



# BASINGSTOKE CANAL BULLETIN

No. 15 August/September/October 2012

## Contract signed for new *John Pinkerton*



We are pleased to announce that on 1<sup>st</sup> October, Nigel Bird and Pete Phillips (*above, centre*) signed the contract on behalf of the Society with boat builders Lambon of Droitwich for the construction of a replacement trip boat, following the approval of the design by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). The Society is now committed to an expenditure (its largest ever) of around £166,000 for a brand new craft which will provide public and chartered trips along the Basingstoke Canal mainly from Odiham. We anticipate delivery of the new *John Pinkerton* early next year. *See page 5 for pictures hot off the press and Pete's account of progress so far.*

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- [Basingstoke Canal Wiki Page](#)
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- [Map of the Basingstoke Canal](#)
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- [BCA Visitor Centre on Facebook](#)



## Deepcut in water again!

After 4 years of being closed and drained, it is good to see that the Deepcut flight is in the process of being rewatered by the rangers, now that the majority of repairs in the current phase have been completed by contractor Dyer and Butler (*eg right, looking downstream to Lock 26*). In preparation, the ranger team have been busy working to remove weed from the canal bed where they can. **However, there is a way to go yet before the flight will be open to navigation.** There is still some significant work to be done, including the repair the void under the Lock 18 upper wing wall, and lock gates have still to be replaced at Locks 24 and 25. Further weed clearance will be necessary and something needs to be done about the fountain from the chamber wall at Lock 20. The rewatering will inevitably show up other water retention issues. As a result, it is not clear when the flight will re-open, but it almost certainly won't be during this year. Nevertheless, let it be said that progress is being made!



*Left, before weed clearance and rewatering above Lock 19 (a few months ago), and right, as it appears now.*



## Appointment of Canal Manager



As reported in the [last bulletin](#), the appointment process for the new Canal Manager had been started, and a selection has now been made. The successful candidate is Fiona Shipp, currently working as reserves officer for the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, and previously as country parks manager with Carlisle City Council. She was chosen from a shortlist of seven who, before their interviews, attended a briefing session in early September (to which some members of the Society committee were invited) and viewed the Canal at first hand, including from the *John Pinkerton* trip boat. Fiona's anticipated start date is 22<sup>nd</sup> October, and the Society would like to welcome her aboard, so to speak. I am sure you will read more about Fiona in subsequent bulletins and in the [Basingstoke Canal News](#).

## Society and Visiting Work Parties



The regular Society work party continues to work at Frimley Lodge Park. Having completed the soft bank protection along the section from Guildford Road bridge to the model railway buildings, they have been at work on a 40m landing stage to the north of the park. Piling has been completed (*right*) and it has been subsequently backfilled with rubble and dredgings. A covering of roadstone will be laid along the repaired towpath and behind the landing stage. Hopefully the job will be completed by the end of October.



As reported in the [last bulletin](#) we welcomed a couple of work parties from the [Waterway Recovery Group](#) to the Canal way back in July,

however it was too early to report on the outcome of their second, week-long, session. Our visitors split into two teams, one based at Deepcut, the other at Ash Lock. The Deepcut team tidied up and repaired the Lock 19 bypass channel (*above left*), installed a 12m piled lower wing wall extension at Lock 19 (*below*), and also repointed the two upper wing walls at Lock 22. For more photos, see the latest [Basingstoke Canal News](#). Meanwhile, the team at Ash Lock completed the paving of a 600m section of towpath (*lower left*), from Ash Lock itself northwards towards the Army Camp, providing a much improved surface. The hope was to pave more of this notoriously muddy towpath, but the weather and time were against them. We thank WRG for all their efforts.



The next *regular Society work parties* take place at **Frimley Lodge Park** on **October 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup>** and **October 28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup>**. If you would like to know more about what we do and maybe come along and join us, then please contact Janet Buckley at [workparty@basingstoke-canal.org.uk](mailto:workparty@basingstoke-canal.org.uk) or on 01252 620787.

## Other activity on the Canal



Residents at Brookwood will have been pleased to see that contractors Dyer and Butler have been working on Lock 12, the bottom of the Brookwood flight, next to the A322. An inflatable dam (*right*) was put in place so the lock could be completely drained, stop plank grooves\* inserted and the lower gates refitted (with experimental "rubber" seals).



However it is disappointing the stop plank groove design chosen result in their protruding from the flank wall (*left*), rather than be recessed as on all other locks – they could be a hazard to boats. Also, we are not confident that the adjustments that have been made to refit these lower gates will not result in water leakage. Anyway, with this work done, at least the business of re-opening the Brookwood pound can now proceed, hopefully by the end of October.

