



BASINGSTOKE CANAL NEWS

No. 224 Winter 2009



Editorial



Things seem to be a bit "up in the air" at the moment on the canal. Lots of discussions going on that may bear fruit, but a lot of things needing action.

Ian Brown has almost finished writing his various management plans, which will be presented to the Joint Management Committee for approval. Once this has happened, all he has to do is persuade someone to give him the resources to implement them.

Despite what must at times be an immensely frustrating job, Ian seems to remain remarkably upbeat about the future of the canal.

Cover Picture: Little Lamb from Hastings at the Fox & Hounds Rally, winner of the furthest travelled trophy.

Photo: Roger Cansdale

Let's hope he is right and that things really have reached the low point and will start to improve next year.

It will be ironic if the Basingstoke's fortunes improve while the rest of the national waterways go into a decline as a result of Government cuts or raiding BW's property portfolio to pay off the national debt.

We urge everyone to support the IWA's Save Our System 2010 campaign to fight these proposals. For more information, go to <http://www.waterways.org.uk/SOS2010>

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It's really nice to see some new faces among the work parties and thanks to those who have answered the calls for volunteers. Currently we have groups working on getting the new work boat ready for launch, installing the new lock landings at Woodham, finishing off the new water point at Brookwood and re-painting the *John Pinkerton* (paint stripping has started in the dry dock as seen here). Whilst the same old faithfuls do tend to appear at all these activities, it is a relief to find some new members appearing.

And some of them are actually under 60 years old!

We could still do with more help, not only with the physical activities, but also on the organisational/administrative side. We used to have a number of activities, such as sponsored walks and weekend outings, but they need people to organise them. I organised a trip to the Black Country Museum a few years ago, but it received very poor support; perhaps there is someone out there with a bit more imagination than me who could do better.

It would be nice also if we had a Western End equivalent of

the monthly talks that go on during the winter at Chobham, but, again, it would need an organiser.

I've also been taking the minutes of our Committee meetings for about 20 years and could do with a break if anyone fancies becoming our Minutes Secretary.

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An interesting article in the Odiamham Society journal by a member of the Whitewater Valley Preservation Society highlights the fact that over-abstraction of water from the chalk aquifers at Greywell causes a reduction in river flows of 30% at times of low flow and 7 to 8% at times of high flow. The same aquifers feed the springs that are supposed to supply the basingstoke Canal with water.

This finding from the Whitewater Environmental Study Programme seems to have been accepted by all parties, including South East Water, but what will be done to remedy the situation remains to be seen. Apparently all water companies are preparing Water Resource Management Plans, but South East Water are somehow going to have to reconcile the need to reduce abstraction with the Government's determination to pile ever more houses into south east England.

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Christmas is coming, so don't forget that we still have supplies of Christmas cards. And, if you are looking for stocking fillers, we also have canal guides and maps, Dieter Jeben's book of old photos of the canal, Tim Denton's booklet on World War II Defences on the Canal, and models of the Canal Society van, now again in the correct colour.

If you want any of these, please contact our Sales Manager, Denise Smith (details on the back cover). And a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to one and all!

Chairman's Page

The fortunes of the canal are varied; a joined up policy for planned improvements by the canal owners should be achievable, but unfortunately this is not the case, as positive actions are, at times, countered by detrimental proposals.

Repairs of some structural failures are being carried out, capital money being made available for repairs in this financial year. Surrey County Council are commended for the works at Lock 12, Deepcut Cutting and replacement lock gates.

Go ahead for our own working parties to assist at Lock 1 is subject to our Health and Safety documentation and liability insurance being accepted by the County audits procedures.

Capital bids for 2010/11 have been submitted to both County Councils' budget process. A key factor in the process will be the Asset Management Plan, due for presentation at the JMC Meeting next February.

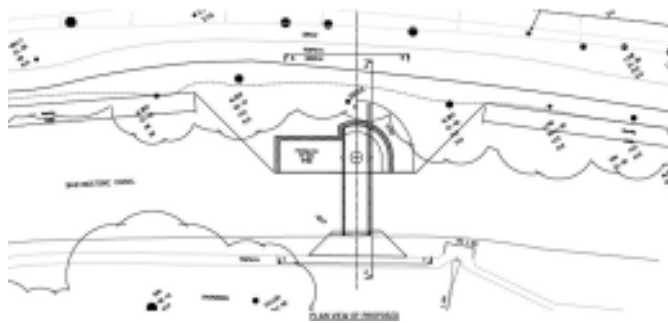
With repairs being carried out and weed cutting in progress at Woking, positive reactions are countered by proposals for installing three Swing Bridges in Woking.

The locations are Hermitage, Kiln Bridge and Chobham Road, and all the locations, in our opinion, will restrict canal usage and events. The bridges are proposed so that towpath users can cross the canal in safety, avoiding crossing roads, a reasonable concept, although they have always managed in the past.



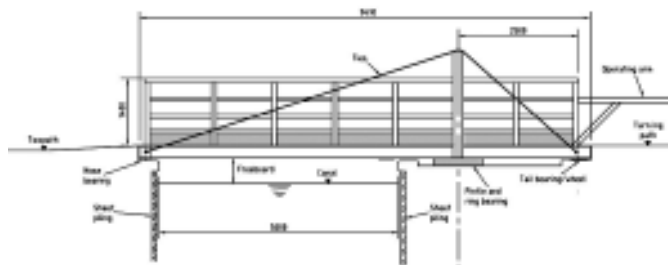
Above: Location of the proposed bridge at Hermitage in the middle of the Brookwood rally site.

The actual sites of the bridges will reduce available moorings or obstruct events. Examples are Brookwood Park, where there would be a significantly impact on event activities and moorings, reduced overnight mooring facilities at Kiln Bridge and obstruction of the Illuminated Boat events at Woking Town Centre.



Above: Plan view of Hermitage bridge

We have objected to the proposals and suggested alternative options. In principle we advocate fixed height crossings using existing structures where possible. Concerns by towpath users, canoeists, boaters and ecology need to be considered and addressed if we are to achieve a multi-user sustainable canal environment.



Above: Elevation of bridges, showing approximately 550mm headroom for canoeists.

Looking at the wider waterway scene, the deterioration of the Basingstoke Canal through lack of investment since restoration is an indication of save today but mortgage the future policies. We have been a lone voice at times when we registered concerns on the finances for canal maintenance, and it is ironic that national policies seem to be following the same formula. The Inland Waterways Association are campaigning against the proposed cuts in grant aid, and members with an interest in the national waterways should support the "Save our System" campaign as individuals.

This Newsletter will be with you for Christmas, so in closing my best wishes to you all for Christmas and New Year and a thank you for your support in 2009.

Peter Redway

Work Party

Lock 22

Working Parties returned to Lock 22 when lack of water dictated that the Deepcut locks were closed for navigation. A decision to manufacture artificial coping stones for placing on the extended towpath side lower wing wall resulted in an extremely good match with the originals, and pointing and backfill completed the task.

