

SURREY AND HAMPSHIRE CANAL SOCIETY REPORT – OCTOBER 2004

INTRODUCTION

At the April J.M.C. meeting, canal finances and the dry dock issues have been the subjects of ongoing meetings and deliberations by JMC members and the Society Committee. These issues have not yet been resolved and for an acceptable outcome to be achieved more work is certainly required by all parties. Society working parties have concentrated on the St. Johns section of the canal during this period, bank side protection work and back pumping construction has progressed; this is detailed in the report.

1.0 WORKING PARTIES

ST JOHNS BACKPUMPING

Langmans Bridge is a Listed Structure; the designated area includes the full width of the towpath and approaches to the bridge.

Consents for excavating the towpath were obtained by the Canal Director following a site meeting with English Heritage, a pragmatic approach was taken by English Heritage who agreed the line of the pipe and four weeks notice of excavations works.

A date of 24/25th July was advised and the work was completed during the weekend.

Safety Risk Assessment required that information on buried Mains and Services were obtained prior to starting work. The request to the Statutory Undertakers was initiated by the Canal Operations Manager, only Thames Water and the Electricity Board responded, lack of response was taken as an indication that Services did not exist.

In the event only one electricity cable was recorded on the plans sent by the board, we located three, one of which was High Voltage, a 2 inch Plastic gas main, not recorded and not locatable, was damaged all passed over Langmans Bridge. No consents for these have been issued or are recorded at the Canal Authority Offices.

The pipeline has now been installed up to the pump chamber site, the pump chamber excavated and site prepared for the summer work camp.

Summer Work Camp

The work camp was held from August 8th to 14th, with accommodation at Mayford Village Hall. The work programme included bank side piling as specified by the canal authority. Work on construction of the pump chamber and dry well was started with good progress being achieved. The base was constructed and wall reinforcement progressed during the week. Regular pumping of ground water is required as the excavation depth is below the water table, overnight the pump chamber base will flood.

Society volunteers have continued work on the dry well, the base being cast on 21st August.

The walls and roof have been cast, the final concrete being placed on 9th October, remaining work includes fitting covers and valves for the pipe work.

Contracts for the Pump installation and Electricity supply are dependent on being able to raise the finance.

Future Works

The civil engineering work on the back pumping at St. Johns will be completed during the autumn; details for the winter work programme will assist the canal authority with maintenance works, probably at Deepcut. The Western End bank side work and if agreed, Penny Bridge Car Park would be included. The details need to be finalised with the canal authority before firming up the programme.

2.0 RESOURCES

Volunteer details for the period March to September 2004

SHCS WORK PARTIES 218 days

VISITING GROUPS 36 days

SUMMER WORK CAMPS 72 days

TOTAL VOLUNTEER INPUT 326 days

3.0 FINANCE

3.1 CONTRIBUTIONS

Society direct costs Jan 2004 -Aug 2004

| | | |
|--------------|---------|----------|
| Work Parties | £ 1,567 | |
| Back Pumping | £17,399 | |
| Accruals | £ 3,150 | |
| Insurance | £ 2,136 | |
| Maintenance | £ 2,037 | £ 26,289 |

Contribution in kind March to September 2004

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 326 Volunteer days at £50 per day | £ 16,300 |
| Half year contributions | <u>£ 42,589</u> |

3.2 BACKPUMPING

Fund-raising for this project has slowed, with some grant applications being refused. Pledged contributions, dependent on consents, which although obtained have not been copied, to the grantor, are delaying the payment of the grant. Confirming these consents has become urgent, as society reserves are exhausting.

Additional sources of funding are essential if we are to achieve commissioning this autumn. Surrey County Council planned move to Woking contains a section 106 contribution towards the project. Planning applications for the new building consents have not been through the full planning procedures at the time of writing. Until the full planning process is complete the sect 106 contribution cannot be considered as available to the back pump project.

Back pumping maintains water levels supporting wildlife and the canal environment, the Canal Authority recognise this and are seeking ways of supporting the society.

Any County or Riparian Local Fund allocations remaining available, which could help fund the project, would be most welcome.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Expenditure for project to end 2003 | £ 95,905 |
| Expenditure year to date | £ 17,399 |
| Accruals | £ 3,150 |
| Total | £116,454 |

4.0 DRY DOCK

Progress on resolving the dry dock issues has been minimal since the last J.M.C. meeting. Representatives from Guildford Borough Council, Surrey County Council the Canal Authority and Society met on 13th July. The meeting enabled an exchange of information and a review of the success or otherwise of the trial period for working arrangements by users of the dry dock. The objective was the evaluation of the revised practices and assessment of potential for compromise on noise levels emanating from the dock, alleged to be a nuisance by residents. The use of the dry dock for normal boat maintenance has a pattern requiring a three day docking and preparation sequence, this was confirmed by the log recorded by the complainant but not confirmed by actual noise measurements. The log is subjective and differentiation of noise generated by the dock compared with any other source can be questioned. Noise measurements need to satisfy these criteria when being made. Guildford officers, on behalf of the resident tabled alternative criteria for the use of the dry dock, only one day for any noise generation, with only 30 minutes continual work in any one hour, hardly, in my opinion, a basis for any possible compromise. The meeting closed with a resolution that Surrey County Council, as owners of the canal agreeing to meet with the resident. I understand that the resident has declined the offer of this meeting, their attitude towards any compromise becomes more questionable as time passes. A decision on achieving The continued use of the dock before users lose confidence and viability of the dock reduces becomes more important, the dock operator won a similar case on the Thames, and this precedent may be applicable for our dock. The KEY fact that commercial craft generating income for the canal require annual inspections and certificates of compliance, issued by the MCA is not being addressed. The dry dock is essential for this process.

Note. The meeting held on 1st October has not resolved any of the issues, it has extended the period of Uncertainty and monitoring.
No firm agreement was achieved leaving the user open to allegations from the complainant
Based on perceived noise levels – a most unsatisfactory result.
Visibility of the recorded noise levels, if carried out by Guildford Officers, would enable a Comparison with our recording. No factual information on noise generated is available to the Society.

4.0 CANAL FINANCES

At the April J.M.C. a number of members raised concerns on the reduced B.C.A. budgets, also the potential for other member organisations to make similar reductions in contributions. An action to promote the value for money provided by the canal was agreed in an attempt to influence the 2004/2005 allocations. Research and feedback received by the society indicates a significant lack of awareness exists at both district and county levels, some recently elected members are not aware that the canal exists, certainly they are not aware of the benefits it provides for their constituents. The society is preparing a presentation on the canal, its restoration and benefits, including wildlife, habitat, leisure and recreational facilities. Target audiences include County and District Members, Portfolio Holders and key opinion and policy makers. A suitable time for the presentations would be early in the budget bids process.

Peter Redway
Chair SHCS
October 2004