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*\*Stop plank grooves are slots in the lock walls outside the chamber that are used to support planks that are installed to create a dam, allowing maintenance work to be carried out on the drained lock itself. These grooves were omitted when Lock 12 was restored – Ed.*

## **Update on Canal Engineering Works**

*Here is an update from James Taylor, Surrey CC countryside client officer on the engineering works that have been taking place on the Canal. James is the Surrey CC representative to which the Basingstoke Canal Authority reports (the other being Phil Allen representing Hampshire CC) – Ed.*

### **Engineering update**

Many of you will be aware that there has been engineering works going on at the Canal over the last couple of years. Since taking over as the Surrey County Council Countryside client officer in April I have become increasingly aware that there has been very limited information available about these works, and so this is to set the record straight.

Despite the difficult times, Surrey and Hampshire County Councils are investing in the future of the Canal, catching up with a backlog of major maintenance works which have arisen since the restoration phase in the 1970s and 80s. You may have seen our contractors, *Dyer & Butler*, working along sections of the Canal, and we apologise for any inconvenience caused during these works when their equipment is on the Canal towpath.

The work is primarily aimed at improving safety; reducing immediate and potential risks to Canal users (whether on foot, cycle, canoe or narrow boat), but also to residents and neighbours. Maintaining large engineering structures such as embankments and locks is a costly exercise, so we have needed to take a phased approach – the present “**rapid improvement project**” is phase 1 of this approach.

### **Rapid Improvement Project – phase 1 works**

In Surrey we have replaced life expired lock gates at 9 locks, carried out “hard” bank protection to seal leaks, done “soft” bank protection to improve stability and reduce the risk of flooding on embankments, as well as carrying out structural repairs throughout the Deepcut flight of locks whilst it was drained of water.

In Hampshire the concentration has been on improving embankment safety by repairing banks and sealing small leaks, carrying out a thorough investigation of culverts passing under the Canal, along with having the ability to isolate sections of the long lock-less Hampshire pound in an emergency through the provision of stop-plank installations.

The first phase of the works in Surrey is now drawing to a close, whilst significant works remain to be done in Hampshire before the end of the present contract in 2013.

### **Significant progress**

The term contractor has nearly completed the works at Brookwood (Lock 12), which will enable the Canal Rangers to do some maintenance works on the remaining Brookwood locks and Brookwood Mile pound - it is hoped this section of the Canal can re-open to navigation by the end of October.

Whilst there are some remaining works to be done in the Deepcut flight of locks (especially at Locks 18, 24 & 25), we have taken the decision to fill as many of the pounds with water as possible; this will help us to check the works done have cured the structural problems we needed to address. There will need to be a period of monitoring before we can consider whether the Deepcut flight is safe to re-open to navigation.

*James Taylor, Surrey CC*

## **Forthcoming events**

Here are some dates for your diary:

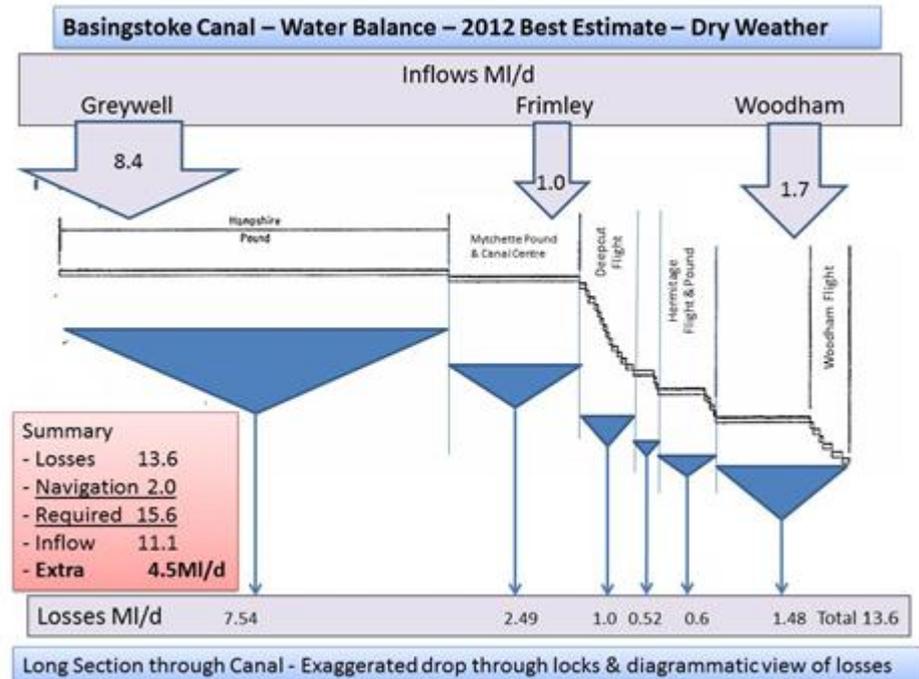
- The 2012/13 season of the [Chobham Social Meetings](#) is taking place at The Parish Pavilion, Recreation Ground, Station Road, Chobham, at **8pm** on the **third Wednesday** of the month. Non members and friends are very welcome. Refreshments will be available at the interval. Please email [David Millett](#) or call him on 01252 617364 for more information. For a map and for more details about the talks, please refer to the latest [Basingstoke Canal News](#). This season’s talks start with the following:
  - **Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2012 - Robin Higgs** - 'Canals and Rivers of Eastern France'
  - **Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2012 - Murray Jones** - 'History of Dragon Boat Racing' (First Half) **Kathryn Dodington** - 'The Jubilee Thames River Pageant 2012' (Second half)
  - **Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> December - Roger Squires BEM** - 'Passage to Astrakhan'