Grading, towpath reinstatement and site clearance followed with the final working party completing an intensive year's work on the lower part of the lock.

The support of visiting groups and dedication of our volunteers in, at times, extreme conditions resulted in a very high standard of work being achieved. Thank you all.

Brookwood

The water supply for the Brookwood event had been started in the winter but postponed when the cold spell ended. Surfacing works for the path on the north bank of the canal were scheduled by Sustrans, and we completed the water pipe installation before the new surface was laid.

Security of the supply requires a locked and vandal proof structure, so steel doors are being manufactured prior to final connection of the water supply.

Work Boat

Our work boat project has now been resumed and good progress has been achieved with steelwork modifications and fitting out is well advanced (*See photos opposite*).

Completion for a launch before spring is possible, followed by off-bank clearing..

Lock Landings

The Waterway Recovery Group summer camp completed four lock landings at Woodham. Visiting groups and our own volunteers will complete the remaining landings prior to the

spring towpath works. Water shortages prevented boat lockage during the late summer but work has recently restarted with a visit by the Newbury Working Party Group. Materials were moved down from St John's in one of the Society's barges with the small work boat acting as a push-tug (*Below*). As before, a pneumatic hammer mounted on a digger made a good job of the pile driving.



Thanks to the NWPG for the photos as well as the weekend's work at Lock 4.

FUTURE WORKING PARTY DETAILS

DATE	LEADER	LOCATION
12-13 Dec	PR DJ DL	Ash Lock
9 -10 Jan	PR DJ DL	Lock 1
23-24 Jan	PR DJ DL	Lock 1
13-14 Feb	PR DJ DL	Lock 1
27-28 Feb	DJ DL KR	Lock 1
13-14 Mar	PR DJ DL	Woodham
27-28 Mar	PR DJ DL	Woodham
10-11 Apr	PR DJ DL	Woodham or Bridge Barn
24-25 Apr	PR/DJ/DL/KR	Deepcut, Lock 17?

Contact Numbers

PR - Peter Redway	01483 721710
DJ - Dave Junkisen	0208 941 0685
DL - Dave Lunn	01483 771294
KR - Kevin Redway	01483 722206

Peter Redway



Work Boat



Work is progressing on the Society's work boat. It should be operational next spring, powered by a brand new 13hp Chrysler outboard motor kindly donated by Canal Society Life Member, Mr Owers.

Left: Dave Lunn and Janet Buckley fitting out the cabin.

Below left: Kevin Redway welding up a battery box.

Right: Duncan Paine equipped for needle-gunning the bow compartment (*Below*).



On the canal

We mentioned in the last newsletter that there was a possibility of Surrey County Council finding extra money to deal with some long-standing problems, and it is good to be able to report that this was confirmed.

As a result, work is due to start at the end of November to install Nicospan bank protection along the towpath in the cutting above Lock 28 at Deepcut, and in the spring Ringway are being contracted to deal with the bank slip and drainage issues. When that is all complete and, hopefully, dry weather arrives, the towpath will be surfaced, ending 4 years of frustration for local inhabitants.

Work has already started to repair the bywash pipe at Lock 12, that was causing problems for the garage. One might well feel that it served the garage right for pinching canal land, but unfortunately failure by the owners to take acting in time has resulted in the garage acquiring a good title to the land. It is hoped that the work at Lock 12 may include installation of this part of the Brookwood back-pumping pipeline.



In Hampshire, the Condition Survey revealed a serious leak in the West Hart Embankment and the risk has been deemed unacceptable. In fact there are several leaks near the culvert that takes one of the tributaries of the River Hart under the canal (Above). A number of repair options are under consideration and the level of the Hampshire pound has been reduced by 140mm to take some of the pressure off the embankment. Past experience is that Hampshire react quickly to such problems, so hopefully it will be sorted by next season.

The upper wing walls of Lock 17 are in need of repair, and this could be a job for the Society volunteers later next year after the work at Woodham is complete.

The report on the May rallies in the last issue mentioned that there was concern about the top gates of Lock 28 and these have now been replaced (Top right). More gates are due for replacement on the flight next year.



Sadly, the extra money was not sufficient to pay for proper dredging in Woking. Pinewood Services' dredger *Belfast Girl* was craned out on the River Wey (Below) and has gone off to the Emerald Isle to work on a lucrative contract to dredge the Royal Canal in Dublin.



When, or if, *Belfast Girl* returns remains to be seen, and other means of clearing the channel in Woking (Below) may have to be found. The canal there currently bears little resemblance to a navigable waterway and, not surprisingly, there will be no Illuminated Boat procession in Woking this year; it would be a brave man who tried to find his way through that lot in the dark. In places the reed bed on the towpath is meeting the hydrocotyle growing from the offside.



JMC meeting

The autumn meeting of the Joint Management Committee had some interesting items and some forthright speaking.

- # David Munro stepped down as Chairman and Keith Chapman from Hampshire was elected as the new one.
- # Charles Hicks from the Basingstoke Canal Canoe Club mentioned that Canoe England might be persuaded to give a grant towards more showers and toilets at the Canal Centre. This would obviously be good for other users of the Centre, such as campers, but the Canoe Club would need a guarantee of security of tenure, which seemed to be a problem for Surrey County Council. Ian Brown supported the idea, so maybe it will get sorted out.
- # An application has been made for £50,000 of Natural England and High Level Stewardship funding for tree management work next year.
- # The houseboat issue was raised and Philip Riley, the Canal Society Vice-Chairman, voiced the opinion that the mooring fees that currently go to the County Council should be paid to the BCA. The County said that as they had a man spending half his time on houseboat matters, they needed the money to pay him. This seemed to ignore the fact that he was having to spend this amount of time only because the matter had been neglected for so many years.

It was mentioned that the County had now produced detailed planning advice for new houseboats. It would be interesting to know how this lines up with the design of this boat advertised recently on eBay.



The advertisement invited buyers to "Live the dream on a brand new 70ft x 12 ft houseboat with a steel hull and superstructure, built by quality craftsmen." The asking price for the boat with its 25 year lease was £275,000, cash buyers only. For some reason there were no bidders.

