

## BASINGSTOKE CANAL JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

### SURREY AND HAMPSHIRE CANAL SOCIETY REPORT – FEBRUARY 2007

#### INTRODUCTION

The minutes for the last JMC Meeting contain a reference to the SHCS Working Parties not undertaking maintenance work on the canal. This is incorrect and is reported “ Out of Context “, maintenance work requiring continuity to finish in a programmed time scale is not appropriate to volunteer working which is geared towards weekends. Maintenance work such as bank side clearing and towpath surfacing are regular activities during the winter period. Project work is normally undertaken in the summer when construction benefits from the dryer conditions.

This winter a maintenance task investigating a towpath subsidence has evolved into a major repair and replacement of some 36 Mtrs of a lock water bye pass system at St Johns, this work is within our capability as an organisation. Weekend working by volunteers would not be acceptable if carried out after Easter when the canal has a higher usage as water levels have been reduced for safety reasons.

It is the lack of weekday continuity that generated the comments on volunteer maintenance work rather than lack of support for the BCA

#### 1.0 WORKING PARTIES

##### ST JOHNS BACKPUMPING

The three phase Electricity supply has been connected following the installation of the Pump and controls. Surrey County Council support via the Local Fund grant contributed towards the cost of the pump, publicity and a Press Release are planned for a Spring event when the pump is required for operational and ecological reasons. Temporary water filter grids have been installed pending manufacture and fitting of the galvanised metal units, towpath upgrade will then follow in the spring. Anticipated expenditure to completion is £9.000.

##### WESTERN END

Last Autumn we returned to the Western End, dry conditions enabled access to the off side of the canal, a start on clearing bank side growth at the water line and below has been made. Rain has now partially re-watered the canal making access more difficult.

The towpath has been cleared with the BCA Tractor and flail and some cutting of the Hazel growth on the towpath cutting sides is planned.

This is preliminary work on improvements proposed for the canal west of the tunnel, potential partners have supported the initiative and discussions on the way forward are encouraging particularly the “Last six miles” footpath link to Basingstoke.

Working parties are planned for February and March so as to clear as much undergrowth as possible before the nesting season.

##### WOODHAM

Waterway Recovery Group and the Kent and East Sussex Canal Restoration Group volunteers arranged a weekend work camp in early December.

The selected site was Woodham, below Lock 1 on the off bank, chainsaw teams had been organised and the intention was to prepare the off bank for protection and strengthening works.

Permissions were not granted for the felling of the larger trees as Runnymede planning dept insisted on a revised application although felling had been agreed with other bodies.

Small tree growth was cleared with chainsaws held in reserve, not efficient use of available resources.

On the Sunday the volunteers were able to assist rangers clearing a fallen Beech tree from the canal, rangers removed limbs from the main trunk with volunteers winching them onto the bank and cutting the

Cordwood, at least the chainsaw team had some effective tasks.  
Crews from boats held up by the fallen tree also assisted with the removal of the lighter branches, the navigation was re-opened for the boats to return to the River Wey during the afternoon.

## LOCK 8 WATER BYE PASS

Prior to the Christmas holiday, a subsidence was reported at the lower end of lock 8, Rangers attended and made safe. The programme of work for the Rangers prior to opening the navigation for Easter included repairs to water bye pass systems and a lower wing wall on the Deepcut locks. The removal of the landslip debris in the cutting above lock 28 is also an essential task for access to the dry dock and opening of the navigation.

For these reasons the society agreed to carry out the repairs at Lock 8

Initial excavations confirmed broken and dropped concrete pipes, water has been leaking and washed soil from under the original pipes. 25 Mtrs of replacement pipes have been installed and the Bye Wash is operational. During repair works, the lock was filled so that an upper gate could be opened and damage to the balance beam avoided as excavations progressed. When the water level in the lock equalled the trench-excavated depth, water flowed into the trench from the outside of the concrete pipes. A significant leak from the lock chamber is suspected in the upper sluice area but not yet been identified. Significant voids have been identified under the upper gate quadrant; excavations to identify the leak are planned. Remedial works specifications have been discussed with the client's engineers and will be carried out in conjunction with the excavations.

## DREDGING

The society has brokered an agreement for use of a dredger by volunteers with a local marine company; the craft is similar to Unity with an excavator unit performing the dredging function.

The volunteers would be able to perform limited maintenance dredging and bank protection work; it is planned to support the Brookwood SSSI recovery initiative by volunteers using the dredger.

Major capital dredging works would be subject to the normal competitive tendering procedures with the dredger being used commercially if the company is successful in tendering for the work.

The volunteer dredging concept is not new, the Society operated our steam dredger during restoration, the sponsorship allowing volunteers to use the dredger is recent and the agreement has to ensure the charitable status of the society is not jeopardised.

## 2.0 RESOURCES.

Volunteer details for the period September 2006 to March 2007

SHCS WORK PARTIES	142 days
VISITING GROUPS	81 days
TOTAL VOLUNTEER INPUT	223 days

## 3.0 FINANCE

### 3.1 CONTRIBUTIONS

I have changed the format for this section so as to identify the Societies contribution for the year 2006  
Society direct costs Jan 2006-Dec 2006

Work Parties	£ 7,119 )	
Back Pumping	£30,222 )	Subject to
Insurance	£ 2,837 )	audit
Maintenance	£ 1,208 )	
Projects	£ 5,696 )	£ 47,082
Contribution in kind for 2006		
549 Volunteer days at £50 per day		£ 27,450
<b>Total contributions for 2006</b>		<b>£ 74,532</b>

### 3.2 BACKPUMPING

The St. Johns Back Pumping only requires the final detail fittings and towpath upgrade to complete, the pump has been installed and tested and will be fully operational this coming season.

Expenditure for project to end 2006	£ 147,583
Estimated expenditure to complete	£ 9,000
Total	£ 156,583

### 4.0 CANAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The draft of the Canal Management Plan circulated for comments provides a balanced and comprehensive approach to the leisure, ecological and navigation aspects of the canal. We have commented on the draft the final version of which is awaited, subject to the comments made by various groups being addressed this should provide a way forward for the canal.

We support efforts to reverse the decline in the SSSI diversity, subject to full navigation facilities being unchanged and channel dimensions allowing full navigation use up to existing agreed limits. A win / win objective between ecology and navigation would satisfy both user groups, improving the canal environment and revenue.

### 5.0 WATER SUPPLY

The IWA and Society are assisting in a Hydrology Study on the water requirements of the canal. A brief is being prepared, for evaluation by the BCA, by the IWA Hon consultant. This work will evaluate losses, leakage and usage requirements.

Peter Redway  
Chair SHCS  
12<sup>th</sup> March 2007