**Click here to join the Surrey and Hants Canal Society**

## Water Strategy Group activities

There is a group of volunteers working actively to identify possible additional sources of water for the Basingstoke Canal. Inevitably, these efforts are speculative and it should be said that there are no guarantees of success, but progress is being made. Here, John How, the leader of the team, sets out the current state of play:

The Basingstoke Canal 'Water Strategy Group' (WSG), was established in November 2011 and consists of Martin Leech and myself, with contributions from Tony Clark. Ideally, our objective is to help the Basingstoke Canal return to year-round, through navigation by finding additional water supplies that can replenish the canal during the Summer months. We have produced a 'water balance' model that indicates in dry weather seasons we require an extra 4.5MI (million litres) or around 20 lock-fills of water daily to maintain navigation, and more with increased boat movements. This estimate is based on a large number of assumptions and hypotheses, such as:



- The rate of flow into the Canal during the dry seasons. We believe this is around a third of the flow in the Whitewater River, which is itself measured by the Environment Agency (EA) who supply the data to us, together with the rainfall on a monthly basis.
- The rate at which pumping facilities discharge into the Canal. These include the Frimley pump which generally produces about 1.0MI/day dewatering the railway embankments to prevent local flooding; and the Woodham back-pumping facility, which returns water from below Lock 1 to above Lock 6 and operates at the defined daily maximum abstraction rate as set by the EA.
- The rate of rainwater seepage through to the aquifers/springs that feed both the Whitewater River and the Basingstoke Canal
- The rate of losses due to evaporation, transpiration by adjacent trees, and seepage.

The WSG have a several different investigations in progress, and all at different stages. Three major positive steps are:-

### **Woodham Abstraction Licence**

An application has been made to the Environment Agency to double the abstraction limit at Woodham to 3.4MI/d from the existing 1.7MI/d. This has taken the WGS nearly 10 months to progress and we are hopeful of a favourable response by December. The effect will be to allow more boat movements onto and off the Canal.

### **Investigations into Boreholes**

An order has now been placed with the British Geological Survey (BGS), for a 'Water Prognosis Report' at key locations along the canal upstream of the Canal centre with a view to determining their suitability as potential sites for one or more boreholes. Hampshire and Surrey County Councils are funding this order.

### **University Support**

Evaluation of the validity of our water balance model and associated assumptions will now be a project for four final year degree students, under the close supervision of Dr Derek Clarke, all from Southampton University. These students are to operate as a 'Consultancy Team', and will produce their Project Report by next May, which accounts for 40% of their final year marks on this prestigious four year degree course.

If anyone wishes to help Martin and me with this work, we will welcome your support. Please contact the [bulletin editor](#) if you are interested.