- # Dissatisfaction with the state of the canal was voiced on all sides. Galleon Marine felt that more money should be spent in Hampshire as there were more boats actually using the canal there, but Ian Brown felt that the condition of Woking was far worse and needed priority.
- # Peter Redway, Canal Society Chairman, expressed disappointment that the Condition Survey report was not available. He understood the reasons but was concerned by the lack of visibility of it at this time of year when the Counties would be preparing next year's budget. If there were serious problems, lobbying for the money was going to be needed. Peter felt that user confidence was at its lowest ebb ever.
- # This view was echoed by Paul Roper, IWA local area chairman. He felt that in the canal world the Basingstoke had the worst reputation of any national waterway and that its owners and the BCA were regarded as a joke. The canal was heading for dereliction again, but the problems were still 'doable' and its income generating potential would be considerable if it was in a fully operational condition. Moorings in the South East of England were in great demand, but, of course, had to have guaranteed access to the rest of the system.
- # Ian Brown said that the canal would not be going into dereliction. He also felt that the problems were doable, but he needed JMC support. He reported that the Deepcut slip was to be repaired and that more lock gates would be replaced. The towpath work in Woking was almost complete and he hoped that something similar might be done in Runnymede, Surrey Heath and Rushmoor. Boat licence fees would remain the same next year.
- # Ian mentioned that he had recommended that a feasibility study should be carried out by Hampshire County Council into management of the canal by a trust. This was recommended twenty years ago by the Canal Society and Philip Riley suggested that a group under HCC leadership should be set up. This was agreed.
- # The financial report disclosed an overspend of £17,000 that would be recovered from the reserves. At the same time, £20,000 was to be put into emergency reserves to help pay for infrastructure repairs.
- # It was agreed that in future the Joint Management Committee would meet three times a year to enable it to monitor things more closely. The next meeting was scheduled for 19th February 2010.

Nancy Bell

Visitors to the Canal Centre at Mytchett will be familiar with the narrowboat *Nancy Bell* and its smaller butty *Towed Haul* that serves as Nancy Larcombe's floating art gallery. Together, they fitted neatly into a narrow lock.

Sadly Nancy is now not in very good health and has reluctantly decided that her canal cruising days are over and that she will have to part with her companion of many years and many miles travelled round the waterways of England.

So *Nancy Bell* is up for sale.

Nancy's initial intention was to have her craned out and taken to be sold at a marina off the canal, but she has agreed to let us try first to sell it to someone on the Basingstoke. It would be very nice to keep it here as it is a boat with a lot of history. Nancy used to write regular pieces for *Canal & Riverboat* magazine while cruising round the country and she intends to leave all her diaries of these trips with the boat, so the new owner will be able to read all about it.

Nancy Bell was built in 1972 by the well respected firm of Colecraft using 1/4 inch steel throughout. Anodes are fitted. The overall length is 38ft and she draws about 2ft. The original Yanmar engine was replaced with a 2 cylinder Lister Alpha with raw water cooling. Her distinctive feature is the bow which has a shape reminiscent of a Canadian canoe; only about three dozen of these were built. Large windows make the interior rather brighter than many boats.

The hull was painted 10 years ago with epoxy paint, and more recently the engine was fitted with a new alternator and starter motor. There is a solid fuel stove in the cabin.

The boat was taken to the dry dock in October for a survey report by a marine surveyor. He reported that the external paint was in "exceptional condition". The engine performed well on the trip to the dry dock and a new battery is being fitted. The boat has a current Safety Certificate.

So much for the good news. On the downside, the interior of the engine compartment has some corrosion that requires treatment; the aft deck doesn't appear to be draining, which can let water get into the engine bay. It shouldn't be difficult to cure this; drainage channels may be blocked.

The other thing is that this is a 37-year old boat with a 37-year old interior. A new owner would probably want to do a complete refit.

However, Nancy's main aim is a happy future for her boat with a new owner who will get further enjoyment from her,



rather than looking to make a lot of money from the sale. We think she is worth £5000 or £6000, but we are open to offers.

At this sort of price, this is a super opportunity for someone who has always wanted a boat, but is unwilling to fork out £50,000+ on a hobby. There must be someone out there, perhaps with a garden backing onto the canal, who could do the refit themselves and end up with a very nice boat with a lot of character, that could give them many years of enjoyment for a small fraction of the usual cost.

Because of Nancy's ill health, we are lending a hand, so if you are interested and would like to have a look over *Nancy Bell*, please contact me, Roger Cansdale (details on the back page).



Above: A drawing from Nancy's book "It's a Boat's Life" showing *Nancy Bell* and *Towed Haul* at Cropredy on the Oxford Canal.

Correspondence

Dear Roger,

Firstly, thank you for yet another informative and interesting edition of the Society's magazine.

Although living in the vicinity of the canal for nearly 70 years now and being a member of the Society for nearly a decade, I do find myself confused at times by the various organisations mentioned in connection with the running/ownership of the Canal. Would it be possible to print in one of the editions, a guide to the structure of the organisation/ownership, perhaps in a "family tree" format?

Yours sincerely,
Alan Fairlie.
Woodham Lock Area

OK, here goes:

Owners of the canal: Surrey and Hampshire County Councils

Operators of the canal: Basingstoke Canal Authority (Headed by **Canal Director** - Ian Brown)

Contributors to the canal budget: Surrey & Hampshire County Councils and Riparian District Councils (Hart, Rushmoor, Guildford, Surrey Heath, Woking and Runnymede), and, indirectly, the Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society.

Management of the canal: Joint Management Committee (Voting representatives from the County Councils and District Councils plus non-voting representatives from SHCS(2), IWA, NE, Canal operators (e.g. Galleon Marine), Houseboat owners, Parish Councils and officials from the County Councils and the BCA)

The JMC is supported by the Joint Advisory Group which also has representatives from the anglers and canoeists.

The following acronyms may occur:

AINA	Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (Includes BW, EA and BCA)
BADC	Basingstoke & Deane Canoe Club (Based at Colt Hill)
BBC	Byfleet Boat Club (Co-organisers of the Bridge Barn Rally and the Illuminated Boat Procession in Woking)
BCA	Basingstoke Canal Authority (HQ, the Canal Centre at Mytchett)
BCAA	Basingstoke Canal Angling Association
BCBC	Basingstoke Canal Boating Club (Organisers of the annual Fox & Hounds Rally in Fleet)
BCCC	Basingstoke Canal Canoe Club (Based at the Canal Centre, Mytchett)
BW	British Waterways (Managers of the national canal network, but not the Basingstoke)
EA	Environment Agency (Managers of other national waterways and issuers of Abstraction Licences)
HCC	Hampshire County Council (Co-owners of the Basingstoke Canal)
IWA	Inland Waterways Association (Support association for UK inland waterways)
JAG	Joint Advisory Group (Advises the JMC - effectively a working sub-committee)
JMC	Joint Management Committee (Overall management of the canal)
KESCRG	Kent & East Sussex Waterway Recovery Group (Volunteer group)
MCA	Maritime and Coastguard Agency (Issues licences for commercial boats and captains)
NE	Natural England (Designators of SSSIs)
NT	National Trust (Managers of the River Wey)
NWPG	Newbury Working Party Group (Volunteer group)
PBA	Passenger Boat Association (Secretary Roger Flitter, our ex-dredger manager)
RBOA	Residential Boat Owners Association (Represents house boat owners' interests nationally)
SCC	Surrey County Council (Co-owners of the Basingstoke Canal)
SHCC	Surrey & Hampshire Canal Cruises (Operators of the <i>John Pinkerton</i> and trading arm of SHCS)
SHCS	Surrey & Hampshire Canal Society (Founded in 1966 to restore and support the Basingstoke Canal)
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest (As designated by NE, e.g. most of the Basingstoke Canal)
WRG	Waterway Recovery Group (National volunteer group)

I hope that makes everything clear, but I will try to avoid using acronyms apart from the most obvious, such as the IWA or BCA.

