

## **Canal Managers Update June 2014**

### **Works**

- New gates were installed at locks 5, 14 and 15 in March
- Works are still underway on the new moorings at the canal centre.

### **Staffing**

- Steve Livesey Bennet (Lock Keeper) has joined us as a Canal Ranger to cover Sara's maternity leave. Steve has many years experience as a Ranger and will be an asset to the team.
- Mark Foster will be leaving us as lock keeper and starting a new role as assistant ranger with the Blackwater Valley Countryside Project.
- We have just interviewed for 3 new lock keepers
- Unfortunately we have lost Phil Allen from the management team. Thank you to Phil for his hard work over the last few years on the canal. He will be greatly missed. James Taylor will be filling his role and now working full time on the canal on behalf of both Surrey and Hampshire.

### **Volunteers**

- The Tuesday volunteer group has been working on installing new bollards at Mytchett Lake and working on soft bank protection opposite the canal centre. They have also been clearing up through Woking and Sheerwater and clearing hydrocotyle weed. They have now also started the summer lock spruce up of cutting and painting.
- The Canal Society Lengthsman scheme continues to provide us with regular updates from out on the Canal.

### **Weedcutter**

- The weedcutter has started its weed onslaught down in Woking. The weed however has proved a tough opponent and the weedcutter had to undergo some repair and reinforcement. It is now back working again. It will be heading back up towards deepcut when it has finished in woodham.

### **New Charges update**

- Role out of the new licence fee collection in March was successful and all existing licence holders have either paid for the full year or are set up on a direct debit system.
- Stage 2 is now to start working through the unlicensed boats on the canal. This is going to be a door knocking exercise based on the boat surveys that have been recently carried out by volunteers and lengthsman. We will also be speaking to canal side residents with unpowered boats in their gardens and informing them of the licence requirements which we believe many are unaware of.

### **Management Team**

- The tree survey has been delayed, but now due to start ASAP
- The summer car park cut has been tendered for and Norris and Gardner will be continuing with this. A few areas have been added to the scheme this year such as bridge barn.
- A blue green algal bloom affected Hampshire in May, but thankfully only lasted a couple of weeks.

### **Brief Updates from other Meetings (full minutes available on request)**

#### **Conservation Management Steering Group 30<sup>th</sup> April 2014**

- Review of Hall and Groom report by Dr Eaton, Dr Eaton concluded that the canal SSSI condition may have become 'unfavourable recovering' for the first time.
- Presentation by Paul Hope (PH) on bats in the Greywell tunnel. PH confirmed that the species recorded in the tunnel are Natterers, Daubentons, Whiskered and Brandt. The long eared bat was recorded but this was more than 10 years ago and appeared to only be one individual. During swarming surveys the Barberstein and Beckstein bats were recorded, but not during hibernation.
- Discussions with EA regarding water quality analysis of the canal. Concluded we are within required parameters. Number of survey points to be reduced by EA but may be able to be picked up by ranger staff instead.
- Alkalinity/acidity was judged to still be of appropriate gradient along the canal.

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