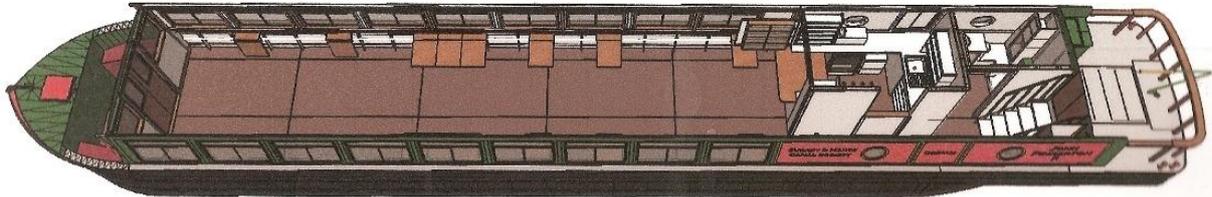
*John How, IWA Reading & Guildford Branch*

## Update on New *John Pinkerton* ("JP2")

I have been asked to write a few words on the progress of the new boat which will replace the *John Pinkerton*, so here goes. It is hard to believe that this process started back in October 2009 when six of us met at Nigel Bird's house to consider replacing the *John Pinkerton*, which after (at that time) 30 years in service was starting to show its age. The choice was to buy a new boat or completely renovate the present boat. Neither option was cheap but the lucky gift of money to the Society has allowed us to consider both options. So, as they say in all story telling: "if you are sitting comfortable I will begin"....

Initially we had to consider what was wrong with the current JP design and the crew's moans about it. The present design is still quite good, but the beam of the boat meant that with 50 passengers it seemed a bit cramped. Although the canal in theory can take a boat of up to 13ft 6ins beam, we considered that in some places this was not possible, and with that in mind we settled on a new boat with a beam of 3 metres (10ft) just to be safe. Because crew members did not like walking along the outside to get to the galley or the steersman position, it was decided that all areas of the boat should be accessible from the inside. Due to the limit of some of the winding holes it was also decided to keep the length the same as the JP, which is 68 feet.

A number of layout plans were considered, but finally a layout was chosen where the toilet was behind the galley on the starboard side and passengers enter the boat over the semi traditional rear deck along a gangway on the port side and so into the passenger cabin. This gangway will also be used as an entrance to both the toilet and the galley. At the front of the boat there will be two French door style doors opening onto a small well deck. So you can see that there will now be no more need to walk on the outside. This is how it will look:



From a systems point of view we have stuck with a Beta Marine engine due to our good experience with the Beta engine that is in the current JP. Due to the ongoing difficulty in getting the JP gas system approved every year, it was decided not to have a gas system on the new boat. This will also do away with the requirement to lift heavy gas bottles on board. Instead the boat will now use an electric urn to heat the water for the all-important tea. Electrical power will be still 12 volts for most of the services, but the galley equipment will run off 240 volt system supplied by inverters. So I am afraid that cooking bacon butties will be a thing of the past. For the convenience of the galley slaves there will be a sink, with hot and cold water and a glass washer. There will also be a bottle cooler which will operate via a mains connection when the boat is moored.

There will be no cosy engine room now as the engine is under the rear decking so I am sorry to say the steersman will be more exposed than at present.

So where are we now? Well, after a number of setbacks in previous years we decided to adopt a plan where the builder would also design the boat and get his design approved by the MCA, at which time we would award that builder the contract to construct the boat completely.

Earlier this year we went and visited Lambons, a boat builder in Droitwich, and we were impressed with their standard of work and their enthusiasm for the task. After several additional meetings we signed an agreement with Lambons, in late August 2012, to design the boat and get that design approved by the MCA. As September drew to a close they got the design approved both by us and the MCA, and so on 1<sup>st</sup> October Nigel Bird and I journeyed to Droitwich to sign the agreement allowing them to proceed with building the boat. We hope it will be ready for use by Easter 2013.

The work for us however is still not over, as colour schemes, interior and exterior, have still to be finalised, along with internal fit out details but getting the MCA approval we felt was a huge achievement on the path to getting a new boat.

Unaccustomed as I am to this typing thing I will bring this episode of the story to a close, but I will try to keep you updated on the progress during the winter months.

*Pete Phillips*

*Pete, Nigel, and the third team member John Abbott are to be congratulated for all their hard work on the JP2 project. We look forward to seeing the new John Pinkerton take shape.*

*Note that it was hoped to put the "virtual tour" of the boat on the website for all to see, but this is not possible for technical reasons – Ed*

## Other John Pinkerton News

### *New Boat Company Chairman*

A while ago Peter Wright stepped down as chairman of the boat company Surrey and Hampshire Canal Cruises Ltd, which is the Society's trading company and the organisation responsible for the running of the John Pinkerton tour boat. Dick King, known to many as one of the JP crew rosterers, was recently elected chairman in Pete's place. By virtue of his appointment, Dick (*seen right with his wife Brenda at the JP helm*) has also been welcomed onto the main Society committee. To ensure that a handover can take place, Pete will continue to attend meetings of both the Society and boat company committees for the time being.