A Tale of Two

In the 1950s, the owner of the canal, Sidney Cooke, set up a company to sell cheap accommodation based on a fleet of old narrow boats brought down from the Midlands. Some of these were already more than 60 years old. The Illustrated London News of December 1960 had an "advertorial" item about them, from which this photo comes.

John Gerrard's Floating Homes Ltd were offering 25-year-old barges (sic) "converted into architect-designed new-style dwellings of great attraction, and even luxury, on the Basingstoke Canal at West Byfleet."

The boats came as three basic models: The 'standard' (three bedrooms, bathroom, kitchen with cooker and refrigerator, entrance hall and saloon with convertible settee/double bed) cost £1,350. The 'de-luxe' (master bedroom, single bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, entrance hall and saloon as above) came at £1,750.

For those on a budget, the 'half boat' contained master bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, entrance hall and saloon as above, and would set you back a mere £875. "All vessels have a minimum life expectancy of 25 years under working conditions. As static dwellings, they may naturally expect a much longer life."

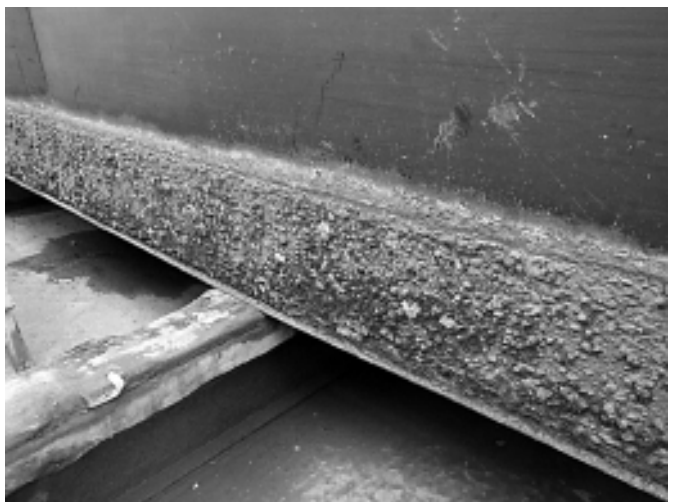
Later other boats joined the colony in Woodham, including David Horsfall's famous *Adelina*.

As the canal approached its re-opening in 1991, the house boats were surveyed. For some the much longer life had failed to materialise and they were too far gone to save, but others were given a new lease of life by having a second hull welded on outside the original one, with a 6mm bottom and 4mm sides.

One such was *Dragonfly*, seen above right, an 1891 built Joey boat, number BCN 1407. Its new hull was grafted on in the Pyrford dry dock some 18 years ago and its current owner bought it in 1987. She very sensibly decided recently that it was time for a dry dock inspection, so with the aid of the tug *James Loader*, back it went to Pyrford Marina on the River Wey (*below*).



The condition of the hull was found to be something of a disappointment, to put it mildly. The side facing into the canal was not too bad, but the side adjacent to the steel piling of the bank had clearly suffered greatly from galvanic corrosion (*below*).



As a result the bottom half of both sides of the hull had yet another layer of steel welded on, plus a full set of sacrificial anodes.



Houseboats

Fortunately a hole that had rusted through in the bottom of the original hull enabled the gap between the two hulls to be inspected and showed that no water was present, so the repair seems to have been done in the nick of time. *Dragonfly* is now back on its mooring.



Above: The *James Loader* waiting for *Dragonfly* to come up through Lock 1 (Below).



Dragonfly should now last for a good few more years, but this episode does illustrate the need for maintenance of steel hulled boats even when they are in fresh water. Canal boats that are not house boats are required to come out of the water every 5 years for inspection and re-certification, and in reality, they are not much more likely to corrode than a house boat.

Dragonfly is about the sixth house boat to go to Pyrford for inspection in recent years, but some of the more recently built "boats" will be unable to do this as they are too big to go under the bridges. On the evidence from *Dragonfly* it is unlikely that they will be celebrating their centenary.

Thanks to Julia Jacs, Peter Boyce and Kathryn Dodington for photos and to Richard Coles for the Illustrated London News article.

Sadly it appears that not all the house boat owners are as sensible as *Dragonfly*'s.

Wenonah apparently changed hands some time ago. However, it appeared to be in a derelict and dangerous condition and liable to become an obstacle to navigation. The BCA moved it to the wharf at Scotland Bridge in case it sank and had to be lifting it out for disposal. Its new owner was given the option of "collecting" it from there (*below*).



This he did in the early hours of a Sunday morning. After cutting the padlock off the gates of Lock 1 with an angle grinder, he then proceeded down to the River Wey, leaving the gates leaking behind him so that the boats above found themselves in a half empty pound the next morning.

His intention apparently is to take it down the Thames to the other side of London. *Wininoah* is now lying on the Wey awaiting the re-opening of Coxes Lock. It is difficult to see the state of the hull as it is all wrapped in sheeting, but I don't think I would want to venture onto the Thames in it. Rumour has it that the owner now has it insured, so one can only wish him bon voyage! At least it won't be cluttering up the canal any more.



Events

Fox & Hounds Rally



Fun for all at the Basingstoke Canal Boating Club rally in Fleet back in September.



Events

CHOBHAM SOCIAL MEETINGS

The talks season is now in full swing and will continue to April 2010. The venue as usual is at the Parish Pavilion, Recreation Ground, Station Road, Chobham, near Woking. Meetings start at 8pm on the third Wednesday of the month (See map above for exact location). Coffee/tea and biscuits will be available during the interval. Non-members and friends are very welcome.

Wednesday 16th December 2009

Brian Stovold - **'The Wilts and Berks Canal - Past, Present and Future'**

Brian Stovold, a Director of the Wilts and Berks Canal Trust and Chairman of the East Vale Branch, will cover the history of this navigation and describe the current position and future of this important project to connect up waterways in this part of the south west, where restoration is taking place at various locations over a wide area.

