theatre Company 2011 Visit, Sunday 3rd 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 40th 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 (though as you will have noticed, it didn't this time..).