And some words from the new boat company chairman:

### *John Pinkerton*

As this edition goes to press, the *John Pinkerton* will be completing another successful year of charters raising money for the Society. Although trip numbers were lower than expected, they stood up very well considering the competing attractions, and accompanying advertising, of the summer's other events. The Boat Co committee wish to thank all the members who gave up their valuable time to act as crew; this year nearly 80 members volunteered, enabling us to provide a full crew on virtually every trip. We look forward to next season with a new boat; training sessions commence this month.

### *Nostalgic Cruise Sun 21<sup>st</sup> October*

The *John Pinkerton* has been offering cruises for over 30 years, with the help of many volunteers from the Surrey & Hants Canal Society. We would like to mark the occasion of JP's final season of charters with a special Nostalgic Cruise for members, especially those who crewed in the early days. After our last public charter, there will be a cruise from Odiham to Blacksmiths Bridge on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> October starting at 11.30, returning approx 3.00pm. Ploughmans lunch can be available (cost £5), or bring your own picnic. I'm sure that our Quartermaster would be only too happy not to have to remove excess drinks from the bar at the end of the season! We are limited to 50 passengers, so pre-booking is required. Please either [email me](#) (Dick King) or phone on 01730 264178, specifying party numbers with a name, contact details, and whether you will require a ploughmans lunch. If there is an excess of bookings, we will start a waiting list, and possibly arrange a further cruise.

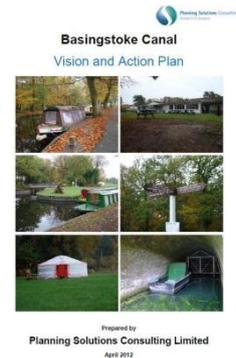
### *Trip Booking Manager*

We are delighted that David Horwood has agreed to take on the job of JP trip booking manager, replacing Marion and Hugh Gough who are retiring after around 20 years of service.

*Dick King, SHCC Chairman*

## Canal Vision

As reported in a [previous bulletin](#), Surrey County Council, with support from Hampshire CC, commissioned a consultancy company to create a "vision" for the Canal which will form the basis for a new business plan and subsequent investment in the Canal, and to support an application for significant funding through the Heritage Lottery Fund. The vision documents have now been published, and are available as an [executive summary](#), an [action plan](#), and a [technical report](#). The deadline for feedback has now passed, but you may still wish to send your comments on the vision to Surrey CC anyway, in which case you can use the available [feedback form](#). The Society and the local Inland Waterways Association branch have jointly commented extensively on the initial and final drafts, however no changes have been made as a result to the final published version. Generally speaking, we were somewhat disappointed that this report did not bring any substantially new ideas to the table. Work on the business plan is in progress at Surrey CC, we are told. Some will know that another, separate, consultancy report has been commissioned on how best to take business advantage of the Canal Centre site. This report is currently not published but may be discussed at the next Joint Management Council meeting at the Canal Centre on **31<sup>st</sup> October, 10am** (this is a public meeting). However we do know there is no suggestion that the site be turned into a residential development....



## Other Bits

### *Restoration Photos*

For those with long memories, Tony Haynes recently posted some photos of the Basingstoke restoration, dated from 1976 to 1978, including of the steam dredger *Perseverance*. They can be seen [here](#) and [here](#). They provide a timely reminder just how much effort was put in by so many people over so many years to restore the Canal back from dereliction. That's why it is so important that the Canal is not allowed to fall into decay again.

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### **Chainage Markers**

Many of you have noticed the steel posts that the rangers have installed along the canal in the last few months, which are intended to help anybody reporting an incident of any sort identify their location on the navigation. These “chainage markers” occur at 500m intervals starting from the eastern (West Byfleet) end of the canal, and there are around 100 in all. (*The one on the right is 12.0km up from the River Wey, putting it somewhere in Brookwood.*)

The principle is a good one, and the markers have already proven invaluable to the ranger team. However, they don’t look very wonderful and are not in keeping with a 200 year old heritage asset. Also their distance apart may mean that your average canal user may have to walk a bit to find the nearest post, which is not ideal in an emergency situation.



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### **Contributions to the Bulletin are welcome..**

**Short articles about the Canal with accompanying photos if possible would be appreciated.** Please send them 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 towards the end of the following month. Please also let the [bulletin editor](#) know if there are any articles or information you would like to appear in future bulletins.

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