Wednesday 20th January 2010

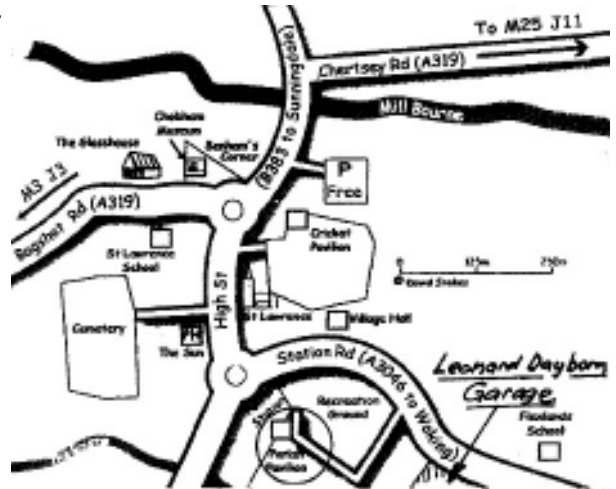
Peter Oates - 'The Itchen Navigation'

Peter Oates, well known to us as a member of the Southampton Canal Society and a working party leader during the restoration of the Deepcut locks, will be returning to talk about the history of this navigation. He will also describe the current work that is taking place with Lottery funds to cosmetically restore some of the locks and features of the waterway.

Wednesday 17th February 2010

Roddy McKee - 'Tale of Two Steamers - Waverley and Kingswear Castle'

Roddy will be recounting the history of these two restored paddle steamers and updating us on the ongoing work that has been taking place over the years to keep these historic vessels in operation, including the two stages of large rebuilds. They are the only two operational sea going paddle steamers left in this country, and long may they be so.



Wednesday 17th March 2010

Ron and Myra Glover - 'Crossing Germany from west to east'

Ron and Myra will be describing and illustrating their cruises in Germany in their steel motor cruiser from the River Rhine in the west through to Berlin and then north to the Mecklenburg Lakes and back to Berlin thence eastwards to the Polish border.

Wednesday 21st April 2010

Runnalls Davis - **'Birds, Beaux, Barges and a Great Big Bang - The Regent's Canal'**

One of our popular speakers returns again to talk about London's very own canal which is comparatively little known, and this voyage follows it from its somewhat sordid beginnings at Limehouse on the Thames to the sublime Regency beauty of Little Venice. Its history and changing fortunes are described, as well as some of its landmark buildings, strange curiosities, and the eccentric characters who have left their mark on it.

For further information on this talks programme please contact David Millett on 01252 617364 or email:d.millett7@ntlworld.com

2010 Rallies

The Inland Waterway Association will again be holding its National Rally at Beale Park on the Thames next year from 28 to 30th August.

The Canal Society will be having a marquee so Verna Smith will be looking for volunteers to help man the stand. The IWA are also looking for help to set up and dismantle the site.

We hope to be running an event at the Bridge Barn in the spring, although it may be a bit lacking in boats unless some weed cutting is done. Verna would also like some help with this, producing risk assessments, contacting stallholders, and managing the waterside.

IN SEARCH OF WATER

The Basingstoke Canal has always been relatively short of water, particularly during dry summer months. In recent years the problem has been addressed to some extent by installing back-pumps on the Woodham and St John's flights of locks with the objective to re-cycle water used when boats lock down. A similar scheme is currently being considered for the Brookwood Three. At the same time it has been suggested that a reservoir at Deepcut would be a better alternative because this would aid navigation of the Deepcut flight of 14 locks at which it would be prohibitively expensive to install a back-pumping scheme.

Another concept which has already been examined but remains on the back-burner is to tap into Bourley Reservoirs and waterworks, considered by the Basingstoke Canal Authority in 1994 when Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick and Partners (SWK), consultant engineers, were commissioned to study the feasibility of utilising water from Bourley Reservoirs for the canal. At the time it was known that this MoD water supply would no longer be needed by the army which was going over to mains water supply.



Above: Bourley No.3 reservoir

The reservoirs, situated in Bourley Bottom just under 2 miles (about 3km) to the west of Aldershot town, were constructed between 1863 and 1866 to supply Aldershot Camp with its water requirement. The geology of most of the catchment area is the relatively permeable Bagshot Sands and Caesar's Camp Gravels, and some surface water run-off. The water is run down to the reservoirs along a network of some 10 miles of glazed open channels: the water drains upstream of the reservoirs are well supplied by groundwater base flow. SWK estimated the yield from Bourley Reservoirs to be 347 million litres annually or 1.9MI/day if only drawn during the summer 6 month period, the total storage capacity being about 182MI. Allowing for the conservation of fish in the reservoirs, SWP estimated that just 1.5MI/day

would be available to the canal. The consultants noted that if drainage channels were to be repaired and adequately maintained the average yield could be increased to 1.65MI/day.

The SWK study considered methods of transporting water from the reservoirs to the canal. SWK rejected the first option for a 2.4km pipeline because of the likely cost estimated at £150,000.

The study also considered two other options for transporting water from the reservoirs to the canal: the first to use the Gelvert Stream which runs under the canal and discharges into Fleet Pond. But the report concluded that military activities in the Long Valley area causing significant sediment loads, coupled with the cost involved in transferring water to the canal, would make another option to use the Claycart Stream, which already discharges into the canal, the preferred one. SWK indicated that there would be costs involved in piping water into the Claycart Stream and controlling and monitoring discharges into the canal.

Referring to water quality, the report acknowledged the acidic nature of the local canal water and its value as a habitat for specific aquatic plants and invertebrates. The report noted that the Bourley Reservoir water is of a similar quality.

Bourley Reservoirs and the water channels with hillside pathways are worth exploring on foot. There is a convenient car parking area off Bourley Road, on the Aldershot side of Tweseldown Race Course, which runs between Beacon Hill Road (B3013), past Tweseldown, and Farnborough Road (A325). When you've parked, cross the road to an open space known as the Camping Ground. At the far end you can ascend Parkhurst Hill on the right to explore the network of water channels. But remember this is MoD land and take heed of any warning notices. Our vice president David Millett recalls taking his nephew to explore the area once and being challenged by an MoD ranger carrying a high velocity rifle to cull deer. So keep your eyes skinned and proceed with the utmost caution!

*While researching this article I became aware of the fact that English Heritage has shown an interest in conservation of the reservoirs and water collection system as a site of historic industrial interest. This should not exclude use of the reservoirs and excess to the water channels.

To end with a personal thought: in addition to supplying the canal with water, the area would make a splendid country park with fishing/holiday lodges.

Dieter Jebens

Note: The Society is currently discussing the Bourley Reservoirs with the MOD.

IN SEARCH OF WATER, 1948

In 1948, the National Gas Turbine Establishment at Pyestock was being planned as an amalgamation of Frank Whittle's Power Jets company and the Engine Department of the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough. Large quantities of water would be needed to cool the engine test cells and the following report was written by a Man from the Ministry.

REPORT ON THE BASINGSTOKE CANAL.

On June 28th 1948, I had a consultation on the Basingstoke Canal with the sole remaining directors, Messrs Harmsworth of Ash Vale, and the following avenues were explored: (a) the possibility of using the canal as a means of transport to the new site, and (b) the possibility of using the canal as a source of make-up water for the new site.

As regards (a), it was found that the 29 locks in existence between Woking and Norris Bridge are all in good condition, and are capable of being worked without any further preparation.

The canal is not in use above Woking, and a large amount of silting has occurred, but it appears that the expense of dredging is not the responsibility of the Company, but that various other bodies are liable for the clearance of the canal on demand. From Woking to Brookwood, this responsibility lies with the Woking Council. From Brookwood to Norris Bridge, the responsibility lies with the War Department, while above that the liability lies with other Councils. No demands have been made for some years on any of these authorities, as there has been no traffic above Woking.

It appears that the whole water supply of the canal, which falls steadily from Basingstoke to Woking, is derived from the Greywell springs - this side of Woking. A meter established at this point shows that the present delivery of these springs is in the vicinity of six million gallons per week*. The Mid Wessex Water Company are also pumping from these springs, and it has been shown that they have been unable to lessen the delivery to the canal. It is the opinion of the owners that, were these springs cleared, the delivery would be in the vicinity of fifteen millions per week*. They have an agreement with the Water Company that, should the meter show a canal delivery of less than six millions per week*, the Company's pumping operations should cease. The delivery, however, has not varied, even in dry weather. This water supply supplies the whole of the canal to Woking, and has never failed to fill the locks in use at present. It might be mentioned here, that approximately 1200 tons of coal are brought into Woking each week, together with timber, bricks, etc.

It therefore seems that scheme (a) is feasible.

As regards (b), this also seems practicable, inasmuch as the majority of the Greywell supply is at present run to waste. It should be pointed out that no more water is required to operate the canal, as far as Norris Bridge than is at present required to operate the Woking Lock. If the bottom lock is filled, the upper locks are automatically filled also. The estimated requirement for Pyestock of a million gallons a week would make no practical difference to the operation of the canal.

I am, however, confidentially informed by the owners that the canal is about to be put up for sale. The former owner, father of the present director, has just died, and his estate is being liquidated by Messrs Foster, Wells and Coggin, Solicitors, of Aldershot, and the sale will be handled by Messrs Pearson & Co. I am also confidentially informed that the price asked will be less than £20,000. I have been requested to keep this matter strictly in confidence at the moment.

I am also informed that the War Department have tentatively made enquiries as to the possibility of using the Canal for the transport of coal to Ash Wharf. In view of the impending sale, however, nothing has been done about this.

I have suggested that our enquiries should not be communicated to any other parties.

J J Holt

** This originally said per day and has been changed by hand*

A brief survey report was attached. The six Woodham locks were said to be in good working order with only a few minor repairs needed. Four of the St John's flight were in good working order with a new lower gate about to be fitted to the fifth. The Brookwood three all had new gates. At Deepcut, four locks required new upper gates and two lower gates. Some brickwork repairs were needed at Lock 21. Ash Lock needed replanking of the lower gates.

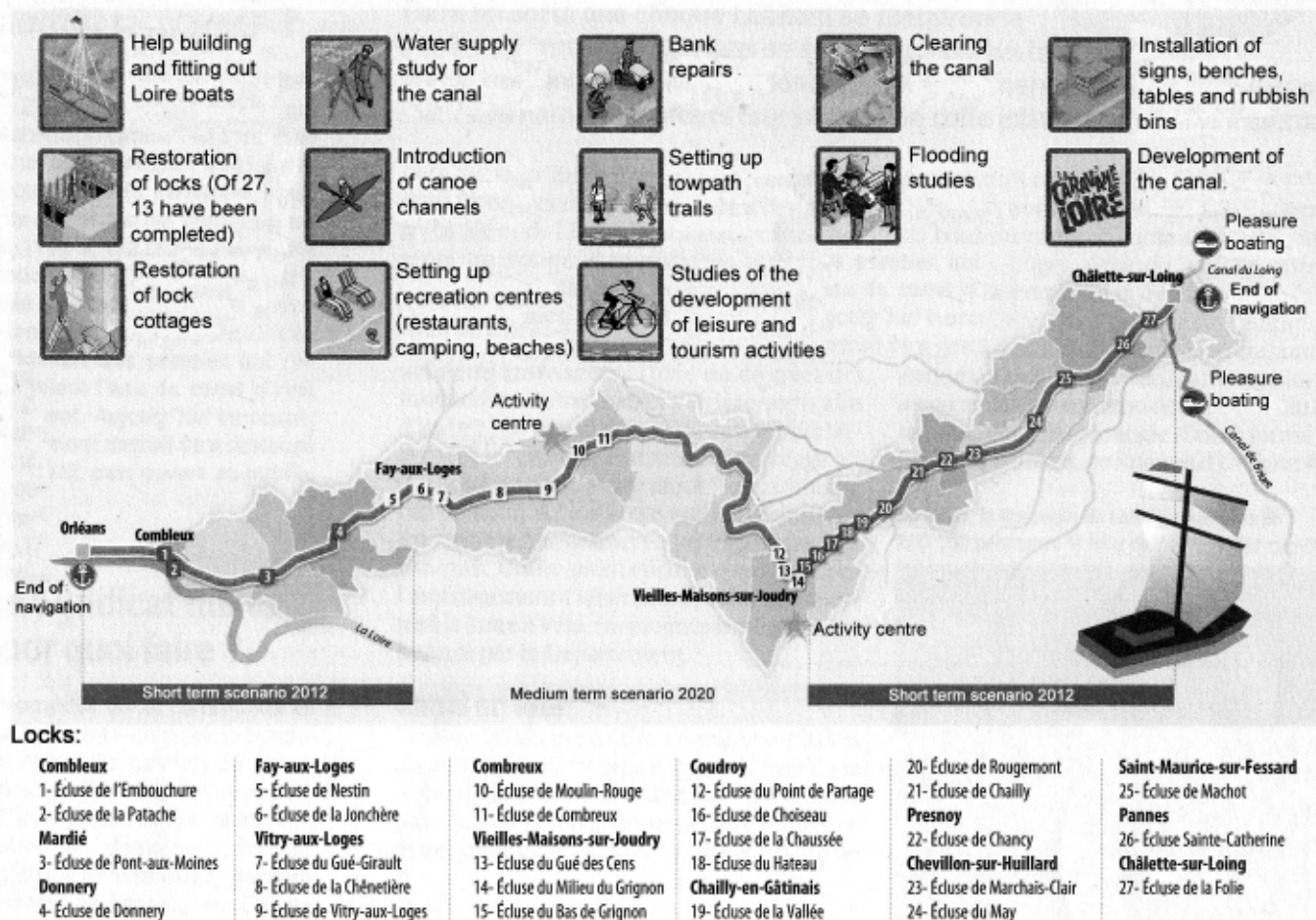
The Canal Company were said to have dredged 4 miles of the navigation enabling freights of 50 tons to Woking and it further states that "The War Department have agreed to remove silt from Norris Hill (Pyestock) to Pirbright, 6 miles and Woking Council have to remove silt at St John's, Langmans Bridge and Wheatsheaf Bridge."

It noted that all road bridges were now turned over to local Councils, and are therefore their responsibility. Railway bridges by Railway Companies concerned.

One wonders how much Mr Holt knew about canals and whether he checked the owners' statements about the good working order of the locks. If they were correct, the locks certainly went into a rapid decline in the following 20 years. NGTE did enter into a contract with the canal to supply water and it was the New Basingstoke Canal Company's main source of income until the contract ended in 1964. Mrs Marshall left the Company the same year and claimed that the loss of the contract was due to greed on the part of the Canal Company who asked too much money for its renewal.

Canal d'Orléans

Work and activities on the Canal d'Orleans since 1985



Tony Davis recently sent me a couple of articles about the restoration of the Basingstoke's twin, the Canal d'Orléans, that are enough to make Ian Brown weep:-

Twelve million Euros programmed between 2010 and 2012

To be able to reopen the navigation in the coming three years at the two ends of the canal (Orléans to Fay-aux-Loges and Grignon to Châlette-sur-Loing), some restoration work is still required. Amongst them, notably, four locks (16 and 17 at Coudroy, and 1 and 2 at Combleux), as well as water works (all weirs and inlets between Fay-aux-Loges and Combleux, then between Grignon and Châlette-sur-Loing). There is also 17 km of bank protection and dredging of 16 pounds (110,000 cubic metres of silt to remove over 35 km) to guarantee a minimum channel depth of 1.4 m. This work programme, estimated to cost 12 million euros, will take place between 2010 and 2012.

And it's not going to stop there. Having already invested 2.7 million euros since 2008, the intention is to complete the full

restoration of the canal by 2020. The total bill will be 40 M•.

The French clearly see it as a worthwhile investment that will provide benefits to the local community both in terms of leisure facilities and economic returns because of increased recreation and tourism activity.

It was very nice to see that many of the friends who we met in France and welcomed to the 2006 Brookwood Rally, are still involved with the Canal d'Orléans, among them, Michel Grillon, President of their JMC, Jacques Cotteray, Denis Godeau and Nadine Delamour. Nadine mentions the twinning with the Basingstoke Canal and hopes that it will be made official in 2012.

So make a note in your diaries for a mass British invasion fleet to the Loiret in 2012.

Thinks: EDF provide our electricity: wonder if the French would like to run our canals as well?

John Hulbert

My dear old friend John Hulbert died peacefully in his bed in October 2009 at the age of 69 years. He had lived in Fleet for 40 years in his beloved home on the banks of the Basingstoke Canal.

He knew the canal very well as he was one of the original canal restoration 'navvies' in the 70s helping with the steam dredger 'Perseverance' and, in those days, the skips on the narrow gauge railway to move the silt to the dump sites between Colt Hill, Odiham and Swan Bridge, North Warnborough. Also in the late 60s when he was helping an unofficial working party under Pondtail Bridge, Fleet, they came across some unexploded phosphorus bombs, so had to get the army bomb disposal unit in the clear the area!

I first met John in the late 70s when I was asked to help him and Martin Bowers to crew the 'John Pinkerton' trip boat. Prior to its commissioning John and Martin had helped with installing the interior floors, head linings and the windows. When crewing John and Martin wore traditional boatmen's clothes and took a great pride in making the passengers comfortable and informed them about the history and restoration progress along the canal.



John and I became boating buddies with a shared love for exploring the inland waterways. We had many adventures in a delightfully restored wooden Canadian canoe called 'Silver Ripple' which was owned by Aubrey Slaughter. This canoe had a old restored Austin 7 engine as its motor power. On one occasion we trailed it to Brest in France for an International Boating Festival where it was displayed in the British Pavilion.

John had a boatbuilding background, having trained at the well known Bates and Toughs Boatyards on the Thames. The former were famous for their Star Cruisers. In the 80s and 90s he constructed in his canalside garden his own beautiful replica of an Edwardian Windermere Inspection Launch which he launched straight into the canal. He spent his last few years entertaining friends on it along the middle reaches of the Thames.

His early contribution to the restoration of the Basingstoke Canal and, in recent years, his assistance at the annual Thames Traditional Boat Rally at Henley on Thames, was where John felt at home and needed. John had the biggest of hearts and was always wanting to help others. He was a good friend to me and I shall miss his cheeky ways.

Virginia Birkett

200 Club

Here are the winners for the second half of 2009. Thank you for all you support and best wishes for Xmas and the New Year.

The 200 Club membership form for 2010 should be in this issue of the newsletter.

Jim Johnstone

August		October		December	
Mrs G Browne	£58	Mr DA Webber	£58	Mrs MJ Marchant	£58
Mrs PA Wells	£29	Mrs J Hunter	£29	Miss P Ford-Young	£29
Mr S Murrell	£15	Mrs S Hughes	£15	Mrs S Wallis	£15
Mr R Glossop	£15	Mrs V Vine	£15	Mr A Hocking	£15

- At the time of writing, the autumn colours along the Basingstoke Canal are magnificent and form a wonderful backdrop to a stroll along the towpath or from a boat. Whatever the season the canal is a superb asset for local residents or those from further afield. Whether for boating, walking, canoeing, fishing, photography or for those interested in the wildlife, the canal is a recreational facility for all, but, being a man-made structure, it needs regular maintenance and repairs so it is essential that all the local riparian county, borough and district councils continue their financial support in spite of the current economic situation. Without this financial support the canal will gradually deteriorate again, undoing all the hard restoration work of the seventies and eighties.
- Good to hear the North East Hampshire MP James Arbuthnot, who is one of our Society Vice Presidents, is backing a campaign to promote Britain's inland waterways. He has given his support to an Early Day Motion (EDM) proposed by Charlotte Atkins, MP for Staffordshire Moorlands. The EDM stresses the importance of the inland waterways for leisure and recreation and for the fact that it gives employment for waterway businesses. He said 'The role played by inland waterways in local communities which is often unrecognised or under appreciated, is a vital part of our way of life. I am happy to lend my support to any initiative which is designed to try and boost greater appreciation of the importance of inland waterways, not just as part of our rich cultural heritage but also to provide facilities for the present and for the future'.
- Hart District Council are revising and updating their Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area document which dates from 1987. The Society have been involved in this process as have the local riparian parish councils. Two drafts have been issued so far and after a public exhibition and consultation in the summer the final version will be going to Hart District Council's Cabinet in December for final approval. This will help in dealing with our comments on future planning applications in Hart.
- 'Hampshire & The New Forest Stories of the Supernatural', a book by Sonia Smith has been newly published to coincide with Hallowe'en. One of the stories is of a man who was out walking his black Labrador dog along the Basingstoke Canal in September 1981. A thick mist descended and the man heard heavy footsteps. He turned to see a piebald heavy horse coming towards him towing a barge. The man called his dog but when he turned back the horse and barge were nowhere in sight. For days after the dog would not go for a walk and certainly not along the canal towpath!.
- Congratulations to the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership who are celebrating thirty years since its formation in 1979. They are a similar organisation to the Basingstoke Canal Authority and comprise Hampshire County Council, Surrey County Council, and the District, Borough and Town Councils of Blackwater and Hawley, Farnham, Guildford, Hart, Rushmoor, Sandhurst, Surrey Heath, Waverley, Wokingham and Yateley. Over the years they have restored the Blackwater Valley river corridor from a derelict and rubbish strewn watercourse into a well-loved amenity, well supported by volunteers who help with maintenance and improvements.
- The Sustrans (which stands for Sustainable Transport) scheme to upgrade the towpath through Woking in conjunction with Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council has been extended to Sheerwater Bridge to the east of the town, and to Pirbright Bridge to the west. Together with a number of new links to the towpath the upgrade has proved very popular and usage has increased dramatically. The Saturn Trail, signed as Route 221, was opened in June and the extension to Sherewater was opened in September.
- A letter written to one of our members by the New Basingstoke Canal Company in November 1967 who enquired about fishing in the canal stated that the stretches of the canal which were not covered by individual clubs notice boards could be fished by purchasing a permit from the Canal Company, the charges for which were: 2/- Day ticket. 10/- Monthly ticket, £1 Season ticket and 25/- Season ticket which included fishing the Crookham Deepes, which was (and still is) one of the most popular locations along the canal. (For comparison, today's rates are: Day Ticket £3.00 - Monthly £8.00 - Season £22.00.) Incidentally, a recent press report has indicated that the Basingstoke Canal Angling Association will fold at a Special EGM in December unless people volunteer to serve as Chairman, Secretary etc to replace those committee members standing down.
- The increase in the number of representatives to serve on the Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee from 18 to 24 has enabled a number of other organisations to be represented including the Inland Waterways Association, Galleon Marine at Odiham, the Hart Parish Councils and the Basingstoke Canal Houseboat Owners' Association. The Society now has an additional representative, Philip Riley, our Vice Chairman, to support our Chairman Peter Redway. The council representatives on the Committee will be able to hear direct any issues or problems raised by a wider cross section of canal users, which is important.

Vice-President

Lookback

From Society Newsletter No 89 February 1980

- At the Society's Special General Meeting in November 1979, the Committee received full support for their plan to employ four of the Job Creation Supervisors, and a motion to increase subscription rates received unanimous approval. However, the motion to increase the Executive Committee (Board) from nine to twelve members got less than full support. A member pointed out Society affairs might be run more effectively by decreasing the size of the Committee and having more sub-committees instead. And the wife of a committee member hoped that the move would not lead to her husband returning home even later after meetings!
- One local company has already responded to the Society's appeal for funds to keep the Job Creation Supervisors employed permanently. The Woking firm of James Walker & Co Ltd, manufacturers of packing, seals and gaskets, has contributed the sum of £500, for which the Society is grateful. The Society is glad to know that this long established, locally based company recognises the value of restoring the canal for recreational use by its employees and the community at large. It is hoped that other local companies will follow suit.
- At the Special General Meeting the Chairman, Robin Higgs, explained that the Society has received over £300, 000 in grants to provide jobs and training for unemployed young people on restoring the Deepcut flight of locks during the last three years. However, under the present Government, the Special Temporary Employment Programme grants would only be available in depressed areas of the country. . By launching the Appeal Fund, the Society hoped that by employing the four Supervisors directly, the restoration schedule could be maintained. The Society needed £30,000 a year excluding materials which is is hoped Surrey County Council would continue to supply. The Society had enough funds to finance an immediate six months of employment. Thereafter it is hoped that Surrey County Council would support the team for a further six months until the Appeal hopefully bore fruit.
- Following the note in the August 1979 Newsletter, thirty families or individuals expressed an interest in the formation of a canal based canoe club. Twenty six representatives attended a meeting in November where it was agreed that the Basingstoke Canoe Club should be formed and affiliated to the Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society. Initially the membership will consist of adults or families. The club has its first 'meet' on the 25th. November from Charles and Katie Hick's garden next to Chequers Bridge, Crookham Village, with forty members/prospective members attending a 'try a canoe' session in blustery conditions. Regular meets would be arranged with indoor training at the pool at RAF Odiham.
- An article on the first TEN HARD YEARS of the Society was written by Paul Benn with a precis of all the effort and work that had gone into this period. The article was headed:
". . . God save Daddy, God Save Mummy and God save the Basingstoke Canal." 5 year old Robert's prayer, 1967.
The article finished by saying that everyone knows what was achieved in 1979, but what will be achieved in 1980. Perhaps two week cruises will be available by 1985, so start saving now, with inflation the cost could be £8, 500!
- A car park for 60 cars and three coaches, together with toilets, an information kiosk and picnic site on the towpath side of the Basingstoke Canal immediately to the east of Colt Hill Bridge at Odiham is planned once the new by-pass is built across the existing cricket pitch. The proposals are contained in a draft report published last August by a working party of Hampshire County Council officers, for recreational facilities at Colt Hill which is seen as one of the centres of leisure activity on the canal because of its easy access. With the possibility of a boat hire station nearby on the south side of the canal and the operation of the 'John Pinkerton' at this location as well, people from a wide area could make use of the canal.
- The report also discusses various possible sites for mooring basins on the Hampshire section of the canal to avoid linear moorings. Of the possible 33 sites considered, only five were thought to be at all suitable: east of Pondtail Bridge, Fleet, Coxmoor Wood, Broad Oak and just west of Colt Hill, Odiham on both the south and north sides of the canal. The report concluded that the most suitable site in terms of easy access, relative simplicity of construction, environmentally, and because it is centrally situated is at Pondtail Bridge on the outskirts of Fleet. A public meeting is to be held in January 1980 in Odiham to discuss the Colt Hill proposals.
- Fears that work on restoring the Deepcut Flight of Locks may finish at the end of 1979 have been temporarily averted by a further grant by the Manpower Services Commission of £15,000 to provide employment for twelve young people and the five existing supervisors. This will enable restoration work to continue for a further eleven weeks from January 14th. Recruitment will be handled by the Careers Officer and Job Centre at Camberley. Frank Jones, the Project Co-ordinator said "that he hoped that these young people will eventually get a job with local building firms, as others have done in the past".

SHCS notes

Sheerwater Woods

The Canal Society was recently given a parcel of land behind the towpath at Sheerwater. It is a piece of woodland that runs from Lock 6 down to Lock 4. It is open to the public, so we have duty of care to ensure that there are no undue hazards or things going on there that shouldn't be.

We are looking for a local SHCS member who would be willing to act as a warden. What we need is someone who is prepared to visit the woods, say once a week, to check on dangerous trees, fly tipping etc and report to someone on the Committee. If you are interested, please contact Philip Riley on 01256 702109.



Anyone interested in joining the Society should contact the Membership Secretary, Mrs Doreen Hornsey, whose contact details are listed below. The annual subscription is Adults £10, Junior £3, OAP £5, Family £12, 2 OAP £7, and Group £15, payable on March 1st each year.

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